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What Shall We Do With This Martin Luther King?

Martin Luther King stood for equality, peace, nonviolence and justice. He was the voice for many people who were unable to speak out so eloquently against the numerous injustices they faced. He strove to help create a better America for all people. Had it not been for his dedication to society, we could be facing a worse situation than we are already facing.

Dr. King had many dreams that he wanted to carry out, such as the eradication of poverty, free medical care for all, decent housing, good jobs and justice for all of God's children. It's unfortunate that he left this world before he was able to achieve all of his dreams. Yet, he was able to accomplish so much, and he has had a lasting impact on the lives of all the people in America.

So, what shall we do with this Martin Luther King? Shall we let his dreams die or shall we find a way to achieve those beloved dreams? Martin was a fighter, not physically, but he never gave up on his dreams, even when his back was against the wall. America's second Reconstruction began with a spark in the 1950's. This Civil Rights Movement was led by Dr. King and other instrumental leaders to ensure equal treatment and create opportunities for black Americans. Martin Luther King left behind a strong legacy, which many have worked hard to keep alive. Our society has come a long way since his death.

Unfortunately, some people today take certain things for granted, such as voting, education and life itself. During the Civil Rights Movement, these were serious issues that people were fighting for. At that time in American society, many blacks were not able to vote or even to receive an equal education because of segregation. As an acclaimed leader of the movement, Dr. King worked to secure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Fortunately, he saw the results of his struggle, as these acts were passed before his assassination in 1968. Now, black people and other minorities have the rights they deserve and are able to vote.

Where would we be without Dr. King? I think that we wouldn't be anywhere close to the equality that we have today. That doesn't mean that Dr. King's dreams have been fulfilled. It means that America is a much better place than it was prior to the Civil Rights Movement. However, I am afraid that America is getting more and more unaware of Dr. King's legacy, thus letting go of his dreams. New generations are showing a lack of interest in our history and in education itself. We, as a people, need to hold fast to his dreams, because they are part of our legacy and heritage.

One way we can do this is by educating ourselves and taking on the task of teaching future generations about our foreparents and what they have done to make possible the many things that matter to us. We not only need to educate ourselves about the greatness of our history, we also need to apply that greatness to our lives.

That is how we keep his dreams alive, thus keeping Dr. Martin Luther King alive. Let's live his dreams through each other and help this world become an even better place. Langston Hughes wrote a poem with these lines:

“Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.”

We all need to remember these words and make certain that our hero never dies. That is what we shall do with this Martin Luther King.