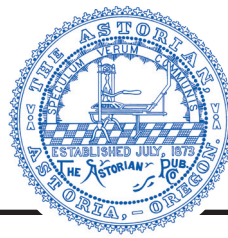


OPINION



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OUR VIEW

A powerful drumbeat lives on

Race is always with us in America. But the terms of our national discussion are constantly changing or evolving. It was said by historians that Barack Obama's rise to the presidency in 2008 was directly linked to the civil rights struggle of the 1960s and the message largely fashioned by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

King's national holiday was Monday.

More than a half-century after King's assassination, Kamala Harris will take the oath Wednesday as America's first female and biracial vice president. Georgia has also gained its first African American U.S. senator, Rev. Raphael Warnock, who has been one of King's successors in the pulpit of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church.

In his campaign against U.S. Sen. Kelly Loeffler, Warnock's authenticity stemmed in large part from his roots in the social justice tradition of the church. Members of the clergy — Black and white — were fixtures in the violent civil rights demonstrations. Exhortations that America must rise to higher values have ignited again and again through our history, with King's oratory and example being the most transformative of the 20th century.

The King holiday is especially apt, coming two days prior to the inauguration of former Vice President Joe Biden and Harris. It marks the coda of a presidency that has covertly and overtly fanned the flames of white supremacy and virulent racism.

King knew well that laws do not inoculate people against the poison and burden of racism. But the message of his life is that we must aspire to a higher law. King's example speaks especially loudly today as we seek to chart a new course where true equality must be the centerpiece, not just some rhetorical goal.

King's father, also a pastor, had traveled to Berlin in 1934 while tracing the transformative life of Martin Luther and witnessed firsthand how the powder keg of hatred toward Jews and nonwhite people



Associated Press

The Rev. Raphael Warnock, who won a U.S. Senate seat in Georgia, was one of the successors to Martin Luther King Jr. in the pulpit of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church.

was being primed.

It cannot be ignored that the vocabulary and violent actions of Americans and Europeans who foment white supremacy today embrace the ugly trappings and symbols of a regime that took the greatest war in the history of the modern era to overcome.

King's nonviolent approach was drawn from Mahatma Gandhi, who challenged the colonialist excesses of the British Empire. But King's influences also included Henry David Thoreau, whose essay "On Civil Disobedience" inspires thousands to reject the inevitability of an unjust system.

He blended these with his raw passion for Christian core values of love and tolerance for every living being — which Warnock continued with vigor during a Georgia Senate campaign that was especially ugly.

In 1965, optimistic about how President Lyndon Johnson was supporting voting rights legislation designed to create more equality into an unequal nation, King said, "No lie can live forever . . . because

the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Later, in his landmark speech, King shared his dream with one-quarter of a million people on the National Mall. "It is 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.'"

The manner in which African Americans and other nonwhite Americans are treated in employment, the justice system and in society continues to suggest that Thomas Jefferson's words are a noble concept, but not yet a reality.

The dog whistle calls from an odious White House escalated through four years of turmoil where the clock of progress was turned back. They did not create today's racial tensions around the nation: they revealed them and revealed in them.

But today, happily, that moment in America's story is over.

We are putting that ugliness where it belongs, on the scrapheap of history.

Historians have pored over King's words, reflecting that he wanted to be remembered as a "drum major" for justice, peace and righteousness.

His drum was silenced by an assassin's bullet, but the drumbeat of his powerful words live on.

We believe as the new administration raises its hands to swear an oath of allegiance on Wednesday, its leaders must inspire in us all a new crusade to make King's dream an everyday reality that we can cherish and celebrate.

It will be done against a background of a pandemic and putting the nation onto a new path to recovery in health and prosperity.

One of King's lesser-known quotations perfectly captures the need for unity and equality at this key moment in the history of the republic.

"We may have come in different ships, but we're all in the same boat now."

GUEST COLUMN

Ideas to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day

North Coast Progressive Action crowdsourced these ideas to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

1. Make a plan for neighbors to check on each other and help each other out (pick up groceries when somebody's sick, make sure everybody's safe, take turns mowing the lawn of somebody who can't do it themselves, etc).

2. Buy a cup of coffee for somebody who seems like she might appreciate some kindness.

3. Start a skill-share co-op with neighbors or other community members.

4. Create a tool library in your neighborhood.

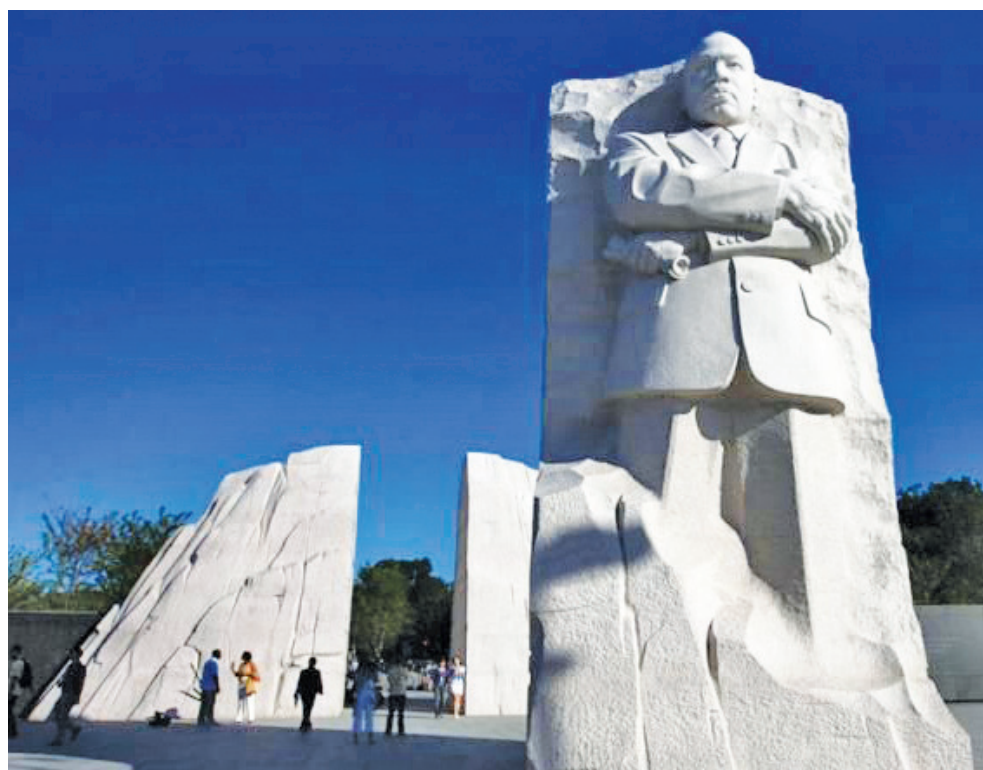
5. Make a plan for neighbors to come together and plant a community garden, plant trees or come together on another project that would benefit the neighborhood.

6. Start a fundraiser for somebody in the community that could use some extra help.

7. Pick up trash and dog poop on your street.

8. Find ways to support community organizations and groups that provide community and services to marginalized groups and others who are less represented on the North Coast.

9. Talk to people who are without housing, are struggling to get by or other-



Associated Press

The memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington, D.C.

wise have limited resources and ask them what they need. Organize others to lift their voices and find solutions.

10. Stay informed on the needs of immigrants and learn how you can help.

11. Clean out your basement and share items you're not using through your neighborhood Buy Nothing Group.

12. Make a financial donation to an existing local community organization.

13. Organize a neighborhood food drive for a local food bank.

14. Call five representatives about something that impacts our local community.

15. Write letters of gratitude to people who have done something that's made your day or life better.

16. Start a child care co-op.

17. Teach somebody a skill you have.

18. Make some extra food once a week and share it with a community member that would appreciate it.

19. Create an emergency phone tree for neighbors to help neighbors in need.

20. Share some time with a community member who doesn't have a lot of company or support.

21. Help a neighbor find assistance through services like Legal Aid Services of Oregon that offer help with issues including foreclosures, evictions and tenant rights.

22. Check the donation requests at Neighbor Share Closet and share what you can.

23. Set up a Community Fridge in your neighborhood.

24. Organize a monthly litter pickup in your community or beach.

25. Resolve to do two kind things each day for someone outside of your immediate circle. Watching for those opportunities will make you more patient, kind and optimistic.