

OPINION



He Created Change for the Good of All America

Dr. King pointed us to a better way

BY LORETTA SMITH

As a tribute to the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on the 50th anniversary of his assassination, I was pleased to work with Gov. Kate Brown who proclaimed April 4, 2018 to be Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance Day in Oregon.



On April 4, 1968, the world lost a towering voice for creating social justice through non-violence. The 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination comes as school children across America cry out for peace and a sense of security against the chaos of gun violence. Sadly, it has hard to identify a community in America that remains unaffected by senseless violence.

Who would have thought that one week before the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination that school children would march on our nation's capital demanding relief from the out of control gun violence they experience in schools, neighborhoods and community gatherings.

No doubt Dr. King would grieve deeply if he were here now.

In 1963 Dr King's eulogy for the four little girls whose lives were cut short by a Sunday morning bombing in a Birmingham, Alabama

church revealed how deeply he felt for young victims touched by violence. He said, "These children - unoffending, innocent, and beautiful -- were the victims of one of the most vicious and tragic crimes perpetrated against humanity."

Church violence across America in recent years has struck a horrifying note as we take these sacred venues to be off limits to any acts of violence. Texas, South Carolina and other states have felt the immediate pain and disbelief of gun violence in churches.

This American icon implored us to judge all people on the basis of their character. I do believe that major strides have been taken here in Oregon, and across the United States, in the past 50 years since Dr. King's death.

His voice reached the masses. In response states have changed or created public policy and public practices to make ours a more equitable and harmonious society. Regardless of race, color, religion or creed we are a better society with greater community tolerance since Dr. King pointed us to a better way of

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But, it is the ever increasing gun violence at elementary, middle and high schools that has captured the conscience of our nation and brought us to a crossroad. In his final published book, Dr. King reminded us of the challenges society will face if it fails to cooperate for the mutual benefit of all and refuses to work against violence.

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communicating with one another, engaging our differences and embracing our diversity.

There is greater work to do and room for improving our collective stride for helping citizens Dr. King advocated for tirelessly. It is my hope, however, that we will re-double our efforts to reach even higher ground and achieve a greater American society like the one Dr. King dreamed.

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