EXCERPT FROM “I HAVE A DREAM”

by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go

back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that

somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I

still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons

of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of

injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom

and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be

judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having

his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in

Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and

white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made

low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the

glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able

to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to

transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With

this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail

together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My

country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of

the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the

prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New

York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let

freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village

and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all

of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will

be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last!

thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Montgomery County Public Schools. (n.d.). I have a dream by Martin Luther King, Jr; August 28, 1963 [Speech transcript]. https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/Schools/Middle-Schools/A-F/leems/uploadedFiles/news/Full-text-I-Have-a-Dream-.pdf