

Chapter 1 : Martin Luther King and the Future of America by Vincent Harding and Claire Gaudiani

A great read addressing the person, Martin Luther King Jr., and the hero we created. It focuses on the Dr. King after the March on Washington, and refuses to remember Dr. King only by his most famous moment.

And besides, it is easier to build monuments than to make a better world. We must let Hines speak to us as we try to overcome the fear and cynicism that says there is no such thing as a better world. For King is related to all who are called upon to help create the twenty-first century. Still, Hines is right: Something in us wants that triumphant, sun-drenched hero to stay right there, so that we can almost worship, not only him, but those words that he spoke. So often the act of worshiping becomes a process of denying life itself. The hard work of creating the twenty-first century demands something else from us -- and from King. Those of us who want to create a twenty-first century marked by justice and compassion in this nation need a hero who is not always triumphant -- who also works in the shadow times of fear, tragedy, betrayal, and death. They are all too much of our life; we need somebody who knows the way we walk, not a plaster-of-Paris somebody on top of a pedestal. If we are going into the twenty-first century, we need somebody who insists on going right on through the storm, through the night, doing the work that has to be done. We need to take a new look at King -- at the King who presses us beyond the March on Washington. Perhaps if we follow King carefully enough, we will realize that the official statement of the March on Washington in said, "This is a march for jobs and freedom. If we keep going with King, we can more adequately take on the issues of our coming century. For instance, we may understand how King went out from the sunlight of the Mall to retrace his steps back to Birmingham, Alabama. There, just three weeks later, he was forced to deal with the fact that white terrorist bombers had destroyed a church -- and the lives of four children. If we keep going with King, we go into some very tough places. So I want to wonder out loud: How do you deal with that? I would like us to move with King in such a way that we take on the difficult questions that a woman or a man has to deal with when trying to give leadership in transforming a society that usually does not want to be transformed. If we follow King closely enough, we might even get to the fall of and read again what Coretta King had to say about that day in November when they sat before their television screen in that house on Sunset Street in Atlanta, and she and Martin watched the somber and elegant processions that followed the assassination of President John F. I keep telling you, this is a sick society. Last January, I was at a middle school in Denver. I was talking to the youngsters about the King who kept going in spite of the dangers. Afterward, one young man about thirteen came walking up to me and said, "Now, listen here, Dr. He had work to do! Indeed, if we want to stay with King, we must also face those issues. In the summer of we would follow King as he gets the word that three young freedom workers in Mississippi were missing, probably dead. What King does then is remarkable. After all, he had almost nothing to do with the organizing of Mississippi Summer, but when he heard that three boys were missing and probably dead, he immediately got up and went there. But of course, to follow King is to find the glory times as well. One of my favorite times with King is in Selma, Alabama. The people gathered there included some wonderfully crazy and bodacious adventurers from SNCC the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee , who were the shock troops of the nonviolent revolution of this country. They had started plowing the ground in that place and had invited, of all people, Malcolm X to come down and spend some time with them in February It is simply fascinating what Malcolm wanted to do when he came to Selma in No great big speech burning white folks and black Christians and all kinds of other folks that he could burn so well, and often justifiably. No, Malcolm came to Selma and said, "I want to talk to Dr. Instead, he went to talk with Coretta. And he said, "Mrs. King, will you tell Dr. King that I had planned to visit with him in jail? I really did come thinking that I could make it easier. I would like us to follow fast enough, far enough, deep enough, past the sunshine of the Mall and consider what it meant for King and Malcolm to be possibly complementary forces in the same struggle. What it meant to them, what it meant to black people, what it meant to this country, and what it meant to the people who thought they owned this country, to have these two men coming closer together. The only way that they could come together was for them to break loose from their older base communities and take great new risks. And everybody remembers, too, that there is no

pilgrimage, there is no dance, there is no facing the powers of injustice without there also being more martyrs. King had to deal with that. I keep seeing him in those post-Mall days constantly being reminded of the cost of personal and social transformation, and I think it is necessary that we face those costs and ask ourselves, "Now what do we do? Do we chill out and look for safety and security? Or do we accept the fact that we have work to-do? A ten-year cycle had been completed: And possibly to get a university professorship, which he always thought about in some back part of his mind. At the end of that fifty miles of marching through danger, at the end of those five days on the road, at the end of these ten years of his career, he gets to Montgomery, and can you imagine this? Martin King does not say, "Now I am ready to hang it up, and now we can rest. Now we have got to face the Northern cities. Now, we have got to face the tremendous exploitation of poor people in the urban centers of our nation. I would like us to be there when Lyndon Baines Johnson signs the act that does so much to transform the political system of this country, an act purchased in blood, developed by poor, so-called powerless people. But afterward, they sit and talk and Martin looks around at the burning buildings and asks, "What are you hoping to accomplish here? What did you win? From my perspective, one reason we have to follow King out into those strange places that he goes is that the man shows that he is really sort of crazy by the stuff that he tries. For instance, after that magnificent victory in the South, King is crazy enough to take seriously what he has said to the people. Those who talk about King the great orator, do not understand: King was not simply a great orator -- he was a great mover of himself and others through terrible situations. He could orate because he had moved. By January , he leaves Alabama and goes to Chicago. Anybody who goes to Chicago in January when she or he has the chance to be in Alabama must be a little bit off-center. But if you consider where the center of this country is now, and will be in the twenty-first century, you know we need as many eccentrics as possible. And that was King --off to Chicago in the winter. Off not just to the South side of Chicago, where some very important people lived, but off to West Lawndale, one of the toughest, most needy places you could find in Chicago. There we hear King speaking a word that is most unpopular at the end of the twentieth century: If King is to speak for them truly, then his voice must reflect their voice. It, too, must be alienated and it is likely to be increasingly at odds with the rest of American society. From that point on, they accelerated their attempt to subvert the life and work of one of the greatest lovers of American democracy that the nation has ever produced. At the same time, as we listen to the new voice of King and observe him carefully, we have to recognize that this man was dealing with deep hungers, deep needs, deep weaknesses in his own life. If we can look at him closely, avoid the voyeurism of modern television, and try to see him with both integrity and compassion, we realize that in one terrible motion he is both damning and redeeming himself again and again and again. King knows this, but with generosity of spirit, he keeps walking with Stokely. And a young teenager comes up to King and says, "I hope you understand, now, Dr. King, you were trying to get us to love white people before we loved ourselves. Because when King heard it, he must have also heard a friend of his saying, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Healthy self-love is a religious imperative. When King began to speak out on Vietnam, it was not a popular movement. He risked a great deal --including, I am convinced, his life. He knew that the poor of this country were being sent to destroy the poor of that country; he could not be silent in the face of such tragedy. Finally, there are two more things that I want to suggest we must deal with as we move with King through the urban explosions of the late s. As he was going through that experience, he had to figure out the question constantly: I suspect the twenty-first century will need a lot of challenging of the policy makers, not with words but with deeds. Where else can this Ph. Everybody else knows what Ph. He thought that they were for serving garbage men. And I call your attention to that because, as Martin used to say, we need more Ph. The last word of all is in many ways the most painful one, but we must go with King far enough finally to be able to face the fact -- the hard, necessary fact -- that there is a very strong likelihood that the agencies of our own federal government were deeply involved in his assassination. Now what do you do with that? And we are the ones who must do it. We the people must redeem our land and remake America --again and again and again. The whole future of America depends upon the impact and influence of Martin Luther King, through us, remaking America again and again. Vincent Harding talked to us about what is prophetic and what is transcendent, about what looks forward and sees the future and guides that future because it is called from a transcendent

spiritual space. He was asking us to remember Christ during the agony in the garden and not just the Christ of the resurrection. He asked us to remember the pain and the acceptance of pain, self-doubt and the courage of perseverance. He says that educational institutions do an excellent job, after all is said and done, of training the rational mind. We have even gotten better at addressing the emotional development of students.

Chapter 2 : Martin Luther King Jr. - Wikipedia

Written by a confidante of Martin Luther King, this book paints a fuller picture of one of our world's most important people. An informative, poetic read about the transition of MLK after his "I Have A Dream" speech.

His mother was an accomplished organist and choir leader who took him to various churches to sing, and he received attention for singing "I Want to Be More and More Like Jesus". King later became a member of the junior choir in his church. When the boys were six, they started school: King had to attend a school for African Americans and the other boy went to one for whites public schools were among the facilities segregated by state law. In his adolescent years, he initially felt resentment against whites due to the "racial humiliation" that he, his family, and his neighbors often had to endure in the segregated South. At the age of 13, he denied the bodily resurrection of Jesus during Sunday school. On the ride home to Atlanta by bus, he and his teacher were ordered by the driver to stand so that white passengers could sit down. King initially refused but complied after his teacher told him that he would be breaking the law if he did not submit. During this incident, King said that he was "the angriest I have ever been in my life. At that time, many students had abandoned further studies to enlist in World War II. Due to this, Morehouse was eager to fill its classrooms. At the age of 15, King passed the exam and entered Morehouse. He had concluded that the church offered the most assuring way to answer "an inner urge to serve humanity. Proctor who went on to become well-known preachers in the black church. King became fond of the street because a classmate had an aunt who prepared collard greens for them, which they both relished. The daughter had been involved with a professor prior to her relationship with King. King planned to marry her, but friends advised against it, saying that an interracial marriage would provoke animosity from both blacks and whites, potentially damaging his chances of ever pastoring a church in the South. He continued to have lingering feelings toward the woman he left; one friend was quoted as saying, "He never recovered. Martin Luther King Jr. King was on the committee from the Birmingham African-American community that looked into the case; E. Nixon and Clifford Durr decided to wait for a better case to pursue because the incident involved a minor. Gayle that ended racial segregation on all Montgomery public buses. The group was created to harness the moral authority and organizing power of black churches to conduct nonviolent protests in the service of civil rights reform. The group was inspired by the crusades of evangelist Billy Graham , who befriended King after he attended a Graham crusade in New York City. Harris , Walter E. Izola Curry "a mentally ill black woman who thought that King was conspiring against her with communists" stabbed him in the chest with a letter opener. King underwent emergency surgery with three doctors: Cordice ; he remained hospitalized for several weeks. Curry was later found mentally incompetent to stand trial. Sullivan ; the case was litigated in reference to the newspaper advertisement " Heed Their Rising Voices ". Wachtel founded a tax-exempt fund to cover the expenses of the suit and to assist the nonviolent civil rights movement through a more effective means of fundraising. This organization was named the "Gandhi Society for Human Rights. He was displeased with the pace that President Kennedy was using to address the issue of segregation. In , King and the Gandhi Society produced a document that called on the President to follow in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln and issue an executive order to deliver a blow for civil rights as a kind of Second Emancipation Proclamation. Kennedy did not execute the order. Johnson and Robert F. He warned King to discontinue these associations and later felt compelled to issue the written directive that authorized the FBI to wiretap King and other SCLC leaders. Edgar Hoover feared the civil rights movement and investigated the allegations of communist infiltration. Journalistic accounts and televised footage of the daily deprivation and indignities suffered by Southern blacks, and of segregationist violence and harassment of civil rights workers and marchers, produced a wave of sympathetic public opinion that convinced the majority of Americans that the civil rights movement was the most important issue in American politics in the early s. There were often dramatic stand-offs with segregationist authorities, who sometimes turned violent. This included opposition by more militant blacks such as Nation of Islam member Malcolm X. The movement mobilized thousands of citizens for a broad-front nonviolent attack on every aspect of segregation within the city and attracted nationwide attention. When King

first visited on December 15, , he "had planned to stay a day or so and return home after giving counsel. According to King, "that agreement was dishonored and violated by the city" after he left town. But for the first time, we witnessed being kicked out of jail. King requested a halt to all demonstrations and a "Day of Penance" to promote nonviolence and maintain the moral high ground. Divisions within the black community and the canny, low-key response by local government defeated efforts. After Albany, King sought to choose engagements for the SCLC in which he could control the circumstances, rather than entering into pre-existing situations. Birmingham campaign King was arrested in for protesting the treatment of blacks in Birmingham. The campaign used nonviolent but intentionally confrontational tactics, developed in part by Rev. Black people in Birmingham, organizing with the SCLC, occupied public spaces with marches and sit-ins , openly violating laws that they considered unjust. Over the concerns of an uncertain King, SCLC strategist James Bevel changed the course of the campaign by recruiting children and young adults to join in the demonstrations. In some cases, bystanders attacked the police, who responded with force. But the campaign was a success: Connor lost his job, the "Jim Crow" signs came down, and public places became more open to blacks. King argues that the crisis of racism is too urgent, and the current system too entrenched: Augustine, Florida, Main article: However, the pacifist SCLC accepted them. Augustine , including a delegation of rabbis and the year-old mother of the governor of Massachusetts, all of whom were arrested. During the course of this movement, the Civil Rights Act of was passed. This injunction temporarily halted civil rights activity until King defied it by speaking at Brown Chapel on January 2, King, representing the SCLC, was among the leaders of the "Big Six" civil rights organizations who were instrumental in the organization of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom , which took place on August 28, Kennedy in changing the focus of the march. However, the organizers were firm that the march would proceed. President Kennedy was concerned the turnout would be less than , Therefore, he enlisted the aid of additional church leaders and Walter Reuther , president of the United Automobile Workers , to help mobilize demonstrators for the cause. The march originally was conceived as an event to dramatize the desperate condition of blacks in the southern U. Organizers intended to denounce the federal government for its failure to safeguard the civil rights and physical safety of civil rights workers and blacks. The group acquiesced to presidential pressure and influence, and the event ultimately took on a far less strident tone. The march made specific demands: At the time, it was the largest gathering of protesters in Washington, D. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. In , Raveling, then 26, was standing near the podium, and immediately after the oration, impulsively asked King if he could have his copy of the speech. The first attempt to march on March 7, , was aborted because of mob and police violence against the demonstrators. This day has become known as Bloody Sunday and was a major turning point in the effort to gain public support for the civil rights movement. King, however, was not present. He did not attend the march due to church duties, but he later wrote, "If I had any idea that the state troopers would use the kind of brutality they did, I would have felt compelled to give up my church duties altogether to lead the line. The SCLC petitioned for an injunction in federal court against the State of Alabama; this was denied and the judge issued an order blocking the march until after a hearing. Nonetheless, King led marchers on March 9 to the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, then held a short prayer session before turning the marchers around and asking them to disperse so as not to violate the court order. The unexpected ending of this second march aroused the surprise and anger of many within the local movement. In , after several successes in the south, King, Bevel, and others in the civil rights organizations took the movement to the North, with Chicago as their first destination. King and Ralph Abernathy, both from the middle class, moved into a building at S. Johnson meeting with King in the White House Cabinet Room ,

King later stated and Abernathy wrote that the movement received a worse reception in Chicago than in the South. Marches, especially the one through Marquette Park on August 5, , were met by thrown bottles and screaming throngs. Rioting seemed very possible. Daley to cancel a march in order to avoid the violence that he feared would result.

Chapter 3 : SparkNotes: Martin Luther King, Jr.: Further Reading

Civil rights activist Vincent Harding was a friend and colleague of King and worked with Coretta Scott King to establish the King Center in Atlanta, serving as its first director.

The vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. And he reversed the question: Speech on April 3, in Memphis Tennessee. I recall the fear I felt, and my parents discussed openly when hearing the news. Detroit had riots in July of that were fresh in my memory. And on March 14th—just three weeks before he was assassinated—Dr. King had spoken at the high school that I would attend a few years later. We deeply feared that riots in Detroit would resume on that night. What was also ignited in those three weeks and the news of assassination was an intense curiosity within my spirit. I wondered why this man, who spoke of nonviolence, was so violently murdered. I wondered why someone would kill him. I wondered why my city was a cauldron. The fear of those moments propelled me to explore. To listen to the recordings of Dr. Years later at M. I had to choose my minors to supplement my engineering degree. I chose creative writing and spent four semesters reading and writing about the work of Dr. I came to understand that Dr. He zeroed in on the importance of economics. I went on to become an economist and, when working in Washington D. And this is what Dr. Well, that made people feel like he was not grateful for what Lyndon Johnson had done. It was interesting that in Vietnam we were able to design bombs to bomb villages yet our bombs never bombed any of the poppy fields. So he was getting on to an economic issue, a corrupt economic issue. What that means is that the wealth has gotta be redistributed to some degree. And he had the ability to unify masses of people — not just black people but white people too. He started to bring in whites in , and white ministers started supporting the civil-rights effort. As the years went on I was introduced to a friend of Dr. Harding wrote a book about Dr. King called *The Inconvenient Hero*. It illuminated the pressure that Dr. King courageously brought to bear on economic injustice, militarism and racism. It is the clearest portrait of who I believe Dr. King really was that I have read to date. King is not just a historical deity. A student of his thinking will see his vision of a universal basic income discussed in a speech at Stanford University 45 years before it became popular in Silicon Valley and Palo Alto to address the disruption of technological change in the digital era. Looking today at the work of Dr. Peter Temin in his book *The Vanishing Middle Class* , we see that the toxicity of racism continues and furthermore we see that the divide has deepened as more and more Americans descend into stagnation and poverty. As Michael Eric Dyson wrote 10 years ago in his book entitled, *April 4th*, His justice agenda has been smothered by adulation. Dyson goes on to quote Andrew Young who asserts: Martin has become a larger-than-life symbol, almost a deity, rather than the flesh-and-blood man I knew. There is a danger in this. We should not lose our sense of how the civil rights movement happened, because if we do, younger generations, along with ourselves, will lose a sense of how new opportunities were fought for, and won. In blurring, or ignoring, the context of the struggle, the veneration of Martin Luther King becomes devoid of depth and context, and the ability to use his model to renew the struggle for a just and equitable society is lost. Andrew Young is right to emphasize the depth and context of the struggle that Martin Luther King fought. Economics was at the center of that struggle and to study the visions of tragedy and the blueprints of health such as the Freedom Budget for All Americans that Dr. King helped create under the leadership of A. Phillip Randolph helps us as we strive to put it at the center of the struggle today. But in the suffering and tension of tragedy there is often regenerative energy. Cone has written about this masterfully in his superb book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Even in the moments just after Dr. Kennedy shared a vision in Indianapolis. In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God. It is hard to know if our society can meet these challenges. It also hard to imagine life if we do not. The resistances are real. He talked about the attractions of conformity to the structure of power and the ideas that support them. As Michael Eric Dyson says about this sermon: Cornel West also writes about the resistances to the vision of the real Dr. King , the one that Vincent Harding wrote about. We now come to the 50th anniversary of his assassination, and we once again are met with sterilized versions of his legacy. A radical man deeply hated and held in contempt is recast as if he was a

universally loved moderate. These neoliberal revisionists thrive on the spectacle of their smartness and the visibility of their mainstream status – yet rarely, if ever, have they said a mumbling word about what would have concerned King, such as US drone strikes, house raids, and torture sites, or raised their voices about escalating inequality, poverty or Wall Street domination under neoliberal administrations – be the president white or black. The police killing of Stephon Clark in Sacramento may stir them but the imperial massacres in Yemen, Libya or Gaza leave them cold. Because they fear for their careers in and acceptance by the neoliberal establishment. Yet King said angrily: King, late in his life increasingly walked alone. He walked alone amidst the crowd despite the attacks from the media and many of his fellow civil rights leaders. He was an inconvenient hero and his agenda was fiercely challenging to the structure of society. Today one senses that many people are despondent and question the legitimacy of governance and economic institutions in our advanced economies. Today there is not just a fear of the elites but also a fear of disintegration of society if the body politics abides the design of the elites. The challenge now appears to me to envision how we can put back together society, broaden prosperity and opportunity and reestablish legitimacy and trust. In recent weeks there are signs that suggest that we might do better. Young people are rising. Not opportunistically operating to please the powerful or conform to a stale notion of hierarchical authority. They know they need new maps and better maps. I am often asked what is new economic thinking? I say that new economic thinking is something different than the conventional wisdom that failed yesterday. It is not novelty. It is an economics that is rigorous, evidence-based when it can be, and focused on the real problems of society today. We are now in an unsustainable social dynamic. We need to reimagine what is good for our country. The old model is failing in many respects. There are new structural dimensions that were not present during Martin Luther King Jr. But the vision that he provided us of the evils and of the possibilities are a very good compass to meet the challenges of tomorrow. And the political will to rise to the occasion will have to accompany the augmented vision of Dr. I sense that there is a new vitality of activism on the horizon. Interestingly an example includes the videos of the granddaughter of Martin Luther King Jr, Yolanda Renee King , age 9, and of another young woman named Naomi Wadler, age 11, as they gave speeches at the March for our Lives rally to support gun control. They and the young people around this world who are increasingly vocal and active inspire me to believe that they just might answer the call of Dr. And who will join this standing up and the ones who stood without sweet company will sing and sing back into the mountains and if necessary we are the ones we have been waiting for Poem for South African Women Below is a series of links to videos, speeches and books to help anyone who wants to delve deeply into the vision and life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and what it perhaps portends for our future.

Chapter 4 : Books & Bibliography | The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change

Get this from a library! Martin Luther King, the inconvenient hero. [Vincent Harding] -- In these eloquent essays, the noted scholar and activist Vincent Harding reflects on the forgotten legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the meaning of his life today.

Chapter 5 : A Different Drummer: Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero

Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero by Vincent Harding This widening of his message and his tactics entail-ed controversy even within his own movement. But they point to a consistent expansion of his critique of American injustice and his solidarity with the oppressed.

Chapter 6 : Learning from MLK, the Inconvenient Hero

Vincent Harding, Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero () Harding was a friend of King and drafted his famous Riverside Church speech, in which King publicly denounced the American war in Vietnam”Ed.

Chapter 7 : Is America Possible? - Veterans of Hope

As part of a November conversation with Dr. Vincent Harding, Professor Emeritus of Religion and Social Transformation at Iliff School of Theology, and Chairperson of the Veterans of Hope.

Chapter 8 : Martin Luther King, the Inconvenient Hero - Vincent Harding - Google Books

A suggested list of literary criticism on 's Martin Luther King, Jr.. The listed critical essays and books will be invaluable for writing essays and papers on Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chapter 9 : Vincent Harding - Wikipedia

Religion News Service is marking the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. with stories and commentaries looking back at the tragic, momentous event.