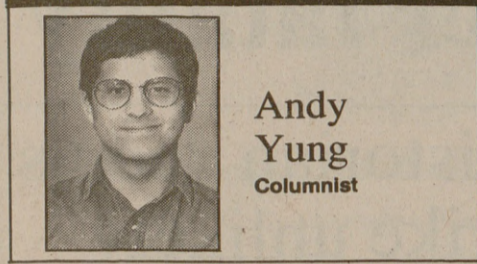


MLK Jr. inspires others to follow path of peace



Andy Yung
Columnist

In light of current events, we all have become intensely aware of our affinity for peace. Also undoubtedly on our minds today is our national commemoration of America's greatest peace advocate and activist, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I do not in any way hold myself out as a MLK scholar; however, King's message is clear, so on this special day I desire to convey my conception of King's ongoing concerns. King spent his life championing the cause of peace. Many remember King solely as a civil rights leader or a black leader.

Far from it: beyond the incredible and fruitful efforts this man made for the condition of African-Americans, King generated outstanding contributions in theology, philosophy, sociology, government, world politics and more.

All of these accomplishments I contend were inspired by transcending philosophical glue. This glue was King's commitment to nonviolent social reform as a means of securing universal human dignity.

Even more basic would be to say that King kept Christ-like love — perfect, selfless, all-forgiving love — as his lighthouse to make certain he was acting right. He needed only to make sure he was on course toward human perfection, and arguably he might have

reached that destination.

King was a leader of the civil rights movement, but he was always first and foremost a human-rights advocate. He opposed segregation of an individual's "moral concern" just as much as he opposed school segregation. He held that all the issues of justice, peace and human dignity were interconnected.

King's dream was not absurd. In fact, his utopia seems very attainable to us. There is reason for this; simply put, a just world order is nonexistent because we have lost sight of brotherhood, or empathy, of compassion — the haves have alienated themselves (geographically, nationally, socially and racially) from the have nots.

Selfish exploitation of some, so that others can get in "18 holes before lunch" has led to a polarization of resources and opportunities. **There is, however, enough to go around.** That is, if people do not take more than they give.

King puts it eloquently: "I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and justice for their spirits." Hence, we can see that violence and selfishness, like peace and justice, go hand in hand.

What many fail to comprehend is that true and lasting peace is a way of life, an attitude, a commitment and unquestionably is the prerequisite of justice. A.J. Muste captured this eternal truth: "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

When this proposition is truly internalized, one can see everything else in this complex world fall into place. King realized that peace must be in place to make one's efforts meaningful and consistent. King recognized that the extremes of violence on the one hand and submission on the other lead to



“One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. How much longer must we play at deadly war games before we heed the plaintive pleas of the unnumbered dead and maimed of past wars? ”

— Martin Luther King Jr.
civil rights activist

selfishness or the light of altruism? King dedicated himself to making an improvement in humanity and building a new horizon of hope for generations of impoverished and disadvantaged people. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964; and for his commitment to brotherly love, he was assassinated in 1968.

King followed his calling — a basic calling to peace which all humans share — and willingly paid the ultimate price for his conviction.

Interestingly enough, King began opposing the Vietnam War in 1965, back when most people had not even given the conflict much thought. How could he ask the world to be nonviolent when the United States was so successful with its own use of force? I encourage all to read his original works, which are both straightforward and inspiring.

Perhaps recognition of his humanitarian efforts in the form of a holiday is an encouraging sign for our nation. Ironically, we find ourselves in the midst of a horrible, complex and violent war. The immediate answer to the question of what to do is not difficult at all for those of us who have chosen to emulate King's philosophy:

"The past is prophetic in that it asserts loudly that wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows. One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. How much longer must we play at deadly war games before we heed the plaintive pleas of the unnumbered dead and maimed of past wars?"

Andy Yung is a junior political science major.

EDITORIALS

Editorials expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

Recall King's dream

As we observe the federal holiday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. — he would have turned 62 last Tuesday — we must note the ironic timing of his birthday as developments in the Persian Gulf worsen.

We can only wonder what King, a man of peace, would have thought of Operation Desert Storm; he was an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War before his assassination in 1968.

Coretta Scott King recently returned to the same church where her slain husband preached non-violence all those years ago. At Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, she gave a message reminiscent of her husband's stand against the Vietnam War.

"We do not seek to defeat people, but to defeat injustice," she said Friday. "Oppose a policy, not a person ... The best way we can support the men and women who will be fighting is to continue to work for a peaceful solution."

Dr. King touched the lives of many people during the 1950s and '60s, and his influence lives on through our commitment for peace in the 1990s. He taught us that we can make a difference, and that each one of us has the ability within ourselves to make change.

Let us remember King for what he was: a man of peace. Let us remember, especially now as our men and women fight in the Persian Gulf, that King's dream was one of peace and equality.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Support troops in Persian Gulf

EDITOR:

Imagine you are a firefighter and I am a hotel owner. Further suppose that I want a new, larger hotel and decide to burn my current building to get money for the new one. And you and everyone else know this is my plan.

Now that I have started my fire, the hotel guests as well as nearby homes and businesses are in grave danger.

However, since you do not agree with extinguishing arson fires for profit, you decide that you will not do your job in this instance.

On the other hand, suppose you go to put out the fire, but angry citizens tell you that you should go home. They do not agree with using city tax dollars and firefighters to extinguish this type of fire no matter what.

To the war protester and conscientious objector, I say to you that Saddam Hussein is this arsonist and the people of Kuwait are his unwilling guests; and they need help.

Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Israel and even Jordan are the nearby homes and businesses, and they need help. The United States is the fire department and our military is our firefighters, and we need help.

We need to support our men and women fighting this blaze, not tell them to go home.

No, I do not want to take a long time to extinguish this fire, but we must put it out for the good of all involved.

Flynn J. Adcock
economics graduate student

tions to situations the United States government gets us into in regards to the military.

Everyone always is so proud of members of their families who join the military to defend the United States of America.

Everyone loves the benefits of a secure job, base housing, lower food costs and a monthly income. Let me tell you, base housing is no palace.

I am tired of listening to people cry about these members of the armed service going to Saudi Arabia. It's their job. You never hear people complaining when they get those monthly checks from the government.

Military families are strong; we know what our parents' job is and what they do. If you don't, then you are lying to yourself.

We live a different lifestyle, we live around nuclear weapons and we associate with the people who practice and carry out the deed of war.

Please remember, no one likes war. I don't want war, but we must do what's right. If we don't deal with the problem now, then we will later at a higher cost to all.

It is your duty as an American citizen to back our men and women who are involved in this conflict. Anyone who joins the military thinking war can never happen is insane; they volunteered their life for our freedom.

I have chosen not to join because it's my right to do so. But if called upon, I would go because that's my duty to my country.

We have always fought for what we believe in: freedom in red, white and blue. Support the troops!

Randal Weeks '91

Fight for U.S. freedoms

EDITOR:

I'd like to remind all our citizens that our military is an all-volunteer force. These men and women have chosen to make the military their career just as some choose to be lawyers or doctors.

Being a military "brat" myself, I love to see people's reac-

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

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