

Many trials have faced people of color throughout the course of time; particularly entwined with American history are the challenges faced by the African American community. Only 56 years ago, the right to vote was a harrowing process, and segregation ran rampant throughout the states. Since then, the country has come a long way with the fight for justice, with the notable recent election of Kamala Harris, America's first female African-American Vice-President, sparking joy amongst millions. Many aspects of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech has bore fruition, and in some ways, exceeded expectations of the time. However, there are many statements which remain a dream. These aspects must be worked towards with a togetherness to turn the remainder of Dr. King's dream into reality.

The nation's cultural landscape has drastically changed over the last few decades. Minority groups have fought and won many battles. No longer are minorities "robbed of their dignity by signs stating: 'For Whites Only'", as Dr. King commented on. When out in public, one shares the same public restrooms and movie theaters with everyone around them, and it is increasingly common to see highly diverse groups of friends, couples, and neighbors. As Dr. King noted, the African American community had been "languished in the corners of American society" for centuries. Today more than ever, this is changing. In the recent election, the most diverse Congressional body in American history was elected, with 124 Black lawmakers. The country has seen Barack Obama, the first African-American President, serve two terms as the country's chief authority figure. Society is becoming increasingly aware of the disparities between white and non-white opportunities, as seen by the overwhelming support the Black Lives Matter protests in May received. Through improving public education systems, it is becoming easier to break the cycle of poverty that many minorities are unfortunately shackled to. In this rapidly transforming society, it is true that Dr. King's dream that "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers" is slowly but surely becoming a reality.

Despite the many advancements, however, there is much progress to be made on the ever-continuing fight for equality. Dr. King specifically pointed out that the African-American community faced “storms of persecution” and “winds of police brutality”. This unfortunately remains true, as African-Americans are nearly twice as likely to be the victims of police force as white people. On May 25th, 2020, news of the death of George Floyd took the nation by storm. The horrifying incident brought many out of their homes for the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, with studies estimating that over seven million people participated in the Black Lives Matter protests that swept the nation. The national fury and mourning brought other similar incidents to light—notably the deaths of Breonna Taylor and Elijah McClain. Although having been an ongoing social issue for much of American history, the incidents shed light to many those who largely remained unaware of the discrepancies in social equality, but made it clear that America still has a long way to go. Dr. King also brought to attention the “lonely island of poverty” that many Black people were stuck in the cycle of. Although Black poverty rates are on the decline, the group still has the highest poverty rates out of racial groups, comprising 18.8% of impoverished people as of a 2018 census. This is nearly double that of the White poverty rate, highlighting the racial disparities in poverty. These issues beg the question of how to fix the issue, which can only be tackled through an increasing awareness and acknowledgement of the dreams that have yet to be brought to light.

Throughout the course of history, many battles fought by the Black community have been rewarded. If not for the efforts of key civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., our society would likely not have progressed this far. However, it is important to be educated on the ongoing fight for equality in the truest sense of the word, as it is only through acknowledging these issues as a nation that we can work towards eliminating them. As more and more people of all races and backgrounds become involved in the fight for African-American rights, it is important to listen and learn from those that have been historically silenced. Only through understanding their words and letting their voices ring clear can society continue to realize all of

Dr. King's dreams. Through the voice of the American people, America continues to make progress in social issues, working towards the day when all of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dreams are truly fulfilled and "justice [becomes] a reality for all of God's children".