

*"From Where I Sit ..."*



## **MLK Day and "Spiritual Wickedness in High Places..."**

It was 35 years ago on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1987. As the new pastor of the Wesley CME Church in Beloit, Wisconsin, and newly elected president of the Black Ministers Alliance of Beloit, I had been invited to serve as the keynote speaker for the Citywide Martin Luther King Ecumenical Worship Service. Assembled in one of the largest churches, I mounted the pulpit praying that the message I had to share would do justice to the occasion and prove meaningful to both the black and white attendees. My text was Ephesians 6:12 (KJV) *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* And though my subject was traditional, it was my sub-subject that caught everyone's attention: *"Little Men in Back Rooms Pulling Strings."*

Even though the text's reference to high places meant heavenly places, for this occasion, I chose to use the literal reference for illustrative purposes for my hearers to understand that evil and spiritual wickedness was also near at hand. As I spoke of the public advances of racial harmony, I warned with the borrowed reference that *"Behind the curtain of genteel civility looms the brooding face of racial unrest and distrust. Lost somewhere in the hyperbolic onslaught of the avalanche of our media outlets is a grain of truth that seems unable to rise to the top or to lift its voice above the bellowing of others. We see the events but miss the signs, we chronicle the actions but miss the significance, we log the occurrences ... but fail to understand what has truly happened."*

Little did I know that the illustration of 35 years ago, would come to pass with a vengeance in our present day. And it didn't just happen overnight. There have always been back rooms with little men pulling the strings of public influence. In July 1987 with the rejection of Supreme Court Nominee Robert Bork, a seed was planted in the back rooms. Little men began perhaps plotting how and pulling the strings to counter such an action. About the time of President Barack Obama's election, the Tea Party became the outward expression of the strings being pulled in the back rooms which over time have manifested in the dominance of state houses (*that control redistricting*), majorities of the US House and Senate chambers, control of the Presidency, and now the revered Supreme Court.

As we celebrate MLK Day 2022, let us remember that the battle is not yet over, and the victory is far from being claimed. We must stand for right as we continue to teach and train our young people the truth of the struggle, the struggle against *"spiritual wickedness in high places"* both heavenly and earthly. ***Or at least that's the way it looks to me...***

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