

Twentieth century thinkers



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Twentieth Century, the year 1901, proved to be a time of change, brilliance, dedication, and new-found technology (2011). From quill pens to ink pens, horse-drawn carriages to gas powered engines, slavery and segregation of Blacks and Whites to the Civil Rights movement, and from handwriting on tablets to storing important information in a computer; the Twentieth Century made a tremendous amount of positive contributions to society.

The contributions made in the Twentieth Century are often over-looked and taken for granted. Americans in particular have become somewhat spoiled with that is "just there." What is forgotten and should often be; without the integrity and dedication within the creative minds of the Twentieth Century, the United States would be living as if it were still 1901 rather than 2012. Many individuals are responsible for the growth of this time. Two of the most influential, though each had a separate aspiration, are Martin Luther King and Bill Gates.

Both men contributed a significant amount, and have gone down in history as individuals who changed the way the world worked personally, socially, and politically. Martin Luther King was one of the most influential civil rights activists and speakers of recent time. According to a Newsday article, King's mission was to lead the world into a more accepting place with not only the Black American population but also other minority groups. The article also referred to King as, "Honored most for his heroic civil rights activism in the United States" as well as "a prophet of peace and justice in a world torn by war in Vietnam" (1992).

Among his many accomplishments, Martin Luther King was a doctor, writer of five published books, a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and at the age of 35 he was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize (1964). The "I Have A Dream" speech given by Martin Luther King captivated the hearts of individuals supporting the Civil Rights cause. His solutions and ideas were implemented widely and had a huge impact on rights among the White and Black America. In 1954 King, and the NAACP assisted in the "Brown v. Board of Education," in Topeka, Kansas, which led to the acceptance of Black Americans in all White public schools (PBS, 2001). The thousands of marches and protests he led among the United States proved that one man can indeed make a difference. Bill Gates is also a man who made a difference in the Twentieth Century, though his passion in the beginning of his career came strictly from knowledge and intelligence.

Gates is described by Who's Who in the Twentieth Century as a "US businessman who co-founded Microsoft Corporation, which in the 1980s became the leading computer software producer." In 2008, Microsoft was, according to this same source, accused of illegal activities, which led to Gates' departure at Microsoft (Phillips, 2008). After Microsoft fell through for Gates, he advanced on to study philanthropy, which is a corporation or individual(s) donate to the goodwill of humanity. Bill Gates, still possessing ties with the Microsoft cooperation could do this combining his newfound wealth and his intelligence (Time Magazine, 2008).

An article from Think Big Magazine quotes from Time, " For many years, Microsoft has used corporate philanthropy to bring technology to people who can't get it otherwise, donating more than \$3 billion in cash and software to try to bridge the digital divide" (2008). Martin Luther King and Bill Gates made different, yet important contributions to society. King " had a dream," that combined with intelligence and persistence, helped the United States become more accepting toward minority groups. Without his determination, America may not have voted in the first Black president.

Bill Gates had a dream as well; however, with his wealth Gatesdreamscould come true slightly faster than Kings. Gates dream, though it began with computer technology, microchips, and corporate ladder climbing; ended with wealth. Without his innovative approach, technology would not have reached the levels on intensity that it has and continue to do over the years, but the goodwill Gates has done for humanity is very noble. Both men brought a completely different level ofcritical thinkinginto the world than the other, which could make comparing and critiquing their work, for some individuals, quite difficult.

Martin Luther King and Bill Gates, though from the outside looking in may be individuals who had different agendas, have both made a huge impact on society. The courage Martin Luther King had to stand up for his fellow Black American citizens and is comparable to the strength that Bill Gates has to rise above his initialfailureand change himself to better mankind. Both men have offered the Twentieth Century hope for future generations. For an individual to critique the work of either of these men without having put forth

any great effort themselves, some may believe is just ignorance and close-mindedness.

In a perfect "dream" world, Martin Luther King and Bill Gates would have collaborated and combined their efforts to achieve a better world. Together their efforts could have been impossible and even more life changing than their work was as individuals. With the wealth of Bill Gates, Martin Luther King may not have had to fight such a battle for freedom, and with the genuine initial compassion as Martin Luther King, Bill Gates may have realized firsthand that his true passion lies within helping humanity.

Unfortunately, the time was not meant for them to work as one; however there is hope that future generations will be able to look past White and Black, wealth and poverty, and combine forces to contribute similar, selfless traits just as King and Gates were able to do as individuals.

References

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