



What Dr. King means to me . . .

by Kathryn Hall Bogle

The years have rolled by since 1968, the year Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. It is not difficult, however, to close the eyes and relive the excitement of his deeds, to feel again the cold chill of fear for his safety and to experience again the heart-swelling pride in his accomplishments. We cherish the togetherness we felt for one another because *WE* had a national hero worthy of the name—a man among men, transcendent of race.

The national picture of our hero began with Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King's exhortation to the Black people of Montgomery, Alabama to walk instead of riding the segregated busses of the city. We listened avidly to the news over TV and radio telling us about those wonderful Montgomery people who walked through sun and rain for yet

another day. They were demonstrating pride and freedom in their self-imposed walking. Martin Luther King told them to "walk on"—and they did.

Other marches took place in other places and, always, one searched out the face of Martin Luther King and listened for his words. Courage of his convictions—he had that. He also had the power to transmit it to those who could hear the inner voice.

With those marches American Negroes became peaceful participants in managing their own destiny. Quietly and with determination, never sacrificing respect for the lives of others, we became a unit to reckon with on a human and intellectual basis in American society.

*We stood tall.
We had a voice.
We had been given a dream.*



"Then my living will not be in vain"

Every now and then I guess we all think realistically about that day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator—that something we call death.

We all think about it, and every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral. And I don't think about it in a morbid sense. And every now and then I ask myself what it is that I would want said and I leave the word to you this morning.

If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral.

And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell him not to talk too long.

And every now and then I wonder what I want him to say. Tell him not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize. That isn't so important.

Tell him not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards—that's not important. Tell him not to mention where I went to school.

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving others.

I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to love somebody.

I want you to say that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked.

I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.

Yes, if you want to, say that I was a drum major. Say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.

And all of the other shallow things will not matter.

I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.

And that is all I want to say. If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a song, if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought.

If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought.

If I can spread the messages as the master taught.

Then my living will not be in vain.

February, 1968
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Atlanta, Georgia

HIS EYES BEHELD THE PROMISED LAND

His eyes beheld the promised land
Of which, few men had dreamed
Though he had borne much sorrow—
He'd done much good, it seemed.

No doubt, there were times he grew weary
And wanted to sit down and rest
But, Martin just kept on prodding
And steadfastly, did his best.

His eyes beheld the promised land
That Moses has seen before
The scars of struggle in his soul—
But these, he so gladly bore.

He was concerned about the future—
Of men, all over the world
He couldn't stop till democracy
Was free, like banners unfurled.

His eyes beheld the promised land
That only Moses knew
Martin, too, had a charge to keep
He too, had a job to do.

His job was all cut out for him
From the foundation of the earth
For God had surely chosen him,
Long before the time of his birth.

His eyes beheld the promised land
Just as it was meant to be
Martin labored in the vineyard
So that, all men might be free.

Uncomplaining, Martin gave his all
Without a doubt, he gave his best
God realized, just how tired he was
So, he just took him on home to rest.

But, Martin just kept on plodding

Mary Jean Berry



King's first book, "Stride Toward Freedom", was published in May of 1958. While autographing copies in New York, he was stabbed by a woman who plunged a letter opener into his chest.

"Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever — the yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Oregon Mutual
savings
Bank FDIC