2-Martin Luther King

It all started on a bus. A black woman was returning home from work after a long hard day. She sat near the front of the bus because she was tired and her legs hurt. But the bus belonged to the city of Montgomery in the southern state of Alabama. And the year was nineteen fifty-five.

In those days, black people could sit only in the back of the bus. So the driver ordered the woman to give up her seat. But the woman refused, and she was arrested.

Incidents like this had happened before. But no one had ever spoken out against such treatment of blacks. This time, however, a young black preacher organized a protest. He called on all black citizens to stop riding the buses in Montgomery until the laws were changed. The name of the young preacher was Martin Luther King. He led the protest movement to end injustice in the Montgomery city bus system. The protest became known as the Montgomery bus boycott. The protest marked the beginning of the civil rights movement in the United States.

Martin Luther King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in nineteen twenty-nine. He was born into a religious family. Martin's father was a preacher at a Baptist church. And his mother came from a family with strong ties to the Baptist religion.

In nineteen twenty-nine, Atlanta was one of the wealthiest cities in the southern part of the United States. Many black families came to the city in search of a better life. There was less racial tension between blacks and whites in Atlanta than in other southern cities. But Atlanta still had laws designed to keep black people separate from whites.

The laws of racial separation existed all over the southern part of the United States. They forced blacks to attend separate schools and live in separate areas of a city. Blacks did not have the same rights as white people, and were often poorer and less educated.

Martin Luther King did not know about racial separation when he was young. But as he grew older, he soon saw that blacks were not treated equally. One day Martin and his father went out to buy shoes. They entered a shoe store owned by a white businessman. The businessman sold shoes to all people. But he had a rule that blacks could not buy shoes in the front part of the store. He ordered Martin's father to obey the rule. Martin never forgot his father's angry answer:
"If you do not sell shoes to black people at the front of the store, you will not sell shoes to us at all."

Such incidents, however, were rare during Martin's early life. Instead, he led the life of a normal boy. It was at the university that Martin decided to become a preacher. At the same time, he also discovered he had a gift for public speaking. He soon was able to test his gifts. One Sunday, Martin's father asked him to preach at his church. When Martin arrived, the church members were surprised to see such a young man getting ready to speak to them. But they were more surprised to find themselves deeply moved by the words of young Martin Luther King.

Martin seemed wise to others because of his studies at the university. He carefully read the works of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian leader and thinker. Martin also studied the books of the American philosopher, Henry David Thoreau. Both men wrote about ways to fight injustice. Martin continued his studies in religion for almost ten years. When he was twenty-two, he moved north to study in Boston. It was in Boston that Martin met Coretta Scott, the woman who later became his wife.

Martin Luther King and his wife were happy in Montgomery. Their first child was born. Martin's work at the church was going well. He became involved in a number of activities to help the poor. And the members of his church spoke highly of their new preacher. Coretta remembered their life as simple and without worries.

Then, a black woman, Rosa Parks, was arrested for sitting in the white part of a Montgomery city bus. And Martin Luther King organized a protest against the Montgomery bus system.
On December twenty-fifth, a Russian cargo rocket linked with the International Space Station. The cargo vehicle carried two and one-half tons of food, fuel, oxygen, water and other supplies. It also carried Christmas presents for the Space Station’s American Commander Leroy Chiao and Russian Cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov. The Progress M-fifty-one cargo vehicle was launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on December twenty-third. The M-fifty-one cargo vehicle arrived just in time. American space agency officials had said the two crewmen on the Space Station had only enough food for two more weeks. They said the two would have had to return to Earth if the supply flight had not been a success.

Russian Soyuz crew vehicles and the Progress cargo ships have been the only links to the Space Station since the Space Shuttle Columbia’s accident in February, two-thousand-three. American Space Agency officials hope to launch the Space Shuttle Discovery in May. NASA finished placing the three main engines in Discovery on December eighth. Discovery and its seven-person crew are to fly to the International Space Station. Discovery will carry cargo and science experiments to the station. It will also test new safety equipment and plans. The tests will include Space Shuttle inspection and repair methods.

NASA says the flight of the Space Shuttle Discovery is the first step in plans to finish the International Space Station. It will also be the first step in future exploration goals. These include returning to the Moon and human flights to the planet Mars.

On December twenty-fourth, the European Space Agency’s Huygens exploration vehicle successfully separated from NASA’s Cassini spacecraft. Huygens began a three-week trip to the planet Saturn’s moon, Titan.

The Huygens vehicle had been linked to the Cassini spacecraft during the almost seven-year trip to Saturn. Huygens will be the first human-made object to explore Titan. Titan has an unusual environment. Many scientists believe it may be very similar to that of the Earth before life formed. The Huygens exploration vehicle will provide information that will tell scientists if this is true.

David Southwood is the director of science for the European Space Agency. Mister Southwood said the release of Huygens is the start of an exciting period of exploration. He thanked NASA for the Huygens’s ride to Saturn. He said each spacecraft will now continue on its own. He added that Huygens will now attempt to provide the first information from a new world that scientists have dreamed of exploring for many years.
The Huygens exploration vehicle is to enter Titan’s upper atmosphere on January fourteenth. Then it will begin to move down toward the surface.

Huygens will test and report about the atmosphere of Titan as it moves lower. It will send information to the Cassini spacecraft, which will then send it back to Earth. After Huygens reaches the surface of Titan, it will deploy radio equipment and communicate with Earth.
4 - Wild Life

The preservation of animal and plant life, and of the general beauty of Nature, is one of the foremost duties of the men and women of to-day. It is an imperative duty, because it must be performed at once, for otherwise it will be too late. Every possible means of preservation,--sentimental, educational and legislative,--must be employed.

The present warning issues with no uncertain sound, because this great battle for preservation and conservation cannot be won by gentle tones or by appeals to the aesthetic instincts of those who have no sense of beauty, or enjoyment of Nature. It is necessary to sound a loud alarm in presenting the facts in very strong language, backed up by irrefutable statistics and by photographs which tell no lies, to establish the law and enforce it if needs be with a bludgeon.

This book is such an alarm call. Its forceful pages remind me of the sounding of the great bells in the watch-towers of the cities of the Middle Ages which called the citizens to arms to protect their homes and their liberties and their happiness. It is undeniable that the welfare and happiness of our own and of all future generations of Americans are at stake in this battle for the preservation of Nature against the selfishness, the ignorance, or the cruelty of her destroyers.

We no longer destroy great works of art. They are treasured, and regarded as of priceless value; but we have yet to attain the state of civilization where the destruction of a glorious work of Nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird, is regarded with equal abhorrence. The whole earth is a poorer place to live in when a colony of exquisite egrets or birds of paradise is destroyed in order that the plumes may decorate the hat of some lady of fashion, and ultimately find their way into the rubbish heap. The people of all the New England States are poorer when the ignorant whites, foreigners, or negroes of our southern states destroy the robins and other song birds of the North for a mess of pottage.

Travels through Europe, as well as over a large part of the North American continent, have convinced me that nowhere is Nature being destroyed so rapidly as in the United States. Except within our conservation areas, an earthly paradise is being turned into an earthly hades; and it is not savages nor primitive men who are doing
this, but men and women who boast of their civilization. Air and water are polluted, rivers and streams serve as sewers and dumping grounds, forests are swept away and fishes are driven from the streams. Many birds are becoming extinct, and certain mammals are on the verge of extermination. Vulgar advertisements hide the landscape, and in all that disfigures the wonderful heritage of the beauty of Nature today, we Americans are in the lead.

(Based on Our Vanishing Wild Life, by William T. Hornaday)
Languages can die. Language death is something that is almost always associated with language contact. The only situation in which a language may die without language contact taking place is in the comparatively rare situation in which an entire speech community is wiped out by a massive calamity such as a volcanic eruption, a military slaughter, or an epidemic. Such things have unfortunately happened in the past. Oral tradition in central Vanuatu tells of the once large island of Kuwae which was shattered by a volcanic cataclysm into the much smaller present day islands of Tongoa and the Shepherd Islands. This massive eruption must have killed large numbers of people. Oral tradition records that, although a small number of people from Kuwae survived this holocaust, when the new, smaller islands were resettled by people from the nearby larger island of Efate, they brought with them their own language, which explains why the people from these islands speak a dialect of Efate language to this day. Presumably the original language of Kuwae disappeared with the death of the last survivors of the eruption. The history of Aboriginal Australia is full of accounts of the extermination of whole communities of the Aboriginal people by European settlers, often by the most inhuman methods such as the deliberate introduction of smallpox, or by vicious shooting sprees. Again, unknown numbers of languages disappeared from the record with the disappearance of their speakers.

Tragic as such circumstances are, they are of primary interest to the scholars of history. Language death typically occurs in much less catastrophic circumstances, and arises as a result of language contact over an extended period of time. When speakers of one of the two languages have power over speakers of the other language, either by force of social prestige or by demographic dominance, it is possible for speakers of the socially weaker language to abandon their language in favour of the dominant language.

Many Australian languages have disappeared, not because their speakers were exterminated, but because the generations of the past either chose to or were forced to speak to their children in English. Only about 1 per cent of Hawaiians today speak Hawaiian, the remainder having shifted to English, and Maori in New Zealand has shown signs of going the same way with only about 10 per cent of Maori people today speaking the ancestral language. The languages in some parts of Papua New Guinea are under pressure, not from English, but from Tok Pisin. In Europe also, minority languages are under pressure from English. Irish, Scots Gaelic, and Welsh are all under pressure from English; Friesian is under pressure from Dutch; and Breton is under pressure from French.