



As a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, I encountered Martin Luther King, Jr. nearly every day. Located near the end of the long walk from my parking spot to my classes in the Winship Drama Building, a statue of Dr. King dominated the East Mall, and he seemed to point the way to my building—"Keep going! You're almost there!" The sculpture, created by Chicago artists Jeffrey Varilla and Anna Koh-Varilla, is both imposing and impressive. From atop a pedestal, Dr. King is captured in mid-speech, gesticulating with his right hand, his academic robes forever billowing in the wind.

Dr. King's life work was the cause of justice, cloaked in the robe of peace, and achieved through nonviolent direct action. Although his own life was cut short, his vision and his admonition to keep going—to see his dream fulfilled—continue to resonate across our cultural landscape. At Pepperdine, I am grateful for the opportunities that we, as students, staff, and faculty, have to learn about how to incorporate a "Dr. King mindset" into our daily work and interactions with others. From the *DUNAMIS* initiative in the Office for Community Belonging to workshops in Becoming a More Equitable Educator, sponsored by the Seaver College Center for Teaching Excellence, to Pepperdine's engagement with the National SEED Project, we are blessed with opportunities to learn

and grow. We have the additional advantage of receiving this training and carrying out the work of justice and equity in a Christian context, which strengthens our resolve.

In response to those who labeled him an extremist for his work, Dr. King wrote in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail,"

[T]he question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

Many of us will begin this semester with new goals, resolutions, and aspirations. May we, like Jesus, resolve to be "creative extremists" determined to work toward love, truth, and goodness. Simply making a resolution, however, does not lessen the challenge of keeping it. When we are tired, when we are beaten down by the news cycle, or when we despair at the continued injustice, war, and violence happening at this very minute around the globe, let us, like the prophet Micah, hold that pain in one hand as we reach out to God with the other:

"But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord,  
I wait for God my Savior;  
my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7, NIV).

Keep going. You're almost there.

**Bradley W. Griffin**

Professor of Theatre and Divisional Dean, Fine Arts  
Seaver College