

Imus is Sunk - Hip Hop Sails Away Unscathed

Contributed by Rev Michael Bresciani
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Among the fairest and most balanced offerings on the Imus incident hails from journalist Ellis Cose in Newsweek for the week of April 23, 2007 in an article entitled "What Will We Learn." Another offering well worth the read is "Imus' Safety Net Failed" penned by the World Net Daily columnist Barbara Simpson, April 16, 2007.
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{bot_wrgoogle}TV interviews are too numerous to cite even though not much variation is offered. It seems like a replay of the same interview and it goes like this. Imus had a right to say what he wants, networks and corporate supporters have the right to bounce him and why doesn't somebody call Rap and Hip Hop out on the carpet.

Naturally when a race card pops up Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are sure to pop up as well. Jackson is seen marching with a tiny placard about Rainbow Coalition and Sharpton is filmed as the magnanimous mediator of the Imus apology, just what we might expect, nothing new in this picture.

Not far behind these familiar scenes another recurring but worn out and highly questionable outcome is the monotonous drone of the interviewers trying to assuage Rappers with talk about their connection to art. A lot of sycophantic gushing can't hide the fact that untold millions of people believe that calling Hip Hop "art" is like comparing Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa to Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup can.

Pop cultures' fling can produce bling but it takes something a little more classic to add something significant to a nation's culture, something that will endure through the ages.

Others have aptly pointed out something already well known namely, that it is the big green money machine that drives Hip Hop. Millions of bucks will also be lost by the networks and sponsors as a result of giving Imus the boot. So that question serves only to raise yet another question. Why did the networks and corporations suddenly go moral on such a lopsided scale?

A few voices have been heard that dare to call Hip Hop artists and sponsors to respond. Among them has been African American poet Maya Anjelou. In her customary dignified and refined manner Maya gracefully lambasted the rappers in an interview on CNN. Are there any other voices out there like this one? We are waiting.

Raising a plethora of new questions seems to be the main product of the entire controversy. These questions are useful only if we are willing to hunker down

and search for the answers and beyond that we must demand that they be answered.

Here is a list of questions that should be asked of every citizen, network chief and corporation in America. It may not be a comprehensive list but it should do for starters.

If profanity has become art, hasn't art become profaned?

Does America and especially African Americans know the difference between a mere activist and a real leader?

Are Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton activists or leaders?

Would Jackson and Sharpton be willing to march around network offices, media outlets and corporate sponsors who gain from Hip Hop?

Do Christians believe that the gospel and gospel music, traditional or contemporary, can really stand by themselves to produce the desired effect? If so why have some groups borrowed from the Rap genre to present their message?

Would the networks be willing to tone down the crap in rap just to give it a slap (no rap intended) in the next Hip Hop presentation? Would they be willing to cancel the next Hip Hop presentation?

Are African American women any less insulted by the rappers than they have been by Imus? Would they be willing to let their voices and their "Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn" be heard on the same?

Have parents listened to what is being piped into their children's brains and what is bombarding their sight daily by Hip Hopsters and are they willing to pull the plug if necessary? Do you know the definition of difficult?

Has anyone at all noticed that the Imus incident clearly says that freedom of speech does have responsibilities connected to it?

Would rappers be willing to ponder the question of why only rap music gets a bad rap? Why haven't other music genres that African Americans have contributed to or wholly created been spoken against? Like Mississippi Delta Blues, Black Gospel and Choir music, Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, Dixieland, etc. etc. etc? Why doesn't anyone question that these genres are actually art?

Would Rappers be willing to ponder this great proverb? In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. Proverbs 10:19

Would the rest of us be willing to ponder these important words from the Saviour of the world? "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:36-37

Rev Bresciani is the author of two books. He also is a columnist for several online sites and magazines. His articles are read throughout the world. For more articles and news from around the globe visit "The Website for Insight"

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