

The Portland Observer

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. 2008



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Local Peace Activists Inspired by King's Work

Goals come with sacrifice, struggle

BY CHARITY PRATER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Another year has passed and one of the great memorialized holidays of the New Year will soon be here, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Day.

The civil-rights leader's words and accomplishments are true inspiration for a group of local peace activists campaigning for a proposed U.S. Department of Peace that would work beside the Department of Justice to reduce violence and advocate for equality issues in this country and others.

As Dr. Martin Luther King has said, "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

One of those tireless and passionate volunteers to today is Ken Bryan, the volunteer coordinator for the Peace Department campaign in the Portland-metro area.

"I have been volunteering for the effort on an average of 10-15 hours a week for over two years," says Bryan. "I got involved because I feel like my generation failed in a big way. My son's world is more threatened than mine was and I didn't make the effort to get involved when I was younger."

A U.S. Department of Peace would be put in place to assist the government with issues like prisoner rehabilitation, gang violence, global conflicts like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, protecting and distributing resources, educating children and many other means for violence through

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PHOTO BY CHARITY PRATER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Ken Bryan (left) and Connie Saylor are activists working to reduce violence in the United States and other countries by the creation of a U.S. Peace Department.

Living a Renewed Dream

Pastor Lamar Hardy shares vision of brotherhood

BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Two pastors, one the icon of the modern civil-rights movement, and the other his own father, are major influences today on a northeast Portland man's ministry.

Pastor Lamar Hardy of Freedom Assembly Church of Christ said his transformative experience began with a dream while asleep during a time in his life when he thought his life was happy, working in a plumbing-supply company.

He saw himself happily in charge of an enthusiastic, diverse church congregation. At first, he passed over the thoughts as extreme and kept them under wraps, but in what he calls a series of miracles, he found himself on the way to priesthood less than a year later.

For the community at Freedom Assembly Church of God in Christ, Hardy found a path that generated similar types of initial uncertainty and eventual accomplishment to the route imagined for America by King.

"He was a great inspiration to I'm thinking not only me, but every preacher," Hardy says. "He had a passion for what he believed in and went the whole nine yards."

Hardy's transition from a regular mem-

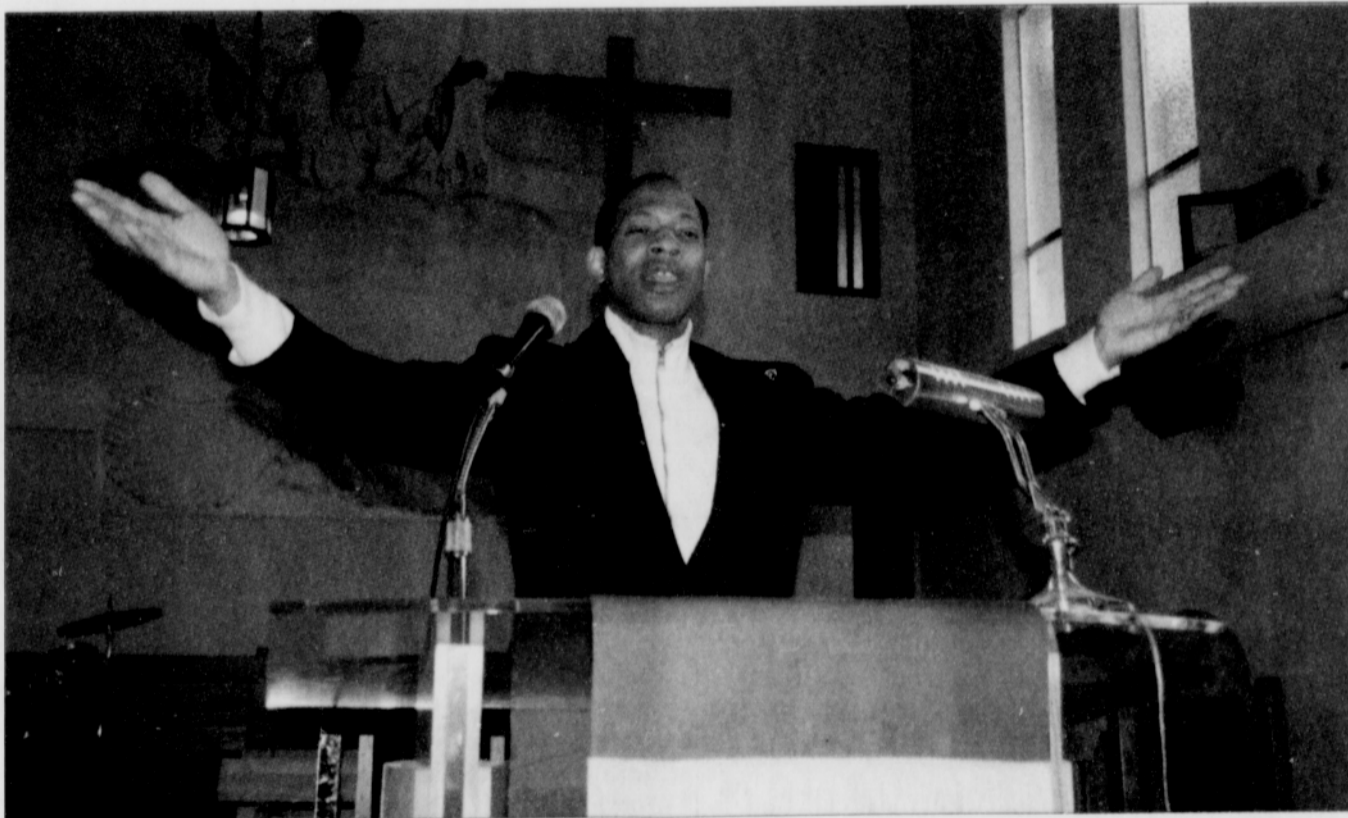


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Looking to the life of Martin Luther King Jr. as well as to his own father for inspiration, Pastor Lamar Hardy leads services every Sunday at the Freedom Assembly Church of God in Christ, 986 N.E. Beech St.

ber of the church took shape when its leader at the time, Hardy's father, realized a detail that Hardy thought he had kept secret. The late Bishop Hardy announced that the former name of the church on Beech Street, Mt. Sinai Temple, would change to Freedom Assembly, which the younger Hardy's dream had predicted.

As subsequent generations follow in the civil-rights movement's footsteps by remembering influential leaders like King, Hardy also looks to his father's memory for guidance.

"He was a little guy in stature, but he was great big and tall in spirit," Hardy says. "He stood up to the task, and he prevailed and handed down, as did Martin Luther King."

Soon after the church name change, Hardy grew in church positions of increasing leadership. His dreams continued to tell him that wonderful things would happen if he worked toward a church where all types of people were joyous together.

"God has been fulfilling all that to the very tee," he says.

The spiritual road presents many chal-

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Education's a civil right
PCC program offers gateway to college

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Dr. King Timeline
Chronicling the civil-rights leader's life

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King's Jail Letters Inspire
Volunteers send books to help prisoners

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