

Celebrate King's Birthday With A Read-In

Why not celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday with a Read-In? We could do this by setting aside a period of time each day during January to read some of his writings; we could bring together a group of friends to read and discuss one of his many books or articles, or we could use one of his many speeches as an assignment for reading and study in school. He surely would have considered this as the highest form of honor.

He often expressed this wish that his people would spend more time with books. Once, in Montgomery at the Institution of Nonviolence, he delivered a candid address on "some things we must do," pointing out that there were too many professionals who had not read a book since they left college, and that there was a definite need for us to do more studying and thinking.

Martin Luther King traced his own spiritual growth and development through the books he had read. In his book, *Strength To Love* (Fortress Press, 1981), he wrote of the way in which books had challenged his old way of thinking and caused him to question old theories, or as he put it, "knocked me out of my dogmatic slumber."

Why should we read King's works when we can listen to his recorded speeches? The written word invites analysis. It can be handled with detachment and placed under the microscope of our own reflections.

The following three books have been found to be especially valuable in studying the Civil Rights Movement and for use with



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

discussion groups.

His first book *"Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story"* (Harper, 1958) is much more than a description of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This book is a blueprint for social change, describing the kind of conditions which keep people protesting or fighting against injustice; pointing out the essentials for organizing a community for protest, and detailing the methods of opposition which can be expected when trying to bring about change. Anyone who plans to organize people for protest and change should consider this book as required reading.

"In Why We Can't Wait"

(Harper, 1963), King describes the forces which shaped the African Ameri-

can's struggle for justice and which reached a peak with the Civil Rights Movement. This is a book which can be used very successfully to stimulate study among high school students, as he gives great attention to the way in which young people were involved in the fight for Civil Rights.

"Strength To Love" is a book of Martin Luther King's sermons which he

prepared especially for reading, rather than listening. These sermons are just as powerful and relevant for

today's problems as they were when he wrote them.

When we gather together to read and discuss Martin Luther King's written works, we are not only honoring him, we are also allowing ourselves to continue to reap the rich rewards of his leadership.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



...left mankind a legacy in the form of a dream, a dream that all Americans shunned the deathmask of hatred and led the entire world to a new life of brotherhood and fellowship among men.

prop play

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Michael L. King: Rowan County Native, North Carolina Central University Honors graduate. Published in legal and non-legal periodicals practicing law after experience as a school teacher.

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