Currently, our nation may be more divided than it has ever been in its two-hundred- and fifty-nine-year history. And that is surely saying something because our nation has been divided from day one. As a matter of fact, there have been very few moments in our history when the United States has truly seen its citizenship almost wholly united. While there was cause for celebration in winning our independence from the tyranny of Great Britain, Blacks in slavery immediately recognized their own freedom was not forthcoming. When the Civil War ended and the union was saved by the north, another celebration occurred. But four million newly freed Blacks soon realized freedom did not crush racism, hatred, cruelty and even death. All of these horrible sins simply just took on new forms.

The signing of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Bills in the 1960's offered some glimmer of hope and respite from the blatant and public forms of discrimination. However the hope and respite was very short-lived. In the months before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death, he expressed a sense of impending doom and strong belief that the United States was heading toward a violent future. Dr. King's anger and frustration was intricately connected to the fact that racism and other forms of discrimination had grown into the system and structure of America. Business, government, education, housing, law enforcement and even religion.

Fast forward to May 2025. We call Dr. King a modern prophet for his early work in Montgomery in the 1950's and his powerful work culminating in his "I Have a Dream Speech" in Washington, DC in 1963. But surely he was a prophet in his final days as well. His anger and frustration about the United States' inability to change was spot on. In the days before his assassination, Dr. King was consumed with efforts to break down walls of division among Americans. He began a Poor People's Campaign with his organization Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He was inviting others from every religion, culture, race, class and ethnicity to join a march on Washington that might have made the 1963 march pale in comparison.

Then he was shot and killed while in Memphis, Tennessee to help sanitation workers who were being discriminated against. We should learn and keep close to our hearts what it was Dr. King was up to in the months before his death. He was less interested in trying to change the system, government, policies, military industrial complex, and capitalism. Rather, he was interested in changing the hearts of people.

These fifty-seven years later most people of goodwill are still trying to change the system. Of course, it is a system that desperately needs changing. But that is not the solution to the myriad woes that are facing our communities, towns and states in our nation. We have learned that changing the system does not prevent the heinous forms of biases from cracking the mosaic that is our country. For all the efforts towards integration in public transportation and accommodations, an end to segregation in public schools, protection of voting rights, protection of civil rights, we are more divided than ever.

Thus, we are now seeing our government being operated by those who have no regard for the civil and human rights of the people. We see astounding, astonishing practices of uncaring and lack of compassion so great, until the violence is earth shattering. We see the power and authority of our government brandished by myopic misanthropes whose vision is corrupted by Anglo-Saxon Protestant male lenses. This is manifest in so many ways.

Banning books by and about black and brown achievements in the nation and world

Eliminating national celebrations of Black, Latino, Women history months

Restricting federal funding to corporations, companies and universities who support diversity, equity and inclusion

Dismissing and firing thousands and thousands of federal employees at every level who support diversity and inclusion

Creating terror among immigrants in the United States and wrongfully deporting human beings to other countries

Denying women choices and decisions about their own personal lives

Creating terror in LGBTQ communities

There are certainly more. However, these are only some of the issues American citizens are currently facing today. And because we are so divided, those in power and authority are simply having their way with us. I have never seen and heard people living with such despair and fear. Seniors worry whether their social security check will arrive each month. Schools worry whether they will be able to continue offering free lunch to students. Students worry whether any of their friends will no longer be in their classes or on the playground simply because they were not born in the United States.

If ever there was a time the NAACP was needed, that time is absolutely right now. And if ever there was a time when the NAACP also needed to expand its horizons and become more inclusive than ever, that time is now. I implore everyone in Evanston and the North Shore who is committed to justice and who is determined to stop this runaway train, please act now. Join the NAACP. Become active in your community. Write letters to elected officials. Support local minority businesses. Speak up, stand up, and stop the terror. In other words, have a heart.

Michael Nabors

President, Evanston/North Shore NAACP