



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 17, 2022

On Good Friday, 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others were arrested for participation in a peaceful and non-violent civil rights march protesting segregation in Birmingham, AL. That very same afternoon, 8 white clergymen published a letter, "A Call to Unity", in the Birmingham News strongly ". . . urging our Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations. . ." and called out King indirectly as an outside leader/organizer of the march.

While sitting in a cell in the Birmingham City Jail, Dr. King wrote a 20-page letter addressing the points in the clergymen's letter. He was unapologetic in his response. Righteous anger is apparent but hate never entered his words. He asks what kind of extremists are we to be: extremist of hate or extremists for love? He wrote as a man of faith speaking not only to other men of faith but to all of us, then and now. His letter, in the end, is one of hope for the United States and mankind.

Please take an hour and explore this timeless document. The following websites are provided as resources:

Alabama clergymen's letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Letter from the Birmingham City Jail (condensed):

<https://www.wheelersburg.net/Downloads/White%20Clergy%20Letter%20to%20King.pdf>

Letter from the Birmingham Jail (Full version)

https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Bill of Rights Institute – Lively discussion of Letter from the Birmingham City Jail. (42 minutes)

https://billofrights.org/videos/reading-martin-luther-king-jrs-letter-from-a-birmingham-jail-a-primary-source-close-read?gclid=CjwKCAiAzrWOBhBjEiwAq85QZzmhW5XMXXxpuND046KWFHL_vWUiHXXBhyccpVd3rq1GUiQmjRCecRoCQSMQAvD_BwE