

Everett Parker Ethics in Telecommunications Lecture
September 12, 2006

Introductory Remarks by James Coltharp, Comcast Corporation

Thank you. On behalf of Comcast, we'd like to welcome you to today's lunch and lecture.

I want to first recognize Dr. Everett Parker, who, for over 50 years, has been a strong leader in the struggle for the advancement of civil rights in media, joined by others along the way from Delores Tucker to many in the room today. I also want to recognize today's honorees and FCC Commissioners Capps and Tate, advisors, and staff.

At Comcast we are committed to strengthening every neighborhood by empowering the families we serve. In Baltimore, Comcast's ON DEMAND technology shows the Library's special "E-Stories" reading program for minority mentors and students.

At The Crossroads School in Baltimore, a group of 6th grade students recently published a book entitled "Rising Tides of Freedom," a look at the lives and the accomplishments of Frederick Douglas and Isaac Myers, which Comcast is helping turn into an OnDemand documentary.

And in early October 30,000 volunteers will join together around the country for the sixth annual Comcast Cares Day, the largest corporate service day in the country. That will be a great day.

As for today, this is an especially good day to think about the passion for freedom, equality, and justice that became the heartbeat of the Civil Rights movement and how we can apply lessons learned during that patient and urgent struggle to what we are trying to accomplish today.

Several months ago, I sat in Dr. Martin Luther King's Ebenezer Baptist Church on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta and listened to a recording of his last sermon. When Dr. King talked about issues of freedom and equality, he used powerful and poetic images. He spoke of a fire that no water or hoses

could put out, because, no matter the obstacle, he and others would go on singing "Over My Head I See Freedom in the Air".

And Dr. King embraced those who dismissed him as an "extremist." In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King looked to Jesus as an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who use you, and persecute you." He spoke of the prophet Amos as an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Dr. King's namesake, Martin Luther, and later John Bunyan, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln...pioneers of their time, all were perceived as extremists. Yet Dr. King said, "the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?"

And in his last sermon Dr. King asked to be remembered, not for his Nobel Peace Prize, but as a drum major for justice, for peace, for righteousness...as a man who tried to give his life serving humanity.

When I think about that power, the fire, and the mighty waters, my only response is to tremble. I tremble and wonder why the issues we address, and the way we think about them today falls so far short of the commitment, sacrifice, and the deep reverence that caused the little boy from Auburn Avenue to grow up to preach a powerful message of hope, and to give his life away as a drum major for justice. Before we shrink away to the shallow end of freedom's tide, it is a great day to think about the involvement and sacrifices that, as Dr. King often concluded, could today "make of this old world a new world."

Thank you for coming. I hope you will enjoy today's lecture.