

All Faiths Can Unite in King's Dream

African American Jew reflects on the message of Dr. Martin Luther King

By MICHAEL HUDSON
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

It was on a Sunday morning in 1968. I was 13-years-old and unaware that I was about to miss what would have been the most memorable church service of my life.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was invited to speak and I missed that morning's service. A few weeks later, hearing the broken voice of presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, I realized that I would never have the chance to personally meet Dr. King again.

"Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings, and he died because of that effort," Kenney said.

I know that Dr. King's message touched me and continues to touch me as an African American. In 1968, I was a United Methodist Christian and recognized Dr. King as a Christian leader.

Approximately nine years ago, I converted to Judaism and have

since developed a new perspective in many of my views on life. I have recently asked myself how Dr. King's message touches me as a Jew.

While in my dormitory room at Pacific University in Forest Grove as a Communications Arts Major in the early 1970s, I thought of the limited opportunities for Black Americans in the media. Since Dr. King's time, there are better opportunities for African Americans not only in the media but also in the areas of housing and employment.

Today, as I review Dr. King's writings, it is clear to me that part of his message involved an acceptance of people of all religions and backgrounds.

In Dr. King's most famous speech delivered on the steps of the Lincoln memorial in 1963, he proclaimed:

"When we let freedom ring . . . we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews

and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

I know that the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) speaks of a day

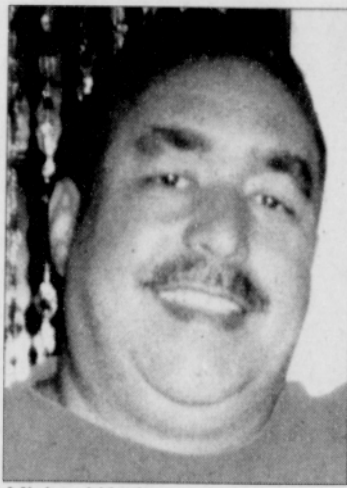
hope that . . . we will become one big family of Americans. Not white Americans, not Black Americans, not Jewish or Gentile Americans, not Irish or Italian Americans, not Mexican Americans, not Puerto Rican Americans, but just Americans. . . I have a dream this

mean Jews—this is God's own truth."

However, I feel that Dr. King's message is not just for Black Americans and Jews. It is a universal message. In a speech delivered in March 1968 just days before he was taken from us, Dr. King said:

participate in terrorism was an issue never faced by Dr. King. Yet the words of his guidance still echoes in my mind:

"I refuse to accept the view . . . that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality."



Michael Hudson

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— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

morning that one day the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid."

As a Jew, I am comforted by Dr. King's specific warning against anti-Semitism in his "Letter to an Anti-Zionist Friend" published in 1967:

"You declare, my friend, that you do not hate the Jews, you are merely 'anti-Zionist.' And I say, let the truth ring forth from the high mountain tops, let it echo through the valleys of God's green earth: When people criticize Zionism, they

"First, we are challenged to develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution. The world in which we live is geographically one. The challenge that we face today is to make it one in terms of brotherhood."

Dr. King did not live through the challenges of the new millennium. Certainly, the challenge of dealing with the threat of terror and yet showing the proper amount of compassion toward the vast majority of Muslims who would never par-

Dr. King's challenge to me today as an African American of the Jewish faith is to continue to seek peaceful solutions to the world's crises and to not let the acts of a few evil persons to shade my view of an entire religion. And most important, to be appreciative of those who fought before me to make the world a better place and to never stop the fight to bring dignity, respect and equality to all people regardless of race, nationality, religion or economic status.

Michael Hudson works as a human resources specialist for the Los Angeles public school system.

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Ministerial Alliance MLK Service Sunday

The Albina Ministerial Alliance will hold its Annual City-wide Martin Luther King Jr. Worship Service at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 19.

The celebration will be held at Maranatha Church of God, located at 4222 N.E. 12th Ave. The world-renowned evangelist

Luis Palau will be one of the major speakers. A host of city, county and state civic leaders and local church choirs will participate in the

worship service. For more information, call Dr. LeRoy Haynes Jr., at Allen Temple CME Church 503.287.0261.

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Martin Luther King Gospel Brunch Set

On Sunday, Jan. 19, director of the group, will join Disciples in Song vocalists Marilyn Keller, Evelyn Lewis, Dean Lewis, Chris Fridge, Myrtle Brown, Linda Nelson, Ruth Lewis and Renee Ross.

The public is invited to enjoy traditional breakfast favorites while listening to spirited gospel music from The Disciples in Song, a group that combines soul-filled ballads with foot-stompin' contemporary tunes.

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Church Celebrates King Message

A celebration and remembrance of the life and words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be held at the Portland Baha'i Center in north Portland at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 20.

The program will be performed by the Baha'i Children's Workshop, consisting of a dozen children from the Portland metro area.

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The Union Gospel Mission served 88,819 meals last year, an 18 percent increase over 2001, according to officials with the downtown chapel.

The increase represents a greater demand for meals and also an expansion of the mission's capacity to serve more meals.

Union Gospel Mission provides a hot dinner and chapel service every weeknight and every weekday morning distributes sack lunches. In addition, Union Gospel Mission provides holiday meals at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as the early fall "Operation Overcoat" event, where a barbeque meal is served and thousands of articles of clothing are distributed.

Thirty men and women lived and worked at Union Gospel Mission as part of the "LifeChange" recovery community in 2002. LifeChange residents live full time at the mission where they learn to overcome addiction, take classes and learn marketable skills as they work full time at the mission's thrift store in Tigard and downtown location.