

Martin Luther King, Jr. Revised: I Have a Dream: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's Landmark Speech

Sande Smith



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Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's Landmark Speech, Martin Luther King, Jr., brought the Civil Rights movement to the forefront of American public life. His "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial following the March on Washington more than 40 years ago, remains one of the best remembered, most moving addresses of modern times. King preached nonviolence as the way to achieve equality, peace, and harmony. Even when he was criticized he was unwilling to change his views. Today, his words ring truer than ever. King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, the son of a Baptist minister. He received a bachelor's degree from Morehouse College, and went to Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, where he was the first African-American to be elected president of the student body there. He received his Ph.D. from Boston University School of Theology in 1955, and took the pastorate of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. A brilliant speaker, King became the spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which resulted in a Supreme Court decision in 1956 declaring Alabama's bus segregation laws unconstitutional. Following this triumph, King became the leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), through which he made clear his commitment to nonviolent activism. Between 1960 and 1965, King led numerous demonstrations and protests on behalf of Civil Rights. In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, and King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that same year. As the Vietnam War began to occupy much attention in America, King spoke out strongly against the war, and declared a war on poverty. He was shot and killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 3rd 1968. His death devastated the nation. The work he did radically altered the structure of American society - it revolutionized voting rights, and struck down legal barriers that prevented African-Americans from obtaining access to schools and public facilities. By the time of his death, he had acquired a national reputation and respect, and his campaign had become nationwide. This book offers an illustrated tribute to a great man.

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