

# **The Spiritual Significance of the Nonviolent Right-to Vote Movement**

***“I went to Selma to be government. I was operating in Selma as government.”***

*—Reverend James L. Bevel*

***My gratitude to the various authors for whom excerpts from their accurate records of the dynamics of the movement for the right-to-vote have been pieced together to create a clear view of how this great achievement was secured. This therefore creates a lesson in how to achieve and maintain ones constitutional rights.***

**IT'S TIME FOR TRUTH IN HISTORY**

*In the Words of*

**Dr. James Luther Bevel**

Initiator, Architect, Director, Chief Organizer

of the

## **Selma 1965 Right-To-Vote Movement**

The movement was an act of God in history. I was simply one of the persons that he had called forth to be involved in it. I saw it, comparable to the Moses movement out of Egypt. Here was a people who had been oppressed and that were going to change that condition and that is an act of God and that you have to be faithful to God in order to get done. The proposition is that you ask God to remove the oppressor because you're not going to kill the oppressor. In order to get him to do that, you have to do what He said to do. So, I feel myself a part of the God Movement or historical Church Movement. That it's God moving in history eliminating oppression, and war and all that, and I'm a part of that.

I started to get that kind of feeling whenever Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke. I started hearing him and listening to him when he'd come to Nashville. It was obvious to me that he was not motivated by political ambition. His motivation was altruistic and theological, and he was scientifically correct. When a person is scientifically correct, and what they're doing is not designed to injure anybody, it's designed to help everybody, then it has to be motivated by God, because the individual motivation is not selfish. So as a minister, he really did love all the American people and he saw it as a contradiction between brothers, so he was not like a black racist, or a black nationalist. He approached it as a Christian minister. So in that sense, I felt that it was a part of the historical, abolitionist movement. You know, I read a lot of Gandhi's books, a lot about Quakers' movements, and I felt that I was a part of that stream of history that addressed the whole problem of oppression.

*—Excerpted in part from an interview for Eyes on the Prize*

*Truth crushed to earth will rise again.*

*-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**“From 1963 to 1968, no one had a greater strategic & political influence on Dr. King than Jim Bevel. From the original idea of an ‘Alabama Project’ targeted to ‘GROW’: ‘Get Rid of Wallace’ in the wake of 16th Street Baptist Church murders in September 1963, through the idea of marching to Montgomery from Selma in the wake of Jimmie Lee Jackson's killing in Marion in February 1965, through the idea of SCLC fundamentally enlarging its purview by moving north & joining the Chicago Freedom Movement in early 1966, to his powerful & persuasive arguments that American military violence in Southeast Asia was a moral issue about which the world's most-celebrated advocate of confrontational nonviolence could not remain silent, Jim Bevel again & again successfully urged Dr. King to confront evils, domestic & foreign, with the great courage both of them possessed. No sins of the flesh, no matter how egregious, can erase from history's record the hugely influential role that Jim Bevel played in determining America's course during the 1960s.”**

*–David J. Garrow is the author of *Bearing the Cross (Morrow)*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Martin Luther King Jr.; *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965*; *The F.B.I. and Martin Luther King, Jr. He is a Research Professor of History and Law at the University of Pittsburgh, holding a joint appointment with Pitt Law and the Department of History. Prior to joining Pitt Law, Garrow was a Senior Research Fellow at Homerton College, University of Cambridge.**

*Truth will rise above falsehood as oil above water.*

*-Miguel de Cervantes*

*The most basic right of a citizen in a democracy is the right to vote. Without this right, people can be easily ignored and even abused by their government. This, in fact, is what happened to African American citizens living in the South following Civil War Reconstruction. Despite the 14th and 15th amendments guaranteeing the civil rights of black Americans, their right to vote was systematically taken away by white supremacist state governments.*

## **“ALL TRUTH CARRIES PROOF.”**

James Bevel may be the most important civil rights activist in the 20th century that you've never heard of. This is a snippet into the true life story of a man, a living legend who won constitutional rights for his people, as he interpreted the works of Yeshua/Jesus, Tolstoy and Gandhi. A true story, the kind that myths and legends are made of. A man born in the bowels of slavery, “the Delta in Mississippi.” (*The constitution of the state of Mississippi was revised in 1867 with the following stated purpose, “The purpose for the revision of this constitution is to destroy the manhood of the Negro citizen through to success.”*) A man who struggled to unshackle the chains of slavery from himself and his people, in-order to exit slavery (*Egypt*), to live in the (*Wilderness*) for forty years in order to purge and heal himself of emotional wounds, scars, shackles, limitations, perversions and errors that slavery and colonialism heaped upon him and the masses, but like Moses did not enter the Land of Freedom, Justice and Equality (*The Promise Land*). He and his brother (Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.) did however leave a road map for those who would enter.

No people can endure four hundred years of chattel slavery and come out unharmed, unscarred and whole. James L. Bevel, did not come out of Mississippi unscathed by the violence he experienced as a child. Each movement that Bevel initiated and participated in, was a sort of therapy to regain full manhood and son-ship with God.

Forty nine years have passed since the signing of the Voting Rights Act, which is proclaimed the most effective piece of civil rights legislation of the 20th century. These forty-nine years are reflective of the wilderness experience that Moses and the people endured.

All Jews are hard pressed to know that Moses delivered them from Egypt. All Indians know that Gandhi delivered them from the British. All American's know that George Washington delivered them from the King of England. All Americans know that Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slaves. And yet those of us who enjoy political enfranchisement had among us a man who liberated us from segregation, discrimination and disenfranchisement, using the principles and methods of Christ, and like Christ he came among his own and his own received him not. This reveals to us our own non-relationship to Christ.

James Bevel, is somebody who needs to be known. as a theologian, statesman, agricultural scientist, clinician, scholar, husbandman, father, grandfather and brother to all of humanity. His voice was that of reason, his thoughts are those of nonviolent living, and principles (love, truth, peace, freedom, justice), his work was that of healing and educating, and his vision was of the beloved community and world peace.

Because the masses have rejected nonviolence at the personal and social level and continue to build on the old archaic violent structures of colonialism and slavery, seeking advantage and control over others, while complaining, conspiring, comparing and competing, they have missed the teachings and works of James Bevel.

This book is designed to introduce James Bevel, and at the same time create a value for freedom, the freedom won with passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. A freedom that is slowly slipping away, because the tool that was used to secure it -nonviolence- has been thrown into the garbage heap of time. It is not to late, to unearth and utilize this valuable science for achieving peaceful co-existence between brothers and sisters in Christ. “It's either nonviolence or non-existence, "Martin Luther King, Jr. has told us, and if we are to truly honor his legacy we must take serious his teachings. It is past time for us to remember who we are as a people and continue the work of forging “An Authentic Nation Under God.”

—Myeka, 2010

*The nonviolent revolution begins in your mind. You must first redefine yourself.  
When people redefine themselves, slavery is dead. Then the power structure  
makes a motion, but doesn't get a second.*

*-Reverend James L. Bevel*

## **YESHUA (JESUS) THE CHRIST**

The Sermon on the Mount, by Yeshua the Christ (generally referred to by his Greek name of Jesus), can be found in what is now called the book of Matthew in the Bible. It covers chapter five through seven in the book. Matthew was a Jew who collected taxes for the Roman occupiers and most Jews hated the type of person Yeshua represented.

Yeshua (who was also a Jew) went one day and told Matthew, “Well they can get someone else to do the tax collecting. There will always be someone to do that. You come and go with me for a few years, and I’ll wake you up.” So Matthew went and got spiritually cleaned up.

When he wrote his book about his experience with Yeshua, he gave account of a long speech that he gave to a lot of people on a hill, because in those days they didn't have microphones to amplify his voice, so a speech to a large audience had to be done either indoors or in a quiet location away from the city and village noises.

People generally call this speech the Sermon on the Mount. It is however much more than a sermon, it is a scientific lecture. Every item in it can be worked out scientifically, and is usable in life for solving seemingly unsolvable problems. We used it in the movement as our main teaching, our textbook and our guidebook. We used it like a chemist would use his chemical formulas.

Reverend James Lawson introduced me to the real meanings of this lecture. During the Nashville Movements, we studied it daily. We began to dig deep into the Sermon on the Mount, not to memorize it, but to study the points and be in compliance with it, and then we adjusted our lives so that we followed it as closely as possible. Remember, we were students experimenting with nonviolence, to see if it worked. We were both explorers and scientist in a science which had very little field study done. We had to do most of the basic field work, just to see if it actually worked.

For instance, Yeshua uses the phrase, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” We had to acknowledge that we weren't pure hearted enough, because none of us had seen God.

Well, I haven't seen God, so God cannot be seen,” the issue arose. “Yeah, well we don't know, because we have not met the requirements of being pure in heart. We have ill motives. We have motives to cheat, to get even with people and to engage in physical injury. We have all kinds of motives. We even have motives to be successful in a system of segregation, which we all recognize to be unjust.” So we started working on the areas of fear in ourselves and on the areas of hate, of emotional attachment to things and to concepts. We addressed the whole problem of embarrassment, shame, guilt, blame, jealousy and regrets. We began to challenge ourselves on these negative emotions using the “Sermon on the Mount.”

Historically, men have said that if somebody violates you, as the nation was doing to us with segregation, you should violate them. Nonviolence said, “Not so.” It wouldn't work for everybody's health, interest, rights and needs. This means that when others are being irresponsible, you must assume the responsibility to be responsible.

The theology of old would say that if somebody curses you, you curse them. Nonviolence says no. The person that curses you is having a problem. So why should you take on their problem? Why don't you continue to do what you're doing? Keep on respecting them and thus you teach them to respect people from the way you respect them.

When somebody hits you, turn the other cheek. In the movement, a good example of this is, if in a demonstration somebody throws a brick and hits a little girl in the head. Instead of acting up about this, keep on demonstrating and assign someone to get an ambulance for the little girl. This way, when the little girl is taken to the emergency room of the hospital to save her life, she'll have the ambulance and the attention of the emergency room staff all to herself. If the crowd reacts, they are likely to cause a chaotic scene and many more injuries, and the little girl could die from lack of proper medical attention.

When guys persecute you for something you are doing, be glad about this. It gives you an opportunity to serve. When somebody sues you for your coat, let them have it. Don't contend with people over things.

Don't be concerned about what you're going to eat or drink or wear in the movement. Stay concerned with the health, interest, rights and needs of the people. Don't judge other people, because if you are judging others, you certainly have not worked out the science of creating your own reality and taking responsibility. If people oppose you in a movement, don't yell and scream and sing taunting songs. Take them aside, walk that mile with them, respect their point of view and show them your point of view. These are the kind of things that we learned. The strategy was to bring ourselves into active compliance with the spirit and the attitude of the "Sermon on the Mount."

Once we did this, the Nashville Sit-in Movement became natural. We were not sitting in because we were black, we had actually gone through a process of transformation, and we were men.

For the first time, I really understood what it meant to believe in Yeshua the Christ, in the Divine. For the first time, I really understood nonviolence, the science of love. It had to do with living the gospel. The science is taught in all enlightened texts of value in every culture. Should we wait or should we live it? We were just living the gospel.

So, in the movement we learned not to believe in the historical drama that went on, and what the status quo was suppose to be. We accepted Christ's principles and applied them to our own lives. We then acted on these principles in a larger arena and called this movement. These actions brought us more knowledge and that further knowledge brought more experiences, and so on.

I began to see how our instructors at the Nashville American Baptist Theological Seminary, pretended that Yeshua's suggestions were not for this time period. They contended that it was just history. They could not imagine anybody actually doing what Yeshua said. As we began to practice it, we came out of darkness and then we began to apply natural common sense to the situations that we found ourselves in.

All throughout the 1960's movements, we'd open our SCLC meeting with reading from the "Sermon on the Mount." We taught everybody who was taking movement classes and citizenship education classes that the "Sermon on the Mount" was the centerpiece, our textbook.

The movement leaders all know that this is true, but few have used it since, or continued to ground people in it. They leave that out of their public actions. What has been missing in movements since 1968 is making sure that the "Sermon on the Mount" is instilled in people.

The religion of Christ is the religion of love. The science of Christ is the science of what love does when it is applied. This is what creates a scientific working mind. According to the science, when we negate or leave

out this point of love, we then get off into our own ego, or into some kind of national or group religion. Most people play at religion. They are not practicing the religion and the science of Christ. As a result, you get all the whole disorder of man and nations.

When we don't deal with our personal, social or economic problems through institutions like clinic, government and business, we are not able to maintain a point of love. This has now been field tested. When you follow the science of love, it causes society to follow logic and love to its logical conclusion and freedom, justice and intelligence follows.

—Dr. James L. Bevel

*“So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind – it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact – I can only submit to the edict of others.”*

*-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

# SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

What is spiritual significance?

The spiritual significance of anything is the relationship of the act to the order of the universe. The universe is above all else orderly and thus mankind has the ability to align with that order. When this is done, the universe joins with that person and creates something that is of benefit to the whole of life on earth.

When we are able to tap into that essence of divinity (homo-divinitus) that resides within each and everyone of us, we are said to be claiming our godship and doing the works of God.

From time to time men and women both known and unknown have achieved the ability to bring spiritual significance to an event, or series of events. During the 1960's here in the United States of America, a man born in the muddy swamps of the Delta in Mississippi, rose to such heights. James L. Bevel took the teachings of Yeshua (Jesus) - The Sermon on the Mount - and applied it to the upliftment of himself and his people out of the dark and dismal age of slavery that was justified by the color of a persons skin. All sane people know that the color of skin is a poor judge of character and God-given abilities. Yet this was the marker used to push human beings into an animalistic existence void of reason and filled with fear and suffering. The horrors of slavery in the Americas has yet to be told, however the remnants of these horrific days are still seen in the crippling effects of a people who have never experienced any therapy to regain their natural manhood and womanhood.

Scientists have recently discovered that Post Traumatic Stress is passed down through the sperm. We see this DNA pattern in the broken men who hold up street corners. We see it in the filled to capacity prisons. We see this in our fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands. We also see it in the females who have yet to heal from 5,000+ years of suppression, oppression, depression, trauma and stress. All of this is a reflection of an emotional illness that drugs, surgery or talk therapy has no affect on. The patterns are energetic signatures which can only be addressed through Energy Healing.

We have all been victims of these discordant patterns, which keep us out of tune with the rhythm, harmony and order of the universe. By chance one or some of us are able to flip into the order and create great works, but our unhealed conditioning and the unhealthy and dysfunctional environments in which we are always subjected to still color our private lives and thus creates a disparity or schizophrenic existence that leads to our failure to wed our private and public lives, creating disease, distress and criminal acts. It high time that we take the time to heal, so that our ends and our means are congruent.

Myeka

## **THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITION**

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and the world and those who dwell therein. And God created man in the same image and likeness of itself to have dominion over the earth; male and female they (Man) were created, and God blessed them and said to them, "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and assume stewardship responsibility over the whole earth.

—Dr. James L. Bevel

Person To Bevel: "Don't you know the Klan is after you?"

Bevel: "No, I'm the one that's after them. They're the guys who are breaking the law. If somebody was violating the Klan's rights to the same extent that ours are being violated, I'd be helping the Klan"

## **THE DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF MAN**

Man (male/female) is a living soul, created by the Creator to reflect the image and likeness of the Creator, which is love, truth, righteousness and justice. Man is thus that which is created by the Creator to manifest love (being committed to the freedom and growth of self and others), truth (honoring the right knowledge of reality), righteousness (doing the right thing, the right way, for the right reason and getting the right result) and justice (giving what is needed and receiving what is needed). These are "Divine Attributes," which are reflected through human character when the person maintains the four definitions and purposes upon which the character of man rests. Those definitions are; the definition of man; the definition and purpose of sex; the definition and purpose of correct diet and the definition and purpose of work.

The purpose of man's existence is to exercise stewardship responsibility over the earth which is naturally done when man simultaneously works for his/her health, interest, rights and needs and that of others.

—Dr. James L. Bevel

# HISTORY OF THE SELMA NONVIOLENT RIGHT-TO-VOTE MOVEMENT

*The introduction of Birmingham's children into the campaign was one of the wisest moves made. It brought a new impact to the crusade and the impetus that we needed to win the struggle. Jim Bevel had the inspiration of setting D Day, when the students would go to jail in historic numbers.*

Why We Can't Wait, Martin L. King, Jr.

*Our Direct Action Department, under the direction of Rev. James Bevel, then decided to attack the very heart of the political structure of the state of Alabama and the Southland through a campaign for the right to vote. Planning for the voter registration project in Selma started around the seventeenth of December, 1964, but the actual project started on the second of January, 1965. Our affiliate organization, the Dallas County Voters League, invited us to aid and assist in getting more Negroes registered to vote. We planned to have Freedom Days, days of testing and challenge, to arouse people all over the community. We decided that on the days that the county and the state had designated as registration days, we would assemble at the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church and walk together to the courthouse. More than three thousand were arrested in Selma and Marion together. I was arrested in one of those periods when we were seeking to go to the courthouse.*

The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., Martin Luther King, Jr.

**BUT JESUS SAID, SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO**

**ME: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

MATTHEW 19;14

**When the four little girls were killed in a Birmingham church bombing on September 15, 1963, Reverend Bevel decided that it could not be ignored. He could see the inter-relatedness of the bombing and the movement actions being carried out in Birmingham. Bevel decided to step up the action of the nonviolent movement. His overriding thought was to provide Black people with a tool that they could use to nonviolently protect themselves. He decided that getting the southern Black people the right-to-vote would go a long way in providing this protection. On the day of the bombing, he and his wife Diane Nash drew up a plan for getting the right to vote. He sent his wife Diane Nash-Bevel to present the proposal to Dr. King, asking for his and SCLC's support for such a plan.**

*"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. We weren't going to stop working until Alabama Blacks had the right to vote."*

Diane Nash-Bevel interview in *Voices of Freedom*, p. 173

**Ye have heard that it hath been said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.**

MATTHEW 5;38-39

*"King's SCLC gave serious consideration to a national civil disobedience campaign (the right to vote proposal) drafted by Reverend James L. Bevel and his wife Diane Nash-Bevel, Field Secretary of SNCC...but a week later was forced to reverse itself when virtually every other civil rights group rejected the idea."*

House Divided, Lionel Lokos

**BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.**

MATTHEW 5:4

Selma, Alabama, is the seat of Dallas County. It is also the unofficial economic, political, and cultural capitol of the western portion of Alabama's Black Belt (similar to Greenwood, the political center of the Mississippi Delta). The County was 57% Black in 1961, but of the 15,000 African-Americans old enough to vote only 130 - less than 1% - are registered - and some of those few actually live and work elsewhere. More than 80% of Dallas County Blacks lived beneath the poverty line. Most of them worked as sharecroppers, farm hands, maids, janitors, and day-laborers. Only 5% of Dallas County Blacks had a high school diploma, and more than 60% never had the chance to go to high school at all because neither Alabama nor the local school board saw any need to educate the "hewers of wood and drawers of water." By contrast, 81% of Dallas County whites lived above the poverty line and 90% had at least a high school education.

In the rural counties surrounding Selma, the Black majorities are even larger - over 80% in some cases - and in many of them not a single African-American is registered. Adjacent Wilcox County is 78% Black and has not had an African-American voter since the end of Reconstruction, neither has next door Lowndes County which is over 81% Black.

Judge James Hare dominated Dallas County politics, and the county was sometimes referred to as a "political plantation," with Judge Hare as master and Sheriff Jim Clark as whip-cracking overseer. Hare was a self-proclaimed "expert" on racial eugenics. He asserted that the Blacks living in Selma were descended from Ibo and Angolan slaves who (in his publicly-stated opinion) were genetically incapable of achieving an IQ of higher than 65. Jim Clark is a brutal, hard-core racist, whose strategy for maintaining rigid segregation is to violently beat down and arrest anyone who dares question the established order. And through bribery, intimidation, and blackmail, Clark built a network of Black snitches who would inform on their neighbors.

In addition to his paid deputies, Clark relied on his Sheriff's posse of more than two hundred armed volunteers - some of them members or supporters of racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. Possemen wear cheap badges issued by Clark, construction helmets, and khaki work clothes. They are armed with shotguns, pistols, and a variety of hardwood clubs including ax-handles. Originally formed after World War II to oppose labor unions, the posse's mission was to defend white-supremacy and suppress all forms of Black protest. The posse wasn't limited to Dallas County. Clark would send them on missions far and wide. In 1961 some were part of the mob that beat the Freedom Riders in Montgomery, others rushed to join the massive violence in Oxford Mississippi when James Meredith integrated 'Ole Miss in 1962, and Bull Connor called them in to help crack the heads of student protesters during The Birmingham Campaign of 1963.

Supporting Hare and Clark was Selma's powerful White Citizens Council composed of bankers, businessmen, politicians, landlords, clergy, and other pillars of the community. The Council stood ever vigilant against any attempt to undermine the "Southern way of life" which they defend with economic terrorism - firings, evictions, foreclosures, blacklists, and business boycotts. Together, Judge Hare, Sheriff Clark, the posse, the Citizens Council, and the snitches created an interlocking reign of economic, judicial, and violent terror that imprisoned Dallas County Blacks in an iron grip of fear.

**LOVE YOUR ENEMY, BLESS THEM THAT CURSE YOU, DO GOOD TO THEM THAT HATE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THEM WHICH DESPITEFULLY USE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU.**

MATTHEW 5:44

Judge Nathan Hare had an illegal and unconstitutional injunction in effect in Selma. It prohibited Black leaders and freedom organizations from meeting with three or more people at one time to talk about civil rights or voter registration. Organizing and registration efforts were thus crippled. There had been no public meetings, no protests, no mass registration efforts since the injunction was issued six months earlier. Hare's order was being appealed, but the case was moving through the courts very slowly with no end in sight.

*"I'd actually heard about Selma before [deciding to work there]. It was during the Freedom Rides when the bus I was riding ... was stopped by state police who said it needed to take another route ... because there was a white mob waiting in Selma and they couldn't protect us. I'm saying to myself, 'Oh Lord - even the State Troopers are scared of that city.' But even remembering that, I decided I'm going to work in Selma ... and get married. Colia who I married was not afraid of anything. And we married. Our honeymoon was going to be Selma."*

—Bernard Lafayette

**YEA THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL: FOR THOU ART WITH ME; THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME.**

PSALMS 23:4

*Bernard and Colia Lafayette went to Selma, in February 1963 to begin a voter education effort. Throughout the spring their monthly Dallas County Voters League clinics drew an average of forty people, and by mid-June they were able to draw seven hundred people to a mass rally at which James Bevel of SCLC spoke.*

Protest At Selma, David Garrow

**Strong local leadership developed in Alabama, in that the NAACP was banned. Local leaders and Rev. Bernard & Colia LaFayette of SNCC were already laying the groundwork in Selma, when Bevel arrived.**

*lthough Selma had been declared "off limits" as an organizing district by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference earlier, Amelia Robinson, with her husband, S. W. Boynton, had labored for the right to vote in that area for over thirty years prior to the campaign of 1964.*

—Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson, 1911 - Present

*The one thing SNCC did not have to do in Selma was identify and develop grassroots community leadership. As I said, this was a self-contained community, and its Dallas County Voter's League had a mighty impressive group of leaders. Some proud, fearless black leaders who, against all odds, had never quit and never backed down. Nuff respect. They were mostly professional people: ministers like the Reverend Mr. Lewis and the Reverend Mr. Reese; Dr. Jackson, who I believe was a dentist; tough-talking, indefatigable attorney J. L. Chestnut; and of course, the president, Mrs. Amelia Boynton, a former teacher and widely respected leader.*

*Mrs. Boynton was a gracious, elegantly spoken lady. A teacher deeply committed to her people's uplift; Mrs. Boynton had been president of the Dallas County NAACP. When the NAACP was outlawed in Alabama, she didn't miss a beat. She merely led the membership into the Voters League and became president of that. She was demure, highly "cultured," and quite unintimidatable. The entire Boynton family were warriors. Her husband also had been a highly respected leader, who managed — with the ingenuity of his widow — to continue the fight literally from his grave.*

Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael)

**ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD,  
TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

ROMANS 8:28

*Mrs. Boynton was a gracious, elegantly spoken lady. A teacher deeply committed to her people's uplift; Mrs. Boynton had been president of the Dallas County NAACP. When the NAACP was outlawed in Alabama, she didn't miss a beat. She merely led the membership into the Voters League and became president of that. She was demure, highly "cultured," and quite unintimidatable. The entire Boynton family were warriors. Her husband also had been a highly respected leader, who managed —*

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Violence, jail, and economic terrorism was not able to entirely suppress the spirit of resistance in Selma. The Boynton family (Sam, Amelia, and their son Bruce) were not intimidated. While a student at Howard Law School, Bruce Boynton was arrested for using a white-only lunch counter at the Trailways bus station in Richmond VA. He filed *Boynton v. Virginia*, the landmark Supreme Court case that overturned segregation in interstate travel and formed the legal basis for the Freedom Rides in 1961.

After several months and no support from SCLC leadership, Reverend Bevel decided to move on the plan without the consent of Dr. King or SCLC. He took some of his staff to Alabama and started organizing people and resources to bring the plan to fruition. Official approval of the voting rights movement didn't come until November, 1964, just after the presidential election.

*Our Direct Action Department, under the direction of Rev. James Bevel, then decided to attack the very heart of the political structure of the state of Alabama and the Southland through a campaign for the right to vote.*

The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., Clayborne Carson

**THE STEPS OF A GOOD MAN ARE ORDERED BY THE LORD: AND HE DELIGHTETH IN HIS WAY. THOUGH HE  
FALL, HE SHALL NOT BE UTTERLY CAST DOWN: FOR THE LORD UPHOLDETH HIM WITH HIS HAND.**

**I HAVE BEEN YOUNG, AND NOW AM OLD; YET HAVE I NOT SEEN THE  
RIGHTEOUS FORSAKEN, NOR HIS SREED BEGGING BREAD.**

PSALM 37:23-25

First the government was asked to remove all barriers that kept blacks from voting. The Congress was petitioned, the state of Alabama and Governor George Wallace were petitioned. This way of asking and engaging in clear communication before any demonstrations began, was proof that the barriers to voting did exist.

**As director of nonviolent education, James Bevel had the responsibility of educating and demonstrating nonviolence.**

*But at one, the Ward Four meeting held in the back of Brown Chapel, they got a reception from an SCLC staff member named James Bevel. Bevel was on Dr. King's executive staff, and was in charge of the SCLC workers in the city; although short and unimposing in appearance, he was one of King's most eloquent and fiery spokesman known especially for the vigor and force of his denunciation of racism. Before a small dumb founded audience, Bevel stood up and ordered the deputies to leave. One of them raised a camera to take his picture and he angrily told him to stop and repeated the order to leave. The deputies were wary of getting involved in such surrounding, and they left. The news of this unprecedented act of defiance quickly spread around the city.*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HAVEN IS PERFECT.**

MATTHEW 5:48

**Past experiences had taught Bevel that once a campaign was started, it had to be completed. He had come to Selma, with his staff to gain the right to vote, realizing that they would be offered everything but that. He however, was resolved that nothing less than the right to vote was acceptable. Next an injunction was issued by Judge Thomas.**

*"...the injunction represented a major attempt by the white leadership to head off the demonstrations in Selma. It contained what seemed to be real concessions, which would open up the voting rolls to larger numbers of Black citizens. Even the SCLC workers weren't sure at first what its impact would be. Andy Young told the people at Brown Chapel, when they heard it was imminent that, "In every battle there are many rounds, and this round may have come to an end. We may have a little breathier."*

*James Bevel who had tossed the deputies out of a ward meeting, was the main preacher at the mass meeting that night, and he was in a combative mood! The order, he said, "may make it more difficult for us to do some of the things we have done before, and we might be cited for contempt of court. But I don't mind being cited for contempt because Negroes were born under an injunction in Alabama. If Judge Thomas plans to connive around with letters of the law in order to deny us our rights, he has a bad dream coming. We mean to vote and have representation in government, and we will settle for nothing less. I'm saying here and now," he finished, "that we must be prepared to fight and die for everything that is ours. And there is going to be rabble rousing all over Alabama until we get the right to vote."*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**LORD, BEHOLD THEIR THREATENINGS: AND GRANT UNTO THY SERVANTS, THAT  
WITH ALL BOLDNESS THEY MAY SPEAK THY WORD.**

ACTS 4:29

**The only act of violence was when Mrs. Annie Lee Cooper, a 224-pound, 54-year-old African-American woman, threw a punch to the jaw of Selma Sheriff Jim Clark and knocked him off his feet. Clark had hit her in the back of the neck with his billy club when she had been standing in line for hours at the Dallas County Courthouse in an attempt to register to vote.**

*I saw Jim Clark fling Mrs. Boynton around like a leaf a day or two before. Clark was larger than I on the outside, but I was larger than he on the inside. The altercation started. ... Jim Clark could not take me down alone. The town sheriff and I were going at it blow for blow, punch for punch, and lick for lick, with our fists. It was a plain old street brawl. Suddenly he cried out to his deputies: "Don'y' an see this nigger woman beatin' me? Do some'um." At the urging of the sheriff the others came to his aid. All four of them closed in on me.*

*Clark took his nightstick and prepared to land a blow. Before he knew it, I had his arm and held it back with a tight grip. Clark brought his billy club over my face. He managed to put enough power in his swing to graze me across the upper part of my eye with the nightstick. The blow stung and was hard enough to draw blood. It struck me over my eye. I was fiercely holding his hand so he could not strike me again. I heard Dr. King urging the marchers to stay calm. He was afraid the marchers were going to turn violent while watching the Policemen attack me. It was four against one. It took everything each of the four had to manhandle me.*

*The deputies wrestled me down onto the pavement, as the crowd looked on. Clark planted his knee in my stomach, as the deputies had me on my back. That was the only way he could have gotten his knee in my stomach. He stood no chance of wrestling me to the ground alone. The deputies rolled me over on my stomach and handcuffed my hands behind my back. They lifted me to my feet and took me to the paddy-wagon. I was taken through an alley in town. While walking through the alley, Clark took his billy club*

*and landed a blow on my head. It was a fierce lick. The blow cracked my skull. ...*

*I remained locked up in the town jail the rest of the day. About 11 pm one of the deputies came to my cell. Jim Clark was nearby sleeping off his drunk. He was a heavy drinker. The deputy said: "I'm going to let you go before Sheriff Clark wakes up in a drunken stupor and decides to kill you."*

Annie Lee Cooper

*Mrs. Cooper was down in that line, and they haven't told the press the truth about it. Mrs. Cooper wouldn't have turned around and hit Sheriff Clark just to be hitting. And of course, as you know, we teach a philosophy of not retaliating and not hitting back, but the truth of the situation is that Mrs. Cooper, if she did anything, was provoked by Sheriff Clark. At that moment, he was engaging in some very ugly business-as-usual action. This is what brought about that scene there."*

Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., at Brown Chapel

**WISDOM IS BETTER THAN WEAPONS OF WAR; BUT ONE SINNER DESTROYETH MUCH GOOD.**

ECCLESIASTES 9:18

*"No matter how justified, retaliatory violence on the part of demonstrators weakens the Movement because, then [the press] don't talk about the registration. We want the world to know they ain't registering nobody!"*

Dr. James Bevel, at Brown Chapel

**Bevel took SCLC to Selma with one goal in mind, to win a strong federal voting rights law that would provide for executive branch enforcement of southern Blacks constitutionally guaranteed right-to-vote. Again and again they were offered everything else.**

*Over the weekend there was quiet negotiations between Black and White leaders over the use of an "appearance book." A number of the local leaders, including Reverend Reese, were momentarily persuaded that the opening of the appearance book a week early would constitute an important sign of good faith on the part of the Whites, and the Whites believed that the Black leaders had agreed to end demonstration once it became available.*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**The instituting of an appearance book was not the equivalent of federal protection of voting rights and to end demonstrations or take a breather would have left Black people at the mercy of the already riled up Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council. There was a position of no compromise in the movement. This circumvented people who were not totally committed to nonviolence or who didn't understand it from giving in to less than the goal, the right to vote.**

*But things didn't work out as the Whites had hoped. The SCLC staff in the city particularly James Bevel, argued vehemently that the appearance book was just another White man's trick, a delaying tactic like so many others and no concession at all. On Monday morning, February eighth, they held a press conference to denounce it, and to call for the holding of registration in other locations as well, the appointment of deputy registrars, some of whom would be Black and the elimination of all voting requirements except age and residence. Bevel said he would lead a group to the courthouse to make explicit their boycott of the book.*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**GIVE NOT THAT WHICH IS HOLY UNTO DOGS, NEITHER CAST YE YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE, LEST THEY TRAMPLE THEM UNDER THEIR FEET, AND TURN AGAIN AND REND YOU.**

MATTHEW 7:6

**As a result of the visibility that came to Reverend Bevel when he would not go along with other Black leaders concessions when they were fooled by the White man's tricks, he was severely beaten, and received a concussion. He was jailed on the day of the appearance book protest.**

*James Bevel, had been beaten insensibly by sheriff's deputies and had sustained a concussion of the brain. Bevel was chained to his bed.*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**I SEND UNTO YOU PROPHETS AND WISE MEN; AND SOME YE SHALL KILL AND CRUCIFY.. BEHOLD YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE. BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.**

MATTHEW 23:34

**Not only was Bevel chained to his bed, he was the target of unremitting abuse and degradation. He was also watered down and stripped of his clothes and caught viral pneumonia in an unheated cell. His wife serving him divorce papers caused this inhumane treatment to come to light, as her lawyer found Bevel near death. This was Diane's strategy for getting help for her husband. She was not actually divorcing Bevel. She managed to get him transferred to an infirmary where he is shackled with iron chains to a bed until she is able to get them removed.**

**The first real causality of the Selma movement was the shooting and subsequent death of Jimmie Lee Jackson in Marion, AL. His murder threatened to destroy the nonviolent movement, as people began to purchase bullets from neighboring states.**

**I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YE PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.**

ROMANS 12:1

*The Black community had armed themselves in Marion, and were ready to kill some policemen or White people. I (Bevel) convinced them that they should march instead and that, that would keep the question of the right to vote before the nation and would force President Johnson not to join the southern White folks in crushing the movement under the pretense of upholding law and order if some white folk were killed. This would have caused a restriction of travel and thus we would not have been able to keep the people at the courthouse. This was a tactical maneuver in the question of the right to vote, aimed at bringing the whole state government and the rest of the nation into the movement.*

Interview with James Bevel, by Helen L. Edmond

*As ministers we felt it was important to make a pastoral call to the family of the slain Jimmy Lee Jackson, to have prayer with them and give them spiritual encouragement. Jimmy was a young man who was the bread winner for the family and was now dead. He had a sister, a wife, and mother who had been beaten. Before leaving the Jackson's, Bevel asked the family, "What do you think we should do? Do you think we should continue to march?" Cager Lee Jackson said, "Oh yes, we have to march now, I have nothing to lose, I've lost everything I had." So Bevel said, "If we march would you march with us?" He said, "Yes, I'll march." So on our way back from the Jackson's house, Bevel said, "I'm going to march, and I'm going to march all the way to Montgomery." He asked, "Do you think I'll get anyone to march with me?" I said, "I'm just one person, but I'll march with you." So Bevel at the mass meeting that very same night made the announcement that he was going to march all the way to Montgomery. He asked, "How many people are going to march with me?" The whole church (Zion United Methodist Church) stood up."*

Account by Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Co-founder of SNCC

**IF ANY MAN SPEAK, LET HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD; IF ANY MAN MINISTER, LET HIM DO IT AS OF THE ABILITY WHICH GOD GIVETH: THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE PRAISE AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.**  
I PETER 4:11

**Jimmie Lee Jackson died of a massive infection at Good Samaritan Hospital on Friday, February 26th. Two days later, a memorial service was held at Zion United Methodist Church in Marion, AL. There were over four hundred mourners packed into the pews and another six hundred stood outside in the rain. Reverend James Bevel delivered the sermon, preaching from two texts. The first was Acts 12:2-3 and the second Esther 4:4. These passages allowed Bevel to identify the biblical kings, Herod and Mordecai's Ahasuerus, with Alabama's governor, George Wallace.**

*"Herod killed James, the brother of John, with a sword; and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also."*

*"I'm not worried about James anymore," I'm concerned about Peter, who is still with us. James has found release from the indignities of being a Negro in Alabama, and no longer can he be cowed and coerced and deprived of his rights as a man. James knows the peace this world cannot give and lives eternally the life we all hope someday to share. I'm not worried about James. I'm concerned with Peter, who must continue to be cowed and coerced and beaten and even murdered."*

*"What could be done to save Peter?" "Also Mordecai gave Hetach the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy the Jews, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go unto the king, to make supplications unto him, and to make requests before him for her people."*

*"Jimmie Lee . . . is speaking to us from the casket and he is saying to us that we much substitute courage for caution. . . . We must not be bitter, and we must not harbor ideas of retaliating with violence. We must not lose faith in our white brothers." "We must go and see the king."*

**James Bevel's idea was to take Jackson's casket to Montgomery and place it on the steps of the capitol. That idea was dismissed. Instead, on Wednesday, March 3rd, the day Jimmie Lee Jackson was buried in Marion, SCLC announced that it would be holding a protest march from Selma all the way to Montgomery, beginning on March 7th. The fifty four mile march would be along Highway 80 and would take five days.**

*In the nonviolent movement, if you went back to some of the classical strategies of Gandhi, when you have, say, a great violation of the people and there's a great sense of injury, you have to give people an honorable means and context in which to express and eliminate that grief and speak decisively and succinctly back to the issue. Otherwise, your movement will break down in violence and chaos.*

*So agreeing to go to Montgomery was that kind of tool that would absorb a tremendous amount of energy and effort, and it was to keep the issue of disenfranchisement before the whole nation. And the whole point was walking from Selma to Montgomery, it'd take you five or six days, and which would give you the time to discuss in the nation through the papers, radio, television and going around speaking what the real issues were.*

James Bevel Interview, Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965; Episode 106-17

*“Who killed him? He was murdered by the brutality of every sheriff who practiced lawlessness in the name of law. He was murdered by the irresponsibility of every politician from governors on down who has fed his constituents the stale bread of hatred and the spoiled meat of racism. He was murdered by the timidity of a Federal Government that is willing to spend millions of dollars a day to defend freedom in Vietnam but cannot protect the rights of its citizens at home. ... And he was murdered by the cowardice of every Negro who passively accepts the evils of segregation and stands on the sidelines in the struggle for justice.*

Martin Luther King, Jr., at Jimmie Lee Jackson’s funeral

**Dr. King endorsed Bevel's proposal for a march from Selma to Montgomery demanding justice for the murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson and to confront Wallace over voting rights. But SNCC opposes the SCLC plan. They see it as a dangerous grandstand play by King that will do nothing for the local people. John Lewis disagreed, "I knew the feelings that were out there on the streets. The people of Selma were hurting. They were angry. They needed to march. It didn't matter to me who led it. They needed to march."**

**Lewis stands alone and is outvoted. The SNCC meeting does agree that SNCC members can participate in the march as individuals, but not as SNCC representatives. SNCC sent a letter to King stating that: We strongly believe that the objectives of the march do not justify the dangers ... consequently [SNCC] will only live up to those minimal commitments to provide radios and cars, and nothing beyond that.**

*We called Dr. King,—he had asked us to call off the march. And we persuaded him that since there were about three hundred people there, maybe they could go ahead and march, that they weren't going to get far anyway. That we had seen the State Troopers and they were going to probably stop them and turn them around, or maybe they would—people would get arrested. So he said, "Well, OK, go ahead and march," he said, "but don't you all go to jail." And we thought that what was going to happen was that we would march over there and everybody would be arrested. So, John Lewis, Hosea Williams and I, and James Bevel decided that only two should go. Well, John said, "Well, I represent SNCC, so I'll go, and one of you all decide which one will go." So we played odd man, and we flipped a coin and the odd man got to march, and the odd man was Hosea Williams. And... but nobody anticipated the kind of savagery and brutality that occurred.*

Reverend Andrew Young Interview, Eyes on the Prize

**Marches began in Selma, AL on March 7, 1965. About 600 black and white civil rights protesters passed through Selma and began to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge spanning the Alabama River. They were met on the other side by a large force of Alabama state troopers, who ordered the marchers to return to Selma. When the marchers refused to turn back, the troopers attacked, some on horseback, knocking down people and beating them with billy clubs. This was all filmed by TV news cameras and shown that evening to a shocked American public. The third march was approved by Governor George Wallace on March 21, 1965.**

*“Dr. King's speech [in Montgomery] was impressive as usual, but the remarks of James Bevel got closest to the whole point of the struggle. Waving up at the capitol, Bevel said, “Those police up there on the steps know we belong inside. Thirty-four percent of the seats in there belong to us. We don't want these steps. We want the capitol.”*

Black Activism, Robert H. Brisbane

**No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and man. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life... but seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6**

*“For Bevel, the march to Montgomery was not the end of the SCLC’s Alabama Project, but only the beginning. But once the march was completed, Bevel returned to his original plan. In fact, in light of the momentum developed by the march, he decided its sights should be raised; the Black citizens of Alabama should not settle for simply a federal voting law, he felt, they should demand the impeachment of Governor Wallace, the resignation of both houses of the state legislature, and a new, federally supervised election for all state offices. To reinforce the impact of the mass arrest in Montgomery, Bevel wanted SCLC to institute a nationwide boycott of the states industries and products, to add economic chaos to political disruption as the campaign heated up. The weekend after the rally at the capitol, Dr. King announced that he would call for a boycott of Alabama products and industries; and ask the federal government to withdraw its funds from programs in the state.”*

*But there was resistance to this program within SCLC, led principally by Hosea William. Williams urged Dr. King to give him command of all the SCLC field staff, including those in Alabama, to help implement SCOPE. SCOPE was given a budget of \$480,000. This meant putting an end to Bevel’s Alabama Project. SCLC’s SCOPE Project did not turn out nearly as well as its sponsors had hoped. Everybody was waiting for the [voting right] bill to be passed. With almost a half million dollars to play with, SCLC’s legendary disorganization became an industry in SCOPE.*

Selma, 1965, Charles Fager

**WHEREFORE BY THEIR FRUIT YE SHALL KNOW THEM.**

MATTHEW 7:20

*What keeps the potency in a movement is the principle being applied to the need and the problem. The need, at the time was for the blacks and whites in Alabama to be re-educated to participate in a democratic government responsibly. And I had proposed, that, we boycott Alabama and call for a new election and in the proposal, it stated that the universities, like say, Boston U. would take say Jefferson County and each university would take a County and would engage in social education and political education, economic development education which would cause the people to think scientifically and academically about living in community rather than the age old pattern of black and white. I lost that struggle within the movement and Hosea Williams came up with a scheme called, Scope. King got caught up in that and spent a half a million dollars, wasted time and money, in a scheme called Scope. And to me, that is what threw the movement off because we should have pursued, the educating of people so that they could functionally carry out good government from the precinct through the beats on up to the legislative districts, in the counties. And to me, we failed the people when we didn't completely take them on to a process of democratic government. When King made that decision, to put the staff and the money under the auspices of Hosea, I simply decided that I would come to Chicago and apply non-violence to the whole question of open housing so, that's what I did.*

Excerpt from interview for Eyes on the Prize

**SCLC pulled out of Selma and the people of Selma and the Blackbelt were left to suffer under the racist tricks and ploys of those elected officials who had a 400 year jump start on keeping them oppressed. In addition the state constitution was founded on the oppression and enslavement of African Americans. The mayor of Selma in 1965 was Mayor Joe Smitherman and he served as mayor until 2003 (38 years). He maintained the racist policies in new ways. In an interview with local Selma residents it was reported that people were encouraged to keep their children out of school and receive crazy checks. One young lady said, that her mother use to beat her when she voiced a desire to go to school. She became a resident of a mental institute.**

**Had Bevel’s plan to hold new elections for all public officials been implemented Mayor Smitherman would not have served for forty more years and the people would have been able to move forward towards true democracy in the state of Alabama. To this day African Americans continue to suffer under the cruelty of unsavory politicians and unjust laws.**

**On January 14, 2014, the city council of Selma voted to award land to the Daughters of the Confederacy, for building of a statue to honor Nathan B. Forest (Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan) in a African American neighborhood and African American members of the council voted for this.**

**The Voting Rights Act, is a landmark piece of federal legislation in the United States that prohibits racial discrimination in voting. It was signed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson on August 6, 1965. Johnson opening the way for greater political participation by blacks in southern politics. He also established an Office of Economic Opportunity, increased educational spending, and established the Medicare and Medicaid programs to benefit the poor and elderly.**

*For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?"*

*There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight as Americans—not as Democrats or Republicans--we are met here as Americans to solve that problem.*

*This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: "All men are created equal"—"government by consent of the governed"—"give me liberty or give me death." Well, those are not just clever words, or those are not just empty theories. In their name Americans have fought and died for two centuries, and tonight around the world they stand there as guardians of our liberty, risking their lives.*

*Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position. It really rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, he shall choose his leaders, educate his children, and provide for his family according to his ability and his merits as a human being.*

*Wednesday I will send to Congress a law designed to eliminate illegal barriers to the right to vote.*

*This is one Nation. What happens in Selma or in Cincinnati is a matter of legitimate concern to every American. But let each of us look within our own hearts and our own communities, and let each of us put our shoulder to the wheel to root out injustice wherever it exists.*

*But even if we pass this bill, the battle will not be over. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and State of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life.*

*Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome.*

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, Excerpt, Voting Rights Speech

*The Voting Rights Act is a complex piece of legislation that was developed in response to the failure of earlier legislation to remedy discrimination in voting. It strengthened judicial remedies, but also provided for direct Federal action through a variety of administrative remedies to counter immediate and potential barriers to full and effective minority political participation. The Voting Rights Act was adopted in 1965. By making these practices illegal, the act seeks to give all Americans a fair chance of electing representatives. The Voting Rights Act has been used by communities across the country to challenge unfair election rules, and create more inclusive governments. The Act prohibits discrimination against African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans. Since 1964, the number of black elected officials nationwide has increased from 300 to more than 9,100.*

WHEN A MAN'S WAYS PLEASE THE LORD, HE MAKES HIS ENEMIES TO BE AT PEACE WITH HIM.

PROVERBS 16:7

**Reverend James Bevel and Diane Nash received the SCLC Rosa Parks Award for having conceived, initiated and successfully executed the Selma Right To Vote Movement.**

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE THAT MEN MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS  
AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

MATTHEW 5:16

Thousands of African Americans have been elected to office since the signing of the Voting Rights Act. They have shunned nonviolence and many have neglected the needs of the people and pursued self-interest while in office. Many gains have been lost as a result of this.

Barack H. Obama was elected 44th president of the U. S., on 11/4/08. He was elected to a second term on 11/6/12. Forty-six years prior to Mr. Obama's election, it was predicted that this would occur.

*"The Irish were not wanted here. Now an Irish Catholic is President of the United States. There is no question about it, in the next forty years a Negro can achieve the same position."*

Attorney General Robert Francis Kennedy, 1962

**In June of 2013, the Supreme Court declared a provision of the Voting Rights Act unconstitutional. With the understanding of "government" as a living principle (*beyond racist politics and self-promotion*) given to man by GOD, "voting" as only one aspect of government, a "statesman" as the servant of the people for the public good, and "nonviolent precinct council government" as the new frontier, African American people will be able to establish and maintain full equality and obtain justice.**

EYES HAVE NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NEITHER HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART  
OF MAN, THE THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED FOR THEM THAT LOVE HIM.

I CORINTHIANS 2:9

Just like in days of old as recorded in Holy Books, GOD has seen fit in this day and time to use men and women to carry out works that lead mankind closer to regaining full stewardship of themselves and the earth. GOD can use any person to fulfill a mission, for GOD has created all things and persons to be of service. To overcome the vestiges of slavery in the United States in the 60's and 70's he choose James Bevel, because he was created for such a purpose. To dishonor, ignore or deny the works of Dr. James L. Bevel, as many historians have chosen to do, is to deny the power, majesty and grace of GOD in modern times. It is to say that GOD cannot create good works in these times, and this is a lie.

*It stands to reason that in that nonviolence was used to open the door to freedom, justice and equality, that it will take nonviolence to keep the door open and that only those who take up nonviolence as a way of life can walk through the door, and thus inherit the Kingdom of God on Earth (the Promised Land).*

*—Myeka, 2017*

*“Precinct Council, government of, for and by the people is the new frontier.”*

*–Dr. James L. Bevel*

## **MAN AS GOVERNMENT**

In order to intelligently participate in your ward, city, county, state, nation or United Nations, you must responsibly participate constitutionally in your precinct. Paying taxes and casting ballots are empty irresponsible acts if these are to the exclusion of precinct responsibility and accountability. The voter and tax payer cannot hold an elected official accountable if they don't have the knowledge and means to hold them accountable.

Freedom is not a gift that can be given by another, nor is it something that can be won by murder or war. Freedom is a gift to those who have the faith to accept their definition and purpose as man (male/female) and the courage to face the lies and perversities that developed in the self as a result of having denied their true definition and purpose.

The precinct council is made up of the people in the precinct who come together to take responsibility for God's definition and purpose for man, and to address the health, interest, rights and needs of themselves and each other in democratically run institutions and communities. The precinct council will have six major institutions and communities. The precinct council will have six major committees and as many subcommittees as is necessary to address all of the questions, issues, problems and needs of the people in the precinct.

The primary purpose of the precinct council is to create a sane, peaceful, and knowledgeable populace in the precinct. The policy of the precinct is to be set by the general body, and policies will be experimented with, in the appropriate community institutions (Worship center, government, business, clinic, home and school).

Because of the nature of problems in the inner cities and because of the devastating effect historical and present day tyranny has had on each of our development, it is recommended that people who vote to constitute a precinct council enroll in a “Nonviolent Clinic.”

The precinct council is man's expression of love for God, self and fellow man. For when we love God, we will seek to know and do the will of God, and we will seek to carry out the purpose for which we were created. If we love our children and neighbors, then truly we must create order and contexts so that constructive work and cooperation can go on.

The tyrannical forces are always competing with each other for military dominance over each other and people, however, we are called to serve God and the health, interests, rights and needs of all, and we must not get involved in supporting tyranny in any form.

As we build our precinct councils, the clearer it will become to all tyrants of the futility of this misguided misconduct, for as it is written, “When the perfect is come, the imperfect will pass away.” We need not fight the imperfect; we need to manifest the perfect.

*“Constitutionality is the sum total of all law that sustains man in a state of integrity, and allows man (individually and collectively) to attain to definition and purpose.*

*With the loss of constitutionality, an individual becomes an animated personality without the ability to comprehend their own or anyone else's health, interest, rights and needs. Freedom is lost by an individual to the exact degree to which the person compromises or contradicts the definition and purpose of their being.”*

*–Dr. James L. Bevel*

## THE LAWS GOVERNING A NONVIOLENT MEETING

1. At the meeting, anyone is allowed to speak. They can only discuss what they and their Creator intend to do. They cannot discuss the misconduct and misfortune of other people, unless they show how that misfortune and/or misconduct creates separation, and unless they explain what they did or are doing to cause reconciliation in the situation, i.e., discuss a healing method for every disorder and misconduct. Otherwise it will be classified as gossip. All flattery is pseudo gossip, an attempt to sophisticate gossip.
2. All references to history should be to prove that there is an intelligent life force that has created all things to live in harmony with each other on earth. (If historical references don't prove the above then the person has a false sense of history which should not be allowed.)
3. Each person must willing to honestly discuss their position, disposition and proposition.
4. The person speaking must be willing and open to let anyone at anytime question their motives and intentions.
5. If one is not prepared to speak under these terms, they must listen, and be contemplative, for they are not yet ready to speak.
6. The songs and music must be the same as the speech.
7. Prayers must be within the framework of the Lord's Prayer and David's 23rd Psalm. The Lord's Prayer is a private request and the 23rd Psalm is the public expression of it. Any prayer vibrations less than this is an outside show to an unfriendly world.

—Dr. James L. Bevel

*Your right to vote is the right upon which your ability to defend all of your other rights depends. When people come after your right to vote, it is usually to make it easier to come after so many of your other rights that you may actually hold dearer.*

*-NAACP President Ben Jealous*

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

*By Dr. James L. Bevel*

America is built on the true definition and purpose for which God created man. At the core of America are the righteousness of God, and the responsibility of man to uphold that righteousness. This is why no cause in America is as strong as a civil rights movement that addressed the responsibility and rights of citizenship. In other words, love is the fulfillment of the law and when we love and work for the health, interest, rights and needs of all Americans and all mankind, the very best comes out of America and Americans. This being true, the loving, righteous, serious, scientific and courageous regardless of gender, race, religion or age can give leadership in this nation, whether it be through the electoral process or through social, education or religious movements.

America was theologically conceived when God said, "let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the earth. So God created man in His own image. In the image of God created he them male and female and named them Man when they were created."

America was sociologically born as she broke the chains of colonial rule and declared that all men were created equal and that they all have the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. After the declaration of 1775 and the confrontation of 1776 and the reconstruction of 1787 (we the people in order to form a more perfect union...), a new nation was born from a colonial mother and a divine father. Within her were character flaws like slavery, indentured servitude and the disenfranchisement of female man. These flaws being in conflict with her divine nature erupted in the confrontation of 1863 which led to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1865 and the subsequent "malice towards none and charity for all and a nation of the people, by the people and for the people never to perish from the earth."

Still clinging to her colonial nature but having lost the flaws of slavery and indentured servitude, she still had the blemish of segregation and disenfranchisement based on gender and race. Segregation and disenfranchisement being in conflict with her Divine nature led to the confrontation of the 1960's. So God called forth the youth of the nation to use the Divine tool of nonviolence to address the blemishes of segregation and disenfranchisement and this began the healing process of America.

Now we are faced with the third reconstruction that will take America and all Americans to the Promised Land seen from the mountaintop by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What will this look like? It will be a movement that will teach the American people and youth to be prayer mates rather than playmates. It will lovingly and lawfully work to put prayer and education in every American public school in the form of nonviolent education. It will work to help put legally sanctioned precinct councils in each precinct with six democratic committees of church, government, business, clinic, home and school so that all citizens can have a government tool through which to volunteer their gifts, skills, talents and time and to provide a government laboratory for our youth to apprenticeship in self government. It will commit our theology, constitutional democratic republic and free enterprise economy to science and make it available to all deprived and oppressed people of the world.

Presently, our local and national communities are going through a very serious crisis. The basis of this crisis is an obsolete educational system that does not produce graduates who are skilled in developing and maintaining character, institutions and communities, because of the predominate villain/victim psychology that could prove to be disastrous to mankind. For as needs go unfulfilled and problems continue to go unsolved, the frustration of citizens and elected and self appointed officials become more intensified. Given the predominating psychology of villain/victim we do not look for cause and solution, but instead assume that someone is the cause and thus seek someone to destroy or punish. This dynamic uncorrected will lead to escalated internal and international class and race wars.

The immediate need is a scientific nonviolent research and educational center that would research the problem, educate the people to the problem and educate people to use the science of nonviolence as an effective social tool for bringing about social change.

The long range need is a nonviolent movement that brings to social consciousness the contradictions of our present educational system and struggle until school boards, administrator, teachers, students and parents comprehend, understand and agree on the need for character and community development education. This is a process that teaches children and

adults to initiate, develop, maintain and administrate their six human and community development institutions of church, government, business, clinic home and school.

Nonviolence being the science of applying intelligent thought to the fulfilling of need and the solving of problems, needs a clinical and educational process in order to get people to understand it and effectively use it.

Presently most people think of nonviolence as a religious concept that flows from great personalities from time to time. As a result much lip service is paid to nonviolence, but very little, if any effort is put into understanding and teaching it as a science.

The present misunderstood events in the south are also the reason nonviolence is not understood as a science. The research, clinical and educational processes that were used in the Sit-in Movement, Open Theater Movement, Freedom Rides, Mississippi Project, Birmingham Movement, Selma, Alabama Movement, Chicago Open Housing Movement and the movement against the Viet-nam War are not known, because the press promoted Dr. King as the source and cause of the movement. However a systematic search of history would immediately dispel that assumption.

It is not my intention to minimize the commitment and effectiveness of Dr. King as a student and practitioner of nonviolence. I simply want to clarify the fact that the success and outcome of those social movements was the result of nonviolence having been scientifically employed in the given situations.

Nonviolence simply understood rests on the premise that man is born for a purpose and that that purpose can be known, understood, attained and maintained without violating self or others. Furthermore, one who is about their purpose has the power to heal and educate those who for whatever reason may be engaged in a violation. Nonviolence is based on the law of truth and original cause. That is, if we know the problem and cause, we can bring forth a solution by healing and educating. It brings personal and social errors to consciousness and creates a non-threatening context and environment so that the error can be understood and corrected and a just solution can be negotiated.

The reason that violence in all forms (spiritual, tongue, attitudinal, militaristic) is destructive is because it causes people to have secrets, causing them to misinterpret self, situation, events, circumstances and people and is designed to destroy the idea making capacity of a person.

When man violates definition, he/she cannot execute their duty, obligation and responsibility to self and others. This reality was comprehended by Yeshua ben David (Jesus) when he said, "Man must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." and "man ought always pray and not faint." We accept these statements to be self-evident truths. Therefore, we must conclude that definition must be understood and respected and methods must be congruent to definition and purpose.

So when we look at the prayer that Yeshua taught and his statement that "man ought to always pray," we can see the logic and reality in the principle.

By taking prayer out of the mystic realm and putting it on a scientific basis, we can be vigilant about our health, interest, rights and needs. How then do you stay in prayer? You stay in prayer by initiating, maintaining, and administrating a church, government, business, clinic, home and school and by asking questions, getting answers, making decisions and doing work in each of your six institutions. In this process spirit, mind, emotion and body will be exercised and all needs fulfilled and all problems solved in the appropriate context.

<b>PRAYER</b>	<b>SCIENCE</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
<b>Our Father</b>	Theology	Church
<b>Thy Kingdom come</b>	Sociology	Government
<b>Give us our daily bread</b>	Ecology	Business
<b>Forgive us, as we forgive</b>	Psychology	Clinic
<b>Lead me not into temptation</b>	Biology	Home
<b>Deliver me from evil</b>	Anthropology	School

In that we do not have an intelligent self regulated social order, we must ask the question, “What false assumption do I have and what is the missing factor?” Presently, we approach all our problems assuming that someone else is the problem, rather than seeking to know our own false assumptions, the areas in which we are deficient in knowledge, and how we contribute to the creation of the problem in our personal and social life and work towards a solution.

Many will debate the relationship to flesh eating as being the source of man's present social crisis, but it does not take much to see what happens when we agree to prey upon animals for food and people for economic gain and sexual pleasure. It is this agreement that causes us to be unable to build a scientific institutional social process that will fulfill needs and solve problems peacefully. For when we prey upon animals and people we violate definition and what we do after that contradicts our purpose, and out of this grows conflict, which leaves needs unfulfilled and problems unsolved. This leads to fear, defensiveness, attack and counter attack.

The immediate need is for a scientific nonviolent research and study center for the following purposes.

1. To recruit and educate people to the methods and science of nonviolence.
2. To research the constitutional violations.
3. To educate the general public to the nature and cause of the constitutional violations.
4. To disseminate information and educate the general public to the use and methods of nonviolence.
5. To teach leaders and groups the science of solving problems and resolving conflict through the use of nonviolence.
6. To teach leaders and groups the science of character and community development education.
7. To develop, print and disseminate nonviolent educational material.

If you have love and a sense of history, who knows whether you have come to the present moment for just such a times as this to bring peace on earth and goodwill towards all.

Nonviolence must be advanced order for “peace on earth” to become a reality. Nonviolence is the science of freedom.

***“It’s either nonviolence or nonexistence.”***

*—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr*

## FROM BOSS/BOY TO BROTHER/SISTER

*In educating young people on the basics of nonviolence, James Bevel constantly emphasized that real learning begins within one's own being. Perspective on oneself is essential to any meaningful liberation and that in turn affects others.*

The first step is always dealing with yourself. We did not assume that segregation was caused by white people. We assumed that segregation was the result of an illicit relationship between us and white people. So we said, "okay, the first person we have to clear up is our self." If you call me a 'boy' and I say 'yes sir', then I'm a boy. So I've got to stop my 'boyism' and my 'yes ism', so that I can address you for being a bully. So if I don't address me first, I don't have the means by which to address you. That's straight across the board. People say, 'go to the back of the bus', and we went; so we're crazy. So, we have to acknowledge that we are crazy. To go to a back door because someone suggests it to you, means you are crazy. So, the first thing we do, is stop being insane, because we have to confess first. You've got to confess, then you've got to repent. That is, the foolishness that you are doing, you've got to stop doing it. We were holding up segregation. So we assumed that responsibility.

The next move was to say to the other guy, "Look, what you've been telling us to do is incorrect. We are no longer going to do that. We have corrected some things within ourselves. We suggest that you correct some things within yourself. So, we're going to witness. Our witness will be in the form of sitting-in until you stop falsely defining us and decide that we are not going along with your previous false definitions of us."

Now the advantage of that is simply this. If you get rid of being a cowardly black boy/man, you can address a white mean bully, because you have some data that you didn't have before. So you say, "Look, we were wrong. I was a boy and you are a bully. Now I'm going to be a brother and you've got to be a brother. Now that I have worked through my psychological disorders, and my fear, hostility and resentments, I have some information that will help you work through yours."

So now you come to the guy with new data that comes from correcting yourself, and that is what makes it work. If you don't come with this new data, you can't make it work, because you're going to aggravate the person or confuse the situation. It's a science.

—Dr. James L. Bevel

*This dialog was taken from an anonymous interview*

# THE NONVIOLENT COURT

The “Nonviolent Court” seeks to understand the cause of misconduct to eliminate its effects.

## **Following are some of the tents of the “Nonviolent Court”:**

1. Recognizes two enemies of the state; ignorance and the illness it creates.
2. Offers two solutions; education and healing.
3. Seeks to restore those who break the law to a state of wholeness and peace of mind.
4. Seeks to restore those violated to a state of health (forgiveness and peace of mind) and wholeness
5. Operates from a holistic viewpoint in addressing any violent action or violent human behavior
6. Does not punish
7. Recognizes that punishment causes people to lie and hide their error, thus an understanding of the cause is unattainable
8. Acknowledge that all people are born with a pure essence and that environment, family, economic conditions, education or the lack thereof, and institutions shape and condition individuals to engage in violations against self and others
9. Recognizes that violence is an illness that starts as a psychological/emotional conflict in the mind
10. Recommends mental and emotional remedies to deviant behavior modification and elimination
11. Recognizes that the violence that exists in individual is also in the society
12. Recognizes that in order to end the problem of violent human behaviors, the root must be eliminated. If the root is not addressed, then the problem remains. The problem is not criminal, family, tribe or national or some other form of social violence. The problem is human violence and human violence means psychological and emotional violence (toxicity)
13. Asks the questions: Is it possible to bring an end to psychological and emotional violence?
14. Recognizes that every form of violence whether it is the violence of war, terrorism, murder, rape, anger, hatred, incest, or jealousy has a single root cause and thus has a single solution
15. Recognizes violence as a state of fragmentation, separation and division
16. Recognizes psychological identification that consists of various thoughts (culture, opinions, mental images, beliefs, rationalizations, judgment, methods, plans, theories, conclusions, concepts and all that makes up the total conditioning of the mind) personal opinions, ideas that define and which influence and direct the decisions you make are all past conditionings or the playback of memory
17. Recognizes emotional toxicity that fosters past conditioning as fear, anger, hate, shame, blame, guilt, sadness, remorse, jealousy, lying, cunning, hurt, selfishness, greed and envy

The “Nonviolent Court” thus seeks to view human violence and its perpetrators in the light of societal conditioning and the elimination of toxic emotions and psychological biases assisting individuals to connect with their original essence which is pure and loving.

**October 16, 1995**  
**MILLION MAN MARCH**  
**"THE WORLD DAY OF ATONEMENT"**  
**(AT ONE MENT),**

**THE 8 STEPS OF ATONEMENT**

**ONE: POINT OUT THE WRONG**

**If I have unknowingly wronged, or mistreated anyone , please bring it to my attention. I am but a phone call away.**

**TWO: ACKNOWLEDGE THE WRONG**

**If I have wronged you and you point out my wrong , then I can and will acknowledge it.**

**THREE: CONFESS THE FAULT**

**I will take ownership of it, making no excuses for it, confess it to my Creator first, and then to you.**

**FOUR: REPENT**

**I will utilize everything in my power to repudiate that offensive act and do it no more.**

**FIVE: ATONEMENT AND RECOMPENSE**

**I will make a sincere good faith gesture to make amends, and make amends to you.**

**SIX: FORGIVENESS**

**I will ask forgiveness from my Creator first, then from you because by offending you I have offended the Creator who's essence animates you. Hopefully the Creator will put it in your heart to forgive myself.**

**SEVEN: RECONCILE AND RESTORE**

**At this point I pray that our relationship will be healed, as we move on in a positive wholesome way.**

**EIGHT: A MORE PERFECT UNION**

**The atmosphere of love and goodwill, saturates our lives, laced with compassion and empathy, and cemented with unity and solidarity returns to then become contagious to the entire community.**

# BEVELIAN NONVIOLENCE

## 8 Step Process

### **1. Purification**

Purge yourself of all ill intention and toxic emotions (anger, grief, hate, sadness, embarrassment, a need to rush, etc.)

### **2. Observation/Recording**

Access the situation. Determine what is a constitutional violation. Keep records of when the violation took place and who was involved.

### **3. Investigation/Examination/Evaluation**

Has a constitutional violation takes place? If so what is it? Do a test to determine that the violation is real and to determine exactly who the participate.

### **4. Recommendation**

Clearly inform the violator/s of the violation and what must be done to end it and make amends.

### **5. Education**

Inform others of the violation, violators and recommendations offered.

### **6. Communication**

Keep all avenues of communication open for asking and answering questions, dialogue, brain storming and negotiations.

### **7. Demonstration/Confrontation**

If the violation persists, demonstrate by operating as a free person. This may entail letter writing, boycotts, mass gatherings, marches, sing-Ins, etc.

### **8. Reconciliation**

When the violator/s end their violation/s enter a process of atonement and forgive them, make peace and join together in a spirit of goodwill and love.

# THE NONVIOLENT COURT

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Does not punish

Recognizes that punishment causes people to lie and hide their error, thus an understanding of the cause is unattainable.

Acknowledge that all people are born with a pure essence and that environment, family, economic conditions, education or the lack thereof, and institutions shape and condition individuals to engage in violations against self and others

Recognizes that violence is an illness that starts as a psychological/emotional conflict in the mind.

Recommends mental and emotional remedies to deviant behavior modification and elimination.

Recognizes that the violence that exists in individuals is also in the society.

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Asks the questions: Is it possible to bring an end to psychological and emotional violence?

Recognizes that every form of violence whether it is the violence of war, terrorism, murder, rape, anger, hatred, incest, or jealousy has a single root cause and thus has a single solution.

Recognizes violence as a state of fragmentation, separation and division.

Recognizes psychological identification that consists of various thoughts (culture, opinions, mental images, beliefs, rationalizations, judgment, methods, plans, theories, conclusions, concepts and all that makes up the total conditioning of the mind) personal opinions, ideas that define and which influence and direct the decisions you make are all past conditionings or the playback of memory.

Recognizes emotional toxicity fosters past conditioning as fear, anger, hate, shame, blame, guilt, sadness, remorse, jealousy, lying, cunning, hurt, selfishness, greed and envy.

The “Nonviolent Court” thus seeks to view human violence and its perpetrators in light of the societal conditioning and the elimination of toxic emotions and psychological biases assisting individuals to connect with their original

## QUOTES ON VOTING

*So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind — it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact — I can only submit to the edict of others.*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting.*

—President Franklin D. Roosevelt

*In reality, there is no such thing as not voting; you either vote by voting, or you vote by staying home and tacitly doubling the value of some Diehard's vote.*

—David Foster

*Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.*

—President Abraham Lincoln

*The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men. A man without a vote is a man without protection.*

—President Lyndon B. Johnson

*Honor the lives sacrificed for your freedoms. Vote.*

—Richelle E. Goodrich

*Sensible and responsible women do not want to vote.*

—President Grover Cleveland

*Voter apathy was and will remain the greatest threat to democracy.*

—Hazen Pingree

*That we have the vote means nothing. That we use it in the right way means everything.*

—Lou Henry Hoover

*Voting is the most precious right of every citizen, and we have a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of our voting process.*

—Hillary Clinton

*Voting is the foundational act that breathes life into the principle of the consent of the governed.*

—DeForest Soaries

*Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country and this world.*

—Sharon Salzberg

*Being adequately informed is a democratic duty, just as the vote is a democratic right. A misinformed electorate, voting without knowledge, is not a true democracy.*

—Jay Griffiths