



## *Resources on Vision*

Martin Luther King's use of images like "beloved community" captured onlooker's imaginations and catapulted him onto a world stage. Who in their right minds wouldn't want to belong to the world about which King dreamed? I know when I heard it I wanted to. You mean to tell me that there is a way to be in the world that people of goodwill in all their glorious differences—the fifty-two year old Caucasian banker, the twenty-five-year-old indigenous entrepreneur, the seventeen-year-old transgender Asian American homeschooler, the thirty-three year-old Latino immigrant soldier and I—could connect with each other and together rewrite the stories of oppression in the world? Sign me up!

Dr. King knew we needed, better story.

- Melvin Bray in "Better, Waking Up to Who We Could Be"

### *The Sacred Hoop by Black Elk*

Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all,  
And round beneath me was the whole hoop of the world.  
And while I stood there I saw more than I can tell  
And I understood more than I saw.  
For I was seeing in the sacred manner  
The shape of all things of the spirit  
And the shapes as they must live together like one being.  
And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people  
Was one of many hoops that make one circle,  
Wide as daylight and starlight,  
And in the center grew one mighty flowering tree  
To shelter all the children of one mother and one father.  
And I saw that it was holy.

"The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps - we must step up the stairs."

-Vance Havner

"I wanted in my lifetime to vote for a radical Native American woman, since my vision of any future that we might have is that it will be led by women and older women."

-Alice Walker

### *The Prophetic Imagination (excerpt) by Walter Brueggemann*



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*The prophet engages in futuring fantasy. The prophet does not ask if the vision can be implemented, for questions of implementation are of no consequence until the vision can be imagined. The imagination must come before the implementation. Our culture is competent to implement almost anything and to imagine almost nothing. The same royal consciousness that make it possible to implement anything and everything is the one that shrinks imagination because imagination is a danger. Thus every totalitarian regime is frightened of the artist. It is the vocation of the prophet to keep alive the ministry of imagination, to keep on conjuring and proposing futures alternative to the single one the king wants to urge as the only thinkable one.*

"A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more."

*- Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

### *Monet Refuses the Operation (adapted) by Lisa Mueller*

Doctor, you say there are no halos  
around the streetlights in Paris  
and what I see is an aberration  
caused by old age, an affliction.

I tell you it has taken me all my life  
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,  
to soften and blur and finally banish  
the edges you regret I don't see,  
to learn that the line I called the horizon  
does not exist and sky and water,  
so long apart, are the same state of being.

Fifty-four years before I could see  
Rouen cathedral is built  
of parallel shafts of sun,  
and now you want to restore  
my youthful errors, fixed  
notions of top and bottom,...  
wisteria separate  
from the bridge it covers.

What can I say to convince you  
the Houses of Parliament dissolve  
night after night to become  
the fluid dream of the Thames?



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I will not return to a universe  
of objects that don't know each other,  
as if islands were not the lost children  
of one great continent.

...

Doctor,  
if only you could see  
how heaven pulls earth into its arms  
and how infinitely the heart expands  
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

"The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight, but has no vision."

*- Helen Keller*

"Rowing harder doesn't help if the boat is headed in the wrong direction."

*- Kenichi Ohmae*

"To the person who does not know where he wants to go there is no favorable wind."

*- Seneca*

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

*- Japanese Proverb*

"If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

*- Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

"Without a vision, the people will perish."

*- Proverbs 18:19 (King James Version)*



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### *We Are Running by Lucille Clifton*

running and  
time is clocking us  
from the edge like an only daughter.  
our mothers stream before us,  
cradling their breasts in their  
hands.  
oh pray that what we want  
is worth this running,  
pray that what we're running  
toward  
is what we want.

“When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

*-Audre Lorde*

“I have a favorite line from a play I read years ago, a Chaucerian drama. The line goes: “In dreams begins responsibility.” And indeed it’s true. When you dream of something, you can begin to take it upon yourself, make it yours, change it. But you have to dream it first. And Unitarian Universalists don’t dream... You have to think of the world as you would really have it. I don’t mean wish it. I mean dream it. And sometimes I think Unitarian Universalists wish more than they dream.”

*-Henry Hampton*

“Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.”

*-Jonathan Swift*

### *Saving Paradise by Rebecca Parker and Rita Nakashima Brock*

*The story of the garden in Genesis 2 lends itself, especially, to a habit of longing for a pristine past and judging the present to be a corrupt age. It functioned thus for the many Christians who settled the land now called North America and shaped its dominant society both as a longing to retrieve the lost past and as a forward march toward the promised land, human progress, greater prosperity, and a better world. The American Protestant structure of nostalgia and hope either retreats to the past or runs toward the future without perceiving carefully where we are. This relentless drive toward change, either as retrieval or progress, characterizes much of American society and its values. Nostalgia and hope elide our responsibility for receiving the good around us, for valuing it and relating ethically toward it.*



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“If I have seen further than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”

*-Isaac Newton*

“Give to us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for—because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything.”

*-Peter Marshall*

“It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.”

*-Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed*

“Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, or desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.”

*-Martha Graham*