

Dr. King's Assassination

UNFULFILLED PROMISES OF
THE PROMISED LAND

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THE TRUTH CLINIC

Forty years ago on April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine motel in Memphis, Tenn. On the eve of his death, King preached prophetically: "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." Most people are familiar with the biblical account of the Jewish people wandering in the desert for 40 years searching for the Promised Land after their escape from Egypt. This year, as has been alluded to each year since Dr. King's death, scholars are specifically placing the King Memphis speech and the plight of African Americans in the same context as Moses and the wandering of the children of Israel.

The similarities are obvious but the reality is that African Americans have been in the Promised Land for over 400 years. The difference is they have been denied the promises of social and economic justice in the Promised Land.

Dr. King's protestations and words were designed to shed light on America's fixation with materialism and the exploitation of the poor and powerless. Even though he was a staunch proponent of non violence King was neither meek nor were his words always soothing.

He spoke of the cultural homicide committed against blacks and how their worth and achievements were diminished while white superiority was promoted. Some of his harshest criticism was directed at the United States government which he called "the greatest purveyor of violence" in the world.

In his fiery 1967 speech at Riverside Church in New York King explained his opposition to the Vietnam War and tied it to his steadfast advocacy on behalf of the This week's Truth Clinic article for your and endlessly about the need to do something about America's inequities yet they allow selfish exploitation .

to preempt moral leadership. poor in the face of criticism from both opponents and some supporters Today we are facing many of the same issues and for the same reasons that Dr. King protested. America is waging another unjust war for rationale so transparent to make the Vietnam War seem just. Yet those that claim to be Drum Majors for justice speak with forked tongues that vacillate depending on the mood of the prevailing poll. These charlatans pontificate loudly. A new report, *Forty Years Later: The Unrealized American Dream*, by Dedrick Muhammad, a researcher at the Institute for Policy Studies, examines American's progress toward King's dream of racial equality. The report concludes that we're not much closer to realizing the promises of the Promised Land than we were 40 years ago at the time of King's assassination.

There has been some progress. However, the advancements are not occurring fast enough to provide noticeable achievement of social and economic parity in the Promised Land. The disparities of income, wealth and net worth that have divided our nation are even more extreme when examined through the polarized lens of race.

Over the last 40 years African Americans have made great strides in educational advancement. The African American high school graduation rate has increased by over 214 percent and could possibly reach parity with white Americans by the year 2018.

The African American college graduation rate has increased by almost 400 percent since 1968. However, at this commendable rate of progress the inequality in college graduation between blacks and whites will prevail until 2087.

Many working people in the promised land are still trying to live on poverty wages. Forty years since Dr. King called for the abolition of poverty about 30 percent of black children live in poverty.

Despite notable educational advances, economic equality for African Americans is still in the dream stage. In 1967 African Americans earned 54 cents for every dollar white Americans made. In 2005, African Americans earned 57 cents on every dollar earned by white Americans. At this rate of progress it will take over 537 years before income parity is achieved.

African Americans are similarly situated in terms of wealth. The home ownership rate for African-Americans is 47 percent compared to 75 percent for whites. Median household wealth exhibits a dramatic ten fold discrepancy between whites who average \$118,300 and blacks who average \$11,800. If this gap continues to close at the same average rate of the last 25 years it will take 600 more years to attain black-white equality. It is decreasing at an annual average of a fourth of a percent. If this continues it will take almost a hundred years to end poverty for black children.

Today, Congress and the Bush administration spend hundreds of billions of dollars to fight a tragic war abroad. Most recently, the

government has decided to bail out investment banks that profited off of predatory subprime lending. It seems only the poor must suffer the economic consequences of America's perverted policies.

We need to be reminded that the biblical Promised Land was not a place to relax and feed off of manna. It was a place that promised equal opportunity to work, provide for your family and achieve economic independence according to your God given abilities.

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Comments or opinions may be sent to the writer at: www.truthclinic.com

The G. W. Bradford

All School Reunion
has been set for the weekend of
June 14, 15, 16, 2008
to be held in
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