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Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)

Civil Rights Activist

> "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

MLK Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi.

King participated in and led marches for blacks' right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other basic civil rights.[1] He led the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott inspired by Rosa Parks and later became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As president of the SCLC, he led the unsuccessful Albany Movement in Georgia, and helped organize some of the nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama. King helped organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

In 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. In 1965, he helped organize two of the three Selma to Montgomery marches. In his final years, he expanded his focus to include opposition towards poverty, capitalism, and the Vietnam War.

In 1968, King was planning a national occupation of Washington, D.C., to be called the Poor People's Campaign, when he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many U.S. cities.

King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in cities and states throughout the United States beginning in 1971.

Biography sourced from Wikipedia.org
[1] Jackson, Thomas F. (2006). From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice. University of Pennsylvania Press. Page 53