

## **It Was Only a Dream, But It Woke Up the World**

As I reflect on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream and his impact on the world, I cannot forget the sacrifices he made, the endless ridicule he endured, and the merciless abuse he experienced. Dr. King was what I call a trailblazer; a man who paved the way for desegregation, equality among men, and friendship between blacks and whites. Although today he holds a position of honor; during his lifetime he felt only the pressure of danger. If it were not for his commitment to unity and his determination to carry on, the United States would not be a symbol of freedom but of dissension and hate.

Dr. King was a crusader with one cause— equality. He stepped out of the lines of segregation in the face of opposition. Sacrificing his pride and comforts, he spent countless days in jail including the Birmingham Jail where he concluded, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." To Alice Walker, an author of black culture, Dr. King was a pillar of courage and an answer to prayer. To those oppressed by discrimination, he was a final hope and savior. Many other African Americans blazed new frontiers of equality preparing the way Dr. King and his crusade. Jesse Owens did not allow opposition to defeat him in the 1936 Olympics. Instead of playing the victim, he strategized and gave his events everything within him. In 1949, Jackie Robinson displayed perseverance as he stepped into a new field for African Americans. As the baseball fans mocked him, he stood his ground at second base because he knew he deserved the chance and earned the position on the Brooklyn Dodgers. Rosa Parks also epitomized strength and courage when she refused to give up her seat on the bus and defied the law of a white world.

During Dr. King's lifetime, his equality was a glimmer in the future, but through his impassioned speeches, peaceful protests, and unfailing determination, we have come very far. During his crusade he touched the hearts and souls of men and women of every color, and for the first time many people questioned the prejudices they had always known and dared to no longer judge "by skin" but "by character." Through his boldness and vulnerability, he exonerated a nation bound by hatred and fear.

Dr. King's dream expanded beyond civil rights and desegregation; his dream was for humanity that the world may see with its heart not its eyes.