



# THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME 32

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The Princeton Seminary Bulletin is published annually  
by Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey

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## Overcoming Justice Fatigue

*Teresa Fry Brown*

*Dr. Teresa Fry Brown is Professor of Homiletics and Director of Black Church Studies at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She delivered the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lecture on February 5, 2015.*

In honor of Theodore Sedgwick Wright (1797–1847), first African American graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, co-founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and part of Underground Railroad.

**I** enter this lecture from a social location as a 63-year-old black woman, the beneficiary of grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles who desegregated libraries, schools, stores, restaurants, and housing in the 1950s and 1960s. They proudly voted in every election they could. They taught their children to know and memorize history, poetry, literature, music, values, and inventions. They had faith that things would get better for black people. They believed that God would make a way for them to be treated as equals not just as domestics and things. They believed if they were good citizens, faithful Christians, and treated everybody with respect, they in turn would be respected, eventually. They believed freedom was worth dying for as long as their children and children's children lived better and had more opportunity than they did. All the while, they were called boys and gals, except on Sundays when they entered Ward Memorial Baptist Church in Sedalia, Missouri, on Pettis street. There, in that sacred space, janitors, chauffeurs, mechanics, road workers, farmers, maids, cooks, teachers, doctors, lawyers, were called Sir, Ma'am, Brother, and Sister.

Their lives mattered.

A child of the 50s and 60s, I grew up in Independence, Missouri. I grew up being called the Little Black thing, girl, gal, N-word, ridiculed for my skin color and texture of my hair, spat upon, threatened, excluded from activities, playgrounds, and swimming pools. I was in the first group to integrate Young and Benton Elementary School. I was told after my undergraduate degree, although I was on the Dean's List that I should just have babies instead of go to graduate school.

But my family continued to believe in the American Dream and all it had to offer even for black people if one simply got an education, worked twice as hard as others to be thought at least half as good. My paternal grandfather, Kerry Fry, a Pullman porter and chauffeur, would say "Act like you have parents and do not embarrass the family," all the while telling the men how he would get his gun if the Klan ever darkened his door, having seen and experienced too much death and destruction in his life. My maternal

grandmother and namesake, Tessie Bernice Ray Parks would say “We all Aunt Haggie’s Children” (meaning we are all made in God’s image). “Hatred” was a word she never used.

I was the dream and hope of my enslaved, disenfranchised, abused, raped, and lynched ancestors.

I believed freedom was possible because they said so, they hoped so, they believed it was so.

So I too sang America as my brother went to Vietnam yet could not find a job when he came home after four tours of duty. I too sang America as my father drank himself to ill health because he was afforded no dignity in the world as a real man. I too sang America as I was told my engaged pedagogy and scholarship was not as valued as that of others because it was too organic and too involved with justice issues, that Black thing.

So I enter this discussion remembering how much I have cried lately. As I read, watched, and lived the denial of rights to persons based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality, residence, education, and melanin, this seminary preaching professor, Womanist scholar, social activist, ordained itinerate clergy person and officer in the African Methodist Episcopal church has self- diagnosed justice fatigue.

I have justice fatigue as I read papers, skim blogs, converse with friends, listen to airport conversations, am ignored or followed through department stores. I have justice fatigue when flight attendants act as if I have no right to be in first class requesting to see my ticket as if I cannot write or read.

I have justice fatigue as I listen to academic and ecclesial colleagues describe students and politics, bemoaning the “Do we have to talk about race again? Isn’t it over? Is it February already?”

I have justice fatigue as I fear my daughter will complete her PhD program and be told that her research on ending the school-to-prison pipeline is irrelevant because not only is the Negro “mis-educated” but is not expected to read or write.

After all these years of justice work, I understand the reality that yes we have come a long way since the first twenty enslaved were brought to British North America in Jamestown in 1619, through the abolitionist era of Bishop Richard Allen, Maria Stewart, Rev. Theodore Sedgwick Wright, and Frederick Douglas.

Too many similarities exist today with the men and women who died in the Black Nadir after the Great Migration. Too many days, I relive the misgivings of my childhood, joining voices over the centuries asking, “How Long Lord?”

Why is my voice less exuberant this year when I sing “facing the rising sun of our new day begun. Let us march on ‘til victory is won”? When is that “someday” when we shall overcome?

I realize that many of us regardless of ethnicity have similar stories and struggles.

## Overcoming Justice Fatigue

In my time tonight, I would like to briefly explore my understanding of the symptomatology, diagnosis, and a possible treatment or course for action for my phrase “justice fatigue.”

Can you see the news clip from that sweltering August day in 1963? The flickering black and white images will be replayed innumerable times today. Various counting agencies numbered the crowd at between 200,000 – 400,000 people representing all of God’s creation, gathered at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. Some had walked and hitchhiked 700 miles just to be part of a protest for jobs and freedom. Some had been present since eight o’clock that morning, sitting around the shallow reflecting pool. Others came to represent “artistic expression,” singing protest songs, reading James Baldwin poetry, and offering monetary support. Asa Philip Randolph, a part of the nine-member planning meeting, had been waiting on promises made for equal government hiring since his postponed 1941 March on Washington.

Ella Baker and Bayard Rustin had worked for years behind the scenes for universal fellowship and human rights and now anxiously rejoiced that their dreams might be actualized. Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, John Lewis, and the only woman on the program, Josephine Baker, had already critiqued conflicts in the promise of the Declaration and Constitution that promoted equality on paper but oppression in practice. More than three thousand came to report the news to the world and more than one thousand militia and police personnel were armed and on alert to “insure the peace.” J Edgar Hoover and his wiretapped attendees promoted character assassination and breached privacy in the name of security and patriotism. Even more than one hundred politicians suspended their personal agenda to stand in the crowd. Preachers left the separatist sanctity of individual pulpits to stand in solidarity with the cause. The so-called “Camelot President” watched the proceedings as he deliberated on signing a piece of legislation that would be the first step in extending the collective civil rights.

Generations unborn on August 28, 1963, would come to know the words by heart of the average-size, well-educated, passionate man in a dark tie and white shirt delivering a closing address. We can envision Dr. Martin Luther King’s face as if it were originally captured in High Definition Plasma, Curved, LCD, Smart 72-inch screens, almost feeling the sweat run down his face. We can hear his poetic proclamation of freedom as if his voice was digitally enhanced and pulsing through Orb audio theater speakers instead of tinny microphones. Some say amen, cry, sing, hum, or recite the words of the challenging melodic rhetoric of that day, the camaraderie of that day. The urgency of that day seemingly has been frozen in time.

This was 187 years after John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry, et al, penned the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, stating:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,  
that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights  
that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

A preacher/scholar stood at the precipice of an extraordinary prophetic mission. A man who learned the ethic of love in the crucible of faith in his father's church was about to move a nation, a world. He had learned much through the teachings of seminary professors in Atlanta, Rochester, and Boston. His life intersected with the lived experience of countless freedom activists with names like Randolph, Young, Johns, Evers, Robinson, Hamer, Bates, Lewis, Clark, Laruzzo, and Gandhi. He had memorized the preamble of foundational document of the United States:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union,  
establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common  
defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty  
to ourselves and our Posterity

My family, even my cynical father, sat around our RCA cabinet television waiting for both the culminating message and the repercussions of this March on Washington. As an impressionable twelve year old, I could not believe someone had the courage to stand in front of all those people and say what he said. After all, there were still places in Missouri where people who looked like us had to enter backdoors, could not try on clothing in department stores, had to watch movies from balconies, had to be off the streets by sunset.

As Martin King took the platform he invoked the style of classical Black preachers—part newly researched and written, part re-filtering of old sermons and speeches, parts of conversations with other ministers (like the one he had with a SNCC worker named Prathia Hall who spoke of having a dream about a beloved community), part re-filtering of old sermons and speeches like an April 10, 1957 speech in St. Louis, Missouri called “I have a dream,” part extemporaneous call and response, parts emotion of the potential of the moment, parts enlivened by audience call and response, all anointed for such a time as this by God's Spirit. A scheduled four-minute speech, prompted by Mahalia Jackson's urgings to “Tell them Martin, tell them about the dream,” morphed into a seventeen-minute-twenty-seven-second mini prophetic proclamation.

So there he stood discarding his prepared notes and launching into his dream for reclaiming the soul of America, for all of God's creation, all of God's sons and daughters to live together in finely textured tapestry of love and unity. A dream of a time when people like us would be evaluated on internal character rather than external pigmentation. It was a dream of a time of transformation, a time of hope, an amazing time.

But here we stand in 2015, fifty-two years after that day in Washington. It often seems as though the promise of that moment—the impetus for a movement toward universal freedom, the prophetic urging toward a beloved community, the activist demonstration

of global liberty and justice for all, the prophetic call of the end to wars domestically and internationally, the countless selfless sacrifices, the depths of intellectual interrogations, the innumerable prophetic sermon and written urgings to “Help Somebody” in order to participate in transforming the character of a nation—have been entombed in an annual dreamscape rather than an actualization of activism. .

Somehow many of us have selectively deferred the call to act, to move, to work, to sacrifice in order to actualize the prophecy inherent in the very text of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Perhaps some are comfortable in the image, and they fear acting on it. Perhaps we have worked hopefully and are tired. Perhaps we have become numb. Some of us are worn out. Some of us, I imagine, are disappointed like the children of Israel because the dream is taking so long. Some have worked nonstop since then and experience every step forward as an eventual ten steps backward.

After all, we thought the inhumanity of those twenty landing in Jamestown, the half million Africans brought as slave labor under inhumane treatment was over. Maybe we thought chattel slavery—“cargo culture” of 1442–1863—would never be supplanted in contemporary sex trafficking, economic slavery, or immigrant labor forces evading border patrols. Perhaps we have accepted the essentialist media portrayals: all young Black men are thugs, threatening or violent; all young white men have youthful indiscretions; all black women are angry and ugly; all white women are beautiful and desired; all successful blacks are trying to be white; all whites steal black cultural makers; all Hispanics are illegal and do not speak English; all Asians are brilliant and hard working. Surely we thought the nooses and strange fruit on southern trees photographed and sold on postcards in the twentieth century would never be repeated as twenty-first-century bullets, leaving black bodies lying in streets, on porches, in parks, or in Wal-Mart parking lots.

What happened?

Did we skip class?

Did we forget to do our homework?

Did our technology lull us into a sense of complacency?

Are we so comfortable with our personal freedom that we are unaware of those millions who languish in despair, disappointment, and disenfranchisement?

Have we become tired, fatigued with the constant need to prove we too are human beings?

Are we waiting for the dream stage before action can take place?

According to the Mayo Clinic, sleeping too long is problematic. Dreaming uninterrupted is also problematic. There are specific stages of sleep: stage 1, transition to sleep; stage 2, light sleep; stage 3, deep sleep that renews the body; stage 4, Rapid Eye Movement (REM or dream sleep) that renews the mind. This cycle takes place two to three times per night, each over a two-hour period lasting two to twenty minutes. During REM sleep, the brain consolidates information and memory. The rest of the body, however, is

essentially paralyzed until we leave REM sleep. Paralysis could be nature's way of making sure we don't act out our dreams.

Maybe we who remember King's dream are being externally paralyzed or anesthetized by the promise of change so that we do not hurt others or those things that we may seek to change.

While it is true a good night's sleep is essential for health, oversleeping has been linked to a host of medical problems, including increased risk of death. Oversleeping can also lead to fatigue. Fatigue is reduced capacity for work or accomplishment following a period of mental or physical activity and decreased capacity or complete inability.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps we misinterpreted the speech and forgot it was a call to action, the doing of something; the state of being in motion or of working; an act or thing done, not oversleeping or eternal dreaming

Seventeen days after King's "I have a Dream" Speech (August 28, 1963) on

Sunday, September 15, 1963, Bobby Frank Cherry, Thomas Blanton, Herman Frank Cash, Robert Chambliss, members of United Klans of America, a Ku Klux Klan group, planted a delayed detonated box of nineteen sticks of dynamite under the steps of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, near the basement. About 10:22 in the morning, as twenty-six children were walking into the basement assembly room, the bomb killed Addie Mae Collins (age 14), Denise McNair (age 11), Carole Robertson (age 14), Cynthia Wesley (age 14), and injured twenty more. The sermon that day was entitled "The Love That Forgives."

Martin King, a father, eulogized the girls:

They say to each of us, black and white alike, that we must substitute courage for caution. They say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy that produced the murderers. Their death says to us that we must work passionately and unrelentingly for the realization of the American dream....

And so I stand here to say this afternoon to all assembled here, that in spite of the darkness of this hour, we must not despair. We must not become bitter, nor must we harbor the desire to retaliate with violence. No, we must not lose faith in our white brothers. Somehow we must believe that the most misguided among them can learn to respect the dignity and the worth of all human personality...

More distress followed. President John F. Kennedy was murdered in November 1963. In 1964, James Chaney, Michael Goodman, and Mickey Schwerner went missing, and when the government went looking for them they found countless bodies of black men whom

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1      [mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-fatigue-syndrome/basics/symptom](http://mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/chronic-fatigue-syndrome/basics/symptom).



no one knew their names. But because there were two white men in the group, they went looking. At the 1964 Democratic Convention, King asked the Mississippi Delegation to compromise on being seated, and they accused him of being a sell out.

What would you do if in less than one month the hopes and dreams of that August day were shattered? What do we do when we have tried everything we know how to do yet justice is elusive for so many?

Do we keep trying or do we enter a cave existence? Pull the covers over our head and dream on?

Is the fatigue so great that justice is not on our list of possibilities?

Sixty-four years ago Harlem Renaissance poet, novelist, playwright, and columnist, Langston Hughes, in his dreamscape poetry collection "Harlem," posited this inquiry:

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

What is your dream doing right now?

In Book VII of *The Republic*, Plato tells a story entitled "The Allegory Of The Cave." The setting is a dark underground cave where a group of people is sitting in one long row with their backs to the cave's entrance. People are chained to their chairs from childhood, with their legs and necks shackled, braced, or fixed so they are unable to turn to their right or left only seeing what is directly in front of them. They face the wall of the cave and are unable to see even who is sitting beside them. This is their world. This is their reality. They do not know anything or anyone else. They hear what is in their sphere, their space. They know only what their limited sensory input teaches. Their view of reality is solely based upon this limited view of the cave. There are other people in the cave. Plato refers to them as the puppet-handlers. They control the others mentally, socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They supply reality. They tell the chained people what to believe, who to trust, when to talk, what to say, how to say it, when to give, who to love, who to hate, and when to think. Knowing nothing else, the people follow their lead.

In Plato's allegory the prisoners do not realize that they are being held captive since

this existence is all they have ever known. Walking behind the prisoners, the puppet-handlers hold up various objects found in the real world. There is a fire at the mouth of the cave so as the items are held up the captives only see shadows or distorted figures on the wall in front of them. As Plato explains, "the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images." The thieves and robbers, the puppet handlers, and false prophets will only do as much as people allow them to do. Their shadows and illusion of power is maintained not only through coercion but also through voluntary consent of those dominated. This was what King was trying to show people: you have it within you to be somebody, but if you listen to what everyone outside says, you continue to do exactly what they tell you to do. Finally, in Plato's story the reality was that the people were sitting with their backs to the opening of the cave. Just behind them is light and air and newness, if they could only see it for themselves.

What if someone decided to risk becoming free, to resist control, to break the pattern, and to seek freedom? What if someone got up and moved toward an uncertain change in life? What if that he resolved to take everyone with him? What if she decided that enough was enough? What if someone initiated some metamorphic boldness and became strong enough to change things? What if those like King had other plans but God wanted them to lead others from the cave?

Dr. King was given a God ordained assignment to point us to a new reality, to rhetorically and physically lead us out of the bottom of the cave. Surely none of us desire to live there. A review of Dr. King's speeches between August 28, 1963, and April 3, 1968, focuses our attention not on dreaming but on being wide awake, on engaging prejudices, oppressions, "isms," and directives on how to change our lives. He emphatically spoke of and preached about universal human rights, economic equality, the end of an unjust war, and tolerance for religious difference. Surely he became tired sometimes.

We in this county like to have the one hero, the greatest, best-of-the-century, did-it-all-by-myself protagonist. But Martin King was clear that many individual sacrifices were a part of the Modern Civil Rights Movement.

King, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1964 said,

I accept the Nobel Prize at a moment when 22 million Negroes of the United States of American are engaging in a creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. I accept this award on behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.

We must never forget that blacks, whites, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, children, young adults, seniors, rich, middle class, poor, entertainers, ditch diggers, retirees, unemployed, educated, uneducated, agnostics, atheists, humanists, heterosexuals, homosexuals, men and women were part of the modern movement for civil rights.

Society usually mentions men of the Civil Rights Movement. Sometime justice fatigue

comes when one's contributions are ignored, nameless, or faceless. There is a tendency to forget Alberta King, Martin King's mother who instilled values long before Dexter Avenue and Montgomery; Coretta Scott King, a civil rights activist in her own right; Joanne Robison, an Alabama State College English teacher who organized the bus boycott and whose home was also bombed right before she was fired; or Claudette Clovin, who refused to move off the bus nine months before Rosa Parks.

One of these forgotten women of the Civil Rights Movement is Ella Baker. Baker was a key strategist in the Civil Rights Movement and in the development of the Southern Christian Leadership Committee (SCLC). She was a nurturing founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Convention (SNCC) and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) yet is known by few in historical terms. During her speech as the keynote speaker of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Convention in August 1964, she stated:

*Until the killing of Black men, Black mothers' sons, becomes as important to the rest of the country as the killing of a White mother's son, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until this happens."*

This quote is echoing in the burgeoning street and online activism today.

## How Might We Overcome Justice Fatigue?

There is an Akan word from Ghana, "Sankofa," meaning to go back and snatch, to remember what came before. I would propose that contemporary tired, cave dwelling, justice-fatigued, still dreaming, cautiously hopeful people take time to seek the lesson of those who came before us. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Use your own tools to strategize in your particular context. No matter how much technology we use or how many studies say we live in a colorblind society (that means we have erased someone's humanity or want everyone to be like whomever is in power today), the justice journey is fraught with difficulty and danger. Metamorphic boldness is needed to walk it.

Remember Martin King did not plan to be a national leader. He planned to be a pastor of a church, work on his PhD thesis, and raise a family. Later, perhaps he would also teach and write about theological and philosophical issues. His father Michael King Sr., having visited Germany in 1931, renamed himself and his son, two-year-old Martin Luther King, after the protestant reformer Martin Luther. Names are the essence of our being.

A twenty-five-year-old preacher who did not view himself as a reformer was called from Augusta, Georgia, to pastor Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery.<sup>2</sup> He was chosen by local African American leaders to serve as spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and was considered a leader from then on. He was arrested thirty times and jailed twenty-nine times—don't you think he got tired? His home was bombed three times. His life was threatened repeatedly. He was wiretapped by the FBI, and his reputation was

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2 [thekingcenter.org/faqs#sthash.wj02yirg.dpuf](http://thekingcenter.org/faqs#sthash.wj02yirg.dpuf)

attacked by Hoover. He was stabbed next to his aorta with a letter opener at a Harlem book signing on September 20, 1958. He was a son, husband, father, brother, friend. He served only twelve years and four months from his election as spokesman for the Montgomery Improvement Association in December of 1955 until he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Perhaps we neglected to view the reluctant “hero” as a human being with human sensibilities and frailties. Dr. King was tired also. He told one audience in Mississippi:

I’m sick and tired of violence. I’m tired of the war in Vietnam. I’m tired of war and conflict in the world. I’m tired of shooting. I’m tired of selfishness.

I’m tired of evil. I’m not going to use violence, no matter who says it.

The eternal struggle for justice is real, sometimes seemingly indelible. French philosopher Albert Camus once said that “change is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.”

Contemporary strategies for change vary, but we have to keep working. As a womanist scholar, my main Sankofa paradigm for overcoming justice fatigue includes doing faith work even in the face of resistance, denial and ostracism, speaking the truth in love even in the face of oppressor, and raising the consciousness of the listeners about the possibilities of liberation and justice for all persons—not only in word but also in deed, regardless of the individual or communal cost.<sup>3</sup> Overcoming justice fatigue requires faith, redemptive self-love, critical engagement, appropriation, and reciprocity.

“Freedom Faith” is critically important. It is a belief that God intends us to be free, and assists us, and empowers us in the struggle for freedom (Prathia Hall). Our faith is made what it is in the crucible of struggle. We must proactively address the particularities of “webs of oppressions,” as homiletician Christine Smith has researched: systemic oppression;<sup>4</sup> exploitation (systemic transfer of benefits from one person to advantage of another); marginalization (unwillingness or inability of economic system to use capabilities of a person or group of persons); powerlessness (recipient of directions of others but unable to give orders or exercise control over one’s situation); imperialism (universalization of one culture to the exclusion of others); and violence (dimension of institutionalization or social permissible violence against persons or groups).<sup>5</sup>

*Redemptive self-love* is celebration and affirmation of self-care and love of humanity. It is a form of agency, *carpe diem*, responsible for one’s own healing, getting up off the mat and getting one’s own water, speaking one’s own mind without allowing others to put words in our mouths or hijack our thoughts or silence our beliefs. Survival and thriving in the world is possible through the practice of self-love, self-discipline, and self-determination. Self loves means knowledge of and appreciation for one’s personhood

3 Christine Smith, *Risking the Terror-Resurrection in this Life* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 20–21.

4 Christine Smith, *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 13.

5 Smith, *Risking the Terror-Resurrection in this Life*, 20–21.

regardless of outside critique or societal standards.

*Critical engagement* means one strives to learn from as many different people as one can. Critical engagement is a means to examine life as we know it in imaginative ways.

*Appropriation and Reciprocity* means utilizing a form of spirit love, the wisdom of the elders. It involves identifying community sayings and lived moral wisdom that keep one grounded and filled with hope in the face of social constrictions. Harlem Renaissance anthropologist and author Zora Neale Hurston once recalled, "Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to 'jump at de sun... We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground.'"<sup>6</sup>

Whatever overcoming strategy works for an individual or group there is too much at stake to keep dreaming. Yes we may be tired, but someone worked diligently for us, even under duress. In one of his last speeches, Martin Luther King prophetically instructs us:

There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right. I believe today that there is a need for all people of goodwill to come with a massive act of conscience and say in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "We ain't goin' study war no more." This is the challenge facing modern man.<sup>7</sup>

In his book *The Inconvenient Hero*, the late Vincent Gordon Harding, who was a historian, civil rights activist, speechwriter, nonviolent advocate, and friend of King, reminds us:

For his greatness may rest not so much in the dream but in his willingness to continue to hope, to struggle, to develop new vision, to call others to a new American fight in the midst of nightmares, despair and brutally broken bodies. In the face of that nightmare, had to re-vision the dream."<sup>8</sup>

In the end, my journey to overcome justice fatigue focuses on the lived, in spite of the experience of my grandparents, my parents, my aunts and uncles, my friends, my colleagues, and my hopes for my children and grandchildren to taste freedom. In Dr. King's last Southern Christian Leadership Conference presidential address, "Where Do We Go From Here?" on August 16, 1967, he challenged us, even in the face of justice fatigue, to keep doing the work, putting in the justice time, and to move ahead with "divine dissatisfaction".

6 Zora Neal Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 13.

7 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Remaining Awake Through A Great Revolution," delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, March 31, 1968. Printed in *The Essential Writings and Speech of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (ed. James M. Washington; New York: HarperOne, 1986), 268.

8 Vincent Gordon Harding, *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2008), 5.

Let us be dissatisfied until America will no longer have a high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds.

Let us be dissatisfied until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort and the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice.

Let us be dissatisfied until those that live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security.

Let us be dissatisfied until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history, and every family is living in a decent sanitary home.

Let us be dissatisfied until the dark yesterdays of segregated schools will be transformed into bright tomorrows of quality, integrated education.

Let us be dissatisfied until integration is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity.

Let us be dissatisfied until men and women, however black they may be, will be judged on the basis of the content of their character and not on the basis of the color of their skin.

Let us be dissatisfied.

Let us be dissatisfied until every state capitol houses a governor who will do justly, who will love mercy and who will walk humbly with his God.

Let us be dissatisfied until from every city hall, justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Let us be dissatisfied until that day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together. and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid. Let us be dissatisfied.

And men will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth.<sup>9</sup>

King remembered the resolve even when understanding the dream was on the edge of exploding.

In 1975 a social activist anthem written by MacFadden and Whitehead put it this way:

Wake up everybody no more sleepin' in bed  
 No more backward thinkin' time for thinkin' ahead...  
 The world has changed  
 So very much  
 From what it used to be  
 There is so much hatred

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9 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Where Do We Go From Here?" delivered at SCLC Headquarters, August 16, 1967. Printed in Washington, *The Essential Writings and Speech of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 251.

War and poverty,  
The world won't get no better if we just let it be  
The world won't get no better we gotta change it the world, just you and  
me.

Forty two years ago Dr. King proclaimed in his "I See the Promised Land" speech in Memphis, Tennessee (April 3, 1968):

Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness  
Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater  
determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of  
challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity  
to make America a better nation.<sup>10</sup>

There is too much at stake to just dream.

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10 Martin Luther King, Jr. "I See the Promised Land" delivered at the Mason Temple, Memphis, Tennessee, April 3, 1968. Printed in Washington, *The Essential Writings and Speech of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 285.