

January 17, 2008

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I SEE THE PROMISED LAND

Sections of the speech given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968)

... As you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" -- I would take my mental flight by Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the Promised Land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there. I would move on by Greece, and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality.

But I wouldn't stop there. I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and esthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even go by the way that the man for whom I'm named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church in Wittenberg.

But I wouldn't stop there. I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating president by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

But I wouldn't stop there. Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy." Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed
(Continued on the next page)

If a man is called to be a streetsweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great streetsweeper who did his job well.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER TOMORROW, PARENT CONFERENCE DAY, AND THE GREAT BARRINGTON TRIP

The forecast for tomorrow Friday, January 18, the day of our parent conferences, continues to vacillate around "wintery mix" - exactly one of those very difficult situations in which to determine whether or not our community can safely get to school. Hopefully it will be a clear call by tomorrow morning. This, in any case, will be our procedure.

1) If there are no cancellations or delays, there will be no communication. Everything will proceed as usual. If you feel you cannot make it in because of the situation in your area, please call the school and leave a message that you will not be in.

2) If school is cancelled or delayed, we will use the usual notification procedure by leaving a message on the school's answering machine and notifying the usual television and radio stations. If school is cancelled, a new conference day will be set up. If school is delayed, the early conferences affected by the delay will have to be rescheduled.

Considerations for canceling or delay are the safety of the roads throughout the day and the need to keep the parking lot and access road empty if plowing is necessary. Obviously, the arrivals are different from regular school days and that will be taken into consideration.

3) If school is not cancelled or is only delayed but a teacher cannot make it in, the teacher will call each parent

affected as well as the school. Again, if any parent can not make it in, please call the school office.

4) If the Great Barrington basketball trip is cancelled, the parents of the players will be called directly or by phone tree and a message will be left with the school office. A decision will be made by noon on Friday, January 18.

(I See the Promised Land continued from page 1)

up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion all around. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars.

... And another reason that I'm happy to live in this period is that we have been forced to a point where we're going to have to grapple with the problems that men have been trying to grapple with through history, but the demands didn't force them to do it. Survival demands that we grapple with them. Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence.

... Now about injunctions: We have an injunction and we're going into court tomorrow morning to fight this illegal, unconstitutional injunction. All we say to America is, "Be true to what you said on paper." If I lived in China or even Russia, or any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic First Amendment privileges, because they hadn't committed themselves to that over there. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of the press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right. And so just as I say, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around. We are going on...

... Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness. One day a man came to Jesus; and he wanted to raise some questions about some vital matters in life. At points, he wanted to trick Jesus, and show him that he knew a little more than Jesus knew, and through this, throw him off base. Now that question could have easily ended up in a philosophical and theological debate. But Jesus immediately pulled that question from mid-air, and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man, who fell among thieves. You remember that a Levite and a priest passed by on the other side. They didn't stop to help him. And finally a man of another race came by. He got down from his beast, decided

not to be compassionate by proxy. But with him, administered first aid, and helped the man in need. Jesus ended up saying; this was the good man, because he had the capacity to project the "I" into the "thou," and to be concerned about his brother. Now you know, we use our imagination a great deal to try to determine why the priest and the Levite didn't stop. At times we say they were busy going to church meetings--an ecclesiastical gathering--and they had to get on down to Jerusalem so they wouldn't be late for their meeting. At other times we would speculate that there was a religious law that "One who was engaged in religious ceremonials was not to touch a human body twenty-four hours before the ceremony." And every now and then we begin to wonder whether maybe they were not going down to Jerusalem, or down to Jericho, rather to organize a "Jericho Road Improvement Association." That's a possibility. Maybe they felt that it was better to deal with the problem from the casual root, rather than to get bogged down with an individual effort.

But I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible that these men were afraid. You see, the Jericho road is a dangerous road. I remember when Mrs. King and I were first in Jerusalem. We rented a car and drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And as soon as we got on that road, I said to my wife, "I can see why Jesus used this as a setting for his parable." It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about 1200 miles, or rather 1200 feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho, fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about 2200 feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the day of Jesus it came to be known as the "Bloody Pass." And you know, it's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking. And he was acting like he had been robbed and hurt, in order to seize them over there, lure them there for quick and easy seizure. And so the first question that the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But then the Good Samaritan came by. And he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

That's the question before you tonight. Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to all of the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?" The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" "If I do not stop to help the

sanitation workers, what will happen to them?"
That's the question...

... You know, several years ago, I was in New York City autographing the first book that I had written. And while sitting there autographing books, a demented black woman came up. The only question I heard from her was, "Are you Martin Luther King?"

And I was looking down writing, and I said yes. And the next minute I felt something beating on my chest. Before I knew it I had been stabbed by this demented woman. I was rushed to Harlem Hospital. It was a dark Saturday afternoon. And that blade had gone through, and the X-rays revealed that the tip of the blade was on the edge of my aorta, the main artery. And once that's punctured, you drown in your own blood--that's the end of you.

It came out in the New York Times the next morning, that if I had sneezed, I would have died. Well, about four days later, they allowed me, after the operation, after my chest had been opened, and the blade had been taken out, to move around in the wheel chair in the hospital. They allowed me to read some of the mail that came in, and from all over the states, and the world, kind letters came in. I read a few, but one of them I will never forget. I had received one from the President and the Vice-President. I've forgotten what those telegrams said. I'd received a visit and a letter from the Governor of New York, but I've forgotten what the letter said. But there was another letter that came from a little girl, a young girl who was a student at the White Plains High School. And I looked at that letter, and I'll never forget it. It said simply, "Dear Dr. King: I am a ninth-grade student at the Whites Plains High School." She said, "While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I am a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze."

And I want to say tonight, I want to say that I am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting-in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around in 1962, when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, decided to straighten

their backs up. And whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can't ride your back unless it is bent. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been here in 1963, when the black people of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused the conscience of this nation, and brought into being the Civil Rights Bill. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have had a chance later that year, in August, to try to tell America about a dream that I had had. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been down in Selma, Alabama, to see the great movement there. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been in Memphis to see a community rally around those brothers and sisters who are suffering. I'm so happy that I didn't sneeze.

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the Promised Land. And I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

(Dr. King was assassinated the day after he gave this speech.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THURSDAY PARENT MORNING HANDWORK

Parent Morning Handwork is resuming every available Thursday beginning next week, January 24. It will take place in the Main Hall from 8:15 to 10:15 AM most Thursdays (subject to a class' need to use the Main Hall.)

It is open to all levels and abilities in knitting, crocheting, felting, sewing or pattern making. Any problems, we'll help you figure them out. Never knitted before – why not start now? Many of us will be doing hats, mittens or scarves since it is the winter season. Little ones are also welcome to attend. Any questions, contact Laura Freysinger, Rose Kindergarten parent, 781-631-6146.

EYE ON THE SKY for the week of
Jan. 14, 2007

High in our southern sky is the brightest of all star figures, ORION, the Hunter. Here we find two immense stars, Rigel and Betelgeuse. Bluish Rigel, the “right foot” of Orion, is one of the most luminous of all stars, one of the hottest and reaching the prime of its life. We see light that left the star before Columbus was born. It is 800 light-years away and estimated to be 39,000 times as luminous as the Sun. In contrast, bright-red Betelgeuse, in Orion’s “left shoulder,” is near the end of its career, some 520 light-years away, but not shining with a steady light.

One might say, as did a lecturer at the Hayden Planetarium in New York City, that Betelgeuse is “like an old man with his strength almost entirely spent, panting in the asthmatic decrepitude of old age,” or in Shakespeare’s stages of man, the seventh and last.

(Adapted by Tom Braden, from *The New York Times* and *The Stars* by H.A. Rey.)

BASKETBALL UPDATE

Change: The alumni basketball game has been changed from Saturday, March 1 to Saturday, March 8 starting with the girls at 10 AM followed by the boys at 11 AM. Both games will be at the Landmark School.

Cancellation and Change: The girls’ game against Landmark on Tuesday, January 29 has been canceled. The boys’ game will begin at 3:30 PM (not 4:45).

POST SNOW STORM PARKING

Parking at the school – a challenge at all times – is particularly challenging after a snow storm. We are grateful that the access road was well plowed this time. Also, please be aware that if a snow emergency is still in effect in Beverly, cars parked on Rte. 127 will be towed. In addition, because of the reduction of already limited parking, some subject teachers could not

find parking when they came in. Please consider these things on the days when the snow makes our challenging parking even more of a challenge. Thank you.

PERSONAL

NORTHWATERS WILDERNESS PROGRAMS

Northwaters Wilderness Programs provide young people with fun and enriching summer experiences to complement their Waldorf school education. From two picturesque island base camps in the heart of the Temagami Forest Reserve, Northwaters offers a series of canoeing programs designed for youth at various stages of adolescence. Northern Lights (girls ages 11-14) is a two week program to help girls cross the bridge to becoming young women. Excalibur (boys ages 10-12) introduces “the quest” to boys. For older or more experienced adventurers, Langskib (all boys) and Northwaters (all girls and co-ed) programs provide 12 – 17 year olds the opportunity to participate in wilderness experience in which balance, individuality and community are honored. Since 1971 several hundred students from over 20 Waldorf schools have shared in these adventures. More information, schedules and applications can be found at www.northwaters.com or by calling 866-458-9974.

Who’s Learning What

- Grade 1 Math
- Grade 2 Math
- Grade 3 Measurement
- Grade 4 Norse Myths
- Grade 5 Decimals
- Grade 6 Physics: Magnetism
- Grade 7 Explorers
- Grade 8 Anatomy