

## KING'S SPEECH

# 'I Have A Dream'

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a Great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free; 100 years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; 100 years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; 100 years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.

So we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.

This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned.

Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check — a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content, will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest or tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundation of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the worn threshold which leads into rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence.

Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy, which has engulfed the Negro community, must not lead us to a distrust of all white people. For many of our white brothers, as evidence by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?"

We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies,

heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For White Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No! No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi. Go back to Alabama. Go back to South Carolina. Go back to Georgia. Go back to Louisiana. Go back to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It's a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. 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. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama — with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification — one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be plain and the crooked places will be straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." This is our hope.

This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountain side, let freedom ring." And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. "From every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last, Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."



Coretta Scott King, second from right, widow of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., acknowledges the crowd gathered for the Civil Rights March Saturday at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. With King are Dick Gregory, left, and two of her children.

## Anniversary March Marks Crossroad: Old Guard Not Ready to Pass the Torch

### ▲ 'I think that there's a lot of energy in our youth ...'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two notices were served on the civil rights movement at the 30th anniversary March on Washington: The young may want to take over, but the old aren't ready to retire.

"We believe this march is not the benediction, but a rebirth," said Joseph Lowery, 70, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for the past 17 years.

There was some talk that maybe, just maybe, the movement's elders would "pass the torch" of responsibility for social change at this additional celebration of 1963 and the dream of equality Martin Luther King Jr. embossed on the nation's psyche. Yet on Saturday, fond remembrance prevailed, and the old guard made it clear that fond remembrance will endure.

"We're going to celebrate the March on Washington until there's nothing left to celebrate," declared Benjamin Hooks, 68, who retired from the NAACP and resurfaced at the helm of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

The young, however, made a few things clear, too.

"We let everybody know we will challenge, seriously, their leadership," said Carl Upchurch, 35, head of the National Urban Peace and Justice Movement and the most vocal critic of Saturday's festivities. "They're on notice now."

Upchurch, along with three other leaders from his group of reformed street-gang members, appeared at Saturday's march,

even though they had said they weren't coming. They stood with NAACP executive director Benjamin Chavis, 45, who pledged his group's support of their efforts to curb violence in the inner city.

"We have worked with these gang members for over a year," Chavis said. "They are my friends. I intend to work with them in every community in this nation."

"Ben Chavis is welcome in our circles. He is making a valiant effort to link the traditional civil rights efforts with our current struggle," Upchurch said. Other older black activists, he added, have not been so forthcoming.

But the young were. Upchurch's National Urban Peace and Justice Movement plans to link with the Student Coalition of Conscience, the teen-agers and young adults who worked with Saturday's march.

The Rev. Barry Hargrove, 27, a leader of that coalition and a youth coordinator for Saturday's march, said, "We were on the same side" on a lot of issues and will meet further to discuss strategy.

They want to "weave young America with urban America," Upchurch said, and take this mixture into every major civil rights forum, to tackle the problems most affecting the young: unemployment, poverty, murder.

Those sentiments were echoed by Lani Guinier, whose nomination as chief civil

rights enforcer in the Justice Department was withdrawn by President Clinton after controversy arose over some of her writings.

"I think that there's a lot of energy in our youth and what we need to do is to tap into that energy and to help to create a climate in which people are not afraid to talk about the hard problems," said Guinier on Sunday, in an interview on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"I think that the apathy or the sense of alienation is profound. It is real and we have to deal with it," warned Guinier.

But dealing with the problem goes beyond the generational dispute to the arena of partisan politics where Republican and Democratic blacks often disagree over how best to improve conditions for African Americans.

"I think the government can play an important role in trying to correct these things," said Guinier. "We have seen that help rebuild Japan, help rebuild Europe ... it needs to rebuild American cities."

"The government has a role to play ... (but) what the U.S. government did was help to create the environment where the Europeans rebuilt Europe," said former Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan who appeared with her on CBS.

"We can't look to government to solve all this. Having served in the government for four years I can tell you that government is a big bureaucracy that indeed doesn't do a lot of things well," he added.

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marched 30 years ago returned. Dr. Rudolph Harris, 56, said he had climbed a tree in 1963 to watch King's speech.

"King just brought it to life," he said.

Conditions have improved since 1963, but "the color of your skin still limits your chances in society," NAACP Executive Director Ben Chavis Jr. said.

"Dr. King's dream still remains unfulfilled," he said on NBC's "Today."

Temperatures were in the high 90s with a matching degree of humidity.

The theme of the day's march was "Jobs, Justice and Peace," and the message was advanced by a broad coalition of Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, women, gays, the disabled and the elderly.

"We hope to accomplish what we didn't accomplish 30 years ago — justice and peace and equality for everyone," said Barbara Wiggins, president of the Greater Hartford, Conn., NAACP. She said she was not pleased that President Clinton would not be present.

"I came because the issues are still important," said Jean Tussey, 75, of Cleveland, who wore a yellowing button from the original march pinned on a white cap. The button read: "Emancipation March on Washington 1963."

Tussey's husband and youngest daughter came to the 1963 march.

"I feel I'm sort of carrying on the family tradition," she said.

"We're here to protect our civil rights and remember Martin Luther King. We

can't just sit back and expect everything to be fair and OK," said Sheila Rogers, 17, of Atlanta. "You have to keep fighting for them."

Organizers said they would use the march to hand over leadership to younger members of the movement, but some have ridiculed that idea, saying black America's aging leaders are not yet ready to share power. Critics also believe the march and its accompanying events were targeted only at middle-class blacks.

Organizers said they expected "tens of thousands" of marchers, well short of their first estimate of 250,000. About 75,000 showed up.

Clinton, vacationing in Martha's Vineyard, Mass., sent a statement that was read at the march. In 1963, President Kennedy sent an emissary to the

march and met with organizers afterward.

"On this day 30 years ago, almost a quarter-million Americans gathered in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial to ask our nation to uphold its founding ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity for all," Clinton's statement said.

"Three decades later, we remember how far we have come on freedom's trail, and we rededicate ourselves to completing the journey."

**Winston-Salem Chronicle**  
The Twin City's Award-Winning Newspaper  
617 N. Liberty Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102  
(919) 722-8624

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