

King, Jr., Martin Luther. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Edited by Clayborne Carson. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 1998.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) worked as a Baptist preacher. King is praised for his non-violent political agitation seeking racial equality in America. King's visionary oratory and personal flaws render his story complex. King headed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he helped found, and helped organize the March on Washington in 1963. During that large protest, King delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. This massive protest influenced passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. King was assassinated in 1968.

- 1. Early Years.** Martin Luther King Jr. described himself as religious, the descendant of a family of preachers. King was born at the leading edge of the Great Depression. His family was loving, his community middle class, and he was gifted physically and mentally. For these things, King was grateful. King's mother was quiet and devout. She countered racial discrimination by teaching her children, including King, that they were somebody, in no way inferior. King's father sought education, despite many obstacles, was deeply moral, and spoke bluntly about circumstances. King's religious life was a constant support from childhood. His grandmother's death shook King. Being excluded from a white friend's life at age six shocked King, making him hate all white people. King's father resisted segregation, and spoke against it. As a youth, King won an oratory contest, speaking on the negro and U.S. Constitution. On the bus home, he and his teacher were forced to stand for ninety miles to let whites sit. King learned that poor whites were as economically oppressed as blacks.
- 2. Morehouse College.** King entered Morehouse College at fifteen years of age. His professors discussed race issues frankly. King read Thoreau on civil disobedience, reaching conviction that noncooperation with evil is as essential as cooperation with good. King's racial hatred moderated to willingness to cooperate with some whites. King came to question much in his religious heritage as he encountered historical criticism of biblical texts, even as he moved closer to choosing a vocation as a pastor. King, following his father's example, entered seminary at nineteen.
- 3. Crozer Seminary.** King tried to live in a manner that contradicted stereotypes about negroes. King developed understanding that individuals and societies are linked, and that one cannot fix one without fixing the other. He understood himself as preaching a social gospel. King read Marx and Lenin, concluding their materialism, atheism, dismissal of ugly means if the ends were deemed glorious, and totalitarianism made both unpalatable. King appreciated communism's roots in the outcry of the poor, its hatred of classism, its action to end income maldistribution, and its critique of capitalism as profit-mongering at the expense of collective well-being. Marxism does justice to man's collectivity; capitalism sees man's individuality. King despaired of peaceful settlement of American race issues; war would be necessary. Love worked, King then believed, but only in individual relationships.

Then King heard a lecture on Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation. King adopted Gandhi's nonviolent resistance as his approach to social ills. King abandoned his earlier fundamentalism, in favor of a liberal view of scripture. He eventually grew critical of liberalism's rosy view of man, which did not accord with King's experience of southern racism. In the end, King settled toward neo-orthodoxy. Human reason is compromised. It justifies evils. Reason peers darkly through sin. Collective evil protrudes like a cancer. Faith is necessary to cope with these shortcomings in man.

Niebuhr's rejection of pacifism argued that nonviolence harms where there exists no reason to believe that its tactics will succeed. Some lack moral conscience. Nonviolent suffering will not move those persons. King rejected Niebuhr's criticism. Niebuhr saw nonviolence as acquiescence in evil, not active opposition to it without violence. King settled in a realistic pacifism, seeing the involvement of all men in collective evil. King praises religious faith as that which gives life meaning. He savored nature, which reveals God.

4. **Boston University.** In his doctoral studies at Boston University, King modified his liberalism by affection for the corrective of neo-orthodoxy. Though Niebuhr held too dim a view of human nature, King balanced that with a bright view of the divine. King encountered personalism, and ultimately wrote a dissertation comparing the god-concepts of Tillich and Wieman. King came to the conviction that he wanted to base his life on the biblical god, not on passing fads.
5. **Coretta.** King met Coretta Scott in Boston. She was at that time involved in justice and peace issues. They married in 1953. Coretta came from Alabama, studied at Antioch in Ohio, and later studied music at a Boston conservatory. Her father ran several businesses, and endured threats from white competitors without becoming bitter. Coretta's mother was shy and attractive, deeply committed to caring for her family. King wrote appreciatively of Coretta's support. He lamented his absence from family life, and felt he failed in those duties.
6. **Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.** King finished his PhD, and ultimately accepted a call to Dexter Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, which church stands across the square from the state capitol where Jefferson Davis took his oath of office for the Confederacy. King, being vetted by the Dexter Baptist congregation, preached on life's three dimensions: personal, social, and divine. King and Coretta had reservations about returning to the South, and raising children there, since segregation still ruled. And King had other offers in the North. King continued work on his dissertation, and preached monthly at Dexter Baptist. King Sr. preached King's installation sermon. King turned Dexter Baptist toward social justice issues. All members registered to vote; all joined the NAACP. King became vice president of the local NAACP, and joined the Council on Human Relations. Daughter Yolanda was born.
7. **Montgomery Movement Begins.** Rosa Parks was arrested for refusal to relinquish her bus seat to white riders on December 1, 1955. King became associated with Ralph Abernathy, a young black preacher in Montgomery. Black leaders met at Dexter Baptist Church; they decided to boycott the Montgomery buses on December 5, 1955, the day of Parks's trial for her bus seat segregation violation. King recast the boycott as noncooperation, after Gandhi and Thoreau. Montgomery's blacks avoided buses; compliance was near 100%. The Montgomery Improvement Association was formed that afternoon; King was elected president. Leaders discussed whether to continue the bus protest. The mass meeting supported continuing the boycott, attended by thousands. Abernathy read a resolution, seeking new courtesies for bus riders, and lesser discriminations. The resolution was unanimously supported. The cradle of the Confederacy was becoming the cradle of the civil rights movement.
8. **The Violence of Desperate Men.** King fell to planning the bus protest. King turned to many, first among whom was Ralph Abernathy. King modeled the Montgomery bus boycott on the previous protest in Selma. Private car pools were organized. Many protesters offered their cars for protest use. The police cut off the taxis by enforcing the minimum fare ordinance. But many blacks walked despite the available rides. Walking was symbolic protest. White housewives drove their black maids. The people of Montgomery became aware of Gandhi and nonviolent noncooperation. Christ moved the blacks; Gandhi provided methodology. Some disapproved, wanting to kill aggressively or asserting their right to self-defense. Many just went along, trusting their leaders. King met with city leaders; they declined to budge. Segregation exists to exploit and oppress; none gives up such ideas merely because asked. Powerful opposition is needed. White opponents sought to discredit the Negro leaders, gossip about them, and sow dissent among the blacks. King offered to resign as leader, fearing he was an obstacle to settlement. The black community refused him. A disinformation campaign announced in the newspaper settlement of the boycott. The MIA thwarted it by a word of mouth counter-campaign. The police began arresting people on pretexts. The number of private drivers fell as fears rose. King was swept up for speeding,

and jailed. Abernathy sought cash bail, but the milling crowd outside convinced the jailers that they would be better off with King on the street. Threats against King and his family ensued. King faltered. He prayed and found Jesus telling him to battle on. King's home was bombed, with Coretta and the baby inside. King urged calm and non-violence. King learned his family was uninjured. A militant armed crowd grew around the parsonage. Coretta's father arrived to take her and the baby to Atlanta; she declined. Many wanted armed protection for King and his family; they declined, and got rid of the gun they owned. Violence robs protesters of their moral momentum, and makes them little different from the oppressors they would resist.

- 9. Desegregation at Last.** When violence failed, opponents used mass arrest, employing an old anti-boycott law on the books. A grand jury indicted King and a hundred others. The boycott was now thirteen weeks old. King's parents worried, advising him to avoid Montgomery. King declined. King's father called a conclave of elders, who advised King to stay out of Montgomery, but relented when King argued otherwise. On his return, King was arrested, and in short order convicted. Lawyers appealed his cause. King was proud of his crime, as were most protesters of theirs. They resisted evil. Opposition tactics welded them into a unified force, mutually reliant. Fear paralyzes. Where fear melts, lifting up humanity becomes possible. King preached that segregation must die, that separate but equal is never equal. Human psychology wants actual, not faux, equality. The city appealed to the Supreme Court. The bus boycott wore on. Montgomery insurers refused black vehicle insurance, so they turned to Lloyds of London. Finally, the city sought to enjoin the car pool itself. As the hearing on the car pool proceeded, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Alabama bus segregation unlawful. Despite this ruling, the Montgomery judge ruled against the car pool. New threats emerged. The Ku Klux Klan rode, but the negroes of Montgomery refused to hide. The black community worked hard to prevent violence as the integrated bus seating was implemented. The white community, including its pastors, did nothing. The Supreme Court order arrived. A meeting was called. King addressed the protesters, urging them to make friends of their enemies when they returned to the buses. King rode the first Montgomery integrated bus. Integration proceeded with minor mishaps only. So, the weapon of nonviolent resistance was honed. It demoralized opponents without immoral means. It gave voice to previously muted angers.
- 10. The Expanding Struggle.** Opponents bombed Abernathy's home and several Negro churches. Black leaders asked President Eisenhower to speak in the south urging compliance with desegregation rulings. They formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and elected King president. King asked God to take him, not others, if someone must die. New bombings occurred, and an unexploded bomb was found at King's residence. King spoke, urging nonviolence and the idea that unwarranted suffering redeems others. The city arrested seven whites with respect to the bombings. Despite written confessions from all, the jury acquitted the seven. King became a sensation in the nation's eye. He spoke across the continent. He struggled to be as good as people deemed him. King worried about the future, about encore performances to the Montgomery victory. *Brown v. Board of Education* made segregated education illegal. King saw the American black struggle as part of a global struggle to throw off imperialism. At the Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington D.C. (1957), blacks called for voting legislation and criticized the federal government and both parties. In the summer of 1957, SCLC promoted the Crusade for Citizenship, attempting to register black voters and get them to vote. In September 1957, Eisenhower sent federal troops to insure that blacks could attend Little Rock High School. King thanked Eisenhower, but criticized his interest in fighting communism abroad more intently than segregation at home.
- 11. Birth of a New Nation.** When the British imperium released Ghana to independence, King wanted to see that event. King traveled to Ghana for the birth of independent Ghana with people from across the planet. Prime Minister Nkrumah said that Ghana faced challenges, but he preferred those dangers to the quietude of servility.

12. **Brush with Death.** A mentally ill woman knifed King. King attributed his calm during the near fatal ordeal to God removing bitterness from his heart. To be nonviolent means to suffer the violence of others without retribution, hoping your pain will redeem the situation.
13. **Pilgrimage to Nonviolence.** King and Coretta traveled to India, where they were well-received. King spoke to thousands; Coretta sang spirituals for them. King's travels led him to question the U.S. military budget. Indians were divided on development. Some wanted better standards of living by industrializing. Others feared losing the Indian soul to Yankee factories. King was impressed with the Bhoodan movement for land reform. The Bhoodanists urged landholders to give land to the landless, to create self-sufficient villages that bartered with surrounding villages. This would stem the tide toward urban centers. It met with moderate success, but lacked centralized organization. King asked the Indian people to take the lead in disarmament. He praised Gandhi's public self-criticism. King took the non-violent revolution that freed India from British rule to be one of history's most important events. King argued that willingly suffering violence, rather than inflicting it, may strike the opponent with shame and change his heart. Gandhi hated untouchability; King recognized that he and America's negroes were untouchable to white America. Gandhi adopted an untouchable as his daughter, over Gandhi's wife's protests. Gandhi fasted, almost to death, to get Brahmins and untouchables to abandon their prejudices. And India outlawed discrimination against untouchables, instituting affirmative action and other atoning policies. King thought that India had made more progress than America in class matters.
14. **The Sit-In Movement.** King and family moved to Atlanta, in part to address King's need for some time to reflect. Atlanta did not, however, afford him that. The sit-in movement challenged segregation frontally. Students in thousands opposed administrations, and went to jail, and walked out of classes. King was indicted for tax fraud. An all white jury, and all white court, acquitted King. His negro northern lawyers convinced the prejudiced jurors to heed a black man over his white accusers.
15. **Atlanta Arrest and Presidential Politics.** King recounted his meeting with then-Senator John Kennedy, seeking the presidential nomination. Kennedy was compliant, but not emotionally committed to the civil rights movement. King was arrested during a lunch counter sit-in in Atlanta. When all 240 arrestees refused bail, the merchants dropped their charges. Released, King was arrested for violating his probation, of which he knew nothing. He had been arrested for having an Alabama driver's license in Georgia, and his attorney had pled guilty on his behalf. After trial, King was sent to four months hard labor a great distance from Atlanta and his pregnant Coretta. John Kennedy intervened. Robert Kennedy got King released on bond. This intercession swayed King toward Kennedy and away from Nixon, who, King said, if Nixon was not sincere, then he was the most dangerous man in America. King never endorsed Kennedy, and found things to like and dislike in both Kennedy and Nixon.
16. **The Albany Movement.** The Kennedy administration took minor actions supporting civil rights. But the negro communities wanted immediate action. Broad protests erupted. King was arrested and jailed in Albany, Georgia. Freedom Rides sought to compel integration, already ordered by federal officials, of bus terminals and interstate transportation. The Albany Movement was multi-focal, addressing schools, voting, speech and assembly, and travel by means of sit-ins, jail-ins, boycotts, lawsuits. 700 were arrested; merchants urged their release. But the City ignored its agreements. Protests resumed. King and Abernathy were jailed, but after two days, some anonymous person paid their fines. They were released. The protests resumed. The police and crowds grew violent against protesters. Negroes retaliated. King halted demonstrations while he urged the black community that no resistance would be acceptable. King was arrested again, this time for praying in front of city hall in Albany, Georgia. The police chief tried to get King to leave; someone put up cash bail. King refused, asking to serve his sentence. The Albany Movement leaders kept up the pressure of legal challengers, demonstrations, boycott, and voter registration. The Albany Movement

ended without the hoped-for results. King blames his own bailing from jail and human weaknesses for that failure. King thought their general protest against segregation should, in hindsight, have chosen a particular practice as its focus. Albany's segregation laws were repealed. The library was integrated. In the fall a moderate defeated a local racist in elections. But the successes were mixed. Lunch counters remained segregated. Overall, Albany was a learning episode.

17. The Birmingham Campaign. Birmingham was a racist stronghold. Segregation replaced slavery, and was every bit as degrading. Blacks were assaulted and killed with impunity by racists. Fear prevailed. George Wallace was Alabama's governor; he promised segregation forever. Birmingham was the most segregated city in the United States. Fred Shuttlesworth, a local pastor, organized protests, and was bombed, stabbed, and beaten for his efforts. Project C (for confrontation) was planned. Learning from the Albany diffuseness, they focused on the business community, which was vulnerable. The protesters waited until after municipal elections, to avoid becoming an issue in that race. The election loser, a virulent racist (Bull Connor) refused to vacate office. Freedom songs lay at the heart of the movement's soul. The Birmingham black community was not united. King and Shuttlesworth blitzed Birmingham, seeking to gel the community behind the protests. Birmingham blacks responded and got behind SCLC efforts. Bull Connor got a court injunction against the demonstrations. The SCLC disobeyed the court order, a first for the organization. The city changed the criteria for bail bondsmen, effectively putting the SCLC's bondsman out of business. So, going to jail might mean very long stays. King and Abernathy decided to go, regardless of the unknown outcome. King endured solitary confinement. Coretta called the Kennedys, and Robert intervened. John Kennedy called Coretta a few hours later. Harry Belafonte raised \$50,000 for bail bonds.

18. Letter from Birmingham Jail. King wrote on scraps a letter responding to other pastors critical of the Birmingham protests. King notes he seldom responded to criticism, for by so doing he might seldom do the work before him. King is no outsider; he works for SCLC and is an American. Injustice anywhere injures justice everywhere, due to human mutuality. Birmingham is racially rancid. King explained the timing of the demonstrations in Birmingham. The purpose of non-violent demonstrations is to create tensions that bring parties to the negotiation table. Pressure opens the door to change, which never occurs voluntarily in the intransigent. Groups, especially, welcome immorality. The American black has been patient for 340 years. Now the civil rights movement opposes unjust laws, those laws failing to conform to God's morality. Protesters break laws, and willingly accept punishments for those transgressions. King expresses disappointment in white moderates, who mouth agreement, but oppose King's tactics. Virulent opposition is more welcome than tepid support. When one opposes evil, evil men do violence. Do not blame the protester. Others condemn the civil rights movement for its hurry. Time aids the recalcitrant. One must strike while the iron is hot. The silence of good people distresses King. But he is convinced that oppression cannot prevail. King reluctantly accepts the name "extremist," but only if Jesus, Amos, Paul, Martin Luther, Bunyan, Lincoln, and Jefferson were extremists. King expresses disappointment in the church. Many are ensconced behind their stained glass in a stupor. If the church is Christ's body, we have terribly mutilated him. The church gives itself to conformity and the status quo. Perhaps a nugget lies within it, the true ecclesia. Praise for the Birmingham police is misplaced. They have been brutal. And to the extent they have been patient, their patience served segregation. Ends must be pure; moral means do not cleanse filthy ends. The civil rights movement is a signal moment in American history; its leaders promote the best of our heritage. King's letter from jail is long, but what else has a prisoner to do with his time? Long letters, long thoughts, long prayers.

19. Freedom Now! King and Abernathy bailed out of Birmingham jail after eight days. King brought students into the Birmingham action. The youths responded in great numbers, and the protesters filled up the jails. Sympathy with the protesters grew nationally and locally. Birmingham whites stood the sidelines in the battle, which heartened the protesters. The

federal government sent officials to negotiate between the parties. In secret, the SCLC and Senior Citizen's committee initiated negotiations. Police violence (and a few protesters' violence) continued throughout the negotiations. After initial intransigence, the business community moved toward settlement. King called a truce for twenty-four hours. An agreement was reached that effectively ended segregation in Birmingham. Adamant segregationists bombed several locations in response. A Saturday night brawl ensued, after bar closings. George Wallace's state police moved in and sealed off the negro areas. Kennedy ordered 3,000 federal troops to Birmingham and federalized the Alabama national guard. The school board suspended or expelled the protesting students. The SCLC took the student issue to court. A federal district court judge upheld the board, but an appeals judge overturned the ruling that same day. The next day, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that Bull Connor and his cronies held office illegally. The segregationists continued opposition, but their cause was lost.

- 20. March on Washington.** Birmingham inspired people to protest. They did so, in their millions. The March on Washington brought 200,000 blacks and whites to the Lincoln Memorial. Media coverage of the March brought to millions of Americans their first view of negroes engaged in important, organized business, to the detriment of stereotypes.
- 21. Death of Illusions.** Inhumanity finds its source in ugly action of bad men, but also in the passive inaction of good ones. Four girls in Sunday School were killed by a bomb. No white officials attended their funerals in Birmingham. King's funeral sermon castigates lethargic clergy and sideline negroes, calls for an aristocracy of character, rather than color, and expresses hope in life after death. Kennedy summoned King and the Birmingham white leadership to confer. But the administration met separately with black and white emissaries. King objected; nothing was accomplished. King criticized failure to apprehend racist assassins. Kennedy was assassinated. King thought Kennedy two men, one before 1963, another after. King lays the reason for Kennedy's death to an unkind moral climate. Kennedy's death also killed many happy illusions. Hate spreads, even to the highest echelons of society.
- 22. St. Augustine.** 1963 and 1964 were the crux of the civil rights movement. St. Augustine, Florida, held vigorously to segregation policy. The SCLC asked for accommodations to that policy, and was rebuffed. SCLC began its nonviolent agitation: legal action, marching, boycotts, nonviolent suffering. The Civil Rights Bill of 1964 passed Congress; St. Augustine officials said they would comply, but did not. Johnson followed Kennedy's policy's and enhanced them. He started a war on poverty, which helped blacks emerge. Civil rights legislation was passed by Congress, but written in the streets by protesters.
- 23. The Mississippi Challenge.** King broke with his policy of political neutrality to oppose the Goldwater nomination. King opined that, while not personally a racist, Goldwater's campaign gave racial hatred a haven and hope. King was offended that Goldwater shook Strom Thurmond's hand. King urged all negroes to vote with the Democratic Party. Mississippi was the testing ground. Nowhere were negroes more oppressed politically and economically. But the negroes were determined to free themselves. King's life was threatened, but he persevered regardless. Only 1,600 Mississippi negroes were registered to vote in 1964. An alternative political party, the Freedom Democratic Party, sought to be seated at the Atlantic City national convention. Two members were seated, in a losing compromise for the renegade party. Johnson won the election, but lost all the southern states to Goldwater. Congress was still compromised with racist members.
- 24. The Nobel Peace Prize.** King was admitted to a hospital for rest and a physical. While there, he received notice that he had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. King took this to be an award for the thousands on the ground of the civil rights movement. World opinion favored the negro civil rights movement. King sought economic sanctions against South Africa. King vows to live a better personal life. He called for the wealthy nations to lift up

the poor, mostly black, nations. After the award, the SCLC turned its attention to the American north, and to global racism, poverty, and war. King advocated a national boycott of Mississippi goods, and that the Mississippi congressional delegation not be seated for the state's failure to make negro voting possible.

25. **Malcolm X.** King met Malcolm X for one minute at a press conference in Washington. King wished Malcolm would speak less of violence, and articulate a creative alternative way of life. Negroes could not win a race war. The only viable alternative is nonviolent protest. Negroes threw eggs at King; King believed that was Malcolm X's doing. King believed that the Black Nationalist groups failed to understand his message, took him to be an Uncle Tom, and did not distinguish between acquiescence in evil and non-violent resistance. Malcolm X's hatred grew from the hatred he experienced. He could have become a master criminal, but turned instead to religion for guidance. He was doing so to his death. Malcolm spoke at length with Coretta, while Martin was in jail in Selma. He could not then renounce violence. He died violently, as he advocated. King noted that negroes cannot afford to kill their men of talent. Those are too few to fall to envy and rivalries. Violence does not work. Black supremacy is no better than white supremacy. Both tyrannies crush humans. Only brotherhood works.
26. **Selma.** President Johnson told King he wanted to delay the Voting Rights Act, in favor of other elements of his Great Society program. Two months later, the Act was passed. King credits the protests of black communities for this result. Obstacles to black voting were police brutality, restrictive mass meeting laws, intentionally dawdling registrars, and literacy tests. In Selma, Alabama, the SCLC organized registration days and protest marches. King and thousands were arrested. King, upon release, met with Vice President Humphrey and the Attorney General urging federal intervention. The Selma demonstrations happened to pressure the federal government into action. State police violently suppressed a march in Selma. King led a responsive march to Pettus Bridge, where troopers blocked the street. The marchers came up to them, and departed. James Reeb, a white protesting pastor, was murdered. King argues that segregation seeks to control white, as well as black, opinion. The SCLC won the right to march in federal court, so they did march from Selma to Montgomery. King likens this march to Gandhi's March to the Sea. The march proceeded peacefully. Thousands of federal troops stood by insuring safety. In Montgomery, the protesters petitioned Governor Wallace. King preaches endurance, peace, and friendship with white men. How long? Not long. The SCLC went to Selma with limited objectives. Police brutality made the issue national. The Voting Rights Act ensued.
27. **Watts.** King turned his attention from southern segregation to northern riots. Watts in Los Angeles had erupted in violence. King deplored the negro violence, but called all to accept responsibility for permitting the underlying causes of the unrest. King portrayed looters as protesting poor people; looters wanted work and dignity. White conspicuous consumption prodded negroes to envy and resentment. The Watts riot was a mass temper tantrum, according to King. King condemned rioting as a theory; it serves only to justify reaction. King asserted that poverty and humiliation hurt people as much as clubs, and demands creative leadership. Such was absent in Los Angeles. Matters worsened in the city. California repealed laws prohibiting housing discrimination. King asserted that economic participation is the root of what it means to be American, which was a somewhat embarrassing admission for King as a pastor.
28. **Chicago Campaign.** The SCLC chose to address the ghetto pathology and problems of Chicago blacks. It joined a non-violent coalition seeking to address black slums and poverty, starting with poor education. King moved to Lawndale, a slum. Laws and restrictive covenants made it impossible for negroes to buy affordable houses. So, they were restricted to Lawndale. Landlords exploited the poor. To go on welfare meant one could not own a car or house. So employment proved difficult. King's own children developed behavior problems in Lawndale. King, for the first time in his career, was booed by angry black men. King saw that his rhetoric had promised more than he could deliver. Many were

disappointed. The Chicago riots of 1966 grew from large numbers of poor with no stake in the system. After the riots, some attempted to blame King and his activists. They stepped up activities. Neo-nazis threw bricks and bottles. The crowds of opponents were the most hostile King had ever encountered. King styled the Chicago agitations as social physicians, pointing out the cancerous state of community life. The protesters worked out an agreement with the leaders of Chicago and the real estate community. Protesters then formed tenant unions, got neighborhood rehabilitation of buildings in dilapidated condition, and boycotted to force employment equity. King sought negro advantages in negro-dominated business. Jewish landlords exploited negro tenants in Lawndale. King argued with both angry parties. Negroes should not indulge anti-semitism. Jewish landlords should not exploit. The Chicago Housing Authority dragged its feet in implementing the fair housing agreements of the year prior. King gave effort to teaching non-violence to Chicago black gang teens. Some joined southern protests, and performed admirably.

29. Black Power. A sniper shot, but did not kill, James Meredith while on his March Against Fear voting protest. The SCLC decided it must take up leadership in Meredith's absence. While King visited Meredith in the hospital, Stokely Carmichael came to visit as well. All black civil rights organizations were invited to join in the continuing March. As they marched, some younger men expressed racial bitterness. King reasoned with dissenters to nonviolence. Violence would muddy the waters, and insisting on blacks-only would be racist. One builds inter-racial understanding a bit at a time by contact and effort. King prevailed, in this one instance at least. In Greenwood, Carmichael calls for "black power." This divided the marchers; King's followers wanted to chant "Freedom Now." King and Carmichael met to discuss the Black Power slogan. King advocated strongly against its use, since its connotations were violent. The SNCC leadership remained adamant. All compromised by agreeing to chant no slogan in the remainder of the march. The slogan "Black Power" expresses some positive thoughts. Black Power expresses disappointment with the broken promises of white power-brokers. Black Power calls black people to gain legitimate economic and political power. Black Power calls for black people to pool their financial resources to better the plight of black people. Black Power calls blacks to manhood. History books ignore black contributions. Despite these positive features of the slogan "Black Power," it could not serve as the basis of the civil rights movement. The slogan expresses despair about changing America. It is nihilism, eschewing hope. Yet hope is the core attribute of all change. King spent long sessions with Black Power advocates, arguing into the night for nonviolence over against Fanon's Algerian praise for violence as a legitimate tool for oppressed peoples. Armed insurrection would result in thousands of negro casualties. One cannot prevail against racial prejudice by violence. Whites of good faith need their fears assuaged by blacks of good faith. Then integration and power sharing can proceed. Even if most blacks prefer violence, King declined to lead them. Genuine leaders shape opinion, not follow it. Black Power invited negroes to fashion themselves after the worst people in America. King asked people to be concerned with outcomes, but also to be concerned about their moral inwardness. King sought a new man, new power, and a new day.

30. Beyond Vietnam. King privately urged peace in Vietnam, but did not protest. When he began making anti-war statements, he was roundly criticized in the black and white press for involving himself in matters he poorly understood. King came to a crisis when he realized the American government talked peace, but intended to make military victory at any cost. King spoke, and organized protests. He could no longer condone by his silence. King linked the paltry war on poverty with the expense and distraction caused by the intent to destroy Vietnam. A disproportionate number of blacks fought and died for democracy in Vietnam when they found none in Georgia. The United States purveys violence; none excel America in this. God gave King his calling; that calling exceeds the interests of one nation. America is on the wrong side of revolution. We must change from money to people in our values. To spend more on war than on social healing portends spiritual collapse. Mankind can no longer preserve his local culture by loyalty to it; we must support mankind to save ourselves. The NAACP opposed a position King never iterated. King criticized them. President Johnson

was a man who could not admit wrong, in a statesman-like fashion. King told Johnson so. King stated he would not fight in Vietnam if he were drafted. He encouraged every young man to search his heart, and refuse to fight.

- 31. The Poor People's Campaign.** The SCLC decided to take on financial opportunity in America by means of a poor people's march on Washington. They would persist until the federal government acted to end poverty. The government had failed to address any of the root causes of the summer riots of 1966 and 1967. Instead, Congress tinkered. So, the SCLC organized demonstrations in Washington. Racism will be confronted. King looked to Jesus for example. He was the true revolutionary, not Marx. King joined the Memphis sanitation workers' strike. America will go to hell if it does not end poverty. King admitted that he got discouraged, but he found solace in his faith.
- 32. Unfulfilled Dreams.** Life often disappoints dreams. At the heart of the universe, evil and good struggle. The struggle extends to our own hearts. God judges a man by the tendency of his life, not incident by incident. God wants your heart to be good. God wants us to try. Of all of human history, King wished to live in no other than his present; for God is at work in the world now. Negroes have grown determined to be men. King encouraged followers to develop a dangerous charity. Do not fear. Project yourself into the shoes of others. Stand with the sanitation workers. When the demented woman almost killed King, newspapers reported that if King had sneezed, he would have died. King received letters of condolence. Of all those, King remembered best that of a ninth-grade white girl, who was glad he had not sneezed. King too was glad he did not sneeze. He recounted the events of his life, with gratitude. When King dies, he wanted to be remembered for serving, loving, opposing the Vietnam war, clothing the naked, visiting some prisoners, and serving humanity. King wanted to leave behind a committed life. That is all.