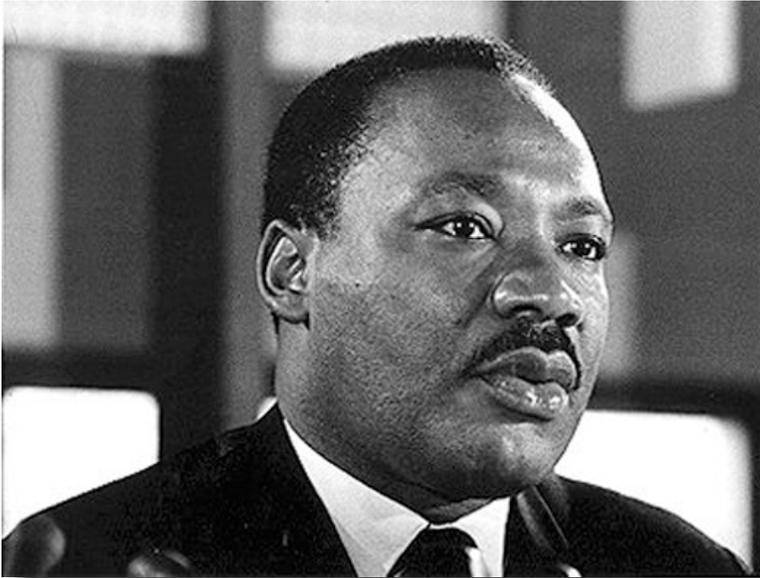




## IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*JANUARY 15, 2008*

**A**s a country, we join together each year on the third Monday in January to remember a remarkable man, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



*The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Dr. King was born on Jan. 15, 1929. He would have been 79 years old this year. As the world knows, he was shot and killed in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968. His legacy to all people is to remind us that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Injustice is what he called moral blindness.

Dr. King's life represented the continual struggle to promote freedom, equality, peace, justice, and dignity for all races and peoples, and to bring an end to man's inhumanity to his fellow man. For this, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on Dec. 10, 1964, just five months after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law.

In 2008, the world again finds itself in an historic time of war, hatred, brutality and killing. In our hope to establish peace, our powerful nations turn to militaristic solutions. But we must continue to ask ourselves whether this is the way to peace and understanding or the way to further alienation, hostility and isolation.

Our Navajo elders long ago understood that for peace and happiness to thrive, the people needed to live in harmony and beauty. Even today, all of our prayers, and all of our aspirations for ourselves, our families, and our People has this at its center.

**D**r. King taught that positive change comes through education rather than force.

“The ultimate weakness of violence,” he said, “is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. .... Returning violence for violence multiples violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.”

Dr. King inevitably reminds Navajos and Native people of our own great leaders of the past, the struggles they confronted to achieve justice for their people, and their ultimate ends for unpopular ideas of their times which we now often take for granted.

Our own great Navajo leader Narbona was known as a fierce warrior for most of his life, later transforming himself into one of our greatest peacemakers, and ultimately being shot and killed in 1849 after having just negotiated peace with the American soldiers he knew as “the New Men.”

Like the virtues of love, tolerance, understanding, and empathy, the shortcomings of hatred, intolerance, racism, and apathy are learned from childhood. We must teach our children well, and understand that even in our modern world the teachings of our Navajo elders hold all that we need for a good life.

On this Martin Luther King Day, I ask that our thoughts for our families, our Navajo Nation, and our country be good thoughts, and that we strive to forgive the shortcomings of those around us.

  
DR. JOE SHIRLEY, JR., PRESIDENT  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**