

Martin Luther King Day: Celebrating Reconciliation

On Monday, Jan. 20, the U.S. celebrates the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, honoring the life of an American hero and a Christian martyr.

King grew up in a world where many people believed that the Black African people were inferior to the white Europeans. This belief, which was used to support slavery in the U.S. and the colonization of Africa by Europe, directly contradicts biblical teaching that all humans are from the same family and that God commands us to love our brothers. However, the rise of secularism and a Darwinistic view of the human race gave a scientific veneer to the myth of racial superiority. To their shame, even some churches went along with the lie. Modern science has now proven that all humans came from the same mother, as the Bible teaches, and that there is more genetic difference within the races than between them. There is no excuse for racism.

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This means Thomas Jefferson was right when he said all men are created equal. But making that statement a reality has been a long battle in the U.S. We fought the Civil War to end slavery, and the war brought God's judgment, as one soldier died for each person left in slavery after the American Revolution, and the slaveholding South was devastated. Nevertheless, racial inequality was reborn in the Jim Crow system of laws that discriminated against Black people in the South. After World War II, Black servicemen who had proven themselves the equal of their white brothers found it more and more difficult to accept their oppression.

In many countries, oppressed minorities had taken up arms, but the U.S. was spared this fate. Instead, a Black Baptist pastor called on his people to use nonviolent Christian principles to bring about change. King envisioned an America where people were judged on character, not color. He faced hate-filled racists, but he wanted to redeem them instead of destroy them. Eventually, his Christian forgiveness and love bought an end to the Jim Crow laws and led to a broad level of reconciliation between the races. Sadly, he and many others gave their lives to bring about the nonviolent civil rights revolution.

We still have some work to do to reach King's goal of a united, color-blind society and full racial reconciliation. But on this day we celebrate a Baptist pastor who used Christian principles and his Christian faith to bring his white and Black brothers together.

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Let us pray that King's memory will be honored by reconciliation and unity, and that those who would divide and promote hatred, whether white or Black, will be exposed and repudiated.

"Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:11).

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Ron Allen is a Christian businessman who is active in ministries spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is the founder of American Wake Up Call.