

“I am mindful that only yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, our children, crying out for brotherhood, were answered with fire hoses, snarling dogs, and even death. I am mindful that only yesterday in Philadelphia, Mississippi, young people seeking to secure the right to vote were brutalized and murdered. Therefore I must ask why this prize is awarded to a movement which is beleaguered and committed to unrelenting struggle; to a movement which has not won the very peace and brotherhood which is the essence of the Nobel Prize. After contemplation I conclude that this award, which I receive on behalf of the movement, is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and racial questions of our time - the need for man to overcome oppression without resorting to violence.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Happy 66th Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr.: How Wonderful Yet Is His Spirit



King returned to Memphis on April 3, 1968, to lead a peaceful march of striking workers that would help boost his Poor People's Campaign, a huge demonstration against poverty. Arriving with him were (from left to right) ministers Andrew Young and Ralph Abernathy and student activist Bernard Lee.

Continued from MLK front

struggles of the city's sanitation workers was a notice to the nation and to the world that he understood the real priorities of the game.

The establishment, too, understood the priorities and so they killed him. The good Reverend must have known quite well that [they] would not let him live very long once he began to play the big economic cards. Listen up, "I have climbed the mountain top and I have seen the other side". There will be the detractors for all who dare to dream and it would seem in this case but surely the most fragile mentality must concede the "self-evidence" of these truths--an the fact that his cohorts and his family carried the economic struggle to new heights.

If one were not perceptive enough to gain an idea of Dr. King's goals from all the foregoing than certainly there was his last book, "Where Do We Go From Here" (1967). "Within the ranks of organized labor there are nearly two million Negroes. Not only are they found in large numbers as workers but they are concentrated in key industries. In the truck transportation, steel, auto and food industries which are the back bone of the nation's economic life, Negroes make up nearly 20 percent of the organized work force.

Now, don't you think the announcement of that fact by a strong, fearless and intelligent black leader would frighten the wits out of the establishment? From the administration and Washington think tanks to the industry board rooms, and from congress and the state houses to the seats of power within the unions themselves. And in the same book Dr. King was forecasting displacement of the black worker by automation and the immediate need to set up new unions for the displaced and unskilled black worker moving into the service sector (King anticipated McDonalds).

Another consideration for an effective evaluation of Dr. King's accomplishments and breadth of vision is the sheer momentum of his initiatives as they were carried into the year 1969 and far beyond. The SCLC was an Example (Southern

Christian Leadership Conference). Under the presidency of former King associate, Rev Ralph David Abernathy, the organization concentrated on 'voter registration and education', and the 'organization of the working poor across the south', there were some successes like that cited by Reverend Andrew Young, the success of the 'Charleston Hospital Worker Strike' of 1969.

But, then, there was the failure of Rev. Abernathy's "Poor Peoples campaign.

Another former Dr. King associate came full stage in 1969. The Rev. Jesse Jackson got his Operation Breadbasket into high gear in 1969, expanding its scope from simply obtaining jobs for blacks to new levels, first broached by Dr. King several years earlier. In both the south and the north, Rev. Jackson used the threat of boycotts to obtain agreements with white merchants to store merchandise manufactured by black-owned companies, to patronize black banks to employ black building contractors and to otherwise carry on 'the work of the master' in achieving spectacular economic successes. How soon some of us forget.

It could be asked where and how we dropped the ball--if, in fact, that is what has happened. Some suggest that African Americans (and concomitantly white folks) have been the victims of right wing plots and secret government agendas ranging all the way to drug saturation of black communities. Whatever the case, it is certain that we cannot persevere or survive if we do not understand the genius within our group and accurately define the agendas of our best and brightest.

The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was a multifaceted genius (as they used to say about the African viziers and architects to the mighty Pharaohs). He not only possessed the spirituality and soul necessary to his endeavors, but he had the intellect and analytic ability to conceive, plan and execute the objectives that spoke of his love for his people--better yet for all mankind. Each year we seem to miss him more and more as things further disintegrate and his footsteps are not filled. Is there someone out there who can dare us to dream again?

Dedicated to a King

who had no throne

who had no crown

who had no castle

who had no ships

who had no armies

who had a Dream.

Martin Luther King Jr.

1929 - 1968

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