

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was America's foremost civil-rights leader during the 20th century. He urged non-violent resistance to laws which allowed legal segregation and which discriminated against African-Americans.

Instrumental in calling the country's attention to unfair restrictions imposed on black citizens who wanted to register to vote (compared to the lack of similar requirements of white citizens), Dr. King tried to lead a peaceful march in Selma, Alabama during March of 1965. He was initially stopped from doing so.

Two days before - on the 7th of March - police had viciously attacked peaceful demonstrators who similarly wanted to make a 50-mile protest walk from Selma to Montgomery (Alabama's capital).

The march finally took place on March 21st after Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. issued an order allowing the march to continue.

Dr. King worked with President Johnson to pass a Voting-Rights law. What did he think of the President and his efforts to get this important legislation through the U.S. House and Senate? What did Dr. King believe about the President's motives?

To learn the answers to those important questions, we turn to Dr. King himself. The following is an excerpt from his book, *Why We Can't Wait*:

I had been fortunate enough to meet Lyndon Johnson during his tenure as Vice President. He was not then a presidential aspirant and was searching for his role under a man who not only had a four-year term to complete but was confidently expected to serve out yet another term as Chief Executive. Therefore, the essential issues were easier to reach and were unclouded by political considerations.

His approach to the problem of civil rights was not identical with mine—nor had I expected it to be. Yet his careful practicality was, nonetheless, clearly no mask to conceal indifference. His emotional and intellectual involvement was genuine and devoid of adornment. It was conspicuous that he was searching for a solution to a problem he knew to be a major shortcoming in American life ...

Today the dimensions of Johnson's leadership have spread from a region to a nation. His recent expressions, public and private, indicate that he has a comprehensive grasp of contemporary problems. He has seen that poverty and unemployment are grave and growing catastrophes, and he is aware that those caught most fiercely in the grip of this economic holocaust are Negroes. Therefore, he has set the twin goal of a battle against discrimination within the war against poverty.

*I have no doubt that we may continue to differ concerning the tempo and the tactical design required to combat the impending crisis. But I do not doubt that the President is approaching the solution with sincerity, realism and, thus far, with wisdom. I hope his course will be straight and true. I will do everything in my power to make it so, by outspoken agreement whenever proper, and determined opposition whenever necessary. (See *Why We Can't Wait*, by Martin Luther King, Jr., at pages 108-109.)*

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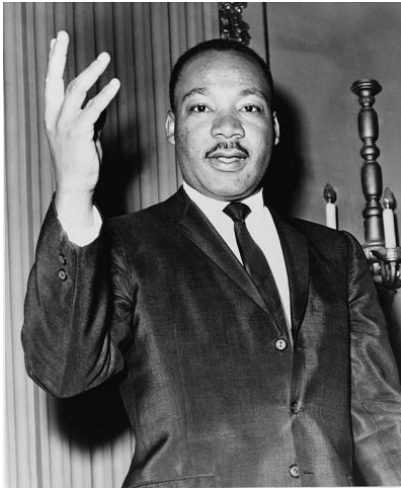
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Dr. King Works with President Johnson on Voting Rights

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