

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

Merely four decades ago, racial tensions in the United States grew to a culmination of hatred and violence. All knew of the desperate need for change. Though many felt the necessity to educate society and dissipate the prevalent racist views, it took one strong leader to guide the country in the right direction. That leader came in the form of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Using peace instead of violence. Dr. King awakened the world to the foolishness of racism. He shared his dream that one day blacks and whites, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, and all other children of God can peacefully celebrate the freedom promised in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution together. Today, Dr. King's dream lives on in all of us.

Even in the most simple of actions, such as dining in a restaurant or going to school, our lives are inseparably intertwined with Dr. King's philosophies. Today, many of us take for granted that different races can coexist peacefully, but none of it would be possible had Dr. King's dream not become a reality.

From the days of exploration when Spanish Conquistadors brought slaves from Africa to the New World for labor, to the days of the vast cotton plantations in the South, people of color had been exploited by their white oppressors throughout the history of the American continent. Even after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans received far from fair treatment. Discrimination, hatred, segregation, and violence plagued the life of the colored person. All this history makes it even more amazing that Dr. King helped bring about such a shockwave of realization and benevolence throughout the country.

Ever since the turbulence of the 1960s, the nation has become a different place. Although the transition has been slow and bumpy, the country has come a long way since the days of mob lynchings and the KKK. Most people have realized the absurdity in judging others by their skin color and have changed their actions to reflect that.

The shockwave did not stop at the borders of the United States. Peoples all over the world realized that different races are capable of living together in harmony. The most dramatic example of Dr. King's effect overseas occurred in 1994 when Nelson Mandela was elected President of the Republic of South Africa, ending 46 years of cruel and violent subjugation in the

form of apartheid.

Though the world has come a long way, racism is far from extinguished. Prejudice and discrimination still keeps many from achieving all that they can achieve. People are still judged based on their appearance everyday. The difference is that now the world is conscious and aware of the problem, which means that people can work together toward solving it, so that one day, the whole world can join together to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., knowing that his dream has become a reality in the hearts of all.