

TEACHING RESOURCES**Excerpt for the Extension Activity**

Martin Luther King Jr. "World House," *Where Do We Go From Here: Community or Chaos?*

Some years ago a famous novelist died. Among his papers was found a list of suggested plots for future stories, the most prominently underscored being this one: "A widely separated family inherits a house in which they have to live together." This is the great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a large house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together-- black and white, Easterner and Westerner, Gentile and Jew, Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu-- a family unduly separated in ideas, culture and interest, who, because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace.

However deeply American Negroes are caught in the struggle to be at last at home in our homeland of the United States, we cannot ignore the larger world house in which we are also dwellers. Equality with whites will not solve the problems of either whites or Negroes if it means equality in a world society stricken by poverty and in a universe doomed to extinction by war.

All inhabitants of the globe are now neighbors. This worldwide neighborhood has been brought into being largely as a result of the modern scientific and technological revolutions. The world of today is vastly different from the world of just one hundred years ago. A century ago Thomas Edison had not yet invented the incandescent lamp to bring light to many dark places of the earth. The Wright brothers had not yet invented that fascinating mechanical bird that would spread its gigantic wings across the skies and soon dwarf distance and place time in the service of man. Einstein had not yet challenged an axiom and the theory of relativity had not yet been posited.

Human beings, searching a century ago as now for better understanding, had no television, no radios, no telephones and no motion pictures through which to communicate. Medical science had not yet discovered the wonder drugs to end many dread plagues and diseases. One hundred years ago military men had not yet developed the terrifying weapons of warfare that we know today-- not the bomber, an airborne fortress raining down death; nor napalm, that burner of all things and flesh in its path. A century ago there were no sky-scraping buildings to kiss the stars and no gargantuan bridges to span the waters. ...

One of the great liabilities of history is that all too many people fail to remain awake through great periods of social change. Every society has its protectors of the status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. But today our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. The large house in which we live demands that we transform this worldwide neighborhood into a worldwide brotherhood. Together we must learn to live as brothers or together we will be forced to perish as fools.

We must work passionately and indefatigably to bridge the gulf between our scientific progress and our moral progress. One of the great problems of mankind is that we suffer from a poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually. Every man lives in two realms, the internal and the external. The internal is that realm of spiritual ends expressed in art, literature, morals and religion. The external is that complex of devices, techniques, mechanisms and instrumentalities by means of which we live. Our problem today is that we have allowed the internal to become lost in the external. We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live. So much of modern life can be summarized in that suggestive phrase of Thoreau: "Improved means to an unimproved end." This is the serious predicament, the deep and haunting problem, confronting modern man. Enlarged material powers spell enlarged peril if there is not proportionate growth of the soul. When the external of man's nature subjugates the internal, dark storm clouds begin to form.

This does not mean that we must turn back the clock of scientific progress. No one can overlook the wonders that science has wrought for our lives. The automobile will not abdicate in favor of the horse and buggy, or the train in favor of the stagecoach, or the tractor in favor of the hand plow, or the scientific method in favor of ignorance and superstition. But our moral and spiritual “lag” must be redeemed. When scientific power outruns moral power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men. When we foolishly minimize the internal of our lives and maximize the external, we sign the warrant for our own day of doom.

Our hope for creative living in this world house that we have inherited lies in our ability to reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice. Without this spiritual and moral reawakening we shall destroy ourselves in the misuse of our own instruments.

Excerpt From *My Life, My Love, My Legacy* by Coretta Scott King

“I began to dream of a world in which all kinds of people would be welcome and could live in peace and harmony. Years later, a label would be attached to this vision: the Beloved Community, where love and trust triumph over fear and hatred.”

“To me, the Beloved Community is a spiritual bond that claims the energies and commitment of a diverse group of people who desire to serve a cause larger than themselves. The Beloved Community is fueled by unconditional love, feels like family, and transcends race, religion, and class.”

“Again, by the Beloved Community, I am not talking about a utopian dream of a perfect society in which everyone lives together without conflict. Many artists have produced lovely, bucolic renditions of the “peaceable kingdom,” with lions and lambs lying down together and everyone having his or her own vine and fig tree. That is more like heaven than the Beloved Community on earth, which is not a perfect society.

To me, the Beloved Community is a realistic vision of an achievable society, one in which problems and conflict exist, but are resolved peacefully and without bitterness. In the Beloved Community, caring and compassion drive political policies that support the worldwide elimination of poverty and hunger and all forms of bigotry and violence. The Beloved Community is a state of heart and mind, a spirit of hope and goodwill that transcends all boundaries and barriers and embraces all creation. At its core, the Beloved Community is an engine of reconciliation. This way of living seems a long way from the kind of world we have now, but I do believe it is a goal that can be accomplished through courage and determination, and through education and training, if enough people are willing to make the necessary commitment.”

Clarification of Concepts: Nonviolence, World House, and Beloved Community

Nonviolence

Nonviolence is a love-centered way of thinking, speaking, acting, and engaging that leads to personal, cultural, and societal transformation. Review the Kingian philosophy of nonviolence: <https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/the-king-philosophy/>

World House

Metaphor: The “world house” is a metaphor used by Martin Luther King Jr. to describe the interconnectedness of humanity on a global scale. It emphasizes that, just like a family living together in one house, people of diverse backgrounds, races, religions, and cultures share the same planet and must learn to coexist.

Inclusivity: The concept of the world house highlights the necessity for people to recognize and appreciate their shared humanity. It calls for unity, understanding, and cooperation among individuals and nations despite their differences.

Responsibilities: Living in the “world house” implies a responsibility to address the challenges of coexistence. King argues that, as inhabitants of this shared world, individuals and nations must learn to live with one another in peace and work together for the common good.

Beloved Community

Definition: The term “Beloved Community” refers to a society characterized by justice, equality, and brotherhood. It is a society based on love, compassion, and mutual respect among its members. King often used this term to describe his vision of an ideal and morally upright society.

Spiritual Bond: The Beloved Community is not merely a physical or geographical concept; it represents a spiritual bond among individuals who are committed to serving a cause larger than themselves. It transcends race, religion, and class.

Nonviolence Leads to the Creation of the Beloved Community: The way of nonviolence leads to the creation of the Beloved Community. The Beloved Community is fueled by unconditional love, care, and goodwill. It promotes values that go beyond superficial differences. The Triple Evils of poverty, racism, and militarism are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle. They stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community. When we work to remedy one evil, we affect all evils. To work against the Triple Evils, we must develop a nonviolent frame of mind as described in the “Six Principles of Nonviolence” and use the Kingian model for social action outlined in the “Six Steps of Nonviolence.”

Scope of Concepts

The “World House” primarily focuses on the global interconnectedness of all people and nations, emphasizing the need for unity on a planetary scale.

The “Beloved Community” is more focused on describing a society characterized by moral and spiritual principles, reflecting the quality of relationships and interactions within a community.

Geographical vs. Societal

The “World House” is a metaphorical representation of the shared Earth, emphasizing the physical space and cohabitation of diverse people on the planet.

The “Beloved Community” is a realistic vision of an achievable society, emphasizing the qualities of relationships and the moral and spiritual principles that should guide interactions among community members.

Unity and Uplift

The “World House” stresses the necessity for unity and cooperation among diverse individuals and nations for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

The “Beloved Community” emphasizes the transformative power of love and justice in creating a society where individuals uplift one another and work collectively toward a higher moral and spiritual ideal.