Mission and Vision Statement of the Memorial Project

Mission Statement

To commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by leading a collaborative funding, design, and construction process in the creation of a memorial to honor his national and international contributions to world peace through non-violent social change.

Vision Statement

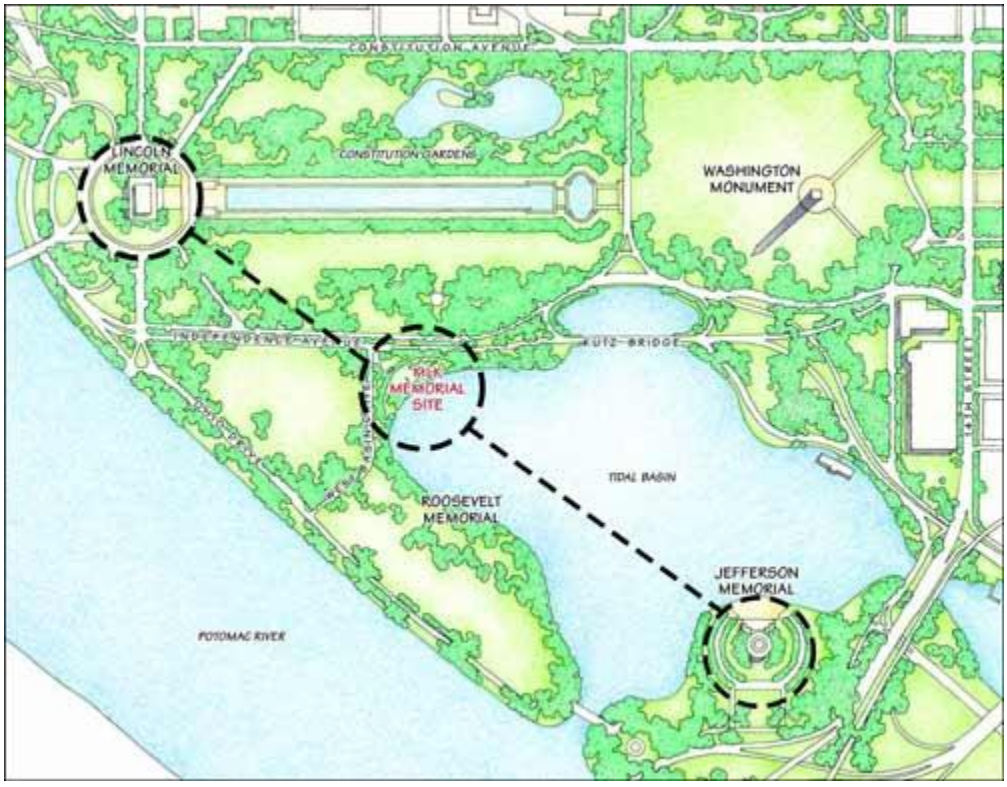
Dr. King championed a movement that draws fully from the deep well of America's potential for freedom, opportunity, and justice. His *vision of America* is captured in his message of hope and possibility for a future anchored in dignity, sensitivity, and mutual respect; a message that challenges each of us to recognize that America's true strength lies in its diversity of talents. The vision of a memorial in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. is one that captures the essence of his message, a message in which he so eloquently affirms the commanding tenants of the *American Dream — Freedom, Democracy and Opportunity for All*; a noble quest that gained him the Nobel Peace Prize and one that continues to influence people and societies throughout the world. Upon reflection, we are reminded that Dr. King's lifelong dedication to the idea of achieving human dignity through global relationships of well being has served to instill a broader and deeper sense of duty within each of us— a duty to be both responsible citizens and conscientious stewards of freedom and democracy.

About the Memorial

Site Location - Context

The National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts approved the site location for the King Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC December 1999.

The Memorial's address will be 1964 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20024. The street number is a reference to the Civil Right's Act of 1964, a milestone which Dr. King played an integral role in achieving.



The approved site creates a visual "line of leadership" from the Lincoln Memorial, which honors the President who

protected the United States from internal strife, and where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech; to the Jefferson Memorial, which honors the President who helped create the United States as the author of the Declaration of Independence.

Site Location - Memorial

For more information on the King Memorial site plan, please visit our Construction Update page.

Dr. King's Memorial is situated on a four-acre plot on the northwest corner of the Tidal Basin adjacent to the Roosevelt Memorial. The Tidal Basin is a man made body of water to the south of the National Mall which acts as an overflow catch basin when the Potomac River swells, helping to prevent extensive flooding of the Mall.

The site is situated within the precinct of Washington, DC's famous cherry blossom trees, a gift from Japan as a sign of peace. Before the King Memorial was built, millions of visitors would come to Washington, DC each spring to witness the beauty of the two week blooming period. During this short timeframe, the Tidal Basin is surrounded by delicate pink and white blossoms on hundreds of trees, a vision that enhances the experience of the Nation's Capital, and announces the arrival of spring each year to its residents.

Sculpture

At the entry portal, two stones are parted and a single stone wedge is pushed forward toward the horizon; the missing piece of what was once a single boulder. The smooth insides of the portal contrast the rough outer surfaces of the boulder. Beyond this portal, the stone appears to have been thrust into the plaza, wrested from the boulder and pushed forward – it bears signs of a great monolithic struggle.

On the visible side of the stone, the theme of hope is presented, with the text from King's famed 1963 speech cut sharply into the stone: *"Out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope."* On the other side are inscribed these words: *"I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness"*, a statement suggested by Dr. King himself when describing how he would like to be remembered.

The boulder is the Mountain of Despair, through which every visitor will enter, moving through the struggle as Dr. King did during his life, and then be released into the open freedom of the plaza. The solitary stone is the Stone of Hope, from which Dr. King's image emerges, gazing over the Tidal Basin toward the horizon, seeing a future society of justice and equality for which he encouraged all citizens to strive.

Inscription Wall

The element of the memorial which truly captures Dr. King's legacy is the Inscription Wall – this element transforms a mere monument into a living memorial. Fourteen of Dr. King's most notable quotes are engraved on a 450-foot crescent shaped granite wall. The quotes span the too-short career of Dr. King, the earliest taken from his rise during the Montgomery Bus Boycotts in Alabama, 1955. The latest quote, appropriately, was taken from his last sermon delivered in Washington, DC at the National Cathedral in 1968, four days before his assassination.

The quotes are not placed chronologically, allowing any visitor to begin reading form any location within the memorial, not requiring them to follow a defined path.

The quotes selected are those which are most representative Dr. King's universal and timeless messages of Justice, Democracy, Hope and Love. None of the inscriptions are from King's "I Have a Dream" speech, for several reasons. Primarily, the entire memorial design is derived from King's most memorable speech; given the limited room for sharing his message and the breadth of his work, the overall design itself is the mark of respect for the moving words from 1963.

The other reason for not including the Dream Speech is that it is Dr. King's best known speech out of the hundreds he delivered. It is the most taught piece of his work in schools, and, at minimum, the history books reference the famed speech when presenting Dr. King's role in American History. But key messages that have and will continue to withstand the test of time are lesser known, and this memorial presented the opportunity to shift the focus of attention from one example of Dr. King's inspirational words to many.

Trees

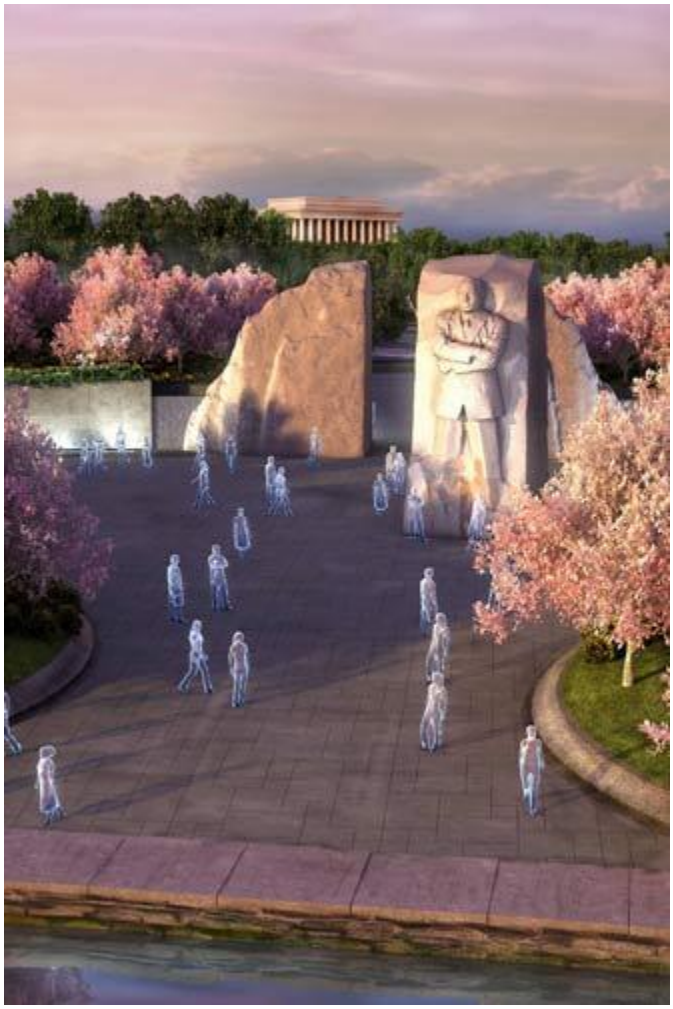
Along the Tidal Basin, Yoshino cherry blossom trees have thrived since 1912 – a gift from Japan as a sign of peace and unity. For only two weeks each spring, their tiny blossoms surround the Basin in a cloud of delicate pink and white. Spring resonates with the spirit of hope, rebirth and renewal; the King Memorial has added 182 cherry blossoms to the Tidal Basin's collection. Poetically, each year the peak blooming period for the trees coincides with the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, April 4th.

To prolong the message of renewed hope embodied by the cherry trees, crape myrtles have also been planted in the memorial. Crape myrtles bloom throughout the summer months and into the fall, prolonging the burst of color and encouraging a sense of endurance and faith.

Along West Basin Drive and Independence Avenue 31 American elm trees have been planted, not only as the

standard street tree of Washington, DC, but also as a border surrounding the memorial, embracing Dr. King as an American icon.

Water



Drawing on its location at the edge of the Tidal Basin, water is used as an essential element that builds on King's words and recalls most powerfully the theme of justice. The water appears only on either side of the main entry, not even visible until one has entered the memorial plaza. It is the sound of water "rolling down" that will draw a visitor's attention. From this life-giving source, Dr. King's message begins stretching away from the entrance, at once welcoming and yet daring the visitor to follow.

Composition and Space

This memorial is not designed to be experienced in a single way with one single message, but rather it is to have a broad accessibility, appealing to all of the senses with diverse and overlapping themes. The introduction of an arcing berm into the horizontal arrangement of the site encourages the Mountain of Despair to be a threshold; after crossing it the visitor is isolated from the traffic along Independence Avenue. The visitors are then free to view, sit, meet, speak and congregate in large and small groups throughout the plaza.

The use of water creates an audible buffer, further enhancing the sensation of being enveloped within the space. Mists will help cool the environment in the warm summer months and rough hewn stone will recall the movement of falling water in the cold winter months. The varied textures of water, stone and landscape will create an environment that is inviting and functional in all seasons and from year to year.

Dr. King's Spiritual Presence

Dr. Martin Luther King is remembered as a great orator whose impact on the nation came from the eloquence and inspirational quality of his words. His speeches, sermons and public addresses melded themes of democracy deeply embedded in the American conscience, and reinvigorated these messages with clear and insightful reflections on the true meaning of justice and equality.

The Jefferson Memorial as seen from the Stone of Hope.

Within the memorial, quotes from Dr. King's sermons and speeches, are inscribed at a large scale on the smooth surfaces of the inscription wall. These passages will be reinforced through the referential use of water, stone,

landscaping and light as metaphorical elements that heighten an awareness of his message.

All of the senses will be engaged through the experience of the memorial, and, foremost, through the visual perception of space, using contrast and juxtaposition, scale and height and the bold display of carefully selected words expressing his spirit. The inspirational text and the mood created by the sound of the water, its cooling mists, and the visual complexity of the contrasting rough and smooth surfaces of stone, the gradual changes in grade and the patterns of light and darkness will dramatically underscore the visual sense of the man and the qualities of courage, conviction and leadership that characterize his life and work.

Added to these powerful sensory experiences will be a sculptural representation of Dr. King himself. This is not conceived of as a pure figurative depiction of his physical being, separate and apart from other elements, but rather would give another dimension and layer of meaning to the experience of the memorial as a whole. Dr. King will appear as an integral part of the "Stone of Hope", as if he embodies the stone itself. He will be positioned on the side of the stone facing the Jefferson Memorial and will be gradually revealed as part of the procession towards the Tidal Basin.

"There are two types of laws: there are just laws and there are unjust laws...What is the difference between the two?...An unjust law is a man-made code that is out of harmony with the moral law...Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Isn't segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, an expression of his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness?"

– Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963

At first, as one enters the main space, the central stone will appear somehow cleft from the stones flanking the portal entry, but pushed forward so as to be visually isolated from the rest of the memorial grounds.

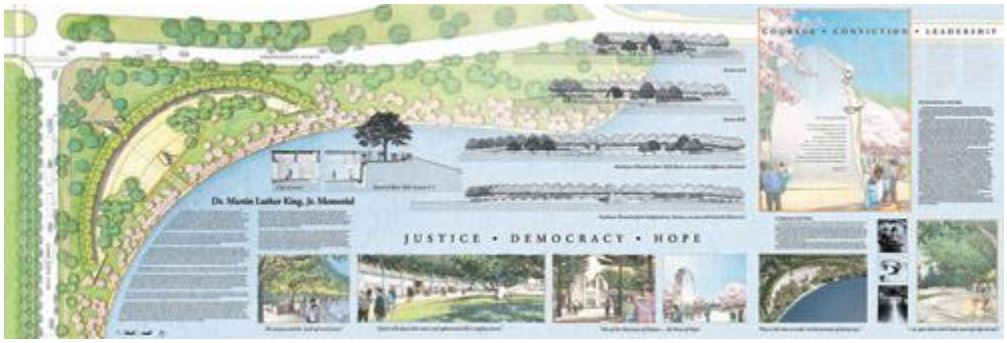
As one gets closer to the monolith, its rough hewn edges toward the memorial will begin to take on a vaguely familiar contour, recognizable, but not entirely clear.

Finally, as one looks back to the inscription wall and main space from the stone, the image of Dr. King will be fully revealed. He will be seen looking across the Tidal Basin. This representation will stir the emotions, transcend the physical and symbolic and directly engage the imagination of the viewer.

World peace through nonviolent means is neither absurd nor unattainable. All other methods have failed. Thus we must begin anew. Nonviolence is a good starting point. Those of us who believe in this method can be voices of reason, sanity, and understanding amid the voices of violence, hatred, and emotion. We can very well set a mood of peace out of which a system of peace can be built.

– Martin Luther King, Jr. December 1964

The entire memorial invokes the memory and spiritual presence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through the visual experience of place, reinforced by the full range of sensory perception, the metaphorical use of water, stone and other landscape elements, the powerful display of passages from his sermons and speeches and the appearance of his physical image in the "Stone of Hope".



Winning Memorial Design. The winning design was submitted in January 2000 by ROMA Design Group of San Francisco, CA.

Design & Construction Team

Designer
ROMA Design Group
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San Francisco, CA 94133
www.ROMA.com

Design-Build Contractor
McKissack & McKissack / Turner Construction / Tompkins Builders / Gilford Corporation Design-Build Joint Venture

- McKissack & McKissack, *Architect of Record*
  www.mckissackdc.com
- Turner Construction
  www.turnerconstruction.com
- Tompkins Builders, Inc.
  www.tompkinsbuilders.com
- Gilford Corporation
  www.gilfordcorp.com

Leadership

The campaign to build a national memorial honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is lead by a team of well-known public figures, respected representatives of various professions, and executives with some of America's foremost business and industrial firms.

Coretta Scott King
In Memoriam
Founder, The King Center

Ambassador Andrew Young
Chairman
GoodWorks International

Gary Cowger
Global Group Vice President, Ret.
General Motors Corporation

John T. Montford
Chairman, GM Foundation
Senior Advisor, Government Relations
and Global Public Policy
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Chad A. Jester
President
Nationwide Foundation

Sheila C. Johnson-Newman
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Partner of Lincoln Holding LLC
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Honorable Jack Kemp
In Memoriam
Founder & Chairman
Kemp Partners

Victor B. MacFarlane
Managing Principal
MacFarlane Partners

J. W. Marriott, Jr.
Chairman & CEO
Marriott International, Inc.

Emilio Pardo
Chief Brand Officer
AARP

Dr. William F. Pickard
Chairman & CEO
Vitec, LLC

General Colin L. Powell
USA (Retired)

Franklin D. Raines
Revolution Health Group
Washington, DC

Henry Schleiff
President & CEO
The Discovery Channel

Ivan G. Seidenberg
Chairman & CEO
VERIZON Communications

Russell Simmons
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Rush Communications

Daniel Snyder
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NFL Washington Redskins

David Stern
Commissioner
National Basketball Association

Dale A. Stinton
CEO
National Association of Realtors

J. C. Watts, Jr.
President & CEO
J. C. Watts Companies

Dr. Robert L. Wright
Chairman
F E Holdings

Presidents' Council

President George H. W. Bush

President Jimmy Carter

President Bill Clinton

Nancy Reagan
(representing President Ronald Reagan)

In memory of **Lady Bird Johnson**
(representing President Lyndon B. Johnson)

Dream Team

The Dream Team consists of celebrities who generously donate their time and resources to promote and support the Memorial.

Laila Ali
Muhammad Ali
Dr. Maya Angelou
Clarence Avant
Angela Bassett
Richard Brooks
Chris Brown
Roger Aaron Brown
Tommy Davidson
Suzzanne Douglas
Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds
Tracey Edmonds
Laurence Fishburne
Antwone Fisher
Harrison Ford
George Foreman
Vivica A. Fox
Morgan Freeman
Whoopi Goldberg
Dennis Haysbert
Dule Hill
Dustin Hoffman
Ernie Hudson
Samuel L. Jackson
Anne Marie Johnson
Patti La Belle
Walt "Baby" Love-Shaw
Peter Max
Holly Robinson Peete
Rodney Peete
Joseph C. Phillips
Paul Pierce
James Reynolds
Lionel Ritchie
Al Roker
Victoria Rowell
Carlos Santana
Deborah Santana
Oz Scott
Martin Sheen
Elisabeth Shue
Andrew Shue
Tavis Smiley
Jerry Stackhouse
Sean Patrick Thomas
Lorraine Touissant
Dr. Debbye Turner
Dionne Warwick
Chris Webber
Brad Whitford

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CEO
Jenkins & Associates, Inc.
Montgomery, AL

Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Herman "Skip" Mason
General President
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Atlanta, GA

Tyrone Means
Attorney at Law
Thomas, Means, Gillis, & Seay, P.C.

Reverend Joe Ratliff
Senior Pastor
Brentwood Baptist Church
Houston, TX

George N. Reaves
Social Insurance Specialist
Social Security Administration
Harold Washington Social Security Center.
Chicago, IL

Frank Russell, Jr.
Atlanta, GA

Caryl M. Stern
Chief Operating Officer
US Fund for UNICEF
New York, NY

Robert Wingo
President & CEO
Sanders/Wingo Advertising, Inc.
El Paso, TX

Chris Womack
Executive Vice President and President
External Affairs
Southern Company
Atlanta, GA

Tonya R. White-Evans
Thomas, Means, Gillis, & Seay, P.C.
Montgomery, AL

Montgomery, AL

Vivian R. Pickard
President, GM Foundation
Director, Corporate Relations General Motors Company
Detroit, MI

Executive Staff

Harry E. Johnson, Sr.
President & CEO

Dynamic Leadership

Harry E. Johnson, Sr. serves as President and CEO of the Foundation. A partner in a Houston, Texas law firm, under his leadership, the Foundation has made steadfast advancement toward completing the Memorial Project.

Richard W. Marshall
Chief Financial Officer

Sound Fiscal Management

Richard W. Marshall, a finance director on loan to the organization from General Motors, serves as Chief Financial Officer of the Foundation, providing fiscal and financial management expertise. He has provided similar services for non-profit organizations throughout his career.

Dr. Ed Jackson, Jr.
Executive Architect

Continuity in Project Management

Dr. Ed Jackson, Jr. serves as the executive architect of the Foundation, providing both management and continuity of the design and construction processes from beginning to end.

To contact any of the members of the Executive Staff please call (202) 737-5420.

Design-Build Team of the Washington, DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial

Overview

The McKissack & McKissack/Turner/Gilford/Tompkins Team is a highly qualified, experienced and diverse design, management and building team. Founded on mutual goals, trust and character, each member of this Design-Build Team has contributed their key corporate strengths as well as best and brightest professionals for this landmark project.

Team members have relevant experience working together. To illustrate, McKissack and Turner have had a successful relationship since 1996. Together, the two firms have completed many high-profile projects, including the New Washington Convention Center, Renovation of RFK Stadium and the Multi-phased Renovation of the U.S. Treasury Building. McKissack and Turner are currently managing the construction of the New Nationals Major League Baseball Stadium as well as providing project management services in support of the Washington Convention Center Headquarters Hotel and Expansion Space project. Furthermore, Gilford Corporation and Turner are jointly performing comprehensive preconstruction services for Broadcast Center One in Washington, DC, and are both working with McKissack on the District of Columbia Public Schools Modernization Program. Gilford Corporation is also teamed on the new National Harbor project in Prince George's County with Tompkins Builders, Inc.

Team Member Profiles

McKissack & McKissack of Washington, Inc. is an African-American, woman-owned full service architecture and program/construction management firm. Deryl McKissack, PE, PMP, founded the company in 1990, which now has offices in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Chicago and Miami. McKissack employs 140 professionals and is certified by the District of Columbia as a Local, Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (LSDBE). It is ranked by the *Washington Business Journal* as one of the top 25 Design firms in the Washington Metropolitan Area and by *Engineering News Record* as one of the nation's leading Construction Management firms.

When Deryl McKissack established the company, she was the fifth generation of her family to carry on the building tradition. McKissack is an outgrowth of the oldest, continually minority-owned architecture/engineering firm in the United States. Its roots go back to before the Civil War, when a slave in Tennessee named Moses McKissack learned the building trade from his overseer. It was his grandson, Moses III, who launched the first McKissack & McKissack in Nashville, Tennessee. The year was 1905.

The year that Ms. McKissack's father took the helm of the Nashville firm, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis at the Lorraine Motel. A civil rights center was later constructed within the motel that would help visitors better understand the history and lessons of the American Civil Rights Movement. McKissack & McKissack of Nashville provided full architectural and engineering services for the $9.9 million renovation and addition for the civil rights center.

Today, the fifth generation of McKissacks still understands the importance of legacy and tradition, especially in the historic preservation of landmarks and erection of monuments, notably its performance as prime contractor on the design-build work at the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. For the past six years, McKissack has provided services for the restoration and security improvements for both the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. The firm's memorial experience has also included construction management for the U.S. Air Force Memorial site preparation. Moreover, in celebration of the McKissack family's centennial year, in 2005 Ms. McKissack's firm bequeathed the concept design for the fundraising effort for the new Cape Coast Museum in Ghana. The museum was designed to represent the seven stages Africans went through in being taken from their homeland, to becoming slaves, to some eventually becoming free in the United States.

Turner Construction Company was founded by Henry C. Turner in 1902. Throughout his career, Mr. Turner referred to his clients as "respected friends". The company quickly built a strong reputation for integrity, teamwork and commitment. One of the largest and most established General Contractors in the United States, Turner put in place more than $8.5 billion in construction in 2006. With its 5,500 employees worldwide, the firm consistently ranks number one or two in the *Engineering News Record* major building category rankings.

Turner has maintained a full service local office in the Washington region since 1975 and employs more than 420 professionals. The company offers the following benefits: 105 years of financial strength and stability; local, national

and international resources and operations; and unmatched design-build, preconstruction and construction experience.

Turner has a long, positive track record in utilizing small firms and Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs). Turner's objective is to increase visibility, improve economic viability, and expand opportunities for these businesses. Since 1979, Turner's total awards to M/WBEs and involvement with M/WBE joint venture partnerships exceeds $14.4 billion. It has established an annual goal of 20% relative to the utilization of M/WBEs in the areas of construction, subcontracting, prime contracting, joint venture relationships/associations, and goods and services. Moreover, Turner has developed a successful Construction Management Training Program for M/WBEs, an eight-week course taught by professional Turner staff volunteers on such topics as risk management, construction estimating, safety and effective marketing. Today, more than 15,000 people have successfully graduated from this program.

Gilford Corporation is a leading minority-owned firm established in 1984 as Gilford & Chase, a civil engineering firm. In 1995, the firm's focus became construction, changed its name to Gilford Corporation, and became certified with the Small Business Administration 8(a) and the District of Columbia as a Local, Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (LSDBE), among others. Since that time, Gilford Corporation has experienced significant growth and completed over 350 projects with an aggregate value of more than $180 million (excluding joint ventures).

Gilford Corporation currently employs an ethnically and culturally diverse staff numbering approximately 180 and offers multidiscipline services through its four operating divisions: general contracting and construction management; demolition and environmental services; information technology and network services; and international construction and network services.

Tompkins Builders, Inc. became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Turner Construction Company in 2003. Tompkins is an important asset of Turner because of its long standing history of service in the District of Columbia. Frequently, Turner and Tompkins Builders share staff, technologies and resources to provide the best project team and performance available to clients.

Tompkins Builders is responsible for some of the District's most unique, prominent, and historically significant projects, including: National World War II Memorial; National Museum of Natural History renovations; Ronald Reagan Building; National Gallery of Art East Wing; National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden; Thomas Garrigue Masaryk Memorial; US Capitol East Front Extension; National Air and Space Museum renovation; Old Post Office Pavilion; and American Red Cross Headquarters.

Bios of Key Personnel

Deryl McKissack, PE, PMP, McKissack & McKissack—Executive Oversight. Ms. McKissack is President and Chief Executive Officer of McKissack. She founded the company in 1990 as a sole entrepreneur working with very limited financial resources. Through her leadership, vision, and passion for excellence, she has defined the culture of the firm. Prior to launching her own company, Ms. McKissack worked directly with the President of Howard University. Her leadership at the institution was marked by successfully managing a $32 million operating budget and capital budget exceeding $200 million, which covered three campuses, 133 buildings and 900 employees. Earlier in her career, she worked for both Turner Construction Company and Dames & Moore Group.

Ms. McKissack serves on the Board of Directors of the National Building Museum, Living Classrooms Foundation and DC Economic Club. She participates on Advisory Boards for the DC Lottery and University of the District of Columbia Foundation. Additionally, Ms. McKissack is a member of the Federal City Council in Washington, DC, Metropolitan Planning Commission in Chicago, the Executive's Club of Chicago, National Forum of Black Public Administrators, Corporate Advisory Council (National, Chicago and Washington, DC Chapters) as well as the Construction Management Association of America and is a former member of the Architecture/Engineering Review Board for the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Hilton Smith*,* Turner Construction Company—Senior Vice President, Corporate and Community Affairs. In his current position, Mr. Smith is responsible for managing the company's corporate affairs, Minority/Woman-owned Business Enterprise Program, equal employment and educational

programs. He coordinates business development and strategic marketing programs with senior executive officers in the company. Mr. Smith has actively led Turner's efforts in awarding over $20 billion to thousands of minority- and woman-owned business enterprises. In 2005, Turner reached the $1 billion mark in its M/WBE program.

Mr. Smith's education includes a BA in Sociology & Political Science from St. Augustine's College as well as Urban Studies at Cleveland State University, completion of the Urban Ministry Program at Yale University, and Doctor of Humane Letters (honorary) from David Meyers University.

Christian E. Jahrling*,* Turner Construction Company—Vice President and General Manager of Turner's Mid-Atlantic regional office. He is responsible for the day-to-day management of the firm with particular focus on the technical and contractual aspects of government, commercial, and healthcare projects. He has 25 years of experience with Turner.

Prior to becoming the regional General Manager, Chris headed Turner's Government Services division. Under his leadership Turner successfully installed baggage screening equipment at all U.S. Airports under a TSA national design-build contract - 447 in all. Chris also has experience as the General Manager of Turner's Detroit offices, overseeing major Turner projects including the Green Bay Packers stadium renovations, Comerica Ball Park, and the General Motors Headquarters renovations.

Henry Gilford, Gilford Corporation—Executive Oversight. As President and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Gilford oversees the corporation's strategic management, marketing and business development. He also has executive responsibility for firm operations. Mr. Gilford provides leadership and executive supervision for all projects, proposal development, contract negotiations, and client relations. He is personally involved in all project aspects to ensure the firm's mission is accomplished in each project. Under Mr. Gilford's leadership, Gilford Corporation accomplishes this objective through partnership, teamwork, planning, training, communication, attention to detail and the belief that excellence and professional relationships are paramount to the firm's success. Mr. Gilford earned a BS in Construction Engineering from Alabama A&M University. He holds Civil Engineering Certifications and Registrations in the District of Columbia and elsewhere.

Ken Terry, Tompkins Builders, Inc.—Project Executive. Mr. Terry has nearly 15 years of experience in the construction industry. His background includes historic and new construction projects. He has repeatedly demonstrated his results-oriented approach by progressively being assigned many of Tompkins most challenging projects. During the span of his tenure in the industry, Mr. Terry has executed construction assignments that have had difficult site restrictions, complex excavation, and intricate sheeting and shoring and structural requirements. Among his most notable projects are the National World War II Memorial, Saint Elizabeths New Hospital, Gallery Place Mixed-Use Redevelopment, and the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center Structural Concrete and Exterior Stone Facade Packages. Mr. Terry received his BS in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech.

Lisa Anders, McKissack & McKissack—Sr. Program Director. Ms. Anders possesses over 18 years of construction project management experience in both the public and private sector markets. Over the course of her career, Ms. Anders has acquired extensive hands-on project management and field experience in all phases of programming preconstruction, construction administration, cost estimating, scheduling, contract negotiations, and project close-out. Prior projects include, National Archives II, Pentagon Renovation, Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute, Cleveland Clinic's Cole Eye Institute, and Oriole Park at Camden Yards. Ms. Anders received her BS in Civil Engineering from Howard University and an MBA from University of Maryland.

Quick Facts About the Memorial

1. Why build a Memorial to Dr. King?

More than a monument to a great humanitarian, the National Memorial honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be a place for visitors from all over the world to be energized by its extraordinary power; the power that illuminated the faith of our founders and now impels us toward our destiny as a nation; the power flowing from the uniquely American spirit of brotherly love, freedom, justice, and the priceless blessing they endure...peace.

2. Why build the Memorial now?

Dr. King once reminded the nation of "the fierce urgency of now" while warning against "the tranquilizing drug of gradualism." The time is now a historical perspective. Many young people have heard of Dr. King, but are unaware of the significance of his contributions to America and the world. The design has been established; the site is secured; the fundraising teams are already at work; and more than $114 million of the campaign goal has been raised. The time is now.

3. What will the Memorial look like?

The Memorial is conceived as an engaging landscape experience to convey four fundamental and recurring themes throughout Dr. King's life – democracy, justice, hope, and love. Natural elements such as the crescent-shaped-stone wall inscribed with excerpts of his sermons, and public addresses will serve as the living testaments of his vision of America. The centerpiece of the Memorial, the "Stone of Hope", will feature a 30-foot likeness of Dr. King.

4. When will the Memorial be completed?

The Ceremonial Groundbreaking occurred on November 13, 2006. The start of construction is contingent upon raising $120 million. The Dedication of the Memorial is August 28, 2011, the 48th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

5. How much will the Memorial cost?

It is estimated that the total cost of the project will be $120 million. Of that amount, more than $114 million has been raised.

6. To date, who have been your major contributors?

General Motors	$10,000,000
Federal Appropriation	9,852,876
Tommy Hilfiger Corporate Foundation	6,000,000
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.	3,485,208
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	3,000,000
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	3,000,000
NBA	3,000,000
The Walt Disney Company	2,750,000
In-Kind (Promotions and Marketing)	1,300,000
Coca-Cola Foundation	2,000,000
The Ford Motor Fund	2,000,000
MetLife Foundation	2,000,000
Toyota	2,000,000

Verizon Foundation	2,000,000
Delta Air Lines and Delta Air Lines Foundation	1,600,000
MTTG a joint venture of McKissack & McKissack, Turner, Tompkins and Gilford	1,400,000
Aetna	1,275,000
Travelers	1,250,000
Credit Unions of the United States	1,200,000
GE	1,200,000
AFSCME	1,061,979
AARP	1,000,000
AFLAC	1,000,000
Best Buy	1,000,000
The Boeing Company	1,000,000
BP America, Inc.	1,000,000
CIGNA	1,000,000
Cummins	1,000,000
DirecTV	1,000,000
DuPont	1,000,000
Exelon Foundation	1,000,000
ExxonMobil Foundation	1,000,000
Fannie Mae Corporation	1,000,000
FedEx Corporation	1,000,000
Ann and Joel Horowitz Family Foundation	1,000,000
Sheila C. Johnson-Newman	1,000,000
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation	1,000,000
George Lucas	1,000,000
MacFarlane Partners	1,000,000
The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation	1,000,000
McDonald’s Corporation	1,000,000
National Association of Realtors (NAR)	1,000,000
National Education Association (NEA)	1,000,000
National Football League Players Association	1,000,000
Nationwide Foundation	1,000,000
PepsiCo Foundation	1,000,000
Pew Charitable Trusts	1,000,000
Pfizer Foundation	1,000,000
Prudential Financial, Inc.	1,000,000

Shell Oil Company	1,000,000
State Farm Insurance	1,000,000
United Health Group	1,000,000
Viacom; BET; MTV	1,000,000
Wal-Mart	1,000,000

King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929-1968)

Martin Luther King, Jr., made history, but he was also transformed by his deep family roots in the African-American Baptist church, his formative experiences in his hometown of Atlanta, his theological studies, his varied models of religious and political leadership, and his extensive network of contacts in the peace and social justice movements of his time. Although King was only thirty-nine at the time of his death, his life was remarkable for the ways it reflected and inspired so many of the twentieth century's major intellectual, cultural, and political developments.

The son, grandson, and great-grandson of Baptist ministers, Martin Luther King Jr., named Michael King at birth, was born in Atlanta and spent his first twelve years in the Auburn Avenue home that his parents, the Reverend Michael King and Alberta Williams King, shared with his maternal grandparents, the Reverend Adam Daniel (A. D.) Williams and Jeannie Celeste Williams. After Rev. Williams' death in 1931, his son-in-law became Ebenezer Baptist Church's new pastor and gradually established himself as a major figure in state and national Baptist groups. The elder King began referring to himself (and later to his son) as Martin Luther King.

King's formative experiences not only immersed him in the affairs of Ebenezer but also introduced him to the African-American social gospel tradition exemplified by his father and grandfather, both of whom were leaders of the Atlanta branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Depression-era breadlines heightened King's awareness of economic inequities, and his father's leadership of campaigns against racial discrimination in voting and teachers' salaries provided a model for the younger King's own politically engaged ministry. He resisted religious emotionalism and as a teenager questioned some facets of Baptist doctrine, such as the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

During his undergraduate years at Atlanta's Morehouse College from 1944 to 1948, King gradually overcame his initial reluctance to accept his inherited calling. Morehouse president Benjamin E. Mays influenced King's spiritual development, encouraging him to view Christianity as a potential force for progressive social change. Religion professor George Kelsey exposed him to biblical criticism and, according to King's autobiographical sketch, taught him "that behind the legends and myths of the Book were many profound truths which one could not escape" (*Papers* 1:43). King admired both educators as deeply religious yet also learned men and by the end of his junior year, such academic role models and the example of his father led King to enter the ministry. He described his decision as a response to an "inner urge" calling him to "serve humanity" (*Papers* 1:363). He was ordained during his final semester at Morehouse, and by this time King had also taken his first steps toward political activism. He had responded to the postwar wave of anti-black violence by proclaiming in a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* that African Americans were "entitled to the basic rights and opportunities of American citizens" (*Papers* 1:121). During his senior year King joined the Intercollegiate Council, an interracial student discussion group that met monthly at Atlanta's Emory University.

After leaving Morehouse, King increased his understanding of liberal Christian thought while attending Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania from 1948 to 1951. Initially uncritical of liberal theology, he gradually moved toward Reinhold Niebuhr's neoorthodoxy, which emphasized the intractability of social evil. Mentored by local minister, J. Pius Barbour, he reacted skeptically to a presentation on pacifism by Fellowship of Reconciliation leader A. J. Muste. Moreover, by the end of his seminary studies King had become increasingly dissatisfied with the abstract conceptions of God held by some modern theologians and identified himself instead with the theologians who affirmed personalism, or a belief in the personality of God. Even as he continued to question and modify his own religious beliefs, he complied an outstanding academic record and graduated at the top of his class.

In 1951 King began doctoral studies in systematic theology at Boston University's School of Theology, which

was dominated by personalist theologians such as Edgar Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. The papers (including his dissertation) that King wrote during his years at Boston displayed little originality, and some contained extensive plagiarism; but his readings enabled him to formulate an eclectic yet coherent theological perspective. By the time he completed his doctoral studies in 1955, King had refined his exceptional ability to draw upon a wide range of theological and philosophical texts to express his views with force and precision. His ability to infuse his oratory with borrowed theological insights became evident in his expanding preaching activities in Boston-area-churches and at Ebenezer, where he assisted his father during school vacations.

During his stay in Boston, King also met and courted Coretta Scott, an Alabama-born Antioch College graduate who was then a student at the New England Conservatory of Music. On 18 June 1953 the two students were married in Marion, Alabama, where Scott's family lived.

Although he considered pursuing an academic career, King decided in 1954 to accept an offer to become the pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In December 1955, when Montgomery black leaders, such as Jo Ann Robinson, E. D. Nixon, and Ralph Abernathy formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to protest the arrest of NAACP official Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man, they selected King to head the new group. In his role as the primary spokesman of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, King utilized the leadership abilities he had gained from his religious background and academic training to forge a distinctive protest strategy that involved the mobilization of black churches and skillful appeals for white support. With the encouragement of Bayard Rustin, Glenn Smiley, William Stuart Nelson and other veteran pacifists, King also became a firm advocate of Mohandas Gandhi's precepts of nonviolence, which he combined with Christian social gospel ideas.

After the United States Supreme Court outlawed Alabama bus segregation laws in Browder v. Gayle in late 1956, King sought to expand the nonviolent civil rights movement throughout the South. In 1957 he joined with C. K. Steele, Fred Shuttlesworth and T .J. Jemison in founding the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with King as president to coordinate civil rights activities throughout the region. Publication of *Stride Toward Freedom*: The Montgomery Story (1958) further contributed to King's rapid emergence as a national civil rights leader. Even as he expanded his influence, however, King acted cautiously. Rather than immediately seeking to stimulate mass desegregation protests in the South, King stressed the goal of achieving black voting rights when he addressed an audience at the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom.

King's rise to fame was not without personal consequences. In 1958 King was the victim of his first assassination attempt. Although his house had been bombed several times during the Montgomery bus boycott, it was while signing copies of *Stride Toward Freedom* that Izola Ware Curry stabbed him with a letter opener. Surgery to remove it was successful, but King had to recuperate for several months, giving up all protest activity.

One of the key aspects of King's leadership was his ability to establish support from many types of organizations including labor unions, peace organizations, southern reform organizations, and religious groups. As early as 1956, labor unions, such as the United Packinghouse Workers and the United Auto Workers contributed to the MIA and peace activists such as Homer Jack alerted their associates to the activities of the MIA. Activists from southern organizations such as Myles Horton's Highlander Folk School and Anne Braden's Southern Conference Education Fund were in frequent contact with King. In addition, his extensive ties to the National Baptist Convention provided support from churches all over the nation; and his advisor, Stanley Levison insured broad support from Jewish groups.

King's recognition of the link between segregation and colonialism resulted in alliances with groups fighting oppression outside the U.S., especially in Africa. In March 1957, King traveled to Ghana at the invitation of Kwame Nkrumah to attend the nation's independence ceremony. Shortly after returning from Ghana King

joined the American Committee on Africa agreeing to serve as vice chairman of an International Sponsoring Committee for a day of protest against South Africa's apartheid government. Later at a SCLC sponsored event honoring Kenyan labor leader Tom Mboya, King further articulated the connections between the African-American freedom struggle and those abroad: "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality" (*Papers* 5:204).

During 1959 he increased his understanding of Gandhian ideas during a month-long visit to India sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. With Coretta and MIA historian Lawrence D. Reddick in tow, King met with many Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Writing after his return, King stated, "I left India more convinced than ever before that non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (*Papers* 5:233).

Early the following year he moved his family, which now included two children, Yolanda and Martin Luther King, III, to Atlanta in order to be nearer SCLC headquarters in that city and to become co-pastor, with his father, of Ebenezer Baptist Church. (The Kings' third child, Dexter, was born in 1961; their fourth, Bernice, was born in 1963.) Soon after King's arrival in Atlanta, the southern civil rights movement gained new impetus from the student-led lunch counter sit-in movement that spread throughout the region during 1960. The sit-ins brought into existence a new protest group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which would often push King toward greater militancy. King came in contact with students, especially those from Nashville such as John Lewis, James Bevel and Diane Nash who had been trained in nonviolent tactics by James Lawson. In October 1960 King's arrest during a student-initiated protest in Atlanta became an issue in the national presidential campaign when Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy called Coretta King to express his concern. The successful efforts of Kennedy supporters to secure King's release contributed to the Democratic candidate's narrow victory over Republican candidate Richard Nixon.

King's decision to move to Atlanta was partly caused by SCLC's lack of success during the late 1950s. Associate director Ella Baker had complained that the SCLC's Crusade for Citizenship suffered from lack of attention from King. SCLC leaders hoped that with King now in Atlanta, programming would be improved. The hiring of Wyatt T. Walker as executive director in 1960 was also seen as a step toward bringing efficiency to the organization, while the addition of Dorothy Cotton and Andrew Young to the staff infused new leadership after SCLC took over the administration of the Citizenship Education program pioneered by Septima Clark. Attorney Clarence Jones also began to assist King and SCLC with legal matters and to act as King's advisor.

As the southern protest movement expanded during the early 1960s, King was often torn between the increasingly militant student activists, such as those who participated in the Freedom Rides and more cautious national civil rights leaders. During 1961 and 1962 his tactical differences with SNCC activists surfaced during a sustained protest movement in Albany, Georgia. King was arrested twice during demonstrations organized by the Albany Movement, but when he left jail and ultimately left Albany without achieving a victory, some movement activists began to question his militancy and his dominant role within the southern protest movement.

As King encountered increasingly fierce white opposition, he continued his movement away from theological abstractions toward more reassuring conceptions, rooted in African-American religious culture, of God as a constant source of support. He later wrote in his book of sermons, *Strength to Love* (1963), that the travails of movement leadership caused him to abandon the notion of God as "theological and philosophically satisfying" and caused him to view God as "a living reality that has been validated in the experiences of everyday life" (*Papers* 5:424).

During 1963, however, King reasserted his preeminence within the African-American freedom struggle through his leadership of the Birmingham campaign. Initiated by SCLC and its affiliate, the Alabama Christian

Movement for Human Rights, the Birmingham demonstrations were the most massive civil rights protest that had yet occurred. With the assistance of Fred Shuttlesworth and other local black leaders and with little competition from SNCC and other civil rights groups, SCLC officials were able to orchestrate the Birmingham protests to achieve maximum national impact. King's decision to intentionally allow himself to be arrested for leading a demonstration on 12 April prodded the Kennedy administration to intervene in the escalating protests. A widely quoted "Letter from Birmingham Jail" displayed his distinctive ability to influence public opinion by appropriating ideas from the Bible, the Constitution, and other canonical texts. During May, televised pictures of police using dogs and fire hoses against young demonstrators generated a national outcry against white segregationist officials in Birmingham. The brutality of Birmingham officials and the refusal of Alabama governor George C. Wallace to allow the admission of black students at the University of Alabama prompted President Kennedy to introduce major civil rights legislation.

King's speech at the 28 August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom attended by more than 200,000 people, was the culmination of a wave of civil rights protest activity that extended even to northern cities. In his prepared remarks King announced that African Americans wished to cash the "promissory note" signified in the egalitarian rhetoric of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Closing his address with extemporaneous remarks, he insisted that he had not lost hope: "I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream . . . that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed:'we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'" He appropriated the familiar words of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" before concluding, "when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last'" (King, *Call*, 82, 85, 87).

Although there was much elation after the March on Washington, less than a month later, the movement was shocked by another act of senseless violence. On 15 September 1963 a dynamite blast killed four young school girls at Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. King delivered the eulogy for three of the four girls, reflecting, "They say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, and the philosophy which produced the murders" (King, *Call*, 96).

St. Augustine, Florida became the site of the next major confrontation of the civil rights movement. Beginning in 1963 Robert B. Hayling, of the local NAACP had led sit-ins against segregated businesses. SCLC was called in to help in May 1964, suffering the arrest of King and Abernathy. After a few court victories, SCLC left when a bi-racial committee was formed; however, local residents continued to suffer violence.

King's ability to focus national attention on orchestrated confrontations with racist authorities, combined with his oration at the 1963 March on Washington, made him the most influential African-American spokesperson of the first half of the 1960s. Named *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year" at the end of 1963, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December 1964. The acclaim King received strengthened his stature among civil rights leaders but also prompted Federal Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover to step up his effort to damage King's reputation. Hoover, with the approval of President Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, established phone taps and bugs. Hoover and many other observers of the southern struggle saw King as controlling events, but he was actually a moderating force within an increasingly diverse black militancy of the mid-1960s. Although he was not personally involved in Freedom Summer (1964), he was called upon to attempt to persuade the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates to accept a compromise at the Democratic Party National Convention.

As the African-American struggle expanded from desegregation protests to mass movements seeking economic

and political gains in the North as well as the South, King's active involvement was limited to a few highly publicized civil rights campaigns, such as Birmingham and St. Augustine, which secured popular support for the passage of national civil rights legislation, particularly the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Alabama protests reached a turning point on 7 March when state police attacked a group of demonstrators at the start of a march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery. Carrying out Governor Wallace's orders, the police used tear gas and clubs to turn back the marchers after they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the outskirts of Selma. Unprepared for the violent confrontation, King alienated some activists when he decided to postpone the continuation of the Selma to Montgomery March until he had received court approval, but the march, which finally secured federal court approval, attracted several thousand civil rights sympathizers, black and white, from all regions of the nation. On 25 March King addressed the arriving marchers from the steps of the capitol in Montgomery. The march and the subsequent killing of a white participant, Viola Liuzzo, as well as the earlier murder of James Reeb dramatized the denial of black voting rights and spurred passage during the following summer of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

After the successful voting rights march in Alabama, King was unable to garner similar support for his effort to confront the problems of northern urban blacks. Early in 1966 he, together with local activist Al Raby, launched a major campaign against poverty and other urban problems and moved his family into an apartment in Chicago's black ghetto. As King shifted the focus of his activities to the North, however, he discovered that the tactics used in the South were not as effective elsewhere. He encountered formidable opposition from Mayor Richard Daley and was unable to mobilize Chicago's economically and ideologically diverse black community. King was stoned by angry whites in the Chicago suburb of Cicero when he led a march against racial discrimination in housing. Despite numerous mass protests, the Chicago Campaign resulted in no significant gains and undermined King's reputation as an effective civil rights leader.

King's influence was damaged further by the increasingly caustic tone of black militancy of the period after 1965. Black radicals increasingly turned away from the Gandhian precepts of King toward the Black Nationalism of Malcolm X, whose posthumously published autobiography and speeches reached large audiences after his assassination in February 1965. Unable to influence the black insurgencies that occurred in many urban areas, King refused to abandon his firmly rooted beliefs about racial integration and nonviolence. He was nevertheless unpersuaded by black nationalist calls for racial uplift and institutional development in black communities.

In June 1966, James Meredith was shot while attempting a "March against Fear" in Mississippi. King, Floyd McKissick of the Congress of Racial Equality and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC decided to continue his march. During the march, the activists from SNCC decided to test a new slogan that they had been using, Black Power. King objected to the use of the term, but the media took the opportunity to expose the disagreements among protestors and publicized the term.

In his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967), King dismissed the claim of Black Power advocates "to be the most revolutionary wing of the social revolution taking place in the United States," but he acknowledged that they responded to a psychological need among African Americans he had not previously addressed (King, *Where Do We Go*, 45-46). "Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery," King wrote. "The Negro will only be free when he reaches down to the inner depths of his own being and signs with the pen and ink of assertive manhood his own emancipation proclamation" (King, *Call*, 184).

Indeed, even as his popularity declined, King spoke out strongly against American involvement in the Vietnam War, making his position public in an address, "Beyond Vietnam," on 4 April 1967 at New York's Riverside Church. King's involvement in the anti-war movement reduced his ability to influence national racial policies

and made him a target of further FBI investigations. Nevertheless, he became ever more insistent that his version of Gandhian nonviolence and social gospel Christianity was the most appropriate response to the problems of black Americans.

In December 1967 King announced the formation of the Poor People's Campaign, designed to prod the federal government to strengthen its antipoverty efforts. King and other SCLC workers began to recruit poor people and antipoverty activists to come to Washington, D.C., to lobby on behalf of improved antipoverty programs. This effort was in its early stages when King became involved in the Memphis sanitation workers' strike in Tennessee. On 28 March 1968, as King led thousands of sanitation workers and sympathizers on a march through downtown Memphis, black youngsters began throwing rocks and looting stores. This outbreak of violence led to extensive press criticisms of King's entire antipoverty strategy. King returned to Memphis for the last time in early April. Addressing an audience at Bishop Charles J. Mason Temple on 3 April, King affirmed his optimism despite the "difficult days" that lay ahead. "But it really doesn't matter with me now," he declared, "because I've been to the mountaintop [and] I've seen the Promised Land." He continued, "I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land." (King, *Call*, 222-223). The following evening the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. took place as he stood on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. A white segregationist, James Earl Ray, was later convicted of the crime. The Poor People's Campaign continued for a few months after his death under the direction of Ralph Abernathy, the new SCLC president, but it did not achieve its objectives.

Until his death King remained steadfast in his commitment to the radical transformation of American society through nonviolent activism. In his posthumously published essay, "A Testament of Hope" (1969), he urged African Americans to refrain from violence but also warned, "White America must recognize that justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society." The "black revolution" was more than a civil rights movement, he insisted. "It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws-racism, poverty, militarism and materialism" (King, "Testament," 194).

After her husband's death, Coretta Scott King established the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change (also known as the King Center) to promote Gandhian-Kingian concepts of nonviolent struggle. She also led the successful effort to honor her husband with a federally mandated King national holiday, which was first celebrated in 1986.

Major King Events Chronology: 1929-1968

1929

15 January	Michael King, later known as Martin Luther King, Jr., is born at 501 Auburn Ave. in Atlanta, Georgia.

1941

Summer	The King family -- Martin Luther King, Sr. (Daddy King), Alberta Williams King, Willie Christine King, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Alfred Daniel Williams King (known as A. D. King) -- moves from 501 Auburn Avenue to 193 Boulevard in Atlanta.

1944

20 September	King begins his freshman year at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

1946

6 August	The *Atlanta Constitution* publishes King's letter to the editor stating that black people "are entitled to the basic rights and opportunities of American citizens."

1948

25 February	King is ordained and appointed assistant pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.
8 June	King receives his bachelor of arts degree in sociology from Morehouse College.
14 September	King begins his studies at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania.

1951

6-8 May	King graduates from Crozer with a bachelor of divinity degree, delivering the valedictory address at commencement.
13 September	King begins his graduate studies in systematic theology at Boston University.

1953

18 June	King and Coretta Scott are married at the Scott home near Marion, Alabama.

1954

1 September	King begins his pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

1955

5 June	King is awarded his doctorate in systematic theology from Boston University.
17 November	Yolanda Denise King, the Kings' first child, is born.
1 December	Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to vacate her seat and move to the rear of a city bus in Montgomery to make way for a white passenger. Jo Ann Robinson and other Women's Political Council members mimeograph thousands of leaflets calling for a one-day boycott of the city's buses on Monday, 5 December.
5 December	At a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) is formed. King becomes its president.

1956

27 January	According to King's later account in *Stride Toward Freedom*, he receives a threatening phone call late in the evening, prompting a spiritual revelation that fills him with strength to carry on in spite of persecution.
30 January	At 9:15 p.m., while King speaks at a mass meeting, his home is bombed. His wife and daughter are not injured. Later King addresses an angry crowd that gathers outside the house, pleading for nonviolence.
13 November	The U.S. Supreme Court affirms the lower court opinion in *Browder v. Gayle* declaring Montgomery and Alabama bus segregation laws unconstitutional.
21 December	Montgomery City Lines resumes full service on all routes. King is among the first passengers to ride the buses in an integrated fashion.

1957

10-11 January	Southern black ministers meet in Atlanta to share strategies in the fight against segregation. King is named chairman of the Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration (later known as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCLC).
18 February	King appears on the cover of *Time* magazine.
6 March	King attends the independence celebrations of the new nation of Ghana in West Africa and meets with Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah.
17 May	At the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., King delivers his first national address, "Give Us The Ballot," at the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom.
13 June	King and Ralph D. Abernathy meet with Vice President Richard M. Nixon and issue a statement on their meeting.
23 October	Coretta King gives birth to their second child, Martin, III.

1958

23 June	King and other civil rights leaders meet with President Dwight D. Eisenhower in Washington.
17 September	King's first book *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* is published.
20 September	During a book signing at Blumstein's Department Store in Harlem, New York, King is stabbed by Izola Ware Curry. He is rushed to Harlem Hospital where a team of doctors successfully remove a seven-inch letter opener from his chest.

1959

3 February	King embarks on a month-long visit to India where he meets with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and many of Gandhi's followers.

1960

1 February	King moves from Montgomery to Atlanta to devote more time to SCLC and the freedom struggle. He becomes assistant pastor to his father at Ebenezer Baptist Church.
25-28 May	King is found not guilty of tax fraud by a white jury in Montgomery.
23 June	King meets privately in New York with Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy.
19 October	King is arrested during a sit-in demonstration at Rich's department store in Atlanta. He is sentenced to four months hard labor for violating a suspended sentence he received for a 1956 traffic violation. He is released on $2000 bond on 27 October.

1961

31 January	Dexter Scott, King's third child, is born.
21 May	After the initial group of Freedom Riders seeking to integrate bus terminals is assaulted in Alabama, King addresses a mass rally at a mob-besieged Montgomery church.
16 October	King meets with President John F. Kennedy and urges him to issue a second Emancipation Proclamation to eliminate racial segregation.
16 December	King, Ralph Abernathy, Albany Movement president William G. Anderson, and other protesters are arrested by Laurie Pritchett during a campaign in Albany, Georgia.

1962

27 July-10 August	King is arrested at an Albany, Georgia prayer vigil and jailed. After spending two weeks in jail, King is released.
28 September	During the closing session of the SCLC conference in Birmingham, Alabama, a member of the American Nazi Party assaults King, striking him twice in the face.

1963

28 March	Bernice Albertine, King's fourth child, is born.
16 April	Responding to eight Jewish and Christian clergymen's advice that African Americans wait patiently for justice, King pens his "Letter from Birmingham Jail." King and Abernathy were arrested on 12 April and released on 19 April.
7 May	Conflict in Birmingham reaches its peak when high-pressure fire hoses force demonstrators from the business district. In addition to hoses, Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor employs dogs, clubs, and cattle prods to disperse four thousand demonstrators in downtown Birmingham.
June	*Strength to Love*, King's book of sermons, is published.
28 August	The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom attracts more than two hundred thousand demonstrators to the Lincoln Memorial. Organized by A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, the march is supported by all major civil rights organizations as well as by many labor and religious groups. King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech. After the march, King and other civil rights leaders meet with President John F. Kennedy and Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson in the White House.
18 September	King delivers the eulogy at the funerals of Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair, and Cynthia Dianne Wesley, three of the four children that were killed during the 15 September bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Carole Robertson, the fourth victim, was buried in a separate ceremony.
10 October	U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy authorizes the FBI to wiretap King's home phone.

1964

3 January	King is named "Man of the Year" by Time Magazine.
18 January	President Lyndon B. Johnson meets with King, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, and James Farmer and seeks support for his War on Poverty initiative.
9 February	Robert Haylng, leader of the movement in St. Augustine, Florida, invites King and SCLC to join the struggle.
26 March	King meets Malcolm X in Washington, D.C. for the first and only time.
June	King's book *Why We Can't Wait* is published.
11 June	King is arrested and jailed for demanding service at a white-only restaurant in St. Augustine, Florida.
20 July	King and SCLC staff launch a People-to-People tour of Mississippi to assist the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in the Mississippi Freedom Summer campaign.
18 November	After King criticizes the FBI's failure to protect civil rights workers, the agency's director J. Edgar Hoover denounces King as "the most notorious liar in the country." A week later he states that SCLC is "spearheaded by Communists and moral degenerates."
1 December	King meets with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover at the Justice Department.

10 December	King receives the Nobel Peace Prize at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway. He declares that "every penny" of the $54,000 award will be used in the ongoing civil rights struggle.

1965

	The King family moves to their new home at 234 Sunset Avenue in Atlanta.
7 March	In an event that will become known as "Bloody Sunday," voting rights marchers are beaten at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama as they attempt to march to Montgomery.
17-25 March	King, James Forman, and John Lewis lead civil rights marchers from Selma to Montgomery after a U.S. District judge upholds the right of demonstrators to conduct an orderly march.
12 August	King publicly opposes the Vietnam War at a mass rally at the Ninth Annual Convention of SCLC in Birmingham.

1966

26 January	King and his wife move into an apartment at 1550 South Hamlin Avenue in Chicago to draw attention to the city's poor housing conditions.
23 February	In Chicago, King meets Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad.
7 June	King, Floyd McKissick of CORE, and Stokely Carmichael of SNCC resume James Meredith's "March Against Fear" from Memphis to Jackson, Mississippi, after Meredith was shot and wounded near Memphis.

1967

4 April	King delivers "Beyond Vietnam" to a gathering of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam at Riverside Church in New York City. He demands that the U.S. take new initiatives to end the war.
June	King's book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* is published.
4 December	King publicly reveals his plans to organize a mass civil disobedience campaign, the Poor People's Campaign, in Washington, D.C., to force the government to end poverty.

1968

28 March	King leads a march of six thousand protesters in support of striking sanitation workers in Memphis. The march descends into violence and looting, and King is rushed from the scene.
3 April	King returns to Memphis, determined to lead a peaceful march. During an evening rally at Mason Temple in Memphis, King delivers his final speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop."
4 April	King is shot and killed while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.
9 April	King is buried in Atlanta.

Nonviolent Resistance

As a theologian, Martin Luther King reflected often on his understanding of nonviolence. He described his own ‘‘pilgrimage to nonviolence’’ in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, and in subsequent books and articles. ‘‘True pacifism,’’ or ‘‘nonviolent resistance,’’ King wrote, is ‘‘a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love’’ (King, *Stride*, 80). Both ‘‘morally and practically’’ committed to nonviolence, King believed that ‘‘the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom’’ (King, *Stride*, 79; *Papers* 5:422).

King stated that he was first introduced to the concept of nonviolence when he read Henry David Thoreau’s *Essay on Civil Disobedience* as a freshman at Morehouse College. Having grown up in Atlanta and witnessed segregation and racism every day, King was ‘‘fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system’’ (King, *Stride*, 73).

In 1950, as a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, King heard a talk by Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University. Dr. Johnson, who had recently traveled to India, spoke about the life and teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi, King later wrote, was the first person to transform Christian love into a powerful force for social change. Gandhi’s stress on love and nonviolence gave King ‘‘the method for social reform that I had been seeking’’ (King, *Stride*, 79).

While intellectually committed to nonviolence, King did not experience the power of nonviolent direct action first-hand until the start of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. During the boycott, King personally enacted Gandhian principles. With guidance from black pacifist Bayard Rustin and Glenn Smiley of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, King eventually decided not to use armed bodyguards despite threats on his life, and reacted to violent experiences, such as the bombing of his home, with compassion. Through the practical experience of leading nonviolent protest, King came to understand how nonviolence could become a way of life, applicable to all situations (King, 83). King called the principle of nonviolent resistance the ‘‘guiding light of our movement. Christ furnished the spirit and motivation while Gandhi furnished the method’’ (*Papers* 5:423).

King’s notion of nonviolence had six key principles. First, one can resist evil without resorting to violence. Second, nonviolence seeks to win the ‘‘friendship and understanding’’ of the opponent, not to humiliate him (King, *Stride*, 84). Third, evil itself, not the people committing evil acts, should be opposed. Fourth, those committed to nonviolence must be willing to suffer without retaliation as suffering itself can be redemptive. Fifth, nonviolent resistance avoids ‘‘external physical violence’’ and ‘‘internal violence of spirit’’ as well: ‘‘The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him’’ (King, *Stride*, 85). The resister should be motivated by love in the sense of the Greek word agape, which means ‘‘understanding,’’ or ‘‘redeeming good will for all men’’ (King, *Stride*, 86). The sixth principle is that the nonviolent resister must have a ‘‘deep faith in the future,’’ stemming from the conviction that ‘‘the universe is on the side of justice’’ (King, *Stride*, 88).

During the years after the bus boycott, King grew increasingly committed to nonviolence. An India trip in 1959 helped him connect more intimately with Gandhi’s legacy. King began to advocate nonviolence not just in a national sphere, but internationally as well: ‘‘the potential destructiveness of modern weapons’’ convinced King that ‘‘the choice today is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence’’ (*Papers* 5:424).

After Black Power advocates such as Stokely Carmichael began to reject nonviolence, King lamented that some African Americans had lost hope, and reaffirmed his own commitment to nonviolence: ‘‘Occasionally in life one develops a conviction so precious and meaningful that he will stand on it till the end. This is what I have found in nonviolence’’ (King, *Where*, 63–64). He wrote in his 1967 book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?:* ‘‘We maintained the hope while transforming the hate of traditional revolutions into positive nonviolent power. As long as the hope was fulfilled there was little questioning of nonviolence. But when the hopes were blasted, when people came to see that in spite of progress their conditions were still insufferable … despair began to set in’’ (King, *Where*, 45). Arguing that violent revolution was impractical in the context of a multiracial society, he concluded that: ‘‘Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. The beauty of nonviolence is that in its own way and in its own time it seeks to break the chain reaction of evil’’ (King, *Where*, 62–63).

Social Gospel

In an 18 July 1952 letter, Martin Luther King wrote to his future wife, Coretta Scott, about his beliefs as a minister and proclaimed: ''Let us continue to hope, work, and pray that in the future we will live to see a warless world, a better distribution of wealth, and a brotherhood that transcends race or color. This is the gospel that I will preach to the world'' (*Papers* 6:126). As a self-described ''advocator of the social gospel,'' King's theology was concerned ''with the whole man, not only his soul but his body, not only his spiritual well-being, but his material well-being'' (*Papers* 6:72; *Papers* 5:422). His ministry built upon the social gospel of the Protestant church at the turn of the twentieth century and his own family's practice of preaching on the social conditions of parishioners.

The early social gospel movement emerged during the rapidly industrializing American society following the Civil War. Recognizing the injustices of ''triumphant capitalism,'' some progressive ministers prescribed a large dose of ''practical Christianity'' to right these wrongs and directly address the social needs of the era (Hopkins, 121). One of the most prominent was Walter Rauschenbusch, a German-American who pastored a church in the Hell's Kitchen district of New York in the late nineteenth century. In *Christianity and the Social Crisis,* Rauschenbusch traced the social gospel back to the lives of the Hebrew prophets. He stated that rather than ritualistic ceremonies, the prophets ''insisted on a right life as the true worship of God'' (Rauschenbusch, 5). This ''right life'' included the belief that ''social problems are moral problems on a large scale'' (Rauschenbusch, 6). King read *Christianity and the Social Crisis* at Crozer Theological Seminary and wrote that its message ''left an indelible imprint on my thinking by giving me a theological basis for the social concern which had already grown up in me'' (*Papers* 4:474).

Social gospel proponent Henry Emerson Fosdick, popular pastor of New York's Riverside Church during the 1930s and 1940s, was an early influence on King's preaching. Fosdick felt that a church ''that pretends to care for the souls of people but is not interested in the slums that damn them, the city government that corrupts them, the economic order that cripples them, and international relationships that, leading to peace or war, determine the spiritual destiny of innumerable souls'' would receive divine condemnation (Fosdick, 25). He also emphasized that ''the saving of society does depend on things which only high, personal religion can supply'' (Fosdick, 38).

King's family put him on a social gospel path, one that had already been cleared by his grandfather, A. D. Williams, and father, King, Sr. Williams, who was minister of Ebenezer Baptist Church at the turn of the twentieth century, helped form the Georgia Equal Rights League in February 1906, and was a founding member of Atlanta's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. King, Sr., succeeded Williams at Ebenezer and, in a 1940 address to the Atlanta Missionary Baptist Association, he envisioned a ''time when every minister will become a registered voter and a part of every movement for the betterment of our people'' (*Papers* 1:34). In his unpublished 1973 autobiography, King, Sr., asserted that his ministry was never ''solely oriented toward life and death. It has been equally concerned with the here and now, with improving man's lot in this life. I have therefore stressed the social gospel'' (''A Black Rebel''). Other influences on King's social gospel included Morehouse College president and minister Benjamin Mays, who regularly spoke against segregation in Tuesday morning chapel at the college during King's years there. He chastised both African Americans who favored a gradualist approach to civil rights and whites who did not ''want democracy to function in certain areas: especially in areas that involve Negroes'' (Mays, ''Three Great Fears'').

King's studies of Reinhold Niebuhr's writings at Crozer and Boston University tempered his belief in the social gospel's typical confidence in liberal theology and its reliance on human agency as a primary force for change. ''While I still believed in man's potential for good, Niebuhr made me realize his potential for evil as well,'' King later recalled (King, Stride, 99). He also appreciated Niebuhr's assertion that ''the glaring reality of collective evil'' was one explanation for racial hatred (King, Stride, 99).

King arrived as pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church still ''a firm believer in what is called the 'social gospel''' (*Papers* 6:141). King tied this faith to the nonviolent protest that characterized the Montgomery bus boycott, noting that ''Christ furnished the spirit and motivation'' for the boycott (*Papers* 5:423).

King took to task those churches that separated the secular realities of daily life from spiritual needs. His vision of the church's role in social concerns was based on the early church's identity, in his mind, as an institution that shaped social mores and conditions. King believed that God would harshly judge the church's apathy on these matters and, conversely, praise those clergy who would take public stands on issues confronting their parishioners' everyday lives.

King remained a proponent of the social gospel despite the many setbacks the civil rights movement suffered in the later 1960s. In a speech delivered the day before his death, King asserted that ''somehow the preacher must have a kind of fire shut up in his bones, and whenever injustice is around he must tell it'' (King, ''I've Been,'' 213).

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,
Kansas 347 U.S. 483 (1954) 349 U.S. 294 (1955)

While speaking at an annual luncheon of the National Committee for Rural Schools on 15 December 1956, Martin Luther King, Jr. reflected on the importance of *Brown v. Board of Education*: ‘‘To all men of good will, this decision came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of human captivity. It came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of colored people throughout the world who had had a dim vision of the promised land of freedom and justice … this decision came as a legal and sociological deathblow to an evil that had occupied the throne of American life for several decades’’ (*Papers* 3:472).

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) was a consolidation of five school desegregation cases: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas; Briggs v. Elliot; Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia; Bolling v. Sharpe; and Belton v. Gebhart.* These cases were designed to challenge the ‘‘separate but equal’’ doctrine established in the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, and because of their common legal challenge the Supreme Court combined the cases and decided them together. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Fund’s chief counsel, Thurgood Marshall, managed the case. He was well aware that the Fund’s reputation and national racial progress was reliant on the outcome of *Brown*.

Social psychologist Kenneth Clark testified in the lower courts that segregation causes black children ‘‘to reject themselves and their color and accept whites as desirable’’ (Williams, 202). Clark had traveled to Clarendon County, South Carolina, to administer a test he and his wife, Mamie, had developed. In the test, black children were shown two dolls, a white doll and a black doll, and asked for their opinions of each. The Clarks’ findings indicated that feelings of inferiority existed at an early age, as children generally considered the white dolls prettier and smarter than the black dolls.

The Supreme Court’s unanimous *Brown* decision, handed down on 17 May 1954, determined that the *Plessy* doctrine of ‘‘separate but equal’’ had no place in education and violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote: ‘‘To separate [blacks] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone’’ (347 U.S. 483 [1954]). With this decision, racial segregation in schools became unconstitutional.

Initial excitement over the *Brown* victory dwindled, however, when desegregation of schools was not mandated as quickly as had been hoped. Marshall and his staff were disappointed that the Court did not impose a desegregation deadline on southern school districts. The NAACP prepared briefs suggesting that school desegregation transpire before fall 1956, and went to court again to argue for this relief. In *Brown v. Board II*, the Court focused on ways to quickly integrate school districts. The Court recognized that different districts would need to implement different techniques to end segregation, and Warren ruled on 31 May 1955 that school districts were required to desegregate only ‘‘with all deliberate speed’’ (349 U.S. 294 [1955])

Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-1956)

Sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks on 1 December 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott was a 13-month mass protest that ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses is unconstitutional. The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) coordinated the boycott, and its president, Martin Luther King, Jr., became a prominent civil rights leader as international attention focused on Montgomery. The bus boycott demonstrated the potential for nonviolent mass protest to successfully challenge racial segregation and served as an example for other southern campaigns that followed. In *Stride Toward Freedom*, King's 1958 memoir of the boycott, he declared the real meaning of the Montgomery bus boycott to be the power of a growing self-respect to animate the struggle for civil rights.

The roots of the bus boycott began years before the arrest of Rosa Parks. The Womens' Political Council (WPC), a group of black professionals founded in 1946, had already turned their attention to Jim Crow practices on the Montgomery city buses. In a meeting with Mayor W. A. Gayle in March 1954, the council's members outlined the changes they sought for Montgomery's bus system: no one standing over empty seats; a decree that black individuals not be made to pay at the front of the bus and enter from the rear; and a policy that would require buses to stop at every corner in black residential areas, as they did in white communities. When the meeting failed to produce any meaningful change, WPC president Jo Ann Robinson reiterated the council's requests in a 21 May letter to Mayor Gayle, telling him, ''there has been talk from twenty-five or more local organizations of planning a city-wide boycott of busses''(''A Letter from the Women's Political Council'').

A year after the WPC's meeting with Mayor Gayle, a 15-year-old named Claudette Colvin was arrested for challenging segregation on a Montgomery bus. Seven months later, 18-year-old Mary Louise Smith was arrested for refusing to yield her seat to a white passenger. Neither arrest, however, mobilized Montgomery's black community like that of Rosa Parks later that year.

King recalled in his memoir that ''Mrs. Parks was ideal for the role assigned to her by history,'' and because ''her character was impeccable and her dedication deep-rooted'' she was ''one of the most respected people in the Negro community'' (King, 44). Robinson and the WPC responded to Parks' arrest by calling for a one-day protest of the city's buses on 5 December 1955. Robinson prepared a series of leaflets at Alabama State College and organized groups to distribute them throughout the black community. Meanwhile, after securing bail for Parks with Clifford and Virginia Durr, E. D. Nixon, past leader of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), began to call local black leaders, including Ralph Abernathy and King, to organize a planning meeting. On 2 December, black ministers and leaders met at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and agreed to publicize the 5 December boycott. The planned protest received unexpected publicity in the weekend newspapers and in radio and television reports.

On 5 December, 90 percent of Montgomery's black citizens stayed off the buses. That afternoon, the city's ministers and leaders met to discuss the possibility of extending the boycott into a long-term campaign. During this meeting the MIA was formed, and King was elected president. Parks recalled: ''The advantage of having Dr. King as president was that he was so new to Montgomery and to civil rights work that he hadn't been there long enough to make any strong friends or enemies'' (Parks, 136).

That evening, at a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church, the MIA voted to continue the boycott. King spoke to several thousand people at the meeting: ''I want it to be known that we're going to work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses in this city. And we are not wrong.… If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the Constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong'' (*Papers* 3:73). After unsuccessful talks with city commissioners and bus company officials, on 8 December the MIA issued a formal list of demands: courteous treatment by bus operators; first-come, first-served seating for all, with blacks seating from the rear and whites from the front; and black bus operators on predominately black routes.

The demands were not met, and Montgomery's black residents stayed off the buses through 1956, despite efforts by city officials and white citizens to defeat the boycott. After the city began to penalize black taxi drivers for aiding the boycotters, the MIA organized a carpool. Following the advice of T. J. Jemison, who had organized a carpool during a 1953 bus boycott in Baton Rouge, the MIA developed an intricate carpool system of about 300 cars. Robert Hughes and others from the Alabama Council for Human Relations organized meetings between the MIA and city officials, but no agreements were reached.

In early 1956, the homes of King and E. D. Nixon were bombed. King was able to calm the crowd that gathered at his home by declaring: ''Be calm as I and my family are. We are not hurt and remember that if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place'' (*Papers* 3:115). City officials obtained injunctions against the boycott in February 1956, and indicted over 80 boycott leaders under a 1921 law prohibiting conspiracies that interfered with lawful business. King was tried and convicted on the charge and ordered to pay $500 or serve 386 days in jail in the case *State of Alabama v. Martin Luther King*, Jr. Despite this resistance, the

boycott continued.

Although most of the publicity about the protest was centered on the actions of black ministers, women played crucial roles in the success of the boycott. Women such as Robinson, Johnnie Carr, and Irene West sustained the MIA committees and volunteer networks. Mary Fair Burks of the WPC also attributed the success of the boycott to ''the nameless cooks and maids who walked endless miles for a year to bring about the breach in the walls of segregation'' (Burks, ''Trailblazers,'' 82). In his memoir, King quotes an elderly woman who proclaimed that she had joined the boycott not for her own benefit but for the good of her children and grandchildren (King, 78).

National coverage of the boycott and King's trial resulted in support from people outside Montgomery. In early 1956 veteran pacifists Bayard Rustin and Glenn E. Smiley visited Montgomery and offered King advice on the application of Gandhian techniques and nonviolence to American race relations. Rustin, Ella Baker, and Stanley Levison founded In Friendship to raise funds in the North for southern civil rights efforts, including the bus boycott. King absorbed ideas from these proponents of nonviolent direct action and crafted his own syntheses of Gandhian principles of nonviolence. He said: ''Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi in India showed it could work'' (Rowland, ''2,500 Here Hail''). Other followers of Gandhian ideas such as Richard Gregg, William Stuart Nelson, and Homer Jack wrote the MIA offering support.

On 5 June 1956, the federal district court ruled in Browder v. Gayle that bus segregation was unconstitutional, and in November 1956 the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed Browder v. Gayle and struck down laws requiring segregated seating on public buses. The court's decision came the same day that King and the MIA were in circuit court challenging an injunction against the MIA carpools. Resolved not to end the boycott until the order to desegregate the buses actually arrived in Montgomery, the MIA operated without the carpool system for a month. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling, and on 20 December 1956 King called for the end of the boycott; the community agreed. The next morning, he boarded an integrated bus with Ralph Abernathy, E. D. Nixon, and Glenn Smiley. King said of the bus boycott: ''We came to see that, in the long run, it is more honorable to walk in dignity than ride in humiliation. So … we decided to substitute tired feet for tired souls, and walk the streets of Montgomery'' (Papers 3:486). King's role in the bus boycott garnered international attention, and the MIA's tactics of combining mass nonviolent protest with Christian ethics became the model for challenging segregation in the South.

Little Rock School Desegregation (1957)

Three years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal, nine African American students—Minnijean Brown, Terrance Roberts, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Patillo, Gloria Ray, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls—attempted to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The students, known as the Little Rock Nine, were recruited by Daisy Bates, president of the Arkansas branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, Martin Luther King wrote President Dwight D. Eisenhower requesting a swift resolution allowing the students to attend school.

On 4 September 1957, the first day of school at Central High, a white mob gathered in front of the school, and Governor Orval Faubus deployed the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the black students from entering. In response to Faubus' action, a team of NAACP lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall, won a federal district court injunction to prevent the governor from blocking the students' entry. With the help of police escorts, the students successfully entered the school through a side entrance on 23 September 1957. Fearing escalating mob violence, however, the students were rushed home soon afterward.

Observing the standoff between Faubus and the federal judiciary, King sent a telegram to President Eisenhower urging him to "take a strong forthright stand in the Little Rock situation." King told the president that if the federal government did not take a stand against the injustice it would "set the process of integration back fifty years. This is a great opportunity for you and the federal government to back up the longings and aspirations of millions of peoples of good will and make law and order a reality" (King, 9 September 1957). Aware that the Little Rock incident was becoming an international embarrassment, Eisenhower reluctantly ordered troops from the Army's 101st Airborne Division to protect the students, who were shielded by federal troops and the Arkansas National Guard for the remainder of the school year. In a 25 September telegram, King praised the president's actions: "I wish to express my sincere support for the stand you have taken to restore law and order in Little Rock, Arkansas. . . .You should know that the overwhelming majority of southerners, Negro and white, stand firmly behind your resolute action" (*Papers* 4:278).

At the end of the school year, Ernest Green became the first African American to graduate from Central High School. King attended his graduation ceremony. In honor of their momentous contributions to history and the integration of the Arkansas public school system, in 1958 the Little Rock Nine were honored with the NAACP's highest honor, the Spingarn Medal.

Before schools opened in the fall of 1958, Faubus closed all four of Little Rock's public high schools rather than proceed with desegregation, but his efforts were short lived. In December 1959, the Supreme Court ruled that the school board must reopen the schools and resume the process of desegregating the city's schools.

Sit-ins (1960)

The sit-in campaigns of 1960 and the ensuing creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) demonstrated the potential strength of grassroots militancy and enabled a new generation of young people to gain confidence in their own leadership. Martin Luther King, Jr. described the student sit-ins as an ''electrifying movement of Negro students [that] shattered the placid surface of campuses and communities across the South,'' and he expressed pride in the new activism for being ''initiated, fed and sustained by students'' (*Papers* 5:368).

The sit-ins started on 1 February 1960, when four black students from North Carolina A&T College sat down at a Woolworth lunch counter in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. The students—Joseph McNeil, Izell Blair, Franklin McCain, and David Richmond—purchased several items in the store before sitting at the counter reserved for white customers. When a waitress asked them to leave, they politely refused; to their surprise, they were not arrested. The four students remained seated for almost an hour until the store closed.

The following morning about two dozen students arrived at Woolworth's and sat at the lunch counter. Although no confrontations occurred, the second sit-in attracted the local media. By day three of the campaign, the students formed the Student Executive Committee for Justice to coordinate protests. The Greensboro protesters eventually agreed to the mayor's request to halt protest activities while city officials sought ''a just and honorable resolution,'' but black students in other communities launched lunch counter protests of their own (Carson, 10). By the end of the month, sit-ins had taken place at more than 30 locations in 7 states, and by the end of April over 50,000 students had participated.

The sustained student protests in Nashville, Tennessee, were particularly well organized. Vanderbilt University student James Lawson led workshops on Gandhian nonviolence that attracted a number of students from Nashville's black colleges. Many of them, including John Lewis, Diane Nash, and Marion Barry, would later become leaders of the southern civil rights struggle. The Nashville movement proved successful, and the students grew ever more confident in their ability to direct campaigns without adult leadership.

Nonviolence was a central component of the student-led demonstrations, however many protesters were not met with peaceful responses from the public. Although protesters were routinely heckled and beaten by segregationists and arrested by police, their determination was unyielding. King wrote: ''The key significance of the student movement lies in the fact that from its inception, everywhere, it has combined direct action with non-violence. This quality has given it the extraordinary power and discipline which every thinking person observes'' (*Papers* 450).

Although many of the student sit-in protesters were affiliated with National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) youth groups, the new student movement offered an implicit challenge to the litigation strategy of the nation's oldest civil rights group. NAACP leaders, for their part, gave public support to the sit-ins, although some privately questioned the usefulness of student-led civil disobedience.

On 16 April, the leaders of the various sit-in campaigns gathered at a conference called by Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) executive director Ella Baker. This meeting became the founding conference of SNCC. In a statement prior to the opening of the conference, King emphasized the ''need for some type of continuing organization'' and expressed his belief that ''the youth must take the freedom struggle into every community in the South'' (*Papers* 5:427). The 120 students representing 12 southern states voted to establish a youth centered organization without formal affiliation with any other civil rights group.

In October 1960 Atlanta student leaders convinced King to participate in a sit-in at Rich's, a local department store. King and about 300 students were arrested. The students were later released, but King remained in jail while Georgia officials determined whether his sit-in arrest violated parole conditions King had received a month earlier after driving with a suspended license. After being sentenced to six months of hard labor at Georgia State Prison at Reidsville, presidential hopeful John F. Kennedy and his campaign manager and brother, Robert Kennedy, helped secure King's release. Their intervention in the case helped contribute to Kennedy's narrow victory over Richard Nixon in the presidential election.

By fall 1960, there were signs that the southern civil rights movement had been profoundly transformed by the fiercely independent student protest movement. Those who had participated in the sit-in campaign were determined to continue the direct action tactics that were seizing the initiative from more cautious organizations made up of older people, such as King's SCLC.

Birmingham Campaign (1963)

In April 1963 King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined with Birmingham, Alabama's existing local movement, the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), in a massive direct action campaign to attack the city's segregation system by putting pressure on Birmingham's merchants during the Easter season, the second biggest shopping season of the year. As ACMHR founder Fred Shuttlesworth stated in the group's ''Birmingham Manifesto,'' the campaign was ''a moral witness to give our community a chance to survive'' (ACMHR, 3 April 1963).

The campaign was originally scheduled to begin in early March 1963, but was postponed until 2 April when the relatively moderate Albert Boutwell defeated Birmingham's segregationist commissioner of public safety, Eugene ''Bull'' Connor, in a run-off mayoral election. On 3 April the desegregation campaign was launched with a series of mass meetings, direct actions, lunch counter sit-ins, marches on City Hall, and a boycott of downtown merchants. King spoke to black citizens about the philosophy of nonviolence and its methods, and extended appeals for volunteers at the end of the mass meetings. With the number of volunteers increasing daily, actions soon expanded to kneel-ins at churches, sit-ins at the library, and a march on the county building to register voters. Hundreds were arrested.

On 10 April the city government obtained a state circuit court injunction against the protests. After heavy debate, campaign leaders decided to disobey the court order. King declared: ''We cannot in all good conscience obey such an injunction which is an unjust, undemocratic and unconstitutional misuse of the legal process'' (ACMHR, 11 April 1963). Plans to continue to submit to arrest were threatened, however, because the money available for cash bonds was depleted, so leaders could no longer guarantee that arrested protestors would be released. King contemplated whether he and Ralph Abernathy should be arrested. Given the lack of bail funds, King's services as a fundraiser were desperately needed, but King also worried that his failure to submit to arrests might undermine his credibility. King concluded that he must risk going to jail in Birmingham. He told his colleagues: ''I don't know what will happen; I don't know where the money will come from. But I have to make a faith act'' (King, 73).

On Good Friday, 12 April, King was arrested in Birmingham after violating the anti-protest injunction and was kept in solitary confinement. During this time King penned the ''Letter from Birmingham Jail'' on the margins of the Birmingham News, in reaction to a statement published in that newspaper by eight Birmingham clergymen condemning the protests. King's request to call his wife, Coretta Scott King, who was at home in Atlanta recovering from the birth of their fourth child, was denied. After she communicated her concern to the Kennedy administration, Birmingham officials permitted King to call home. Bail money was made available, and he was released on 20 April 1963.

In order to sustain the campaign, SCLC organizer James Bevel proposed using young children in demonstrations. Bevel's rationale for the Children's Crusade was that young people represented an untapped source of freedom fighters without the prohibitive responsibilities of older activists. On 2 May more than 1,000 African American students attempted to march into downtown Birmingham, and hundreds were arrested. When hundreds more gathered the following day, Commissioner Connor directed local police and fire departments to use force to halt the demonstrations. During the next few days images of children being blasted by high-pressure fire hoses, clubbed by police officers, and attacked by police dogs appeared on television and in newspapers, triggering international outrage. While leading a group of child marchers, Shuttlesworth himself was hit with the full force of a fire hose and had to be hospitalized. King offered encouragement to parents of the young protesters: ''Don't worry about your children, they're going to be alright. Don't hold them back if they want to go to jail. For they are doing a job for not only themselves, but for all of America and for all mankind'' (King, 6 May 1963).

In the meantime, the white business structure was weakening under adverse publicity and the unexpected decline in business due to the boycott, but many business owners and city officials were reluctant to negotiate with the protestors. With national pressure on the White House also mounting, Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent Burke Marshall, his chief civil rights assistant, to facilitate negotiations between prominent black citizens and representatives of Birmingham's Senior Citizens Council, the city's business leadership.

The Senior Citizen's Council sought a moratorium on street protests as an act of good faith before any ï¬ • nal settlement was declared, and Marshall encouraged campaign leaders to halt demonstrations, accept an interim compromise that would provide partial success, and negotiate the rest of their demands afterward. Some black negotiators were open to the idea, and although the hospitalized Shuttlesworth was not present at the negotiations, on 8 May King told the negotiators he would accept the compromise and call the demonstrations to a halt.

When Shuttlesworth learned that King intended to announce a moratorium he was furious—about both the decision to ease pressure off white business owners and the fact that he, as the acknowledged leader of the local movement, had not been consulted. Feeling betrayed, Shuttlesworth reminded King that he could not legitimately speak for the black population of Birmingham on his own: ''Go ahead and call it off.… When I see it on TV, that you have called it off, I will get up out of this, my sickbed, with what little

ounce of strength I have, and lead them back into the street. And your name'll be Mud'' (Hampton and Fayer, 136). King made the announcement anyway, but indicated that demonstrations might be resumed if negotiations did not resolve the situation shortly.

By 10 May negotiators had reached an agreement, and despite his falling out with King, Shuttlesworth joined him and Abernathy to read the prepared statement that detailed the compromise: the removal of ''Whites Only'' and ''Blacks Only'' signs in restrooms and on drinking fountains, a plan to desegregate lunch counters, an ongoing ''program of upgrading Negro employment,'' the formation of a biracial committee to monitor the progress of the agreement, and the release of jailed protestors on bond (''The Birmingham Truce Agreement,'' 10 May 1963).

Birmingham segregationists responded to the agreement with a series of violent attacks. That night an explosive went off near the Gaston Motel room where King and SCLC leaders had previously stayed, and the next day the home of King's brother Alfred Daniel King was bombed. President John F. Kennedy responded by ordering 3,000 federal troops into position near Birmingham and making preparations to federalize the Alabama National Guard. Four months later, on 15 September, Ku Klux Klan members bombed Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four young girls. King delivered the eulogy at the 18 September joint funeral of three of the victims, preaching that the girls were ''the martyred heroines of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity'' (King, 18 September 1963).

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (1963)

On 28 August 1963, more than 200,000 demonstrators took part in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in the nation's capital. The march was successful in pressuring the administration of John F. Kennedy to initiate a strong federal civil rights bill in Congress. During this event, Martin Luther King delivered his memorable ''I Have a Dream'' speech.

The 1963 March on Washington had several precedents. In the summer of 1941 A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, called for a march on Washington, D. C., to draw attention to the exclusion of African Americans from positions in the national defense industry. This job market had proven to be closed to blacks, despite the fact that it was growing to supply materials to the Allies in World War II. The threat of 100,000 marchers in Washington, D.C., pushed President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802, which mandated the formation of the Fair Employment Practices Commission to investigate racial discrimination charges against defense firms. In response, Randolph cancelled plans for the march.

Civil rights demonstrators did assemble at the Lincoln Memorial in May 1957 for a Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom on the third anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and in October 1958, for a Youth March for Integrated Schools to protest the lack of progress since that ruling. King addressed the 1957 demonstration, but due to ill health after being stabbed by Izola Curry, Coretta Scott King delivered his scheduled remarks at the 1958 event.

By 1963, the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, most of the goals of these earlier protests still had not been realized. High levels of black unemployment, work that offered most African Americans only minimal wages and poor job mobility, systematic disenfranchisement of many African Americans, and the persistence of racial segregation in the South prompted discussions about a large scale march for political and economic justice as early as 1962. On behalf of the Negro American Labor Council (NALC), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Randolph wrote a letter on 24 May 1962 to Secretary Stewart Udall of the Department of the Interior regarding permits for a march culminating at the Lincoln Memorial that fall. Plans for the march were stalled when Udall encouraged the groups to consider the Sylvan Theater at the Washington Monument due to the complications of rerouting traffic and the volume of tourists at the Lincoln Memorial.

In March 1963 Randolph telegraphed King that the NALC had begun planning a June march ''for Negro job rights,'' and asked for King's immediate response (Randolph, 26 March 1963). In May, at the height of the Birmingham Campaign, King joined Randolph, James Farmer of CORE, and Charles McDew of SNCC in calling for such an action later that year, declaring, ''Let the black laboring masses speak!'' (King et al., 7 May 1963) After notifying President Kennedy of their intent, the leaders of the major civil rights organizations set the march date for 28 August. The stated goals of the protest included ''a comprehensive civil rights bill'' that would do away with segregated public accommodations; ''protection of the right to vote''; mechanisms for seeking redress of violations of constitutional rights; ''desegregation of all public schools in 1963''; a massive federal works program ''to train and place unemployed workers''; and ''a Federal Fair Employment Practices Act barring discrimination in all employment'' (''Goals of Rights March'').

As the summer passed, the list of organizations participating in and sponsoring the event expanded to include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the United Auto Workers (UAW), and many others.

The March on Washington was not universally embraced. It was condemned by the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X who referred to it as ''the Farce on Washington,'' although he attended nonetheless (Malcolm X, 278). The executive board of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) declined to support the march, adopting a position of neutrality. Nevertheless, many constituent unions attended in substantial numbers.

The diversity of those in attendance was reflected in the event's speakers and performers. They included singers Marian Anderson, Odetta, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan; Little Rock civil rights veteran Daisy Lee Bates; actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee; American Jewish Congress president Rabbi Joachim Prinz; Randolph; UAW president Walter Reuther; march organizer Bayard Rustin; NAACP

president Roy Wilkins; National Urban League president Whitney Young and SNCC leader John Lewis.

A draft of John Lewis' prepared speech, circulated before the march, was denounced by Reuther, Burke Marshall, and Patrick O'Boyle, the Catholic Archbishop of Washington, D.C., for its militant tone. In the speech's original version Lewis charged that the Kennedy administration's proposed Civil Rights Act was ''too little and too late,'' and threatened not only to march in Washington but to ''march through the South, through the heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We will pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy'' (Lewis, 221; 224). In a caucus that included King, Randolph, and SNCC's James Forman, Lewis agreed to eliminate those and other phrases, but believed that in its final form his address ''was still a strong speech, very strong'' (Lewis, 227).

The day's high point came when King took the podium toward the end of the event, and moved the Lincoln Memorial audience and live television viewers with what has come to be known as his ''I Have a Dream'' speech. King commented that ''as television beamed the image of this extraordinary gathering across the border oceans, everyone who believed in man's capacity to better himself had a moment of inspiration and confidence in the future of the human race,'' and characterized the march as an ''appropriate climax'' to the summer's events (King, ''I Have a Dream,'' 125; 122).

After the march, King and other civil rights leaders met with President Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, where they discussed the need for bipartisan support of civil rights legislation. Though they were passed after Kennedy's death, the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 reflect the demands of the march.

Time Magazine's "Man of the Year" (1963)

In its January 1964 issue, *Time* named Martin Luther King, Jr., ''Man of the Year'' for 1963, making the civil rights leader the first African American recipient of this honor. This was not King's first appearance on the cover of *Time*. In 1957 he was featured on the cover for his role in the Montgomery bus boycott.

One of the first news magazines in the United States, *Time* was founded in 1923 as a weekly publication. Over the years, the ''Man of the Year'' issue (later ''Person of the Year''), in which the magazine recognizes the individual, group, or object that had the greatest influence on the year's news, has grown to be one of its most popular features.

Time's tribute to King included a photograph of the civil rights leader on the magazine's cover, along with a seven-page feature that included pictures of King during some of the most memorable moments of his civil rights career, including a meeting with President Lyndon B. Johnson and King's arrest in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963. King received many congratulatory telegrams, notably from Roy Wilkins, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; and Nelson A. Rockefeller, governor of New York.

Although many of King's supporters celebrated the tribute, King was privately incensed by some of the comments in the story. His clothing style was described as ''funereal conservatism,'' and he was said to have ''very little sense of humor.'' King, who had garnered considerable fame from his speeches and oratorical skills, was criticized for his use of metaphors, which the author called ''downright embarrassing'' (''Man of the Year,'' 13).

To those outside his inner circle, King said he was pleased to receive the honor. In a 27 February 1964 letter to Homer Jack, executive director of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, he maintained that it was not just a personal honor but a tribute bestowed upon the entire civil rights movement. ''The fact that Time took such cognizance of the social revolution in which we are engaged is an indication that the conscience of America has been reached and that the old order which has embraced bigotry and discrimination must now yield to what we know to be right and just,'' King wrote. In a letter to Time founder Henry R. Luce, King thanked him for the honor and commended the magazine for its inclusion of other professional African Americans. ''This image of the Negro is certainly one that many of us like to see carried in the pages of our national periodicals,'' King wrote. ''For it does much to help grind away the granite-like notions that have obtained for so long that the Negro is not able to take his place in all fields of endeavor and that he is lazy, shiftless and without ambition'' (King, 16 January 1964).

Freedom Summer (1964)

Although the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had labored for civil rights in rural Mississippi since 1961, the organization found that intense and often violent resistance by segregationists in rural areas of Mississippi would not allow for the kind of direct action campaigns that been successful in urban areas such as Montgomery and Birmingham. The 1964 Freedom Summer project was designed to draw the nation's attention to the violent oppression experienced by Mississippi blacks who attempted to exercise their constitutional rights, and to develop a grassroots freedom movement that could be sustained long after student activists left Mississippi.

When SNCC activist Robert Moses launched a voter registration drive in Mississippi in 1961, he confronted a system that regularly used segregation laws and fear tactics to disenfranchise black citizens. In 1962, he became director of the Council of Federated Organizations, a coalition of organizations led by SNCC that coordinated the efforts of civil rights groups within the state. Capitalizing on the successful use of white student volunteers in Mississippi during a 1963 mock election called the ''Freedom Vote,'' Moses proposed that northern white student volunteers take part in a large number of simultaneous local campaigns in Mississippi during the summer of 1964.

Letters to prospective volunteers alerted them to conditions in Mississippi, explaining the likelihood of arrest, the need for bond money and subsistence funds, and the requirement that drivers obtain Mississippi licenses for themselves and their cars. Volunteers were also asked to prepare for the experience by reading several books, including King's memoir of the Montgomery bus boycott, *Stride Toward Freedom*, and Lillian Smith's novel *Killers of the Dream*.

On 14 June 1964 the first group of summer volunteers began training at Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio. Of the approximately 1,000 volunteers, the majority were white northern college students from middle and upper class backgrounds. The training sessions were intended to prepare volunteers to register black voters, teach literacy and civics at Freedom Schools, and promote the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's (MFDP) challenge to the all-white Democratic delegation at that summer's Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Just one week after the first group of volunteers arrived in Oxford, three civil rights workers were reported missing in Mississippi. James Chaney, a black Mississippian, and two white northerners, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, disappeared while visiting Philadelphia, Mississippi, to investigate the burning of a church. The abduction of the three civil rights workers intensified the new activists' fears, but Freedom Summer staff and volunteers moved ahead with the campaign.

Voter registration was the cornerstone of the summer project. Although approximately 17,000 black residents of Mississippi attempted to register to vote in the summer of 1964, only 1,600 of the completed applications were accepted by local registrars. Highlighting the need for federal voting rights legislation, these efforts created political momentum for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In an effort to address Mississippi's separate and unequal public education system, the summer project established 41 Freedom Schools attended by more than 3,000 young black students throughout the state. In addition to math, reading, and other traditional courses, students were also taught black history, the philosophy of the civil rights movement, and leadership skills that provided them with the intellectual and practical tools to carry on the struggle after the summer volunteers departed.

At Mose's invitation King visited Greenwood, Mississippi, to show the support of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for the summer project and to encourage black Mississippians to vote despite acts of violence and intimidation. Less than three weeks after King's visit, the murdered bodies of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were found. King characterized their brutal deaths as ''an attack on the human brotherhood taught by all the great religions of mankind'' (King, 4 August 1964).

Freedom Summer activists also worked to make the MFDP a viable alternative to Mississippi's ''Jim Crow'' democratic convention delegation. King publicly supported the MFDP, telling the 1964 convention's credentials committee, ''if you value your party, if you value your nation, if you value democratic government you have no alternative but to recognize, with full voice and vote, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party'' (King, 22 August 1964). While the MFDP was initially unsuccessful, some of its members were seated at the 1968 convention.

Freedom Summer marked one of the last major interracial civil rights efforts of the 1960s, as the movement entered a period of divisive conflict that would draw even sharper lines between the goals of King and those of the younger, more militant faction of the black freedom struggle.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

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In an 11 June 1963 speech broadcast live on national television and radio, President John F. Kennedy unveiled plans to pursue a comprehensive civil rights bill in Congress, stating, ‘‘this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free’’ (‘‘President Kennedy’s Radio-TV Address,’’ 970). King congratulated Kennedy on his speech, calling it ‘‘one of the most eloquent, profound and unequivocal pleas for justice and the freedom of all men ever made by any president’’ (King, 12 June 1963).

The earlier Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first law addressing the legal rights of African Americans passed by Congress since Reconstruction, had established the Civil Rights division of the Justice Department and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission to investigate claims of racial discrimination. Before the 1957 bill was passed Congress had, however, removed a provision that would have empowered the Justice Department to enforce the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. A. Philip Randolph and other civil rights leaders continued to press the major political parties and presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy to enact such legislation and to outlaw segregation. The civil rights legislation that Kennedy introduced to Congress on 19 June 1963 addressed these issues, and King advocated for its passage.

In an article published after the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom that posed the question, ‘‘What next?’’ King wrote, ‘‘The hundreds of thousands who marched in Washington marched to level barriers. They summed up everything in a word—NOW. What is the content of NOW? Everything, not some things, in the President’s civil rights bill is part of NOW’’ (King, ‘‘In a Word—Now’’).

Following Kennedy’s assassination in November 1963, King continued to press for the bill as did newly inaugurated President Lyndon B. Johnson. In his 4 January 1964 column in the *New York Amsterdam News*, King maintained that the legislation was ‘‘the order of the day at the great March on Washington last summer. The Negro and his compatriots for self-respect and human dignity will not be denied’’ (King, ‘‘A Look to 1964’’).

The bill passed the House of Representatives in mid-February 1964, but became mired in the Senate due to a filibuster by southern senators that lasted 75 days. When the bill finally passed the Senate, King hailed it as one that would ‘‘bring practical relief to the Negro in the South, and will give the Negro in the North a psychological boost that he sorely needs’’ (King, 19 June 1964). On 2 July 1964, Johnson signed the new Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law with King and other civil rights leaders present. The law’s provisions created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to address race and sex discrimination in employment and a Community Relations Service to help local communities solve racial disputes; authorized federal intervention to ensure the desegregation of schools, parks, swimming pools, and other public facilities; and restricted the use of literacy tests as a requirement for voter registration.

Nobel Peace Prize (1964)

On the morning of 14 October 1964, Martin Luther King, sleeping in an Atlanta hospital room after checking in for a rest, was awakened by a phone call from his wife, Coretta Scott King, telling him that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Although many in the United States and abroad praised the selection, segregationist Eugene ‘‘Bull’’ Connor called it ‘‘scraping the bottom of the barrel’’ (‘‘Cheers and Scorn’’). Presenting the award to King in Oslo, Norway, that December, the chairman of the Nobel Committee praised him for being ‘‘the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races’’ (Jahn, ‘‘Presentation,’’ 332).

The Nobel Prize was endowed in 1895 by Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist and the inventor of dynamite. Annual awards in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace began in 1901. The winner of the Peace Prize is selected by a committee appointed by the Norwegian Parliament from nominations submitted by past winners and other select persons. King was nominated by the American Friends Service Committee, which had received the prize in 1947.

King departed for Oslo on 4 December 1964, stopping in London for three days to preach at St. Paul’s Cathedral and meet with leaders of the peace community. He was accompanied on his trip by a group of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) staff and members of his family. King accepted the prize on 10 December, in the name of the thousands of people in the civil rights movement who constituted what he termed a ‘‘mighty army of love’’ (King, ‘‘Mighty Army of Love’’). He called the award, ‘‘a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence andoppression,’’ and discussed ways to overcome the evils of racial injustice, poverty, and war (King, ‘‘Address,’’ 106).

Recognizing that SCLC played only one part in the movement, King shared the $54,000 monetary prize with leading civil rights groups, giving $25,000 to the Gandhi Society for Human Rights, $12,000 to SCLC, and splitting the remainder among the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Urban League, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

King was feted at events in Europe and at home, where he praised the volunteers in the movement who would never be publicly recognized but who were critical to the success of the nonviolent struggle. King described the award as a reminder to civil rights workers that ‘‘the tide of world opinion is in our favor,’’ and pledged to ‘‘work even harder to make peace and brotherhood a reality’’ (King, ‘‘Mighty Army of Love;’’ King, 27 January 1965). When King decided to speak out against the Vietnam War in April 1967, he reflected on this promise, calling the prize a ‘‘commission,’’ that required him to go ‘‘beyond national allegiances’’ to speak out for peace (King, ‘‘Beyond Vietnam,’’ 145).

Vietnam War (1965)

Four years after President John F. Kennedy sent the first American troops into Vietnam, Martin Luther King issued his first public statement on the war. Answering press questions after addressing a Howard University audience on 2 March 1965, King asserted that the war in Vietnam was ''accomplishing nothing'' and called for a negotiated settlement (Schuette, ''King Preaches on Non-Violence'').

While King was personally opposed to the war, he was concerned that publicly criticizing U.S. foreign policy would damage his relationship with President Lyndon B. Johnson, who had been instrumental in passing civil rights legislation and who had declared in April 1965 that he was willing to negotiate a diplomatic end to the war in Vietnam. Though he avoided condemning the war outright, at the August 1965 annual Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) convention King called for a halt to bombing in North Vietnam, urged that the United Nations be empowered to mediate the conflict, and told the crowd that ''What is required is a small first step that may establish a new spirit of mutual confidence … a step capable of breaking the cycle of mistrust, violence and war'' (King, 12 August 1965). He supported Johnson's calls for diplomatic negotiations and economic development as the beginnings of such a step. Later that year King framed the issue of war in Vietnam as a moral issue: ''as a minister of the gospel,'' he said, ''I consider war an evil. I must cry out when I see war escalated at any point'' (''Opposes Vietnam War'').

King's opposition to the war provoked criticism from members of Congress, the press and from his civil rights colleagues who argued that expanding his civil rights message to include foreign affairs would harm the black freedom struggle in America. Fearful of being labeled a Communist, which would diminish the impact of his civil rights work, King tempered his criticism of U.S. policy in Vietnam through late 1965 and 1966. His wife, Coretta Scott King, took a more active role in opposing the war, speaking at a rally at the Washington Monument on 27 November 1965 with Benjamin Spock, the renowned pediatrician and anti-war activist and joined in other demonstrations.

In December 1966, testifying before a congressional subcommittee on budget priorities, King argued for a ''rebalancing'' of fiscal priorities away from America's ''obsession'' with Vietnam and toward greater support for anti-poverty programs at home (Semple, ''Dr. King Scores Poverty''). King led his first anti-war march in Chicago on 25 March 1967, and reinforced the connection between war abroad and injustice at home: ''The bombs in Vietnam explode at home—they destroy the dream and possibility for a decent America'' (''Dr. King Leads Chicago''). A few days later, King made it clear that his peace work was not undertaken as the leader of the SCLC, but ''as an individual, as a clergyman, as one who is greatly concerned about peace'' (''Dr. King to Weigh Civil Disobedience'').

Less than two weeks after leading his first Vietnam demonstration, on 4 April 1967, King made his best known and most comprehensive statement against the war. Seeking to reduce the potential backlash by framing his speech within the context of religious objection to war, King addressed a crowd of 3,000 people at Riverside Church in New York City, King delivered a speech entitled ''Beyond Vietnam.'' pointing out that the war effort was ''taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem'' (King, ''Beyond Vietnam,'' 143).

Although the peace community lauded King's willingness to take a public stand against the war in Vietnam, many within the civil rights movement further distanced themselves from his stance. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example, issued a statement against merging the civil rights and peace movements. Undeterred, King, Spock, and Harry Belafonte led 100,000 demonstrators on an anti-war march to the United Nations on 15 April 1967.

During the last year of his life, King worked with Spock to develop ''Vietnam Summer,'' a volunteer project to increase grassroots peace activism in time for the 1968 elections. King linked his anti-war and civil rights work in speeches throughout the country, where he described the three problems he saw plaguing the nation: racism, poverty, and the war in Vietnam. In his last Sunday sermon, delivered at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on 31 March 1968, King said that he was ''convinced that [Vietnam] is one of the most unjust wars that has ever been fought in the history of the world'' (King, ''Remaining Awake,'' 219). Nearly five years after King's assassination, American troops withdrew from Vietnam and a peace treaty declared South and North Vietnam independent of each other.

Selma to Montgomery March (1965)

On 25 March 1965, Martin Luther King led thousands of nonviolent demonstrators to the steps of the capitol in Montgomery, Alabama, after a 5-day, 54-mile march from Selma, Alabama, where local African Americans, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) had been campaigning for voting rights. King told the assembled crowd: ''There never was a moment in American history more honorable and more inspiring than the pilgrimage of clergymen and laymen of every race and faith pouring into Selma to face danger at the side of its embattled Negroes'' (King, ''Address at the Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March,'' 121).

On 2 January 1965 King and SCLC joined the SNCC, the Dallas County Voters League, and other local African American activists in a voting rights campaign in Selma where, in spite of repeated registration attempts by local blacks, only two percent were on the voting rolls. SCLC had chosen to focus its efforts in Selma because they anticipated that the notorious brutality of local law enforcement under Sheriff Jim Clark would attract national attention and pressure President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress to enact new national voting rights legislation.

The campaign in Selma and nearby Marion, Alabama, progressed with mass arrests but little violence for the first month. That changed in February, however, when police attacks against nonviolent demonstrators increased. On the night of 18 February, Alabama state troopers joined local police breaking up an evening march in Marion. In the ensuing melee, a state trooper shot Jimmie Lee Jackson, a 26-year-old church deacon from Marion, as he attempted to protect his mother from the trooper's nightstick. Jackson died eight days later in a Selma hospital.

In response to Jackson's death, activists in Selma and Marion set out on 7 March, to march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery. While King was in Atlanta, his SCLC colleague Hosea Williams, and SNCC leader John Lewis led the march. The marchers made their way through Selma across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where they faced a blockade of state troopers and local lawmen commanded by Clark and Major John Cloud who ordered the marchers to disperse. When they did not, Cloud ordered his men to advance. Cheered on by white onlookers, the troopers attacked the crowd with clubs and tear gas. Mounted police chased retreating marchers and continued to beat them.

Television coverage of ''Bloody Sunday,'' as the event became known, triggered national outrage. Lewis, who was severely beaten on the head, said: ''I don't see how President Johnson can send troops to Vietnam—I don't see how he can send troops to the Congo—I don't see how he can send troops to Africa and can't send troops to Selma,'' (Reed, ''Alabama Police Use Gas'').

That evening King began a blitz of telegrams and public statements, ''calling on religious leaders from all over the nation to join us on Tuesday in our peaceful, nonviolent march for freedom'' (King, 7 March 1965). While King and Selma activists made plans to retry the march again two days later, Federal District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. notified the movement attorney Fred Gray that he intended to issue a restraining order prohibiting the march until at least 11 March, and President Johnson pressured King to call off the march until the federal court order could provide protection to the marchers.

Forced to consider whether to disobey the pending court order, after consulting late into the night and early morning with other civil rights leaders and John Doar, the deputy chief of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, King proceeded to the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the afternoon of 9 March. He led more than 2,000 marchers, including hundreds of clergy who had answered King's call on short notice, to the site of Sunday's attack, then stopped and asked them to kneel and pray. After prayers they rose and turned the march back to Selma, avoiding another confrontation with state troopers and skirting the issue of whether to obey Judge Johnson's court order. Many marchers were critical of King's unexpected decision not to push on to Montgomery, but the restraint gained support from President Johnson, who issued a public statement: ''Americans everywhere join in deploring the brutality with which a number of Negro citizens of Alabama were treated when they sought to dramatize their deep and sincere interest in attaining the precious right to vote'' (Johnson, ''Statement by the President,'' 272). Johnson promised to introduce a voting rights bill to Congress within a few days.

That evening, several local whites attacked James Reeb, a white Unitarian minister who had come from Massachusetts to join the protest. His death two days later contributed to the rising national concern over the situation in Alabama. Johnson personally telephoned his condolences to Reeb's widow and met with Alabama Governor George Wallace, pressuring him to protect marchers and support universal suffrage.

On 15 March Johnson addressed the Congress, identifying himself with the demonstrators in Selma in a televised address: ''Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome'' (Johnson, ''Special Message''). The following day Selma demonstrators submitted a detailed march plan to federal Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., who approved the demonstration and enjoined Governor Wallace and local law enforcement from harassing or threatening marchers. On 17 March President Johnson submitted voting rights legislation to

Congress.

The federally sanctioned march left Selma on 21 March. Protected by hundreds of federalized Alabama National Guardsmen and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, the demonstrators covered between 7 to 17 miles per day. Camping at night in supporters' yards, they were entertained by celebrities such as Harry Belafonte and Lena Horne. Limited by Judge Johnson's order to 300 marchers over a stretch of two-lane highway, the number of demonstrators swelled on the last day to 25,000, accompanied by Assistant Attorneys General John Doar and Ramsey Clark, and former Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall, among others.

During the final rally, held on the steps of the capitol in Montgomery, King proclaimed: ''The end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man'' (King, ''Address,'' 130). Afterward a delegation of march leaders attempted to deliver a petition to Governor Wallace, but was rebuffed. That night, while ferrying Selma demonstrators back home from Montgomery, Viola Liuzzo, a housewife from Michigan who had come to Alabama to volunteer, was shot and killed by four members of the Ku Klux Klan. Doar later prosecuted three Klansmen conspiring to violate her civil rights.

On 6 August, in the presence of King and other civil rights leaders, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Recalling ''the outrage of Selma,'' Johnson called the right to vote ''the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men'' (Johnson, ''Remarks''). In his annual address to SCLC a few days later, King noted that ''Montgomery led to the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and 1960; Birmingham inspired the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Selma produced the voting rights legislation of 1965'' (King, 11 August 1965).

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Voting Rights Act (1965)

On 6 August 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, calling the day ‘‘a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield’’ (Johnson, ‘‘Remarks in the Capitol Rotunda’’). The law came seven months after Martin Luther King launched a Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) campaign based in Selma, Alabama, with the aim of pressuring Congress to pass such legislation.

‘‘In Selma,’’ King wrote, ‘‘we see a classic pattern of disenfranchisement typical of the Southern Black Belt areas where Negroes are in the majority’’ (King, ‘‘Selma— The Shame and the Promise’’). In addition to facing arbitrary literacy tests and poll taxes, African Americans in Selma and other southern towns were intimidated, harassed, and assaulted when they sought to register to vote. Civil rights activists met with fierce resistance to their campaign, which attracted national attention on 7 March 1965, when civil rights workers were brutally attacked by white law enforcement officers on a march from Selma to Montgomery.

Johnson introduced the Voting Rights Act that same month, ‘‘with the outrage of Selma still fresh’’ (Johnson, ‘‘Remarks in the Capitol Rotunda’’). In just over four months, Congress passed the bill. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 abolished literacy tests and poll taxes designed to disenfranchise African American voters, and gave the federal government the authority to take over voter registration in counties with a pattern of persistent discrimination. ‘‘This law covers many pages,’’ Johnson said before signing the bill, ‘‘but the heart of the act is plain. Wherever, by clear and objective standards, States and counties are using regulations, or laws, or tests to deny the right to vote, then they will be struck down’’ (Johnson, ‘‘Remarks in the Capitol Rotunda’’).

On the same day Johnson signed the bill, he announced that his attorney general, Nicholas Katzenbach, would initiate lawsuits against four states that still required a poll tax to register. Although King called the law ‘‘a great step forward in removing all of the remaining obstacles to the right to vote,’’ he knew that the ballot would only be an effective tool for social change if potential voters rid themselves of the fear associated with voting (King, 5 August 1965.) To meet this goal and ‘‘rid the American body politic of racism,’’ SCLC developed its Political Education and Voter Registration Department (King, ‘‘Annual Report’’).

Poor People's Campaign (1967)

Martin Luther King announced the Poor People's Campaign at a staff retreat for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in November 1967. Seeking a ''middle ground between riots on the one hand and timid supplications for justice on the other,'' King planned for an initial group of 2,000 poor people to descend on Washington, D.C., southern states and northern cities to meet with government officials to demand jobs, unemployment insurance, a fair minimum wage, and education for poor adults and children designed to improve their self-image and self-esteem (King, 29 November 1967).

Suggested to King by Marion Wright, director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Legal Defense and Education Fund in Jackson, Mississippi, the Poor People's Campaign was seen by King as the next chapter in the struggle for genuine equality. Desegregation and the right to vote were essential, but King believed that African Americans and other minorities would never enter full citizenship until they had economic security. Through nonviolent direct action, King and SCLC hoped to focus the nation's attention on economic inequality and poverty. ''This is a highly significant event,'' King told delegates at an early planning meeting, describing the campaign as ''the beginning of a new co-operation, understanding, and a determination by poor people of all colors and backgrounds to assert and win their right to a decent life and respect for their culture and dignity'' (SCLC, 15 March 1968). Many leaders of American Indian, Puerto Rican, Mexican American, and poor white communities pledged themselves to the Poor People's Campaign.

Some in SCLC thought King's campaign too ambitious, and the demands too amorphous. Although King praised the simplicity of the campaign's goals, saying, ''it's as pure as a man needing an income to support his family,'' he knew that the campaign was inherently different from others SCLC had attempted (King, 29 November 1967). ''We have an ultimate goal of freedom, independence, self-determination, whatever we want to call it, but we aren't going to get all of that now, and we aren't going to get all of that next year,'' he commented at a staff meeting on 17 January 1968. ''Let's find something that is so possible, so achievable, so pure, so simple that even the backlash can't do much to deny it. And yet something so non-token and so basic to life that even the black nationalists can't disagree with it that much'' (King, 17 January 1968).

After King's assassination in April 1968, SCLC decided to go on with the campaign under the leadership of Ralph Abernathy, SCLC's new president. On Mother's Day, 12 May 1968, thousands of women, led by Coretta Scott King, formed the first wave of demonstrators. The following day, Resurrection City, a temporary settlement of tents and shacks, was built on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Braving rain, mud, and summer heat, protesters stayed for over a month. Demonstrators made daily pilgrimages to various federal agencies to protest and demand economic justice. Mid-way through the campaign, Robert Kennedy, whose wife had attended the Mother's Day opening of Resurrection City, was assassinated. Out of respect for the campaign, his funeral procession passed through Resurrection City. The Department of the Interior forced Resurrection City to close on 24 June 1968, after the permit to use park land expired.

Although the campaign succeeded in small ways, such as qualifying 200 counties for free surplus food distribution, and securing promises from several federal agencies to hire poor people to help run programs for the poor, Abernathy felt these concessions were insufficient.

Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike (1968)

The night before his assassination in April 1968, Martin Luther King told a group of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee: "We've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through" (King, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," 217). King believed the struggle in Memphis exposed the need for economic equality and social justice that he hoped his Poor People's Campaign would highlight nationally.

On 1 February 1968, two Memphis garbage collectors, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a malfunctioning truck. Twelve days later, frustrated by the city's response to the latest event in a long pattern of neglect and abuse of its black employees, 1,300 black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike. Sanitation workers, led by garbage-collector-turned-union-organizer, T. O. Jones, and supported by the president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Jerry Wurf, demanded recognition of their union, better safety standards, and a decent wage.

The union, which had been granted a charter by AFSCME in 1964, had attempted a strike in 1966, but it failed, in large part because workers were unable to arouse the support of Memphis's religious community or middle class. Conditions for black sanitation workers worsened when Henry Loeb became mayor in January 1968. Loeb refused to take dilapidated trucks out of service or pay overtime when men were forced to work late-night shifts. Sanitation workers earned wages so low that many were on welfare and hundreds relied on food stamps to feed their families.

On 11 February over 700 men attended a union meeting and unanimously decided to strike. Within a week, the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) passed a resolution supporting the strike. The strike might have ended on 22 February, when the City Council, pressured by a sit-in of sanitation workers and their supporters, voted to recognize the union and recommended a wage increase. Mayor Loeb rejected the Council's vote, however, insisting that only he had the authority to recognize the union and refused to do so.

The following day, after police used mace and tear gas against nonviolent demonstrators marching to City Hall, Memphis's black community was galvanized. Meeting in a church basement on 24 February, 150 local ministers formed Community on the Move for Equality (COME), under the leadership of King's longtime ally, local minister James Lawson. COME committed to the use nonviolent civil disobedience to fill Memphis's jails and bring attention to the plight of the sanitation workers. By the beginning of March, local high school and college students, nearly a quarter of them white, were participating alongside garbage workers in daily marches; and over one hundred people, including several ministers, had been arrested.

While Lawson kept King updated by phone, other national civil rights leaders, including Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin, came to rally the sanitation workers. King himself arrived on 18 March to address a crowd of about 25,000 – the largest indoor gathering the civil rights movement had ever seen. Speaking to a group of labor and civil rights activists and members of the powerful black church, King praised the group's unity saying, "You are demonstrating that we can stick together. You are demonstrating that we are all tied in a single garment of destiny, and that if one black person suffers, if one black person is down, we are all down" (King, 18 March 1968). King encouraged the group to support the sanitation strike by going on a citywide work stoppage, and he pledged to return that Friday, 22 March, to lead a protest through the city.

King left Memphis the following day, but Southern Christian Leaderships Conference's (SCLC) James Bevel and Ralph Abernathy remained to help organize the protest and work stoppage. When the day arrived, however, a massive snowstorm blanketed the region, preventing King from reaching Memphis and causing the organizers to reschedule the march for 28 March. Memphis city officials estimated that 22,000 students skipped school that day to participate in the demonstration. King arrived late and found a massive crowd on the brink of chaos. Lawson and King led the march together but quickly called off the demonstration as violence began to erupt. King was whisked away to a nearby hotel, and Lawson told the mass of people to turn around and go back to the church. In the chaos that followed, downtown shops were looted, and a 16-year-old was shot and killed by a policeman. Police followed demonstrators back to the Clayborn Temple, entered the church, released tear gas inside the sanctuary, and clubbed people as they lay on the floor to get fresh air.

Loeb called for martial law and brought in 4,000 National Guard troops. The following day, over 200 striking workers continued their daily march, carrying signs that read, "I Am a Man" (Honey, 389). At a news conference held before he returned to Atlanta, King said that he had been unaware of the divisions within the community, particularly of the presence of a black youth group committed to "Black Power" called the Invaders, who were accused of starting the violence.

King considered not returning to Memphis, but decided that if the nonviolent struggle for economic justice was going to succeed it would be necessary to follow through with the movement there. After a divisive meeting on 30 March, SCLC staff agreed to support King's return to Memphis. He arrived on 3 April and was persuaded to speak by a crowd of dedicated sanitation workers who had

braved another storm to hear him. A weary King preached about his own mortality, telling the group, “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life--longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now… I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land” (King, 222-223).

The following evening, as King was getting ready for dinner, he was shot and killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. While Lawson recorded a radio announcement urging calm in Memphis, Loeb called in the state police and the National Guard and ordered a 7pm curfew. Black and white ministers pleaded with Loeb to concede to the union’s demands, but the Mayor held firm. President Lyndon Johnson charged his Undersecretary of Labor, James Reynolds, with negotiating a solution and ending the strike.

On 8 April, an estimated 42,000 people led by Coretta Scott King, SCLC, and union leaders silently marched through Memphis in honor of King, demanding that Loeb give in to the union’s requests. In front of the City Hall, AFSCME pledged to support the workers until “we have justice” (Honey, 480). Negotiators finally reached a deal on 16 April, allowing the City Council to recognize the union and guaranteeing a better wage. While the deal brought the strike to an end, the union had to threaten another strike several months later to press the city to follow through with its commitment.

Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (4 April 1968)

At 6:05 P.M. on Thursday, 4 April 1968, Martin Luther King was shot dead while standing on a balcony outside his second-floor room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. News of King's assassination prompted major outbreaks of racial violence, resulting in more than 40 deaths nationwide and extensive property damage in over 100 American cities. James Earl Ray, a 40-year-old escaped fugitive, later confessed to the crime and was sentenced to a 99-year prison term. During King's funeral a tape recording was played in which King spoke of how he wanted to be remembered after his death: ''I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving
others'' (King, ''Drum Major Instinct,'' 85).

King had arrived in Tennessee on Wednesday, 3 April to prepare for a march the following Monday on behalf of striking Memphis sanitation workers. As he prepared to leave the Lorraine Motel for a dinner at the home of Memphis minister Samuel ''Billy'' Kyles, King stepped out onto the balcony of room 306 to speak with Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) colleagues standing in the parking area below. An assassin fired a single shot that caused severe wounds to the lower right side of his face. SCLC aides rushed to him, and Ralph Abernathy cradled King's head. Others on the balcony pointed across the street toward the rear of a boarding house on South Main Street where the shot seemed to have originated. An ambulance rushed King to St. Joseph's Hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead at 7:05 P.M.

President Lyndon B. Johnson called for a national day of mourning to be observed on 7 April. In the following days, public libraries, museums, schools, and businesses were closed, and the Academy Awards ceremony and numerous sporting events were postponed. On 8 April King's widow, Coretta Scott King, and other family members joined thousands of participants in a march in Memphis honoring King and supporting the sanitation workers. King's funeral service was held the following day in Atlanta at Ebenezer Baptist Church. It was attended by many of the nation's political and civil rights leaders, including Jacqueline Kennedy, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and Ralph Bunche. Morehouse College President Benjamin Mays delivered the eulogy, predicting that King ''would probably say that, if death had to come, I am sure there was no greater cause to die for than fighting to get a just wage for garbage collectors'' (Mays, 9 April 1968). Over 100,000 mourners followed two mules pulling King's coffin through the streets of Atlanta. After another ceremony on the Morehouse campus, King's body was initially interred at South-View Cemetery. Eventually, it was moved to a crypt next to the Ebenezer Church at the King Center, an institution founded by King's widow.

Shortly after the assassination, a policeman discovered a bundle containing a 30.06 Remington rifle next door to the boarding house. The largest investigation in Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) history led its agents to an apartment in Atlanta. Fingerprints uncovered in the apartment matched those of James Earl Ray, a fugitive who had escaped from a Missouri prison in April 1967. FBI agents and police in Memphis produced further evidence that Ray had registered on 4 April at the South Main Street roominghouse and that he had taken a second-floor room near a common bathroom with a view of the Lorraine Motel.

The identification of Ray as a suspect led to an international manhunt. On 19 July 1968, Ray was extradited to the United States from Britain to stand trial. In a plea bargain, Tennessee prosecutors agreed in March 1969 to forgo seeking the death penalty when Ray pled guilty to murder charges. The circumstances leading to the plea later became a source of controversy, when Ray recanted his confession soon after being sentenced to a 99-year term in prison.

During the years following King's assassination, doubts about the adequacy of the case against Ray were fueled by revelations of the extensive surveillance of King by the FBI and other government agencies. Beginning in 1976, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, chaired by Representative Louis Stokes, re-examined the evidence concerning King's assassination, as well as that of President John F. Kennedy. The committee's final report suggested that Ray may have had co-conspirators. The report nonetheless concluded that there was no convincing evidence of government complicity in King's assassination.

After recanting his guilty plea, Ray continued to maintain his innocence, claiming to have been framed by a gun-smuggler he knew as ''Raoul.'' In 1993 Ray's lawyer, William F. Pepper, sought to build popular support to reopen Ray's case by staging a televised mock trial of Ray in which the ''jury'' found him not guilty. In 1997 members of King's family publicly supported Ray's appeal for a new trial, and King's son Dexter Scott King supported Ray's claims innocence during a televised prison encounter. Despite this support Tennessee authorities refused to reopen the case, and Ray died in prison on 23 April 1998.

Even after Ray's death, conspiracy allegations continued to surface. In 1999, on behalf of King's widow and children, Pepper won a token civil verdict of wrongful death against Lloyd Jowers, owner of Jim's Grill, a restaurant across the street from the Lorraine Motel. Although the trial produced considerable testimony that contradicted the original case against Ray, the Justice Department announced in 2000 that its own internal investigation, launched in 1998 at the King family's request, had failed to find sufficient evidence to warrant a further investigation.

King National Holiday

The establishment of a national holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., marked the culmination of a long campaign that began soon after King's assassination and ended on 2 November 1983, with the signing of the legislation by President Ronald Reagan. Public Law 98-144 designated the third Monday in January as an annual federal holiday in King's honor, and the first official celebration took place on 20 January 1986.

King's 1968 assassination prompted various efforts to pay homage to the slain civil rights leader. Many communities throughout the nation reacted by naming streets, schools, and other public landmarks after King. In 1973, the first state King Holiday bill (sponsored by Assemblyman Harold Washington) was signed into law in Illinois, and in 1974, similar legislation was passed in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Most other states followed suit during the following decade.

Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) initially introduced a bill calling for a national holiday only four days after King's assassination, but this proposal garnered little support until the numbers of African Americans elected to Congress increased and King holiday campaigns at the local and state levels gained momentum. The Congressional Black Caucus' persistent attempts to pass King holiday legislation gained support from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which King had led since its founding in 1957. In the early 1970s the SCLC gathered petitions bearing 3 million signatures in support of the King Holiday. In 1973, the first state King holiday bill (sponsored by Assemblyman Harold Washington) was signed into law in Illinois, and in 1974, similar legislation was passed in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Most other states followed suit during the following decade.

During the late 1970s, King's widow, Coretta Scott King, and the Atlanta-based King Center that she founded played an increasingly important role in mobilizing popular support for a holiday. In 1979, Coretta Scott King urged passage of a national King holiday bill when she testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and joint hearings of Congress. In addition, Coretta Scott King directed King Center staff to begin intensive organizing of a nationwide citizens lobby for the holiday and garnered more than 300,000 signatures on a petition before the end of the year. With support from the Jimmy Carter administration, the King Holiday emerged for the first time from congressional committees, but in November 1979, the bill was defeated by five votes in a floor vote in the House of Representatives.

The setback did not end the national campaign. Singer Stevie Wonder composed a song celebrating King's birth, and his hit recording of the birthday song further increased the holiday's popular support. On 15 January 1983, more than 100,000 people rallied at the Washington Monument to express support for the King holiday movement. With financial support from Wonder, a lobbying office was opened in Washington, D. C., and eventually this effort secured more than 6 million signatures on petitions to Congress in support of a King national holiday. The King Center began working with Wonder to organize an observance of the 20th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. More than half a million people attended this commemoration march and the rally at the Lincoln Memorial, where they heard speakers call upon the Senate and President Reagan to enact King holiday legislation.

A few weeks before the march took place, the House passed a bill creating the King holiday by an overwhelming vote of 338-90. But the subsequent Senate debate concerning the bill was nonetheless contentious, continuing into the fall of 1983. North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms sought to diminish King's reputation by calling for the release of Federal Bureau of Investigation surveillance tapes on King that had been sealed by court order until the year 2027, while other senators complained that another paid holiday would be too costly. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) vigorously defended King against the allegations of Helms, noting that no evidence of ties between King and the Communist Party had been uncovered. When the Senate finally voted on the bill on 19 October, the packed galleries included numerous prominent proponents of the holiday, including Coretta Scott King, SCLC President Joseph E. Lowery, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Executive Director Benjamin Hooks. The holiday bill was finally approved by a vote of 78 to 22 (37 Republicans and 41 Democrats voted in favor; 18 Republicans and 4 Democrats voted against).

After the holiday bill became law, the King Center gained congressional support to establish a King Federal Holiday Commission, which introduced a variety of commemorative activities, including tree planting ceremonies and the distribution of posters, newsletters, and guides citing the principles of King's nonviolence teachings. In the 1990s the King holiday theme became "Remember – Celebrate – Act. A Day On. Not a Day Off." As with other federal holidays, the observance of the King holiday applied only to federal workers rather than employees of state and local governments or of private institutions, but by January 1989 the number of states celebrating a King holiday had grown to 44, and in June 1999, New Hampshire became the final state to pass some form of King holiday legislation.

INSCRIPTIONS

STONE OF HOPE

South elevation: Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.

North elevations: Yes, if you want to say that i was a drum major, say that i was a drum major for justice. Say that i was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. Georgia, 1968.

SOUTH WALL

Panel A: Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

Panel B: We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. District of Columbia 1968

Panel C: Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that. 1963

Panel D: I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant. Norway, 1964

Panel E: Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in. District of Columbia, 1959

Panel F: I oppose the war in Vietnam because I love America. I speak out against it not in anger but with anxiety and sorrow in my heart, and above all with a passionate desire to see our beloved country stand as the moral example of the world. California, 1967

Panel G: If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective Georgia, 1967

NORTH WALL

Panel H: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Alabama, 1963

Panel J: I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. Norway, 1964

Panel L: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. 1963

Panel M: Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies. New York, 1967

Panel N: We are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs “down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” Alabama, 1955

Panel P (sic): We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. Alabama, 1965

Panel Q: True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice. 1958

STONE OF HOPE

South elevation: "OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR, A STONE OF HOPE."

28 August 1963
"I Have a Dream"

In 1950's America, the equality of man envisioned by the Declaration of Independence was far from a reality. People of color — blacks, Hispanics, Asians — were discriminated against in many ways, both overt and covert. The 1950's were a turbulent time in America, when racial barriers began to come down due to Supreme Court decisions, like Brown v. Board of Education; and due to an increase in the activism of blacks, fighting for equal rights.

Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister, was a driving force in the push for racial equality in the 1950's and the 1960's. In 1963, King and his staff focused on Birmingham, Alabama. They marched and protested non-violently, raising the ire of local officials who sicced water cannon and police dogs on the marchers, whose ranks included teenagers and children. The bad publicity and break-down of business forced the white leaders of Birmingham to concede to some anti-segregation demands.

Thrust into the national spotlight in Birmingham, where he was arrested and jailed, King helped organize a massive march on Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963. His partners in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom included other religious leaders, labor leaders, and black organizers. The assembled masses marched down the Washington Mall from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, heard songs from Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, and heard speeches by actor Charlton Heston, NAACP president Roy Wilkins, and future U.S. Representative from Georgia John Lewis.

King's appearance was the last of the event; the closing speech was carried live on major television networks. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King evoked the name of Lincoln in his "I Have a Dream" speech, which is credited with mobilizing supporters of desegregation and prompted the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The next year, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The following is the exact text of the spoken speech, transcribed from recordings.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew **out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.** With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

STONE OF HOPE

North elevation: "YES, IF YOU WANT TO SAY THAT I WAS A DRUM MAJOR, SAY THAT I WAS A DRUM MAJOR FOR JUSTICE. SAY THAT I WAS A DRUM MAJOR FOR PEACE. I WAS A DRUM MAJOR FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. AND ALL OF THE OTHER SHALLOW THINGS WILL NOT MATTER." Georgia, 1968.

4 February 1968
"The Drum Major Instinct"

King's "Drum Major Instinct" sermon, given on 4 February 1968, was an adaptation of the 1952 homily ''Drum-Major Instincts'' by J. Wallace Hamilton, a well-known, liberal, white Methodist preacher. King encouraged his congregation to seek greatness, but to do so through service and love. King concluded the sermon by imagining his own funeral, downplaying his famous achievements and emphasizing his heart to do right.

This morning I would like to use as a subject from which to preach: "The Drum Major Instinct." "The Drum Major Instinct." And our text for the morning is taken from a very familiar passage in the tenth chapter as recorded by Saint Mark. Beginning with the thirty-fifth verse of that chapter, we read these words: "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him saying, 'Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.' And he said unto them, 'What would ye that I should do for you?' And they said unto him, 'Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.' But Jesus said unto them, 'Ye know not what ye ask: Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' And they said unto him, 'We can.' And Jesus said unto them, 'Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.'" And then Jesus goes on toward the end of that passage to say, "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."

The setting is clear. James and John are making a specific request of the master. They had dreamed, as most of the Hebrews dreamed, of a coming king of Israel who would set Jerusalem free and establish his kingdom on Mount Zion, and in righteousness rule the world. And they thought of Jesus as this kind of king. And they were thinking of that day when Jesus would reign supreme as this new king of Israel. And they were saying, "Now when you establish your kingdom, let one of us sit on the right hand and the other on the left hand of your throne."

Now very quickly, we would automatically condemn James and John, and we would say they were selfish. Why would they make such a selfish request? But before we condemn them too quickly, let us look calmly and honestly at ourselves, and we will discover that we too have those same basic desires for recognition, for importance. That same desire for attention, that same desire to be first. Of course, the other disciples got mad with James and John, and you could understand why, but we must understand that we have some of the same James and John qualities. And there is deep down within all of us an instinct. It's a kind of drum major instinct—a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade, a desire to be first. And it is something that runs the whole gamut of life.

And so before we condemn them, let us see that we all have the drum major instinct. We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade. Alfred Adler, the great psychoanalyst, contends that this is the dominant impulse. Sigmund Freud used to contend that sex was the dominant impulse, and Adler came with a new argument saying that this quest for recognition, this desire for attention, this desire for distinction is the basic impulse, the basic drive of human life, this drum major instinct.

And you know, we begin early to ask life to put us first. Our first cry as a baby was a bid for attention. And all through childhood the drum major impulse or instinct is a major obsession. Children ask life to grant them first place. They are a little bundle of ego. And they have innately the drum major impulse or the drum major instinct.

Now in adult life, we still have it, and we really never get by it. We like to do something good. And you know, we like to be praised for it. Now if you don't believe that, you just go on living life, and you will discover very soon that you like to be praised. Everybody likes it, as a matter of fact. And somehow this warm glow we feel when we are praised or when our name is in print is something of the vitamin A to our ego. Nobody is unhappy when they are praised, even if they know they don't deserve it and even if they don't believe it. The only unhappy people about praise is when that praise is going too much toward somebody else. (*That's right*) But everybody likes to be praised because of this real drum major instinct.

Now the presence of the drum major instinct is why so many people are "joiners." You know, there are some people who just join

everything. And it's really a quest for attention and recognition and importance. And they get names that give them that impression. So you get your groups, and they become the "Grand Patron," and the little fellow who is henpecked at home needs a chance to be the "Most Worthy of the Most Worthy" of something. It is the drum major impulse and longing that runs the gamut of human life. And so we see it everywhere, this quest for recognition. And we join things, overjoin really, that we think that we will find that recognition in.

Now the presence of this instinct explains why we are so often taken by advertisers. You know, those gentlemen of massive verbal persuasion. And they have a way of saying things to you that kind of gets you into buying. In order to be a man of distinction, you must drink this whiskey. In order to make your neighbors envious, you must drive this type of car. (*Make it plain*) In order to be lovely to love you must wear this kind of lipstick or this kind of perfume. And you know, before you know it, you're just buying that stuff. (*Yes*) That's the way the advertisers do it.

I got a letter the other day, and it was a new magazine coming out. And it opened up, "Dear Dr. King: As you know, you are on many mailing lists. And you are categorized as highly intelligent, progressive, a lover of the arts and the sciences, and I know you will want to read what I have to say." Of course I did. After you said all of that and explained me so exactly, of course I wanted to read it. [*laughter*]

But very seriously, it goes through life; the drum major instinct is real. (*Yes*) And you know what else it causes to happen? It often causes us to live above our means. (*Make it plain*) It's nothing but the drum major instinct. Do you ever see people buy cars that they can't even begin to buy in terms of their income? (*Amen*) [*laughter*] You've seen people riding around in Cadillacs and Chryslers who don't earn enough to have a good T-Model Ford. (*Make it plain*) But it feeds a repressed ego.

You know, economists tell us that your automobile should not cost more than half of your annual income. So if you make an income of five thousand dollars, your car shouldn't cost more than about twenty-five hundred. That's just good economics. And if it's a family of two, and both members of the family make ten thousand dollars, they would have to make out with one car. That would be good economics, although it's often inconvenient. But so often, haven't you seen people making five thousand dollars a year and driving a car that costs six thousand? And they wonder why their ends never meet. [*laughter*] That's a fact.

Now the economists also say that your house shouldn't cost—if you're buying a house, it shouldn't cost more than twice your income. That's based on the economy and how you would make ends meet. So, if you have an income of five thousand dollars, it's kind of difficult in this society. But say it's a family with an income of ten thousand dollars; the house shouldn't cost much more than twenty thousand. Well, I've seen folk making ten thousand dollars, living in a forty- and fifty-thousand-dollar house. And you know they just barely make it. They get a check every month somewhere, and they owe all of that out before it comes in. Never have anything to put away for rainy days.

But now the problem is, it is the drum major instinct. And you know, you see people over and over again with the drum major instinct taking them over. And they just live their lives trying to outdo the Joneses. (*Amen*) They got to get this coat because this particular coat is a little better and a little better-looking than Mary's coat. And I got to drive this car because it's something about this car that makes my car a little better than my neighbor's car. (*Amen*) I know a man who used to live in a thirty-five-thousand-dollar house. And other people started building thirty-five-thousand-dollar houses, so he built a seventy-five-thousand-dollar house. And then somebody else built a seventy-five-thousand-dollar house, and he built a hundred-thousand-dollar house. And I don't know where he's going to end up if he's going to live his life trying to keep up with the Joneses.

There comes a time that the drum major instinct can become destructive. (*Make it plain*) And that's where I want to move now. I want to move to the point of saying that if this instinct is not harnessed, it becomes a very dangerous, pernicious instinct. For instance, if it isn't harnessed, it causes one's personality to become distorted. I guess that's the most damaging aspect of it: what it does to the personality. If it isn't harnessed, you will end up day in and day out trying to deal with your ego problem by boasting. Have you ever heard people that—you know, and I'm sure you've met them—that really become sickening because they just sit up all the time talking about themselves. (*Amen*) And they just boast and boast and boast, and that's the person who has not harnessed the drum major instinct.

And then it does other things to the personality. It causes you to lie about who you know sometimes. (*Amen, Make it plain*) There are some people who are influence peddlers. And in their attempt to deal with the drum major instinct, they have to try to identify with the so-called big-name people. (*Yeah, Make it plain*) And if you're not careful, they will make you think they know somebody that they don't really know. (*Amen*) They know them well, they sip tea with them, and they this-and-that. That happens to people.

And the other thing is that it causes one to engage ultimately in activities that are merely used to get attention. Criminologists tell us that some people are driven to crime because of this drum major instinct. They don't feel that they are getting enough attention through the normal channels of social behavior, and so they turn to anti-social behavior in order to get attention, in order to feel important.

(*Yeah*) And so they get that gun, and before they know it they robbed a bank in a quest for recognition, in a quest for importance.

And then the final great tragedy of the distorted personality is the fact that when one fails to harness this instinct, (*Glory to God*) he ends up trying to push others down in order to push himself up. (*Amen*) And whenever you do that, you engage in some of the most vicious activities. You will spread evil, vicious, lying gossip on people, because you are trying to pull them down in order to push yourself up. (*Make it plain*) And the great issue of life is to harness the drum major instinct.

Now the other problem is, when you don't harness the drum major instinct—this uncontrolled aspect of it—is that it leads to snobbish exclusivism. It leads to snobbish exclusivism. (*Make it plain*) And you know, this is the danger of social clubs and fraternities—I'm in a fraternity; I'm in two or three—for sororities and all of these, I'm not talking against them. I'm saying it's the danger. The danger is that they can become forces of classism and exclusivism where somehow you get a degree of satisfaction because you are in something exclusive. And that's fulfilling something, you know—that I'm in this fraternity, and it's the best fraternity in the world, and everybody can't get in this fraternity. So it ends up, you know, a very exclusive kind of thing.

And you know, that can happen with the church; I know churches get in that bind sometimes. (*Amen, Make it plain*) I've been to churches, you know, and they say, "We have so many doctors, and so many school teachers, and so many lawyers, and so many businessmen in our church." And that's fine, because doctors need to go to church, and lawyers, and businessmen, teachers—they ought to be in church. But they say that—even the preacher sometimes will go all through that—they say that as if the other people don't count. (*Amen*)

And the church is the one place where a doctor ought to forget that he's a doctor. The church is the one place where a Ph.D. ought to forget that he's a Ph.D. (*Yes*) The church is the one place that the school teacher ought to forget the degree she has behind her name. The church is the one place where the lawyer ought to forget that he's a lawyer. And any church that violates the "whosoever will, let him come" doctrine is a dead, cold church, (*Yes*) and nothing but a little social club with a thin veneer of religiosity.

When the church is true to its nature, (*Whoo*) it says, "Whosoever will, let him come." (*Yes*) And it does not supposed to satisfy the perverted uses of the drum major instinct. It's the one place where everybody should be the same, standing before a common master and savior. (*Yes, sir*) And a recognition grows out of this—that all men are brothers because they are children (*Yes*) of a common father.

The drum major instinct can lead to exclusivism in one's thinking and can lead one to feel that because he has some training, he's a little better than that person who doesn't have it. Or because he has some economic security, that he's a little better than that person who doesn't have it. And that's the uncontrolled, perverted use of the drum major instinct.

Now the other thing is, that it leads to tragic—and we've seen it happen so often—tragic race prejudice. Many who have written about this problem—Lillian Smith used to say it beautifully in some of her books. And she would say it to the point of getting men and women to see the source of the problem. Do you know that a lot of the race problem grows out of the drum major instinct? A need that some people have to feel superior. A need that some people have to feel that they are first, and to feel that their white skin ordained them to be first. (*Make it plain, today, 'cause I'm against it, so help me God*) And they have said over and over again in ways that we see with our own eyes. In fact, not too long ago, a man down in Mississippi said that God was a charter member of the White Citizens Council. And so God being the charter member means that everybody who's in that has a kind of divinity, a kind of superiority. And think of what has happened in history as a result of this perverted use of the drum major instinct. It has led to the most tragic prejudice, the most tragic expressions of man's inhumanity to man.

The other day I was saying, I always try to do a little converting when I'm in jail. And when we were in jail in Birmingham the other day, the white wardens and all enjoyed coming around the cell to talk about the race problem. And they were showing us where we were so wrong demonstrating. And they were showing us where segregation was so right. And they were showing us where intermarriage was so wrong. So I would get to preaching, and we would get to talking—calmly, because they wanted to talk about it. And then we got down one day to the point—that was the second or third day—to talk about where they lived, and how much they were earning. And when those brothers told me what they were earning, I said, "Now, you know what? You ought to be marching with us. [*laughter*] You're just as poor as Negroes." And I said, "You are put in the position of supporting your oppressor, because through prejudice and blindness, you fail to see that the same forces that oppress Negroes in American society oppress poor white people. (*Yes*) And all you are living on is the satisfaction of your skin being white, and the drum major instinct of thinking that you are somebody big because you are white. And you're so poor you can't send your children to school. You ought to be out here marching with every one of us every time we have a march."

Now that's a fact. That the poor white has been put into this position, where through blindness and prejudice, (*Make it plain*) he is forced to support his oppressors. And the only thing he has going for him is the false feeling that he's superior because his skin is

white—and can't hardly eat and make his ends meet week in and week out. (*Amen*)

And not only does this thing go into the racial struggle, it goes into the struggle between nations. And I would submit to you this morning that what is wrong in the world today is that the nations of the world are engaged in a bitter, colossal contest for supremacy. And if something doesn't happen to stop this trend, I'm sorely afraid that we won't be here to talk about Jesus Christ and about God and about brotherhood too many more years. (*Yeah*) If somebody doesn't bring an end to this suicidal thrust that we see in the world today, none of us are going to be around, because somebody's going to make the mistake through our senseless blunderings of dropping a nuclear bomb somewhere. And then another one is going to drop. And don't let anybody fool you, this can happen within a matter of seconds. (*Amen*) They have twenty-megaton bombs in Russia right now that can destroy a city as big as New York in three seconds, with everybody wiped away, and every building. And we can do the same thing to Russia and China.

But this is why we are drifting. And we are drifting there because nations are caught up with the drum major instinct. "I must be first." "I must be supreme." "Our nation must rule the world." (*Preach it*) And I am sad to say that the nation in which we live is the supreme culprit. And I'm going to continue to say it to America, because I love this country too much to see the drift that it has taken.

God didn't call America to do what she's doing in the world now. (*Preach it, preach it*) God didn't call America to engage in a senseless, unjust war as the war in Vietnam. And we are criminals in that war. We've committed more war crimes almost than any nation in the world, and I'm going to continue to say it. And we won't stop it because of our pride and our arrogance as a nation.

But God has a way of even putting nations in their place. (*Amen*) The God that I worship has a way of saying, "Don't play with me." (*Yes*) He has a way of saying, as the God of the Old Testament used to say to the Hebrews, "Don't play with me, Israel. Don't play with me, Babylon. (*Yes*) Be still and know that I'm God. And if you don't stop your reckless course, I'll rise up and break the backbone of your power." (*Yes*) And that can happen to America. (*Yes*) Every now and then I go back and read Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. And when I come and look at America, I say to myself, the parallels are frightening. And we have perverted the drum major instinct.

But let me rush on to my conclusion, because I want you to see what Jesus was really saying. What was the answer that Jesus gave these men? It's very interesting. One would have thought that Jesus would have condemned them. One would have thought that Jesus would have said, "You are out of your place. You are selfish. Why would you raise such a question?"

But that isn't what Jesus did; he did something altogether different. He said in substance, "Oh, I see, you want to be first. You want to be great. You want to be important. You want to be significant. Well, you ought to be. If you're going to be my disciple, you must be." But he reordered priorities. And he said, "Yes, don't give up this instinct. It's a good instinct if you use it right. (*Yes*) It's a good instinct if you don't distort it and pervert it. Don't give it up. Keep feeling the need for being important. Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love. (*Amen*) I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity. That is what I want you to do."

And he transformed the situation by giving a new definition of greatness. And you know how he said it? He said, "Now brethren, I can't give you greatness. And really, I can't make you first." This is what Jesus said to James and John. "You must earn it. True greatness comes not by favoritism, but by fitness. And the right hand and the left are not mine to give, they belong to those who are prepared." (*Amen*)

And so Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important—wonderful. If you want to be recognized—wonderful. If you want to be great—wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. (*Amen*) That's a new definition of greatness.

And this morning, the thing that I like about it: by giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, (*Everybody*) because everybody can serve. (*Amen*) You don't have to have a college degree to serve. (*All right*) You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. (*Amen*) You only need a heart full of grace, (*Yes, sir, Amen*) a soul generated by love. (*Yes*) And you can be that servant.

I know a man—and I just want to talk about him a minute, and maybe you will discover who I'm talking about as I go down the way (*Yeah*) because he was a great one. And he just went about serving. He was born in an obscure village, (*Yes, sir*) the child of a poor peasant woman. And then he grew up in still another obscure village, where he worked as a carpenter until he was thirty years old. (*Amen*) Then for three years, he just got on his feet, and he was an itinerant preacher. And he went about doing some things. He didn't have much. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. (*Yes*) He never owned a house. He never went to college. He never visited a big city. He never went two hundred miles from where he was born. He did none of the usual things that

the world would associate with greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. They called him a rabble-rouser. They called him a troublemaker. They said he was an agitator. (*Glory to God*) He practiced civil disobedience; he broke injunctions. And so he was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. And the irony of it all is that his friends turned him over to them. (*Amen*) One of his closest friends denied him. Another of his friends turned him over to his enemies. And while he was dying, the people who killed him gambled for his clothing, the only possession that he had in the world. (*Lord help him*) When he was dead he was buried in a borrowed tomb, through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today he stands as the most influential figure that ever entered human history. All of the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned put together (*Yes*) have not affected the life of man on this earth (*Amen*) as much as that one solitary life. His name may be a familiar one. (*Jesus*) But today I can hear them talking about him. Every now and then somebody says, "He's King of Kings." (*Yes*) And again I can hear somebody saying, "He's Lord of Lords." Somewhere else I can hear somebody saying, "In Christ there is no East nor West." (*Yes*) And then they go on and talk about, "In Him there's no North and South, but one great Fellowship of Love throughout the whole wide world." He didn't have anything. (*Amen*) He just went around serving and doing good.

This morning, you can be on his right hand and his left hand if you serve. (*Amen*) It's the only way in.

Every now and then I guess we all think realistically (*Yes, sir*) about that day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator—that something that we call death. We all think about it. And every now and then I think about my own death and I think about my own funeral. And I don't think of it in a morbid sense. And every now and then I ask myself, "What is it that I would want said?" And I leave the word to you this morning.

If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. (*Yes*) And every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize—that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards—that's not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school. (*Yes*)

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. (*Yes*)

I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody.

I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. (*Amen*)

I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. (*Yes*)

And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. (*Yes*)

I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. (*Lord*)

I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. (*Yes*)

Yes, if you want to say that **I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice.** (*Amen*) Say that I was a drum major for **peace**. (*Yes*) I was a drum major for **righteousness**. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. (*Yes*) I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind. (*Amen*) And that's all I want to say.

If I can help somebody as I pass along,

If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,

If I can show somebody he's traveling wrong,

Then my living will not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,

If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought,

If I can spread the message as the master taught,

Then my living will not be in vain.

Yes, Jesus, I want to be on your right or your left side, (*Yes*) not for any selfish reason. I want to be on your right or your left side, not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition. But I just want to be there in love and in justice and in truth and in commitment to others, so that we can make of this old world a new world.

31 March 1968
"Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution"**

Delivered at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., on 31 March 1968.

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here this morning, to have the opportunity of standing in this very great and significant pulpit. And I do want to express my deep personal appreciation to Dean Sayre and all of the cathedral clergy for extending the invitation.

It is always a rich and rewarding experience to take a brief break from our day-to-day demands and the struggle for freedom and human dignity and discuss the issues involved in that struggle with concerned friends of goodwill all over our nation. And certainly it is always a deep and meaningful experience to be in a worship service. And so for many reasons, I'm happy to be here today.

I would like to use as a subject from which to preach this morning: "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution." The text for the morning is found in the book of Revelation. There are two passages there that I would like to quote, in the sixteenth chapter of that book: "Behold I make all things new; former things are passed away."

I am sure that most of you have read that arresting little story from the pen of Washington Irving entitled "Rip Van Winkle." The one thing that we usually remember about the story is that Rip Van Winkle slept twenty years. But there is another point in that little story that is almost completely overlooked. It was the sign in the end, from which Rip went up in the mountain for his long sleep.

When Rip Van Winkle went up into the mountain, the sign had a picture of King George the Third of England. When he came down twenty years later the sign had a picture of George Washington, the first president of the United States. When Rip Van Winkle looked up at the picture of George Washington—and looking at the picture he was amazed—he was completely lost. He knew not who he was.

And this reveals to us that the most striking thing about the story of Rip Van Winkle is not merely that Rip slept twenty years, but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring up in the mountain a revolution was taking place that at points would change the course of history—and Rip knew nothing about it. He was asleep. Yes, he slept through a revolution. And one of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution.

There can be no gainsaying of the fact that a great revolution is taking place in the world today. In a sense it is a triple revolution: that is, a technological revolution, with the impact of automation and cybernation; then there is a revolution in weaponry, with the emergence of atomic and nuclear weapons of warfare; then there is a human rights revolution, with the freedom explosion that is taking place all over the world. Yes, we do live in a period where changes are taking place. And there is still the voice crying through the vista of time saying, "Behold, I make all things new; former things are passed away."

Now whenever anything new comes into history it brings with it new challenges and new opportunities. And I would like to deal with the challenges that we face today as a result of this triple revolution that is taking place in the world today.

First, we are challenged to develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution. The world in which we live is geographically one. The challenge that we face today is to make it one in terms of brotherhood.

Now it is true that the geographical oneness of this age has come into being to a large extent through modern man's scientific ingenuity. Modern man through his scientific genius has been able to dwarf distance and place time in chains. And our jet planes have compressed into minutes distances that once took weeks and even months. All of this tells us that our world is a neighborhood.

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as

brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

John Donne caught it years ago and placed it in graphic terms: "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." And he goes on toward the end to say, "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." We must see this, believe this, and live by it if we are to remain awake through a great revolution.

Secondly, we are challenged to eradicate the last vestiges of racial injustice from our nation. I must say this morning that racial injustice is still the black man's burden and the white man's shame.

It is an unhappy truth that racism is a way of life for the vast majority of white Americans, spoken and unspoken, acknowledged and denied, subtle and sometimes not so subtle—the disease of racism permeates and poisons a whole body politic. And I can see nothing more urgent than for America to work passionately and unrelentingly—to get rid of the disease of racism.

Something positive must be done. Everyone must share in the guilt as individuals and as institutions. The government must certainly share the guilt; individuals must share the guilt; even the church must share the guilt.

We must face the sad fact that at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning when we stand to sing "In Christ there is no East or West," we stand in the most segregated hour of America.

The hour has come for everybody, for all institutions of the public sector and the private sector to work to get rid of racism. And now if we are to do it we must honestly admit certain things and get rid of certain myths that have constantly been disseminated all over our nation.

One is the myth of time. It is the notion that only time can solve the problem of racial injustice. And there are those who often sincerely say to the Negro and his allies in the white community, "Why don't you slow up? Stop pushing things so fast. Only time can solve the problem. And if you will just be nice and patient and continue to pray, in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out."

There is an answer to that myth. It is that time is neutral. It can be used wither constructively or destructively. And I am sorry to say this morning that I am absolutely convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation, the extreme rightists of our nation—the people on the wrong side—have used time much more effectively than the forces of goodwill. And it may well be that we will have to repent in this generation. Not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say, "Wait on time."

Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

Now there is another myth that still gets around: it is a kind of over reliance on the bootstrap philosophy. There are those who still feel that if the Negro is to rise out of poverty, if the Negro is to rise out of the slum conditions, if he is to rise out of discrimination and segregation, he must do it all by himself. And so they say the Negro must lift himself by his own bootstraps.

They never stop to realize that no other ethnic group has been a slave on American soil. The people who say this never stop to realize that the nation made the black man's color a stigma. But beyond this they never stop to realize the debt that they owe a people who were kept in slavery two hundred and forty-four years.

In 1863 the Negro was told that he was free as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation being signed by Abraham Lincoln. But he was not given any land to make that freedom meaningful. It was something like keeping a person in prison for a number of years and suddenly discovering that that person is not guilty of the crime for which he was convicted. And you just go up to him and say, "Now you are free," but you don't give him any bus fare to get to town. You don't give him any money to get some clothes to put on his back or to get on his feet again in life.

Every court of jurisprudence would rise up against this, and yet this is the very thing that our nation did to the black man. It simply

said, "You're free," and it left him there penniless, illiterate, not knowing what to do. And the irony of it all is that at the same time the nation failed to do anything for the black man, though an act of Congress was giving away millions of acres of land in the West and the Midwest. Which meant that it was willing to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor.

But not only did it give the land, it built land-grant colleges to teach them how to farm. Not only that, it provided county agents to further their expertise in farming; not only that, as the years unfolded it provided low interest rates so that they could mechanize their farms. And to this day thousands of these very persons are receiving millions of dollars in federal subsidies every years not to farm. And these are so often the very people who tell Negroes that they must lift themselves by their own bootstraps. It's all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

We must come to see that the roots of racism are very deep in our country, and there must be something positive and massive in order to get rid of all the effects of racism and the tragedies of racial injustice.

There is another thing closely related to racism that I would like to mention as another challenge. We are challenged to rid our nation and the world of poverty. Like a monstrous octopus, poverty spreads its nagging, prehensile tentacles into hamlets and villages all over our world. Two-thirds of the people of the world go to bed hungry tonight. They are ill-housed; they are ill-nourished; they are shabbily clad. I've seen it in Latin America; I've seen it in Africa; I've seen this poverty in Asia.

I remember some years ago Mrs. King and I journeyed to that great country known as India. And I never will forget the experience. It was a marvelous experience to meet and talk with the great leaders of India, to meet and talk with and to speak to thousands and thousands of people all over that vast country. These experiences will remain dear to me as long as the cords of memory shall lengthen.

But I say to you this morning, my friends, there were those depressing moments. How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes evidences of millions of people going to bed hungry at night? How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes God's children sleeping on the sidewalks at night? In Bombay more than a million people sleep on the sidewalks every night. In Calcutta more than six hundred thousand sleep on the sidewalks every night. They have no beds to sleep in; they have no houses to go in. How can one avoid being depressed when he discovers that out of India's population of more than five hundred million people, some four hundred and eighty million make an annual income of less than ninety dollars a year. And most of them have never seen a doctor or a dentist.

As I noticed these things, something within me cried out, "Can we in America stand idly by and not be concerned?" And an answer came: "Oh no!" Because the destiny of the United States is tied up with the destiny of India and every other nation. And I started thinking of the fact that we spend in America millions of dollars a day to store surplus food, and I said to myself, "I know where we can store that food free of charge—in the wrinkled stomachs of millions of God's children all over the world who go to bed hungry at night." And maybe we spend far too much of our national budget establishing military bases around the world rather than bases of genuine concern and understanding.

Not only do we see poverty abroad, I would remind you that in our own nation there are about forty million people who are poverty-stricken. I have seen them here and there. I have seen them in the ghettos of the North; I have seen them in the rural areas of the South; I have seen them in Appalachia. I have just been in the process of touring many areas of our country and I must confess that in some situations I have literally found myself crying.

I was in Marks, Mississippi, the other day, which is in Whitman County, the poorest county in the United States. I tell you, I saw hundreds of little black boys and black girls walking the streets with no shoes to wear. I saw their mothers and fathers trying to carry on a little Head Start program, but they had no money. The federal government hadn't funded them, but they were trying to carry on. They raised a little money here and there; trying to get a little food to feed the children; trying to teach them a little something.

And I saw mothers and fathers who said to me not only were they unemployed, they didn't get any kind of income—no old-age pension, no welfare check, no anything. I said, "How do you live?" And they say, "Well, we go around, go around to the neighbors and ask them for a little something. When the berry season comes, we pick berries. When the rabbit season comes, we hunt and catch a few rabbits. And that's about it."

And I was in Newark and Harlem just this week. And I walked into the homes of welfare mothers. I saw them in conditions—no, not with wall-to-wall carpet, but wall-to-wall rats and roaches. I stood in an apartment and this welfare mother said to me, "The landlord will not repair this place. I've been here two years and he hasn't made a single repair." She pointed out the walls with all the ceiling falling through. She showed me the holes where the rats came in. She said night after night we have to stay awake to keep the rats and

roaches from getting to the children. I said, "How much do you pay for this apartment?" She said, "a hundred and twenty-five dollars." I looked, and I thought, and said to myself, "It isn't worth sixty dollars." Poor people are forced to pay more for less. Living in conditions day in and day out where the whole area is constantly drained without being replenished. It becomes a kind of domestic colony. And the tragedy is, so often these forty million people are invisible because America is so affluent, so rich. Because our expressways carry us from the ghetto, we don't see the poor.

Jesus told a parable one day, and he reminded us that a man went to hell because he didn't see the poor. His name was Dives. He was a rich man. And there was a man by the name of Lazarus who was a poor man, but not only was he poor, he was sick. Sores were all over his body, and he was so weak that he could hardly move. But he managed to get to the gate of Dives every day, wanting just to have the crumbs that would fall from his table. And Dives did nothing about it. And the parable ends saying, "Dives went to hell, and there were a fixed gulf now between Lazarus and Dives."

There is nothing in that parable that said Dives went to hell because he was rich. Jesus never made a universal indictment against all wealth. It is true that one day a rich young ruler came to him, and he advised him to sell all, but in that instance Jesus was prescribing individual surgery and not setting forth a universal diagnosis. And if you will look at that parable with all of its symbolism, you will remember that a conversation took place between heaven and hell, and on the other end of that long-distance call between heaven and hell was Abraham in heaven talking to Dives in hell.

Now Abraham was a very rich man. If you go back to the Old Testament, you see that he was the richest man of his day, so it was not a rich man in hell talking with a poor man in heaven; it was a little millionaire in hell talking with a multimillionaire in heaven. Dives didn't go to hell because he was rich; Dives didn't realize that his wealth was his opportunity. It was his opportunity to bridge the gulf that separated him from his brother Lazarus. Dives went to hell because he was passed by Lazarus every day and he never really saw him. He went to hell because he allowed his brother to become invisible. Dives went to hell because he maximized the minimum and minimized the maximum. Indeed, Dives went to hell because he sought to be a conscientious objector in the war against poverty.

And this can happen to America, the richest nation in the world—and nothing's wrong with that—this is America's opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. The question is whether America will do it. There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will.

In a few weeks some of us are coming to Washington to see if the will is still alive or if it is alive in this nation. We are coming to Washington in a Poor People's Campaign. Yes, we are going to bring the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. We are going to bring those who have known long years of hurt and neglect. We are going to bring those who have come to feel that life is a long and desolate corridor with no exit signs. We are going to bring children and adults and old people, people who have never seen a doctor or a dentist in their lives.

We are not coming to engage in any histrionic gesture. We are not coming to tear up Washington. We are coming to demand that the government address itself to the problem of poverty. We read one day, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." But if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists.

We are coming to ask America to be true to the huge promissory note that it signed years ago. And we are coming to engage in dramatic nonviolent action, to call attention to the gulf between promise and fulfillment; to make the invisible visible.

Why do we do it this way? We do it this way because it is our experience that the nation doesn't move around questions of genuine equality for the poor and for black people until it is confronted massively, dramatically in terms of direct action.

Great documents are here to tell us something should be done. We met here some years ago in the White House conference on civil rights. And we came out with the same recommendations that we will be demanding in our campaign here, but nothing has been done. The President's commission on technology, automation and economic progress recommended these things some time ago. Nothing has been done. Even the urban coalition of mayors of most of the cities of our country and the leading businessmen have said these things should be done. Nothing has been done. The Kerner Commission came out with its report just a few days ago and then made specific recommendations. Nothing has been done.

And I submit that nothing will be done until people of goodwill put their bodies and their souls in motion. And it will be the kind of soul force brought into being as a result of this confrontation that I believe will make the difference.

Yes, it will be a Poor People's Campaign. This is the question facing America. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. America has not met its obligations and its responsibilities to the poor.

One day we will have to stand before the God of history and we will talk in terms of things we've done. Yes, we will be able to say we built gargantuan bridges to span the seas, we built gigantic buildings to kiss the skies. Yes, we made our submarines to penetrate oceanic depths. We brought into being many other things with our scientific and technological power.

It seems that I can hear the God of history saying, "That was not enough! But I was hungry, and ye fed me not. I was naked, and ye clothed me not. I was devoid of a decent sanitary house to live in, and ye provided no shelter for me. And consequently, you cannot enter the kingdom of greatness. If ye do it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye do it unto me." That's the question facing America today.

I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a great revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." The world must hear this. I pray God that America will hear this before it is too late, because today we're fighting a war.

I am convinced that it is one of the most unjust wars that has ever been fought in the history of the world. Our involvement in the war in Vietnam has torn up the Geneva Accord. It has strengthened the military-industrial complex; it has strengthened the forces of reaction in our nation. It has put us against the self-determination of a vast majority of the Vietnamese people, and put us in the position of protecting a corrupt regime that is stacked against the poor.

It has played havoc with our domestic destinies. This day we are spending five hundred thousand dollars to kill every Vietcong soldier. Every time we kill one we spend about five hundred thousand dollars while we spend only fifty-three dollars a year for every person characterized as poverty-stricken in the so-called poverty program, which is not even a good skirmish against poverty.

Not only that, it has put us in a position of appearing to the world as an arrogant nation. And here we are ten thousand miles away from home fighting for the so-called freedom of the Vietnamese people when we have not even put our own house in order. And we force young black men and young white men to fight and kill in brutal solidarity. Yet when they come back home that can't hardly live on the same block together.

The judgment of God is upon us today. And we could go right down the line and see that something must be done—and something must be done quickly. We have alienated ourselves from other nations so we end up morally and politically isolated in the world. There is not a single major ally of the United States of America that would dare send a troop to Vietnam, and so the only friends that we have now are a few client-nations like Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, and a few others.

This is where we are. "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind," and the best way to start is to put an end to war in Vietnam, because if it continues, we will inevitably come to the point of confronting China which could lead the whole world to nuclear annihilation.

It is no longer a choice, my friends, between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence. And the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation, and our earthly habitat would be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine.

This is why I felt the need of raising my voice against that war and working wherever I can to arouse the conscience of our nation on it. I remember so well when I first took a stand against the war in Vietnam. The critics took me on and they had their say in the most negative and sometimes most vicious way.

One day a newsman came to me and said, "Dr. King, don't you think you're going to have to stop, now, opposing the war and move more in line with the administration's policy? As I understand it, it has hurt the budget of your organization, and people who once respected you have lost respect for you. Don't you feel that you've really got to change your position?" I looked at him and I had to say, "Sir, I'm sorry you don't know me. I'm not a consensus leader. I do not determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I've not taken a sort of Gallup Poll of the majority opinion." Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus, but a molder of consensus.

On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic?

Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right?

There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right. I believe today that there is a need for all people of goodwill to come with a massive act of conscience and say in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "We ain't goin' study war no more." This is the challenge facing modern man.

Let me close by saying that we have difficult days ahead in the struggle for justice and peace, but I will not yield to a politic of despair. I'm going to maintain hope as we come to Washington in this campaign. The cards are stacked against us. This time we will really confront a Goliath. God grant that we will be that David of truth set out against the Goliath of injustice, the Goliath of neglect, the Goliath of refusing to deal with the problems, and go on with the determination to make America the truly great America that it is called to be.

I say to you that our goal is freedom, and I believe we are going to get there because however much she strays away from it, the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be as a people, our destiny is tied up in the destiny of America.

Before the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. Before the beautiful words of the "Star Spangled Banner" were written, we were here.

For more than two centuries our forbearers labored here without wages. They made cotton king, and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of the most humiliating and oppressive conditions. And yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to grow and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery couldn't stop us, the opposition that we now face will surely fail.

We're going to win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands. And so, however dark it is, however deep the angry feelings are, and however violent explosions are, I can still sing "We Shall Overcome."

We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

We shall overcome because Carlyle is right—"No lie can live forever."

We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right—"Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again."

We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right—as we were singing earlier today,

Truth forever on the scaffold,

Wrong forever on the throne.

Yet that scaffold sways the future.

And behind the dim unknown stands God,

Within the shadow keeping watch above his own.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair the stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

Thank God for John, who centuries ago out on a lonely, obscure island called Patmos caught vision of a new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, who heard a voice saying, "Behold, I make all things new; former things are passed away."

God grant that we will be participants in this newness and this magnificent development. If we will but do it, we will bring about a new day of justice and brotherhood and peace. And that day the morning stars will sing together and the sons of God will shout for joy. God bless you.

SOUTH WALL

Panel C: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." 1963

Strength to Love (1963)

As Martin Luther King prepared for the Birmingham Campaign in early 1963, he drafted the final sermons for Strength to Love, a volume of his most well-known homilies that would be published later that year. He originally proposed the book in early 1957 to Melvin Arnold, head of Harper & Brothers' Religious Books Department. Arnold welcomed King's ''proposed collection of sermons; we hope that they will have a heavy emphasis on permanent religious values, rather than on topical events'' (Arnold, 5 February 1957). Despite King's best intentions and Arnold's repeated urging for a manuscript, however, King had not produced the promised sermon book by mid-1962.

Although circumstances were far from ideal, King was finally able to start working on the sermons during a fortnight in jail in July 1962, during the Albany Movement. Having been arrested for holding a prayer vigil outside Albany City Hall, King and Ralph Abernathy shared a jail cell for 15 days that was, according to King, ''dirty, filthy, and ill-equipped'' and ''the worse I have ever seen'' (King, ''Reverend M. L. King's Diary''). While behind bars, he was able to spend a fair amount of uninterrupted time preparing the drafts for the sermons ''Loving Your Enemies,'' ''Love in Action,'' and ''Shattered Dreams,'' and continued to work on the volume after his release. King sent the first part of the manuscript to his publisher in the early fall, including several sermons that had become King standards, such as ''Paul's Letter to American Christians'' and ''What Is Man?''

His editors praised the first results, seeing Strength to Love as the words of a minister who addressed his congregation with messages of ''warmth, immediate application, and poetic verve'' (Wallis, 3 October 1962). In the process of editing the book, however, many familiar King phrases were removed by Arnold and Charles Wallis. King's assessment of segregation as one of ''the ugly practices of our nation,'' his call that capitalism must be transformed by ''a deep-seated change,'' and his depiction of colonialism as ''evil because it is based on a contempt for life'' were stricken from the text (Papers 6:480; Papers 6:471; Papers 6:530). In particular, many of King's vivid anti-military and anti-war statements were deleted. In his draft sermon of ''Transformed Nonconformist,'' for example, he characterized the early Christian church as anti-war: ''Its views on war were clearly known because of the refusal of every Christian to take up arms'' (Papers 6:473). These statements were absent in the sermons' published versions.

King worried that the force of his spoken words would not make the transition to the printed page and wrote in the book's preface that his reservations had ''grown out of the fact that a sermon is not an essay to be read but a discourse to be heard. It should be a convincing appeal to a listening congregation.'' Even as the book went to press, he conceded: ''I have not altogether overcome my misgivings'' (King, x).

As the first volume of sermons by an African American preacher widely available to a white audience, Strength to Love was a landmark work. Despite omissions and changes to the original manuscript, Strength to Love remains a concrete testament to King's lifelong commitment to preach the social gospel. His fusion of Christian teachings and social consciousness remains in print and continues to promote King's vision of love as a potent social and political force for change, the efficacy of religious faith in surmounting evil, and the vital need for true human integration, or, as he defined it, ''genuine intergroup and interpersonal living'' (King, 23). This volume brought to the forefront King's identity as a compelling, well educated, and compassionate preacher at a time when many whites knew him only as a civil rights leader.

SOUTH WALL

Panel D: "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant." Norway, 1964

10 December 1964
Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony

On the morning of 14 October 1964, Martin Luther King, sleeping in an Atlanta hospital room after checking in for a rest, was awakened by a phone call from his wife, Coretta Scott King, telling him that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Although many in the United States and abroad praised the selection, segregationist Eugene ''Bull'' Connor called it ''scraping the bottom of the barrel'' (''Cheers and Scorn''). Presenting the award to King in Oslo, Norway, that December, the chairman of the Nobel Committee praised him for being ''the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races'' (Jahn, ''Presentation,'' 332).

The Nobel Prize was endowed in 1895 by Alfred Nobel, a Swedish industrialist and the inventor of dynamite. Annual awards in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace began in 1901. The winner of the Peace Prize is selected by a committee appointed by the Norwegian Parliament from nominations submitted by past winners and other select persons. King was nominated by the American Friends Service Committee, which had received the prize in 1947.

King departed for Oslo on 4 December 1964, stopping in London for three days to preach at St. Paul's Cathedral and meet with leaders of the peace community. He was accompanied on his trip by a group of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) staff and members of his family. King accepted the prize on 10 December, in the name of the thousands of people in the civil rights movement who constituted what he termed a ''mighty army of love'' (King, ''Mighty Army of Love''). He called the award, ''a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence andoppression,'' and discussed ways to overcome the evils of racial injustice, poverty, and war (King, ''Address,'' 106).

Recognizing that SCLC played only one part in the movement, King shared the $54,000 monetary prize with leading civil rights groups, giving $25,000 to the Gandhi Society for Human Rights, $12,000 to SCLC, and splitting the remainder among the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Urban League, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

King was feted at events in Europe and at home, where he praised the volunteers in the movement who would never be publicly recognized but who were critical to the success of the nonviolent struggle. King described the award as a reminder to civil rights workers that ''the tide of world opinion is in our favor,'' and pledged to ''work even harder to make peace and brotherhood a reality'' (King, ''Mighty Army of Love;'' King, 27 January 1965). When King decided to speak out against the Vietnam War in April 1967, he reflected on this promise, calling the prize a ''commission,'' that required him to go ''beyond national allegiances'' to speak out for peace (King, ''Beyond Vietnam,'' 145)

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Mr. President, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen: I accept the Nobel Prize for Peace at a moment when twenty-two million Negroes of the United States are engaged in a creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. I accept this award on behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.

I am mindful that only yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, our children, crying out for brotherhood, were answered with fire hoses, snarling dogs, and even death. I am mindful that only yesterday in Philadelphia, Mississippi; young people seeking to secure the right to vote were brutalized and murdered. I am mindful that debilitating and grinding poverty afflicts my people and chains them to the lowest rung of the economic ladder.

Therefore, I must ask why this prize is awarded to a movement which is beleaguered and committed to unrelenting struggle, and to a movement which has not yet won the very peace and brotherhood which is the essence of the Nobel Prize. After contemplation, I conclude that this award, which I receive on behalf of that movement, is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.

Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later, all the peoples of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

The torturous road which has led from Montgomery, Alabama, to Oslo bears witness to this truth, and this is a road over which millions of Negroes are traveling to find a new sense of dignity. This same road has opened for all Americans a new era of progress and hope. It has led to a new civil rights bill, and it will, I am convinced, be widened and lengthened into a superhighway of justice as Negro and white men in increasing numbers create alliances to overcome their common problems.

I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history.

I refuse to accept the idea that the "is-ness" of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal "ought-ness" that forever confronts him.

I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him.

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant. (PANEL D, SOUTH WALL)

I believe that even amid today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow.

I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men.

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. (PANEL J, NORTH WALL).

I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up.

I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed and nonviolent redemptive goodwill proclaimed the rule of the land. And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid.

I still believe that we shall overcome.

This faith can give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds and our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, we will know that we are living in the creative turmoil of a genuine civilization struggling to be born.

Today I come to Oslo as a trustee, inspired and with renewed dedication to humanity. I accept this prize on behalf of all men who love peace and brotherhood. I say I come as a trustee, for in the depths of my heart I am aware that this prize is much more than an honor to me personally. Every time I take a flight I am always mindful of the many people who make a successful journey possible, the known pilots and the unknown ground crew. You honor the dedicated pilots of our struggle, who have sat at the controls as the freedom movement soared into orbit. You honor, once again, Chief Lutuli of South Africa, whose struggles with and for his people are still met with the most brutal expression of man's inhumanity to man. You honor the ground crew, without whose labor and sacrifice the jet flights to freedom could never have left the earth. Most of these people will never make the headlines, and their names will never appear in *Who's Who*. Yet, when years have rolled past and when the blazing light of truth is focused on this marvelous age in which

we live, men and women will know and children will be taught that we have a finer land, a better people, a more noble civilization because these humble children of God were willing to suffer for righteousness' sake.

I think Alfred Nobel would know what I mean when I say I accept this award in the spirit of a curator of some precious heirloom which he holds in trust for its true owners: all those to whom truth is beauty, and beauty, truth, and in whose eyes the beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold. Thank you. [*applause*]

SOUTH WALL

Panel E: "Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in." District of Columbia, 1959

18 April 1959
Address at the Youth March for Integrated Schools

Almost six months after the first Youth March for Integrated Schools, King addresses some twenty-six thousand people at the Sylvan Theater on the grounds of the Washington Monument. This effort, spearheaded by A. Philip Randolph and coordinated by Bayard Rustin, drew support from a wide array of religious, civil rights, peace, and labor leaders. The program at the Washington Monument followed the presentation of petitions to the president and Congress calling for the orderly and speedy '' integration of schools. In his remarks at the event's conclusion, King urges the young people to "make a career of humanity. . . . You will make a greater person of yourself; a greater Nation of your country and a finer world to live in." This speech was published in the Congressional Record.

As I stand here and look out upon the thousands of Negro faces, and the thousands of white faces, intermingled like the waters of a river, I see only one face the face of the future.
Yes, as I gaze upon this great historic assembly, this unprecedented gathering of young people, I cannot help thinking-that a hundred years from now the historians will be calling this not the "beat" generation, but the generation of integration.
The fact that thousands of you came here to Washington and that thousands more signed your petition proves that this generation will not take "No" for an answer-will not take double talk for an answer-will not take gradualism for an answer.' It proves that the only answer you will settle for is-total desegregation and total equality-now.

I know of no words eloquent enough to express the deep meaning, the great power, and the unconquerable spirit back of this inspiringly original, uniquely American march of young people. Nothing like it has ever happened in the history of our Nation. Nothing, that is, except the last youth march. What this march demonstrates to me, above all else, is that you young people, through your own experience, have somehow discovered the central fact of American life-that the extension of democracy for all Americans depends upon complete integration of Negro Americans.

By coming here you have shown yourselves to be highly alert, highly responsible young citizens. And very soon the area of your responsibility will increase, for you will begin to exercise your greatest privilege as an American-the right to vote. Of course, you will have no difficulty exercising this privilege-if you are white. But I wonder if you can understand what it feels like to be a Negro, living in the South, where, by attempting to exercise this right, you may be taking your life in your hands.

The denial of the vote not only deprives the Negro of his constitutional rights but what is even worse-it degrades him as a human being. And yet, even this degradation, which is only one of many humiliations of everyday life, is losing its ability to degrade. For the southern Negro is learning to transform his degradation into resistance. Nonviolent resistance. And by so doing he is not only achieving his dignity as a human being, he is helping to advance democracy in the South. This is why my colleagues and I in the Southern Leadership Conference are giving our major attention to the campaign to increase the registration of Negro voters in the South to 3 million. Do you realize what would happen in this country if we were to gain 3 million southern Negro votes? We could change the composition of Congress. We could have a Congress far more responsive to the voters' will. We could have all schools integrated-north and south. A new era would open to all Americans. Thus, the Negro, in his struggle to secure his own rights is destined to enlarge democracy for all people, in both a political and a social sense.

Indeed in your great movement to organize a march for integrated schools you have actually accomplished much more. You have awakened on hundreds of campuses throughout the land a new spirit of social inquiry to the benefit of all Americans.
This is really a noble cause. As June approaches, with its graduation ceremonies and speeches, a thought suggests itself. You will hear much about careers, security, and prosperity. I will leave the discussion of such matters to your deans, your principals, and your valedictorians. But I do have a graduation thought to pass along to you. Whatever career you may choose for yourself-doctor, lawyer, teacher-let me propose an avocation to be pursued along with it. Become a dedicated fighter for civil rights. Make it a central part of your life.
It will make you a better doctor, a better lawyer, a better teacher. It will enrich your spirit as nothing else possibly can. It will give you that rare sense of nobility that can only spring from love and selflessly helping your fellow man. **Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater Nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.**

SOUTH WALL

Panel F: "I oppose the war in Vietnam because I love America. I speak out against it not in anger but with anxiety and sorrow in my heart, and above all with a passionate desire to see our beloved country stand as the moral example of the world." California, 1967

25 February 1967
The Casualties of the War in Vietnam,
The Nation Institute, Los Angeles

I would like to speak to you candidly and forthrightly this afternoon about our present involvement in Vietnam. I have chosen as a subject, "The Casualties of the War in Vietnam." We are all aware of the nightmarish physical casualties. We see them in our living rooms in all of their tragic dimensions on television screens, and we read about them on our subway and bus rides in daily newspaper accounts. We see the rice fields of a small Asian country being trampled at will and burned at whim. We see grief stricken mothers with crying babies clutched in their arms as they watch their little huts burst forth into flames. We see the fields and valleys of battle being painted with human blood. We see the broken bodies left prostrate in countless fields. We see young men being sent home half men, physically handicapped and mentally deranged. Most tragic of all is the casualty list among children. So many Vietnamese children have been mutilated and incinerated by napalm and by bombs. A war in which children are incinerated, in which American soldiers die in mounting numbers is a war that mutilates the conscience. These casualties are enough to cause all men to rise up with righteous indignation and oppose the very nature of this war.

But the physical casualties of the war in Vietnam are not alone catastrophes. The casualties of principles and values are equally disastrous and injurious. Indeed, they are ultimately more harmful because they are self-perpetuating. If the casualties of principle are not healed, the physical casualties will continue to mount.

One of the first casualties of the war in Vietnam was the Charter of the United Nations. In taking armed action against the Vietcong and North Vietnam, the United States clearly violated the United Nations charter which provides, in Chapter I, Article II (4):
All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

And in Chapter VII, (39):
The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, and shall make recommendations or shall decide what measures shall be taken....to maintain or restore international peace and security.

It is very obvious that our government blatantly violated its obligation under the charter of the United Nations to submit to the Security Council its charge of aggression against North Vietnam. Instead we unilaterally launched an all out war on Asian soil. In the process we have undermined the purpose of the United Nations and caused its effectiveness to atrophy. We have also placed our nation in the position of being morally and politically isolated. Even the long standing allies of our nation have adamantly refused to join our government in this ugly war. As Americans and lovers of Democracy we should carefully ponder the consequences of our nation's declining moral status in the world.

The second casualty of the war in Vietnam is the principle of self-determination. By entering a war that is little more than a domestic civil war, America has ended up supporting a new form of colonialism covered up by certain niceties of complexity. Whether we realize it or not our participation in the war in Vietnam is an ominous expression of our lack of sympathy for the oppressed, our paranoid anti-Communism, our failure to feel the ache and anguish of the Have-nots. It reveals our willingness to continue participating in neo-colonialist adventures.

A brief look at the back ground and history of this war reveals with brutal clarity the ugliness of our policy. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1945 after a combined French and Japanese occupation, and before the Communist revolution in China. They were led by the now well-known Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its re-conquest of her former colony. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination, and a government that had been established not by China, for whom the Vietnamese have no great love, but by clearly indigenous forces that included some Communists.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right to independence. For nine years we financially supported the French in their abortive effort to re-colonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting 80% of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will.

When a negotiated settlement of the war was reached in 1954, through the Geneva Accord, it was done against our will. After doing all that we could to sabotage the planning for the Geneva Accord, we finally refused to sign it.

Soon after this we helped install Ngo Dhim Diem. We supported him in his betrayal of the Geneva Accord and his refusal to have the promised 1956 elections. We watched with approval as he engaged in ruthless and bloody persecution of all opposition forces. When Diem's infamous actions finally led to the formation of The National Liberation Front, the American public was duped into believing that the civil rebellion was being waged by puppets from Hanoi. As Douglas Pike wrote: "In horror, Americans helplessly watched Diem tear apart the fabric of Vietnamese society more effectively than the Communists had ever been able to do it. It was the most efficient act of his entire career."

Since Diem's death we have actively supported military dictatorships all in the name of fighting for freedom. When it became evident that these regimes could not defeat the Vietcong, we began to steadily increase our forces, calling them 'military advisors' rather than fighting soldiers.

Today we are fighting an all-out war, undeclared by Congress. We have well over 500,000 American servicemen fighting in that benighted and unhappy country. American planes based in other countries are bombing the territory of their neighbor.

The greatest irony and tragedy of all is that our nation, which initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world, is now cast in the mold of being an arch anti-revolutionary. We are engaged in a war that seeks to turn the clock of history back and perpetuate white colonialism.

A third casualty of the war in Vietnam is the Great Society. This confused war has played havoc with our domestic destinies. Despite feeble protestations to the contrary, the promises of the Great Society have been shot down on the battlefield of Vietnam. The pursuit of this widened war has narrowed domestic welfare programs, making the poor, white and Negro, bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home.

While the anti-poverty program is cautiously initiated and zealously supervised, billions are liberally expended for this ill-considered war. The recently revealed misestimate of the war budget amounts to ten billions of dollars for a single year. This error alone is more than five times the amount committed to anti-poverty programs. The security we profess to seek in foreign adventures we will lose in our decaying cities. The bombs in Vietnam explode at home. They destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.

If we reversed investments and gave the armed forces the anti-poverty budget, the generals could be forgiven if they walked off the battlefield in disgust. Poverty, urban problems and social progress generally are ignored when the guns of war become a national obsession.

It is estimated that we spend $322,000 for each enemy we kill, while we spend in the so-called war on poverty in America only about $53 for each person classified as 'poor'. And much of that $53 goes for salaries of people who are not poor. We have escalated the war in Vietnam and de-escalated the skirmish against poverty. It challenges the imagination to contemplate what lives we could transform if we were to cease killing.

At this moment in history it is irrefutable that our world prestige is pathetically frail. Our war policy excites pronounced contempt and aversion virtually everywhere. Even when some national governments, for reasons of economic and diplomatic interest, do not condemn us, their people in surprising measure have made clear they do not share the official policy.

Another casualty of the war in Vietnam is the humility of our nation. Through rugged determination, scientific and technological progress and dazzling achievements, America has become the richest and most powerful nation in the world. But honesty impels me to admit that our power has often made us arrogant. We feel that our money can do anything. We arrogantly feel that we have everything

to teach other nations and nothing to learn from them. We often arrogantly feel that we have some divine, messianic mission to police the whole world. We are arrogant in not allowing young nations to go through the same growing pains, turbulence and revolution that characterized our history. We are arrogant in our contention that we have some sacred mission to protect people from totalitarian rule, while we make little use of our power to end the evils of South Africa and Rhodesia, and while we are in fact supporting dictatorships with guns and money under the guise of fighting Communism.

We are arrogant in professing to be concerned about the freedom of foreign nations while not setting our own house in order. Many of our Senators and Congressmen vote joyously to appropriate billions of dollars for war in Vietnam, and these same Senators and Congressmen vote loudly against a Fair Housing Bill to make it possible for a Negro veteran of Vietnam to purchase a decent home. We arm Negro soldiers to kill on foreign battlefields, but offer little protection for their relatives from beatings and killings in our own South. We are willing to make the Negro 100% of a citizen in warfare, but reduce him to 50% of a citizen on American soil. Of all the good things in life the Negro has approximately one half those of whites, of the bad he has twice that of whites. Thus, half of all Negroes live in substandard housing and Negroes have half the income of whites. When we turn to the negative experiences of life, the Negro has a double share. The infant mortality rate is double that of whites. There are twice as many Negroes in combat in Vietnam at the beginning of 1967 and twice as many Negro soldiers died in action (20.6%) in proportion to their numbers in the population as whites.

All of this reveals that our nation has not yet used its vast resources of power to end the long night of poverty, racism and man's inhumanity to man. Enlarged power means enlarged peril if there is not concomitant growth of the soul. Constructive power is the right use of strength. Our arrogance can be our doom. It can bring the curtain down on our national drama. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. We are challenged in these turbulent days to use our power to speed up the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."

A fifth casualty of the war in Vietnam is the principle of dissent. An ugly repressive sentiment to silence peace seekers depicts advocates of immediate negotiation and persons who call for a cessation of bombings in the north as quasi-traitors, fools and venal enemies of our soldiers and institutions. When those who stand for peace are so vilified it is time to consider where we are going and whether free speech has not become one of the major casualties of the war.

Curtailment of free speech is rationalized on grounds that American tradition forbids criticism of our government when the nation is at war. More than a century ago when we were in a declared state of war with Mexico, a first term Congressman by the name of Abraham Lincoln stood in the halls of Congress and fearlessly and scathingly denounced that war. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois had not heard of this tradition or he was not inclined to respect it. Nor had Thoreau and Emerson and many other philosophers who shaped our democratic traditions.

A sixth casualty of the war in Vietnam is the prospect of mankind's survival. This war has created the climate for greater armament and further expansion of destructive nuclear power. One of the most persistent ambiguities that we face is that everybody talks about peace as a goal. However, it does not take sharpest-eyed sophistication to discern that while everybody talks about peace, peace has become practically nobody's business among the power wielders. Many men cry Peace! Peace! but they refuse to do the things that make for peace.

The large power blocs of the world talk passionately of pursuing peace while burgeoning defense budgets bulge, enlarging already awesome armies, and devising even more devastating weapons. Call the roll of those who sing the glad tidings of peace and one's ears will be surprised by the responding sounds. The heads of all of the nations issue clarion calls for peace yet these destiny determiners come accompanied by a band and brigand of national choristers, each bearing unsheathed swords rather than olive branches.

So when I see in this day the leaders of nations talking peace while preparing for war, I take frightful pause. When I see our country today intervening in what is basically a civil war, destroying hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese children with napalm, leaving broken bodies in countless fields and sending home half men, mutilated, mentally and physically. When I see the recalcitrant unwillingness of our government to create the atmosphere for a negotiated settlement of this awful conflict by halting bombings in the north and agreeing to talk with the Vietcong, and all this in the name of pursuing the goal of peace, I tremble for our world. I do so not only from dire recall of the nightmares wreaked in the wars of yesterday, but also from dreadful realization of today's possible nuclear destructiveness, and tomorrow's even more damnable prospects.

The past is prophetic in that it asserts loudly that wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows. One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. How much longer must we play at deadly war games before we heed the plaintive pleas of the unnumbered dead a maimed of past wars?

President John F. Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put and end to mankind." Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force, but the destructive power of modern weapons eliminates even the possibility that war may serve as a negative good. If we assume that life is worth living and that man has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war. In a day when vehicles hurtle through outer space and guided ballistic missiles carve highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can claim victory in war. A so-called limited war will leave little more than a calamitous legacy of human suffering, political turmoil, and spiritual disillusionment. A world war, God forbid, will leave only smoldering ashes as a mute testimony of a human race whose folly led inexorably to ultimate death. So if modern man continues to flirt unhesitatingly with war, he will transform his earthly habitat into an inferno such as even the mind of Dante could not imagine.

Let me say finally that **I oppose the war in Vietnam because I love America. I speak out against it not in anger but with anxiety and sorrow in my heart, and above all with a passionate desire to see our beloved country stand as the moral example of the world.** I speak out against this war because I am disappointed with America. There can be no great disappointed with our failure to deal positively and forthrightly with the triple evils of racism, extreme materialism and militarism. We are presently moving down a dead-end road that can lead to national disaster.

It is time for all people of conscience to call upon America to return to her true home of brotherhood and peaceful pursuits. We cannot remain silent as our nation engages in one of history's most cruel and senseless wars. During these days of human travail we must encourage creative dissenters. We need them because the thunder of their fearless voices will be the only sound stronger than the blasts of bombs and the clamor of war hysteria.

Those of us who love peace must organize as effectively as the war hawks. As they spread the propaganda of war we must spread the propaganda of peace. We must combine the fervor of the civil rights movement with the peace movement. We must demonstrate, teach and preach, until the very foundations of our nation are shaken. We must work unceasingly to lift this nation that we love to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness.

I have tried to be honest. To be honest is to confront the truth. To be honest is to realize that the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and moments of comfort, but where he stands in moments of challenge and moments of controversy. However unpleasant and inconvenient the truth may be, I believe we must expose and face it if we are to achieve a better quality of American life.

Just the other day, the distinguished American historian, Henry Steele Commager, told a Senate Committee: "Justice Holmes used to say that the first lesson a judge had to learn was that he was not God...we do tend perhaps more that other nations, to transform our wars into crusades...our current involvement in Vietnam is cast, increasingly, into a moral mold...It is my feeling that we do not have the resources, material, intellectual or moral, to be at once an American power, a European power and an Asian power."

I agree with Mr. Commager. And I would suggest that there is, however, another kind of power that America can and should be. It is a moral power, a power harnessed to the service of peace and human beings, not an inhumane power unleashed against defenseless people. All the world knows that America is a great military power. We need not be diligent in seeking to prove it. We must now show the world our moral power.

We still have a choice today, non-violent co-existence or violent co-annihilation. History will record the choice we made. It is still not too late to make the proper choice. If we decide to become a moral power we will be able to transform the jangling discords of this world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we make the wise decision we will be able to transform our pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. This will be a glorious day. In reaching it we can fulfill the noblest of American dreams.

SOUTH WALL

Panel G: "If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective." Georgia, 1967

The Trumpet of Conscience (1967)
1967 Christmas Eve sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church

The Trumpet of Conscience features five lectures that Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered in November and December 1967 for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Massey Lectures. Founded in 1961 to honor Vincent Massey, former Governor General of Canada, the annual Massey Lectures served as a venue for earlier speakers such as John Kenneth Galbraith and Paul Goodman. The event, sponsored by the University of Toronto's Massey College, is broadcast each year on the CBC Radio One show ''Ideas.'' Prior to King's assassination, the book was released under the title Conscience for Change through the CBC. After King's death in 1968, the book was republished as The Trumpet of Conscience, and included a foreword written by Coretta Scott King. The book reveals some of King's most introspective reflections and his last impressions of the movement.

Each of the five orations encompasses a distinct theme pertinent to the African American civil rights struggle. In his first talk, ''Impasse in Race Relations,'' King notes that although ''the white backlash declared true equality could never be a reality in the United States,'' he felt that ''mass civil disobedience as a new stage of struggle can transmute the deep rage of the ghetto into a constructive and creative force'' (King, Trumpet, 10; 15). The second lecture, ''Conscience and the Vietnam War,'' is a close parallel to the ''Beyond Vietnam'' speech that King gave at New York City's Riverside Church in April 1967, in opposition to the war. ''Youth and Social Action,'' King's third lecture, envisions the mobilized power of a united youth front in which ''hippies,'' ''radicals,'' and other youth activists work in tandem to combine their strengths (King, Trumpet, 49). In ''Nonviolence and Social Change,'' King defends nonviolent resistance as a political tool to convince ''the wielders of power'' to respond to national poverty (King, Trumpet, 62).

King's concluding speech was a live broadcast of his 1967 Christmas Eve sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church, ''A Christmas Sermon on Peace.'' The sermon illuminates King's long-term vision of nonviolence as a path to world peace, and contains many of King's classical oratorical set pieces, including his description of agape. In his concluding remarks, King refers to his remarks at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and admits, ''not long after talking about that dream I started seeing it turn into a nightmare'' (King, Trumpet, 76). He reviews the recent setbacks the movement faced, including violence during the Birmingham Campaign, persistent poverty, urban race riots, and an escalation of the war in Vietnam, and notes, ''I am personally the victim of deferred dreams, of blasted hopes'' (King, Trumpet, 76). In spite of these hurdles, King reassures his congregation: ''I still have a dream. I have a dream that one day men will rise up and come to see that they are made to live together as brothers'' (King, Trumpet, 76–77).

NORTH WALL

Panel H: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Alabama, 1963

16 April 1963
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

As the events of the Birmingham Campaign intensified on the city's streets, Martin Luther King, Jr., composed a letter from his prison cell in Birmingham in response to local religious leaders' criticisms of the campaign: "Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?" (King, Why, 94-95).

King's 12 April 1963 arrest for violating Alabama's law against mass public demonstrations took place just over a week after the campaign's commencement. In an effort to revive the campaign, King and Ralph Abernathy had donned work clothes and marched from Sixth Avenue Baptist Church into a waiting police wagon. The day of his arrest, eight Birmingham clergy members wrote a criticism of the campaign that was published in the Birmingham News, calling its direct action strategy "unwise and untimely" and appealing "to both our white and Negro citizenry to observe the principles of law and order and common sense" ("White Clergy Urge").

Following the initial circulation of King's letter in Birmingham as a mimeographed copy, it was published in a variety of formats: as a pamphlet distributed by the American Friends Service Committee and as an article in periodicals such as Christian Century, Christianity and Crisis, the New York Post, and Ebony magazine. The first half of the letter was introduced into testimony before Congress by Representative William Fitts Ryan (D-NY) and published in the Congressional Record. One year later, King revised the letter and presented it as a chapter in his 1964 memoir of the Birmingham Campaign, Why We Can't Wait, a book modeled after the basic themes set out in "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

In Why We Can't Wait, King recalled in an author's note accompanying the letter's re-publication: "Begun on the margins of the newspaper in which the statement appeared while I was in jail, the letter was continued on scraps of writing paper supplied by a friendly black trusty, and concluded on a pad my attorneys were eventually permitted to leave me" (King, Why, 78). After countering the charge that he was an "outside agitator" in the body of the letter, King sought to explain the value of a "nonviolent campaign" and its "four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustice exists; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action"(King, Why, 79). He went on to explain that the purpose of direct action is "to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation" (King, Why, 82).

The body of King's letter called into question the clergy's charge of "impatience" on the part of the African American community and of the "extreme" level of the campaign's actions ("White Clergymen Urge"). "For years now, I have heard the word 'Wait!" King wrote. "This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never'" (King, Why, 83). He articulated the resentment felt "when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness'— then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait"(King, Why, 84). King justified the tactic of civil disobedience by stating that, just as the Bible's Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar's unjust laws and colonists staged the Boston Tea Party, he refused to submit to laws and injunctions that were "used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest" (King, Why, 86).

King also decried the inaction of white moderates such as the clergymen, charging that human progress "comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation"(King, Why, 89). He prided himself as being among "extremists" such as Jesus, the prophet Amos, the apostle Paul, Martin Luther, and Abraham Lincoln, and observed: "Perhaps the South, the nation, and the world are in dire need of creative extremists" (King, Why, 92). In closing, he hoped to meet the eight authors of the first letter "as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother" (King, Why, 100).

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:
While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try

to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants--for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather

shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience. You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954

decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal. Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have

consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber. I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist. But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So 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? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I

should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some -such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle--have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators.'" But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed

by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment. I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feets is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than

brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

NORTH WALL

Panel J: I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. Norway, 1964

10 December 1964
Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony (see PANEL D above).

NORTH WALL

Panel L. The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. 1963

Strength to Love **(1963) (See PANEL C Above)**

NORTH WALL

Panel M: Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies. New York, 1967

4 April 1967
Beyond Vietnam
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight, and how very delighted I am to see you expressing your concern about the issues that will be discussed tonight by turning out in such large numbers. I also want to say that I consider it a great honor to share this program with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Commager, and Rabbi Heschel, some of the most distinguished leaders and personalities of our nation. And of course it's always good to come back to Riverside Church. Over the last eight years, I have had the privilege of preaching here almost every year in that period, and it's always a rich and rewarding experience to come to this great church and this great pulpit.

I come to this great magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I am in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization that brought us together, Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." That time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty. But we must move on.

Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movement, and pray that our inner being may be sensitive to its guidance. For we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns, this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King? Why are you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people?" they ask. And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment, or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live. In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church—the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate—leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides. Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, but rather to my fellow Americans.

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I and others have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings.

Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything on a society gone mad on war. And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic, destructive suction tube. So I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years, especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked, and rightly so, "What about Vietnam?" They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957, when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard from Harlem, who had written earlier:

O, yes, I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

Now it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read "Vietnam." It can never be saved so long as it destroys the hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that "America will be" are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1954.* And I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for the brotherhood of man. This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances.

But even if it were not present, I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me, the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I am speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the Good News was meant for all men—for communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the one who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this one? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

Finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place, I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood. Because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned, especially for His suffering and helpless and outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them. This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless,

for the victims of our nation, for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954—in 1945 rather—after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China—for whom the Vietnamese have no great love—but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization.

After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed and Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all of this was presided over by United States influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing of the nation's only noncommunist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.

Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon the only solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions they

cannot raise. These, too, are our brothers.

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there was nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only real party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of a new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western worlds, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led this nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second struggle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954 they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a unified Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be considered.

Also, it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops. They remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the north. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred, or rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Surely this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroy, whose culture is being subverted. I speak for the poor in America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and dealt death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own

nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote:

Each day the war goes on the hatred increased in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism.

Unquote.

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war.

I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

Number one: End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

Number two: Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

Three: Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

Four: Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

Five: Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement. [*sustained applause*]

Part of our ongoing [*applause continues*], part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the Liberation Front. Then we must make what reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, making it available in this country if necessary. Meanwhile [*applause*], meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must continue to raise our voices and our lives if our nation persists in its perverse ways in Vietnam. We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service, we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. [*sustained applause*] I am pleased to say that this is a path now chosen by more than seventy students at my own alma mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. [*applause*] Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. [*applause*] These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

Now there is something seductively tempting about stopping there and sending us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality [*applause*], and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing "clergy and laymen concerned" committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They

will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy. [*sustained applause*] So such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

In 1957 a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which has now justified the presence of U.S. military advisors in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru.

It is with such activity that the words of the late John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." [*applause*] Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin [*applause*], we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see than an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. [*applause*]

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say, "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. [*sustained applause*]

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism. [*applause*] War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anticommunism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy [*applause*], realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. We in the West must support these revolutions.

It is a sad fact that because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the

revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low [*Audience:*] (*Yes*); the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain."

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. **Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.**

This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I'm not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Muslim-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: "Let us love one another (*Yes*), for love is God. (*Yes*) And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. . . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us." Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day.

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. History is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says: "Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word." Unquote.

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood—it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on."

We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message—of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history. As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

Once to every man and nation comes a moment do decide,
In the strife of truth and Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong
Though her portions be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. [*sustained applause*]

*. King says "1954," but most likely means 1964, the year he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

NORTH WALL

Panel N: We are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs "down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Alabama, 1955

5 December 1955
MIA Mass Meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church
Montgomery, Ala.

The first mass meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association attracted several thousand people to the spacious Holt Street Baptist Church, in a black working-class section of Montgomery. Both the sanctuary and the basement auditorium were filled well before the proceedings began, and an audience outside listened via loudspeakers. In addition to reporters, photographers, and two television crews, black leaders from other Alabama cities such as Birmingham, Mobile, and Tuscaloosa were among those in attendance. The meeting opened with two hymns, "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," a prayer by Rev. W.F. Alford, and a Scripture reading (Psalm 34) by Rev. U.J. Fields.

King then delivered an address that he had quickly composed before the meeting. He later recalled the questions in his mind as he considered what to say: "How could I make a speech that would be militant enough to keep my people aroused to positive action and yet moderate enough to keep this fervor within controllable and Christian bounds? I knew that many of the Negro people were victims of bitterness that could easily rise to flood proportions. What could I say to keep them courageous and prepared for positive action and yet devoid of hate and resentment? Could the militant and the moderate be combined in a single speech?"[1]

In his speech, King described the mistreatment of black bus passengers and the civil disobedience of Rosa Parks, and then justified the nonviolent protest by appealing to African-American Christian faith in love and justice and the American democratic tradition of legal protest.

A quiet pause followed King's address, then great applause. Rev. Edgar N. French of the Hilliard Chapel AME Zion Church introduced Rosa Parks and Fred Daniel, a student at Alabama State College who had been arrested that morning on a disorderly conduct charge (later dismissed) for allegedly preventing a woman from getting on a bus. Rev. Abernathy read the resolutions that he, King, and others on the resolution committee had drafted. The assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor, resolving "to refrain from riding buses… until some arrangement has been worked out" with the bus company. King appealed for funds, then left to speak at a YMCA fathers and sons banquet.

[King:] My friends, we are certainly very happy to see each of you out this evening. We are here this evening for serious business. [Audience:] (Yes) We are here in a general sense because first and foremost we are American citizens (That's right) and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. (Yeah, That's right) We are here also because of our love for democracy (Yes), because of our deep-seated belief that democracy transformed from thin paper to thick action (Yes) is the greatest form of government on earth. (That's right)

But we are here in a specific sense, because of the bus situation in Montgomery. (Yes) We are here because we are determined to get the situation corrected. This situation is not at all new. The problem has existed over endless years. (That's right) For many years now Negroes in Montgomery and so many other areas have been inflicted with the paralysis of crippling fears (Yes) on buses in our community. (That's right) On so many occasions, Negroes have been intimidated and humiliated and impressed—oppressed—because of the sheer fact that they were Negroes. (That's right) I don't have time this evening to go into the history of these numerous cases. Many of them now are lost in the thick fog of oblivion (Yes), but at least one stands before us now with glaring dimensions. (Yes)

Just the other day, just last Thursday to be exact, one of the finest citizens in Montgomery (Amen)—not one of the finest Negro citizens (That's right), but one of the finest citizens in Montgomery—was taken from a bus (Yes) and carried to jail and arrested (Yes) because she refused to get up to give her seat to a white person. (Yes, That's right) Now the press would have us believe that she refused to leave a reserved section for Negroes (Yes), but I want you to know this evening that there is no reserved section. (All right) The law has never been clarified at that point. (Hell no) Now I think I speak with, with legal authority—not that I have any legal authority, but I think I speak with legal authority behind me (All right)—that the law, the ordinance, the city ordinance has never been totally clarified.[2] (That's right)

Mrs. Rosa Parks is a fine person. (Well, well said) And, since it had to happen, I'm happy that it happened to a person like Mrs. Parks, for nobody can doubt the boundless outreach of her integrity. (Sure enough) Nobody can doubt the height of her character (Yes),

nobody can doubt the depth of her Christian commitment and devotion to the teachings of Jesus. (All right) And I'm happy since it had to happen, it happened to a person that nobody can call a disturbing factor in the community. (All right) Mrs. Parks is a fine Christian person, unassuming, and yet there is integrity and character there. And just because she refused to get up, she was arrested.

And you know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. [thundering applause] There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. (Keep talking) There comes a time when people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July and left standing amid the piercing chill of an alpine November. (That's right) [applause] There comes a time. (Yes sir, Teach) [applause continues]

We are here, we are here this evening because we're tired now. (Yes) [applause] And I want to say that we are not here advocating violence. (No) We have never done that. (Repeat that, Repeat that) [applause] I want it to be known throughout Montgomery and throughout this nation (Well) that we are Christian people. (Yes) [applause] We believe in the Christian religion. We believe in the teachings of Jesus. (Well) The only weapon that we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest. (Yes) [applause] That's all.

And certainly, certainly, this is the glory of America, with all of its faults. (Yeah) This is the glory of our democracy. If we were incarcerated behind the iron curtains of a Communistic nation we couldn't do this. If we were dropped in the dungeon of a totalitarian regime we couldn't do this. (All right) But the great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right. (That's right) [applause] My friends, don't let anybody make us feel that we are to be compared in our actions with the Ku Klux Klan or with the White Citizens Council. [applause] There will be no crosses burned at any bus stops in Montgomery. (Well, That's right) There will be no white persons pulled out of their homes and taken out on some distant road and lynched for not cooperating. [applause] There will be nobody amid, among us who will stand up and defy the Constitution of this nation. [applause] We only assemble here because of our desire to see right exist. [applause] My friends, I want it to be known that we're going to work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses in this city. [applause]

And we are not wrong, we are not wrong in what we are doing. (Well) If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. (Yes sir) [applause] If we are wrong, the Constitution of the United States is wrong. (Yes) [applause] If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong. (That's right) [applause] If we are wrong, Jesus of Nazareth was merely a utopian dreamer that never came down to earth. (Yes) [applause] If we are wrong, justice is a lie. (Yes) Love has no meaning. [applause] **And we are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water (Yes) [applause], and righteousness like a mighty stream.**[3] (Keep talking) [applause]

I want to say that in all of our actions we must stick together. (That's right) [applause] Unity is the great need of the hour (Well, That's right), and if we are united we can get many of the things that we not only desire but which we justly deserve. (Yeah) And don't let anybody frighten you. (Yeah) We are not afraid of what we are doing (Oh no), because we are doing it within the law. (All right) There is never a time in our American democracy that we must ever think we're wrong when we protest. (Yes sir) We reserve that right. When labor all over this nation came to see that it would be trampled over by capitalistic power, it was nothing wrong with labor getting together and organizing and protesting for its rights. (That's right)

We, the disinherited of this land, we who have been oppressed so long, are tired of going through the long night of captivity. And now we are reaching out for the daybreak of freedom and justice and equality. [applause] May I say to you my friends, as I come to a close, and just giving some idea of why we are assembled here, that we must keep—and I want to stress this, in all of our doings, in all of our deliberations here this evening and all of the week and while—whatever we do, we must keep God in the forefront. (Yeah) Let us be Christian in all of our actions. (That's right) But I want to tell you this evening that it is not enough for us to talk about love, love is one of the pivotal points of the Christian face, faith. There is another side called justice. And justice is really love in calculation. (All right) Justice is love correcting that which revolts against love. (Well)

The Almighty God himself is not the only, not the, not the God just standing out saying through Hosea, "I love you, Israel." He's also the God that stands up before the nations and said: "Be still and know that I'm God (Yeah), that if you don't obey me I will break the backbone of your power (Yeah) and slap you out of the orbits of your international and national relationships."[4] (That's right) Standing beside love is always justice, and we are only using the tools of justice. Not only are we using the tools of persuasion, but we've come to see that we've got to use the tools of coercion. Not only is this thing a process of education, but it is also a process of legislation. [applause]

As we stand and sit here this evening and as we prepare ourselves for what lies ahead, let us go out with a grim and bold determination that we are going to stick together. [applause] We are going to work together. [applause] Right here in Montgomery, when the history books are written in the future (Yes), somebody will have to say, "There lived a race of people (Well), a black people (Yes sir), 'fleecy

locks and black complexion' (Yes), a people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights.[5] [applause] And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization." And we're gonna do that. God grant that we will do it before it is too late. (Oh yeah) As we proceed with our program let us think of these things. (Yes) [applause]

[recording interrupted]… Mrs. Parks and Mr. Fred Daniel. He will tell you why they're being, you know why Mrs. Parks is being presented, and also Mr. Fred Daniel will be presented. Reverend French will make the presentation.

[French:] Fellow American citizens. I say "American citizens" because I believe tonight more than any other time in my whole life that we have arrived at the point in life where we can see for ourselves a new destiny. (Yes) Our horizons are broader. I think the record of our racial group speaks with various languages attesting to the fact that we have been, since the lifting of the bonds of slavery, law-abiding, honest, tax-paying citizens of America. (Yeah) [applause] And we believe that our record warrants for us (All right) the recognition of citizens of America. (Yes) We don't mean Negro citizens. We don't mean second-rate citizens. We simply mean citizens of America. (That's right) [applause] I have a responsibility to and for a group of students. Like possibly many of you out there before me, I have the responsibility of teaching them democracy. I don't have to remind you that when occurrences like these take place and many of the other things that have happened occur, and when they begin firing questions away at you, you feel just a little unequal to the task of formulating them into real citizens of America. (Yes) But that's our solemn responsibility. And each of us, I'm sure, has accepted that responsibility, and we are going to do our best with molding these [recording interrupted]… active in civic and social affairs in the community. [applause] An upstanding, law-abiding citizen, one who would deprive no one of rights that belong to them. (All right) [applause] It has already been pointed out to you time and again that she was ordered from her seat on the bus, a public conveyance for which she had paid the legal fare. (Well) [applause] What difference does it make even if the president of the United States—and [he's?] the greatest individual in these United States of America that I know about [applause]—if he had gotten on the bus? Mrs. Parks was a lady, and any gentleman would allow a lady to have a seat. (Speak up) [applause] But because other passengers came after she was seated, she was ordered to leave her seat, and because she refused, she was put in jail. I have the responsibility, and it's not an easy task, to present to you the victim of this gross injustice, almost inhumanity, and absolute undemocratic principle: Mrs. Rosa Parks.[6] [applause] [recording interrupted]

You know, during my life I've heard tell of a number of false alarms, but I have a responsibility of presenting another victim. President, late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said some years ago, in one of his fireside chats to the people of this nation, that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. (All right) [applause] When we become victims of fear, it is hard indeed to explain our actions. (All right) Thank God I feel that I can say this evening that we are moving sanely and soberly. We are not allowing our emotions to control us. We are guiding and channeling our emotions to the extent that we feel that God shall give us the victory. [applause]

The press would have us believe that someone has organized some goon squads, whatever that is [laughter], whose purpose it was to molest and intimidate those who attempted to board the city buses this morning. But if that kind of thing happened, thank God I don't know anything about it. (That's right) But somebody became a victim of that kind of fear and notion. And you know, the psychologists have a way of saying that if you begin thinking of things strong enough, you can become such a victim of that kind of thing until it becomes a reality to you. [applause] Somebody saw a young man, a citizen of America, attending the courtesies that any young man would attend a lady walking down the street. And he was so engrossed with the idea of intimidation and violence that even the light, gentle touch of the hand appeared to be an act of molesting to this individual. (That's right, Speak up)

Now the press again would have you believe that here was a young man who latched on to a lady who was attempting to board the bus and wrestled her away from the door, saying, "You can't ride this bus. I won't allow you to do it." (Yes) [applause] But I have the responsibility of presenting to you the gentleman that is so erroneously accused. Again we present a young man, an American citizen, one who is preparing himself for greater service to this country, a student at Alabama State College [applause], a member of the First Baptist Church of the city of Montgomery [applause], a young man who is so industrious and zealous about his undertaking and his studies, until he gets up early hours in the morning and carries a paper route before he goes to school and makes good grades in the classroom. I have the responsibility of presenting Mr. Fred Daniel. (Yes) [applause] [recording interrupted]

They have the moral courage to stand. But these alone cannot win this victory that inevitably must be ours. (All right) [applause] Each of us here, and those who are not here tonight, have a responsibility in this great task. (Yes) And I'm pleading to you, this evening, to let every one of us, under God, join our hands and hearts together in this great concerted effort. And let each of us go out from here resolved as never before in our lives, to never give back one inch until we shall be accorded the full respect and rights. [applause] [recording interrupted]

[King:] I think we are moving on with a great deal of enthusiasm this evening, the type of thing that we need in our efforts. And we are certainly very happy to see that, indeed. We at least see that you are with this cause and you are with our struggle. It is a struggle for all of us, not just one, but all (Yeah), and we're gonna stick with it. I'd like to say just before we move to the next point that I'm very happy to see all over this audience some of the outstanding figures from over the state. (Right) Montgomery is not only here but I

see folk here from Mobile and Birmingham and Tuscaloosa and some of our other points in Alabama. [applause] I see Reverend Ware here from Birmingham, one of the outstanding ministers of our state and a great champion of civil rights; and then that stalwart, militant Christian gentleman, Emory Jackson of the Birmingham World, we're certainly happy to see him here, one of the greats in our struggle for democracy and first-class citizenship; and many others that I will not take our time to mention.[7] I'm very happy to see them here.

Now at this point, Reverend Abernathy, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, will come to us and read the resolutions and recommendations. I want you to listen to this, and be very careful in listening to it. Listen with a great deal of interest so that you will know everything he said, because we want you to vote on it after it's over. Reverend Abernathy of the First Baptist Church.

[Abernathy]: Thank you, Dr. King. All of you who know me, know very well that I would love to make a speech now. [laughter, applause] I, whenever you start talking about freedom and start talking about justice, you know I have something to say about it. (Well) And you further know, those of you who heard me on this past Sunday morning by radio, beyond a shadow of doubt I stand for integration in this American society. (Amen) [applause] But I have been asked to read these resolutions and I want to read them carefully to you in order that you might understand them. I've only received them a few moments ago, and it may be that I'll read slow. I'm sorry that some members of the press have dismissed themselves; because there are some things in here I'd really want them to have. [applause] I certainly hope, I certainly hope that the television man will come back. (Well) [applause] You know, it isn't fair to get part of it. I want you to get all of it. [applause] I guess I better read. (Read) [laughter, applause] Resolution:

Whereas, there are thousands of Negroes in the city and county of Montgomery who ride buses owned and operated by the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated, and

Whereas, said citizens have been riding buses owned and operated by said company over a number of years, and

Whereas, said citizens, over a number of years, and on many occasions, have been insulted, embarrassed (Yeah), and have been made to suffer great fear of bodily harm (That's right) by drivers of buses owned and operated by said bus company (Yeah), and

Whereas, the drivers of said buses have never requested a white passenger riding on any of its buses to relinquish his seat and to stand so that a Negro may take his seat. [applause] However, said drivers have on many occasions, too numerous to mention, requested Negro passengers on said buses to relinquish their seats and to stand so that white passengers may take their seats [applause], and

Whereas, said citizens of Montgomery city and county pay their fares just as all other persons who are passengers on said buses (All right) and are entitled to fair and equal treatment (Yeah) [applause], and

Whereas, there has been any number of arrests of Negroes caused by drivers of said buses, and they are constantly put in jail for refusing to give white passengers their seats and to stand. (All right) [applause]

Whereas, in March of 1955, a committee of citizens did have a conference with one of the officials of the said bus line, at which time said officials arranged a meeting between attorneys representing the Negro citizens of this city and attorneys representing the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated, and the city of Montgomery, and

Whereas, the official of the bus line promised that as a result of the meeting between said attorneys he would issue a statement of policy clarifying the law with reference to the seating of Negro passengers on the buses, and

Whereas, said attorneys did have a meeting and did discuss the matter of clarifying the law; however, the official of said bus lines did not make public the statement as to its policy with reference to the seating of passengers on its buses, and

Whereas, since that time, at least two ladies have been arrested for an alleged violation of the city segregation law with reference to bus travel, and

Whereas, said citizens of Montgomery city and county believe that they have been grossly mistreated as passengers on the buses owned and operated by said bus company (All right) in spite of the fact that they are in the majority with reference to the number of passengers riding the said buses. [applause]

In light of these observations, be it therefore resolved as follows:

Number One. That the citizens of Montgomery are requesting that every citizen in Montgomery, regardless of race, color, or creed, to

refrain from riding buses owned and operated in the city of Montgomery by the Montgomery Lines, Incorporated [applause], until some arrangement has been worked out [applause] between said citizens and the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated.

Now I'm reading it slow and I want you to hear every word of it.

Number Two. That every person owning or who has access to an automobile will use their automobiles in assisting other persons to get to work without charge. [applause]

Number Three. That the employees, I repeat, that the employers of persons whose employees live a great distance from them, as much as possible, afford transportation for your own employees. [applause]

That the Negro citizens of Montgomery are ready and willing to send a delegation of citizens to the Montgomery City Lines, Incorporated, to discuss their grievances and to work out a solution for the same. (All right) [applause]

Be it further resolved that we have not—I said, we have not, we are not, and we have no intentions of—using any unlawful means or any intimidation (Go ahead) to persuade persons not to ride the Montgomery City Lines buses. [applause] However, we call upon your conscience (All right), both moral and spiritual, to give your wholehearted support (That's right) to this worthy undertaking. [applause] We believe we have a just complaint, and we are willing to discuss this matter with the proper authorities. (Yes) [applause]

Thus ends the resolution.[8] [applause] Dr. King, prayerfully, spiritually, sincerely, I wish to offer a motion. I move that this resolution shall be adopted. (Dr. King, I second the motion) [applause]

[King:] It has been moved, it has been moved, and seconded that these recommendations and these resolutions would be accepted and adopted by the citizens of Montgomery. Are you ready for the question? (Yes) [thundering response]

All in favor, stand on your feet. [enthusiastic applause] Opposers do likewise. Opposers do likewise. [laughter] There is a prevailing majority.

I certainly want to thank you, my friends for this tremendous response. [pause] My friends, in order that nothing, that we will not be misquoted, and particularly with the resolutions, copies are prepared for the press; so that if the press would like to secure copies, they may do that, so that we will not be misquoted. [enthusiastic applause] [recording interrupted]

… said here this evening because everything is being recorded. Reverend Glasco is here on hand recording everything that is being said, so that we're not doing anything in the dark here. Everything is recorded. [applause] Now my friends, I just want to say once more to you. I've got to leave, I have presided to this point. It so happens that we have a group of very fine men who can do a much better job than I've done, and we're gonna let them do it. You know, we preachers have many engagements sometime. And I've got to go speak to the fathers and sons of this city; so that I'm gonna have to leave.

But just before leaving I want to say this. I want to urge you. You have voted, and you have done it with a great deal of enthusiasm, and I want to express my appreciation to you, on behalf of everybody here. Now let us go out to stick together and stay with this thing until the end. [applause] Now it means sacrificing, yes, it means sacrificing at points. But there are some things that we've got to learn to sacrifice for. (Yeah) And we've got to come to the point that we are determined not to accept a lot of things that we have been accepting in the past.

So I'm urging you now. We have the facilities for you to get to your jobs, and we are putting, we have the cabs there at your service. Automobiles will be at your service, and don't be afraid to use up any of the gas. If you have it, if you are fortunate enough to have a little money, use it for a good cause. Now my automobile is gonna be in it, it has been in it, and I'm not concerned about how much gas I'm gonna use. (That's right) I want to see this thing work.

And we will not be content until oppression is wiped out of Montgomery, and really out of America. We won't be content until that is done. We are merely insisting on the dignity and worth of every human personality. And I don't stand here, I'm not arguing for any selfish person. I've never been on a bus in Montgomery. But I would be less than a Christian if I stood back and said, because I don't ride the bus, I don't have to ride a bus, that it doesn't concern me. [applause] I will not be content. I can hear a voice saying, "If you do it unto the least of these, my brother, you do it unto me."[9] [applause]

And I won't rest, I will face intimidation, and everything else, along with these other stalwart fighters for democracy and for citizenship. We don't mind it, so long as justice comes out of it. And I've come to see now that as we struggle for our rights, maybe

some of them will have to die. But somebody said, if a man doesn't have something that he'll die for, he isn't fit to live. [enthusiastic applause]

Now, let me tell you this. You know, it takes money to do what we're about to do. We can't do it clapping hands now and we can't do it saying "Amen." (That's right) That's not enough. That is, that encourages the speaker to go on, but that isn't enough. We need money to do this and we're gonna have to get ourselves some money tonight. And we're gonna ask everybody here, that's everybody outside and inside, to get ready to make a contribution to this cause. (That's right) And the money will be well used. And the committee will tell you, someone will tell you what it will be used for. Now, we're asking Reverend Bonner to come here, from the First CME Church, to come and take this offering. I'm gonna ask Brother Nixon to assist him and we're gonna, I'm gonna ask—huh?—Brother Matthews, also. Where's Brother Matthews? Yeah. Brother Matthews here, the president of our NAACP, to come here and assist.[10] Now I want to say this. We're gonna need somebody to go outside and collect money. So that I'm gonna ask about, we'd say about ten people, I'm gonna ask ten of the ministers of the city to assist us in taking this offering. [Rev. Bonner begins calling out names] My friends, let me say this. Just a moment, Reverend Bonner, we don't want anybody to leave until this is over. I'm gonna leave mine as I leave, and this will continue. Reverend Bennett will continue in presiding. I'm sorry I have to leave, but I'm certainly happy to see your enthusiasm.

At. MLKJrP-GAMK: Box 107.

1. King, Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 59-60. King's quotations from the speech in Stride (pp. 61-63) differ somewhat from his actual remarks.
2. By custom bus drivers could request that black passengers move to the rear, one row at a time, when the forward white section was filled and additional white passengers had to be accommodated. See discussion of segregation ordinance in "Statement of Negro Citizens on Bus Situation," 10 December 1955, pp. 81-83 in this volume.
3. Amos 5:24.
4. King refers to Hosea 11:1 ("When Israel was a child, I loved him"). He may also refer to Psalm 46:10 ("Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!").
5. The phrase "fleecy locks and black complexion" is from a poem, "The Negro's Complaint" (1788), by British poet William Cowper. In later speeches King included longer quotations from this poem (see note 5, "The 'New Negro' of the South: Behind the Montgomery Story," June 1956, p.283 in this volume).
6. Two months later Parks commented, "I wasn't then and [have] not since then been asked to speak at any of the meetings. I appreciate the fact of not having to make speeches [,] for other people have suffered indignities, and it is really our fight rather than mine" (Parks, interview by Willie Mae Lee, 5 February 1956). (The complete citation, including archival location, for all documents referenced in the notes may be found in the Calendar of Documents.)
7. James Lowell Ware (1899-1975) was born in Wetumpka, Alabama. He became pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church in 1941 and remained there for the next thirty years. He was president of the Birmingham Baptist Ministers Conference for twenty-five years and the first African American to run for council in Birmingham, in 1963.He was secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Convention for many years. Emory Overton Jackson (1908-1975), born in Buena Vista, Georgia, edited the Birmingham World, Alabama's leading black newspaper.
8. A mimeographed version of these resolutions also included, in King's handwriting, the three demands the MIA presented to the bus company and city commissioners at an 8 December 1955 meeting arranged by the Alabama Council on Human Relations: "Better treatment and more courteous actions"; "That the seating arrangements be changed to a first come-first serve basis"; "That Negro Bus drivers be employed, especially on predominately Negro lines. Since about 75 percent of the income for the bus company come from Negroes, some of that money should come back to them." On the verso of the document King added, "Bus drivers to complement Negro Police in Colored district. There are times that Negro Policemen serve whites"; "On the predominately Negro routes, run every other bus special for Negroes" (MIA, Resolution with Proposals, 8 December 1955). On 9 December 1955 the Montgomery Advertiser reported that Jack Crenshaw, counsel for Montgomery City Lines, suggested having an exclusively Negro bus (see Tom Johnson, "4-Hour Huddle; Bus Boycott Conference Fails to Find Solution," Montgomery Advertiser, 9 December 1955).
9. King quotes from Matthew 25:40: "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"
10. Robert L. Matthews, president of the Montgomery NAACP branch, would serve on the MIA executive board.

NORTH WALL

Panel P (sic): We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. Alabama, 1965

25 March 1965
Address at the Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March

My dear and abiding friends, Ralph Abernathy, and to all of the distinguished Americans seated here on the rostrum, my friends and co-workers of the state of Alabama, and to all of the freedom-loving people who have assembled here this afternoon from all over our nation and from all over the world: Last Sunday, more than eight thousand of us started on a mighty walk from Selma, Alabama. We have walked through desolate valleys and across the trying hills. We have walked on meandering highways and rested our bodies on rocky byways. Some of our faces are burned from the outpourings of the sweltering sun. Some have literally slept in the mud. We have been drenched by the rains. [*Audience:*] (*Speak*) Our bodies are tired and our feet are somewhat sore.

But today as I stand before you and think back over that great march, I can say, as Sister Pollard said—a seventy-year-old Negro woman who lived in this community during the bus boycott—and one day, she was asked while walking if she didn't want to ride. And when she answered, "No," the person said, "Well, aren't you tired?" And with her ungrammatical profundity, she said, "My feets is tired, but my soul is rested." (*Yes, sir. All right*) And in a real sense this afternoon, we can say that our feet are tired, (*Yes, sir*) but our souls are rested.

They told us we wouldn't get here. And there were those who said that we would get here only over their dead bodies, (*Well. Yes, sir. Talk*) but all the world today knows that we are here and we are standing before the forces of power in the state of Alabama saying, "We ain't goin' let nobody turn us around." (*Yes, sir. Speak*) [*Applause*]

Now it is not an accident that one of the great marches of American history should terminate in Montgomery, Alabama. (*Yes, sir*) Just ten years ago, in this very city, a new philosophy was born of the Negro struggle. Montgomery was the first city in the South in which the entire Negro community united and squarely faced its age-old oppressors. (*Yes, sir. Well*) Out of this struggle, more than bus [*de*]segregation was won; a new idea, more powerful than guns or clubs was born. Negroes took it and carried it across the South in epic battles (*Yes, sir. Speak*) that electrified the nation (*Well*) and the world.

Yet, strangely, the climactic conflicts always were fought and won on Alabama soil. After Montgomery's, heroic confrontations loomed up in Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, and elsewhere. But not until the colossus of segregation was challenged in Birmingham did the conscience of America begin to bleed. White America was profoundly aroused by Birmingham because it witnessed the whole community of Negroes facing terror and brutality with majestic scorn and heroic courage. And from the wells of this democratic spirit, the nation finally forced Congress (*Well*) to write legislation (*Yes, sir*) in the hope that it would eradicate the stain of Birmingham. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave Negroes some part of their rightful dignity, (*Speak, sir*) but without the vote it was dignity without strength. (*Yes, sir*)

Once more the method of nonviolent resistance (*Yes*) was unsheathed from its scabbard, and once again an entire community was mobilized to confront the adversary. (*Yes, sir*) And again the brutality of a dying order shrieks across the land. Yet, Selma, Alabama, became a shining moment in the conscience of man. If the worst in American life lurked in its dark streets, the best of American instincts arose passionately from across the nation to overcome it. (*Yes, sir. Speak*) There never was a moment in American history (*Yes, sir*) more honorable and more inspiring than the pilgrimage of clergymen and laymen of every race and faith pouring into Selma to face danger (*Yes*) at the side of its embattled Negroes.

The confrontation of good and evil compressed in the tiny community of Selma (*Speak, speak*) generated the massive power (*Yes, sir. Yes, sir*) to turn the whole nation to a new course. A president born in the South (*Well*) had the sensitivity to feel the will of the country, (*Speak, sir*) and in an address that will live in history as one of the most passionate pleas for human rights ever made by a president of our nation, he pledged the might of the federal government to cast off the centuries-old blight. President Johnson rightly praised the courage of the Negro for awakening the conscience of the nation. (*Yes, sir*)

On our part we must pay our profound respects to the white Americans who cherish their democratic traditions over the ugly customs and privileges of generations and come forth boldly to join hands with us. (*Yes, sir*) From Montgomery to Birmingham, (*Yes, sir*) from Birmingham to Selma, (*Yes, sir*) from Selma back to Montgomery, (*Yes*) a trail wound in a circle long and often bloody, yet it has become a highway up from darkness. (*Yes, sir*) Alabama has tried to nurture and defend evil, but evil is choking to death in the dusty roads and streets of this state. (*Yes, sir. Speak, sir*) So I stand before you this afternoon (*Speak, sir. Well*) with the conviction that

segregation is on its deathbed in Alabama, and the only thing uncertain about it is how costly the segregationists and Wallace will make the funeral. (*Go ahead. Yes, sir*) [*Applause*]

Our whole campaign in Alabama has been centered around the right to vote. In focusing the attention of the nation and the world today on the flagrant denial of the right to vote, we are exposing the very origin, the root cause, of racial segregation in the Southland. Racial segregation as a way of life did not come about as a natural result of hatred between the races immediately after the Civil War. There were no laws segregating the races then. And as the noted historian, C. Vann Woodward, in his book, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, clearly points out, the segregation of the races was really a political stratagem employed by the emerging Bourbon interests in the South to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land. You see, it was a simple thing to keep the poor white masses working for near-starvation wages in the years that followed the Civil War. Why, if the poor white plantation or mill worker became dissatisfied with his low wages, the plantation or mill owner would merely threaten to fire him and hire former Negro slaves and pay him even less. Thus, the southern wage level was kept almost unbearably low.

Toward the end of the Reconstruction era, something very significant happened. (*Listen to him*) That is what was known as the Populist Movement. (*Speak, sir*) The leaders of this movement began awakening the poor white masses (*Yes, sir*) and the former Negro slaves to the fact that they were being fleeced by the emerging Bourbon interests. Not only that, but they began uniting the Negro and white masses (*Yeah*) into a voting bloc that threatened to drive the Bourbon interests from the command posts of political power in the South.

To meet this threat, the southern aristocracy began immediately to engineer this development of a segregated society. (*Right*) I want you to follow me through here because this is very important to see the roots of racism and the denial of the right to vote. Through their control of mass media, they revised the doctrine of white supremacy. They saturated the thinking of the poor white masses with it, (*Yes*) thus clouding their minds to the real issue involved in the Populist Movement. They then directed the placement on the books of the South of laws that made it a crime for Negroes and whites to come together as equals at any level. (*Yes, sir*) And that did it. That crippled and eventually destroyed the Populist Movement of the nineteenth century.

If it may be said of the slavery era that the white man took the world and gave the Negro Jesus, then it may be said of the Reconstruction era that the southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow. (*Yes, sir*) He gave him Jim Crow. (*Uh huh*) And when his wrinkled stomach cried out for the food that his empty pockets could not provide, (*Yes, sir*) he ate Jim Crow, a psychological bird that told him that no matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man. (*Right sir*) And he ate Jim Crow. (*Uh huh*) And when his undernourished children cried out for the necessities that his low wages could not provide, he showed them the Jim Crow signs on the buses and in the stores, on the streets and in the public buildings. (*Yes, sir*) And his children, too, learned to feed upon Jim Crow, (*Speak*) their last outpost of psychological oblivion. (*Yes, sir*)

Thus, the threat of the free exercise of the ballot by the Negro and the white masses alike (*Uh huh*) resulted in the establishment of a segregated society. They segregated southern money from the poor whites; they segregated southern mores from the rich whites; (*Yes, sir*) they segregated southern churches from Christianity (*Yes, sir*); they segregated southern minds from honest thinking; (*Yes, sir*) and they segregated the Negro from everything. (*Yes, sir*) That's what happened when the Negro and white masses of the South threatened to unite and build a great society: a society of justice where none would pray upon the weakness of others; a society of plenty where greed and poverty would be done away; a society of brotherhood where every man would respect the dignity and worth of human personality. (*Yes, sir*)

We've come a long way since that travesty of justice was perpetrated upon the American mind. James Weldon Johnson put it eloquently. He said:

We have come over a way

That with tears hath been watered. (*Yes, sir*)

We have come treading our paths

Through the blood of the slaughtered. (*Yes, sir*)

Out of the gloomy past, (*Yes, sir*)

Till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam

Of our bright star is cast. (*Speak, sir*)

Today I want to tell the city of Selma, (*Tell them, Doctor*) today I want to say to the state of Alabama, (*Yes, sir*) today I want to say to the people of America and the nations of the world, that we are not about to turn around. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*)

Yes, we are on the move and no wave of racism can stop us. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. The burning of our churches will not deter us. (*Yes, sir*) The bombing of our homes will not dissuade us. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) The beating and killing of our clergymen and young people will not divert us. We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) The wanton release of their known murderers would not discourage us. We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) Like an idea whose time has come, (*Yes, sir*) not even the marching of mighty armies can halt us. (*Yes, sir*) We are moving to the land of freedom. (*Yes, sir*)

Let us therefore continue our triumphant march (*Uh huh*) to the realization of the American dream. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on segregated housing (*Yes, sir*) until every ghetto or social and economic depression dissolves, and Negroes and whites live side by side in decent, safe, and sanitary housing. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on segregated schools (*Let us march, Tell it*) until every vestige of segregated and inferior education becomes a thing of the past, and Negroes and whites study side-by-side in the socially-healing context of the classroom.

Let us march on poverty (*Let us march*) until no American parent has to skip a meal so that their children may eat. (*Yes, sir*) March on poverty (*Let us march*) until no starved man walks the streets of our cities and towns (*Yes, sir*) in search of jobs that do not exist. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on poverty (*Let us march*) until wrinkled stomachs in Mississippi are filled, (*That's right*) and the idle industries of Appalachia are realized and revitalized, and broken lives in sweltering ghettos are mended and remolded.

Let us march on ballot boxes, (*Let's march*) march on ballot boxes until race-baiters disappear from the political arena.

Let us march on ballot boxes until the salient misdeeds of bloodthirsty mobs (*Yes, sir*) will be transformed into the calculated good deeds of orderly citizens. (*Speak, Doctor*)

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march*) until the Wallaces of our nation tremble away in silence.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march*) until we send to our city councils (*Yes, sir*), state legislatures, (*Yes, sir*) and the United States Congress, (*Yes, sir*) men who will not fear to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march. March*) until brotherhood becomes more than a meaningless word in an opening prayer, but the order of the day on every legislative agenda.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Yes*) until all over Alabama God's children will be able to walk the earth in decency and honor.

There is nothing wrong with marching in this sense. (*Yes, sir*) The Bible tells us that the mighty men of Joshua merely walked about the walled city of Jericho (*Yes*) and the barriers to freedom came tumbling down. (*Yes, sir*) I like that old Negro spiritual, (*Yes, sir*) "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." In its simple, yet colorful, depiction (*Yes, sir*) of that great moment in biblical history, it tells us that:

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, (*Tell it*)

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, (*Yes, sir*)

And the walls come tumbling down. (*Yes, sir. Tell it*)

Up to the walls of Jericho they marched, spear in hand. (*Yes, sir*)

"Go blow them ramhorns," Joshua cried,

"'Cause the battle am in my hand." (*Yes, sir*)

These words I have given you just as they were given us by the unknown, long-dead, dark-skinned originator. (*Yes, sir*) Some now

long-gone black bard bequeathed to posterity these words in ungrammatical form, (*Yes, sir*) yet with emphatic pertinence for all of us today. (*Uh huh*)

The battle is in our hands. And we can answer with creative nonviolence the call to higher ground to which the new directions of our struggle summons us. (*Yes, sir*) The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. (*No*) There are no broad highways that lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions. But we must keep going.

In the glow of the lamplight on my desk a few nights ago, I gazed again upon the wondrous sign of our times, full of hope and promise of the future. (*Uh huh*) And I smiled to see in the newspaper photographs of many a decade ago, the faces so bright, so solemn, of our valiant heroes, the people of Montgomery. To this list may be added the names of all those (*Yes*) who have fought and, yes, died in the nonviolent army of our day: Medgar Evers, (*Speak*) three civil rights workers in Mississippi last summer, (*Uh huh*) William Moore, as has already been mentioned, (*Yes, sir*) the Reverend James Reeb, (*Yes, sir*) Jimmy Lee Jackson, (*Yes, sir*) and four little girls in the church of God in Birmingham on Sunday morning. (*Yes, sir*) But in spite of this, we must go on and be sure that they did not die in vain. (*Yes, sir*) The pattern of their feet as they walked through Jim Crow barriers in the great stride toward freedom is the thunder of the marching men of Joshua, (*Yes, sir*) and the world rocks beneath their tread. (*Yes, sir*)

My people, my people, listen. (*Yes, sir*) The battle is in our hands. (*Yes, sir*) The battle is in our hands in Mississippi and Alabama and all over the United States. (*Yes, sir*) I know there is a cry today in Alabama, (*Uh huh*) we see it in numerous editorials: "When will Martin Luther King, SCLC, SNCC, and all of these civil rights agitators and all of the white clergymen and labor leaders and students and others get out of our community and let Alabama return to normalcy?"

But I have a message that I would like to leave with Alabama this evening. (*Tell it*) That is exactly what we don't want, and we will not allow it to happen, (*Yes, sir*) for we know that it was normalcy in Marion (*Yes, sir*) that led to the brutal murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson. (*Speak*) It was normalcy in Birmingham (*Yes*) that led to the murder on Sunday morning of four beautiful, unoffending, innocent girls. It was normalcy on Highway 80 (*Yes, sir*) that led state troopers to use tear gas and horses and billy clubs against unarmed human beings who were simply marching for justice. (*Speak, sir*) It was normalcy by a cafe in Selma, Alabama, that led to the brutal beating of Reverend James Reeb.

It is normalcy all over our country (*Yes, sir*) which leaves the Negro perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of vast ocean of material prosperity. It is normalcy all over Alabama (*Yeah*) that prevents the Negro from becoming a registered voter. (*Yes*) No, we will not allow Alabama (*Go ahead*) to return to normalcy. [*Applause*]

The only normalcy that we will settle for (*Yes, sir*) is the normalcy that recognizes the dignity and worth of all of God's children. The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that allows judgment to run down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. (*Yes, sir*) The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy of brotherhood, the normalcy of true peace, the normalcy of justice.

And so as we go away this afternoon, let us go away more than ever before committed to this struggle and committed to nonviolence. I must admit to you that there are still some difficult days ahead. We are still in for a season of suffering in many of the black belt counties of Alabama, many areas of Mississippi, many areas of Louisiana. I must admit to you that there are still jail cells waiting for us, and dark and difficult moments. But if we will go on with the faith that nonviolence and its power can transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows, we will be able to change all of these conditions.

And so I plead with you this afternoon as we go ahead: remain committed to nonviolence. Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship and understanding. **We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience.** And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man. (*Yes*)

I know you are asking today, "How long will it take?" (*Speak, sir*) Somebody's asking, "How long will prejudice blind the visions of men, darken their understanding, and drive bright-eyed wisdom from her sacred throne?" Somebody's asking, "When will wounded justice, lying prostrate on the streets of Selma and Birmingham and communities all over the South, be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men?" Somebody's asking, "When will the radiant star of hope be plunged against the nocturnal bosom of this lonely night, (*Speak, speak, speak*) plucked from weary souls with chains of fear and the manacles of death? How long will justice be crucified, (*Speak*) and truth bear it?" (*Yes, sir*)

I come to say to you this afternoon, however difficult the moment, (*Yes, sir*) however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, (*No sir*) because "truth crushed to earth will rise again." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*Yes, sir*) because "no lie can live forever." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*All right. How long*) because "you shall reap what you sow." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? (*How long?*) Not long: (*Not long*)

Truth forever on the scaffold, (*Speak*)

Wrong forever on the throne, (*Yes, sir*)

Yet that scaffold sways the future, (*Yes, sir*)

And, behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow,

Keeping watch above his own.

How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. (*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*Not long*) because:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; (*Yes, sir*)

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; (*Yes*)

He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword; (*Yes, sir*)

His truth is marching on. (*Yes, sir*)

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; (*Speak, sir*)

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat. (*That's right*)

O, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant my feet!

Our God is marching on. (*Yeah*)

Glory, hallelujah! (*Yes, sir*) Glory, hallelujah! (*All right*)

Glory, hallelujah! Glory, hallelujah!

His truth is marching on. [*Applause*]

NORTH WALL

Panel Q: True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice. 1958

In a 1955 response to an accusation that he was "disturbing the peace" by his activism during the Montgomery Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, as quoted in Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1982) by Stephen B. Oates