

WFWP Celebrates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday

Fannie Smith

January 31, 2023

Women Intercepting for Peace on Earth



Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) has traditionally and continues to honor the national birthday celebration for one of the world's most influential civil rights leaders, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. This year 2023, he would have turned 94 years of age. Fortunately, greatness doesn't age! It is also an honor for WFWP to acknowledge his wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, as an endearing woman whose strength and compassion we admire.

This year participants around the world energetically acknowledged and responded to the call of Dr. King as a day to be celebrated by the Pope, presidents of countries, clergy, elected officials and others around the globe. Martin Luther King Day is not only a holiday, but more importantly a day of service, giving of ourselves to those in need of tangible and intangible resources to sustain a better life and livelihood.

The sovereign call of peace by Dr. King, unfortunately, is not being heard from the mountain top nor in the valley. Racial upheavals among humanity are alive and thriving, communities in every culture are being threatened by those who refuse to see comradeship as a peacemaking virtue. As members and supporters of WFWP we must revive, restore, and revitalize the premise we stand for to rekindle the flame of Freedom for all people. We can create PEACE with the following:

- P: participate in WFWP current peace efforts
- E: evolve, elevate, embrace, more fervently inclusivity with other cultures
- A: announce anger for the lack of humanity and justice for all
- C: celebrate your ability to make changes on behalf of your family members
- E: experience the fulfillment of being a [drum major for justice](#)

We as women have the opportunity, obligation and desire by virtue of our feminine physical, biological, and spiritual attributes to produce, sustain, and maintain the very essence of our being here on earth.

A quote from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "History is calling for reconciliation, compassion, love, service, and sacrifice. Today's problems cannot be solved by the logic of power. Our present problems can only be solved by the logic of love."

"What would Martin say today??" This is the chime thousands of school children are echoing around the world in programs and events performed in the memory of Dr. King's Day. Perhaps he would respond with these words:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"

"I have decided to stick with Love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

"If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."

"Now is the time to make justice a reality for all God's children."

The legacy of Dr. King is dominated with accolades of his accomplishments starting out as a young Baptist preacher in Birmingham. One can also note that he initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott in retaliation to Rosa Parks' arrest. Of course, his eloquent speech at the March on Washington in 1963 will never be forgotten. He was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Dr. King is also credited with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Above all, I'm sure he would much rather be remembered as the ["Drum Major for Peace"](#)

My prayer is that as a nation, specifically as women, we have the audacity to "intercept" the current destruction and lack of consideration for others living on this planet. By nature of being humankind, we have more in common than differences regardless of ethnicity or culture. Our spouses, children, parents, communities, and world neighbors at this very hour are being exposed to internal and external acts of hatred, death, and separation of families. With the efforts of WFWP, our founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, leaders around the nation and supporters, let us carry the work of Dr. King into this new year of 2023; in hopes of securing PEACE for our future. We must connect in Faith knowing that in participation towards accomplishing the dream, everyone counts.

May God bless you and smile upon you. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Minister Fannie M. Smith

WFWP Schools of Africa National Coordinator



[Back to the King Encyclopedia](#) »

"Drum Major Instinct"

Event | February 4, 1968

On 4 February 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., preached "The Drum Major Instinct" from the pulpit of **Ebenezer Baptist Church**. Ironically, two months before his **assassination** on 4 April 1968, he told his congregation what he would like said at his funeral: "I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 185). Excerpts were played at King's nationally televised funeral service, held at Ebenezer on 9 April 1968.

King's sermon was an adaptation of the 1952 homily "Drum-Major Instincts" by J. Wallace Hamilton, a well-known, liberal, white Methodist preacher. Both men tell the biblical story of James and John, who ask Jesus for the most prominent seats in heaven. At the core of their desire was a "drum major instinct—a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 170–171). King warns his congregation that this desire for importance can lead to "snobbish exclusivism" and "tragic race prejudice": "Do you know that a lot of the race problem grows out of the drum major instinct? A need that some people have to feel superior ... and to feel that their white skin ordained them to be first" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 176; 178). Conversely, King preached that when Jesus responded to the request by James and John, he did not rebuke them for their ambition, but taught that greatness comes from humble servitude. As King put it, Jesus "reordered priorities," and told his disciples to "Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 181; 182).

King used Jesus' own life as an example of how the priority of love could provide greatness. In his biographical sketch of Jesus, King preached that Jesus owned nothing, and when public opinion turned against him he was called a "rabblouser" and a "troublemaker" for "[practicing] civil disobedience" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 183). King notes that, although by worldly standards Jesus was a failure, no one else has "affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 184).

King concluded the February 1968 sermon by imagining his own funeral. Urging the congregation not to dwell on his life's achievements, including his receipt of the **Nobel Peace Prize**, King asked to be remembered as one who "tried to give his life serving others" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 185). He implored his congregation to remember his attempts to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort prisoners. "Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice," King intoned. "Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter" (King, "**The Drum Major**," 185–186).

Footnotes

Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 2006.

Hamilton, "Drum-Major Instincts," in *Ride the Wild Horses!*, 1952.

King, "**The Drum Major Instinct**," **Sermon Delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church**, in *A Knock at Midnight*, ed. Carson and Holloran, 1998.