

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gov. Mapp Issues Official Message For Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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dr. king

In commemoration of the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Governor Kenneth Mapp issued a message to residents of the territory recognizing the work of the civil rights leader.

In the brief statement, Mapp writes: "By leading and inspiring hundreds of thousands across the nation to protest unjust laws and practices in non-violent assembly, only to be met with government-sanctioned violence, Dr. King was able to appeal directly to the

moral conscience of a nation."

Many individuals and organizations in recent years have taken action to celebrate the holiday by volunteering and giving back to their communities, calling it a "day on, not a day off."

Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tenn., and soon after his death, a campaign began for a national holiday to honor the efforts of the Baptist minister.

President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday, the third Monday in January, into law in 1983. It was first celebrated three years later.

The full contents of Mapp's message is found below:

Many remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the great civil rights leader who led demonstrations and marches, who delivered inspiring speeches to large crowds, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, and who won audiences with presidents and other world leaders. I believe that we must remember, also, that he was among the most gifted spiritual leaders of his time. Let us consider, on this occasion, how his faith influenced the unprecedented advancement of civil and basic human rights still underway.

Dr. King was most visible as the new leader of the long struggle for racial equality under the laws of our nation. He preached his belief that laws would not be changed until the hearts of the nation were changed. By leading and inspiring hundreds of thousands across the nation to protest unjust laws and practices in non-violent assembly, only to be met with government-sanctioned violence, Dr. King was able to appeal directly to the moral conscience of a nation.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, addressed many of the issues of race, and paved the way for many other just causes. Consider subsequent laws which now address the rights of women, children, the elderly, the disabled, the worker, and so on. A new era of moral consciousness began when a man, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., dared to put his faith in the good in people's hearts, and in his own religiosity.

There is nothing complicated about the strategy. Victory over injustice, if we are truly to embrace our best examples, we must muster the courage to choose what is right over what is wrong. The moral conscience is the great influence in such matters. Let us resolve to develop ours, both individually and collectively, to the levels inspired by a great man of God and country, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

May God Bless America and the US Virgin Islands,

Kenneth E.
Mapp

Governor

Image Credit: Dr. King's 1963 March on Washington, ABC News

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