

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic name 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 by the cruel scourge of slavery. It declared that Negro slaves, who had been sold into the hands of their masters, were now free. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finding himself an exile in his own land. So, we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to cash the check on the promise of the Declaration of Independence. When the architects of our Republic wrote the noble words "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," they were signing a promissory note to which every man — yes, black men as well as white men — was entitled. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a check that has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to accept this check. We demand that America live up to its promise. So we've come to cash this check, to demand that America fulfill her promise to the Negro. We have also come to this hallowed spot to engage in the great struggle for the soul of our nation. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of equality. It would be a tragedy for all of God's children. It would be a tragedy if the Negro's legitimate discontent will not be satisfied until he has won the rights that were promised him at the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It would be a tragedy if the Negro's legitimate discontent will not be satisfied until he has won the rights that were promised him at the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It would be a tragedy if the Negro's legitimate discontent will not be satisfied until he has won the rights that were promised him at the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

# 1994 SPECIAL EDITION MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



**“Sooner or later, all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace.”**  
*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

## Winston-Salem Chronicle

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.