

The Legacy And Dream That Have Reached Around The World

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When a life is lost through violence, regardless of the cause, one can only hope that some ultimate, useful purpose has been served. When the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was extinguished by the vengeful gunfire of an assassin, the hope was that his dream of peace and racial harmony would survive his mortality.

While the progress that had been marked by Black Americans during and for some years following his death seems now to be marred by negative United States Supreme

Court decisions, a resurgence of anti-Black activities, and other steps backwards, the dream has not been lost. In fact, the impact of what Dr. King started is being felt, even now, around the world.

One only has to look at the breakup of the Soviet Union. After seven decades of oppressive dictatorships and tyranny, the Soviet Union no longer exists. Those independent countries that have and are still emerging and shaping their own destinies clamored for the freedom, the civil and human rights that Dr. King, and those who supported him, marched and clamored for in America.

The world joins this nation in the celebration of the birthday of a man who is recognized as one who symbolizes the eternal struggle of mankind to be free, to determine who and what will govern their right to exist. And despite all those individuals and governments (like Arizona) that struggle to diminish the global contributions and impact of Dr. King's actions, there is no disputing the momentum that he generated.

Over the last decade, forces have been at work in America to snuff out the dream, to restore the status quo that existed when Dr. King seized the opportunity and de-

manded freedom and justice for all people. No other person has achieved the social upheaval and, as a result, the social, moral, judicial, and ethical changes that this noble human being effected.

This occasion, celebrating his birthday, is also one to remember some of the words Dr. King spoke to inspire dedication to what has become a worldwide cause c'ele'bre.

"You ought to believe something in life, believe that thing so fervently that you will stand up with it till the end of your days..."

"Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve...You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."

"Our hope for creative living in this world house that we have inherited lies in our ability to reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice. Without this spiritual and moral reawakening, we shall destroy ourselves in the misuse of our own instruments."

"In a multiracial society no group can make it alone. It is a myth to believe that the Irish, the Italians, and the Jews...rose to power through separatism. It is true that they stuck together. But their group unity was always enlarged by joining in alliances with other groups such as political machines and trade unions. To succeed in a pluralistic society, and an often hostile one at that, the Negro obviously needs organized strength, but that strength will only be effective when it is consolidated through constructive alliances with the majority group."

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

We, as a nation and even as a people, have not yet fully captured that dream. But, the legacy demands that we keep that dream alive - not just during the celebrations of Dr. King's birthday, or during Black History Month, or on the commemoration of his death, but all year long, every day until that dream and all it implies and expresses is realized.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
(1929-1968)