

BLACK HISTORY

The Portland Observer

The Negro Is Your Brother

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ham at this time, but I would say in more emphatic terms that it is even more unfortunate that the white power structure of this city left the Negro community with no other alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action. We have gone through all of these steps in Birmingham.

There can be no gainsaying of the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of police brutality is known in every section of this country. Its unjust treatment of Negroes in the courts is a notorious reality.

There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in this nation. These are the hard, brutal, and unbelievable facts. On the basis of them, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the political leaders consistently refused to engage in good-faith negotiation.

Then came the opportunity last September to talk with some of the leaders of the economic community. In these negotiating sessions certain promises were made by the merchants, such as the promise to remove the humiliating racial signs from the stores. On the basis of these promises, Rev. Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to call a moratorium on any type of demonstration.

As the weeks and months unfolded, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. The signs remained. As in so many experiences of the past, we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow

of a deep disappointment settled upon us.

So we had no alternative except that of preparing for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community. We were not unmindful of the difficulties involved. So we decided to go through a process of self-purification.

We started having workshops on nonviolence and repeatedly asked ourselves the questions, "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" and "Are you able to endure the ordeals of jail?" We decided to

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The African American Women

I am a woman, not just any woman but a African American woman. I come in many different shapes, forms, and fashions. I am tall, short, large, and small. I am elegant, sophisticated, full of richness and Grace. I am black, I am beautiful, I'm a African American woman. I am a Doctor, a Lawyer, a Teacher, a Preacher, I am a Dentist, a Dancer, a Writer, a Fighter, but most of all I am a survivor. I have paid my dues, now I demand my respect, I demand to be acknowledged, I will be desired, I will be admired. I will not be ridiculed, nor will I be criticized. I'm black, I'm beautiful and I must be recognized! I am a African American woman, I will never go away. I am a African American woman, I am here to stay.

--Kelly Hollins



Waiting for the paddy wagon, Birmingham demonstrators - some praying, some singing.

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