

Dr. Martin Luther King Challenged People Of All Faiths To Join Fight For Freedom For All Americans

Special To The Post

There is a whole generation of Americans who have never seen a sign saying "colored" seats on a bus, or a drinking water fountain for "colored" people. This generation has little or no direct experience or knowledge of the struggle for civil rights and human dignity in this country, or of the heroes who led the protest, nor the price they paid.

In this age when we still see so much violence around us, it is necessary and proper to study the lives and works of men and women who achieves so much with nonviolent techniques. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was one of those persons.

Early Life:

Michael Luther King was born in Atlanta, Ga., on January 15, 1929, the son and grandson of Baptist ministers. Later he changed his name to Martin Luther King. He was protected somewhat as a child because he was the son of "substantial" black parents. However, he, too, faced personal incidents in the South which smacked of discrimination and social injustice. In Atlanta he attended Booker T. Washington High School. By the time King was 19, he had graduated as a special gifted student from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., and continued his ministerial education by obtaining a Bachelor of Divinity Degree at Crozer Theological Seminary. He was awarded a Ph.D. at Boston University in 1955.

While he was pursuing his education in Massachusetts, King met and married Coretta Scott from Alabama, who was studying voice at the New England Conservatory of Music. During those early formative years, he developed a fascination for the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, who articulated his own doctrine of passive resistance to gain freedom in India.

While Martin Luther King was studying for his doctorate in 1954, he was offered and accepted the pastorate of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala. In 1955, black people in Alabama were still sent to the rear of any public conveyance - segregated seating. The Montgomery Improvement Association was organized in December, 1955, to change that situation. King became the M.I.A.'s president and



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
1929 - 1968

preached resistance with love - not hate - for the oppressors. During this period of change in Alabama many black people were arrested, physically attacked, and otherwise intimidated. Still their protest made its point. The U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled that existing Alabama laws regarding

segregated seating were unconstitutional. Blacks and whites rode buses for the first time on a nonsegregated basis. The success of the venture taught civil rights advocates that there was power in good organization and strong leadership, which Dr. King provided. King as leader:

Dr. King was convinced that his leadership strength lay in its nonviolent approach and proceeded to follow his own dictates by organizing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in January 1957 to widen the effects of his Montgomery success.

King moved his family to Atlanta

in 1959 where he joined forces with his father, who was the minister associated with the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

King's life was anything but nonviolent. He was frequently arrested, jailed, and physically bruised. Fire hoses and attack dogs became a way of life for this fighter of social injustice. His life was one long thread of demonstrations on buses and other public conveyances, in restaurants, hotels, department stores and other places which needed to be desegregated.

Massive demonstrations took the form of freedom marches in Alabama and Washington. These challenged people of all faiths, races, and religions to join the fight for freedom for all Americans.

From all over the nation people joined together in support of the civil rights movement. King's speeches were impassioned and concerned his personal and his race's fight against prejudice. They often referred to his philosophy of nonviolence containing the "I have a dream" appeal first introduced at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

County To

Observe King's

Birthday

County offices and agencies will be closed Friday, January 15, in observance of Martin Luther King's birthday.

This includes all units of the Department of Social Services and the Health Department, all branches of the Public Library, the Tax Collector's and Tax Supervisor's Offices, and the Register of Deeds Office.

The County's two landfills, Harrisburg Park and Holbrooks Rd., however, will remain open.

The administrative office of the County's Parks and Recreation Department will be closed for the day. However, the County's three parks, Latta Plantation Park, McDowell Park, and McAlpine Greenway Park, will remain open.

All County emergency services, including MEDIC, mental health, and County Police, will remain in full operation.

NBIPP Urges Support Of Annual Martin King Holiday March

On January 15 thousands are expected to converge upon Washington, D.C., to participate in the Stevie Wonder sponsored second Annual Martin Luther King Birthday Holiday March. The marchers will rally on the Capitol grounds to petition Congress to declare Dr. King's birthday a national holiday.

The National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) along with numerous other organizations will be mobilizing black people from throughout the nation to participate in the march.

"A Nobel Peace Prize recipient and the driving force behind the civil rights movement of the 1960s

which achieved significant social and political reforms which freed black people from the overt tyranny of racial segregation, Dr. King's legacy deserves the highest tribute," notes NBIPP National Representative Barbara R. Arnwine. "We are urging black people everywhere who can make it to D.C. to come and support the March, those who cannot should organize local celebrations to commemorate Dr. King and reaffirm our commitment to the struggle for full fledged social, political and economic justice."

This year's marchers are expected to carry signs protesting

the economic policies of the Reagan Administration which has resulted in extreme deprivation to the black and poor. Also, in keeping with Dr. King's anti-war positions, the marchers will protest the growing militarism of the United States and its adverse effect upon funds for social programs.

"Although we would like Congress to declare this a national holiday, black people should not wait forever for Congressional action but must instead declare and take the holiday ourselves," says NBIPP National Representative Rev. Benjamin Chavis. "It is

important that we recognize those black people whose lives have led to our overall survival and progress as a people, therefore, our holidays should not be partying events but based on study and an individual rededication to be active in the movement for liberation."

In that regard NBIPP believes that this and all other holidays should be utilized to involve black people in some concrete action which will help to advance our struggle for liberation. Black holidays should serve to remind us of our history or oppression, of struggle and of achievements as well as

to provide an opportunity for us to focus in on our current condition and commit us to action. In this regard, NBIPP endorses MLK's birthday as a holiday that we will utilize as a teaching, learning, active experience as we move forward with our vision for our future.

Last year an estimated 100,000 people marched bearing petitions with two million signatures urging the declaration of January 15 as a national holiday. Currently 17 states observe MLK's birthday.

This year under the theme "Dr. King had a Dream - We have a See NBIPP on page 5B.