

"We Shall Overcome"

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,

We shall overcome someday.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

The truth will make us free,

the truth will make us free,

The truth will make us free someday,

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

We'll walk hand in hand,

we'll walk hand in hand,

We'll walk hand in hand someday.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,

We are not afraid today.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

The truth will make us free,

the truth will make us free,

The truth will make us free someday,

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,

We shall overcome someday.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,



DFSU
LIFELONG LEARNING CAMPUS

DoForSelf
Unlimited
Organization

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reception

January 19, 2015

Los Angeles, CA

Blue Skies,
Sunshine
Green Lights

DFSU

The Dream Continues

0
1
2
3
4

One of the most overlooked aspects of Martin Luther King's legacy is his work around economic justice and poverty. Though the landmark rally in 1963 during which King delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech is now widely known as "The March on Washington," the complete title of that event was "The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom." In fact, in the last year of his life, Dr. King was organizing the Poor People's Campaign, a multiracial effort to alleviate poverty and provide guaranteed income for every citizen. King understood that without greater economic equality, racial disparities and divisions could not be overcome.

5
6
7
8

In 1967, Dr. King wrote the foreword for the Freedom Budget -- a far-reaching and ambitious social proposal created by economist Leon Keyserling and March on Washington organizer Bayard Rustin. It involved massive investments in public works and infrastructure, training programs that would upgrade skills and education, employment opportunity expansion, affordable public health services, and raising the minimum wage to two dollars an hour -- an amount equivalent to \$13.79 in buying power today, though our federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 an hour.

The Freedom Budget, along with many of the economic goals of the civil rights movement, never came to pass, leaving a racial economic chasm that persists to this day. Today the Freedom Budget remains startlingly relevant, emphasizing issues such as job creation, living wages, access to better health care, and wealth redistribution -- relevant and urgent problems that still impair our country.

In remembering Dr. King and the legacy of the Black Freedom movement for which he gave his life, too often we revise history and speak as though the racism and white supremacy he fought against are now problems of the past. The truth is since Dr. King's time, the Black Unemployment Rate has remained twice that of whites, and in the last three decades, racial wealth inequality has ballooned out of control. To truly honor Dr. King, we must remember that he died on the battlefield fighting for an agenda, which to this day remains unrealized. Dr. King's dream of racial equality is still a dream that requires ongoing struggle to make a Reality.

Dr. King and the movement he represents offer

us many valuable lessons, both as a country and as individuals. A core principle of the 1967 Freedom Budget holds that smart investments that spur economic growth are the best way forward for a weak economy. This also holds true for our own personal economy. For a young adult out of high school, or an unemployed worker forced to undergo a career change, it may be tempting to keep treading water and avoid risk -- but it is often precisely during these times of personal economic uncertainty that we should invest in higher education or job certification programs that will, over the long run, allow us to bring in more income and gain economic stability.

During Dr. King's famed speech at the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs, he stated, "We refuse to believe there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation." One of the great economic lessons Dr. King has for us all is this: The road to prosperity requires of us faith, struggle, sacrifice, and investment, particularly for the most vulnerable. On Martin Luther King's birthday, let us commit ourselves to Dr. King's economic principles.