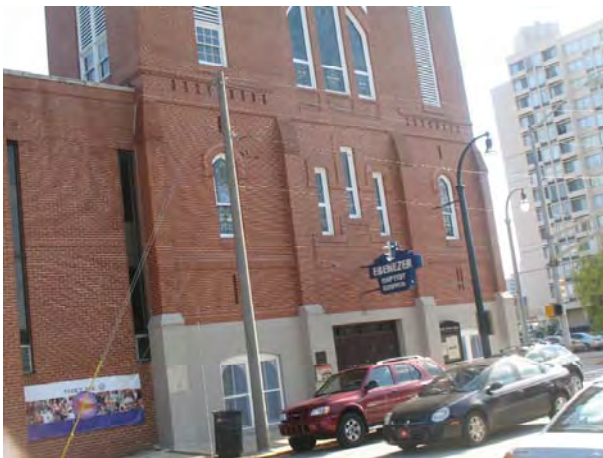


A City of Hope



Greetings from Atlanta, the city of hope! The SAMHSA MFP of the ANA is holding its 2010 Intensive Summer Institute in Atlanta, Georgia. It is Sunday morning. I decide to tour the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change and am moved by the scenes and re-creations of the Civil Rights Movement in Freedom Hall

Museum. However, those re-creations are woefully inadequate when compared to the memories this child of the sixties had, of the actual events and times, and I am left wanting for more of a connection to the people involved with this turning point in American History.



The Original Ebenezer Baptist church

So, I venture over to the original Ebenezer Baptist Church, which has been declared as a historical site, and replaced with a new structure that reflects the architectural motif of an African hut but is grand in its splendor. I immerse myself in this historical site where Dr. Martin Luther King's spiritual roots were nurtured, but I am left still hoping for



The New Ebenezer Baptist church

more. I search out the bookstore and resource center to purchase a remembrance, a souvenir of my visit to the city of hope; some keepsake that would be in concordance with my memories of that time in history. I purchased nothing for none of the items evoked that special time in history.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Birth Home

I shared this with the older African American sales clerk who fronted the souvenir section of the bookstore. He said to me, *"why don't you go on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birth Home Tour, it's free."* So, I venture over to Auburn Ave, nicknamed "Sweet Auburn Ave" and the heart of the Black community and tour the birthplace of Martin and his siblings. He had a childhood similar to my own and grew up in a house much like the one I grew up in, in Galveston, Texas. It made the experience more real for me, but there was still something lacking. I went back to the older African American sales clerk and told him how I felt. He said *"look, there is a celebration of the last*

remaining sibling of Martin Luther King, his sister Christine to be held at the church at 4:00 PM this afternoon." I ask if anyone could attend, and he says "sure it is open to all, it's a church!" I am wearing blue jeans and a tee shirt. I ask if I can attend like this, and he says, *"Everyone will be wearing their Sunday best."* Its 3:15 PM, so I hail a cab and rush back to the hotel to change. I put on my "Sunday Best" and head back to the church. I arrive at 3:55 PM. I am given a program that says "50th Wedding Anniversary of Isaac Newton Farris, Sr. and Christine King Farris, Renewal of Vows Ceremony." I am escorted to a seat surprisingly close to the main sanctuary.



50th Wedding Anniversary of Isaac and Christine King Farris Renewal of Vows Ceremony

While seated in the pews with the sun beaming much like a divine light on to the program, I began reviewing the events of the day. I noticed that an Andrew Young would



Divine Light

I gaze up and to my left and the actual Ambassador Andrew Young is strolling down the aisle to the stage. I am beaming with the excitement of being in his presence. I then look to my right and strolling down this aisle is Congressman John Lewis. The theme for the 2010 MFP Intensive Summer Institute is to Reduce Substance abuse and Mental Health Disparities through *Competent Leadership* and I am elated, to be in the presence of these fearless, competent leaders who risked their lives for

perform in a Voice choir, and thought to myself that it must be one of the children of the actual Ambassador Andrew Young.



Ambassador Andrew Young in Voice Choir

Black Freedom. I could not leave without introducing myself to Congressman Lewis and he graciously consented to a photograph with me. Additionally, the program offered a scripture reading by Martin Luther King III and Elder Bernice King, the children of Martin Luther King, Sr. and Coretta Scott King. I left the city of hope with a sense of having fulfilled my desire to have concordance with my memories of that time in history.



Congressman J. Lewis and MFP Fellow Dr. R. Pope



That time in history