

editorial

King's message one of action and love

Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that one day humanity would rise up above the hatred of racism, the suffering of poverty, and the mass violence of war. He had a dream that one day freedom would ring "for all of God's children."

But King had more than just a dream. He also had a plan of action, and it was this plan of action that sent fear and anger into the hearts of many Americans, just as it also sent out love and inspiration to others. Many of America's most prominent leaders liked King's dream more than they liked his active pursuit to achieve it.

"Get the weapon of nonviolence, the breastplate of righteousness, the armor of truth, and just keep marching," King said, and that's just what he and thousands of others did: the restaurant sit-in in Atlanta in 1960; street demonstrations in Albany, Georgia in 1961; the explosive Birmingham protests of 1963; the Selma, Alabama march of 1965. The list goes on. King marched because, "When you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim and when you've seen the vast majority of your black brothers and sisters smother in the air-tight cage of poverty... the human personality cries out and says 'I can take it no more'."

The marches and protests led by King, coupled with the struggles of blacks throughout the country for equal rights and freedom, led to the official signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But King didn't stop there. He continued to expand his struggle for justice until it embodied the needs of oppressed peoples everywhere.

It was when King began to link the struggles of oppressed peoples worldwide that he began to be attacked as anti-American, a communist and a traitor to his nation. But that didn't stop him. On April 4, 1967, King declared that the United States is "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today," and accused it of "cruel manipulation of the poor." King stated that U.S. troops "test our latest weapons on the peasants of South Vietnam, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe." He urged Americans to become conscientious objectors to the war in Vietnam.

Just as King didn't hesitate to speak out for truth and justice, he also never hesitated to speak out for love and forgiveness. As Americans around the country celebrate his birthday today, it is King's message of an unending struggle for justice and his unending offering of love that must be remembered the most.

King declared that "nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time," and that "the foundation of such a method is love." Perhaps more than anything else, King taught that even in a world where injustice thrives and seems to prosper, one must never give up the struggle for social change. What he said in Oslo in 1964 is even more important today: "I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down the militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality... I still believe that we shall overcome."

As we think back on the life of Martin Luther King Jr. today, let us remember him for what he was: a man of action, a man of love, and a man of hope. Furthermore, let us take his message and put it to action in our own lives.



letters

Bad letters

I strongly believe that this "letters" column should continue to serve as a free forum for students' ideas. But I am getting sick of reading the hateful, violent, bigoted crap that keeps appearing in the name of the "Christian" perspective on "homosexuals" (sic). I am going to stop reading this column if minimal editing and good judgment does not begin weeding out those bent letters supporting violence against gay people.

Brad Hall's letter (Jan. 8) goes too far to print. In it, Hall advocates that gay people should "die out or shrink in numbers and be destroyed."

That letter is disgusting, repulsive, and — I might add — typical of the intolerant "Christian" hatred expressed by Hall and others whose letters have failed to understand or accept the nicely diverse body of humanity.

By printing such demented diatribes, the Emerald becomes an accomplice. I seriously doubt you would print letters calling for violence against any racial or religious minority; why then are similar letters directed against gay people accepted? Your policy is "to print all letters containing fair comment..." Do you deem Hall's call to violence "fair comment?"

This practice on the part of the Emerald is particularly insensitive, given the fact that a recent rash of threats against gay people have been received by gay rights organizations and

displayed in public places locally. Perhaps a more responsible approach for the Emerald when receiving letters of this type would be to notify the police and organizations interested in investigating these threats.

Douglas Pyle
Editor, Mid-Vally Link

Don't criticize?

Ron Munion demonstrated in his letter (ODE, Jan. 11) a deep misunderstanding of the purpose of protest in America. In short, he said that since America is a good place to live, we shouldn't criticize or protest any of our country's wrongs.

A letter to the opposite effect could easily be written, listing a few of America's shortcomings (rampant racism, 30 million Americans in poverty, oppressive foreign policy, rapid depletion of natural resources) and concluding, "Not so good, is it, boasters?"

A more realistic, more constructive view, however, is to acknowledge both the right and the wrong in America, and to try to change those things that are wrong. Protesters bring attention to these shortcomings, in hopes that we can change them, and therefore should not be dismissed as "the dumbest people in the world."

Or would we call Martin Luther King, Jr. a "dumb complainer?"

Dan Thoma
German

Censorship

In Wednesday's Emerald (ODE, Jan. 9) Janice Sunseri criticized what she saw as my rationalization of Newspeak. Unfortunately, she has much to learn about satire; satire states the opposite of what it means. When I said that language controls thought, I was merely rephrasing those who said that when we say "men" it automatically excludes women, and therefore the sign in the EMU subliminally told women they had no value. I agree with her; such a stand is nonsense.

I also agree with her that generic words such as "firefighter" are fine words. What bothers me is that we censure and censor people who use words like "man" to mean humanity. Mark Twain referred

to Jim in Huckleberry Finn as a "nigger." Does that make him a racist? No, because that was what blacks were called when he was writing. Intelligence, though, has not stopped his book from being banned (at Mark Twain Elementary School, among others) nor has it saved the EMU sign. What we will soon have, according to this trend, is a society that burns books that they don't agree with. Is that right?

Ms. Sunseri, by taking my sarcasm seriously, has merely echoed some of my thoughts, while saying I'm irrational. She has also missed my intent: who is to say what is sexist and what should be banned?

Brian Moore
English

Unimaginative

I read to the end of Don Bishoff's column on the mayor's inaugural speech (Register Guard, Jan. 9) looking for the tongue-in-cheek. There was none. Not a hint of irony. Not a trace of satire. Obie rises from Bishoff's verbiage as a near-charismatic figure who speaks with "ringing phrases in the style... of John F. Kennedy," a leader whose tenure will be hailed as the "Obie Era."

The person on TV at the hour of the inaugural speech was introduced as Obie, sounded like Obie, and had Obie's blank expression. I naturally assumed it was Obie. But the TV Obie was no orator, delivered no resounding phrases. The TV Obie read his lines in a monotone, heaping banality upon generality, interlarding the pile with clichés. I expected the Center's stagehands to rush out with shovels to keep the audience from suffocating as the slithering accumulation grew.

If Obie had made more campaign speeches, the voters might have seen him for the unimaginative creature that he is, and we would have been spared his mayoralty. Concealed bacon fat is more inspiring. It has possibilities.

Why is Bishoff kissing Obie's shoes? Perhaps the question is unfair. He may not be stooping that low.

Guido Palandri
Library

Tuesday, January 15, 1985

oregon daily emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

General Staff

Advertising Director
Production Manager
Classified Advertising
Controller

Susan Thelen
Russell Steele
Vince Adams
Jean Ownbey

Advertising Sales: Laura Buckley, Tim Clevenger, Jennifer Fox, Marcia Leonard, Rick Martz, Nancy Nielsen, Laurie Nobel, Roberta Oliver, David Wood.

Production: David Bryant, Kelly Cornyn, John Dorsey, Stormi Dykes, Julie Freeman, Kathy Gallagher, Dean Guernsey, Susan Hawkins, Ross Martin, Karin McKercher, Lauri Neely, Kelly Neff, Curt Penrod, Tamy Riggs, Michele Ross, Alyson Simmons, Peg Solonika, Tim Swilling, Colleen Tremaine, Hank Trotter.

Editor
Managing Editor
News Editor
Editorial Page Editor
Photo Editor
Sports Editor
Sidelines Editor
Entertainment Editor
Assistant Entertainment Editor
Night Editor

Associate Editors

Administration
Higher Education
Politics
ASUO
Student Activities
Community
Features

Reporters: Sean Axmaker, Dave Berns, Robert Collias, Diana Elliott, Thomas Henderson, Allan Lazo, Capi Lynn, Scott McFetridge.

News and Editorial
Display Advertising and Business
Classified Advertising
Production
Circulation

Michele Matassa
Mike Sims
Michael Kulaga
Costas Christ
Michael Clapp
Brent De La Paz
Sheila Landry
Kim Carlson
Mike Duncan
Michele Matassa

Jolayne Houtz
Michael Hosmar
Paul Ertelt
Julie Shippen
Stasia Scarborough
Cynthia Whitfield
Lori Steinhauer

686-5511
686-3712
686-4343
686-4381
686-5511