

# MLK Memorial Dedicated in Washington

Dear Teacher,

If earthquakes and hurricanes don't force a rescheduling, the memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be dedicated in Washington, D.C., this Sunday. It reminds us of his great "I Have a Dream" speech, and that causes us to think about the role of vision in the Bible and in the Christian faith. So the topic of this installment of **The Wired Word** is dream, vision and prophecy.

If you prefer a discussion related to the East Coast earthquake, we provided some material on that topic under the "Other News This Week" section.

Remember, if you wish to provide your class members with an abbreviated copy of the lesson, [click here](#), and you can send them a copy via e-mail today.

May God bless you as you teach the Scriptures this week.

The Editorial Team of **The Wired Word**



## MLK Memorial Dedicated in Washington

*The Wired Word for August 28, 2011*

### In the News

The memorial honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is scheduled to be officially dedicated Sunday, August 28, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the location of King's historic "I Have a Dream" speech 48 years ago.

Dr. King, an American clergyman and civil rights leader, had a powerful impact on advancing the rights and treatment of minorities in the latter half of the 20th century. In his "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before thousands during the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, King used powerful cadences, imagery and allusions to Scripture and the nation's founding documents to call for racial equality and an end to discrimination. The speech gathered the vision and hopes of minorities and those working for positive change in civil rights and gave the movement a rallying point.

The memorial, which is spread over four acres and includes a stone statue of Dr. King, is adjacent to the FDR Memorial and between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. Dr. King is the first African-American honored with a memorial on the National Mall area and only the fourth non-President to be memorialized in this way.

Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, but his vision was carried on by many others in the civil rights movement. Today, most observers agree that significant progress has been made in civil rights for minorities, but that a racial divide still exists.

Here are some lines from Dr. King's speech. (Read the whole speech at ["I Have a Dream." American Rhetoric.](#))

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’

“I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

“I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

“I have a dream today!”

More on this story can be found at these links:

[MLK Memorial “Holy Ground” for Many. \*The Washington Post\*](#)  
[As King Memorial Opens, Christian Leaders Recall His “Dream.” \*The Christian Post\*](#)  
[Tour the MLK Memorial from Your Computer. \*CNN\*](#)

## The Big Questions

1. Dreams of how we’d like the world to be and the reality of how the world actually is are often far apart. Is describing how we’d like things to be merely wishful thinking? Why or why not? What might be accomplished by naming and holding onto such dreams?
2. What role do visions of the future play in biblical faith?
3. What do dreams for the future, hope and biblical prophecy have in common?
4. What does biblical prophecy and promises, often made by God to people who have been unfaithful to him, reveal about God’s character?
5. Is a dream, hope or prophecy that declares that things will be better *someday* really helpful when our present lives are in the midst of seemingly unending trouble?

## Confronting the News with Scripture

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

### **Jeremiah 30:3**

*“For the days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors and they shall take possession of it.”* (For context, read 30:1-3.)

This is one of God’s “I Have a Dream” speeches, and it shows us that “tomorrow” is the stuff of prophecy. “The days are surely coming when ...” proclaimed Jeremiah, along with other prophets. Such prophecies were often uttered during dark and dismal days in Israel’s history when not only the present but also the future looked bleak. But “tomorrow” was how the prophets kept Israel’s faith alive. The verse above is but one example.

**Question:** How does the “tomorrow factor” figure into your outlook on life?

### **Exodus 3:7-8**

*“Then the LORD said, ‘I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.’”* (For context, read 3:1-12.)

Early in the Bible, God tells Moses, “I have a dream.” Much of the book of Exodus -- and continuing through Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua -- chronicles this dream and its realization. God hears the cries of the Israelites who are groaning under Egyptian oppression (Exodus 2:23-25) and determines to bring them out, all the way into the Promised Land (3:8). God appears to Moses in a burning bush and enlists Moses’ leadership in this cause. Across many chapters we see the power of God, the resistance of the people (including both Pharaoh and the Israelites). God’s dream is realized, though, with the Israelites crossing through the waters of the Jordan at the beginning of the book of Joshua.

**Questions:** Can you think of times when God has heard your cries and carried out a “dream” to bring you out of bad circumstances into a “promised land”? How is that experience of deliverance at the heart of our faith?

### **Zechariah 8:4-8**

*“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. Thus says the LORD of hosts: Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of this people in these days, should it also seem impossible to me, says the LORD of hosts? Thus says the LORD of hosts: I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.”* (For context, read 8:1-13.)

Here is another of God’s “I Have a Dream” speeches, again predicting the restoration of Judah. But while the people of Judah did eventually return to their homeland, the reality did not match the vision. Their city and homes were in ruins, the fields were fallow, foreign squatters were in the land and the Jews were no longer citizens of an independent nation, but rather subjects of the Persian Empire. And even at that, their return was not forever. The land changed hands several times as foreign powers waxed and waned, so that by the time the New Testament opens, the Jews were under the thumb of the Roman Empire.

**Question:** Since this vision was not completely fulfilled in the Old Testament era (and even modern Israel is not a place where boys and girls can be guaranteed safety in the streets), how are we to hear this prophecy? As an overstatement to provide motivation? As a bright picture to engender hope? As a dream still to be fulfilled? As a “spiritual” vision, portraying an image of eternal life? Explain your answer.

### **Hebrews 11:1, 3**

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ... By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.”* (For context, read 11:1-16.)

Hebrews 11, which is often called simply “the faith chapter,” describes faith as based on something that is “not seen” and “made from things that are not visible.” One way to hear this chapter is as a declaration that faith in God is based not on what is present, but on what God has promised. In other words, faith is a different way of seeing. Faith believes that God is real and present in our lives even though God cannot be

seen with our eyeballs. Instead, faith is the “eyes” through which we see God.

Thus, faith is not some mustered-up belief or desperately held position. It is a way of seeing, of having a “dream.” When we apply the Christian faith to the world we live in, we could say that faith does not change the facts about the world, but it does change the conclusions we draw about those facts and about the direction of life itself.

The author of Hebrews then points out Old Testament persons, including Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and others, as examples of people of faith. Of them, the writer says, “All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them” (v. 13).

**Questions:** How are “having faith” and “having a dream” alike? How are they different?

### **Revelation 21:3-4**

*“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”* (For context, read 21:1-8.)

Here is God’s *ultimate* “I Have a Dream” speech. The full passage is often read at funerals in the face of death itself. Christianity’s critics sometimes call this wishful thinking, and there is a sense in which they are right. Christianity does have a wishful-thinking element. Where we differ with our critics, however, is on what wishful thinking can accomplish. Frederick Buechner, a Christian writer of our time, has said that “Sometimes wishing is the wings the truth comes true on. Sometimes the truth is what sets us wishing for it.”

One thing wishful thinking means is that we have a dream. Some of its fulfillment is reserved for eternity, but we also dream of a world right here where peace and justice prevail and where needless suffering is minimized. Divinely given dreams and goals are a strong part of what motivates us to try to change things, to make things better, to do good, to alleviate agony.

**Question:** Where have you seen wishful thinking bring about positive change?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. Consider Proverbs 29:18 -- “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (KJV). Why might this be so?
2. In what ways is the petition from the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” similar to the “I Have a Dream” speech?
3. Unlike some who advocated for equal rights, Dr. King emphasized the importance of nonviolence in his crusade for justice. What difference did that make during the Civil Rights era? What difference does it make now?
4. Though the Civil Rights movement of the ’50s and ’60s caused great controversy, and there was greatly divided opinion back then, few people would speak against the idea of equality now. Which issues dividing people of good faith at this time do you think will eventually become consensus?
5. Although some would say that we have achieved a post-racial America, others suggest that in some ways the divide is greater, more subtle, and worse. Have you ever been surprised that someone you know told you a racial joke, or sent an inappropriate forward, expecting that you would find it funny? How did you respond? How should you respond?

## Responding to the News

This is a good time to recall abandoned dreams. What did you once dream of accomplishing for God that you have since given up as “unrealistic”? How can you be sure that your former bright hope wasn’t the right one, but that you simply overestimated how quickly it could come to pass? What reasons are there to rethink the conclusion that your dream was “unrealistic”?

## Other News This Week

Tuesday’s earthquake on the East Coast brought the following thoughts from one of our TWW team members:

“I’m a native Californian and have experienced many earthquakes, some where there was loss of life and extensive property damage. Tuesday there was a decent earthquake on the eastern seaboard, a nuclear power plant or two had to be closed down and some spires were damaged on the National Cathedral, but no loss of life. I was visiting with a church member and felt my chair rock back and forth and thought to myself, ‘This sure feels like an earthquake, but this is Pennsylvania, so of course it isn’t.’ I figured a truck was driving by in the alley.

“But nonstop coverage started on CNN and other news outlets because many East Coast people had never felt such an earthquake. In Los Angeles this would have been one of the top stories, but maybe not the first one, and it might have merited five to 10 minutes of coverage. But suddenly it was real to a lot of people. They now understood what others go through. The Japanese earthquake was catastrophic, but it had been something you watch on the television. Now these Easterners felt their world shake.”

The earthquake suggests these questions:

1. To what extent do we need to feel something for ourselves before it becomes “real” to us?
2. How hard is it to really empathize with victims of famine when the most we’ve ever felt is a few hunger pangs that we quickly squelched with a candy bar?
3. If we have experienced privilege in our society, can we really empathize with those who experience prejudice and oppression?

Some Scriptures to consider:

**Job 42:1-5.** Job has finally understood what God wanted him to know. God had answered Job’s complaints by showing him the big picture (see Job 38-41).

**Mark 4:38.** The disciples lash out in fear at Jesus as he sleeps through a storm at sea, saying, “Do you not care that we are perishing?” They assume Jesus is not experiencing what they are experiencing and thus cannot understand.

**1 Corinthians 13:12.** “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” Paul acknowledges that in this life, we humans are quite limited in what we can know.

And here’s another perspective on the earthquake:

*Earth may rumble, rocks may crumble,*

*People fumble, often stumble,  
While we mumble, grrr and grumble,  
Tumbles serve to make us humble.*

--Joanna Loucky Ramsey, August 24, 2011

### **Closing Prayer**

Thank you, O Lord, for the biblical prophecies and dreams that have taught us of your kingdom to come and given us great hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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*If you wish to start thinking about our topic in advance, below is some introductory material.*



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*The Wired Word for August 28, 2011*

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### **The Big Questions**

*Here are some of the questions we will discuss in class:*

1. Dreams of how we'd like the world to be and the reality of how the world actually is are often far apart. Is describing how we'd like things to be merely wishful thinking? Why or why not? What might be accomplished by naming and holding onto such dreams?
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### **Confronting the News with Scripture**

*We will look at selected verses from these Scripture texts. You may wish to read these in advance for background:*

Jeremiah 30:1-3  
Exodus 3:1-12  
Zechariah 8:1-13  
Hebrews 11:1-16  
Revelation 21:1-8

*In class, we will talk about these passages and look for some insight on the big questions, as well as talk about other questions you may have about this topic. Please join us.*

## Scriptures for the Wired Word Online Bible Study for August 28, 2011

### Jeremiah 30:1-3

30The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: <sup>2</sup>Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. <sup>3</sup>For the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the Lord, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their ancestors and they shall take possession of it.

### Exodus 3:1-12

3Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." <sup>4</sup>When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup>Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup>He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup>He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

### Zechariah 8:1-13

8The word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying: <sup>2</sup>Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. <sup>3</sup>Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts shall be called the holy mountain. <sup>4</sup>Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. <sup>5</sup>And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls

playing in its streets. <sup>6</sup>Thus says the Lord of hosts: Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of this people in these days, should it also seem impossible to me, says the Lord of hosts? <sup>7</sup>Thus says the Lord of hosts: I will save my people from the east country and from the west country; <sup>8</sup>and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.

<sup>9</sup>Thus says the Lord of hosts: Let your hands be strong—you that have recently been hearing these words from the mouths of the prophets who were present when the foundation was laid for the rebuilding of the temple, the house of the Lord of hosts. <sup>10</sup>For before those days there were no wages for people or for animals, nor was there any safety from the foe for those who went out or came in, and I set them all against one other. <sup>11</sup>But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>12</sup>For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. <sup>13</sup>Just as you have been a cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.

## Hebrews 11:1-16

<sup>1</sup>Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. <sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

<sup>4</sup>By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks. <sup>5</sup>By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and "he was not found, because God had taken him." For it was attested before he was taken away that "he had pleased God." <sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. <sup>7</sup>By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith. <sup>8</sup>By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup>For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup>By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup>Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore." <sup>13</sup>All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, <sup>14</sup>for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind,

they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

## **Revelation 21:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; <sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." <sup>5</sup>And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup>Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup>Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. <sup>8</sup>But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."



## Martin Luther King, Jr.

### *"I Have a Dream"*

delivered 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.



[Video Purchase](#)

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[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio. (2)]

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, [a great American](#), in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the [Declaration of Independence](#), they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen



sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."<sup>1</sup>

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."<sup>2</sup>

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.*

*Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,*

*From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

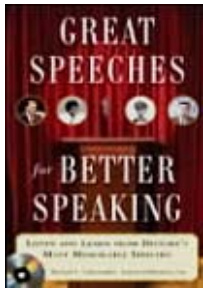
Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, 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!*<sup>3</sup>



Book/CDs by Michael E. Eidenmuller, Published by McGraw-Hill (2008)

<sup>1</sup> [Amos 5:24](#) (rendered precisely in The American Standard Version of the Holy Bible)

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40:4-5 (King James Version of the Holy Bible). Quotation marks are excluded from part of this moment in the text because King's rendering of Isaiah 40:4 does not precisely follow the KJV version from which he quotes (e.g., "hill" and "mountain" are reversed in the KJV). King's rendering of Isaiah 40:5, however, is precisely quoted from the KJV.

<sup>3</sup> At: [http://www.negrospirituals.com/news-song/free\\_at\\_last\\_from.htm](http://www.negrospirituals.com/news-song/free_at_last_from.htm)

Also in this database: [Martin Luther King, Jr: A Time to Break Silence](#)

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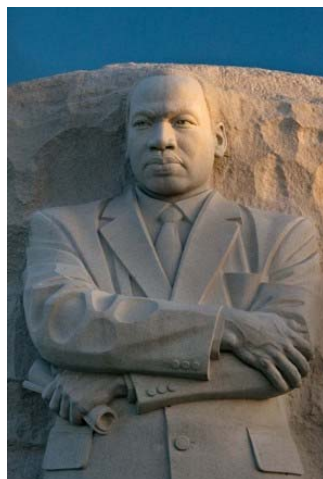
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Posted at 12:24 PM ET, 08/23/2011

## MLK memorial 'holy ground' for many

By Jeannine Hunter



The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is shown in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, July 16, 2011. The official unveiling of the latest memorial on the National Mall is scheduled for Sunday, August 28. (Nikki Kahn - THE WASHINGTON POST)

For Sister Donna Barfield, getting a sneak peak at the soon-to-open [Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial](#) was, she said, one of the most emotional experiences of her life.

She was moved by the statue, the curving granite walls engraved with his words taken from various speeches and writings.

"It was phenomenal," said Barfield who was among nearly 100 African American priests, nuns, seminarians, and deacons who got to tour the memorial in late July when they visited Washington for their annual National Black Catholic Joint Conference.

"If I have the opportunity, I would love to go back to the opening," she said. Barfield said she appreciated being able to "absorb the whole spiritual aspects of it" without crowds.

Crowds are what Washington officials are bracing for as the Aug. 28 dedication of the MLK's memorial draws near. King, a religious and civil rights leader, frequently drew on his spiritual tradition to inspire the movement

[Destination DC](#), the city's official tourism and marketing office, is reporting an increase in calls and other inquiries about the events surrounding the dedication. The office has refocused its marketing efforts to promote King memorial-related hotel packages, including tickets to the official viewing areas at the dedication ceremony. Due to demand since the close of a public lottery for tickets, six of the 16 hotels started offering one-night packages. The office also has reached out to a variety of groups, including faith-based organizations, and targeted niche and national publications, television and radio networks to promote the memorial. In July, the office's president and chief executive Elliott Ferguson spoke on the [Tom Joyner Morning Show](#), which reaches more than 8 million listeners daily, many of whom are African American.

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Washington is a beacon for visitors from around the world, particularly in the summer. Its connection to King is already strong: The Mall served as the backdrop for one of his most famous speeches; he rested at one of its landmark hotels, the Willard Hotel; and he has been among revered theologians and ministers to preach at Howard University's [Rankin Chapel](#).

The dedication of the memorial is scheduled to take place on the 48th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom when King delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech. The effort to build the memorial took more than 25 years.

Standing on the grounds of the memorial, gazing at the Stone of Hope and imagining that for years to come, legions will learn and also become inspired by the slain minister and humanitarian were very overwhelming, said Redemptorist Father Maurice Nutt.

"It felt like I was on holy ground," said Nutt of Chicago. "You feel as you walk through the Mountain of Despair and see the image of Dr. King on the Stone of Hope, his image coming out of the stone depicts steadfast determination."

The priest is a member of [Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.](#), which King joined in the 1950s and Nutt joined in 2006. Members of the black Greek-letter organization spearheaded the effort to raise money to construct the monument between the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials.

Nutt said he plans to return and march with fellow Alphas to the site the day of its dedication.

"Given the situation we are in today, with racial unrest, political differences, and economic recessions, this is a very significant time for the memorial to be dedicated," he said. "We need hope. I believe that it's very pertinent that the memorial is being dedicated right at this very moment."

The Rev. Al Sharpton, founder and president of the [National Action Network](#), is organizing a rally and march to the memorial site a day before the official dedication. Busloads of supporters from across the country are scheduled to participate. He said the need to fight for jobs, freedom and equality persists.

"Dr. King died dealing with economic inequality in this country, which we are still dealing with to this day," said Sharpton, who is slated to speak during the dedication. "Where we will be for his memorial is where he wanted to build Resurrection City as part of the Poor People's Campaign." The campaign was the last major movement King organized before his assassination.



Hundreds attend the first public viewing of the Martin Luther King Junior Memorial in Washington, D.C. on August 22, 2011. (Marvin Joseph - WASHINGTON POST)

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Sharpton said King played a major influence on his life.

"I grew up as a boy preacher," he said. By 12, Sharpton found himself drawn more toward social justice ministry outside the sanctuary than working strictly for one congregation as a pastor. When King died, Sharpton was serving as youth director of the New York branch of Operation Breadbasket, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference initiative aimed at providing economic opportunity and equality.

Sharpton noted that the march will be the first national gathering of progressives, faith-based groups, labor leaders and others since the battle over raising the debt-ceiling, the ongoing debate over proposed changes to medicare and social security and the passage of the health-care bill. It is being called the Emancipator to the Liberator rally and march for jobs and justice, and it will begin at the Lincoln Memorial and end at the King memorial.

"It will be a rallying cry for people in the street against what is happening, against those who tried to declare war on poor people and the disadvantaged and the middle class," he said, adding that one of the co-chairs is a leader of AFSCME, the group whose striking sanitation workers King spoke in support of in Memphis the night before he died.

Ronald Rice, a Newark city councilman and an Alpha, said he couldn't miss witnessing history and plans to drive down Washington, D.C. later this week.

"I am just proud to be alive and to be able to see the first African American president dedicate this monument to the man who foretold his election in America," Rice said. "This is a celebration of what is best about this nation and a call to service in our own communities.

"This day is almost as big as the inauguration of President Obama, but only if we all leave the dedication committed to doing more in our communities when we get back home. Our urban communities need mentoring, jobs and real education reform, healthcare and a renewed covenant by us to save us," he said.

By Jeannine Hunter | 12:24 PM ET, 08/23/2011

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## As King Memorial Opens, Christian Leaders Recall His 'Dream'

Tue, Aug. 23, 2011 Posted: 10:41 AM EDT

The life and mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. embedded itself into the fabric of American life and without question, had the greatest impact in advancing rights for minorities in the latter half of the 20th century. His works and accomplishments are being recognized with a national monument in his honor in Washington, D.C. that opened Monday.

African-American pastor and High Impact Leadership Coalition founder Bishop Harry Jackson Jr. said of the King monument, "As a Christian, I am really excited. Such a memorial shows the power of an individual life and the power of prayer."

Jackson, who says he was 11 or 12 at the time of the 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, prayerfully watched the march with his father in their hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio.

He says King's influence is reflected in the election of Barack Obama, the first African-American president, and now permanently recognized with the erection of the King memorial.

The memorial includes a 30-foot high-sculpture of King's likeness, arms folded across his chest and standing tall, hewn in a "Stone of Hope" just beyond a mountain-like portal.

The memorial's design is meant to embody King's words in his famous 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech: "With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope."

The tribute, located near the Tidal Basin, also features a marble inscription wall featuring many of his most memorable quotes, including, "I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits" and "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

The memorial makes King the first African American and the first person not elected as a U.S. president to be honored on the National Mall.

Despite his excitement for the memorial, Jackson says the memorial is a reminder that King's dream that began over 50 years ago has yet to be completely fulfilled.

Noting the 53 percent decline in wealth and 15.9 percent unemployment among African Americans, Jackson stated King would be disappointed with the way future generations have not embraced the spiritual and moral values of his day.

Instead those generations have allowed material possession to lead them astray, he believes.

"Middle and upper income African Americans are busy enjoying their fancier homes, buying their more beautiful cars and maybe sacrificing their children on the altar of their own success because they are never there and they have not kept their own marriages and families together," Jackson described.

Jackson says of the younger generation, "Many of them have thrown away the opportunities available to them."

Pro-life advocate Alveda King said the materialism plaguing African Americans afflicts all Americans and reminds her daily of her uncle's words.

"Dr. King said, 'The negro cannot win if he's willing to sacrifice the futures of his children for personal comfort and safety.' American has certainly done that," she said.

Ms. King says Americans' sacrifice is evident in U.S. abortion rates, the national war on drugs, domestic violence and even war.

She says that the Bible puts a special emphasis on love. Because of that emphasis, she says we must love one another and stop killing each other with violence, abortion and selfish ambition.

Ms. King says she hopes that people will be inspired by Dr. King's memorial to reconnect with his messages, not only of racial equality, but love in the kingdom of God.

Jackson reminds people that King was not just a civil rights leader, but also a theologian who spoke from an understanding of both the U.S. Constitution and the Bible.

Martin Luther King Jr. pursued theology studies at Crozer Theological Seminary in 1948 and Boston University in 1955 before

joining the fight against racial inequality.

Following his ordination, King served at his Father's church, Ebenezer Baptist in Atlanta, as assistant pastor. After finishing his doctoral studies at Boston University, he became the senior pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala.

During the civil rights movement, Alveda King says her uncle preached about love and fellowship in the body of Christ.

"He worked very hard to help all people to find the love of God," she affirmed.

On the Aug. 28 official unveiling of the monument, she says, "We're going to remember that dream."

Alveda King says she will recall Martin Luther King's messages of love and the universal family of God in her scheduled address.

President Obama is also scheduled to speak at the unveiling.

Stephanie Samuel  
Christian Post Reporter

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