

From William Stuart Nelson

21 March 1956
Washington, D.C.

Nelson, dean of Howard University, was an advocate of nonviolent resistance who had marched with Gandhi in 1946 to promote friendship between Hindus and Muslims in the Indian state of Bengal.¹

The Reverend Martin Luther King
309 South Jackson Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Mr. King:

This is just a line to wish you well in your present trials and to assure you that in the end right will prevail. I have followed the course of affairs in Montgomery

1. William Stuart Nelson (1895–1977), a native of Paris, Kentucky, received his B.A. (1920) from Howard University and his B.D. (1924) from Yale University. After teaching philosophy and religion at Howard, Nelson served as the first black president of Shaw University (1931–1936) and the first black president of Dillard University (1936–1940). While dean of Howard University's School of Religion (1940–1948) he founded the *Journal of Religious Thought* and taught a pioneering course on the philosophy of nonviolence. Nelson marched with Gandhi in 1946 as a representative of the American Friends Service Committee.

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with the deepest interest and concern and always with the hope that your cause would triumph.

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As a fellow Negro and a fellow minister, I am naturally interested in what you are doing. In addition, your methods have made a deep impression upon me because of my associations with Mahatma Gandhi and my study of his great ideals. Once I asked him whether his method of non-violent non-cooperation might prove successful in the struggle here for our rights. Now it appears that you are experimenting in that direction. My hope is that in the near future I might find it possible to visit Montgomery and discuss with you and your courageous fellow ministers and friends the inner forces and the events which have moved and sustained you. I wish somehow I had the power to help you.

With many thousands everywhere I join in prayer and assurance that your cause and our cause will triumph over every difficulty.

Sincerely yours,

[*signed*]

Wm. Stuart Nelson

Dean

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 28.