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Walker is important today for a number of reasons. Being a scholar, activist, and writer he is able to explain the dynamics, accomplishments, and weaknesses of the black liberation struggle through the written word. It is not often that a dynamic activist like Dr. Walker is able to exercise the discipline required to write and publish books. But Walker does it again and again. Thus he provides a valuable historical record of the black freedom struggle for unborn generations. To gain this knowledge they can take a short walk to the library. Additionally, Dr. Walker is involved in current movements for social justice. He has been directly involved in the struggle against racial apartheid in South Africa long before it became fashionable. Back in the spring of 1978 Walker was the key figure in organizing the International Freedom Day to dramatize the plight of victims of apartheid in South Africa. Thirty cities across the country participated in this event.

Because of his administrative skills, his central position in the black church community, and his crucial experiences gained as a top assistant to Dr. King, Walker is sought out for assistance and advice by top leaders today. Dr. Walker has played a very important role in Jesse Jackson's leadership and bid for the democratic presidential nomination. Walker supported Jackson in the early stage of his presidential bid while many other black leaders were either hesitant or directly opposed. Importantly, in 1983 Dr. Walker became a Special Assistant to Jesse Jackson and played a crucial role in Jackson's successful effort to convince the Syrians to release the captured Lt. Robert Goodman. Jackson convinced Walker to accompany him to Syria and to officially serve as his Chief of Protocol on this historic mission. In this capacity Walker was responsible for coordinating activities with the Secret Service; arranging meetings with top Syrian officials; coordinating the activities of the Jackson delegation; and solving thorny problems as they arose. Walker's role in Damascus was to assist Jackson in securing Goodman's release by keeping the process moving along in an organized and fruitful manner. Walker accomplished this delicate feat splendidly by drawing on his national and international experiences.

Walker has made another invaluable contribution by writing a superb book on Goodman's release titled *Road to Damascus*. One gets the feeling that Walker is destined to make even more historic contributions for human freedom. It is the great behind-the-scenes organizers such as Dr. Walker that make great liberation movements possible.

### Jesse Louis Jackson

The Reverend Jesse Louis Jackson is one of the Premier leaders in the world today. He eloquently orates on behalf of the poor, the uneducated, the hungry and the oppressed. In Reverend Jackson's view the oppressed are the ones whose boats are stuck at the bottom of an affluent and uncaring society. In addition to leading the oppressed, Jackson challenges them not to passively accept their position but to recognize that they are somebody and that they are precious in God's sight, and that they can change the situation. The damned and dispossessed recognize Jackson as their authentic champion and leader. National Opinion polls continue to reveal that black America considers Jackson as its leader by far. Large numbers of whites are also attracted to Reverend Jackson although they, of course, do not view him as their leader. Rather the Gallup poll reveals that Reverend Jackson is one of the ten most admired men by Americans. Who then is Jesse Jackson? Where did he come from and where is he headed?

Reverend Jackson is of the generation that immediately followed Dr. King's generation. Jackson was born October 8, 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina where he attended high school and excelled as an athlete. Having graduated, Jackson accepted a football scholarship to attend the Black Agricultural and Technical College (A&T) in Greensboro, North Carolina. Jackson's decision to attend A&T College reveals a great deal about his personality. He actually began his college career at the University of Illinois where he had also received a football scholarship. In high school Jackson had been the leader of the team because he was its star quarterback. He fully expected to play this role as quarterback of the University of Illinois football team. However the predominantly white University had different plans. Jackson was told he could become a running back for the fighting Illini. It was a bitter message. Jackson knew the quarterback position was being reserved for whites only. Rather than compromise his dignity and talent Jackson transferred to A&T where he could excel and be himself. Excel he did. At A&T Jackson became an honor student, a football star and president of the student body. Throughout his academic career Jackson remained near the top of his classes because he studied long hours and cherished a first-rate education.

As far as the civil rights movement is concerned A&T is famous because the 1960 student sit-in movement started there. By 1963 Jesse Jackson had become the

leader of the movement at A&T. Indeed, he led daily student sit-ins and protest marches which eventually desegregated Greensboro's theaters and restaurants. But Jackson's resistance to white racism began before 1963. His biographer, Barbara Reynolds points out that Jackson at age 12, secretly spit in the food of whites while he worked at a segregated hotel in South Carolina. While still in high school Jackson and a friend "protested the white-only restrooms and drinking fountains and attempted to organize the employers in protest against segregation, low wages, and unsafe working conditions." When protest burst forth in the early 1960s at A&T Jackson was prepared.

By 1966 Jesse Jackson came to the attention of Dr. Martin Luther King. That year Jackson, at the request of King, became head of the Chicago branch of King's Operation Breadbasket. Because of successful boycotts launched by Jackson and others against racist Chicago merchants, King appointed Jackson as National Director of Operation Breadbasket. In 1971 Jackson formed his own organization called People United to Save Humanity (PUSH). After repeated successes as head of PUSH Jackson went on to electrify black America and startle white America in 1983 when he actively and seriously sought the Democratic Nomination for President of the United States. As a result of his leadership and his bold attempt for the Presidency, Jackson is now the most powerful and influential black leader in the nation and one of the most visible leaders in the world today.

Jesse Jackson has reached this coveted plateau because he is a creative political maverick. Like King he is able to attract brilliant and dedicated individuals into his leadership orbit. Like King he can see farther than most because he stands on the shoulders of these giants. But far more important, like all great leaders — Frederick Douglass, A. Philip Randolph, Marcus Garvey and Martin King — Jesse is backed and propelled by the black masses because he speaks their language and shares in their pain and brilliantly articulates their aspirations. Most of all Jackson dares to accomplish goals most contemporary black leaders have not even imagined in their wildest dreams. In this sense Jackson is a true leader because often the masses wish to move faster than their leaders. So when Jesse risks it all so that we can soar to new heights, the masses are there exclaiming "run Jesse run," "win Jesse win."

Clearly Jackson's groundbreaking leadership stems from his unique creative abilities to break loose from old assumptions and his commitment to see a task through. When Jackson first arrived in Chicago in the late 1960s the city was considered by blacks and whites to be Richard Daley's political empire for as long as he lived. Jackson disagreed. Through his work and weekly mass meetings he laid the foundation for an independent political movement. In 1971 he planted the idea that a black person could be mayor of Chicago by running for that office and thus paving the way for Harold Washington's historic victory. In 1971 Jackson threatened to run for president of the United States. Thus his candidacy in 1984 was the fulfillment of earlier insight and work. During the presidential campaign Jackson took his work seriously. He knew that like Jackie Robinson he was battling for the race. Jackson never lost a presidential debate for any reason because he made sure that he had done his homework. While running for president, Jackson conceived and carried through the idea of making a trip to Damascus, Syria and returning with Lt. Robert Goodman. Only Jackson could have succeeded in this international diplomacy because he was well known and highly respected in the Middle East. Jackson is a trailblazer and pace setter.

Jesse Jackson's position as the major leader of black America carries enormous responsibilities. The major problem to be solved in black America is economic oppression. Blacks earn about 58% of the income that whites earn. Therefore, the current economic position of blacks as compared to whites is worse today than it was twenty years ago. Can the civil rights movement and black leadership solve this problem which Jackson refers to as the problem of silver rights? Dr. King and the civil rights movement were successful in overthrowing Jim Crow and seizing the vote for southern blacks by creatively devising appropriate tactics and strategies that galvanized the energies of the masses. The crucial test for Jackson (and others) is whether he is able to crystalize the economic issue in clear-cut terms so that the masses are able to see through the maze and confront the issues head-on and in a collective manner.

Jackson is already making some headway on the economic front by insisting upon a relationship between corporate America and the black community that is based on reciprocity and parity. This approach is promising because numerous major corporations have signed fair trade agreements with PUSH. Nevertheless, until the masses are directly involved in determining their economic future, the situation will not change drastically. Then, too, Jackson is investing a great deal of energy in efforts aimed at getting blacks elected into political offices. This effort is crucial in black political development but even if it is successful, it will not solve

the problem of economic oppression. The black masses remain ill-housed, undereducated, underfed and in poor health even in those cities with black mayors. Jackson's creativity, charisma, and vision must be linked with a mass struggle if black America is to gain economic equality and independence. The future, though challenging, is not dim because Jackson has proven that breakthroughs are possible.

Both Dr. Walker and Reverend Jackson are shining lights in the historic struggle for racial justice and human freedom. They demonstrate that struggle, dedication, hard work, creativity, and hope is the cornerstone to brighter tomorrows. The movement continues.

## Philadelphia Racial Prejudice Deplored

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on November 27 deplored the harassment and acts of vandalism perpetrated against a black family and an interracial couple who moved into a predominantly white Philadelphia neighborhood. Such racial harassment still remains all too common, said the commission.

"This latest Philadelphia story highlights the urgency of a strong fair housing law and all-out enforcement of our present civil rights laws," Commission Chairman Clarence M. Pendleton Jr. said.



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—Martin Luther King, Jr., 1960

# K IENOW'S

*Until justice  
is blind to color,  
until education  
is unaware of race,  
until opportunity  
is unconcerned  
with the color  
of men's skins,  
emancipation  
will be  
a proclamation  
but not a fact.*

—Lyndon B. Johnson

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