

# English response



He wrote " Letter from Birmingham Jail" which he wrote when he was in jail. He was the most influential civil rights leader in America. He was arrested when protesting the existing segregation laws in downtown Birmingham. While he was in prison, he heard that the clergymen were saying that his activities were " unwise and untimely" and they wanted him and his fellows to stop their demonstration.

This letter, Letter from Birmingham Jail, is his response that he actually spent time to write. The letter tries to justify the need for nonviolent direct action, the meaning of just law, and the disappointment with the Church who did not have responsibilities that there were people of God. King maintains that there are four basic steps in nonviolent campaign which are " collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action" (paragraph 6).

He says that Birmingham is the most segregated city in the United States and he and his fellows have been through all those steps in Birmingham. He states that " Negro" have been through " unjust treatment". In addition, African Americans are threatened by unsolved violent actions such as Bombing. With these situations, " Negro" leaders desired to negotiate with city councilor. When he had a chance to discuss with the people who are controlling economics in Birmingham about removing the racial signs in stores, they betrayed even though they agreed to forbid the discrimination (paragraph 7).

The reason why he went to Birmingham was that injustice was there and also he was invited for demonstration. He expresses that " there are two types of laws: just and unjust". He thinks that he would be the first to publicly

recommend obeying just laws. He explains the differences between just and unjust laws in paragraph 16. He writes " A just law is a manmade code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law". By using the words such as " law of God" and " moral law," he establishes his character as a believer of God.

He uses the words of St. Thomas Aquinas and states that any law that encourages human's characteristics is just and the one that treats someone with disrespect is unjust. King maintains that every segregation law is unjust because it hurts human's characteristics or personalities (paragraph 16). One of things that disappointed him is " white church and its leadership" (paragraph 33). He has always wanted change in Birmingham and he thought that he could get help and support from churches, but he didn't receive enough.

When he was put into a leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, the white church didn't support him and refused to be conscious of the freedom movement (paragraph 35). He hopes that the white churches would see the injustice of segregation. King seriously spent time to write this response thinking and hoping to just let this segregation go away and to have freedom. In paragraph 45, he says " Never before have I write so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time.

I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers? " Being in jail made him write this long response letter because he could maintain a lot of facts how " Negros" were struggling. If he

was not arrested, there would have been no change with the segregation. Even though there is still discrimination in some areas, this letter did change the concept of segregation.