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CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

HOMEWORK SHEET

**Response 1**  
Ambrose , Stephen E. "Founding Fathers and Slaveholders." *Smithsonian Magazine* (November 2002): n. pag. Web. 08 Feb. 2017.  
  
To what degree do the attitudes of Washington and Jefferson toward slavery diminish their achievements?  
  
“Let’s begin with Thomas Jefferson, because it is he who wrote the words that inspired subsequent generations to make the heroic sacrifices that transformed the words "All men are created equal" into reality. . . . Jefferson was as remarkable a man as America has produced. "Spent the evening with Mr. Jefferson," John Quincy Adams wrote in his diary in 1785, "whom I love to be with....You can never be an hour in the man’s company without something of the marvelous." And even Abigail Adams wrote of him, "He is one of the choice ones of the earth." He was the author of the Declaration of Independence. The second paragraph begins with a perfect sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."  
  
Jefferson owned slaves. He did not believe that all were created equal. He was a racist, incapable of rising above the thought of his time and place, and willing to profit from slave labor. Few of us entirely escape our times and places. Thomas Jefferson did not achieve greatness in his personal life. He had a slave as mistress. He lied about it. He once tried to bribe a hostile reporter. His war record was not good. He spent much of his life in intellectual pursuits in which he excelled and not enough in leading his fellow Americans toward great goals by example. Jefferson surely knew slavery was wrong, but he didn’t have the courage to lead the way to emancipation.”  
  
**Response 2:** Taken from "Emancipation" by Thomas Nast; Philadelphia, 1865. Image for analysis can be found at https://www.loc.gov/item/2004665360/.  
  
**Response 3:** Taken from the opinion of Justice Taney in delivering the court in the case of Dred Scott v. Sandford in 1855.  
In addition to laws written by the legislative branch and executive orders written by the President, the Judicial branch makes decisions in cases and their decisions become laws for the nation to follow.  
"The question is simply this: Can a negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guarantied by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States in the cases specified in the Constitution.  
  
It will be observed, that the plea applies to that class of persons only whose ancestors were negroes of the African race, and imported into this country, and sold and held as slaves. The only matter in issue before the court, therefore, is, whether the descendants of such slaves, when they shall be emancipated, or who are born of parents who had become free before their birth, are citizens of a State, in the sense in which the word citizen is used in the Constitution of the United States. And this being the only matter in dispute on the pleadings, the court must be understood as speaking in this opinion of that class only, that is, of those persons who are the descendants of Africans who were imported into this country, and sold as slaves.  
  
We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States. On the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them."  
  
​**Response 4:** Emancipation. Proclamation  
Transcript of Emancipation Proclamation (1863)By the President of the United States of America:  
"Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:  
"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.​ . . .  
  
Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States.  
  
. . . And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.  
And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.  
And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.  
  
**Response 5**: Jim Crow Laws and Etiquette, Taken from http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm  
Questions to consider in your response: What was the purpose of these laws? What impact would these laws have on society? Specific communities? What do these laws tell us about the values of society? What do these laws tell us about whites and blacks?  
  
The following Jim Crow etiquette norms show how inclusive and pervasive these norms were:  
1. A black male could not offer his hand (to shake hands) with a white male because it implied being socially equal. Obviously, a black male could not offer his hand or any other part of his body to a white woman, because he risked being accused of rape.  
2. Blacks and whites were not supposed to eat together. If they did eat together, whites were to be served first, and some sort of partition was to be placed between them.  
3. Under no circumstance was a black male to offer to light the cigarette of a white female -- that gesture implied intimacy.  
4. Blacks were not allowed to show public affection toward one another in public, especially kissing, because it offended whites.  
5. Jim Crow etiquette prescribed that blacks were introduced to whites, never whites to blacks. For example: "Mr. Peters (the white person), this is Charlie (the black person), that I spoke to you about."  
6. Whites did not use courtesy titles of respect when referring to blacks, for example, Mr., Mrs., Miss., Sir, or Ma'am. Instead, blacks were called by their first names. Blacks had to use courtesy titles when referring to whites, and were not allowed to call them by their first names.  
7. If a black person rode in a car driven by a white person, the black person sat in the back seat, or the back of a truck.  
8. White motorists had the right-of-way at all intersections.  
Stetson Kennedy, the author of *Jim Crow Guide* (1990), offered these simple rules that blacks were supposed to observe in conversing with whites:

1. Never assert or even intimate that a white person is lying.
2. Never impute dishonorable intentions to a white person.
3. Never suggest that a white person is from an inferior class.
4. Never lay claim to, or overly demonstrate, superior knowledge or intelligence.
5. Never curse a white person.
6. Never laugh derisively at a white person.
7. Never comment upon the appearance of a white female.

**Response 6: "**Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday  
Listen online: https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tf54ydkrkkzkkqu2ok2z2jtzisu?lyrics=1&utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=search&utm\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#  
​  
Southern trees bear strange fruit  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root  
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees  
Pastoral scene of the gallant south  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth  
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh  
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh  
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck  
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop  
Here is a strange and bitter crop  
Written by Lewis Allan, Maurice Pearl, Dwayne P Wiggins • Copyright © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc  
  
**Response 7:** WalD Sussman, Robert. "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS RACE" November 8, 2014  
  
In 1950, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a statement asserting that all humans belong to the same species and that “race” is not a biological reality but a myth. This was a summary of the findings of an international panel of anthropologists, geneticists, sociologists, and psychologists.  
  
Today the vast majority of those involved in research on human variation would agree that biological races do not exist among humans. Among those who study the subject, who use and accept modern scientific techniques and logic, this scientific fact is as valid and true as the fact that the earth is round and revolves around the sun.Yet as recently as 2010, highly acclaimed journalist Guy Harrison wrote:  
  
One day in the 1980s, I sat in the front row in my first undergraduate anthropology class, eager to learn more about this bizarre and fascinating species I was born into. But I got more than I expected that day as I heard for the first time that biological races are not real. After hearing several perfectly sensible reasons why vast biological categories don’t work very well, I started to feel betrayed by my society. “Why am I just hearing this now? . . . Why didn’t somebody tell me this in elementary school?” . . . I never should have made it through twelve years of schooling before entering a university, without ever hearing the important news that most anthropologists reject the concept of biological races.  
  
It seems that the belief in human races, carrying along with it the prejudice and hatred of “racism,” is so embedded in our culture and has been an integral part of our worldview for so long that many of us assume that it just must be true.  
  
Racism is a part of our everyday lives. Where you live, where you go to school, your job, your profession, who you interact with, how people interact with you, your treatment in the healthcare and justice systems are all affected by your race.  
  
What many people do not realize is that this racial structure is not based on reality. Anthropologists have shown for many years now that there is no biological reality to human race. . . .  
​  
However, over the past 500 years, we have been taught by an informal, mutually reinforcing consortium of intellectuals, politicians, statesmen, business and economic leaders and their books that human racial biology is real and that certain races are biologically better than others.  
  
These teachings have led to major injustices to Jews and non-Christians during the Spanish Inquisition; to blacks, Native Americans, and others during colonial times; to African Americans during slavery and reconstruction; to Jews and other Europeans during the reign of the Nazis in Germany; and to groups from Latin America and the Middle East, among others, during modern political times.

**Response 8**

"I am Elizabeth Eckford. I am part of the group that became known as the Little Rock Nine. Prior to the  [de]segregation of Central, there had been one high school for whites, Central High School; one high school for blacks, Dunbar. I expected that there may be something more available to me at Central that was not available at Dunbar; that there might be more courses I could pursue; that there were more options available. I was not prepared for what actually happened."



"I was more concerned about what I would wear, whether we could finish my dress in time...what I was wearing was that okay, would it look good. The night before when the governor went on television and announced that he had called out the Arkansas National Guard, I thought that he had done this to insure the protection of all the students. We did not have a telephone, so inadvertently we were not contacted to let us know that Daisy Bates of NAACP had arranged for some ministers to accompany the students in a group. And so, it was I that arrived alone."



*The dress Elizabeth Eckford wore on her first day of school.*

"On the morning of September 4th, my mother was doing what she usually did. My mother was making sure everybody’s hair looked right and everybody had their lunch money and their notebooks and things. But she did finally get quiet and we had family prayer. I remember my father walking back and forth. My father worked at night and normally he would have been asleep at that time, but he was awake and he was walking back and forth chomping on cigar that wasn’t lit."

"I expected that I would go to school as before on a city bus. So, I walked a few blocks to the bus stop, got on the bus, and rode to within two blocks of the school. I got off the bus and I noticed along the street that there were many more cars than usual. And I remember hearing the murmur of a crowd. But, when I got to the corner where the school was, I was reassured seeing these soldiers circling the school grounds. And I saw students going to school. I saw the guards break ranks as students approached the sidewalks so that they could pass through to get to school. And I approached the guard at the corner as I had seen some other students do and they closed ranks. So, I thought; 'Maybe I am not supposed to enter at this point.' So, I walked further down the line of guards to where there was another sidewalk and I attempted to pass through there. But when I stepped up, they crossed rifles. And again I said to myself; 'So maybe I’m supposed to go down to where the main entrance is.' So, I walked toward the center of the street and when I got to about the middle and I approached the guard he directed me across the street *into the crowd*. It was only then that I realized that they were barring me, that I wouldn’t go to school."



*Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957.*

"As I stepped out into the street, the people who had been across the street started surging forward behind me. So, I headed in the opposite direction to where there was another bus stop. Safety to me meant getting to that bus stop. It seemed like I sat there for a long time before the bus came. In the meantime, people were screaming behind me what I would have described as a crowd before, to my ears sounded like a mob."

**Response 9**

The following is excerpted from an essay published onThe American Conservativewebsite by writer and humanities professor Alan Jacobs:

All I can say in my defense is that I never hurled a stone at him, or shouted abuse. But I stood by, many a time, as others did those things, and I neither walked away nor averted my eyes . . . . I watched it all, gripping a rock in my hand as though I were preparing to use it—so that no one would turn on me with anger or contempt—and I always stood a little behind them so they couldn’t see that I wasn’t throwing anything. I was smaller and younger than the rest of them, and they were smaller and younger than him. In my memory he seems almost a full-grown man; I suppose he was eleven or twelve.

We called him Nigger Jeff. I have never doubted that Jeff was indeed his name, though as I write this account I find myself asking, for the first time, how we could have known: I never heard any of the boys speak to him except in cries of hatred, and I never knew anyone else who knew him. It occurs to me now that, if his name was Jeff, there had to have been at least a brief moment of human contact and exchange—perhaps not even involving Jeff, perhaps one of the boys’ mothers talked to Jeff’s mother. But we grasp what’s available for support or stability. It’s bad to call a boy Nigger Jeff, but worse still to call him just Nigger. A name counts for something.

Arkadelphia Road is a major artery on the west side of Birmingham, Alabama. . . . I could gaze across the four lanes of charging traffic into another world, a world inhabited solely by black people. Often I passed in an automobile through that world, but my feet had never touched its ground, and I knew no one who lived there . . . . [T]hose dark strangers could sometimes be seen hanging clothes on the clotheslines of our neighborhood, or taking the clothes in to iron them. . . . But really, neither side passed to the other: when they came to labor for us they always left something essential behind; maybe everything essential. I stood sometimes on the hot pavement of the gas station, straddling my bike, and while I drank my coke I would look across the blaring four-lane gulf. Then I would drain the bottle and ride back towards home.

. . . Especially I remember Jeff moving at his habitual level pace towards our world, a small world so comfortable to us but surely like some wall of flame to him. Of course we knew where he was going: not to us but through us, through our neighborhood to the one on the other side of Arkadelphia, where there must have been friends glad to see him and houses where he was welcome. But first there were the three blocks of our territory. And when we saw him coming we picked up our rocks.

When he caught sight of us, Jeff would stoop and collect a handful of good throwing-size stones for his own use. In another part of Birmingham, at this very time, Martin Luther King’s followers were practicing nonviolent resistance to the water cannons and police dogs of Bull Connor, but Jeff was no pacifist. Yet he never initiated conflict: he had somewhere to get to, and all he wanted was the quickest and most uneventful passage possible. If we threw our rocks he returned fire, and since he was bigger and stronger than any of us, that was something to be reckoned with. So often my friends inadvertently and unwittingly imitated me by simply holding their missiles in their hands; they contented themselves with curses and mockery. And Jeff, then, would simply walk on down the middle of the otherwise quiet little street, slowly and steadily. He never ran, and would only vary his even pace when he had to stop to launch a rock or two—though sometimes he had to walk backwards for a while to be sure we didn’t start pelting him when his head was turned.

We could have surrounded him, of course, but we were too cowardly for that. We were pretty sure that, as long as we huddled in a small group, he wouldn’t attack; but if we separated he might go for one of us. So we gathered like a Greek chorus to curse, and Jeff kept walking. Eventually his solitary figure grew smaller, and our throats grew tired of launching insults. We dropped our rocks and returned to our children’s games.

Sometimes I would be playing alone in my yard, and would look up to see Jeff walking by. My heart would then buck in my chest, but he never turned his head to acknowledge my presence. At the time I wondered if he knew that I never threw rocks at him, that I didn’t curse him—for, if my memory is not appeasing my conscience, I avoided that crime as well. But now I realize that he neither knew nor cared about the individual members of our cruel impromptu assembly: with rocks in our hands we were just mobile, noisy impediments to his enjoyment of some of the blessings of life—friendship, comfort, safety—but when unarmed and solitary we posed no threat and therefore, for Jeff, lacked significant substance. He kept his eyes on that day’s small but valued prize, and kept on walking.

Why didn’t I throw rocks at him? Why didn’t I curse him? Well, obviously, because I felt sorry for him. But not sorry enough to walk away, or to turn my back on the scene; and not nearly sorry enough to stay a friend’s hand or demand his silence. I was young, and small, and timid. I saw one valid option: to stand as a member of the chorus, grasping the rock that was the badge of our common identity. There’s no point now in trying to distinguish myself from the others. But I can’t help it.”

**Response 10**

Views on Nonviolence

*“We, the men, women, and children of the civil rights movement, truly believed that if we adhered to the discipline and philosophy of nonviolence, we could help transform America. We wanted to realize what I like to call, the Beloved Community, an all-inclusive, truly interracial democracy based on simple justice, which respects the dignity and worth of every human being....Consider those two words: Beloved and Community. "Beloved" means not hateful, not violent, not uncaring, not unkind. And "Community" means not separated, not polarized, not locked in struggle. “*- John Lewis, Member of the House of Representatives and former leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

“*Why use nonviolence? The most practical reason is that we're trying to create a more just society. You cannot do it if you exaggerate animosities. Martin King used to say, "If you use the law ‘An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' then you end up with everybody blind and toothless," which is right. So from a practical point of view, you don't want to blow up Nashville downtown, you simply want to open it up so that everybody has a chance to participate in it as people, fully, without any kind of reservations caused by creed, color, class, sex, anything else.”* - Reverend James Lawson, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

*“Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair.” -*Reverend James Lawson, SNCC Statement of Purpose

**Response 11**

Due 5/15

More like a journal. What issue/cause would you be willing to die for today in protest? If there is none, what would you risk your health for? What would you go to jail for?

**Response 12**

Due 5/22

This assignment will be longer than others and more structured. Write a 5 paragraph essay (typed, double-spaced, two pages) discussing King’s views in this letter. Include at least three quotes from the text. This essay must have a thesis addressing one of the following question:

1. Were King’s actions in Birmingham justified?
2. Is this letter threatening and offensive or inspirational and motivating?

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "[Letter from a Birmingham Jail](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/liberation_curriculum/pdfs/letterfrombirmingham_wwcw.pdf)," 1963

“My Dear Fellow Clergymen,

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities “unwise and untimely.” Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas … But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of “outsiders coming in.” I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every Southern state with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some 85 affiliate organizations all across the South … Several months ago our local affiliate here in Birmingham invited us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: 1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive; 2) negotiation; 3) self-purification; and 4) direct action. We have gone through all of these steps in Birmingham … Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of police brutality is known in every section of the country. Its unjust treatment of Negroes in the courts is a notorious reality. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any city in this nation. These are the hard, brutal, and unbelievable facts. On the basis of these conditions Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the political leaders consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then came the opportunity last September to talk with some of the leaders of the economic community. In these negotiating sessions certain promises were made by the merchants—such as the promise to remove the humiliating racial signs from the stores. On the basis of these promises Reverend Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to call a moratorium on any type of demonstrations. As the weeks and months unfolded we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. The signs remained. As in so many experiences in the past, we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us. So we had no alternative except that of preparing for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community. We were not unmindful of the difficulties involved. So we decided to go through the process of self-purification. We started having workshops on nonviolence and repeatedly asked ourselves the questions, “are you able to accept the blows without retaliating?” “Are you able to endure the ordeals of jail?”

You may well ask, “Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.

My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without legal and nonviolent pressure. History is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and give up their unjust posture; but as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups are more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was “well timed,” according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This “wait” has almost always meant “never.” It has been a tranquilizing Thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.” We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see the tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking in agonizing pathos: “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?” when you take a cross country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading “white” men and “colored” when your first name becomes “nigger” and your middle name becomes “boy” (however old you are) and your last name becomes “John,” and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title of “Mrs.” when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness”—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White citizens’ “Councilor” or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can’t agree with your methods of direst action” who paternistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a “more convenient season.” Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I started thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency made up of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, have been so completely drained of self-respect and a sense of “somebodiness” that they have adjusted to segregation, and a few Negroes in the middle class who, because of a degree of academic and economic security, and at points they profit from segregation, have unconsciously become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred and comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up over the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad’s Muslim movement. This movement is nourished by the contemporary frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination. It is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man in an incurable “devil.”

The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations. He has to get them out. So let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides. If his repressed emotions do not come out in these nonviolent ways, they will come out in ominous expressions of violence. This is not a threat; it is a fact of history. So I have not said to my people, “Get rid of your discontent.” But I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled through the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action.

In spite of my shattered dreams of the past, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership in the community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, serve as the channel through which our just grievances could get to the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed. I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshippers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, “Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern,” and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which made a strange distinction between body and soul, the sacred and the secular.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil rights leader, but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all of their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood M. L. King, Jr.

**Response 13**

Due 5/26

Malcolm X Speech: Visit the following website (<https://newsone.com/184281/top-5-malcolm-x-speeches/>). Choose one of the five speeches listed. First, briefly discuss the ideas and concepts from the video. Then pick two quotes to analyze and voice your dis/agreement.

**Response 14**

Due 6/2

Read and review the article below. Do you agree or disagree with the author’s points. Use your own life to support arguments.

Title: The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

The civil rights movement was a heroic episode in American history. It aimed to give African Americans the same citizenship rights that whites took for granted. It was a war waged on many fronts. In the 1960s it achieved impressive judicial and legislative victories against discrimination in public accommodations and voting. It had less complete but still considerable success in combating job and housing discrimination. Those best able to take advantage of new opportunities were middle-class blacks—the teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals who had served as role models for the black community. Their departure for formerly all-white areas left all-black neighborhoods segregated not only by race but now also by class. The problem of poverty, compounded by drugs, crime, and broken families, was not solved by the civil rights movement.

The process of school integration begun by the *Brown* decision of 1954 is viewed by some as a failure because many schools remain segregated by race as blacks and whites still, mostly, live in distinct neighborhoods. But no longer does the law assign blacks to separate schools. Although *Brown* dealt only with discrimination in education, it effectively sounded the death knell for the whole Jim Crow system of second-class citizenship. That is its greatest significance. However, it took the efforts—and in some cases the lives—of many men and women, black and white, to finally conquer Jim Crow.

Inequality remains. The average income of black families is still well below that of whites. Even college-educated blacks earn less than their white counterparts. The civil rights movement did not achieve complete equality, but greater equality. It brought the reality of Virginia closer to the promise articulated by Virginian Thomas Jefferson when he wrote "that all men are created equal."

**Response 15:** Course Reflection

1. What did you like about the class?
2. What would you have liked to learn about? Why?
3. How did what you learned shape/influence your understanding of civil rights issues today?