



Keeping The Dream alive



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Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship's Ron Collins leads marchers in prayer Monday at the conclusion of Kingsport's fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade. At top, marchers make their way through downtown.

Kingsport marchers remember vision of Martin Luther King Jr.

By RAIN SMITH
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KINGSPORT — Monday's balmy 25 degree temperatures couldn't cool the passion of one man's dream for a warmer, loving humanity, nearly four decades after his death.

At noon, more than 100 people marched through downtown Kingsport as part of the fifth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade. The event was organized by the Tennessee/Virginia Fellowship Against Racism and East Tennessee Full Gospel Church Fellowship. The group's 30-minute parade traveled from the corner of Center Street and Sevier Avenue to the Kingsport Public Library parking lot.

Willie Hodges, 66, pulled the Central Baptist Church Praise Dancers in a trailer behind his truck during the parade. The man acknowledged seeing many changes in human

rights over his lifetime and said he hopes the struggles of the past are not lost on younger generations.

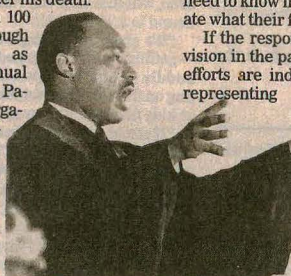
"I'd say a lot of the trials and tribulations the older generation has went through, the younger kids don't know," Hodges said. "They need to know in order to respect and appreciate what their forefathers had to go through."

If the responses of youth honoring King's vision in the parade are an indication, King's efforts are indeed appreciated. Three girls representing

New Vision for Youth Outreach in the parade were more than eager to discuss King's lasting contributions.

"He was a great leader, and he showed us not to be violent to other people because other people are not our enemies, they're our friends," said Shardaye Releford,

11. "I come here because, if you remember, Martin Luther King told us he has a dream for his kids that one day they will not be judged by their color but by their character."



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



Inside

• Americans inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. took part in marches and rallies around the country, drawing from the late civil rights leader's message to call for an end to the Iraq war, advocate affirmative action and speak out for gay rights. Page 12A.
• Scores of people marched through Rogersville and then congregated at a church on Monday for a service honoring slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Page 1B.

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Kingsport marchers remember vision of Martin Luther King Jr.

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"He did a speech for blacks and whites to be together and stop fighting and stuff," said Morgan Lee, also 11. "I'm here to remember Martin Luther King and bringing blacks and whites together."

"He was a really good man," said Sasha Morrisette, 7. "He helped blacks and whites to be friends."

Anthony Daniels, pastor of Central Baptist Church and president of the Greater Kingsport Ministerial Alliance, believes younger generations are actually executing King's dream more faithfully than those who witnessed the turbulent civil rights movement firsthand.

"One thing I like about children, they don't see color," Daniels said. "That's something they learn. The youngins are reminded of the dream and that it's still alive. Dr. King wanted to see

all races come together across this continent as one body, as it is in the word of God."

Daniels said the assassination of King left a vacuum in American culture, yet to be filled.

"This was at a time when Malcolm X was saying, 'By any means necessary,'" Daniels said. "But where Malcolm was divisive, King was a unifier. I think that's why his legacy lives on."

"I see no one individual that compares (to King) now," Daniels continued. "I see organizations, various groups, but no one person."

At the parade's conclusion in the library's parking lot downtown, Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship overseer Ron Collins gave a message of love and togetherness to the parade marchers' roaring approval.

"Dr. King was a preacher. He was a man of God," Collins said. "He knew Jesus could change you from the inside.

"Take the attitude that you love everybody, and we can change everybody. The end of racism happens one heart at a time, and guess where it begins? In your heart," Collins said.

State Rep. Nathan Vaughn also took part in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

"If government is to work, its people must come together," Vaughn said at the parade's conclusion. "Let government know what things are important, what things need to happen, and how our government and society and communities across this state and this country can be made fair for all people. That's our goal in Nashville."

Also participating in Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade were representatives of the Riverview community's Weed and Seed program, Shiloh Baptist Church and Clark Funeral Service.