

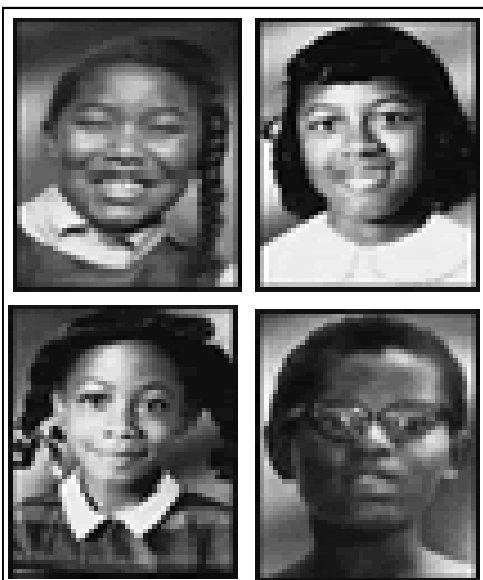
This Birmingham, AL tragedy was the impetus that caused Reverend James L. Bevel and his then wife Diane Nash, to write the proposal that led to the Nonviolent Right To Vote Movement in Selma, AL.



## Bombing-ham, Alabama

**JAMES BEVEL:** My first reaction when I heard about the bombing of the church was anger and rage. The bombing felt like a personal insult from the reactionary forces of the Klan, or whoever was trying to teach us a lesson. Then I got information to the effect that some of the guys involved in it were from the sheriff's department, and then I was thinking about killing people. I had to do a lot of thinking and praying about that. That's when I asked the question, "what would be the appropriate response to this kind of situation?" I think it's natural for human beings to get angry when there's an intense violation, and I think if a person doesn't have the capacity to get angry, they don't have the capacity to think through fully the implications of that which caused them to be angry.

**DIANE NASH:** My former husband (Jim Bevel) and I, cried when we heard about the bombing, because in many ways we felt like our own children had been killed. We knew that the activity of the civil rights movement had been involved in generating a kind of energy that brought out this kind of hostility. We decided that we would do something about it, and we said that we had two options. First, we felt confident that if we tried, we could find out who had done it, and we could make sure they got killed. We considered that as a real option. The second option was that we felt that if blacks in Alabama had the right to vote, they could protect black children. We deliberately made a choice, and chose the second option.



On September 15, 1964, Ku Klux Klan members bombed the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham and killed four young girls who were attending Sunday School. They were Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair and

