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NEW YORK AP - The board chairman of the late Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference said today that an independent commission should be established to investigate King's assassination.

The Rev. J. E. Lowery of Atlanta, the board chairman, said he didn't know if James Earl Ray had acted alone or as part of

a conspiracy but an agency similar to the Warren Commission should be appointed.

"There is certainly a racist societal conspiracy abroad in our land," he said.

The Warren Commission, headed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, was appointed by former President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Lowery was interviewed on NBC television's Today Show along with Arthur Hanes, Ray's first attorney, and William Bradford Huie, a journalist who has written several articles on Ray.

Ray pleaded guilty to King's murder in return for a 99-year prison sentence. He has since said he will try to withdraw the guilty plea.

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