

January 14, 2008
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THE STAND **COLOR AND CONTENT**

It is not, said Martin Luther King, the color of any person that matters. Color of skin is irrelevant in human terms. Skin color is occasioned by the environment as God would so will. Inside that skin, whatever the color, is a heart, soul and mind the same the world over. So said Dr. King. His message to ignore color was clear.

Red, yellow, black or white. They are all precious in His sight, and therefore all should be precious in the sight of you and me. Violent prejudice has raged the world over because of the color of skin. Men and women of goodwill shun such bigotry, and reach out in love to opposites.

More importantly is the content of ones character, said the good doctor. How very true. A good man is a good man regardless of color. There are men and women, red-yellow-black-white who are wonderful, beautiful people and make the world a better place. We should gravitate to them, mimic and spread love, cheer and goodwill even as they do.

Persons of character are honest. In terms of the main concerns of Dr. King, honest people identify and deal with prejudice wherever they find it. For it exists everywhere. There are those white prejudice against black, and there are those black prejudice against white. Any color, race or ethnicity can have prejudice against any other. It is an ugly, awful thing. Persons with content in their character cannot abide any form of prejudice.

We live in a day and age of diversity. Differences are brought to consciousness more so then ever. That is good, but really not that different. Differences have always been there but in many cases, it has not been necessary to recognize them. Today, the world explodes with diversity and each human being from his particular culture is exposed to some much and some many from different cultures. The issue then is how we react to this diverse onslaught, whether with character, that is love and acceptance, or without character that is with prejudice and bias. The reaction and the action show clearly the content of the character of any person. It is duty for every human being to accept and respect the humanity of any other human being. So said Dr. King.

It is easy to be prejudiced in broad, sweeping general terms. That is, for white to be prejudice against black, and black to be prejudice against white. Once color is stereotyped, it is easy to discriminate, even hate. In broad generalities, one can be suspicious, untrusting and assumptive, assuming the worst. If one is a certain color, one can therefore be presumed to be potentially problematic.

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But how different it is when you deal with any person of any color one on one. At that level, one is forced to relate and to see another, which may be part of a stereotype, as a real God-Created human being. It is almost always amazing how the color of the skin and consequently any prejudice vanishes so quickly one-on-one. One human being looks for and draws upon the good, the best of the other human being, and dialogue and rapport can happen in wonderful and qualitative ways. I know I could have had that kind of dialogue and relationship with Dr. Martin Luther King, had I had the opportunity to meet and talk with him. That would have been one great privilege for a white man to be in the presence of a black man who radiated charisma, values, mission and purpose. All of that was the content of his character. Had we met, the eyes of a white man would not have seen a black man, but a very special human being, a leader, an incredible communicator and a person worthy of the highest respect. What a better world it would be if all that Dr. King was, including and especially a man of Christian love, would permeate the African-American Community. What a better world it would be if that love and example were to permeate the Caucasian-White Community. It would be easy to get along. More than anything else, this world needs to get along.

January 17 asks all Americans to remember one great man, Dr. Martin Luther King. But even more importantly, the celebration of the life and death of this missionary and martyr asks all of us to reach out in brotherly love to those who are different, and in Christian terms, to open the hearts door to every human being God created, regardless of the color of skin. The mere loving act of doing that will uplift and upgrade the character of any human being.

How blessed we are as Americans to have been exposed to the light, ministry and mission of Dr. Martin Luther King.

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