

## **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – An Honored Leader**

By Rev. Buddy Monahan

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a man of dreams and visions. Within Native American communities dreams and visions are an essential part of determination and survival. A person who seeks dreams and visions knows how things once were and how they need to improve in order for all parts of creation to exist together in a loving and caring environment.

Throughout Indian country there is an unwritten checklist that exists as we seek leadership among our people. One must humble themselves as they seek equality for others. They must see their acts as a means of unselfishness so others will feel a sense of self-worth. One must be a person of courage to be able to stand up on behalf of others and not allow your ego to overcome your calling. It takes a person of intelligence to be able to know the barriers that might be ahead and how to plan for them. A leader must also possess a good heart as they seek creative ways of communicating in a peaceful manner. Many nations and tribes have and had chiefs and other leaders possessing these same qualities. Native people today are living testaments of what these qualities can accomplish for a survival of people. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also embodied these leadership qualities and is an honored leader among Native communities.

During the Civil Rights Movement the American Indian Movement was also on the rise. It was a time when many individuals began to find out more about their history and the resurgence of tribal awareness and pride. Both Movements also inspired Churches to get involved with specific causes that sought to focus on equality. For some, the energy and passion for these causes has been lost. For those who continue to live within the Movements it continues to be a positive experience of empowering people to know who they are and educate one another the power of civil rights within our own surroundings.

As Native people we have always believed the dreams and visions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We will continue to work with all parts of creation to make these things come true. We know our Creator will continue to lead us to that promise land of total equality and harmony.

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