

MARTIN LUTHER KING:



Honoring the "Drum Major for Justice"

by Anthony Podesta

This year America is doing something long overdue: honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., with a federal legal holiday.

Now that Dr. King has been given the honor he so rightly deserves, we must make certain that the holiday does not simply become a pious cliché. We must honor him for his real accomplishments in leading a nonviolent social revolution.

By transforming our nation's laws and attitudes and leading us toward the goal of racial equality, Dr. King liberated whites, as well as Blacks. He recognized that oppression hurts the oppressor as well as the oppressed. Strengthened by an unshakable faith in the possibility of human perfectibility, Dr. King and the movement he led helped to free the South from more than a century of backward-looking intolerance.

But Dr. King also realized that the South did not have a monopoly on bigotry. In 1966 he led a campaign for integrated schools and housing in what was then and may still be the most segregated city in the North: my home town of Chicago. As a student activist, I had the opportunity to participate in several of the marches which Dr. King led and, with great sorrow, I came to understand what he meant when he said that he had never seen such hatred as what he saw in some segregated communities in and around Chicago. Yet, in his Chicago campaign as in his crusades in other cities, Dr. King never swerved from his commitment to nonviolence and his belief that even the most intolerant individuals and communities could reform themselves through peaceful change.

Dr. King taught Americans how to infuse public debate with religion and moral values in ways that foster tolerance—not intolerance. When Martin Luther King spoke out on social issues, he appealed to a sense of morality that is shared by people from every religious heritage. He did not demand that everyone adhere to dogmas espoused only by his own church; instead, he worked for dignity and equality for all.

Dr. King's most urgent message was to remind Americans of our common humanity, for, as he said so eloquently: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an escapable network of morality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Guided by this belief, Dr. King urged his followers to share a redemptive love for all people, even those who persecuted them. He viewed nonviolence not only as an effective tactic in the struggle for social change but also as a manifestation of religious faith: an appeal to the spark of conscience that is the living evidence of God's handiwork in all men and women.

Two decades after the historic civil rights struggles of the 1960s, Dr. King's example is a living rebuke to all who preach or practice intolerance. Unlike those who claim divine mandates for their political views or even their political candidacies, Dr. King described himself not as a prophet of God or a bearer of revealed truth but simply as "a drum major for justice."

In 1986 and the years ahead, Americans should honor Dr. King not only by observing the holiday that bears his name but also by completing the social revolution that he began: a revolution that will not be concluded until we have eradicated all forms of discrimination and inequality, whether based on race, religion, or sex. In so doing, we will uphold the noblest elements of our Judeo-Christian heritage. And we will also honor the memory of Dr. King, a man who knew the right way to mix religion and politics—and who made an historic contribution to both in the process.

Anthony T. Podesta is president of *People for the American Way*, a 200,000-member citizens organization working to protect constitutional liberties.

Martin Luther King, Jr. — A different tribute

by June R. Key

We pause today in this special tribute to the life of one whose life so closely followed and, in many instances, paralleled the life of Christ. Martin Luther King, Jr. Let us for this moment review these similarities and parallels.

First: There was birth... one that was called to attention by three wise men and celebrated far and wide... the other obscure and possibly of interest only to his parents.

Second: There was a silent period, some years of obscurity for both until brought to the attention of men, in their respective times, by teaching love. Christ teaching in the world of scholars and in synagogues of the early times. King in the world of Baptist, other churches and learned men of this time.

Third: Christ taught in the temple, highways and byways... King in churches, city streets and ghettos.

Fourth: Both were sent by God to teach and preach to all men, this they both did.

Fifth: Both were young men in their late thirties... both were feared and loved at the same time.

Sixth: Both were envied... Christ by Kings of his day who despised his ability to have men believe and follow him... King by racists and bigots who despised the color of his skin and his threat to their way of life.

Seventh: Both played great roles in the lives of minorities... Christ in the lives of the Christians and King in the lives of Blacks.

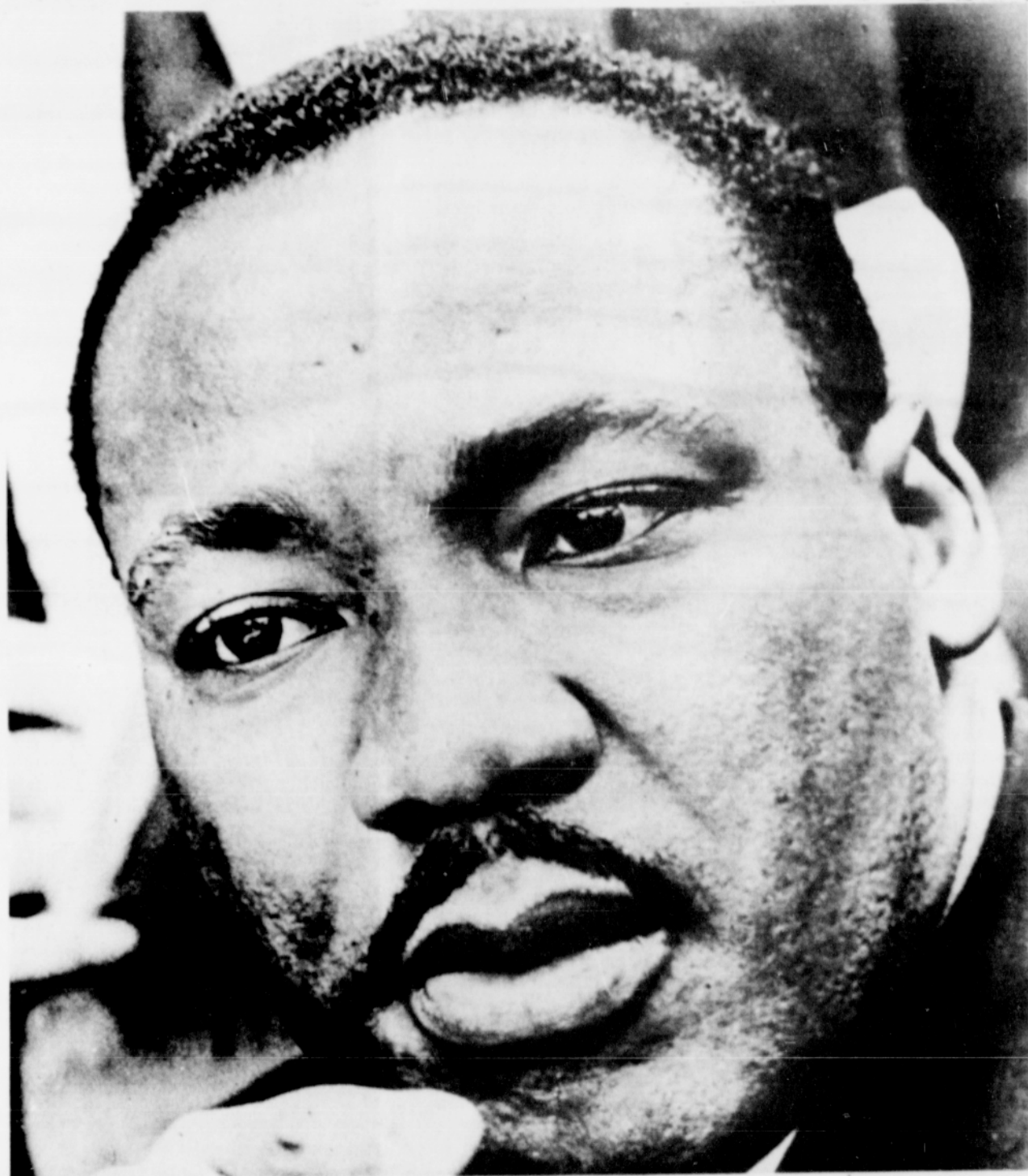
Eighth: Both men had to die... in each case death was inevitable. Christ, at a time selected by God, died to save men, all men. King, at a time selected by man, died to save men, garbage men.

Ninth: Both died violently, Christ bore a wooden cross, was hanged and pierced in the side, King bore the cross of hate for garbage men and was shot in the head.

Tenth: The mountain top figured in both of their pre-death inevitabilities. Christ in his last days went to the mountain top to pray and experienced concern for man, King, too, went to the mountain top in his mind's eye and saw the promised land.

Has there, in your lifetime before Martin Luther King, been another whose life so paralleled the life of our Christ?

We honor Martin Luther King today for his belief first, in God the Father, Christ the son and second, for his belief in his fellow man. We honor him for his belief in his dream. We honor him for leaving with us a great legacy of love that gives assurance that brotherhood will be the reality of man, not the dream of man.



44 states establish King Holiday

44 states and three U.S. territories have established their own official holidays in conjunction with the first official celebration of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Two more states are in the process of establishing the holiday on Jan. 20.

The latest count of participation by states and territories was conducted by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission on Dec. 23, 1985. Coretta Scott King, chairperson of the holiday commission, also noted that four states and one territory have taken no action to establish a holiday.

Thirty-three states and three territories have established the official holiday on Jan. 20. Eleven states will observe the holiday on Jan. 15.

States and territories observing the Jan. 20 date are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Virgin Islands, Washington and West Virginia.

States observing the holiday on Jan. 15 are Alaska, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Wisconsin.

Establishment of a Jan. 20 holiday is pending in Idaho and Vermont.

States and territories which have taken no action to establish a holiday in honor of Dr. King are Montana, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, Texas and Wyoming.

Boston U. Prof to unveil King memorial statue

Boston University Professor John Wilson, chosen by the National Foundation for the Arts and Mrs. Coretta Scott King to create a bust of Martin Luther King for the Rotunda of the Nation's Capitol, will unveil his work on Jan. 16 in Washington, DC, to a gathering of some of the nation's leading statesmen and human rights leaders.

Wilson, a native of Roxbury, MA, and now a resident of Brookline, MA, studied at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts School before going on to Tufts and a period of study in Europe and Mexico. He welcomed the opportunity to return home when Boston University offered him a place on the teaching staff of the School of Visual Arts in 1964.

Wilson hopes that his artistic creation, an eight-foot-high bust, will have a similar impact to that of its subject, helping people to remember King's dream by keeping his image in the public eye and presenting a spiritual as well as physical reminder of the importance of his message.

In speaking about his work, Wilson said, "I would like my art to make some changes in the audience and I would like the images I create to confront and challenge people to their insights of what the world is about, essentially what King did."

AJCongress sponsors exhibit

The American Jewish Congress will honor the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with an exhibit of photographs and statements beginning Sunday, Jan. 12, in the lobby of the American Jewish Congress in Manhattan, where they will remain on exhibit for a month. Dr. King's birthday will be celebrated as a national holiday for the first time this year.

The display, which was announced by Theodore R. Mann, president of the American Jewish Congress, reflects Dr. King's close relations with the Jewish community. It includes Dr. King's views on various aspects of Black-Jewish relations, including Israel, Soviet Jewry, Anti-Semitism and joint Black-Jewish efforts towards expanded civil rights, such as the 1963 March on Washington.



"Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence."

Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

In observation of the devotion to peace and special contributions to justice made by Dr. King.

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