

THE **VALIDATION** OF **A DREAM**

“King’s dream pleads for sweeping reform in all of American society, not merely the election of a black president.”

By Trevor Delmore II '07



On Inauguration Day, when President Barack Obama placed his hand on Lincoln’s Bible, I couldn’t help but recall the words I overheard in a popular rap song—as hackneyed as they might seem: “Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther could walk/Martin Luther walked so Barack Obama could run.”

As President Obama solemnly pledged to preserve, protect and defend the United States Constitution, the entire world took notice. More than a million people gathered on the Mall in Washington. Some were in awe, others in disbelief. Some a little bit of both. In Pasadena, Calif., a live audience watching the ceremony via satellite sat in hushed silence. In Memphis, Tenn., a local church assembled to witness history, their eyes fixed on a large overhead monitor.

In Kenya, the native land of Obama’s father, children danced in the streets. People on the streets of Times Square paused in the middle of their daily activities. Others on the streets of Harlem waved U.S. flags as a sure sign of their patriotism. A friend of mine watched the entire event in streaming video on his cell phone from his desk at work. Another huddled near an office water cooler with a hundred co-workers. And in Facebook, nine of 10 statuses commented on the event.

Amid all the excitement, one CNN analyst accurately observed, “This isn’t just a transition—this is a transformation.”

The entire world tuned in not simply because of Barack Obama, but also because of what his presidency symbolizes. Not too long ago, America was a place where Jim Crow was en vogue,

and the very humanity of black people was called into question.

I never doubted, not for one second, that America would elect a black president in my lifetime. Growing up in East Elmhurst, N.Y., I received a pre-school education at a small private school named the Learning Tree. Most of my teachers there were black. They taught me a slanted version of American history that emphasized its black heritage. I knew about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman way before I knew about Thomas Jefferson or Benjamin Franklin. What’s more, David Dinkins—the first black mayor of New York City—was in power when I was a toddler. For me, his example was the rule, not the exception. Also, I was fortunate enough to have parents who told me I could be anything I wanted to be. And I held on firmly to their words.

The election of President Obama does not mark the realization of King’s dream. The scope of King’s dream is much larger. King’s dream pleads for sweeping reform in all of American society, not merely the election of a black president. Still, Obama’s election undoubtedly draws us one step closer. His election validates King’s dream—“a dream deeply rooted in the American dream”—and signals to every little boy and girl in America that absolutely nothing is beyond their reach.

All things are possible. ■

—Trevor Delmore II graduated *cum laude* from Morehouse with a bachelor’s degree in English in 2007. He currently resides in Stamford, Conn.