

1

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.

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail: April 16, 1963." [University of Pennsylvania - African Studies Center](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html) 27 Feb. 1994: 16 Jan. 2005

2

Nonviolent resistance does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that noncooperation and boycotts are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. **The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.**

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Nonviolent Resitance." [Martin Luther King Papers Project: Stanford University Online](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/nonviolent.resist.html) 14 Jan. 2005: 16 Jan. 2005

3

It is evil we are seeking to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil. Those of us who struggle against racial injustice must come to see that the basic tension is not between races. [...]

Nonviolent resistance avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. In struggling for human dignity the oppressed people of the world must not allow themselves to become bitter or indulge in hate campaigns. To retaliate with hate and bitterness would do nothing but intensify the hate in the world. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. **This can be done only by projecting the ethics of love to the center of our lives.**

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Nonviolent Resitance." [Martin Luther King Papers Project: Stanford University Online](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/nonviolent.resist.html) 14 Jan. 2005: 16 Jan. 2005

4

Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movement, and pray that our own 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.

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Beyond Vietnam: Address at Riverside Church on 4 April 1967." [AfricanAmericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com/MLKjrBeyondVietnam.htm) 1997: 3 Nov. 2004

5

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?

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Beyond Vietnam: Address at Riverside Church on 4 April 1967." [AfricanAmericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com) 1997: 3 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.africanamericans.com/MLKjrBeyondVietnam.htm>>

6

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, 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.** So such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Beyond Vietnam: Address at Riverside Church on 4 April 1967." [AfricanAmericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com) 1997: 3 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.africanamericans.com/MLKjrBeyondVietnam.htm>>

7

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.**

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Beyond Vietnam: Address at Riverside Church on 4 April 1967." [AfricanAmericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com) 1997: 3 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.africanamericans.com/MLKjrBeyondVietnam.htm>>

8

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.

King Jr., Dr. Martin Luther. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail: April 16, 1963." [University of Pennsylvania - African Studies Center](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html) 27 Feb. 1994: 16 Jan. 2005 <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html>