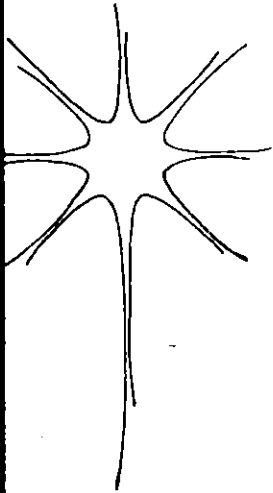


December, 1967



Greetings of the Season:

When the horizons of man's destiny loom ashen and somber; when the deafening report of weaponry stuns yearnings for peace; when people are alienated from the outside society, spiritually isolated and weary of heart; when a child is hungry, a father desperate, a mother fearful--the beseeching question arises, where can one turn?

This year that question is so relevant and contemporary, so deeply serious and urgent for all who will face it, that all of us must search now for a reasoned yet comforting answer.

We cannot deny the dreadful conditions found in our society and in the world. Global holocaust is no longer a mere technological possibility, it is a direct and escalating threat. The spirit of man everywhere has been dampened, and often his mind is engulfed in gloom. And there are millions of hungry children, and defeated fathers, and frightened mothers in our land and others.

We--these people, you, all of us--must have not only hope for the unknown future, but also confidence in our capacity to change the menacing present. Let us put hands and heart, mind and muscle, to this task. Let us not give up, for surrender and apathy are nothing but failure. In our work, let us see scorn and ridicule of us for what they are--scornful and ridiculous. "Keep your hand on the plow," the old spiritual admonishes. "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round," the freedom song declares.

This is a Season when we can summon that kind of determination and bold purpose required to create inner peace and to commit external acts of good will.

Peace and good will, the simplest and most elusive of dreams, the dreams of this Season, begin with the individual before they can be extended to collective man. So let us begin with ourselves.

If we as individual human beings will spurn selfishness, we shall appreciate the value of true love of self, of the exhilarating beauty of living. And if we recognize that all people can become truly alive and beautiful, we will understand the cosmic truth that all men are brothers and inseparable. Then we will see where we must go and how we must live. Real brothers can not kill each other, they are incapable of oppressing each other, they are utterly unable to hate each other, because they are as one in the embodiment of dignity and respect.

We who know we are brothers, therefore, have a duty to bring others back into the broken family of man, into our world house. In the context of the modern world, we must live together as brothers or we shall perish divided as fools.

The task is stern and provocative. Among the moral imperatives of our time, we are challenged to work all over the world with unshakable commitment to wipe out the last vestiges of racism. Another grave problem that must be solved if we are to live creatively is that of poverty on both the national and international scale. A final problem that demands solution is finding an alternative to war and human destruction.

Yes, the challenges are awesome, but exciting, too. This is a Season when we can still take heart. We can be joyful that swelling masses are absolutely dedicated to the death of racism and a life of brotherhood. We can give thanks that the world at last has the ability and resources to end poverty, and that more and more people are overcoming their blindness to the suffering poor. We can thrill to the burgeoning love of peace and the devotion to it.

We wish you and yours a joyous Holiday and a New Year of fulfillment.

Cordially,

Coretta & Martin King
Yolande, Martin III, Dexter & Bernice