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HAVE YOURSELF A GODLESS LITTLE CHRISTMAS

By Bill O'Reilly

Once again we are in the Christmas season, and the coal-in-your-stocking crowd is back at it. This year the American Humanist Association is putting up bus ads in selected cities that say, "No god? No problem! Be good for goodness sake." The picture accompanying the text shows a group of young people wearing Santa hats. Ho, ho, ho.

A second front was launched by the virulently anti-God group "Freedom from Religion."

(NEO: DEFINITION OF VIRULENT:

"Hostile to the point of being venomous; intensely acrimonious."

THIS IS HOW O'REILLY DESCRIBES AN ORGANIZATION THAT DISAGREES WITH HIS BELIEFS. AS YOU CONTINUE READING WHAT O'REILLY HAS TO SAY, IT SHOULD BECOME OBVIOUS WHICH SIDE IS BEING "VIRULENT").

It is celebrating Christmas in Las Vegas with ads that say, "Yes, Virginia, there is no God." Nice.

(NEO: THEY ARE NOT "CELEBRATING" CHRISTMAS. THEY ARE MAKING PUBLIC, THEIR STAND ON RELIGION - SOMETHING YOU HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH, WHEN IT IS YOUR FAITH THAT IS PLASTERING ITS BELIEFS ALL OVER BILLBOARDS, AND EVERYWHERE ELSE YOU CAN POST YOUR MESSAGE.

AT LEAST THEIR MESSAGE DOESN'T INCLUDE A DEATH THREAT - LIKE YOURS USUALLY DOES).

The question is, why bother?

(NEO: THEY COULD PROBABLY ASK YOU THE SAME THING).

Why spend money at Christmas time to spread dubious will among men?

(NEO: I DON'T KNOW. WHY DON'T YOU ASK THOUSANDS OF CHRISTIANS WHO DO EXACTLY THAT EVERY YEAR. I WOULD CONSIDER THREATENING PEOPLE WITH ETERNAL TORTURE TO BE "SPREADING DUBIOUS WILL AMONG MEN" - BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY I ROLL).

The reason, I believe, is that the atheists are jealous of the Yuletide season.

(NEO: OKAY. TELL US WHY YOU BELIEVE THAT).

While Christians have Jesus and Jews have the prophets, non-believers have Bill Maher.

(NEO: AT LEAST WE KNOW BILL MAHER IS REAL. I HOPE THAT'S NOT YOUR ONLY REASON).

There are no atheist Christmas carols, no pagan displays of largesse like Santa Claus.

(NEO: OF COURSE THERE ARE NO ATHEIST CHRISTMAS CAROLS - CHRISTMAS IS A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY. WHY WOULD ANYONE WRITE AN ATHEIST CAROL FOR A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY?

YOU ALSO SEEM TO BE CONFUSED ABOUT PAGANS. PAGANS ARE NOTHING LIKE ATHEISTS - THEY ARE MUCH MORE LIKE YOU: THEY BELIEVE IN INVISIBLE GODS - WE DON'T).

In fact, for the non-believer, Christmas is just a day off, a time to consider that Mardi Gras is less than two months away.

(NEO: WE CELEBRATE AND ENJOY CHRISTMAS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. WE EXCHANGE GIFTS AND SPEND TIME WITH OUR FAMILIES. PEOPLE OF MANY OTHER RELIGIONS ENJOY CHRISTMAS AS WELL. BELIEF IN JESUS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS).

But there is a serious side to this, and the American "humanists" should listen up. Christmas is a joyous time for children; that's the big upside of celebrating the birth of Jesus.

(NEO: CHILDREN AREN'T JOYOUS BECAUSE OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS - THEY ARE JOYOUS BECAUSE OF ALL THE PRESENTS THEY ARE GOING TO GET, AND THE EXCITEMENT OF SEEING SELDOM-SEEN FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS).

Why, then, do people who want to "be good" spend money denigrating a beautiful day?

(NEO: THEY ARE NOT DENIGRATING A BEAUTIFUL DAY. YOU ARE JUST CLAIMING THEY ARE, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SHARE YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS).

Could it be that the humanists are not really interested in good at all? Maybe.

The head humanist guy, Roy Speckhardt, says the anti-God signs are worthy because they send a message that atheists shouldn't be vilified as immoral. Well, old Roy needs to wise up. The signs actually create resentment and hostility toward atheists.

(NEO: BUT YOU APPARENTLY SEE NO PROBLEM WHEN CHRISTIAN SIGNS THREATEN NONCHRISTIANS WITH ETERNAL TORTURE. SOMEHOW, IN YOUR MIND, THAT DOESN'T CREATE RESENTMENT AND HOSTILITY?).

Here's a bulletin: Many parents don't want their children to see bus signs proclaiming that God is a big hoax.

(NEO: THAT'S CORRECT. IT IS MUCH HARDER TO INDOCTRINATE CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE EXPOSED TO OTHER IDEAS - AND ESPECIALLY TO FACTS).

That message may be constitutionally protected,

(NEO: THERE'S A REASON WHY THAT MESSAGE IS CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED. IT IS BECAUSE OUR FOUNDING FATHERS DESIGNED OUR COUNTRY TO ALLOW FREEDOM OF RELIGION, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, PROTECTING ITS CITIZENS FROM DOMINATION BY ANY ONE RELIGION.

DESPITE THE CONSTANT ATTACKS ON OUR CONSTITUTION BY RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISTS, AND THE LIE THAT YOU YOURSELF SPREAD BY CLAIMING, FALSELY, THAT OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED ON JUDEO-CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES, THE SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE STILL STANDS - BARELY).

but it is not going to engender much goodwill among believers.

(NEO: THAT SOUNDS LIKE A THREAT. BUT THEN AGAIN, YOU GUYS HAVE THOUSANDS OF YEARS EXPERIENCE AT ISSUING THREATS, DON'T YOU?).

Of course, Roy Speckhardt knows that, and he is being disingenuous with the "just looking out for atheists" posture.

(NEO: THAT STATEMENT WOULD BE TRUE - IF YOUR ARGUMENT WAS VALID. BUT FOR YOUR ARGUMENT TO BE VALID, YOU WOULD HAVE HAD TO SUPPORT IT WITH EVIDENCE. THE ONLY THING YOU SUPPORTED YOUR ARGUMENT WITH WAS OPINIONS).

What many non-believers enjoy doing is mocking those who embrace theology.

(NEO: YOUR BRUTAL HISTORY PROVES THAT, WHAT MANY FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIANS ENJOYED DOING WAS EXECUTING THOSE WHO WON'T EMBRACE YOUR GOD. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT WE DO NOT RESPOND TO YOUR BELIEFS - THE WAY YOU RESPONDED TO OURS).

I guess that makes some atheists feel better, because there is no other reason to run down Christmas.

(NEO: THEY DIDN'T RUN DOWN CHRISTMAS - READ THE SIGN AGAIN).

It is a happy day for most human beings.

(NEO: FINALLY, WE AGREE ON SOMETHING).

The latest Rasmussen poll on the season says that 72% of Americans like saying "Merry Christmas," while just 22% prefer the greeting "happy holidays."

(NEO: SINCE 75% OF AMERICA IS CHRISTIAN, OF COURSE 72% LIKE SAYING, "MERRY CHRISTMAS." THE REASON FOR SAYING "HAPPY HOLIDAYS" IS IN CASES WHERE YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH RELIGION SOMEONE IS, AND THEREFORE, WHICH HOLIDAY THEY CELEBRATE (CHRISTMAS, CHANUKAH, KWANZAA, OR OTHER). THAT IS WHY STORES SHOULD BE USING "HAPPY HOLIDAYS" - SO THAT EVERYONE CAN FEEL INCLUDED. THAT SHOULD NOT BE OFFENSIVE TO ANYONE. BUT YOU HAVE CAMPAIGNED TO FORCE EVERYONE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ONLY YOUR HOLIDAY DURING THIS SEASON.

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS MAKING THIS AN ANGRY SEASON WHEN IT SHOULD BE A HAPPY SEASON FOR ALL. MAYBE YOU NEED TO LOOK UP THE WORD "ALL." YOU'LL FIND IT DOESN'T JUST MEAN CHRISTIANS).

So the evidence suggests that, despite the ACLU, atheist groups, and a politically correct media, Christmas is actually gaining in relevance and, perhaps, reverence.

(NEO: WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW ABOUT "EVIDENCE." YOUR ARGUMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DEVOID OF ANYTHING EVEN COMING CLOSE TO RESEMBLING EVIDENCE.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN BY "GAINING IN RELEVANCE," BUT IF YOU LOOK AT THE RELIGIOUS STATISTICS FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS, YOU WILL SEE THAT DISBELIEF IS SKYROCKETING; INDICATING THAT YOUR CLAIM, "GAINING IN REVERENCE," IS PROBABLY "WISHFUL THINKING" ON YOUR PART).

Most folks know a good thing when they see it, and the converse is true as well.

(NEO: IF THAT WERE TRUE - YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN OFF THE AIR YEARS AGO.

I'LL LET YOU HAVE THE LAST WORD).

That's why they know these anti-God signs at Christmas time are dumb and unnecessary. Isn't that right, Virginia?

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

NASA FINDS LOTS OF WATER ON MOON

ROCKET PROBE DISCOVERS LARGE AMOUNTS OF ICE

A NASA PROBE HAS TURNED UP WATER ON THE MOON. LOTS OF WATER. “WE PRACTICALLY TASTED IT WITH THE IMPACT,” SAID A GEOLOGIST. THE DISCOVERY—MADE LAST MONTH AFTER THE SPACE AGENCY BLASTED THE PROBE INTO THE MOON TO STUDY THE DEBRIS—RAISES THE CHANCES OF ONE DAY SETTING UP A LUNAR OUTPOST. WHAT'S MORE, THE FROZEN WATER COULD HOLD CLUES TO THE ORIGINS OF THE UNIVERSE.

WATER HAS BEEN FOUND ON THE MOON BEFORE, BUT IN VERY SMALL AMOUNTS AND ONLY BOUND TO DIRT PARTICLES. THE PRESENCE OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF ICE WILL BE HELPFUL FOR ASTRONAUTS PARTICIPATING IN EXTENDED MOONWALKS PLANNED FOR 2020—BOTH FOR DRINKING AND FOR CONVERSION INTO HYDROGEN FOR ROCKET FUEL.

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RELIGION

BLASPHEMY LAWS

PERHAPS IN AN EFFORT TO REHABILITATE THE UNITED STATES’ IMAGE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD, THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAS JOINED A U.N. EFFORT TO RESTRICT RELIGIOUS SPEECH. THIS COUNTRY SHOULD NEVER SACRIFICE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ON THE ALTAR OF RELIGION.

AROUND THE WORLD, FREE SPEECH IS BEING SACRIFICED ON THE ALTAR OF RELIGION. WHETHER DEFINED AS HATE SPEECH, DISCRIMINATION OR SIMPLE BLASPHEMY, GOVERNMENTS ARE DECLARING UNLIMITED FREE SPEECH AS THE ENEMY OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION. THIS GROWING MOVEMENT HAS REACHED THE UNITED NATIONS, WHERE RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE COUNTRIES RECEIVED A BOOST IN THEIR CAMPAIGN TO PASS AN INTERNATIONAL BLASPHEMY LAW. IT CAME FROM THE MOST UNLIKELY OF PLACES: THE UNITED STATES.

WHILE ATTRACTING SURPRISINGLY LITTLE ATTENTION, THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED THE EFFORT OF LARGELY MUSLIM NATIONS IN THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL TO RECOGNIZE EXCEPTIONS TO FREE SPEECH FOR ANY "NEGATIVE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS STEREOTYPING." THE EXCEPTION WAS MADE AS PART OF A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FREE SPEECH THAT PASSED THIS MONTH, BUT IT IS THE EXCEPTION, NOT THE RULE THAT WORRIES CIVIL LIBERTARIANS. THOUGH THE RESOLUTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, EUROPEAN AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY REMAIN AT ODDS ON THE ISSUE OF PROTECTING RELIGIONS FROM CRITICISM. IT IS VIEWED AS A TRANSPARENT BID TO APPEAL TO THE "MUSLIM STREET" AND OUR ARAB ALLIES, WITH THE ADMINISTRATION SEEKING GREATER COEXISTENCE THROUGH THE CURTAILMENT OF OBJECTIONABLE SPEECH. THOUGH IT HAS NO DIRECT ENFORCEMENT (AND IS WEAKER THAN EARLIER VERSIONS), IT IS STILL VIEWED AS A VICTORY FOR THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO JUXTAPOSE AND BALANCE THE RIGHTS OF SPEECH AND RELIGION.

A 'MISUSED' FREEDOM?

IN THE RESOLUTION, THE ADMINISTRATION ALIGNED ITSELF WITH EGYPT, WHICH HAS LONG BEEN CRITICIZED FOR PROSECUTING ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS FOR INSULTING ISLAM. FOR EXAMPLE, EGYPT RECENTLY BANNED A JOURNAL THAT PUBLISHED RESPECTED POET HELMI SALEM MERELY BECAUSE ONE OF HIS POEMS COMPARED GOD TO A VILLAGER WHO FEEDS DUCKS AND MILKS COWS. THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N., HISHAM BADR, WASTED NO TIME IN HERALDING THE NEW CONSENSUS WITH THE U.S. THAT "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION HAS BEEN SOMETIMES MISUSED" AND SHOWING THAT THE "TRUE NATURE OF THIS RIGHT" MUST YIELD GOVERNMENT LIMITATIONS.

HIS U.S. COUNTERPART, DOUGLAS GRIFFITHS, HERALDED "THIS JOINT PROJECT WITH EGYPT" AND SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION TO ACHIEVE "TOLERANCE AND THE DIGNITY OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS." WHILE NOT EXPRESSLY ENDORSING BLASPHEMY PROSECUTIONS, THE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTED FROM OTHER WESTERN ALLIES IN SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO BALANCE FREE SPEECH AGAINST THE PROTECTING OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS.

THINLY DISGUISED BLASPHEMY LAWS ARE OFTEN DEFENDED AS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE IDEALS OF TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM. THEY IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE LAWS ACHIEVE TOLERANCE THROUGH THE ULTIMATE ACT OF INTOLERANCE: CRIMINALIZING THE ABILITY OF SOME INDIVIDUALS TO DENOUNCE SACRED OR SENSITIVE VALUES. WE DO NOT NEED FREE SPEECH TO PROTECT POPULAR THOUGHTS OR POPULAR PEOPLE. IT IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT THOSE WHO CHALLENGE THE MAJORITY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS. CRITICISM OF RELIGION IS THE VERY MEASURE OF THE GUARANTEE OF FREE SPEECH — THE LITERAL SACRED INSTITUTION OF SOCIETY.

BLASPHEMY PROSECUTIONS IN THE WEST APPEAR TO HAVE INCREASED AFTER THE RIOTS BY MUSLIMS FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF CARTOONS DISRESPECTING PROPHET MOHAMMED IN DENMARK IN 2005. RIOTERS KILLED CHRISTIANS, BURNED CHURCHES AND CALLED FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE CARTOONISTS. WHILE WESTERN COUNTRIES PUBLICLY DEFENDED FREE SPEECH, SOME QUIETLY MOVED TO DETER THOSE WHO'D CAUSE FURTHER CONTROVERSIES THROUGH UNPOPULAR SPEECH.

IN BRITAIN, IT IS A CRIME TO "ABUSE" OR "THREATEN" A RELIGION UNDER THE RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HATRED ACT 2006. A 15-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS CHARGED LAST YEAR FOR HOLDING UP A SIGN OUTSIDE A SCIENTOLOGY BUILDING DECLARING, "SCIENTOLOGY IS NOT A RELIGION, IT IS A DANGEROUS CULT. "IN FRANCE, FAMED ACTRESS BRIGITTE BARDOT WAS CONVICTED FOR SAYING IN 2006 THAT MUSLIMS WERE RUINING FRANCE IN A LETTER TO THEN-INTERIOR MINISTER (AND NOW PRESIDENT) NICOLAS SARKOZY. THIS YEAR, IRELAND JOINED THIS SELF-DESTRUCTIVE TREND WITH A BLASPHEMY LAW THAT CALLS FOR THE PROSECUTION OF ANYONE WHO WRITES OR UTTERS VIEWS DEEMED "GROSSLY ABUSIVE OR INSULTING IN RELATION TO MATTERS HELD SACRED BY ANY RELIGION, THEREBY CAUSING OUTRAGE AMONG A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THE ADHERENTS OF THAT RELIGION; AND HE OR SHE INTENDS, BY THE PUBLICATION OF THE MATTER CONCERNED, TO CAUSE SUCH OUTRAGE."

'BLASPHEMY' INCIDENTS

CONSIDER JUST A FEW SUCH WESTERN "BLASPHEMY" CASES IN THE PAST TWO YEARS:

• IN HOLLAND, DUTCH PROSECUTORS ARRESTED CARTOONIST GREGORIUS NEKSCHOT FOR INSULTING CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS WITH CARTOONS, INCLUDING ONE THAT CARICATURED A CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALIST AND A MUSLIM FUNDAMENTALIST AS ZOMBIES WHO WANT TO MARRY AND ATTEND GAY RALLIES.

• IN CANADA, THE ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION PUNISHED THE REV. STEPHEN BOISSION AND THE CONCERNED CHRISTIAN COALITION FOR ANTI-GAY SPEECH, NOT ONLY AWARDING DAMAGES BUT ALSO CENSURING FUTURE SPEECH THAT THE COMMISSION DEEMS INAPPROPRIATE.

• IN ITALY, COMEDIAN SABINA GUZZANTI WAS PUT UNDER CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION FOR JOKING AT A RALLY THAT "IN 20 YEARS, THE POPE WILL BE WHERE HE OUGHT TO BE — IN HELL, TORMENTED BY GREAT BIG POOFTER (GAY) DEVILS, AND VERY ACTIVE ONES."

• IN LONDON, AN AIDE TO BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID MILIBAND WAS ARRESTED FOR "INCITING RELIGIOUS HATRED" AT HIS GYM BY SHOUTING OBSCENITIES ABOUT JEWS WHILE WATCHING NEWS REPORTS OF ISRAEL'S BOMBARDMENT OF GAZA.ALSO, DUTCH POLITICIAN GEERT WILDERS WAS BARRED FROM ENTERING BRITAIN AS A "THREAT TO PUBLIC POLICY, PUBLIC SECURITY OR PUBLIC HEALTH" BECAUSE HE MADE A MOVIE DESCRIBING THE QURAN AS A "FASCIST" BOOK AND ISLAM AS A VIOLENT RELIGION.

• IN POLAND, CATHOLIC MAGAZINE GOSC NIEDZIELNY WAS FINED $11,000 FOR INCITING "CONTEMPT, HOSTILITY AND MALICE"BY COMPARING THE ABORTION OF A WOMAN TO THE MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS AT AUSCHWITZ.

THE "BLASPHEMY" CASES INCLUDE THE PROSECUTION OF WRITERS FOR CALLING MOHAMMED A "PEDOPHILE" BECAUSE OF HIS MARRIAGE TO 6-YEAR-OLD AISHA (WHICH WAS CONSUMMATED WHEN SHE WAS 9). A FAR-RIGHT LEGISLATOR IN AUSTRIA, A PUBLISHER IN INDIA AND A CITY COUNCILMAN IN FINLAND HAVE BEEN PROSECUTED FOR REPEATING THIS VIEW OF THE HISTORICAL RECORD.

IN THE FLIPSIDE OF THE CARTOON CONTROVERSY, DUTCH PROSECUTORS THIS YEAR HAVE BROUGHT CHARGES AGAINST THE ARAB EUROPEAN LEAGUE FOR A CARTOON QUESTIONING THE HOLOCAUST.

WHAT'S NEXT?

PRIVATE COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS ARE FOLLOWING SUIT IN WHAT COULD BE SEEN AS RESPONDING TO THE EGYPTIAN-U.S. CALL FOR GREATER "RESPONSIBILITY" IN CONTROLLING SPEECH. FOR EXAMPLE, IN AN ACT OF UNPRECEDENTED COWARDICE AND SELF-CENSORSHIP, YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS PUBLISHED THE CARTOONS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD, A BOOK BY JYTTE KLAUSEN ON THE ORIGINAL MOHAMMED CARTOONS. YALE, HOWEVER, (OVER KLAUSEN'S OBJECTIONS) CUT THE ACTUAL PICTURES OF THE CARTOONS. IT WAS AKIN TO PUBLISHING A BOOK ON THE SISTINE CHAPEL WHILE BARRING ANY IMAGES OF THE PAINTINGS.

THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CURTAILMENT ON RELIGIOUS CRITICISM THREATENS RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR SPEAKERS ALIKE. HOWEVER, THE FEAR IS THAT, WHEN SPEECH BECOMES SACRILEGIOUS, ONLY THE RELIGIOUS WILL HAVE TRUE FREE SPEECH. IT IS A DANGER THAT HAS BECOME ALL THE MORE REAL AFTER THE DECISION OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO JOIN IN THE EFFORT TO CRAFT A NEW FAITH-BASED SPEECH STANDARD. IT IS NOW UP TO CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC TO BE HEARD BEFORE THE WORLD LEAVES FREE SPEECH WITH LITTLE MORE THAN A HOPE AND A PRAYER.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929 –1968) 39 YEARS.

HE WAS AN AMERICAN CLERGYMAN, ACTIVIST AND PROMINENT LEADER IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. HIS MAIN LEGACY WAS TO SECURE PROGRESS ON CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND HE IS FREQUENTLY REFERENCED AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ICON TODAY. KING IS RECOGNIZED AS A MARTYR BY TWO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. A BAPTIST MINISTER, KING BECAME A CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST EARLY IN HIS CAREER. HE LED THE 1955 MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT AND HELPED FOUND THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IN 1957, SERVING AS ITS FIRST PRESIDENT. KING'S EFFORTS LED TO THE 1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON, WHERE KING DELIVERED HIS "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH. THERE, HE RAISED PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS ONE OF THE GREATEST ORATORS IN U.S. HISTORY.

IN 1964, KING BECAME THE YOUNGEST PERSON TO RECEIVE THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR HIS WORK TO END RACIAL SEGREGATION AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION THROUGH CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND OTHER NON-VIOLENT MEANS. BY THE TIME OF HIS DEATH IN 1968, HE HAD REFOCUSED HIS EFFORTS ON ENDING POVERTY AND OPPOSING THE VIETNAM WAR, BOTH FROM A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE. KING WAS ASSASSINATED ON APRIL 4, 1968, IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. HE WAS POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM IN 1977 AND CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL IN 2004; MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY WAS ESTABLISHED AS A U.S. NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN 1986.

“NOTHING IN ALL THE WORLD IS MORE DANGEROUS

THAN SINCERE IGNORANCE AND CONSCIENTIOUS STUPIDITY.”