

Composing Martin Luther King, Jr.

Author(s): Keith D. Miller

Source: *PMLA*, Vol. 105, No. 1, Special Topic: African and African American Literature (Jan., 1990), pp. 70-82

Published by: Modern Language Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/462344>

Accessed: 12-12-2018 19:37 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Modern Language Association* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *PMLA*

# Composing Martin Luther King, Jr.

*KEITH D. MILLER, assistant professor of rhetoric and composition at Arizona State University, received his PhD from Texas Christian University. He has also taught in the writing program at Ohio State University. His previous essays about King have appeared in College English and Rhetoric Society Quarterly, and a forthcoming book about King's discourse will be published by the Free Press.*

**I**n the seventeen pages of "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," Martin Luther King, Jr., accounts for the intellectual development that shaped his leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott.<sup>1</sup> Although King devotes a page of the essay to a discussion of his childhood and adolescence, he attributes the growth of his ideas almost entirely to his formal education at Morehouse College, where he received an AB degree; Crozer Theological Seminary, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity; and Boston University School of Theology, where he earned a PhD. During the years at Crozer and Boston, King reports, he wrestled with Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, and other intellectual giants as his professors coached him from the corner. According to "Pilgrimage" his ability to synthesize diverse strands of philosophy and theology and his capacity to absorb and adapt ideas of Gandhi prepared him to guide the Montgomery campaign.

Certainly many of King's followers before and after the boycott attached themselves to a man whose thinking seemed to reflect a sound understanding of Western philosophy and a keen awareness of the respectable strands of recent Protestant thought, including the influential notions of Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr. And an even larger number of people appreciated King's apparently unique comprehension of the principles of Gandhi, especially with regard to nonviolence.

Since King's death, scholars have credited much of his leadership to what a popular biographer, Stephen Oates, calls an "encyclopedic knowledge of philosophy, theology, and history" (38). Civil rights historian Harvard Sitkoff marvels that King's theological studies "left him with an appetite for transcendent ideas," while his "advanced education in philosophy, quite likely, led him to articulate the thrust of the movement in grand, conceptual terms" (60). On the supposition that King's graduate training furnished the intellectual basis for his discourse and politics, Kenneth Smith and Ira Zepp provide a book-length exploration of that schooling and its impact on King; John Ansbro offers a similar, more detailed examination. In a recent, Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of King, David Garrow joins Oates, Smith and Zepp, Ansbro, William Miller, Frederick Downing, distinguished

church historian Martin Marty, and others in noting the importance of King's direct exposure to the theologies of Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr.<sup>2</sup> Given the general attention to King's years in white graduate school, Donald Smith seems to speak for a number of investigators in observing that for King the distance between his hometown of Atlanta and Boston University was "measurable in intellectual light years" (43).

These versions of King's intellectual evolution rest primarily on "Pilgrimage." Accepting "Pilgrimage" at its face value, many scholars cite it routinely and refer frequently to its five major themes—the social gospel of Rauschenbusch, Communism, Gandhi and nonviolence, Niebuhr's Christian realism, and love—and to three of its briefer motifs—Hegel's dialectic, Boston personalism, and interrelatedness. (King devotes approximately one page of "Pilgrimage" to the social gospel; three and two-thirds pages to Communism; three and three-fourths pages to Gandhi and nonviolence; two and one-third pages to Niebuhr; two and two-thirds pages to love; one-third page to Hegel; two-thirds page to personalism, the theology of King's dissertation director; and one-fourth page to interrelatedness, a topic that often surfaced in his speeches and sermons.)

Although one essay by Garrow and two by James Cone depart from "Pilgrimage" by tracing King's intellectual development to his immersion in the black church, the contention of these essays has won relatively few converts. However, despite Cone's admission that his evidence is "indirect" ("Black Theology" 411), reservations about "Pilgrimage" are warranted, for the essay is not what it appears to be.

"Pilgrimage" does not constitute a reliable report about King's intellectual evolution because *none* of the sources King mentions for his eight sets of ideas is the original, pivotal source of his thinking. By substantially exaggerating the significance of his formal education at white graduate schools, King's essay masks a careful process of self-making that must be understood before his rhetorical prowess can be fathomed. This process includes King's unacknowledged use of eight passages by seven writers whose names do not appear in the essay. The borrowed passages explain King's responses to and interpretations of the work of

philosophers and theologians. Zepp, in his dissertation, identifies three of these sources.<sup>3</sup> Unaware of the others (and usually ignoring those cited by Zepp), scholars often extract language King borrowed from the seven writers to "prove" what he learned from a more respectable group of thinkers, namely, Marx, Rauschenbusch, Gandhi, and others whose names dominate "Pilgrimage" and scholarship about King's intellectual maturation.<sup>4</sup>

I contend that the seven lesser-known writers and a larger network they represent structured King's thought and discourse more profoundly than did the prestigious tradition of Euro-American intellectual history that "Pilgrimage" invokes. I further maintain that the black church provided King with the foundation for *all* the theological ideas he discusses in "Pilgrimage," with the exception of his response to Communism. In addition the black folk pulpit supplied him with the rhetorical assumption that language is common treasure—not private property—and with a well-established practice of borrowing and voice merging that he adapted to print. This tradition equipped King to unite parts of eight texts by seven writers, to place his distinctive imprimatur on the resulting intertext, and thereby to create for the public (and for King scholars) a coherent and highly convincing self. The white-educated PhD who emerges in "Pilgrimage" constitutes a substantial portion of King's entire philosophical persona—an identity that spurred the spectacular success of the civil rights movement and that the nation now enshrines in a federal holiday.

First, I briefly sketch the network represented by the seven writers—Harry Emerson Fosdick, Robert McCracken, William Stuart Nelson, Harris Wofford, Richard Gregg, George Kelsey, and Paul Ramsey—and King's chains of contact with the network. Second, I examine King's sources for four of the five major themes of "Pilgrimage"—Communism, Gandhian nonviolence, the social gospel, and love. Then I explore the black church as the wellspring that nurtured the roots of virtually all the major and minor themes that emerge in "Pilgrimage." Finally, I analyze the role of the black folk pulpit in providing the assumptions and procedures that make possible the kind of rhetorical self-making that King undertakes in "Pilgrimage."

### Network and Chains of Contact

In the first half of the twentieth century the dominant liberal Protestant preacher was certainly Harry Emerson Fosdick. Fosdick used the money of John D. Rockefeller to establish Riverside Church in New York City, helped develop a pulpit circuit across the country, selected Harper and Brothers (later Harper and Row) as publisher of nineteen of his books, joined his professorial colleague Reinhold Niebuhr in writing frequently for the bellwether liberal journal the *Christian Century*, and for nineteen years preached every week over a national radio pulpit, in his heyday reaching well over a million listeners on a given Sunday. After World War I Fosdick became an adamant and outspoken pacifist, as did many other writers of the *Christian Century*, which was founded and edited by pacifist C. C. Morrison.<sup>5</sup>

Linking King to Fosdick and to the intellectual and rhetorical network that undergirds "Pilgrimage" is Benjamin Mays, who served as president of Morehouse College during King's undergraduate years and whom King described as "one of the great influences in my life" (*Stride* 145). Mays acted as a mentor to King during King's years at Morehouse, mediated between King and King's father, offered the benediction at the historic 1963 March on Washington, defended King's opposition to the Vietnam War, and delivered the eulogy at King's graveside. A sharecropper's son, Mays earned a PhD at the University of Chicago, where he heard Fosdick advocate pacifism; Mays explains that he subsequently "read everything Fosdick ever wrote" (Interview). Before coming to Morehouse, Mays rose to the deanship of the School of Religion at Howard University; there he worked alongside university president Mordecai Johnson until he was succeeded as dean by William Stuart Nelson.<sup>6</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s Mays and three other black religious intellectuals—Johnson, Nelson, and Howard Thurman (a Morehouse graduate and dean of Marsh Chapel at Boston University during King's final year in Boston)—traveled to India to discuss nonviolence with Gandhi himself. In "Pilgrimage" King reports that he first became interested in Gandhi when, as a seminarian, he heard Johnson preach about

Gandhi and nonviolence. Later King became acquainted with Nelson, who taught what has been described as "probably the first course in an American college or university on 'The Philosophy and Methods of Non-Violence'" (Logan 544). King became friends as well with Harris Wofford, who had also visited India to learn about nonviolence and who became the first white male to graduate from the law school of Howard University. Wofford, Nelson, and Richard Gregg spoke at workshops about nonviolence held by King's organizations, the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.<sup>7</sup> In the preface of *Stride toward Freedom*, which features "Pilgrimage" as one of its chapters, King thanks Wofford for his editorial assistance (11).

Although King did not know Fosdick personally, he certainly respected the dean of the liberal Protestant pulpit. King told one interviewer that he learned the classic three-point homiletic structure from Fosdick; after extravagantly praising Fosdick in a handwritten inscription of *Stride*, King mailed the book to the aging homilist. Between 1958 and 1964 King served as an editor at large for the *Christian Century*, which printed a later version of "Pilgrimage" and the famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail." He also selected Harper and Row as publisher of his four major books. Like Mays, Johnson, Thurman, Fosdick, and Niebuhr, King preached occasionally at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, one of the more notable stops on the pulpit circuit. At the behest of Robert McCracken, Fosdick's successor at Riverside Church, King accepted at least three invitations to preach at that institution during the early 1960s. And in 1967 he chose Riverside Church as the location of his well-publicized, full-scale public denunciation of the Vietnam War.<sup>8</sup>

### Communism

In "Pilgrimage" King explains his attitude toward Communism as a response to reading Communist works. But King's discussion of Communism derives from a sermon by McCracken:

*McCracken:* [Communism] is avowedly secularistic and materialistic. . . . Again, Communism is a

heresy because it acknowledges no transcendental standards or values. . . . Since for the Communist there is no Divine government, no absolute moral order, there are no fixed, immutable principles. . . . Any means—force, violence, imprisonment, torture, terrorism, lying, murder—justify that millennial end. (168)

*King:* For the first time I carefully scrutinized *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto*. I also read some interpretive works on the thinking of Marx and Lenin. In reading such Communist writings I drew certain conclusions that have remained with me as convictions to this day. First, I rejected their materialistic interpretation of history. Communism, avowedly secularistic and materialistic, has no place for God. . . . Second, I strongly disagreed with communism's ethical relativism. Since for the Communist there is no divine government, no absolute moral order, there are no fixed, immutable principles; consequently almost anything—force, violence, murder, lying—is a justifiable means to the "millennial" end. (92)

King also repeats McCracken's view of the positive qualities of Marxism:

*McCracken:* [William Temple, the late archbishop of Canterbury,] once described Communism as a "Christian heresy." . . . He meant that Communism had laid hold on certain truths which are an essential part of the Christian scheme of things and which every Christian should acknowledge and profess, but that it had bound up with them concepts and practices which no Christian can ever acknowledge or profess. . . . First, Communism is the story of men aflame with a passionate concern for social justice. . . . Consider a second conception basic in Communism but also an integral element in the Christian outlook, the conception of a classless society. (165–67)

*King:* The late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, referred to communism as a Christian heresy. By this he meant that communism had laid hold of certain truths which are essential parts of the Christian view of things, but that it had bound up with them concepts and practices which no Christian could ever accept or profess. Communism . . . should challenge every Christian . . . to a growing concern about social justice. . . . Communism in theory emphasized a classless society, and a concern for social justice. . . . (93)

Furthermore, both McCracken (166–67, 169–70) and King (92–94) criticize the loss of freedom under Communist dictatorship, and both invoke Jesus's first sermon as an expression of Christian concern for the poor.

King's thinking about Communism did not evolve simply from his encounters with Marxist texts. Rather, his interpretation of Communism reflects the views of McCracken.

### Gandhi and Nonviolence

Recounting his response to Johnson's sermon about Gandhi, King states that he immediately "bought a half-dozen books on Gandhi's life and works" (96). King fails, however, to mention essays about Gandhi that supply most of the analysis of nonviolence that appears in "Pilgrimage." Several sentences of King's explication of nonviolence, including several quotations from Gandhi, stem from Harris Wofford's "Non-violence and the Law: The Law Needs Help." Compare:

*Wofford:* "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom but it must be our blood," [Gandhi] said to his countrymen. . . . What was Gandhi's justification for this ordeal to which he invited his countrymen, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of turning the other cheek? . . . [T]here should be little that a lawyer need say to convince you of the educational potentialities of suffering. "Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering," said Gandhi. "Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason." (32).

If the jails must be filled, let them be entered, as Gandhi urged his countrymen, "as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber." (34)<sup>9</sup>

*King:* "Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood," Gandhi said to his countrymen. . . . If going to jail is necessary, [the nonviolent resister] enters it "as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber."

One may well ask: "What is the nonviolent resister's justification for this ordeal to which he invites men, for this mass political application of the ancient doctrine of turning the other cheek?" . . . Suffering, the

nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities. "Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering," said Gandhi. He continues: "Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason." (103)

Other portions of King's explanation of non-violence parallel William Stuart Nelson's "Satyagraha: Gandhian Principles of Non-violent Non-cooperation," a copy of which Nelson had mailed to King.<sup>10</sup> (For similarities between "Pilgrimage" and Nelson's essay, see appendix 2.) King's expression of Gandhi's thought also contains a sentence from Richard Gregg's *Power of Nonviolence*, which King scholars often identify as one of the half-dozen volumes that King examined (compare Gregg 75 to "Pilgrimage" 102).

King's understanding of Gandhian nonviolence did not arise simply from hearing a sermon and reading books in the privacy of his study; rather, his awareness resulted chiefly from the efforts of Johnson, Nelson, Thurman, Wofford, and others to introduce Gandhian tactics into the black American struggle for equality. Leaders of the black religious intelligentsia filtered King's conception of Gandhi and shaped his desire to apply Gandhian strategy.

### Social Gospel

According to "Pilgrimage" King embraced the social gospel as a result of reading Rauschenbusch. However, the words King used to describe what he learned from Rauschenbusch were first enunciated by Fosdick:

*Fosdick:* Any 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 . . . would hear again the Master's withering words: "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Hope 25)  
 "[I]f religion ends with the individual, it ends." (Hope 38)

*King:* I spent a great deal of time [in seminary] reading the works of the great social philosophers. I came

early to Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, which left an indelible imprint on my thinking. . . . It has been my conviction ever since reading Rauschenbusch that any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion. . . . It has well been said: "A religion that ends with the individual, ends." (91)

On another occasion King's formulation of the social gospel mirrors Fosdick's expression even more closely:

*King:* Rauschenbusch gave to American Protestantism a sense of social responsibility that it should never lose. The gospel at its best deals with the whole man. . . . Any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them and the social conditions that cripple them is a spiritually moribund religion. . . . ("Pilgrimage," *Testament* 37–38)

King's advocacy of the social gospel does not simply emerge from his reading of Rauschenbusch, as King scholars maintain it does, but clearly reiterates Fosdick's declaration of the basic tenet of social gospel preaching.<sup>11</sup>

### Love

King's analysis of love incorporates passages from Nelson, George Kelsey (King's professor at Morehouse), and ethicist Paul Ramsey, whose work King studied at Crozer.<sup>12</sup> (Elsewhere in *Stride* a number of King's passages also match those of Kelsey. For correspondences between King's texts and those of Nelson and Kelsey, see appendix 3.) In addition a number of sentences in King's discussion derive from a sermon by Fosdick:

*Fosdick:* Love in the New Testament is not a sentimental and affectionate emotion. . . . There are three words in Greek for love, . . . *Eros*— . . . that is one; . . . in Platonic philosophy it meant the yearning of the soul for the realm of the gods. . . . *Philia*—that is another Greek word. It meant intimate personal affectionateness and friendship. . . . [*A*]gape . . . means understanding, redeeming, creative good will. . . . "Love your enemies"—it is nonsense to com-

mand that, if it means feeling affection for our foes; but if it means . . . extending even to them an understanding, saving, creative good will . . . that makes sense.  
(*On Being* 6–7)

*King*: In speaking of love at this point, we are not referring to some sentimental or affectionate emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. Love in this connection means understanding, redemptive good will. . . . There are three words for love in the Greek New Testament. First, there is *eros*. In Platonic philosophy *eros* meant the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. . . . Second, there is *philia* which means intimate affection between personal friends. . . . *Agape* means understanding, redeeming good will for all men. (104)

Fosdick and the three other writers helped refine King's conception of love.

One could, I suppose, attempt to rewrite the civil rights leader's development simply by adding Fosdick, McCracken, Nelson, Wofford, and Kelsey to the ledger of King's intellectual debts. For example, one might argue that reading Fosdick and (or possibly instead of) Rauschenbusch converted King to the social gospel; or one might claim that Fosdick, Ramsey, and Kelsey determined King's definition of love. Clearly, Fosdick, McCracken, Nelson, Wofford, Kelsey, Ramsey, and Gregg deserve recognition for their contribution to King's success, especially since King's readers responded to their words—not to those of Rauschenbusch, Hegel, or Niebuhr. But merely listing the seven writers on the roll call of influences would not provide a satisfactory interpretation of King's intellectual maturation or of the composition of "Pilgrimage." An explanation that only expanded the roster of intellectual predecessors would fail for four reasons. First, it would ignore his original exposure to almost all the themes of "Pilgrimage." Second, it would not explain why he borrowed passages. Third, it would not account for his failure to credit sources. Fourth, it would do nothing to clarify the success of "Pilgrimage." That is, it would not elucidate King's remarkable ability to mine and to weld other writers' discourse as he fashioned the distinctive and powerful alloy of a philosophical self that eventually became a na-

tional icon. Examining the seven writers will neither account for King's borrowing nor explain why "Pilgrimage" is a tapestry instead of patchwork.

### The Wellspring of King's Thought

Despite the tendency of "Pilgrimage" and of a number of King scholars to portray King's mind as a virtual tabula rasa when he entered college, the premises of most of his conceptions and values were firmly in place before he matriculated at Crozer (or even at Morehouse). Surely his initial notions about religion developed within the walls of his home and of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where his father presided as minister. Exploring the theology of Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., is a prerequisite to understanding the growth of the ideas of the younger King, who claimed as a seminarian that he entered the ministry because of the "noble example" of his father ("Autobiography").

Like other ministers, the elder King affirmed that a loving, fatherly God sent His fully human yet completely divine Son to earth to redeem humanity from sin. The theological and homiletic works that the younger King studied during his academic years essentially elaborated, clarified, and reinforced notions of love, a personal God, the prevalence of sin, and other themes articulated in his home church. Evident particularly in his dissertation, King's gravitation toward the Boston personalism of his professors—a notably thin body of thought that lacked both novelty and the depth and complexity of Niebuhr's competing theology—is highly unsurprising inasmuch as personalism simply repeats the emphasis on a personal God that King had heard celebrated in every sermon, prayer, and hymn offered at Ebenezer Church throughout his childhood and adolescence.

Like the personalists, Niebuhr also reinforced a theme King had already absorbed. In "Pilgrimage" King observes that Niebuhr "constructively influenced [his] thinking" partly because Niebuhr's "theology is a persistent reminder of the reality of sin at every level of man's existence"; King continues, "While I still believed in man's potential for good, Niebuhr made me realize his potential for evil as well" (99). Just as King's statements about Marx and Rauschenbusch cannot be

accepted at face value, neither can his claims about Niebuhr. In the 1960 version of "Pilgrimage" King describes his experience at Ebenezer Church as being "raised in a rather strict fundamentalistic tradition" (*Testament* 35). If the elder King was even remotely fundamentalist, then surely his son had heard a great deal about the pervasiveness of sin. Fundamentalists stress little else but the abundance of sin and the need for grace. From listening to his father, King developed a well-ingrained sense of the widespread nature of sin. Had King lacked the benefit of his father's preaching, he would hardly have needed to read Niebuhr to grasp humanity's immense potential for evil. All he would have had to do was to glance at the system of segregation. Where could one find a better example of the pervasiveness of sin and evil? King did not need the prodding of Niebuhr to awaken from a state of fatuous optimism, because in all likelihood the adult King never suffered from such a state. Under segregation blacks in the South confronted the face of evil every single day, and in such a circumstance they did not enjoy the luxury of naive optimism.

And despite his comments about Rauschenbusch and his borrowing from Fosdick, King did not adopt a social gospel orientation primarily from reading Rauschenbusch, Fosdick, or anyone else. A glimpse into the background of his father reveals the source of King's orientation. Before the elder King came to Ebenezer Church, the church was pastored by his father-in-law, Rev. A. D. Williams. Rev. Williams participated in the NAACP, organized a boycott to put a racist newspaper out of business, and defeated a bond proposal that ignored black schools (King, Sr. 85–87, 100–01). The high school that King attended was built partly through the political exertions of Williams (King, Sr. 100–01; D. Smith 21). Because the elder King regarded Williams as a "mentor" who was a "good man and fine preacher," he followed Williams's example of combining religion and political activism (King, Sr. 90). In 1935 he led church members and several hundred other demonstrators to Atlanta's City Hall, where they demanded the right to vote (King, Sr. 98–101). The next year he supported the protests of black teachers who wanted pay comparable to that of their white counterparts (King, Sr. 104–07). Gardner Taylor, an eminent minister

and family friend of the Kings, reports that both Williams and his son-in-law attacked segregation from the Ebenezer pulpit; several older members of the congregation also remember hearing Rev. King preach racial equality.<sup>13</sup> And one block from Ebenezer Church another prominent black preacher, William Holmes Borders, lambasted segregation from his pulpit, emphasized economic development, raised money to bury victims of lynching, promoted voter registration, led efforts to integrate Atlanta's buses after the Montgomery bus boycott, and eventually constructed a twelve and a half million dollar conglomerate consisting of a church and a housing project (English). According to Borders, a young King listened to Borders's formal and informal sermonizing in person and over an outdoor loudspeaker.<sup>14</sup>

In the *weltanschauung* of Williams, the elder King, and Borders, religion and the politics of race relations were inseparably intertwined. Expressing his theology, the elder King writes, "In the act of faith, every minister became an advocate for justice" (82). Although not every black preacher actually functioned as such an advocate, many preachers did. Even black sermons that appeared escapist often were not. As Gayraud Wilmore explains, "It was precisely [the black church's] mystique and 'otherworldliness' which gave it license to speak authoritatively to Black people about daily life, about white oppression and Black liberation" (106).<sup>15</sup>

King's social gospel directly reflects the theology of his father, his grandfather, and Borders. Their nonviolent protests—not his reading of Thoreau, Gandhi, Nelson, or Wofford—provided his initial and most significant lessons in nonviolence. The black social gospel also led Johnson, Thurman, Nelson, and the elder King's close friend Mays to trek to India to question Gandhi about the vision and tactics of massive nonviolent protest. The traditional tendency of black clergy to see all reality as, in Henry Young's words, "interconnected, interwoven, and interlocked" (13) manifests itself both in the desires of black preachers to define segregation as a religious issue and in King's sounding the motif of interrelatedness in "Pilgrimage."

Another portion of the philosophical persona that emerges in "Pilgrimage" comes from an in-



vocation of Hegel as the stimulus for King's understanding that "growth comes through struggle" (101). Williams had taught that lesson to King's father. If the elder King failed to pass it on, his son still did not need to consult Hegel to learn about struggle. Without citing Hegel, the founders of the NAACP built their organization on the premise that struggle—not Booker T. Washington-style accommodationism—would lead to black progress. Unaware of Hegel, Rosa Parks accepted the necessity for struggle before refusing to yield her seat on a bus in Montgomery. The crowd of several thousand blacks who appeared at the first meeting of the Montgomery bus boycott had never heard King and had never perused Hegel's tomes, yet their attendance at the rally demonstrated their sense that racial gains would come only as a result of struggle. King did not learn about the need for struggle either initially or primarily through reading Hegel. He accepted the need for struggle primarily because of the historical frustration of black America.

In sum, the most important intellectual influence on King does not appear in "Pilgrimage" and rarely makes more than a cameo appearance in accounts of King's worldview. This person provided King an example of a preacher who was also an activist; he proudly sent King to three universities, connected King with Mays and thus with a large Protestant network, and enthusiastically welcomed King as copastor during the last eight years of King's life, despite the allegedly foreign ideas King had acquired in supposedly alien graduate programs. Had King credited this person—his father—white readers of "Pilgrimage" would hardly have admired King or granted him a philosophical persona. But we should not dismiss Martin Luther King, Sr.<sup>16</sup>

### Shared Treasure, Voice Merging, and Self-Making

How did King develop his understanding of discourse? His initial exposure to religious language occurred at Ebenezer Church, where his father and guest preachers delivered long sermons. What were these sermons like? In his autobiography the elder King speaks of his own maturation as a preacher. He grew up in rural Georgia, attending

a church whose pastors apparently could not read (27). As for his education in homiletics, he describes himself as "mostly self-trained" (60). When he first approached the pulpit, his reading ability was "barely beyond a rank beginner's" and he "could hardly write at all" (61). Although he graduated from Morehouse, he did so after failing freshman English twice (87). Having "no natural talent for study," however, did not interfere with his preaching and his ministry of a large and thriving church (62). Given that sermons provide the "spiritual *élan vital*" of the black church (Lincoln 7), one can only conclude that Ebenezer Church prospered because of the elder King's mastery of a highly oral pulpit tradition begun during slavery, when blacks were prohibited from learning to read.

What was this tradition like? According to Walter Ong, in an oral culture unoriginal language abounds, and "[c]opying becomes an overwhelming and preemptive state of mind" (*Interfaces* 284). No exception to Ong's generalization, the black folk pulpit features ubiquitous and long-lived sermons; one sermon popular in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s was heard at least as early as 1868.<sup>17</sup> In addition to sermons, shorter homiletic formulas also float from minister to minister and are easily adjusted to the needs of a particular occasion. After investigating African American folk sermonizing, Bruce Rosenberg decided that, for the clergy he studied, "[t]he most fertile field for religious ideas is the sermons of other preachers . . ." (28). Seeking homiletic material, preachers quarry other sources as well, including hymns and spirituals.

Why do folk preachers borrow? Ong declares that the language of oral culture is highly repetitive for two reasons. First, reiteration ensures that knowledge, which cannot be recorded, will be remembered by both speakers and audiences (*Orality* 33–36). Second, in the absence of print, people only rarely develop a sense of what Ong terms "proprietary rights" to a piece of discourse. When print arrived, Ong observes, it "created a new sense of the private ownership of words"; typography, he argues, "made the word into a commodity" (*Orality* 131). Folk preachers borrow partly because their oral culture fails to define the word as a commodity and instead assumes that

everyone creates language and that no one owns it. Their enterprise is, in the words of Henry Mitchell, “by its very nature oblivious of the rules and requirements of the majority culture” (13).

Repetition occurs in the black folk pulpit for the reasons Ong cites and for two others as well. First, it helps ensure congregational participation. Such involvement takes place because, as Rosenberg suggests, “Often the congregation knows what words are coming next, or if they do not know precisely they are not surprised . . .” (105). Able to anticipate “what language, music, or story element is to come next,” churchgoers can more easily engage in worship by singing, clapping, or dancing (105). Second, repetition enhances a preacher’s standing with an audience. In such a context the rhetorical issue is always authority, not originality; appropriateness, not personal expression; the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not the views of an individual speaker. A homilist develops authority by embracing well-loved discourse, creating a voice by melding it with those of previous speakers. Preaching becomes a reenactment—not as strict a reenactment as the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer or the celebration of the Last Supper, but a reenactment nonetheless. By exclaiming, “He touched me! Jesus touched me! He touched me!” a preacher recounts a religious experience through the words of a hymn, merging the voice in the pulpit with the narrator of the hymn and with those who have sung the lyrics. The identities of narrator, singers, and preacher converge.

From the atmosphere of folk preaching, what did King absorb? He learned techniques of delivery, the practice of borrowing from oneself and others, and voice merging. First, delivery. King orchestrated his rhythm according to the familiar antiphonal pattern of call and response and mastered the contrasts and pyrotechnics necessary to swing a sermon to an appropriately thunderous conclusion. Such vocal maneuvers are hallmarks of folk preaching. Second, borrowing. Like other masters of the folk pulpit (Rosenberg 48, 68–70, 88), King often floated his own passages from one sermon, speech, column, essay, or book to another—a practice uncommon among authors. He also preached portions of sermons by Fosdick (K. Miller). Third, voice merging. The civil rights leader understood how the lyrics of spirituals and

hymns could help a preacher create an authoritative identity. Consider “There Is a Balm in Gilead”:

Sometimes I feel discouraged,  
I feel my work’s in vain.  
But then the Holy Spirit  
Revives my soul again.  
There is a balm in Gilead.

Compare King’s testimony:

Sometimes I feel discouraged.  
And I don’t mind telling you this morning that  
Sometimes I feel discouraged.  
I felt discouraged in Chicago.  
As I move through Mississippi and Georgia and  
Alabama,  
I feel discouraged.  
Living every day under the threat of death,  
I feel discouraged sometimes. . . .  
And feel my work’s in vain.  
But then the Holy Spirit  
Revives my soul again.  
There *is* a balm in Gilead! (In Search)

Who is speaking here? In King’s address the voice is obviously the narrator of the spiritual. Yet the voice certainly belongs to King as well: he met frustration in Chicago, Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama; survived assassination attempts; and received death threats frequently. The persona of the nineteenth-century slave song and King speak in the same voice as King the folk preacher effectively unites his identity with the narrator of the spiritual. In “I Have a Dream” he merges his voice with that of Amos (“We shall never be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters . . .”) and with those of Isaiah and Jesus (“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted . . .”).

More than analogy is at work here. Underlying King’s voice merging is the same epistemological assumption that undergirds that practice in the folk pulpit: the repetition of equivalent and knowable types of religious experience guarantees the order, predictability, and meaning of history, threading each succeeding generation to those before. The interpretation of history operating in King’s rhetoric echoes the typology of the folk pulpit, not the dialectical theories of Hegel and Marx

or the Niebuhrian view of history as mainly sin and ambiguity. In all likelihood King learned delivery, borrowing, and voice merging from an oral religious tradition before he left Atlanta—already an ordained minister—for seminary.

Reared in a culture that treated discourse as communal wealth, King encountered a different sensibility when he matriculated at Crozer, where texts, including sermons, were copyrighted, packaged, and sold to earn money for authors. Whereas King received clarification and reinforcement for ideas he had obtained from the black church, he received no such reinforcement for his training in language. Despite his years of immersion in academia, however, King failed to treat the word as a commodity when he wrote “Pilgrimage.” His socialization in folk tradition led him to ignore the bedrock rhetorical assumption of print culture, namely, that publication spells ownership.

But King’s rhetorical development did not end before he enrolled at Crozer. Taking the major step of adapting procedures of the folk pulpit to the world of print, King had no helpful precedents or useful models. Neither his father nor his professors offered any guidance. Yet despite the absence of models, the possibilities were great. Reading supplied King with a pool of discourse much larger than anything a folk preacher could hold in memory. Writing afforded him the chance to reach an audience far beyond the walls of a church or an auditorium. By enlarging the pool of discourse and the size of audiences, print altered King’s rhetorical universe without disturbing its premise that words are shared assets, not personal belongings. The Protestant academic and homiletic rhetoric that became available to King allowed him to merge his voice and identity with a tradition of a white majority as he stitched together eight texts by seven authors. Surely this strategy endeared King to his white audiences, who, failing to recognize and respect the intellectual resources of the black church, would not have responded favorably to a straightforward tribute to his father and his community.

The paradox of reviving and politicizing the words of others in order to become himself assisted King in directing a grand protest against the indescribable horror, brutality, and tragedy of segregation. Borrowing aided King in emerging as

a masterful public intellectual who could simultaneously participate in the political fray and stand philosophically above it, towering over the day-to-day frustrations of the movement to articulate its overarching principles. His magisterial public persona helped valorize the struggle.

For his role in ameliorating racial oppression—always America’s most grievous and most intractable problem—King certainly deserves his current iconic status. We do not honor King, however, by creating a walking marble statue or by fantasizing an implausible black champion who lacked intellectual and rhetorical roots in the black community. Nor do we honor King by ignoring his borrowing, for to ignore King’s borrowing is to ignore his original act of yoking black orality and print culture. We honor King by understanding how, immersed in the rhetoric of the folk pulpit, he introduced the epistemology of voice merging into the sphere of publication, composing his autobiographical essay and himself through the folk practices of sharing discourse and blending identities. We honor King by analyzing and comprehending his powerfully creative act of rhetorical self-making.<sup>18</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, discussion of and quotations from “Pilgrimage” refer to the earliest, most extensive, most cited rendition of the essay—the version that appears as a chapter in King, Jr., *Stride*.

<sup>2</sup>See Garrow, *Bearing* 42–43; Oates 25–26, 34–35; Smith and Zepp 33–45, 71–97; Ansbro 151–60, 163–72; W. Miller 27–28, 32–33; Downing 155–59; Marty 441.

<sup>3</sup>Zepp names Gregg, Wofford, and Ramsey as sources for portions of “Pilgrimage” and *Stride* (99–100, 133, 143, 145–47, 339–40, 346–49). In his subsequent, coauthored book Zepp pays less attention to these sources but does remark King’s use of Gregg and Ramsey (Smith and Zepp 48, 62–64). Essentially Smith and Zepp’s and Ansbro’s volumes serve as expanded versions of “Pilgrimage.”

<sup>4</sup>For example, as evidence for what King supposedly learned from Rauschenbusch, a number of scholars cite a statement King took from Fosdick. See Oates 26; Ansbro 169–70; D. Smith 33; Smith and Zepp 33; and W. Miller 28.

<sup>5</sup>The best source of information about Fosdick is Robert Miller.

<sup>6</sup>For information about Mays see Mays, *Born, Lord*, and

Interview; and Bennett. All the interviews I cite are available in the archives of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Non-violent Social Change, Atlanta. Most interviews are taped.

<sup>7</sup>See Wofford, *Of Kennedys* 118–22, and W. Miller 96.

<sup>8</sup>For King's remark about learning homiletic structure, see Warren 189. For his inscription of *Stride*, see R. Miller 450. Scholarship about King generally fails to note his connections with Fosdick and McCracken, his formal relationship with *Century*, and the role of the Harper company as one of the two or three major publishers of liberal Protestantism. *Century* and Harper and Row provided King extremely important links to a core group of Northern white supporters, whom he also cultivated through the pulpit circuit.

<sup>9</sup>According to Zepp, Wofford presented "Non-violence and the Law" as a speech at Howard University in October 1957. Zepp states that Wofford delivered the lecture again at a meeting of an institute of the Montgomery Improvement Association, a meeting that King attended (339–40). Wofford published the address before the earliest version of "Pilgrimage" appeared in *Stride*, which was issued in September 1958. Other portions of Wofford's lecture emerge elsewhere in *Stride*. See appendix 1. Although *Stride* does not mention any coauthors, Wofford apparently worked as a ghostwriter on portions of the manuscript. He states that he cannot recall whether he or King "picked something up from my [earlier] work" and inserted it in *Stride* (Interview). King's practice of borrowing discourse inclines one to believe that King himself borrowed material from Wofford's lecture. Wofford comments that he would be "complimented" if that was the case (Interview).

<sup>10</sup>King's copy of the essay resides in the King Collection, Boston University. When King received the essay in the mail, he read Nelson's remark, ". . . non-violence is not to be confined to physical action but . . . involves words and even thoughts" (17). In the margin King paraphrased Nelson: "It avoid[s] both external physical and internal violence of spirit." King's rewording of Nelson finds its way into "Pilgrimage": "A fifth point concerning nonviolent resistance is that it avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit" (103).

<sup>11</sup>King also borrowed a substantial amount of homiletic material from Fosdick. See K. Miller.

<sup>12</sup>Compare Ramsey 92–99 to "Pilgrimage" 104–05. Kelsey's essay reflects on a book by Anders Nygren. By borrowing from Kelsey, King was indirectly influenced by Nygren. But the textual evidence does not suggest that Nygren directly influenced King, as King scholars often maintain he did. In this case and others the scholarly imperative is to locate texts the civil rights leader actually read and used. Here he used Kelsey, not Nygren. Appendix 3 relates King's debt to Kelsey.

<sup>13</sup>See interviews with Arthur Henderson and Laura Henderson, J. H. Edwards, Sarah Reed, and Fannie Lou Heard. These church members also note the political activism of King's father.

<sup>14</sup>See Borders interview. Borders virtually never appears in accounts of King's development. King scholars' neglect of Borders is lamentable and unjustified, for the young King could hardly have failed to notice Borders's hugely successful social gospel ministry.

<sup>15</sup>Rev. Kelly Miller Smith, King's friend and political ally,

also hails the social gospel of the black church (72), as does Taylor.

<sup>16</sup>Despite the common assumption that Mays and the elder King contrasted sharply in their theologies, Sarah Reed, a secretary at Ebenezer Church, reports that Mays often came to Ebenezer and that Mays and the elder King were "like brothers."

<sup>17</sup>See Lyell; Spillers 14; Rosenberg 28, 155–62; and Franklin.

<sup>18</sup>For their kindness in granting interviews, I thank William Holmes Borders, Gardner Taylor, Harris Wofford, several older members of Ebenezer Baptist Church, and the late Benjamin Mays. For their help with this essay I thank Ann Dobyns, Suellynn Duffey, David Garrow, Lisa McClure, Patricia Naulty, David Schwalm, Linda Skillman, my research assistants Cynthia Kleinman and Elizabeth Vander Lei, and other friends and colleagues. In July 1986, I presented a shorter version of this essay at the Penn State Conference of Rhetoric and Composition. A faculty grant-in-aid award from Arizona State University provided financial support for this research project.

## Works Cited

- Ansbro, John. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Making of a Mind*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1982.
- Bennett, Lerone. "Benjamin Elijah Mays: The Last of the Great Schoolmasters." *Ebony* Dec. 1977: 72–80.
- Borders, William Holmes. Personal interview. July 1987.
- Cone, James. "Martin Luther King, Jr., Black Theology—Black Church." *Theology Today* 40 (1984): 409–20.
- . "The Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 40 (1986): 21–39.
- Downing, Frederick. *To See the Promised Land: The Faith Pilgrimage of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Macon: Mercer UP, 1986.
- Edwards, J. H. Personal interviews. June and July 1987.
- English, James. *The Prophet of Wheat Street: The Story of William Holmes Borders, a Man Who Refused to Fail*. Elgin: Cook, 1973.
- Fosdick, Harry Emerson. *The Hope of the World: Twenty-Five Sermons on Christianity Today*. New York: Harper, 1933.
- . *On Being Fit to Live With: Sermons on Post-War Christianity*. New York: Harper, 1946.
- Franklin, C. L. *The Eagle Stirs Her Nest*. Jewel Records, LPS 0083, 1973.
- Garrow, David. *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*. New York: Morrow, 1986.
- . "The Intellectual Development of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Influences and Commentaries." *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 40 (1986): 5–20.
- Gregg, Richard. *The Power of Nonviolence*. 1935. Nyack: Fellowship, 1959.
- Heard, Fannie Lou. Personal interview. March 1983.
- Henderson, Arthur, and Laura Henderson. Personal interview. June 1987.
- Kelsey, George. "The Christian Way in Race Relations." *The Christian Way in Race Relations*. Ed. William Stuart Nelson. New York: Harper, 1948. 29–50.

- King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Autobiography of Religious Development." N.d. [ca. 1949]. King Papers, Boston U. Rpt. in Warren 269–84.
- . "A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman." Diss. Boston U, 1955.
- . *In Search of Freedom*. Mercury Records, SR 1170, n.d.
- . "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." *Stride toward Freedom* 90–107.
- . "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence." *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. James Washington. New York: Harper, 1986. 35–40.
- . *Stride toward Freedom*. New York: Harper, 1958.
- King, Martin Luther, Sr. (with Clayton Riley). *Daddy King: An Autobiography*. New York: Morrow, 1980.
- Lincoln, C. Eric. Foreword. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* 5–11.
- Logan, Rayford. *Howard University: The First Hundred Years*. New York: New York UP, 1969.
- Lyell, Charles. "A Negro Church in Savannah." *The Negro American: A Documentary History*. Ed. Leslie Fishel and Benjamin Quarles. Glenview: Scott, 1967. 135–36.
- Marty, Martin. *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*. New York: Little, 1984.
- Mays, Benjamin. *Born to Rebel*. New York: Scribner's, 1971.
- . *Lord, the People Have Driven Me On*. New York: Vantage, 1981.
- . Personal interview. Mar. 1983.
- McCracken, Robert. *Questions People Ask*. New York: Harper, 1951.
- Miller, Keith D. "Martin Luther King, Jr. Borrows a Revolution." *College English* 48 (1986): 249–65.
- Miller, Robert. *Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Miller, William. *Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life, Martyrdom, and Meaning for the World*. New York: Avon, 1968.
- Mitchell, Henry. *Black Preaching*. New York: Lippincott, 1970.
- Nelson, William Stuart. "Satyagraha: Gandhian Principles of Non-violent Non-cooperation." *Journal of Religious Thought* (Autumn-Winter 1957–58): 15–24.
- Nygren, Anders. *Agape and Eros*. Trans. Philip Watson. 1953. New York: Harper, 1969.
- Oates, Stephen. *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Harper, 1982.
- Ong, Walter. *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977.
- . *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen, 1982.
- Ramsey, Paul. *Basic Christian Ethics*. New York: Scribner's, 1950.
- Reed, Sarah. Personal interview. June 1987.
- Rosenberg, Bruce. *The Art of the American Folk Preacher*. New York: Oxford UP, 1970.
- Sitkoff, Harvard. *The Struggle for Black Equality: 1954–1980*. New York: Hill, 1981.
- Smith, Donald. "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rhetorician of Revolt." Diss. U of Wisconsin, 1964.
- Smith, Kelly. *Social Crisis Preaching*. Macon: Mercer UP, 1984.
- Smith, Kenneth, and Ira Zepp. *Search for the Beloved Community*. Valley Forge: Judson, 1974.
- Spillers, Hortense. "Martin Luther King and the Style of the Black Sermon." *Black Scholar* 3 (1971): 14–27.
- Taylor, Gardner. Telephone interview. Jan. 1987.
- Warren, Mervyn. "A Rhetorical Study of the Preaching of Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.: Pastor and Pulpit Orator." Diss. Michigan State U, 1966.
- Wilmore, Gayraud. *Black Religion and Black Radicalism*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1972.
- Wofford, Harris. "Non-violence and the Law: The Law Needs Help." *Journal of Religious Thought* 15 (Autumn-Winter 1957–58): 25–36. Rpt. in *Civil Disobedience: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Hugo Bedau. New York: Pegasus, 1969. 59–71.
- . *Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties*. New York: Farrar, 1980.
- . Telephone interview. 2 Nov. 1988.
- Young, Henry. *Major Black Religious Leaders: 1777–1940*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977.
- Zepp, Ira. "The Intellectual Sources of Ethical Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr." Diss. St. Mary's U, 1971.

## Appendix 1

Wofford: The old law of an eye-for-an-eye-for-an-eye leaves everyone blind. ("Non-violence" 32)

We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for the government to act. . . . We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully, because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of non-violence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail we will try to persuade with our acts. We will always be ready to talk and to seek fair compromise, but we are also ready to suffer when necessary, to go to jail or risk our lives, to become witnesses to the truth as we see it. (29–30)

What I hope is that recognizing the necessity of struggle and suffering, we will make of it a virtue. If only to save itself from bitterness, this generation of Negroes needs the vision to see its ordeal as the opportunity to transfigure itself and American society. If the jails must be filled, let them be entered, as Gandhi urged his countrymen, "as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber." That is, with some trepidation but with great expectation. (34)

. . . non-violent resistance to all forms of racial injustice, including state and local laws and practices, even when this means a term in jail; and imaginative, bold, constructive action to end the demoralization caused by the legacy of slavery and segregation, inferior schools, slums, and second-class citizenship. The non-violent struggle, if conducted with the dignity and courage already shown in Montgomery and

Little Rock, will itself help end the demoralization, but a new frontal assault on the poverty, disease, and ignorance of a people too long behind God's back will make victory in the struggle more certain. (35–36)

*King*: The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. (*Stride* 213)

We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to act. We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts. We will always be willing to talk and seek fair compromise, but we are ready to suffer when necessary and even risk our lives to become witnesses to the truth as we see it. (216)

I pray that, recognizing the necessity of suffering, the Negro will make it a virtue. . . . If only to save himself from bitterness, the Negro needs the vision to see the ordeals of this generation as the opportunity to transfigure himself and American society. If he has to go to jail . . . let him enter it in the fashion Gandhi urged his countrymen, "as the bridegroom enters the bride's chamber"—that is, with a little trepidation but with a great expectation. (220)

. . . nonviolent resistance to all forms of racial injustice, including state and local laws and practices, even when this means going to jail; and imaginative, bold, constructive action to end the demoralization caused by the legacy of slavery and segregation, inferior schools, slums and second-class citizenship. The nonviolent struggle, when conducted with the dignity and courage already shown by the people of Montgomery and the children of Little Rock, will in itself help end the demoralization; but a new frontal assault on the poverty, disease, and ignorance of a people too long ignored by America's conscience will make victory more certain. (223–24)

## Appendix 2

*Nelson*: For Gandhi . . . non-violence is non-violence of the strong and not of the weak. (17)

. . . [Gandhi] said, "Non-cooperation is not a passive state, it is an intensely active state." (17)

. . . non-violence makes a distinction between evil and the evil doer. . . . (18)

*King*: [Nonviolence] is ultimately the way of the strong man. ("Pilgrimage" 102)

The method is passive physically but strongly active spiritually. (102)

. . . the [nonviolent] attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. (102)

## Appendix 3

*Nelson*: . . . non-violence is equated with love. (17)

*Kelsey*: . . . [Christian love] is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative; it is the love of God operating in the human heart. (40)

*King*: At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. ("Pilgrimage" 103–04)

. . . [*agape*] is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart. (104)

*Kelsey*: The problem of race is indeed America's greatest moral dilemma. (29)

[Segregation] is . . . a complete denial of the "*I-thou*" relationship, and a complete expression of the "*I-it*" relation. . . . The Christian ethic . . . is wholly rejected as a guide and inspiration in the relation. (44)

The question of intermarriage ought to be decided on the merits of individual cases. Marriage is an individual matter. Properly speaking, races do not marry; individuals marry. (47)

*King*: . . . the problem of race is America's greatest moral dilemma. (*Stride* 205)

Segregation substitutes an "*I-it*" relationship for the "*I-thou*" relationship. Thus it is utterly opposed to the noble teaching of our Judeo-Christian tradition. (205)

[The church] can say to men that marriage is an individual matter that must be decided on the merits of individual cases. Properly speaking, races do not marry; individuals marry. (206)