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Response Paper 1

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was very influential during the Civil Rights Movement, creating change for future generations to come. His famous “I Have A Dream” speech was so influential that it led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or natural origin, and race in hiring, promoting, and firing. King’s speech provided a sense of unity amongst all people then and now. His speech used an extensive amount of metaphors which aided in the effectiveness of change.

“I Have A Dream” was successful in uniting people of all races and backgrounds due to the reason that King included many metaphors that spoke on hardships of the spoken audience. Using metaphors allowed listeners and readers to not only have images in their mind, but emotions they could perceive. One example of this is “the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity” (King, 41, 3). This metaphor was intended to make listeners and readers feel and see what slaves and African-Americans endure everyday while living in America. I believe this metaphor was for every audience excluding African-Americans so others could undergo a similar experience mentally.

Another example would be “sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice” (King 43, 20). This metaphor expresses how oppression is similar to heat. One can associate heat with discomfort, agitation, and fury. He goes on to compare freedom and justice to an oasis. When thinking of the likeness of an oasis one can associate a spring, safe haven, shelter, and sanctuary. This allows readers and listeners to understand the contrast between the two also establishing that mental image. This metaphor was again intended for every audience excluding African-Americans so that others could undergo a similar experience mentally.

Works Cited

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "I Have A Dream." *Readings for Writers*, edited by Jo Ray McCuen-Metherell and Anthony C. Winkler, 15th ed., Cengage Learning, 2016., pp. 40-44.

Legal highlight: The civil rights act of 1964. United States Department of Labor.