

What Would Martin Luther King Think of Chris Matthews?

✘ Like many people in our country, I was born after the African-American Civil Rights Movement. I wasn't around to witness the shameful legalities of racial discrimination, and the bold acts of civil disobedience led by brave heroes to end that discrimination. No, I learned of the historical plight where many of us did: From school, film footage, and the words of the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

King's *dream* of a colorblind society has made him one of the most important figures in all of American history. He died for that dream, but thanks to his bravery, leadership, and moral messages of freedom and equality, his dream now flourishes in this country.

On the few occasions when I'm asked which people inspire me the most, Martin Luther King, Jr. is always right at the top of that list. In my view, King's most powerful message was that he wanted his children to grow up in a country where they "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." It's such an amazingly profound statement to me, and he phrased it so simply and earnestly that its meaning was unmistakable.

That's why I find it absolutely astonishing that, after nearly fifty years of amazing racial strides in this country, many proclaimed admirers of King seem to have absolutely no clue what the man gave his life for. They not only fail to understand it, but manage to unwittingly marginalize and even pervert King's dream under the premise of defending it.

From a media standpoint, the most vocal offender has to be MSNBC's Chris Matthews. While there's no shortage of knee-jerk race-baiters in the left-wing media, Matthews is in a class

all by himself. He has actually managed to pollute the sincere meaningfulness of the *actual* civil rights movement, by conducting a hair-on-fire, satirical civil rights movement of his own.

The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about freedom, racial equality, or advancing society. It's about taking viewpoints that he disagrees with, reflexively crumpling them up into something unrecognizable, then unraveling them through a nonsensical methodology to expose the inevitable conclusion of *racism*.

He's been skipping down this tasteless and obnoxious path for some time now, but while broadcasting from the Republican National Convention this week, he demonstrated just how truly demented he has become.

Monday night, he interviewed former presidential candidate, Newt Gingrich. Matthews took the opportunity to accuse both Gingrich and Mitt Romney of using "racial code words" (a favorite phrase of his over the past year) by bringing attention to the large number of Americans that are on welfare and food stamps. According to Matthews, if you point out that an unhealthy, unsustainable number of people are reliant on these programs, you're a racist. Why? Well, Matthews' rationale is that when the public thinks about welfare and food stamps, they also think of black people. So if those programs are mentioned aloud, the public (presumably white people) will be inclined to believe that black people are a drag on our society. Matthews has been insisting that Republicans realize this, and that's why they keep bringing up the topic.

Newt Gingrich found the obvious irony in Matthews' logic: It's Chris Matthews (not the Republicans) who is making the connection between welfare, food stamps, and the black community. The Republicans have merely stated the numbers without any mention of ethnicity. Of course, that observation

was adamantly rejected by the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*.

That same day, an unhinged Matthews scolded RNC chairman, Reince Priebus, for the Republican party's criticism of the president's recent changes to welfare eligibility requirements. "You are playing that little ethnic card there!" Matthews chided, forcing even his liberal colleagues seated at the same table to squirm uncomfortably in their chairs. "It's a race card!"

When Priebus stated that Obama is using a European approach in managing our economy, Matthews screamed, "You're doing it again!... You're saying he's influenced by *foreign* influences! You're playing that card again!" Matthews' assertion was that if you believe the president is taking our economy in the direction of European economies, you're a racist. I would love to be able to explain his thinking on that one, but I started to form a headache when I tried... so I stopped. Sadly, that statement wasn't even the most outrageous one that Matthews made during the discussion...

He complained that Mitt Romney had a cushy life growing up, in comparison to the president. Matthews screamed that President Obama has "an African name, and he's had to live with that!" Aside from the obvious racial condescension of that statement (again, not recognized by the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*), I found it humorous that Matthews was trying to evoke sympathy for the president's name from a guy named "Reince Priebus".

On Wednesday night, Matthews decried the Republicans for repeatedly mentioning that Barack Obama comes from Chicago. The nerve! How could they do such a thing?! As we all know, the president IS from Chicago. It's the city where he has lived much of his adult life (and still has a house there), it's the city he served public offices in, and it's the city where his presidential campaign is based. According to

Matthews, because there's a significant black population in Chicago, mentioning Chicago in accordance with Obama is another "racial code word." Yes, in the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*, saying the name of President Obama's hometown is considered *hate speech*.

Later Wednesday, after Vice Presidential nominee Paul Ryan delivered his well-received speech to the RNC crowd, Matthews came forward with some unique, on-the-spot analysis. After hearing Ryan's line about our rights coming from "nature and God", he pondered what type of audience that comment was tailored for. His determination was that it was designed to resonate with people who received their rights prior to 1965. In other words, *white people*. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* has apparently decided that either "nature", "God", or a combination of the two are also *racial code words*.

Now, maybe I should cut Matthews a little slack on that last one. It was pretty late at night when he made those comments. He may have just been a bit tired after a long day of identifying other, various forms of racism (I've heard that can be exhausting). Maybe a night's sleep did him some good. When Chuck Todd interviewed him Thursday morning, it was a perfect opportunity to find out if that was the case. To his credit, Matthews' didn't repeat his 1965 reference. Nope, he instead took us back further in time and suggested that the Republican party wanted to take the country back to the days of slavery. Yes, slavery. Thanks for clearing that up, Chris! You're a class act!

At least when Al Sharpton does stuff like this, the motivation is clear. He's just trying to market his career.

But with Matthews, I think it's more complicated than that. Sure, he's a committed liberal with a crippling case of *white guilt*, who is astonishingly desperate to earn acceptance from the hardest-left elements of the Democratic party. But there's something else, and I think it goes to his professional

career. I think he has felt so tormented and bitter over the thumping he's taken from conservative critics over his embarrassing fawning of Barack Obama, that he somewhere along the line blew a gasket.

Four years ago, Chris Matthews sacrificed any journalistic integrity he may have still had to serve as a shameless media-cheerleader from Barack Obama. No one has let him forget it. To this day, he's still often antagonized by hecklers and guests on his show for confessing that he felt a "thrill" up his leg when listening to Obama speak. With his audience dwindling, his media colleagues regularly laughing at him, and his very relevance steadily slipping from his grasp, he's made a life-decision to re-establish himself as a man of great importance – a crusader, if you will. And for a dedicated, bleeding-heart liberal like Matthews, there is no more noble crusade than that of exposing racism.

Thus, he appears to have made it his life mission to strike back at conservatives in the most lethal way he knows how: Exposing *them* as racists. It doesn't matter how ridiculous he sounds in the process. It doesn't matter how illogical his arguments are. It doesn't even matter that his entire supposition (that *wink-and-nod* racism is somehow a political winner in a country that has soundly rejected racism) makes absolutely no sense. He has gone *all in* with the *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement*. The result is an angry man with a microphone who sounds more unhinged with each passing day.

Matthews' often references Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his commentary. It's clear he admires King. One has to wonder, though, what King would have thought of Chris Matthews. I have little doubt that he'd be absolutely ashamed of him, because Matthews' plight pretty much goes against everything that King that stood for.

The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about advancing

an oppressed people. It's about presuming racism in order to slander people that Matthews doesn't like. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about judging people by the content of their character. It's about condescendingly assuming that judgement of our African-American president's job performance is not about his character, but about the color of his skin. The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* isn't about striving for a colorblind society. It's about identifying and differentiating people by their race.

While King risked everything to defeat racism, Matthews uses presumed racism to advance his own sanctimony. While King's message transcends politics, Matthews' message is nothing but pure politics.

Most importantly... Every time Matthews condemns imagined racism, he marginalizes actual racism. Genuine elements of racism absolutely still exist in this country, but those elements are largely ignored because official and unofficial followers of The *Chris Matthews Civil Rights Movement* have turned racism into a satire. They've turned what should be a serious charge – one worthy of attention – into a reflexive insult that is taken with a grain of salt. He's not carrying on Martin Luther King's dream. He's trashing it.

Chris Matthews is earning himself a legacy alright, but not the one he wants. He's securing his proper spot as the national media's most abhorrent buffoon.