

To Save Our World

"Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.

"The transformed nonconformist never yields to the passive sort of patience which is an excuse to do nothing. And one's very transformation saves one from speaking irresponsible words which estrange without reconciling and from making hasty judgments which are blind to the necessity of social process. Social change will not come overnight, yet the nonconformist works as though it is an imminent possibility.

"This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists. The saving of our world from pending doom will come not through the complacent adjustment of the conforming majority but through the creative maladjustment of a nonconforming minority."

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1954)

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 ...sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood....This is our hopeWith 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 dayThis will be the day when all God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing."

Martin Luther King Jr.

August 28, 1963

We may have to repent in this generation not merely for the riotous actions and words of the bad people, but also for the appalling silence, due to the apathy and fear of the good people.

Martin Luther King

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are victims of Americanism, one of the...victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver—no, not!! I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream. I see an American nightmare!

Malcolm X

April 3, 1964

A King's Legacy

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I'd like somebody to say that day, that Martin Luther King tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day, that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day, that I did try to feed the hungry. ... I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness. ... I just want to leave a committed life behind.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.