









Howard Sochurek/LIFE

LETTER TO MARTIN LUTHER KING

Signed by:

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- JOSEPH A. DURICK, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Mobile-Birmingham
- Rabbi MILTON L. GRAFMAN, Temple Emanu-El, Birmingham, AL
- Bishop PAUL HARDIN, Bishop of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the Methodist Church
- Bishop NOLAN B. HARMON, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church
- GEORGE M. MURRAY, D.D., LL.D., Bishop Coadjutor, Episcopal Diocese of Alabama
- EDWARD V. RAMAGE, Moderator, Synod of the Alabama Presbyterian Church in the United States
- EARL STALLINGS, Pastors, First Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL

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.

-MLK Jr. Letter from a Birmingham Jail

GALATIANS 2:11-21

¹¹ But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

GALATIANS 2:11-21

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

GALATIANS 2:11-21

¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

The words 'bad timing' came to be ghosts haunting our every move in Birmingham. Yet people who used this argument were ignorant of the background of our planning...they did not realize that it was ridiculous to speak of timing when the clock of history showed that the Negro had already suffered one hundred years of delay."

— *Martin Luther King Jr., Why We Can't Wait*

"Lamentably, it is a 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."

— *Martin Luther King Jr., Why We Can't Wait*

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MATTHEW 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

