Dissertation Title: IMPACT OF SPIRITUALITY ON MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S PHILOSOPHY OF ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Spirituality, Nonviolence, Active Nonviolence, Spirituality of Nonviolence, Christian Spirituality, Social Justice.

Social activists, often times motivated by moral outrage against forces of institutionalized injustice, corruption and oppression, might become involved in a sometimes long and exacting movement for reform. There are often many perils and pitfalls associated with such struggles for social and economic justice, whether the nonviolent resister is spiritually well-grounded or not. Perils like false-motivation, physical and emotional burn-out, inability to overcome personal prejudices and biases, inconsistency and perseverance for the long haul. Nonviolent action, even when it is completely selfless, should be guided by spiritual understanding and wisdom, and this for the simple reason that, though seemingly altruistic, nonviolence when applied solely as strategy for social change, and when unintelligently handled, often creates chaos and complications, even to the point of becoming counter-productive. Spirituality, which, in most cases, is aligned with ethical considerations, often
acts in the activist, as moral guidance and rule of life and provides guiding principles to keep the nonviolent tactic within ethical and righteous limits. It helps to regulate, for instance, the congruence between the means and the ends of nonviolence such that the means does not nullify the ends. This research is an effort to avoid the dualistic approach that is often found in the work for social justice, and to integrate the two elements of spirituality and nonviolent action in a dynamic and holistic manner, as reflected in the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

Field of Study: Spirituality in Nonviolent Action

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