

Other Opinions

King's birthday reminds all of racism problems



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By Bobby Drakeford

Morehouse College in 1948 at the age of 19, a growing discontent of black people with segregation was forming the roots of the forecoming civil right movements.

Unexpected ally

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other organizations fought for equality. They found an unexpected friend in President Truman throughout the middle and late 1940s. Truman created various interracial committees to study civil rights.

While the nation experienced the early stages of the Civil rights movement during the early 1950s, King experienced an intellectual and emotional crisis himself. As a student at the intergrated Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pa., King became convinced that a love for all men must exist in every successful crusade of nonviolent resistance.

The combination of extensively reading the works of many of the world's greatest philosophers and authors, and his religious background all shaped his beliefs and philosophies.

**Martin Luther King Jr.
Inspired by God, Love, Gandhi**

Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of Christian ethics in the

book *The Will To Power* caused King much deliberation. The result of this reading was his near despair of his belief in the power of love for solving social problems. He was puzzled by the value of love for social good and began to question whether Jesus' ethical messages were only good for individual conflict resolutions, not for racial groups or nations resolutions.

Nonviolent methods

In the midst of his bewilderment, King was inspired to read about the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. This reading soon restored his original faith in the power of love. He realized that when love pervades nonviolent methods, it is not a sign of weakness, but it is a potent force for social transformation.

From this point on, God, Gandhi and a love for mankind were the driving forces in King's march toward freedom. In a sermon at The Riverside Church in 1967, King said, "We will return good for evil. We will love our enemies. Christ showed us the way and Gandhi showed us it could work."

Before graduating in 1951 as class valedictorian King studied and critiqued the writings of Carl Marx, Anders Nygren, Henry David Thoreau and Paul Tillich. He also did extensive studies on pacifism and meanings of the three Greek words for love: eros, philia and agape.

Power of love

When King began his doctoral study at Boston University in 1951, he had laid the foundation of his philosophy of the power of love for mankind, just as the foundations of the civil rights movement had been laid.

In January of 1954, Dr. King and his new wife Coretta Scott King traveled to Montgomery Ala., where he had just been hired as the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. It was the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court banned segregation in public schools.

The following year witnessed the next major step of the civil rights movements. Religious, political and community leaders of Montgomery rallied in support of Mrs. Rosa Parks, Mrs. Parks, a black woman, had been jailed because she refused to sit in the back of a city bus.

Ed Nixon, a respected leader in the community, decided a

boycott of the city bus system was in order. The boycott eventually lead to the Supreme Court ruling that segregation of buses was unconstitutional. The Rev. Ralph Abernathy and King were two of the first people Nixon approached with the idea. The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was the product of their deliberations.

At 3 p.m. on Dec. 5, 1955, King was appointed the head of the MIA by Abernathy, Nixon and other community leaders. By 7 p.m. that night, he aroused a crowd of more than 4,000 with an unrehearsed speech. Few, if any one, realized that they were witnessing the beginning of an era that would open the eyes of millions to the injustices caused by segregation.

It was an era that would watch him win the Nobel Peace Prize, form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, write half dozen books, and deliver many inspirational

speeches, that would be the driving force behind a national civil rights movement. The most memorable of his speeches was given before more than 250,000 people on Aug. 28, 1963 at the Washington monument his famous, "I Have a Dream" speech.

He stated in his speech that: "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 their character."

He closed by saying: "When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every tenement and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of 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 spiritual. Free at last, Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Learn how to locate summer, part-time and full-time jobs...

COE 210
Cooperative Education

"Job Search Strategies"

A one credit hour course for Senior, Junior and Sophomore level students.

Registration remains open for this course through March 12, 1985. For more information stop by 113 Alamance