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

GEORGE OKROIGWE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY OF THAILAND ACADEMIC YEAR 2012
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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.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of Study

"...as Gandhi saw it, the fully consistent practice of nonviolence demands a solid metaphysical and religious basis both in being and in God. This comes before subjective good intentions and sincerity."

In the struggle against unjust institutions and all kinds of oppressive and evil structures in our world today, two types of people emerge who are passionate about changing these negative situations and bringing about societal transformation. They are the activists and the spiritualists, or, as I would prefer to call them, the militant reformer and spiritually minded reformer. There are surely other categories but I am mainly concerned about these two groups of social reformers. These two ideological approaches focus on particular styles and apply particular values in their efforts at effecting social change and transformation. There is however, a disturbing factor regarding these two groups; it is that they seem to be always at odds with each other; they seem to operate their particular ideologies and approaches on an "either-or" basis. With this kind of situation, one could be tempted into thinking that these two ideologies are exclusive of each other. Yet, there are many instances and examples where both ideologies have been successfully blended to form a cohesive and integrated spirituality and strategy for dealing with social injustices of all kinds. Amongst such names that blended spirituality and strategy is that of Martin Luther King Jr. He skillfully blended spirituality and strategy in his nonviolent yet quite active philosophy. Thus, this study shall focus its attention on the Christian spirituality and strategy of Martin Luther King Jr. and also show how spirituality and strategy are not two separate models that cannot be united in the struggle against injustice and oppression. On the
contrary, in King’s life we see a coming together of these two elements to form a unified system of philosophy for nonviolent action.

The night, just before he was assassinated in 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The choice is no longer violence or nonviolence. It’s nonviolence or nonexistence.” King believed that the practice of nonviolence was the only way forward for our world; otherwise we were doomed and would destroy the planet in a conflagration of violence. For King, nonviolence was both a strategy and a way of life. His Christian spirituality provided him with the principles and philosophical foundation upon which his nonviolent actions were based. We live in a world that believes that might is right and thus, the need to spread the word about the positive and indispensable value of nonviolence for a more sustainable and peaceful world becomes important. Nonviolence and nonviolent action are the force of active love and truth that seeks justice and peace for every human person and indeed all of creation.

In the past centuries alone we have experienced two world wars of unparalleled violence and brutality. Rather than decreasing as the result of growth in human consciousness, science and technological advancement and improved living standards, rather, we see a marked increase in racial discrimination and crimes, institutional injustices, economic oppression of the poorer peoples of the world, intentional mass genocide and all kinds of social and economic injustices. With the help of the communications technology, we have become more aware, sometimes even watch in real time, the reality and rise in violence on both the micro and macro levels; the violence of the hooded youth waiting for an unsuspecting victim in the dark alleys and subways and the more subtle but much more dangerous violence of the white-collar organized bureaucratic and technological destruction of man. So much war is going on in almost every
corner of the globe at the moment and war crimes are committed against innocent and helpless people. More and more, we see a world that used to be guided by religious and spiritual principles becoming anti-religion, and the sense of the spiritual seems to have been lost in large measure. This has its attendant consequences of a loss of the moral sense and the line between right and wrong been erased.

In response to this heightened oppressive and inhuman conditions being experienced by people everywhere, there seems to be a growing awareness of the value of nonviolence and nonviolent action as the most effective way to bring about a just and caring society. People, through the labor Unions and organized peace groups, are becoming more involved in peace protests and civil disobedience; rising up against these oppressive agents and institutions. Some of these protests have been of the violent strain with the protesting parties having militant arms while some of the protests have been nonviolent and guided by nonviolent principles. It is the nonviolent kinds of protests and their potentials for the transformation of society that this study is concerned with. But much more than just applying nonviolent principles merely as tactics and strategies in protesting injustices and structural evils, I wish to argue for a deeper and more holistic approach to bringing about social change; an approach that would bring two aspects of nonviolence together in a dynamic and integrated manner to bring about a more wholesome and humane social transformation. The two approaches include nonviolent strategic action and nonviolent spirituality. We see these two dimensions portrayed in the life and struggles of Martin Luther King Jr. and his efforts to secure equal rights and justice for the oppressed African Americans of his time.

Social activists, just like King, 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. As a matter of fact, it could even prove to be counterproductive. Spirituality, which, in most cases, is aligned with ethical considerations, often acts in the activist, as 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. In the practice of nonviolence, the means does not always justify the ends.

What is needed in our modern milieu are people who can bring into fusion the deep spiritual knowledge, experience, and practice of spirituality with wise, determined and sustained action for justice and peace. Such fusion of spirituality and nonviolent activism was well exemplified in the lives of great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama, Dorothy Day and Desmond Tutu. Each of these individuals had the courage to meet the challenges of our modern times with the wisdom gained from being steeped in spirituality and spiritual practices, an inner strength derived from inner contemplative life and experience, and added to these, decisive action for socio-political transformation of their various situations. Combining spirituality and nonviolent action provides the activist with a system of
thought and traditional wisdom that act as framework and support for the kind of transformative change that is sustainable and lasting.

The main thesis in this study is that, the application of nonviolence merely as a strategy for social change does not go far enough in terms of the kind of transformation that society really requires, rather, there is a need to have a combination of strategy and spirituality in order to bring about a more fundamental and lasting social change in society. As a matter of fact, nonviolence could prove to be counter-productive when not guided and grounded on a solid spiritual and metaphysical basis. This is particularly true when nonviolence is seen from the Christian perspective because Christian nonviolence takes as its basis and starting point, a God who created the human person in his own image and likeness and in the message of Jesus Christ who preached the values of nonviolent love and compassion. In creating the human person in his own image and likeness, the human person takes on the characteristics of God, two of which are his spiritual nature and his moral perfection. Thus, there is a need to factor in the dimensions of spirituality and love for peace, which are intrinsic parts of the human person when considering the use of nonviolence in conflict situations. My submission is that there is interconnectedness between strategy, spirituality and nonviolence, and these three elements would have to be taken together when applying nonviolence in any kind of civil disobedience. Society needs real and lasting peace and this can only be achieved by a transformation of the total man, and that means both the physical, spiritual and psychological aspects of the human person and society must be transformed and not just the physical aspects alone. To apply nonviolence merely as strategy for social change alone might be something like treating the symptoms of a sick person without addressing the real cause of the person’s ailment. If society is sick, it is in part because of the disconnection between the spiritual and the physical. This three-tiered connection of strategy,
spirituality and nonviolence come together quite clearly in the Christian nonviolence of Martin Luther King Jr. and his struggle against racial injustices and segregation in the United States of America. In King we see the use of nonviolent strategies in his leadership of the American Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s. Influenced and inspired by the teachings of his Christian faith and the philosophies of people like Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr and Mahatma Gandhi, King assumed leadership of the Black civil rights movement and became the voice of the oppressed and discriminated African Americans. He led various protest marches and sit-ins, the famous Montgomery bus boycott comes to mind at this point. This was both a political and a social protest against the unjust segregationist laws against blacks in the public transit system. What started off for King as a mere strategy for standing up against white supremacy and racial injustices in America soon evolved into a philosophy of nonviolent action that was inspired by a Christian spirituality of love and compassion. As he puts it in *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*, “Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life.”

In this study, I shall try to define the various important concepts of strategic nonviolence, tactical nonviolence and Christian spirituality, and also show how they are all interconnected in the life and work of King and how they can work in a dynamic manner to bring about a healthy and wholesome social transformation. I shall try to show the importance of spirituality and how spirituality and nonviolence find their basis in a God who created the human person in his image and likeness. In this study, I shall also attempt to show that there is a real need for spirituality which is connected to nonviolence and that there is a connection between a spirituality of nonviolence as seen from the Christian point of view.
Retracing our steps as human persons and as a society to recapture the essence of spirituality and its link with justice, peace and nonviolence is the recommended way back for a broken world. Christian spirituality of nonviolent action necessarily involves fight for justice and love for peace and equality because it takes as its basis, a God who created human persons in his own image and likeness and bequeathed to them the dimensions of the spirit, love, justice, moral perfection and right relationship, qualities that are being eroded at an alarming rate in our modern world. There is clearly a need to review these God-given dimensions of the human person as a reminder of who we really are and are capable of as the imago Dei, the ‘image and likeness’ of God.

This study is an effort to call people back to take a stand for their own lives and delve into the mystery of their minds to unravel the roots of anger, hatred, sadness, prejudice, pride, violence and war that resides in each human person. It is with such self-awareness that arouses spirituality in us that any kind of activism can lead to lasting change both in each human person and in the society as a whole. It is only then that King’s vision of The Beloved Community can be realized.

1.2 Relevance of Topic to Fields of Knowledge
This Research is relevant for discussions in the field of Interreligious Dialogue. It is very relevant to Peace Studies and for Environmental Protection Groups. It is relevant for making important distinctions between Religion and Spirituality. It also contributes to the discussion on religious and philosophical anthropology.
1.3 Thesis Statements

Nonviolent Action understood as merely a strategy for social change is insufficient. Neither is the mere practice of Spirituality alone.

Awareness of and the practice of Spirituality in conjunction with nonviolent action and strategy are the basis for true and wholesome practice of nonviolent action and lasting social transformation.

1.4 Research Questions

How can Nonviolent Action become a more Holistic Tool for Social Change?

What are the Implications of the use of nonviolent action as merely a strategy without recourse to spirituality?

Why is spirituality important in nonviolent action?

How did spirituality and strategy merge in the Christian nonviolent action of Martin Luther King Jr.?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this Research Study is to show the importance of spirituality for any advocate of nonviolent action and to create greater awareness of the importance of spirituality for every aspect of life and society.
1.5.2 Sub-objective
The sub-objective of this Study is to challenge the often dualistic approach to social justice work, and to provoke an inward look at the motives for the performance of any form of moral action and ideal.

1.6 Definition of the Terms Used in Research

1.6.1 Spirituality: An awareness of that "life-giving and living principle" that animates and inspires each human person and indeed everything that is created and the way of life inspired by this life-giving principle.

1.6.2 Nonviolence: 'Nonviolence' is an umbrella term for describing a range of methods for dealing with conflict which share the common principle that physical violence, at least against other people, is not used.

1.6.3 Active Nonviolence: Active Nonviolence or Nonviolent action could be defined as a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission to the status quo, what Dr. King refers to as "acquiescence," and who believe that resistance against unjust social structures was a moral imperative. They see the struggle against injustice as essential, though this has to be done without violence. Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict, rather, it is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics, especially how to wield powers effectively.\(^5\)

1.6.4 Violence: Violence could be described as an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder.\(^6\) Violence also refers to that which is psychologically destructive, that which demeans, damages, or depersonalizes others. In view of these considerations, violence may be defined as follows: any action, verbal or nonverbal, oral or written, physical or psychical,
active or passive, public or private, individual or institutional/societal, human or divine, in whatever degree of intensity that abuses, violates, injures, or kills.

1.6.5 Spirituality of Nonviolence: I take my definition from Mahatma Gandhi’s understanding of spirituality of nonviolence. He describes it as a ‘total absence of ill-will towards any form of life. It is pure love’. That is why the spirit of non-violence embraces both persons and nature.

1.6.6 Christian Spirituality: This could be described as the quest for a fulfilled and authentic life that involves taking the beliefs and values of Christianity and weaving them into the fabric of our lives so that they "animate," provide the "breath" and "spirit" and "fire" for our lives. It is a set of values founded on hope and the promise of salvation, love of others and of self-denial. It is way of life which enables us to integrate our beliefs and values into a concrete human expression.

1.6.7 Social Justice: This is the fair and proper application of laws in conformity with the natural law and which allows that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, status, race, religion, etc., are treated equally and without prejudice.

1.7 Research Limitations

This Research is limited to Christian spirituality of MLK but not exclusively. It would discuss spirituality and nonviolence in an inclusive manner. This Research also focuses mainly on the need to apply spirituality to nonviolent action in the work for social justice.

1.8 Research Methodology

This Study is a documentary Research. It follows a method of theoretical study and analysis of relevant documents and sources relevant to areas of research. It is not empirical in
nature in the sense that it did not carry out any kind of interviews neither did it make use of questionnaires. Rather, it is a study and analysis of relevant literatures regarding the research topic and objectives. The Research also explores all relevant approaches to the topic of study as supported by various disciplines like Philosophy, Psychology, theology and the biological sciences. Particular attention was given to works of Dr. King and also academic works of scholars on Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame as recommended by the Head of Department for Religious Studies, Asst. Prof. Intiyaz Yusuf.
Chapter 2

Christian Spirituality and Nonviolence

2.1 Christianity

Since this research is on the Christian nonviolence of King, I need to say something about Christianity and spirituality before articulating its tenets on nonviolence. Christianity is a monotheistic religion that has Abraham as its first Patriarch. Christianity is ranked amongst the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The word Christianity comes from an ancient Greek word ‘Christianos.’ The Christian religion is based on the life and teachings of Jesus whom the Christians refer to as the Christ, the anointed One of God. His life and teachings are recorded in the canonical gospels and in other parts of the Christian New Testament Bible. Followers of Jesus Christ are known as Christians. Christianity began as a Jewish religion, though not every Jew is a Christian. Adherents of the Christian faith believe that Jesus’ coming was foretold in the Hebrew Scripture known as the “Old Testament.”

2.1.1 The Incarnation in Christian Theology

Christians believe that Jesus who is called the Christ came from God into the world to reveal God as a loving Father who is interested in the daily affairs of his children and creation. Jesus is both divine and human. This is known traditionally in Christianity as the Incarnation. It is the belief that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, who is also referred to as God the Son, “became flesh” and was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The theology of the Incarnation is very fundamental in Christianity and it is the belief that Jesus, who is the uncreated Second Person of the Trinity, took on a human body and became both God and man in
a hypostatic union. In the Christian Scripture, the Gospel of John records that the “Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

2.1.2 The Ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus’ public ministry, according to Christian Scriptures, started when he was about thirty years of age. His ministry was about three and a half years long and in that period of time, he accomplished quite a lot as recorded in the Scriptures. During his time in ministry, he told his followers about who God the Father was. He preached many sermons and taught moral norms that continue to guide and challenge even great intellectual minds today. He had a ministry of healing and he healed many sick and incurable diseases of the time. As recorded in the Christian Scripture, he performed many miraculous deeds, walked on water, calmed a storm, raised the dead. He befriended the poor and despised of the world and challenged the corrupt religious authorities of his time who hated him for this. He taught in the temple and in the Jewish Synagogues. He taught in open country and in boats on the seashore. Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God, which he said was not a kingdom of this world. He compared God’s Kingdom to a treasure hidden in a field that was worth selling all of one’s property to buy, and also a mustard seed that grows gradually and becomes a safe haven for every kind of animals. He taught that he was the “Bread of life which had come down from heaven,” and that “everyone who ate him would live forever.” He picked twelve men to continue the ministry that he had begun.
2.1.3 The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in Christian Theology

According to Christian Scripture, Jesus made many anomalies amongst the Jewish religious leaders of his time, partly because he made some staggering claims of being able to forgive sins and even being the same as God. The leaders instigated some local people to bring false evidence against him; that he was trying to start an insurrection in Palestine and did not respect Caesar. Charges were brought against him, which could not be proved. After much scourging and torture, he was executed through a method of crucifixion.

His death, as recorded in the Gospels of the Christian Bible, was devastating to his followers. But news came to them three days later from some women who had gone to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, that he had risen from the dead, and that they saw two angels who had announced this to them. Later in the gospels, Jesus was seen by his disciples and many others. After staying with his followers for a while, the Bible states that he was taken up to heaven.

Christianity teaches that there is only one God in all existence, that this God made the universe, the Earth, and created human beings, male and female. He created humans in his own image and likeness. Every human person is worthy of respect because we are all made in the image of God. The humans who were created first, Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden and were given the power and freedom to choose between right and wrong. They chose wrong and in doing so brought sin into the world. Sin is disobedience to the voice of God in us. Spiritual death was the result of sin. Jesus Christ came into the world to do away with sin and reunite human beings with their creator, God.
After the life of Jesus Christ on earth, the Christian Church was born on the day of Pentecost and since then, there has also arisen a Christian theology and creed developed by Christian Ecumenical Councils. The profession of the Christian creed states that Christians believe in a Triune God, that Jesus suffered, died and was buried and on the third day he was resurrected and ascended into heaven and that he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Christianity teaches that followers of Jesus get salvation through grace and not through works. Works have their place in the scheme of Christian living but salvation is a free gift of God and cannot be merited. Furthermore, the Christian religion teaches that baptism enables a person to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit and to enter into a relationship with God. There are many denominations in the Christian religion with the Roman Catholic denomination having the largest followers. Christians number approximately 2.2 billion as of the early 21st century, it represents about a third of the world’s population. It is currently the world’s largest religion.

2.2 Christianity, Spirituality and the Human Person

It is safe to say that every traditional culture, be it African, Asian or European, has a concept of the spirit and spiritual realities. Much as the scientific and technological revolution might have taken deep root in the modern world and almost everything is measured with the categories of science and reason, the fact of a spiritual dimension of life still remains a strong source of attraction even for the modern man, and this seems to be acknowledged as such in almost all cultures of the modern world.

Exploring the characteristics of the human person or what it means to be human is important to our discussions on spirituality and nonviolent actions because to understand the
characteristics of human nature is to understand why human persons act the way they do, how society is to be structured, how humans relate to each other and to the environment, what the relations of human persons ought to be with realities greater or other than themselves. I shall, however, restrict my discussion on the human person to a Christian understanding.

2.2.1 The *Imago Dei* in Christian Theology

The Christian Bible, deeply rooted in traditional culture, gives us a perspective from which to understand the nature of the human person. In Genesis 1: 26-27 we get a glimpse into the anthropological and theological understanding of the human person and the world. 'Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

In discussing the doctrine of the *Imago Dei*, three authors provide helpful theological direction for us. Wayne Grudem (Gruden, 1994: 442), a professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinitiy Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, pointed out that the words used in Genesis 1:26-27, "image" (*tselem*) and "likeness" (*demut*) in the Hebrew "refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing that it represents or is the 'image' of. Therefore, Genesis 1: 26, "would have meant to the original readers, 'Let us make man to be like us and to represent us." Bruce Ware, (Bruce, 2002), professor of Christian theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, noted that "the image of God in man involves God's creation of divine representations (images of God), who, in relationship with God and each other, function to represent God (imaging God) in carrying out God's designated responsibilities." Anthony Hoekema (1986: 95), wrote that the image of God "describes not just something that
man has, but something man is." Drawing from the insights of these three Christian writers and theologians, some general characteristics for understanding the imago Dei, the image of God in man could be outlined as follow: Human persons are spiritual, personal, moral, relational, rational, emotional and creative beings.

In this section of our research, I would like to focus the reader's attention to the first, central and most pertinent characteristic of God in the human person. This characteristic also gives us something of an understanding, or perhaps a glimpse, into the nature of God. The Scripture that sets the basis for understanding the human person as the imago Dei is taken from Genesis 1: 26-27. ‘Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ ‘So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’

2.2.2 Human Persons as Essentially Spiritual Beings

With the passage in Genesis 1:26-27 as our starting point, the first characteristic of the human person as the imago Dei finds resonance in the Gospel of John 4: 24, ‘...God is Spirit...’ This passage defines God as being Pure Spirit. If God who is Spirit created the human person to be like him, then, drawing from Hoekema's thesis, that "the image of God "describes not just something that man has, but something man is," it follows logically that a characteristic of the human person is spiritual. An essential aspect of the human person is to be spiritual since he shares in the spirit-likeness of God. To be human is to be spiritual. In the Christian understanding, human persons are not merely material, they possess the "breath of God" in them. It is stated in Genesis 2: 7 that, when God created the first man, "He breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life,” thereby making the human person a living soul and bequeathing him with spiritual life. According to Grudein, “A vital component of this spiritual nature is immortality — human beings that will never cease to exist but will live forever.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC. no. 362) affirms, that “the human person, made in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual” The human body is human and living precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul. So closely united are body and soul in the human person that one must consider the soul to be the “form” of the “body.” It is only because it is animated by a spiritual soul that the body in question is a living, human body.

2.3 Anthropology of Spirituality

When viewed in its most fundamental and basic sense, spirituality, just like personality, is a characteristic of the human person as such. It denotes the capacity of human persons to transcend themselves through knowledge and love. In other words, it is the ability of human persons to reach beyond themselves in their relationship to themselves, to others and to an Ultimate Reality some refer to as God. In this sense, spirituality refers to a developed relational capacity of human persons to self, others, the world and the Transcendent. Spirituality is not necessarily reserved to the religious sense alone; it also encompasses the whole of human life and existence.
2.4 Defining Spirituality

The word spirituality comes from the Latin root "Spiritus" -meaning breath, life. The Latin verb *spirare* means "to breath," and the corresponding adjective *spiritualis* means "of or belonging to breathing or to air." The common denominator in this word group has to do with life. It is by breathing that we have life. Thus, Spirituality involves everything that concerns human life. Spirituality could be understood as the relationship with an alleged immaterial reality. It could also be understood as an inner path that enables a human person to discover the fundamental basis of his or her being and existence. It is also understood as describing the deepest values and meanings by which people live.

Still, for others, spirituality is the lifestyle of one who perceives and integrates over a lifetime an all-encompassing value which gives meaning to one's life, and indeed to the life of the whole community. In it one sees, relates to and lives every aspect of created life. Spirituality is not an escape from life or the world, but the dynamic that moves us into a total involvement with, and commitment to, everything that exists. Such a definition and understanding of spirituality for the human community can find expression in either a non-religious or religious way.

In the encyclopedia of religion, spirituality is defined as "the concern of human beings with their appropriate relationships to the cosmos." Spirituality in this sense, involves everything in the cosmic universe and the right kinds of relationships every human person should have toward it. It has to be noted that, such relationships to the cosmos differ from one culture and worldview to the other. As mentioned earlier, there are various approaches to discussing the
topic of spirituality. For instance, in the entry on *spirituality* in the encyclopedia of religion (second edition), classic spirituality, contemporary spiritualities, and spirituality as an alternative to religion are focused upon. Yet, there are many more areas and angles from which spirituality could be approached.

About the end of the twentieth century, according to the encyclopedia of religion, spirituality was more and more regarded as a separate discipline and quest that could stand on its own without religion. Before then, spirituality and religion are considered as an integral part of each other; thus, religion was becoming more and more distinguished from secular spiritualities. Today, it is common place to hear the phrase, “spiritual but not religious.” This pointed to a slight shift in paradigm from the original conception of religion and spirituality.

Thus, today, spirituality is not considered the same as religion and is not even necessarily affiliated with religion. While the definition of spirituality is different for everyone, coupled with our definition above, the following are some themes also associated with spirituality: 1. The idea of a process or journey of self-discovery and of learning not only who you are, but who you want to be. 2. The challenge of reaching beyond your current limits. This can include keeping an open mind, questioning current beliefs, or trying to better understand others' beliefs. 3. A connectedness to yourself and to others. Spirituality is personal, but it is also rooted in being connected with others and with the world around you. This connection can facilitate you finding "your place in the world." 4. Meaning, purpose, and direction. Spirituality, while it doesn't necessarily solve or reach conclusions, often embraces the concept of searching and moving forward in the direction of meaning, purpose, and direction for your life. 5. A higher power, whether rooted in a religion, nature, or some kind of unknown essence.
Michael Downey (1996:25) discerns two recurrent themes in the multiple varieties of spirituality: "First, and most importantly, there is an awareness that there are levels of reality not immediately apparent. Second, there is a quest for personal integration in the face of forces of fragmentation and depersonalization." Since this quest is usually directed to the highest value in the individual's belief system, spirituality has direct reference to morality, though not necessarily to God."23 Spirituality, says William C. Spohn (1997), 'was mostly a Roman Catholic term until the late 19th century. Although it originally referred to living according to the Spirit of Jesus in response to God, the term "gradually came to mean that life as the special concern of 'souls seeking perfection' rather than as the common experience of all Christians." This elitist description has been rejected in the past two decades in favor of more inclusive definitions. Bernard McGinn proposed a working definition of spirituality that has guided the editors and contributors of a major series in the field."

Jolinda Cary, in her article What is Spirituality?, states that “spirituality is, in the most basic sense, matters pertaining to the spirit and is based on the idea that there exists something, be it a state of mind, a being, or a place, that is outside the experience of our five limited senses”.

In this study, I shall define spirituality as the lifestyle of one who perceives and integrates over a lifetime an all-encompassing value which gives meaning to one's life, and indeed to the life of the whole community. In it one sees, relates to and lives every aspect of created life. It is an inward and outward move to connect to oneself, to others and to every created reality. Spirituality is personal, but it is also rooted in being connected with others and with the world around us. This connection can facilitate one’s finding "one’s place in the world." Spirituality is concerned with meaning, purpose, and direction in one’s life. Spirituality, while it doesn't necessarily solve or reach conclusions, often embraces the concept of searching and moving
forward in the direction of meaning, purpose, and direction for one’s life. It is also a desire to connect to a higher power, whether rooted in a religion, nature, or some kind of unknown essence.

2.5 Spirituality and Religiosity

The question is often asked why it is that religion which is supposed to preach peace and brotherhood has often times become a source of hatred and violence? To understand this paradox, one has to understand the distinction between spirituality and religiosity.

Spirituality has to do with a vision of life and an experience of an Ultimate Reality, of the human and of the world around. Founders of major religions had such an experience. It could also be understood as an inner path that enables a human person to discover the fundamental basis of his or her being and existence. It is also understood as describing the deepest values and meanings by which people live. Spiritual experience is basically the same for all, since it is the experience of the same Ultimate Reality which some religions refer to as God, of the same human persons and of the same world.

Religiosity on the other hand is excessive adherence to the external practices of religion. When a particular religious symbol, for example a Scripture, manner of dressing, religious attires, foods, temple, church and mosque buildings become more important than the core teachings, the result is often violence and hatred. It is often the case that most times religious teachers and priests, in their over-eagerness to preserve the identity of the religious group gradually forget the original spiritual experience of the Master and give more importance to the external symbols. When this happens, the result is that the preservation of the religious group and the symbols that bind it together become almost the only goal. This often times leads to
religious fundamentalism, a situation whereby, adherents of the different traditions, while holding firmly and only to the externals of their respective religions, violently oppose each other and anyone who allegedly denigrates “sacred” and “holy” elements of their religions.

2.6 Traditional Spiritualities

Every religion is unique and has specific characteristics that set it apart from other religions. Each religion adheres to particular behavioral patterns, attitudes, outlook and worldview that it has imbibed and developed since its inception. This also includes sets of disciplines and practices that enable the interaction between the adherents and a high Supreme Being, to other human persons and to the cosmos as a whole. In this regard, we often speak of Islamic spirituality, Jewish spirituality, Christian spirituality, Hindu spirituality.

Furthermore, spirituality, when associated with religion and its various ways of expression, could also describe the sensibility and practices of schools of thought, orders, or denominations within specific religions. For instance, spiritual Leaders scholars of the Christian religion often distinguish approaches to the spiritual life of various Catholic and Protestant groups. Examples of such groups and their spiritualities are the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, the Redemptorists, and many more. In the Protestant tradition, there are also the Calvinist, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist and more. The common factors in these Christian spiritualities are their focus on the person of Jesus Christ, the use of the Bible, Sacrament, Prayers and good works. The same could be said about the Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religions.
2.7 Contemporary Spiritualities

According to MacDonald (2005), one distinguishing factor that sets contemporary spiritualities apart is the way practitioners "combine practices of particular religious traditions with concern for the global situation and the life of the planet." Contemporary spiritualities place much emphasis on self-development and the cultivation of potentialities in the human person. While pluralistic and quite diverse in orientation, they also place much emphasis on the protection and preservation of nature and its resources. They encourage and support a fair and just distribution of the earth's resources, they support feminism and are often found in peace movements. Another distinguishing factor in contemporary spirituality is the tendency to abandon traditional religious beliefs and practices in favor of commitment to the environment. For such practitioners, the earth, often referred to as "Mother," is regarded as the source of being and existence and as such must be taken care of and respected. Also, all the animals of the earth must be treated with due regard and respect since they have a right to own and share the earth just like every human person. Approaches to spirituality such as these are turning out more and more to be a new kind of religion in the twenty-first century. Unlike traditional spiritualities that prescribed practices both internal and external to enable the practitioner come closer to the religious ideal, contemporary spiritualities place emphasis on an inner work for self-realization and cultivation.

2.8 Difference between Traditional and Contemporary Spiritualities

Often times, the difference between the traditional spirituality and contemporary spirituality is not so much about what spirituality is about more than in their views on whether they are inclusive or exclusive of each other. They both agree on the fact that spirituality is
concerned with how an individual is situated in the overall scheme of things in the cosmic universe. They also agree that spirituality has to do with what affects the deepest dimensions of the human person and how the human person is related to and should relate to the cosmic universe. The real difference is to be found in their disagreement on whether spirituality is an aspect of religion or not. While traditional spirituality see spirituality as an aspect of religion, contemporary spiritual practitioners view spirituality as bigger and in some cases, exclusive of religion.

2.9 Christian Spirituality

Faith in Jesus Christ is the source of all spiritual life in the Christian religion. Through this faith in Christ the believer is reunited with God from whom he was separated and cut off as the result of sin. This union with God brings about a spiritual birth, and the person who was once spiritually dead is now made spiritually alive. Thus, Christian spirituality could be said to describe the union with God through faith in Christ in the Holy Spirit. This union involves every dimension of the believer’s life. Christian spirituality thus involves the totality of the Christian’s life as this is directed to self-transcendence, freedom, and love in relation to the ultimate values and highest ideals revealed in the mystery and life of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the church and personal lives of the believer. Christian spirituality is concerned with everything that makes for Christian experience, especially the pursuit of a deeper union with God disclosed in Jesus Christ through life in the Spirit. William Stringfellow (1984: 22) puts it thus: "... spiritual maturity or spiritual fulfillment necessarily involves the whole person - body, mind and soul, place, relationships - in connection with the whole of creation throughout the era of time. ...spirituality
encompasses the whole person in the totality of existence in the world, not some fragment or scrap or incident of a person."\textsuperscript{28}

Christian spirituality is the lived experience of Christian belief in both its general and more specialized form. It is possible to distinguish spirituality from doctrine in that it concentrates not on faith itself, but on the reaction that faith arouses in religious consciousness and practice. It can likewise be distinguished from Christian ethics in that it treats not all human actions in their relation to God, but those acts in which the relation to God is immediate and explicit.\textsuperscript{29} Put differently, Christian spirituality can be described as a lived a response to a perceived and real inner spiritual hunger and thirst for union with God who is understood as the source of our being as human persons. It is at the same time a hunger and response for completeness and connection with the life of God as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This hunger and the corresponding response are lived out in the context of the community of believers and the wider world as a whole. Christian spirituality has to do with our experiencing of God and with the transformation of our consciousness and a Christian life as outcome of that experience.

St. Augustine of Hippo said: 

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."\textsuperscript{30} This is a famous passage from St. Augustine's Confessions. Augustine recognizes in himself a hunger for transcendence that pleasures and people have not been able to satisfy. In the Christian religion, it is believed that this is a hunger that only God can satisfy. Thus, for the Christian, it is in the satisfaction of this hunger by contact with God and the resulting relationship that follows that everything else begins to make sense, every desire is only for the highest forms of pleasure and values.
This desire for God and for transcendence is expressed in various ways by different religious and secular traditions. The search for spirituality is a search for meaning and a desire to discover the true God image in each human person. Even those who do not profess any kind of faith or follow any kind of organized religion are also search for some kind of truth and transcendence. As Peter Van Ness, (Van Ness, 1996:1) writing on the topic of ‘Spirituality and the Secular Quest’ in the journal, ‘World Spirituality Series,’ stated that, ‘...there persons who describe themselves, their beliefs and their behaviors as spiritual even though they acknowledge no bond of doctrine or community with any historical religion.’ Van Ness states further that, ‘...being religious is not a necessary condition for being spiritual.’

For the Christian, then, spirituality could be defined as a way of life pertaining to the spirit and a constant inward and outward journey to connect with an ultimate reality much bigger than us. It is inward journey to discover the essence of who we are as human persons and ultimately connect with an inner reality that forms the basis and foundation of our lives. Spirituality as a way of life involves the totality of one’s being in living out values and meaning systems that have been discovered in the process of the journey inward. In other words, spirituality is concerned with everything that constitutes the human experience, specifically the perception and pursuit of the highest ideal or goal of human life. Spirituality touches and transforms the core of our being as human persons. It leads to a transformation in the spirit through a realization and progressive awareness that there is more to life than what the five senses make available to us. Spirituality can be found where people grapple with issues of how life is meaningful. Every time we ask questions like where does the universe come from, what is my place in the scheme of things in the universe, do human persons have purpose? If yes, what exactly is it? What happens when we die? Is there a life after death? How do we make sense of
the fact that we have everything money can buy yet experience a deep emptiness inside our hearts? How can we make sense of suffering and evil in the world? Questions such as these are the beginnings of the hunger for spirituality and a connection with something greater than us. This hunger for transcendence can manifest in various such as boredom, uneasiness with life, sadness, and dissatisfaction with material things and temporal realities as the source of our joy. We also become spiritual when we become moved and inspired by such values as beauty, love, creativity, love nature and care for the earth. Such interests reveal a meaning or power beyond our visible world and lead to experience a sense of internal connection with realities beyond or within one’s own self. This is reflected in a sense of heightened awareness of one’s on-going lived experiences and being more fully present to the here and now. It provides a framework for making sense of so many of the intangible qualities of life, such as getting in touch with one’s purpose in the scheme of life. Jeffrey Solomon asserts that, “Ideally, people strive to align everyday actions and contexts, including their work lives, with the values of their spiritual meaning systems.”

Spirituality need not be practiced only by religious persons as stated earlier. It is totally possible for non-religious persons to be spiritual since by virtue of being human, every person is born with God’s nature whether or not they acknowledge the existence of a God. Values such as love, justice, altruism, knowledge of good and evil, sociability, creativity, desire for peace and harmony are all intrinsic in every human person. Awareness of these inherent values might be heightened by the gift of God’s Spirit and the practice of religion but basically, every human person, whether religious or not comes equipped with them. Evidence of this could be seen in the lives of great individuals who have contributed to the advancement of humanity and God’s creation. Persons such as Zackie Achmat (1962–): South African anti-HIV/AIDS activist; Baba
Amte (1914–2008): Respected Indian social activist, known for his work with lepers; Yaron Brook (1961–): Current president and executive director of the Ayn Rand Institute; Augustus Taiwo "Tai" Solarin (August 20, 1922 – June 27, 1994), a Nigerian educator and author; David Suzuki (1936–): University professor, and environmental activist. These are just a few of the people who do not profess any form of religion and yet have responded to an inner call to better the world we live in. In their creative endeavors, each of these individuals has exhibited an aspect of God’s nature in them and thus could be said to have practiced spirituality or to be spiritual. The promise held out by religion is that through the Scriptures and the help of the Holy Spirit, each person who believes can experience friendship with God through faith. This perspective of viewing spirituality broadens out its understanding and could also be described as a vision of life with a system of values, ideals and goals that orient and guide one's life. It is an experience of an ultimate reality or God from the point of reference of the monotheistic religions. It is also an experience of other human persons and of the world. Founders of all major religions had such an experience. C. P. Varkey states that: “this experience is basically the same for all persons since it is the experience of the same God, of the same human persons and of the same world. God being unknowable by nature, each one’s experience of God will emphasize one or the other aspect of Godhead, depending on the cultural, geographical and socio-economic situations in which one lives.”34 In Christ we see the mercy of God highlighted; in Prophet Mohammed we hear the call for socio-economic justice for the children of God; and in Rishis of India we see the immanent presence of God in all beings.35

The goal of human life according to Western Christian doctrine is the beatific vision. The Eastern Orthodox theology articulates the goal of human life as divination (Theosis), becoming like God, Christ-like. This is in line with what St. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 3: 17-18; “Now
the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

In recent years, there has been a sustained interest in a more holistic understanding of Christian spirituality. This approach to spirituality includes the beliefs and practices of believers, as well as the way they live their everyday lives. A holistic spirituality focuses more on the existential day to day living out of the articles of faith. It is concerned with having a concrete experience of searching for God and a living relationship with the God of faith, it involves the way we treat each other, our relationships of love and kindness, our fight for justice and peace. It does not focus on doctrinal formulations or theoretical explanations of Christian life. There has to be a synchronization of faith and action, between what one professes in the religious creeds and what one practices concretely. A holistic spirituality is one that is also open to the wisdom that can be gleaned from other disciplines in so far as it is helpful in understanding one’s faith, relationship with God, with self and with other better and in living out the authentic Christian life. Knowledge from disciplines like psychology, sociology, anthropology and even the physical and biological sciences are considered acceptable and important in the search for a holistic and authentic Christian spirituality. There must be an active and dynamic integration of the active and the contemplative dimensions of prayer and life in any search for a holistic spirituality. A holistic and authentic Christian spirituality is an invitation for concern with the protection, preservation and care for the earth and the earth’s resources.
2.9.1 Historical Foundations of Christian Spirituality

In order to situate our discussion on the Christian spirituality of King, it would suffice to give a brief historical overview of Christian spirituality. This overview touches mostly the important aspects of the development of Christian spirituality beginning with the scriptural foundations. It is within this context that we shall situate King’s Christian spirituality and how he was influenced by it. So, what then is Christian spirituality?

Christian Spirituality, in the context of religious studies, is an academic discipline that investigates Christian religious experience as such, that is, as both religious experience and as lived experience. It necessarily examines spirituality in light of the broad contemporary understanding of spirituality and in conversation with religious spiritualities outside the Christian sphere. The field is intrinsically interdisciplinary and touches on some basic disciplines like, biblical foundations of Christian spirituality; history of Christian spirituality; the field of Christian spirituality itself; a spirituality outside the Christian tradition; and the relation of spirituality to another academic discipline selected from the humanities, the social sciences or the natural sciences.

2.9.2 Scriptural Foundations

The event of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, his teachings in the Gospels and his entire life that gave rise to and shaped Christian spirituality. From the moment of his life on earth and after his resurrection, Christianity took on a distinct character as different from other religions and spiritualities. From the moment of the event of the resurrection, scholars of theology and exegesis have struggled to come to grips with the full meaning of that event. Even today, in the twenty first century, the investigation still continues. The fact of the crucifixion of
Jesus the Christ, an event that completely devastated his disciples, was testified to by the disciples of Jesus who were of the strong conviction that the same Jesus whom they had followed, who had been killed and buried, was alive with God and in and among them. He had risen from the dead and was alive with a new kind of life that was indestructible, a life that the disciples also experienced within themselves as the guarantee of their own eventual victory over sin and death.

After that event of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples began to live as participants in Jesus’ paschal mystery, that is, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, whom they proclaimed as Lord and Messiah. They started believing themselves to be free from the Mosaic Law under which they had previously been subjected to (Gal. 3: 23-27). They believed that they were no longer bound to struggle to please God through the performance of good works, but rather were now living under grace as God’s children in Christ and empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit dwelling in them was Jesus’ promise to his disciples and to all who would believe in him and it enabled the disciple to live a life in accordance with that of Jesus. Everyone who believed in Jesus was baptized and through the indwelling Spirit of Christ, lived faithfully as a follower and disciple within the community of believers who soon came to be known as “Christians” after their Lord and Master, Jesus the Christ. Sandra M. Schneiders (1985) summed up the basic elements involved in classical Christian spirituality as follows:

“...personal participation in the mystery of Christ begun in faith sealed by baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, was nourished by sharing in the Lord’s Supper, which the community celebrated regularly in memory of him who was truly present wherever his followers gathered (see Matt. 18: 26), and was expressed by a simple life of universal love that bore witness to life in the Spirit and attracted others to faith...”^37
The Christian Scriptures, especially the gospels, give the account of Jesus’ teachings regarding love and relationships. In the context of this study, we shall now examine two of such teachings of Jesus in order to get a glimpse into his spirituality and by extension into Christian spirituality.

2.9.3 Christian Spirituality and the Love of Enemies

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

This passage describes the essentials of Christianity in action. To understand what Jesus meant by loving one’s enemies, it is important to look at the meaning of the Greek translation of the word “love.” The Greek language is rich in synonyms; its words usually have various shades of meaning which are not found in the English language. In Greek there are four different words for love.

(a) The first Greek word for love is storge which has its accompanying verb stergein. These words are used for the type of love that exists in the family. They are the words which describe the love of a parent for a child and the child for a parent. They basically describe family affection.

(b) The second Greek word for love is eros with its accompanying verb eran. These words describe the love of a man for a woman. It is passionate and sexual in nature. These words are not essentially bad, they simply describe the passion of human love.
(c) The third Greek word to describe love is *philia* with its accompanying verb *philein*. They describe real love, real affection. It is the love of a friend to another friend. "It is warm, tender affection, the highest kind of love."

(d) The fourth Greek word used for love is *agape* with its accompanying verb *agapan*. These words describe a love that is unconquerable, benevolent, invincible goodwill. To have agape love for someone means that "no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he or she treats us, no matter the kind of insults and injuries we suffer from such a person, we will never allow any bitterness to invade our hearts against that person. Rather we would regard such a person with that unconquerable benevolence and the goodwill which will seek nothing but the person's highest good."

It is the agape kind of love that Jesus Christ exhorts his followers to have for their enemies. Followers of Jesus Christ are not expected to love their enemies in the same way as they love their nearest and dearest. To love one's enemies with the kind of affection one has for one's nearest and dearest would be impossible and unrealistic. Love of enemies involves both the action of the heart as well as the will, especially the will. We have to will ourselves into loving our enemies since loving them from the heart does not come to us naturally. With such a practice of agape, it is possible to love those we do not like and who may not like us either. The power to love a person we do not like can be beyond us often and that is where Christ's Spirit enables us and lifts us above our natural tendencies to anger and to bitterness to the point of having this invincible goodwill to all people."
Often times many critics look on Christian nonviolence as mere passivism whereby a person simply accepts passively whatever evils that presents itself. It is probably for this reason that many who have committed their lives to working for change and justice in the world simply dismiss Jesus' teachings about nonviolence as impractical idealism. One cannot blame such people who think like this because to "turn the other cheek" suggests a kind of passivism whereby a Christian becomes a doormat for everyone to walk over. It is precisely because of such a passive quality that has made so many Christians cowardly and complicit in the face of injustice. To take a position of nonviolence towards evil and oppressive situations is not to counsel submission to the status quo, neither is it to advocate a retaliatory violent approach. So what precisely did Jesus mean by to "turn the other cheek?"

Christian agape love is not an invitation to be complacent with the evils of others. It does not mean that we allow people to turn us into their carpet without us putting up any kind of resistance. To regard a person with unconquerable benevolence and an invincible goodwill is to love the person and hate the evil that he or she does. It is to resist and consciously take measures to overcome the evil without developing any kind of bitterness and hatred for the person. It is only when the Christian has such a love for enemies that Christ's teaching about turning the other cheek begins to be bearable. Turning the other cheek is not what naturally comes to us as humans. To love the enemy and to turn the other cheek is not to accept the evil or to run away from it. Jesus was not telling his oppressed hearers not to resist evil. His entire ministry was at odds with such a ludicrous idea. He was, rather, warning against responding to evil in kind by letting the oppressor set the terms of our opposition. A proper translation of Jesus' teaching would then be, "do not retaliate against violence with violence." Jesus was very committed to opposing evil as much as the nationalists and Zealots of his time.
2.9.4 Christian Spirituality of Non-Retaliation

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Reflecting on what Jesus meant by “turning the other cheek,” Walter Wink (2004) points out that, it is difficult and symbolically important to even attempt to hit a person on the right cheek in the cultural context of the Jews of Jesus’ time. Normally to strike the right cheek with the fist would require using the left hand, but in that society, as in many African and Asian societies today, the left hand was used only for unclean tasks. As the Dead Sea Scrolls specify, even to gesture with the left hand at Qumran carried the penalty of ten days penance. The only way one could strike the right cheek with the right hand would be with the back of the hand. A backhand slap was the normal way of admonishing inferiors. Masters backhanded slaves; husbands, wives; parents, children; men, women; Romans, Jews. According to Walter Wink, to give a backhanded slap signified unequal relations, in each of which to retaliate would be dangerous or even suicidal. The only normal response would be to accept the blows with resignation and humble submission. Worthy of note at this point is Jesus’ audience. It should be noticed that when Jesus spoke these words, he was addressing them to the victims of oppression, those who were powerless to defend themselves and were lowly and poor. They have been forced to stifle their inner outrage at the dehumanizing treatment meted out to them by the hierarchical system of caste and class, race and gender, age and status, and by the guardians of imperial occupation. If this is the case, it becomes rather baffling that Jesus would counsel humble submission for such oppressed and humiliated people. But there was much wisdom in this manner of counsel it would seem and this is so because this action of “turning the other cheek,” robs the oppressor of power to humiliate them. To turn the other cheek is actually some
form of protest and action. It is saying in effect, "Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect. I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status (gender, race, age, wealth) does not alter that. You cannot demean me." Such a response would create enormous difficulties for the striker. Purely from a logistic perspective, how can he now hit the other cheek? He cannot backhand it with his right hand. If he hits with a fist, it is understood that he makes himself an equal, acknowledging the other as a peer, at least this was the cultural understanding in Jesus' time. A response like the one Jesus counsels shows initiative. It throws the oppressor off balance and gives the oppressed the power of choice.

The idea of turning the other cheek and seizing the initiative is not meant to embarrass or humiliate the oppressor although that might be a side-effect of the action. There is, admittedly, the danger of using nonviolence as a tactic of revenge and humiliation. The goal is to enable the oppressor to see the evil of his ways and repent of it. There is also, at the opposite extreme, an equal danger of sentimentality and softness that confuses the uncompromising love of Jesus with being nice. This could lead to an inactive passivism. Loving confrontation can free both the oppressed from docility and the oppressor from sin.

2.9.5 Mind-set in the Early Christian Community

The Christian Church was an offshoot of the history and messianic expectations of late Judaism as the fulfillment of the destiny of the people of God as foretold by the Prophets. Thus, it could be said that Christian spirituality emerged under the influence of the beliefs of contemporary Judaism. The early Christian community was mostly made up of Jews and converts from Judaism who had been familiar with the Hebrew prophesies of the coming of the Messiah who would liberate them from the Romans who had occupied and ruled over Palestine.
and indeed the whole of Israel. This messianic expectation in the Hebrew mind laid the foundations for and shaped Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality, under the influence of the expectant Hebrew mind, with regards to eschatology, was from the onset focused on history rather than on cosmology. Events, rather than observation of nature, shaped the Church’s outlook.

Contrary to the Greek idea of looking to rational explanations of reality and also the rational meaning of human existence, the biblical approach was rather through history and eschatology that was futuristic in outlook. Human existence found meaning in relation to God’s final act in history. In this was to be found explanations for present and past events, particularly of the mystery of suffering and evil in the world. This expectation of the Messianic era with its eschatological outlook was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ who was identified with the prophetic expectations of later Judaism. The prophecy of the coming of the Messiah and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, his birth, life, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension were all very important to the early Christian community of the first centuries but it was his passion and resurrection that were the decisive factors in the shaping of the Christian spirituality. The cross and death of Jesus Christ that was initially viewed as a scandal, became a corner stone of Christian spirituality. Christians began to see the way of suffering and death as an acceptable way to salvation. In Jesus Christ, the mystery of suffering, shame, persecution, and evil began to find meaning and understanding in the Christian mentality and spirituality. In Jesus Christ’s passion, the cross was no longer a scandal but something to be welcomed and embraced. Being weak was no longer considered unrealistic and inhuman, rather, Christian saw themselves as “Strong when they are Weak” (2 Cor. 12: 10). Thus, Christian spirituality became based on accepting as one’s own the very scandal of the crucified Son of Man, an acceptance that could
mean much suffering and even martyrdom and death. It was a costly and in many ways a difficult spirituality.

The clear proof that the historical Jesus was the promised Messiah was the event of his resurrection. It was faith in the resurrection that enabled and empowered the early Christian community to associate Jesus as the Christ. For the early Christians, this was a proof that God's promise of salvation had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The fact of Jesus' resurrection gave hope of God's victory through the believer's faith. Christians celebrated this power over sin and death and this shaped their relation to God and to their experiences in the world.

For the early Christian community, faith in the risen Christ meant both an encounter with the risen Lord especially in the form of Holy Communion, and an anxious expectation of his return to take away the sufferings of his people and bring justice to the earth. Thus, it could be said that, Christian spirituality was experienced as the dialectic between historical events and eschatology; this was reflected in the Lord's Prayer as taught by Jesus to his disciples. For the early Christians, spirituality was a combination of patient endurance in the face of tribulation and an eager but vigilant expectation of the parousia, the second coming of the Lord. The delay of the second coming of Christ also acted as an important factor to shape the spirituality of the early Christian community. Evidence of this fills the pages of the Christian Scripture, especially the New Testament.
2.9.6 Various Aspects of the Spirituality of the Early Christian Community

Worship of Jesus

The early Christians associated the historical Jesus with the expected Messiah, the Christ through the event of the resurrection, and after his ascension, they recognized him as Lord and God by applying to him Psalm 110 “The Lord says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand....’” Thus, Jesus, together with the Father, was worshipped and glorified as reflected in the Nicene Creed. This recognition of Jesus as the kyrios, Lord, was essential in shaping the spirituality of the early Christian community.

2.9.6.1 The Holy Spirit and the Church

The Holy Spirit was given a very important place in the life of the early Christian community right from the onset. The Christian community was given the Spirit by Jesus before and after the resurrection and through its indwelling, the members of the community became energized and inspired to live as a community of love and service and they proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ with boldness. As the disciples received the Spirit from Jesus, they also gave it out to others as the gift of the last days (Joel 3: 1-5). As mentioned earlier, the resurrection of Jesus was the proof that he was the eschatological Messiah, and because of this, his resurrection was linked with the giving of the Spirit to the disciples at Pentecost. Thus, because of the consolation of the Spirit and the Ministry it inspired amongst the community of believers, the members endure the seeming delay between the resurrection and second coming of Christ.

Through the presence and work of the Spirit in the Christian community, the members were considered “spiritual” and believed in the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. Paul, in
his letters to the Christians in Corinth, states that though the members possessed different gifts, it was given by the same Spirit and as such, there should be no room for discrimination as to which gifts were higher or lower. The highest form of spirituality according to Paul, is love (1 Cor. 13:13). Christian spirituality could only be experienced in the context of the Christian community since it was the One Spirit that acted in every member, regardless of each person’s particular charism. Spirituality, for the early Christian community, was a communal affair and as such, there was no room for individualism. Individualism is not compatible with Christian spirituality. As John D. Zizioulas (1985) writes,

"None can possess the Spirit as an individual, but only as a member of the community. When the Spirit blows, the result is never to create good individual Christians but members of a community."

Thus, the dimension of community became a fundamental aspect of the spirituality of the early Christian community. Christian spirituality was ecclesia in its nature. It was a set of dynamic relationships whereby each member did not live for his or her own needs alone but lived for the good of the community. Being a Christian meant being filled with the Holy Spirit and exercising the gifts of the Spirit within the context of a community. This was an important dimension of spirituality in the early periods of the Christian Church.

2.9.6.2 The Sacraments

The sacraments of baptism, Eucharist were integral parts of the early Christian community because they signified a new birth in the Spirit and a communion with the person of Christ. Through baptism, the initiate is believed to have died to the old life of sin and reborn into a new life of grace. This was followed by a new kind of relationship with Christ in the Eucharist and with the Christian community. For the early Christian community, spirituality had to do with
acquiring new relationships and through them a new identity. It was also the sharing in the same
donship of Jesus Christ, which was a relationship with God. As Zizioulas further states,
"Membership in the Church as the body of those who through baptism and the Eucharist have acquired such an identity was the source of true spirituality."47

2.9.6.3 Martyrdom

For the Christians of the first generation, in the time of trial, martyrdom was the ideal instance of union with Christ and this, they believed, led to perfect union with him in the life of charity. Martyrs and Martyrdom were highly honored because it was believed that Martyrdom offered a possibility, by assimilation to Christ dead and risen again, of attaining and, in a certain sense, of anticipating the eschatological event. The Martyrs sought union with Christ and Martyrdom offered the quickest way to this union.

2.9.7 The Patristic Period

2.9.7.1 Spirituality, Eucharistic Community and the Office of the Bishop

In the early patristic period, the Christian communities had gradually moved from being a gathering of believers for worship and different Christian celebrations into a more organized church that had the Eucharist as its basis and center. The most prominent figure that greatly influenced the Eucharistic outlook of the church at that time was Ignatius of Antioch, a bishop around 110 C.E. Ignatius had come to be an important voice whose words and letters were considered authentic and important. In his seven letters, he had forcefully developed the position that the Eucharist held the means of salvation and spirituality and that it was only in the faithful communion of in the Eucharist, presided over by the bishop and the college of presbyters, that
the faithful could attain eternal life and true spirituality. According to John D. Zizioulas (1985),
the intention of Ignatius in insisting on a Eucharistic foundation for the Christian church was not
force the church into a kind of sacramentalism that was almost pagan or magical, neither was it
his intention to introduce a legalistic mentality that attached absolute authority to structures and
ministries and demanded obedience from the lay members of the church and without questions
and conditions. The reason for scholars' skepticism of Ignatius' Eucharistic spirituality came
from what Ignatius commented in one of his seven letters about the Eucharist. In his Letter to the
Ephesians, Ignatius referred to the Eucharist as "medicine of immortality, an antidote against
death." Such comments had led scholars to the conclusion that Ignatius' Eucharistic spirituality
was a form of pagan spirituality that radically departed from the biblical mentality. In Zizioulas'
view, to reduce Ignatius' Eucharistic spirituality to a pagan spirituality as a result of his
statement in the Letter was too hasty. For him, Ignatius did not regard the Eucharist as an object
that possessed in its nature supernatural powers of immortality, rather, the Eucharist was
primarily and basically an event of communion, that is, a gathering together of the believers for
fellowship in the same sense as the Bible understood the gathering of God's people. As Zizioulas
states:

The meaning, therefore, of the expression "medicine of immortality" in the context of
Ignatian theology is that eternal life stems not from the object of the Eucharist but from
participation in the event of communion, the gathering of the community.49

In the same way, it is important to understand Ignatius' reference to the bishop as an
indispensable factor for the believer's participation in eternal life. For Ignatius, whoever
disobeys the bishop disobeys God or Christ himself, who is the true bishop of the church,
because the bishop represents God in the church. Ignatius insisted that eternal life and true
spirituality was an eschatological reality that was granted only to those who participated in the
Eucharist, presided over by the bishop, with the community of believers. For him, those who despised the Eucharistic community and the bishop were arrogant and were automatically cutting themselves off from communion with God and from eternal life. The crucial importance of the bishop lies in his being the head of the Eucharistic community and not in an office that he holds as an isolated individual. In much the same way, the importance of the Eucharist to the community lies in its relational role in the community. Both the Eucharist and the bishop are important for spirituality because they are crucial for the existence of the eschatological community through which eternal life and true spirituality are experienced. Ignatius’ Eucharistic and Ecclesial spirituality was backed up, according to Zizioulas, by two documents of about the same period: The Syriac Didascalia Apostolorum and the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome. Both of these documents which had a great influence on the spirituality of the time, stressed the principle that the Eucharistic community and its head, the bishop, make up the context of Christian spirituality. The Eucharist is a meal that believers eat and drink in memory of Jesus the Christ. In the patristic period, spirituality meant the eschatological participation of the believers in a Eucharistic meal that was presided over by the bishop.

2.9.8 Medieval to Early Middle Ages

Spirituality in the medieval period was in many ways a continuation of the spirituality inherited from the patristic period. In this period, spirituality came to have two dimensions from which it was approached. On the one hand was the spirituality bequeathed to it from the early patristic period, a spirituality that involved participating in the eschatological Eucharistic community that had the bishop as its head; and on the other hand, a spirituality that was based on the experience of the individual who struggled against passions and toward the achievement of
moral perfection, a spirituality that was accompanied by a mystical union of the soul or the mind with the Logos of God. The first spirituality of the patristic period was promoted by such church fathers as Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus and the second spirituality of the medieval period was promoted under the influence of Origen and the Alexandrian theologians.

These two spiritualities existed from the fourth century. They complemented each other and yet were constantly at odds with each other. Through the strong influence of Origen, the spirituality of the purification of the mind from evil thoughts became the dominant spirituality and was widely read, taught and practiced by the monks of Egypt in the fourth century. The spirituality promoted by Origen soon came to be called in monastic traditions and circles as Evagrianism (from the name Evagrius of Pontus, the founder of this spirituality). Evagrianism as promoted by Origen, though impressive as a form of spirituality, had fundamental flaws and dangers and as a result was rejected by the mainstream church. Such spirituality focused too much on the mind and on performance of works alone as the source of eternal salvation; something contrary to the Bible’s teachings on the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Origen’s spirituality was officially condemned by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553 C.E.

At the same period from the fourth century when Evagrianism was being propounded by Origen, another type of spirituality was also being practiced in the church as a way of correcting Origenism. It was a spirituality attributed to Macarius of Egypt and it involved removing the center of spirituality from the mind (nous) to the heart (kardia). This spirituality taught that the heart was the bond of obedience and love was the only needed factor for personal purification and spiritual ascetic exercise. Macarius’ spirituality of perfection through love was inspirational for most of the monastic traditions because it did not judge or condemn the sinner...
but sought to help the sinner change his ways. In Zizioulas’ opinion, it was the Macarian spirituality of love from the heart that saved Christian spirituality from the dangers of Origenism and brought it back to its Biblical basis and foundations.

As mentioned earlier, these two spiritualities, though co-existing at the same period of the fourth century, were for the most part at odds with each other. Attempts were made to reconcile the two at the time. The most important of these attempts was made by a Greek church father of the late sixth and early seventh century, Maximus the Confessor. He was a decisive voice in the restoration and synthesizing of the old biblical and early patristic Eucharistic approach to existence with monastic experience. Maximus worked hard in correcting Origenism and purifying Evagrianism from the dangers that they posed to Christian spirituality of the time. Maximus was able to restore and reconcile into Christian spirituality the Biblical, Eucharistic and eschatological dimensions. By the end of the medieval period, Christian spirituality was once again understood and practiced as a participation in the Eucharistic community, just as Irenaeus and the church fathers had taught from the late first century to the early third century. Such Eucharistic celebration within the Christian community was an antidote against individualism and also a way of purification of the heart from every passion and a preparation for the eschatological end.

The Cappadocian fathers provided monasticism with its theologically well thought out theory and teaching and this also helped to rectify and broaden out the views of Origen. Gregory of Nyssa (330-395) in particular, had the greatest influence in this regard. According to Pseudo-Dionysius (4th of 5th century), the soul finds God by transcending itself, by rejecting all particular knowledge and by being united to Him, who is transcendent, in the luminous darkness where he
awaits. Despite the contribution of many spiritual writers in the formation and shaping of Christian spirituality during the 5th and 6th centuries, still, it was Maximus who definitively sketched out the spirituality of that period and it was known as the Byzantine spirituality.\textsuperscript{52}

Benedict of Nursia (480-543), is considered by many to be the founder of Western Monasticism. This could be as a result of his Rule, popularly known as “The Rule of St. Benedict.” Benedict’s Rule was written for the monks in his monastery and was mostly influenced by the writings of John Cassian. His Rule was very influential during the Middle Ages and many religious communities adopted, mostly because of the unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness that it contained.

The early Middle Ages have become known as the “Benedictine centuries.”\textsuperscript{53} Pope Benedict XVI, in April, 2008, raised as a point of discussion, the influence of St. Benedict on Western Europe. According the Pope, speaking about the life and work of St. Benedict, said, “with his life and work St. Benedict exercised a fundamental influence on the development of European civilization and culture” and helped Europe to emerge from the “dark night of history” that followed the fall of the Roman empire.\textsuperscript{54} St. Benedict’s contribution to the rise of Western monastic life and tradition is unparalleled. His Rule is still the most commonly used by monasteries and monks to date. The influence of Benedict was instrumental to a new wave of Christian spirituality and cultural unity that swept through Western Europe since the early Middle Ages and continues to be a strong influence amongst religious and monastic communities today. It was because of this reason that Benedict has become known as the founder of Western monasticism. He is revered and honored by both the Anglican and Catholic Christian churches as
the patron saint of Europe and student. Today, the Benedictine order is comprised of two branches, the Benedictine Federation and the Cistercians.55

2.9.9 The Middle Ages

The spirituality of the early Middle Ages was mostly focused on the cloistered life. It hard arisen out of the dark ages, a time when conditions were such that it was hard to find any form of civilized life anywhere else. During this period, monks maintained a high ascetical ideal and gave an example of prayer profitable to the laity, clerics, and bishops. As a result of the barbarism that dominated that period, an intense need arose among the Christian people for exterior penance. There was a strong devotion to the cross, to relics and the tombs of the saints, and to the Mother of God.

In this period existed the Carolingan Epoch, which saw the strong influence of the Benedictine Rule, almost to the point of being exclusive. Among the laity arose many groups of penitents, oblates, and fervent Christians who were concentrated around the monasteries and mostly focused their attention on the Bible and love of liturgy.

The 10th and 11th Centuries saw the abbeys joining the lay pious groups in order to prevent abuse and obtain the spiritual freedom necessary to carry on the tasks of the Church. They were bound, though, by loose juridical bonds. Such associations focused around monasteries and eventually gave rise to congregations of monasteries and to the first religious order, the Order of Cluny.56 The life of the medieval monk consisted in keeping present before the world the value of Pentecost; the holiness of God communicated to men. All his asceticism and the entire system of observances that constrained him had as their goal his liberation.
The 12th Century saw the rise of the Saint Victor theological and spiritual center outside of Paris, the birthplace of a congregation of canons regular. The writers and scholars of this school who were known as Victorines, were mostly influenced by the Intellectual movement of scholasticism. They however remained within the monastic tradition of Christian spirituality. They had a symbolist view of the universe, a tribute to the influence of Augustine. They held on to an intuitive rather than a dialectical method of approaching God and consequently, they were drawn to the contemplative dimension of Christian spirituality. The main scholars of this school were, Hugh of Saint Victor, Richard of Saint-Victor, and Thomas Gallus. Attached to the spirituality of this period was a kind of exasperated reaching toward the pure ideal of the Gospel. As Kavanaugh states in his entry on the “History of spirituality” in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, “Social, political, and religious leaders were pushing to extremes the demands of radical poverty and an opposition to all formalism and legalism.” This was pushed to the point that by the 13th century, sections of the laity began to criticize the existing social conditions and the lives of the clergy, and the fostering of a neo-Manichean movement under the representation of the Waldenses and then the Albigenses, began to materialize.

The 13th Century was the period in which Francis (1181-1226) and Dominic (1170-1221) made their appearances. They were instrumental in the correction of these spiritual extremes inherited from the 12th century. They did this through their ideal of the practice of poverty and the service of the Church. The Dominicans, through the guidance of Dominic, were provided with a background of traditional cloistered life which served as a safeguard and a source of strength. It was in this environment that Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) thrived. Thomas strengthened Dominic’s position when he taught that the highest life was that which combined contemplation with preaching.
Francis, on the other hand, focused his spirituality on the imitation of the life of Christ in all its simplicity and poverty. The Franciscans had to introduce some form of organizational structure into their monastic life as their number grew; something Francis was not in favor of since he emphasized the spirituality of gospel simplicity and poverty. Bonaventure (1221-1274) was a very important figure in the Franciscan Order. He it was who was able to find a balance between Francis’ desire for simplicity and evangelical poverty and the need for structural organization of the Order. Thus, the Franciscan way of life consisted of three main ways: (i) following Christ through the evangelical counsels, especially poverty; (ii) laboring for the salvation of souls by preaching and hearing confessions; and (iii) contemplation. As a result of the influence of Francis, a movement of Christocentric and affective piety started in 12th and 13th century Europe.

The 14th Century was a period that saw the beginnings of a new current in Christian spirituality in Christian Europe. This involved a new attitude toward contemplation and an analytical approach to the understanding of its meaning and importance. Pseudo-Dionysius stands out as a prominent figure that influenced the spirituality of this period. Spirituality in this period consisted of an analytical understanding of the conditions of contemplation rather than its redemptive effects. At this time Catherine of Sienna (1347-1380) came into the scene with her strong interest in taking care of the needs of the Church rather than being concerned with analysis of prayer and contemplation. Despite her desire to cater to the needs of the Church, she still recognized the importance of prayer and contemplation as of greater benefit to the Church than her public acts. By the end of the 14th century, a spirituality known as “Devotio Moderna” emerged. It was most concerned with affective and empirical spirituality rather than a mere
speculative analysis of contemplation. It was from this spiritual movement that Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* emerged.

### 2.9.10 Renaissance Period

The Renaissance period was a time of great humanist upheaval in Christian spiritual history. Although the monastic and contemplative traditions of the medieval period persisted well into this period, new ideas began to be incorporated into them, albeit, without much disturbance. By the 16th century, there began attempts to organize private prayer and with the influence of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), a technique of private prayer was introduced through his famous "Spiritual Exercises." Ignatius systematized prayer and placed much emphasis on the imaginative powers, the deliberate incitement of the affections, and ascetic and moral application.

Christian spirituality was humanistic in the renaissance period and though the drive to restore the Christian life to its gospel roots was the strong point of the Christian humanists, still, they were sympathetic toward the spiritual heritage of the Middle Ages and they accommodated medieval mystical spirituality. Also, Christian humanists of this period had a love for classical antiquity and an optimistic view of human nature. Erasmus (1467-1536) was notable during this humanistic period of Christian spirituality.

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), and John of the Cross (1542-1591) were important spiritual figures in this period. They placed much emphasis on prayer and Christian mysticism. Teresa wrote much on the stages of prayer which still has much impact in Christian spirituality today. For her, prayer consists essentially in an exchange of love with God, a love that has to be
demonstrated on the part of the believer, through the practice of the virtues, and God, in turn should be left to communicate his graces in the time and how he so desires. John of the Cross, of the Carmelite Order, on the other hand, was well known for his contribution to the understanding of the analysis of the soul’s active and passive purifications and his explanations of the life of union with God. He is arguably said to be the greatest mystical writer of the Christian spiritual tradition.

2.9.11 Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation, the beginnings of which dates around the 16th century, was a period of religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe. What followed from the Reformation was to put in place the structures and beliefs that would define the continent in the modern era. In northern and central Europe, reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenged papal authority and questioned the Catholic Church’s ability to define Christian practice. They argued for a religious and political redistribution of power into the hands of Bible- and pamphlet-reading pastors and princes. The disruption triggered wars, persecutions and the so-called Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church’s delayed but forceful response to the Protestants.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), was a Catholic, German monk, priest and theologian. He greatly influenced the Protestant Reformation and Christian spirituality and life since the Protestant Reformation era. Luther’s influence on Christian spirituality was quite profound and this was reflected in his strong criticism and opposition of the Christian spirituality of his time. He disputed the claim that freedom from God’s punishment for sin could be purchased with money, a practice known as indulgences. He taught that salvation is not earned by good deeds
but was a free gift of grace from God through Jesus Christ. Luther challenged the authority of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church through his teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge, a phrase known as "Solar Scriptura." He opposed the hierarchical priesthood and taught that all baptized Christians shared in the holy priesthood. Luther's followers have come to be known as Lutherans. Luther's efforts to translate the Bible into vernacular instead of only Latin did much to shape Christian spirituality as many more followers could now read the Bible on their own and did not have to wait for the priest and church hierarchy to interpret it for them. His marriage to Kathatina von Bora was considered a model for the practice of clerical marriage by the Protestant priests. Luther's refusal to retract all his teachings and writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521 led to his excommunication by the pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Emperor.

John Calvin (1509-1564), was a French theologian who had a great influence on the Protestant Reformation. He was a key figure in the development of the system of Christian theology known as Calvinism. He was originally trained as a humanist lawyer, and from the time he broke from the Roman Catholic Church in 1530, became a strong critic of the Church and its ways. He fled to Switzerland as a result of religious tensions that caused a violent persecution against Protestants in France. He wrote about and practiced a Reformed doctrine which stressed God's power and humanity's predestined fate. He eventually returned to France where his influence and teachings took stronger roots and spread throughout Europe.

Regarding the doctrine that he preached and its influence on Christian spirituality, a concise expression of it is to be found in his magnum opus, the Institutes of the Christian
Religion. According to William Niesel (1980), Calvin’s views were stated in the first statement of the *Institutes*. In it, Calvin states that “the sum of human wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” Calvin argues that the knowledge of God is not inherent in human persons nor can it be discovered by observing this world. The only way to obtain it is to study scripture. He writes as follows, “For anyone to arrive at God the Creator he needs Scripture as his Guide and Teacher.” He defends the Trinitarian view of God but argued against the Catholic Church on the use of images as aids to worship. For him, this was tantamount to idolatry.

Calvinism was adopted in the Electorate of the Palatinate under Frederick III, and this led to the formulation of the Heidelberg Catechism in 1563. This and the Belgic Confession were adopted as confessional standards in the first synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1571. At the time of the English Civil War, the Calvinistic Puritans produced the Westminster Confession, which became the confessional standard for Presbyterians in the English-speaking world. Calvinism eventually spread to other parts of the world including North America, South Africa, and Korea and became a religious and economic force for the next four hundred years.

2.9.12 Post-Reformation Period

In this period, the task of bringing Christian spirituality of the cloister into the world was taken up by Francis de Sales (1567-1622). He was known as the representative of the counter-reformation. His mission was to show Christians that, whatever their place in society, their lives must be influenced and guided by their Christian faith and profession. There was much emphasis on devotion to the Word Incarnate and a special place was given to the virtue of religion in this period. The prayer of simplicity was a common practice everywhere in France and Europe.
teaching on pure love, a form of passive prayer and quietism, and absolute sacrifice of salvation of Fenelon were condemned by the Holy See in 1699. As a result of this condemnation of Fenelon's teachings by the Holy See, many thought it best not to talk about Christian mysticism any more. At this period, the doctrine of quietism and Jansenism were strong influences in the Church. Jansenism made fear the driving force for any kind of moral activity. These doctrines were negative influences and attempted to corrupt the idea of true Christian piety.

Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), was the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, bishop and Doctor of the Church. He was born in Marianella, near Naples and died in Pagani, near Salerno, August 1, 1787. (feast, Aug. 2). Alphonsus Liguori was a strong defender of true Christian piety against the negative and fear-driven doctrines of the Jansenists. His writings were instrumental in the restoration of the true idea of piety. His spirituality was mainly affective and he placed much emphasis and attention on divine love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Mother.

Alphonsus had a great influence on moral theological scholarship and his theology has endured to date. His pastoral and practical approach to guiding the people of God was substantially adopted by the Christian Church. His moral theology was a rallying point for Church in the fight against rigorism, and his approach to the sacraments facilitated access to the Sacraments. He was indeed a fountain of youthfulness and a breath of fresh air to Christian spirituality. His influence was mostly felt in France and spread quite rapidly from there to every part of the Christian world. It could be said Alphonsus had a profound and lasting influence on Catholicism, particularly in the 19th century and even to present day. His spirituality and writings were of great importance in the understanding of doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception.
and the Infallibility of the Pope. His writings did much to shape Christian spirituality, especially in the shape that popular devotions to the Eucharist and the Virgin Mary took. His teachings on prayer also did much to shape the minds, and continue to guide the spirituality of Christians today. Notable also was his defense of the Church against rationalism and the despotism of the enlightenment period. Perhaps amongst his greatest achievements was the fatal blow he dealt to Jansenism, from which it has never recovered. The spirituality of Alphonsus called people back to the redeeming and liberating message of God’s love for all people. His moral and pastoral approach to theology and ministry made it possible for Christians everywhere to feel the love of God in their difficulties and perplexities. His spirituality was one of hope, forgiveness, mercy and reconciliation into God’s unfathomable love.

2.9.13 Modern Period

During this period from the 19th century onwards, there was a renewed desire for contact with God and a devotion to the Holy Spirit as represented in the revived mystical traditions in England. In Oxford, England, this Movement toward mystical spirituality was most prominent. Notable figures like Frederick William Faber (1814-1863); Cardinal Newman (1801-1890) influenced the spirituality of this period.

During this period, there was a drive for the re-Christianization of the world, beginning in Europe, and this had as its basis, a spirituality of mysticism and holiness of life. There was a renewed zest for apostolic preaching and catechizing through schools, hospitals, foreign missions and work for the poor. The spirituality of this period was one that expressed the love of Christ and union with God. Many sister congregations devoted to education were formed for the purpose of spreading Christian education through schools. A French priest by the name of Jean
Vianney, also known as Cure of Ars was an important figure in the revival movement of this period. His spirituality was one of an intense hatred for sin, and an acute sadness for the evils in the world, just like Jesus experienced during his agony and passion. From the time of the industrial revolution and the dawn of the modern era, Church worship, under the negative influence of modern individualism, was increasingly relegated to the background. Spiritual life, more and more, came to be seen as private and subject affair and had to be separated from the state. Christian spirituality, through the Church, has since been struggling to regain its foothold and influence in the scheme of people’s lives, hence the effort at renewing of liturgical stipulations and instructions throughout the world.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968), an Anglo-American Trappist monk, mystic, poet, social activist, student of comparative religion and writer, has been a very prominent and influential figure from the modern era up into the post modern era in Christian spirituality. Merton has written over seventy books and most of it has been in the area of Christian spirituality. He also wrote on social justice and corporate injustices in the modern world. His book, The Seven Storey Mountain (1984), was most influential in the post-WWII period and inspired scores of students, teenagers and even World War II veterans to join the monasteries and religious life in the United States. Merton was a strong advocate of interfaith dialogue and collaboration. He was part of the group that pioneered dialogues with prominent Asian figures like the Dalai Lama, the Japanese writer, D. T. Suzuki, and the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Merton was a social critic who spoke out forcefully against racism, economic injustice and militarism. He was able to find parallels between Oriental mysticism and Western Christian tradition and having sought permission from his superiors, he attended an ecumenical conference of Buddhist and Christian monks held in Bangkok, Thailand. It was while he was attending this conference that he was
accidentally electrocuted and died in 1968. His legacy and influence continue through his numerous literatures.

John Paul II (1920-2005), also known as John Paul the Great, was one of the most influential Popes of the Catholic Church of the 20th century. He was the second-longest serving Pope in history and the first non-Italian Pope since 1523. John Paul II was a very charismatic figure who was instrumental in the ending of communism in Poland, his native homeland, and eventually all over Europe. It was through his untiring efforts that Catholic relations Judaism, Islam, Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Anglican Communion became greatly improved. He upheld and supported the Church’s Second Vatican Council and its reforms, to the disapproval of traditionalists in the Catholic tradition. On the other hand, he was quite conservative in his upholding of the Church’s position on artificial contraception, even under much criticism from progressives. His charisma and firmness on matters of faith and morals was highly praised by all. He was loved by those within and outside the Christian tradition. Visiting 129 countries, he was one of the most-travelled of all the Catholic Popes. He placed special emphasis on a Universal Call to Holiness and he beatified one thousand three hundred and forty men and women and canonized four hundred and eighty-three saints. His dream and key goal was to place the Christian church, led by the Catholic denomination, at the heart and center of a new religious alliance that would mend and cement relations and that would bring together Jews, Muslims and Christians in a great religious unity. The role of John Paul II in shaping Christian spirituality in the post-modern period cannot be over-emphasized. His universal call to holiness and his desire to see unity and collaboration between Jews, Muslims, Christian and other religious traditions remains the ideal of Christian spirituality and life.
Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997), an ethnic Albanian, was an Indian Catholic Nun. She believed that and would often say that “By blood, I am Albanian, by citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus.”\(^{62}\) Mother Teresa devoted forty-five years of her life ministering to the poor, sick, homeless, orphaned and dying. She founded a group of sisters known as Missionaries of Charity, first in India and then in other countries of the world. She received numerous awards for her work with the poor and in 1979, she was given the Nobel Peace Prize. She would not accept the customary ceremonial banquet given on behalf of Nobel Laureates, rather, she requested that the funds for the banquet be given to the poor in India. When asked during her reception of the Nobel Peace Prize, “What can we do to promote world peace?” She answered, “Go home and love your family.” In her Nobel Lecture, she said: “Around the world, not only in the poor countries, but I found the poverty of the West so much more difficult to remove. When I pick up a person from the street, hungry, I give him a plate of rice, a piece of bread, I have satisfied. I have removed that hunger. But a person that is shut out, that feels unwanted, unloved, terrified, the person that has been thrown out from society—that poverty is so hurtable and so much, and I find that very difficult.” She also singled out abortion as ‘the greatest destroyer of peace in the world’\(^{63}\). Mother Teresa’s life and legacy has done much to shape Christian spirituality, particularly with regards to her call for universal healing and forgiveness, love and charity that starts from the family.

A discussion on Christian spirituality and nonviolent social action for justice and peace would be incomplete without a mention of Desmond Tutu. He is particularly connected to Christian spirituality in the sense that he lived out the values, moral and social ethics, and the call
to work for justice as contained in his Christian belief and doctrine. For these reasons, he is worthy of mention.

Desmond Tutu (1931), is a South African retired Anglican bishop and social rights activist. His fame became known since the 1980s when he stood firm with the people of South Africa against the evil and oppressive apartheid regime of the time. He was the first South African Archbishop of Cape Town and primate of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. Tutu is a Nobel Peace Laureate and Chair of The Elders is widely regarded as ‘South Africa’s moral conscience’. The following quote from him gives a glimpse into his moral character:

Despite all of the ghastliness in the world, human beings are made for goodness. The ones that are held in high regard are not militarily powerful, nor even economically prosperous. They have a commitment to try and make the world a better place.64

Desmond Tutu’s spirituality and contribution to peace and social justice in Africa and all over the world could be discerned from the various causes he has gotten involved in. His moral courage and wisdom have singled him out as an outstanding spiritual leader whose example is worthy of emulation. In 1995, President Nelson Mandela appointed Archbishop Tutu Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a body which was set up to investigate gross human rights violations that took place during the apartheid era. He has also been involved in the campaign against HIV/AIDS, resolving of the Israel and Palestinian conflict. He was involved in the Global March to Jerusalem. He speaks out against the occupation of Gaza by Israel. He has spoken out on the China-Tibet issue, calling for justice and freedom for the oppressed. He was strong against unilateralism, support of church reform, call for Gay rights, Women’s rights, Family, Climate Change, US Immigration reform and he was against the war in Iraq. His
vigorous campaigns and advocacy for social justice and human rights have rendered him a controversial figure. Yet, he is regarded all over the world as an elder statesman with a major role to play in reconciliation, and as a leading moral voice. He is a beacon of hope for the Southern African countries and indeed the whole world.

The merit of Tutu lies in the fact that, while he presided as an Archbishop, a spiritual head and shepherd of God’s people, he did not allow his spirituality and Christian training to be confined to his church life or academic life alone. He was able to translate the Gospel values into concrete actions for justice and peace in a world that badly needs it. His spirituality was one of love, justice, moral courage, compassion for the poor, and voice for the oppressed and voiceless of the world. Tutu holds out a true example of what true Christian spirituality should understood as. His was Christian spirituality in action.

There have been many other influences in the 21st century on Christian spirituality. For instance, the natural sciences and the human sciences have also made much contribution to the spirituality of the Christian Church. These new insights into the human psyche and into the workings of the physical world have been a source of challenge and invitation for a new appreciation of old and time-held theological and historical religious positions. They have impacted positively and sometime, negatively, on Christian spiritual understandings and tradition. One thing continues to be consistent in Christian spirituality, and it is the conviction of the central place of Jesus Christ, love, forgiveness, prayer and spiritual discipline, contemplation and an awareness of the reality of the Ultimate Reality known as God.
Having discussed, albeit in brief, the history of Christian spirituality, we shall at this point, turn our attention to non-religious spirituality, a reality that has become increasingly common place since the beginning of the modern era.

2.10 Non-Religious Spirituality

We live in post modern times and there has been a definite shift away from the modern culture in which most adults today were familiar with. In these times, there has arisen, a strong move away from foundationalism and its master narratives. In the modern times a unitary worldview dominated, and any other worldview that did not correspond to it was considered heretical, whereas today, there is a rejection of any kind of unitary or narrow worldview. In these postmodern times, all paternalism and normative tendency by religious or any kind of institution is not only being resisted, but in many cases totally rejected. Relativism has become the order of the day and as far as religion and any other type of authoritative institution goes, their authority has been greatly diminished. This move away from any kind of foundationalism has seen a corresponding rise in relativistic position regarding matters of faith and doctrine. This cuts across every institution, whether religious or not.

Despite this movement though, there is still being experienced a strong desire for some meaning, direction and for some value by which people can live worthwhile lives. This need has led to the strong movement in search of some form of spirituality in which the old unitary worldview and the master narrative that stretches from creation to the end of the world no longer holds. A nonreligious spirituality is being preferred to the old and institutionalized religions and spiritualities. People seek more freedom from rules and regulations and wish to be able to make up their own minds on important issues without the imposition of moral authorities like is found in established religions like Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Nonreligious spirituality is quite
compatible with postmodern thought and worldview. This movement away from organized religions and spiritualities has become a source of worry for institutional religion since so many of its followers are leaving in droves in search of a new and different kind of spirituality. This has been made worse by difficulties in interreligious dialogue among religions today coupled with the exclusivist, ideological and clerically hierarchical nature of these religions. Also, all the established and institutionalized religions have been tainted by violence and destruction of lives and this to the post-modern mentality is unacceptable.

In the intellectual circles, attempts have been made to distinguish and even separate the "spiritual" from the "religious." Spirituality has come to be associated with the "private" domain of life while religiosity has been associated with the "public" realm. According to Robert C. Fuller (2001), in his article, "Spiritual but Not Religious," quite a lot of people in America now refer to themselves as "spiritual but not religious." The number of such people who refer to themselves in such a manner could be as high as one in every five persons, roughly half of all the non-religious persons, says Fuller. He locates the confusion in the fact that the terms "spiritual" and "religious" were really used as synonyms, at least since the fourth till the twentieth century; an idea that is still believed in even in modern times. So, even today, both terms are still understood as pointing to a belief in a Higher Power of some sort. As pointed out in the section on spirituality, both terms connote a desire to connect, or enter into a more intimate relationship, with this Higher Power. Also, both terms are still understood today to be involved with interest in ritual, practices, and daily moral behaviors that foster and strengthen such intimate relationship with the perceived Higher Power. This way of looking at spirituality has been rejected by the group that refer to themselves as "spiritual" but not "religious." They believe that spirituality should be looked at "as something free of institutional structures and hierarchies, not
so much about dogma and beliefs as about attitudes, values and practices, about what motivates you (us) at the deepest level, influencing how you think and behave, helping you find a true and useful place in your community, culture and in the world.\textsuperscript{67} To buttress this point further, Fuller talked about the findings of a group of social scientists as follows:

"...A group of social scientists studied 346 people representing a wide range of religious backgrounds in an attempt to clarify what is implied when individuals describe themselves as "spiritual, but not religious." Religiousness, they found, was associated with higher levels of interest in church attendance and commitment to orthodox beliefs. Spirituality, in contrast, was associated with higher levels of interest in mysticism, experimentation with unorthodox beliefs and practices, and negative feelings toward both clergy and churches.\textsuperscript{68}

According to Fuller, while most of the people interviewed tried to bring together elements of spirituality and religiosity, there was another nineteen percent that totally would not identify with anything religious. They belonged to a separate group that could be described as "spiritual, not religious." Basically what the survey showed was that while some were willing to associate spirituality with religiosity and believed that private spirituality was intricately interwoven with public membership in a religious group and organization, another group begged to be different. This latter group would consider themselves as "spiritual but not religious," and would usually be characterized by their dislike for anything religious. They are least likely to be involved in forms of worship such as attending church regularly, praying, fellowshipping and engaging in group spiritual dynamics as is often seen with religiously minded people. They are more likely to be agnostics, atheists, and skeptics. They believe that "spirituality" and "religiosity" are totally different concepts which should not be used interchangeably. With these said, is doesn't indicate that such people have never had mystical experiences, on the contrary, they most likely have had and that might explain their strong disagreement with traditional beliefs since what they experience might run counter to what religious institutions and doctrines
teach. Such people tend to reject traditional organized religion as the “sole-or even the most valuable-means of experiencing and enhancing spiritual growth. Furthermore, perhaps the reason for the positions of such people who refer to themselves as “spiritual” but not “religious” is that many of them have had negative experiences with churches or church leaders. For example, they may have perceived church leaders as more concerned with building an organization than promoting spiritual values, as hypocritical, or as narrow-minded. Some may have experienced various forms of emotional and even sexual abuse. Reasons such as these have led many in this group to eschew organized religions. They rather have taken to an individualized spirituality that gives them the freedom to pick and choose from a wide variety of alternative religious philosophies and ideologies. They view spirituality as a journey more connected with personal growth rather than formal doctrinal understanding. According to Fuller, quoting a sociologist, Marilyn McGuire, “the fact that most seekers dabble or experiment rather than making once-and-forever commitments is in McGuire's opinion "particularly apt for late modern societies with their high degrees of pluralism, mobility and temporally limited social ties, communications, and voluntarism." Most people who take the position that they are “spiritual” but not “religious,” it has been observed, are more likely to be quite educated and tend to belong to a white-collar job category, they are often liberal in their political views, have parents who were not regular church-goers and tend to be quite independent and private regarding relationships.

So, if this is how it is with the group that hold the position of “spiritual” but not “religious,” What then are the indices and criteria by which they could be said to actually fall into the “spiritual” group? Fuller answers this question by laying down some of his own criteria. We can discern spirituality in the lives of this group whenever they, like other spiritual people, struggle with issues of how our lives fit into the greater cosmic scheme of things. It is not so
important whether the questions get answered or not, let suffice to think that they even ask it at all. They don’t have to be involved in religious practices like prayer and meditation in order to be spiritual. As long as they, like others who explicitly practice spirituality, wonder about the origins of the universe, reflect about life after death and what our purpose is here on earth, whether life is teleological and meaningful, whether suffering makes any sense. We also could be said to be spiritual whenever we begin to show reverence for everything in the universe and we begin to be drawn to and appreciative of values like beauty, compassion, love, creativity and less taken in by transient values like material prosperity, popularity, fame and power. When in relationships we operate on deeper and meaning levels and are sensitive and respectful of the other, we could be said to be spiritual.

2.11 Nonviolence: A Definition

“Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit....”

Nonviolence is defined in this work as a philosophy, spirituality, a way of life and a strategy that proposes that “all forms of violence, war, and killing are wrong and must be avoided as much as possible.” The goal of nonviolence and nonviolent action is that social relationships should be completely nonviolent and peaceful. Even among conditional pacifists, nonviolence is still much preferred to any other alternative. However, violence may be justified under certain extreme circumstances. For instance, in the protection of the innocent that is being abused, in the protection of a nation’s sovereignty and self-defense, one may have to resort to violence of one kind or the other, but it is important that one should do everything to minimize the harm inflicted on the opponent. Nonviolence is a way of life and a philosophy found in most
religious traditions. The Christian peace denominations such as the Quakers and the Mennonite have the practice of nonviolence as a core aspect of their religion and they reject violence of any sort. In the non-Christian traditions, there is also the Gulen Islamic Peace Movement, a moderate Islamic movement begun in the early 1970’s by Mr. Fethullah Gulen, an imam in Turkey. The movement stresses education, interfaith/intercultural dialog and “basic human values” and is now a global movement with schools, hospitals, dialog societies and tutoring centers in over 180 countries on five continents.73 The Jains also practice nonviolence and reject violence as core components of their religion. There are also non-religious peace movements like VAP (Volunteer Action for Peace), a UK based charity organization which works towards creating and preserving international peace, justice and human solidarity for people and their communities; Greenpeace Movement which evolved from the peace movement and anti-nuclear protests in Vancouver, British Columbia, in the early 1970s. The scope of this research does not permit a more detailed discussion of the nonviolent traditions of the world’s religions but it could be said that some central features of these nonviolent, peace movements are, that life is precious and no person has the right to take the life of another. Equality, freedom and justice are fundamental natural rights of every human person regardless of race, color, religion, gender and sexual orientation. Some of these Peace Movements also extend some of these rights to animal life, such as the Animal Equality Movement whose original name in Spanish is Igualdad Animal; an international non-profit animal rights organization whose purpose is to achieve equal consideration and respect for animal, and the abolition of animal slavery.

With respect to religious nonviolence, the main concern for most religious people is usually for the wellbeing of their personal spiritual life. This may require one to avoid engaging in violent behavior of any sort and in its extreme, of not defending oneself from attack. Many
nonviolent religious and non-religious traditions encourage their members to work to end war and other forms of violence. This was the goal of Martin Luther King's Christian nonviolent spirituality and approach. Part of King's nonviolent Philosophy was that "Love" was to be the overriding and fundamental principle for action. The love of the opponent is meant to prick his conscience and hopefully bring about a genuine change of heart. Richard B. Gregg puts it like this, (Gregg, 1959: 50): "Love thine enemy" is often married to a hope of affecting the opponent. "If through love for your enemy you can create in him respect or admiration for you, this provides the best possible means by which your new idea or suggestion to him will become an auto-suggestion within him, and it will also help nourish that auto-suggestion."74 The goal of nonviolence is to convert the enemy.

2.11.1 Types of Nonviolence

There are a wide variety of approaches and methods for resolving conflict that come under the umbrella term of "Nonviolence." These approaches share some common principles such as the avoidance of any sort of physical violence against other people and against animals, plants and indeed, everything in the universe. Gene Sharp, a famous political scientist and a leading writer on nonviolent struggle gives a comprehensive categorization of nonviolent methods and strategies. In this section, we shall highlight some of these nonviolent categories as compiled by Sharp. The criteria which underpin these various categories of nonviolence are identified by looking at the two dimensions of nonviolent action. The first dimension is known as the Tactical-Strategic. According to Sharp, this dimension is an indication of "the depth of analysis, the ultimate aim and the operational time-frame which activists use." The second dimension is known as the Pragmatic-Ideological. This dimension is an indication of the nature of the commitment to nonviolence and the approach to conflict which activists make use of: this
includes the importance attached to the relationship between means and ends and the attitude towards the opponent.

Activists who make use of the tactical approach to nonviolent action apply short to medium term protests in order to achieve a particular goal within an existing social framework. The focus of this approach to nonviolence is change of oppressive institutions and reform. Activists that make use of the Strategic approach are motivated by a structural analysis of social relationships and are mostly preoccupied with the transformation of society's moral, political, economic, and intellectual foundations. In this regard, the kinds of protests and campaigns carried out are usually long-term and revolutionary in nature. Advocates of the Pragmatic model apply nonviolent action with the conviction that it is the most effective method available in the circumstances. Activists in who apply the pragmatic method view conflict situations as a dynamic relationship between antagonists with incompatible interests; they set their goal as that of defeating the opponent. Proponents of the Ideological model prefer this nonviolent approach for ethical reasons and they insist on the unity of means and ends. They have a more humane approach and view the opponent as a partner that should be respected and whose voice should be heard and together, all parties can arrive at a mutual resolution. They see nonviolence not merely as a tactic or a strategy but as a way of life.

2.12 Defining Active Nonviolence

Active Nonviolence or Nonviolent action could be defined as a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission to the status quo, what Dr. King refers to as "acquiescence," and who believe that resistance against unjust social structures was a moral imperative. They see the struggle against injustice as essential, though this has to be done without violence. Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict, rather, it is one
response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics, especially how to wield powers effectively.75

2.12.1 Types of Nonviolent Actions

Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion: This involves a group of techniques which are ‘mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal expressions.’ These methods include marches, vigils, pickets, use of posters, street theatre, painting and protest meetings;

Noncooperation: This is usually the most commonly used form of nonviolent action. It involves the deliberate withdrawal of cooperation with the person, activity, institution or regime with which the activists have become engaged in conflict. This strategy of nonviolent action includes the provision of sanctuary; strikes, boycotts and war tax resistance (economic) and boycotts of legislative bodies and elections (political). Political noncooperation also includes acts of civil disobedience, the ‘deliberate, open and peaceful violation of particular laws, decrees, regulations… and the like which are believed to be illegitimate for some reason’;

Nonviolent Intervention: This is a group of strategies that involve the disruption or destruction of established behavior patterns, policies, relationships or institutions which are considered objectionable, or creation of new patterns of behavior, policies, relationships or institutions which are preferred. Disruption group of methods include, nonviolent occupations or blockades, fasting, seeking imprisonment and overloading facilities (such as courts and prisons). Creation group of methods includes establishing alternative political, ethical investment groups, alternative schools, energy exchange cooperatives as well as parallel media, communications and transport networks.76
2.13 Leonardo Boff and Nonviolent Action

In some religious traditions, the practice of nonviolent action is understood as a moral imperative particularly in cases of repeated and pervasive social injustice. The Brazilian liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, speaks of the urgent imperative to resist any form of structural and pervasive violence, something he refers to as “originating violence.” (Boff, 1991: 7). As Boff saw it:

“Originating violence has its roots in the elite institutions of power, in a social structure that protects the interests of the dominant groups, and in the extreme right, which will not tolerate any social change out of fear of losing its privileged status. As a result many countries of the Third World are in the grips of state terrorism.”

It is a moral imperative to respond forcefully to such structural violence rather than trying to be retaliatory or even revolutionary. This, however, must be done through the use of nonviolent action, Boff would insist. Nonviolent actions such as Boff recommends, keeps us from becoming accomplices of injustice. It is important that the status-quo be resisted while at the same time retaining one’s own human dignity by refraining from violence. He put forward what he calls “mistica” as the underlying principle for nonviolent struggle. Boff’s “mistica” is the equivalent of spirituality which facilitates an inward quest for wholeness and a constant purification of one’s motives. This finds resonance with the third step of the four step process of preparation for nonviolent direct action as stated by Dr. King. According to Boff, there should be a constant inward conversion of oneself while undertaking nonviolent action. As he puts it:

“The mistica of active nonviolence implies changing ourselves as well as working to change the world. We must live the truth. We must be just, our integrity transparent. We must be peacemakers. It is not enough simply to confront external violence. We must also dig out the roots of violence in our own hearts, in our personal agendas, and in our life projects. In both a personal and a political sense we must seek to live today in miniature what we are seeking for tomorrow.”
2.14 Gandhian Nonviolent Action

Gandhian nonviolence philosophy and strategy had a strong influence in the life of Dr. King as he would admit in his book, “Stride Toward Freedom.” In his own words King said:

“Prior to reading Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationships. The "turn the other cheek" philosophy and the "love your enemies" philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive nonresistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.”

Gandhi’s strategy and method of nonviolent resistance which he had used in South Africa to secure the rights of the Indian community there was originally described by the English phrase ‘passive resistance.’ For Gandhi, however (Gandhi, 1966: 266), this phrase did not adequately convey the idea that he had in mind with regards to nonviolent direct action, he felt that the term was too narrowly constructed, that it was supposed to be a tool of the weak, and that care needed to be taken so that it was not characterized by hatred which manifested itself in violence. It was the desire to avoid a negative and wrong understanding by the use of the English phrase ‘passive resistance,’ that led Gandhi to coin a new word ‘Satyagraha’ (sat: truth, agra: firmness).

Gandhi’s philosophy and strategy of nonviolence were based on religious principles which were derived from a wide variety of scriptures, particularly the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, and the Koran. He had recourse to higher authority for absolute truth. The central concept of Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence is known as Satyagraha, which translate both as “truth seeking” and “soul force.” He believed that nonviolent activists could learn from the opponent and vice versa. According to Gandhi, ‘Truth must be disseminated through peaceful means and not by force.’ For this reason, he taught that the concept of Ahimsa, nonviolence, was important and indispensable to the Satyagrahi (the person engaged in truth seeking). For Gandhi, Ahimsa
carried a more positive rather than a negative connotation. The practice of Satyagraha, for Gandhi, should be a creed and a way of life and not a strategy for conflict resolution, if it was to succeed.

The principle of Satyagraha, for Gandhi, was based on the conviction that the opponent was not to be considered an enemy and that through a consistent and steady movement towards the discovery of truth, the opponent was to be converted into becoming a friend (Gandhi, 1961: 3). This principle saw the opponent as someone to be worked with and not work against; it was based on the idea that the moral appeal to the heart or conscience...is more effective than an appeal based on threat or bodily pain or violence.

2.14.1 Gandhian Propositions for Satyagraha

Arne Naess, (1974: 60-84) in his book, *Gandhi and Group Conflict*, lists some propositions for Gandhi’s satyagraha as follows: 1. The aim in the struggle is to act a such a way that was conducive to long-term, universal, maximal reduction of violence; 2. The means applied in the struggle should be as pure as the end intended; 3. A constructive program that involves positive peace-building should be part of every campaign; 4. The struggle must be positive and always in favor of human beings, that is, fight antagonisms, not antagonists; 5. All human beings have long-term interests in common; 6. The opponent should not be provoked to violence through humiliation or disrespect; 7. A violent attitude on the part of would-be satyagrahis (advocates of satyagraha) is less likely they have made clear to themselves the essential elements of their case and the purpose of the struggle; 8. The better opponents understand the satyagrahi’s position and conduct, the less likely they are to resort to violence. Secrecy should therefore be avoided; 9. The essential interests which opponents have in common should be clearly formulated and cooperation established on that basis; 10. Personal contact with
the opponent should be sought; 11. Opponents should not be judged harder than the self; 12. Opponents should be trusted; 13. The property of opponents should not be destroyed; 14. An unwillingness to compromise on non-essentials decreases the likelihood of converting the opponent; 15. The conversion of an opponent is furthered by personal sincerity; 16. The best way to convince an opponent of your sincerity is to make sacrifices for the cause; 17. A position of weakness in an opponent should not be exploited. Satyagraha is concerned with morality over and above winning."  

Regarding making a judgment as to which of two opposing cases was closer to the truth, Gandhi advocates that one listens to the voice of conscience in such circumstances. Recognizing though that some problems may arise based on this advice, like, for instance, what is to be done in a situation where two people saw the truth from two different and totally opposing angles, Gandhi warns that, "no one has the right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth." Nonviolence, according to Gandhi, is the only appropriate means at arriving at the truth and if the position of the satyagrahi proves to be further from the truth than that of the opponent, it will be the satyagrahi who suffers; others will not be made to suffer for the satyagrahi's mistake.

2.15 Christian Nonviolence

The foundations of Christian spirituality of nonviolence can be traced to the life and message of Jesus Christ and the nonviolent way in which the early Christian church dealt with persecutions and attacks to their faith and to their persons and families. The core foundation for the Christian nonviolence is taken from the words of the founder of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, when he said in Matthew 5:38-41, "You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye
and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

2.15.1 Love and nonviolence in Christianity

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

This passage describes the essentials of Christianity in action. To understand what Jesus meant by loving one's enemies, it is important to look at the meaning of the Greek translation of the word "love." The Greek language is rich in synonyms; its words usually have various shades of meaning which are not found in the English language. In Greek there are four different words for love.

(e) The first Greek word for love is *storge* which has its accompanying verb *stergein*. These words are used for the type of love that exists in the family. They are the words which describe the love of a parent for a child and the child for a parent. They basically describe family affection.

(f) The second Greek word for love is *eros* with its accompanying verb *eran*. These words describe the love of a man for a woman. It is passionate and sexual in nature. These words are not essentially bad; they simply describe the passion of human love.
(g) The third Greek word to describe love is *philia* with its accompanying verb *philein*. They describe real love, real affection. It is the love of a friend to another friend. “It is warm, tender affection, the highest kind of love.”

(h) The fourth Greek word used for love is *agape* with its accompanying verb *agapan*. These words describe a love that is unconquerable, benevolent, invincible goodwill. To have agape love for someone means that “no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he or she treats us, no matter the kind of insults and injuries we suffer from such a person, we will never allow any bitterness to invade our hearts against that person. Rather we would regard such a person with that unconquerable benevolence and the goodwill which will seek nothing but the person’s highest good.”

It is the agape kind of love that Jesus Christ exhorts his followers to have for their enemies. Followers of Jesus Christ are not expected to love their enemies in the same way as they love their nearest and dearest. To love ones’ enemies with the kind of affection one has for ones’ nearest and dearest would be impossible and unrealistic. Love of enemies involves both the action of the heart as well as the will, especially the will. We have to will ourselves into loving our enemies since loving them from the heart does not come to us naturally. With such a practice of agape, it is possible to love those we do not like and who may not like us either. The power to love a person we do not like can be beyond us often and that is where Christ’s Spirit enables us and lifts us above our natural tendencies to anger and to bitterness to the point of having this invincible goodwill to all people.
Often times many critics look on Christian nonviolence as mere passivism whereby a person simply accepts passively whatever evils that presents itself. It is probably for this reason that many who have committed their lives to working for change and justice in the world simply dismiss Jesus' teachings about nonviolence as impractical idealism. One cannot blame such people who think like this because to "turn the other cheek" suggests a kind of passivism whereby a Christian becomes a doormat for everyone to walk over. It is precisely because of such a passive quality that has made so many Christians cowardly and complicit in the face of injustice. To take a position of nonviolence towards evil and oppressive situations is not to counsel submission to the status quo, neither is it to advocate a retaliatory violent approach. So what precisely did Jesus mean by to “turn the other cheek?”

Christian agape love is not an invitation to be complacent with the evils of others. It does not mean that we allow people to turn us into their carpet without us putting up any kind of resistance. To regard a person with unconquerable benevolence and an invincible goodwill is to love the person and hate the evil that he or she does. It is to resist and consciously take measures to overcome the evil without developing any kind of bitterness and hatred for the person. It is only when the Christian has such a love for enemies that Christ’s teaching about turning the other cheek begins to be bearable. Turning the other cheek is not what naturally comes to us as humans. To love the enemy and to turn the other cheek is not to accept the evil or to run away from it. Jesus was not telling his oppressed hearers not to resist evil. His entire ministry was at odds with such a ludicrous idea. He was, rather, warning against responding to evil in kind by letting the oppressor set the terms of our opposition. A proper translation of Jesus' teaching would then be, "do not retaliate against violence with violence." Jesus was very committed to opposing evil as much as the nationalists and Zealots of his time.
2.15.2 Turning the Other Cheek: A Christian Interpretation

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

As discussed in chapter one on Christian spirituality and its effect on nonviolence, Jesus’ injunction to his followers to ‘turn the other cheek’ ought to be understood correctly. Still drawing from the contribution of Walter Wink (2004), we begin to understand how difficult and symbolically important it is to even attempt to hit a person on the right cheek in the cultural context of the Jews of Jesus’ time. Under normal circumstances, to strike a person’s right cheek with the fist would require using the left hand, but in that society, as in many African and Asian societies today, the left hand was used only for unclean tasks. As the Dead Sea Scrolls specify, even to gesture with the left hand at Qumran carried the penalty of ten days penance. The only way one could strike the right cheek with the right hand would be with the back of the hand. A backhand slap was the normal way of admonishing inferiors. Masters backhanded slaves; husbands, wives; parents, children; men, women; Romans, Jews. According to Walter Wink, to give a backhanded slap signified unequal relations, in each of which to retaliate would be dangerous or even suicidal. The only normal response would be to accept the blows with resignation and humble submission. Worthy of note at this point is Jesus’ audience. It should be noticed that when Jesus spoke these words, he was addressing them to the victims of oppression, those who were powerless to defend themselves and were lowly and poor. They have been forced to stifle their inner outrage at the dehumanizing treatment meted out to them by the hierarchical system of caste and class, race and gender, age and status, and by the guardians of imperial occupation. If this is the case, it becomes rather baffling that Jesus would counsel humble submission for such oppressed and humiliated people. But there was much wisdom in
this manner of counsel it would seem and this is so because this action of “turning the other cheek,” robs the oppressor of power to humiliate them. To turn the other cheek is actually some form of protest and action. It is saying in effect, "Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect. I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status (gender, race, age, wealth) does not alter that. You cannot demean me." Such a response would create enormous difficulties for the striker. Purely from a logistic perspective, how can he now hit the other cheek? He cannot backhand it with his right hand. If he hits with a fist, it is understood that he makes himself an equal, acknowledging the other as a peer, at least this was the cultural understanding in Jesus’ time. A response like the one Jesus counsels shows initiative. It throws the oppressor off balance and gives the oppressed the power of choice.

The idea of turning the other cheek and seizing the initiative is not meant to embarrass or humiliate the oppressor although that might be a side-effect of the action. There is, admittedly, the danger of using nonviolence as a tactic of revenge and humiliation. The goal is to enable the oppressor to see the evil of his ways and repent of it. There is also, at the opposite extreme, an equal danger of sentimentality and softness that confuses the uncompromising love of Jesus with being nice. This could lead to an inactive passivism. Loving confrontation can free both the oppressed from docility and the oppressor from sin.

Christian doctrine teaches that it is only by the grace of God that anyone can live according to such Christian tenets as “Love of Enemies,” and “Turn the other Cheek.” It is only when Christ lives in the heart of a human person that he or she experiences the kind of metanoia that makes such a love possible. Christianity teaches that one need’s Christ’s grace if one is to carry out his command of love for enemies. Gandhi states that: “We may never be strong enough
to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make strong progress towards it."94

Despite the fact that love, mercy, forgiveness, justice and peace are the central tenets of the Christian religion, one still finds it difficult to explain the historical facts of horrific violence in Christian tradition? Christians have to answer to the question of why the Christian Old Testament Scripture is filled with instances depicting God as a God of violence and even commanding his followers to commit acts of violence. Why were Christians of the early periods and the middle ages so violent as to produce such events as the Crusades, the Inquisitions, Witch hunts, and religious wars? The next part of this study would be committed to addressing these contradictions. We shall begin by looking at the Christian understanding of the origins of corruption and violence in the human person.

2.16 The Problem of Violence in Christian Theology

Our view of what God is like greatly shapes our behavior. This is especially true for Christians and indeed, every religious and non-religious person. It is important to have a positive view of the Principle that motivates ones’ faith and behavior. How people act in relation to their view of God affects the rest of the world. If religious people believe that the God of their faith is violent, it would only be logical that they also believe in violence as justified. But if they have a view of their God as nonviolent, then it is more likely that their approach to life would be nonviolent. Ted Grimsrud (2007), outlines four possible ways of viewing the connection between people’s view of God and their behavior in relation to violence as follows:

Most people who believe in God believe God is violent and that human beings thus are also appropriately violent, at least in morally justifiable circumstances. As human existence grows ever more precarious, though, this simple assumption grows more problematic—violence, it becomes increasingly clear, leads to more violence. The spiral of violence more clearly all the time becomes a threat to the viability of human life
itself... As a second logical possibility, one could presumably believe that God is nonviolent but that human beings need not be. A third view would be that God is not nonviolent — but human beings should be. Some of those who believe human beings are called to nonviolence understand this calling to stem more directly from the specific teaching of Jesus, not God's own pacifism... a fourth view, that God is nonviolent... and human beings are called also to be nonviolent. In this view, human nonviolence is both what God through Jesus commands us to embody and what has become a necessity for the sake of our survival in the contemporary world. 95

In this research, I would like to argue the position that God is nonviolent and therefore, human persons are called to nonviolence. I believe that God is nonviolent, though evidence for this might be ambiguous and inconclusive. From a Christian theological perspective, the Scriptures, tradition and experience would be the ordinary sources upon which arguments for God's nonviolence is based. It is important to keep in mind the Christian theology of the human person as the imago Dei since whatever conclusions one reaches with regards to God's nonviolent status, would by extension be related to human persons. What does the Christian Scripture say about God and nonviolence?

2.17 Mysticism in Christian Spirituality

The word "mysticism" derives from the Greek noun mysteurion (mystery) and the adjective mystikos (mystical), both related to the verb myein, which means "to close," and this conveys a sense of what is hidden or secret. According to Joyce Roger (1988):

"...mysticism could be described as "an immediate knowledge of God attained in this life through personal religious experience. It is primarily a state of prayer, and as such and rare Divine "touches" to the practically permanent union with God in the so-called "mystic marriage." The mystic is the person who attains this union. The mystic is the person who attains to this union. The mystic is one who goes beyond knowing about a closeness to God to being a personal relationship with God. The effects of drawing close to God in such a personal way are an increase of humility, charity, and love." 96
Mysticism in its psychological affectation and physical expression varies among various religious traditions. In Christianity the elements of Love and a Personal God or Reality are emphasized. In this case, the union with God is viewed as love between God and the mystic in a personal relationship in which the mystic recognizes God as personal, loving and real. In pantheism among the Eastern religions, the goal is union with nature, or the union with the transcendent self. The Ultimate Reality in this instance is impersonal in its unity with the mystic. In the Christian religion, the mystic, though united with God in a union of love and will, still retains his or her unique personality; the mystic and God retain their individual distinct personalities. This is different in the Eastern pantheistic religion in which the mystic loses his or her identity and becomes one with nature and the underlying Reality. Mysticism in all religions claims a transcendence of all forms, whether images, concepts or ideas.

2.18 Violence and the Human Person

According to the American Psychological Association, violence could be described as an extreme form of aggression, such as assault, rape or murder. This definition however, tends to suggest that only physical violence truly qualifies as violence. I would like to contend that violence is certainly more than just physical violence. According to Terence Fretheim, "...We must insist that violence also refers to that which is psychologically destructive, that which demeans, damages, or depersonalizes others. In view of these considerations, violence may be defined as follows: any action, verbal or nonverbal, oral or written, physical or psychical, active or passive, public or private, individual or institutional/societal, human or divine, in whatever degree of intensity that abuses, violates, injures, or kills. Some of the most pervasive and most dangerous forms of violence are those that are often hidden from view (against women and
children, especially); just beneath the surface in many of our homes, churches, and communities is abuse enough to freeze the blood. Moreover, many forms of systemic violence often slip past our attention because they are so much a part of the infrastructure of life, for example, racism, sexism, ageism.98

2.18.1 The Image of God and the Fall of Man in Christian Thought

In the earlier section of this study, I have discussed the topic of the imago Dei, the image of God in the human person. I argued that because the human person, according to Christian theology, was created by a God, who is Spirit. As such, it followed logically that if a God who is Spirit chose to create human persons in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1: 26-27), therefore every human person possessed a spiritual dimension. Human persons are fully spirit and fully physical. So, human persons resemble God in his spiritual nature, in his creativity, in his love of peace, in his justice and in his holiness. Christian theology states that the original intention of God was for human persons to be perfect just as he, God, is perfect.

However, according to Christian theology of the Fall, the image of God in human persons was deeply marred by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. This disobedience is known in Christian theology as sin. As a result of this sin, humanity's relationship with God was ruptured, as well as all interpersonal relationships. Moral purity was lost and was replaced by a sin and violent nature. Personality was corrupted, producing an array of psychological disorders. Human knowledge became warped.
2.18.2 Human Sin and Fall from Grace

The Book of Genesis gives us four basic stories that depict the reason for the Fall and the beginning of violence in human persons. Thus, after the creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:4, we hear the story of Adam and Eve; in Genesis 2-11: first Adam and Eve (2: 4b-3:24); second, Cain and Abel (4: 1-26); third, Noah and the Flood (6: 1-9:29); and fourth, the Tower of Babel (11:1-9). A close inspection of these four stories reveal the same story of human disobedience, wrong use of free will, arrogance and jealousy; in short, they all reveal human sin and the consequences of sin. This situation of sin and punishment would not be the last word as Christian theology also discusses the theology of Salvation, that God always steps in to offer human persons salvation from sin and its consequences.

A study of each of these four passages revealed that the trouble always began with human sin. When God created Adam and Eve, he put them in the Garden of Eden, according to the creation account in Genesis, and gave them specific instructions not to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree (2: 16-17; 3: 1-7). The man and the woman both disobeyed God’s command. In the second story of sin and violence is attributed to Cain and Abel. Cain, out of jealousy, killed his brother Abel (4: 8). The third story speaks about how as a result of so much evil and violence in the world, God decided to destroy the world with a Flood but not before he had Noah and his family and pairs of every animal on earth enter the ark that he had commanded Noah to build. The fourth story gives the account of the people of Shinar in Babylonia, who ignored God and wanted to build for themselves, a great city, a tower that would reach up to heaven (11:4).
2.18.3 Consequences of the Fall

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and fell from Grace, immense consequences followed. These consequences did not only affect Adam and Eve, but it also passed down and was felt by the rest of the human race and the whole of creation. As Francis A. Schaeffer (Schaeffer, 1985: 270) pointed out, “not only was the communion between Man and God broken, but also the communion between Man and his fellow Man, and Man and the creation. Furthermore, Man has also been separated from himself.”

Andrew S. Kulikovsky (1999), in his work, *The Consequences of the Fall and the Depravity of Man according to the Letter to the Romans*, discusses at length, the consequences of the Fall. He argued that, as the result of the Fall, human persons became depraved in the character and personality. Kulikovsky enumerates six basic ways in which the Fall affected the relationship between God and human person; and the character of the human person: 1. Suppression of Truth (1:18-20); 2. Foolish and Futile Thinking (1:21-22, 25, 28); 3. Sexual Perversion (1:24, 26-27); 4. Practitioners of Every Kind of Evil (1:29-31; 3:10-18) 5. Approvers of Evil and Evil-doers (1:32)

Kulikovsky asserts that God had made his plans and intentions know to human persons but as a result of the negative consequence of the Fall, human persons have consistently rejected God; and this rejection of God is repeated in every generation by every individual. Schaeffer makes a summary of this first consequence of sin, that is, humanity’s tendency to suppress the truth as follows:

Man’s basic psychosis is his separation from God carried into his own personality as a separation from himself. Thus we have self-deception. All men are liars, but, most importantly, each man lies to himself. The greatest falsehood is not lying to other men, but to ourselves. A related aspect is the loss of ability to acquire true knowledge. All his knowledge is now out of shape because the perspective is wrong, the framework is
wrong. That is, man does not lose all his knowledge, but he loses “true knowledge,” especially as he makes extensions from the bits and pieces of knowledge he does have.102

As a consequence of the Fall, humanity can no longer identify the truth and now has the tendency to suppress the truth. Without the knowledge of God and the truth he represents, human persons no longer have any basis for judging truth, morals or ethics, so it is only expected that things which should not be done, will be done, contends Kulikovsky. As a result, human thinking becomes futile. When knowledge of God is suppressed, man’s ability to think and reason clearly and deeply is significantly inhibited. According to Cranfield, (1975: 274), “futility is the inevitable result of loss of touch with reality…. Thus it appears that the corruption of the intellect is one of the direct consequences of the Fall.”103 Indeed, every aspect of the image of God in humans was corrupted, says Kulilovsky. E. C. Beisner (1997: 185) stated it thus: “what had been a sound mind full of the light of truth, full of the God who is the Truth, became unsound and darkened by falsehood.”104

Based on his analysis of Paul’s letter to the Romans, 1: 22-25, Beisner, went on to describe Paul’s emphasis on the difference between humanity’s own opinion and actual fact. Applying this difference to existential reality of the modern world, he notes: “Despite our mighty claims of knowledge and wisdom, and our technological achievements, we have shown ourselves to be utterly foolish. The devastation humanity has caused to the environment, the overfishing, the extinction of species, the over-mining, and the production of nuclear waste all bear testimony to this, as do the many wars, the oppressive political regimes and the immense poverty in many nations.”105 In v. 25, Paul states that humanity has “exchanged the truth of God for a lie” ‘which suggests that we had the truth but willfully and intentionally decided to reject it in favor of a lie.’ Following from this position, S. L. Johnson Jr. (1972: 125) asserts that: “The Pauline picture of the religious history of mankind is one of retrogression, not progression, of devolution, not
evolution, downward, not upward. In unbelief man has passed from light to futility to folly. Thus, the divine wrath has found its justification in human rejection of “the truth of God” (1:18, 25).”

According to D. Moo (1991: 331), Paul, in Romans 1: 23 and 25, described the strong tendency of human persons to reject the little knowledge of God they do have, by making idols of their own. He states that, “in the modern western world, such idols take the form of self, sex, sport, sports people, celebrities, the environment, work, pleasure, and possessions, rather than icons of men and animals. The “truth of God” in v. 25, refers to God Himself and His self-revelation. The “lie,” on the other hand, refers to the whole futility of idolatry – which is so well expounded by Isaiah the prophet (Isa 44:9-20). Again, the use of “exchanged” suggests that the move to idolatry was both willful and deliberate.”

Kulikovsky discusses further another consequence of the Fall of humanity as the immediate result of sin, that is the problem of Sexual Perversion (1:24, 26-27). Aligned closely with humanity’s resort to idolatry as a result of the Fall is also sexual infidelity and perversion. This is not to suggest that God actively caused humanity to become perverse as the passage in Romans 1: 26-27 might suggest, rather it is that he simply allowed the consequences of humanity’s sin to go its normal course in the human person. As C. H. Dodd writes: “the disastrous progress of evil in society is presented as a natural process of cause and effect, and not as the direct act of God... The act of God is no more than an abstention from interference with their free choice and its consequences.” Contextualizing this view in our modern world, we can see the effects of infidelity in marriage, it has led to so much marriage-breakdown, promiscuity often leads to unwanted pregnancy, or the contraction of venereal diseases, or even
HIV, AIDS. Backing up this cause and effect interplay regarding the Fall, Harvard sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin, in his book *The Crisis of Our Age*, warned that:

...increases in crime, suicides, mental breakdowns, revolutions, and war are the symptoms of a dying civilization. In another article on homosexuals in *Time* magazine he wrote, “At their fullest flowering, the Persian, Greek, Roman and Moslem civilizations permitted a measure of homosexuality; as they decayed, it became more prevalent.” In another book, *The American Sex Revolution*, he pointed out that sex anarchy has lead to mental breakdowns, rather than the other way around, as the Freudian psychologists have taught. He also pointed out that increasing sexual license leads to decreasing creativity and productivity in the intellectual, artistic, and economic spheres of life.109

Another effect of the Fall that Kulikovsky discusses is the idea that human persons became *Practitioners of Every Kind of Evil* (1:29-31; 3:10-18). By this, he was referring to Paul’s listing, though not exhaustive, of the characteristics of sinful humanity as recorded in Romans 1: 29-31. These sinful characteristics and behavior of the human person points to the broken relationship between one human person and another human person, and this is as a result of the Fall. Schaeffer strengthens this position when he points out that: “The third of the great separations is man from man. This is the sociological separation. We have seen already how Adam was separated from Eve. Both of them immediately tried to pass off the blame for the Fall. This signals the loss of the possibility of their walking truly side by side in true democracy. Not only was man separated from his wife, but soon brother became separated from brother, Cain killing Abel.”110 Following from the sinful nature and characteristics that the human person came to have as a result of the Fall, Kulikovsky argues further that human persons had also become *Approvers of Evil and Evil-doers* (1:32). By this, he was referring to the human conscience which, according to Kulikovsky, had a built-in sense of right and wrong; this ability helped the human person in matters of morality and it made every human person conscious of the consequences of wrong-doing. This applies to every human person, no matter how hardened in
evil and sin people might be, they usually know full well that they are doing what is evil or wrong. Romans 1: 32 speaks about the 'blatant and willful rebellion of human persons against God, and this could be even with the promptings of their conscience.\textsuperscript{111}

In summary, the Christian theology of the Fall of man accounts for the violence, disobedience, wrong judgment, sexual perversion and innate desire for every kind of wrongdoing. It was a Fall that affected the spirit and psyche of every human person, hence the propensity and tendency for violence and corruption. That said, however, we also get traces of the fact that, in Christian theology, there is also means of escape from the consequences of the Fall for the human person.

2.18.4 Violence in Christian Scripture and Tradition

When one reads the Bible, it would seem quite clear that the God was a God of the directly involved in violent acts and also instructed human persons to commit acts of violence. This is particularly true in the Old Testament where there were many instances in which God commanded human persons to carry out acts of violence. However, are we to conclude from these instances that God in the Bible was violent and therefore human persons that share his image are necessarily also violent? Some of these instances could be found in the event of the Great Flood in Genesis 6:9-8:22; the destruction with fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19; the killing of the first born sons of the Egyptians by God's angel of death in Exodus 11:1-13:16; the ordering of King Saul to exterminate the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15:1-35.
According to Biblical scholarship, it is not always academically proper to make conclusions on themes of the Bible simply by applying selected segments. To be faithful to Biblical exegesis, the Bible must be interpreted and understood as one whole story. If this premise is accepted, then it is important to also note that with regards the theme of God’s violent acts, there are other evidences in the Bible that show God otherwise. For instance, the God of the Genesis one creation story does not create in the context of violence but in the milieu of peace. The God of Abraham and Sarah and down through the exile and beyond showed himself to be a God of patience and persevering love and forgiveness, a God who time and time again forgives the Hebrews and delivers them from their enemies though the Hebrew nation repeatedly disobeyed him and broke their covenant with him. The account of how God dealt with his people in the Old Testament gives the impression that God has determined to work within the framework of historical processes, securing salvation ultimately through mercy and forgiveness and not through coercive force. The same idea of God is seen in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The God about whom Jesus taught the early Christians was a God of love and mercy, a God they could call their Father. Instances of such teachings of God’s enduring love and mercy could be found in the parables of the prodigal son and the one who brings rain on the just and the unjust alike. It is the same God that Paul spoke about as “loving us even while we were God’s enemies.”

In Christian tradition, theologians and Christian apologists have portrayed God as having a dark and violent side and as such have justified retributive style of justice in imitation of God. This is surely a contradiction between Christianity’s claims to be centered on “love and peace” Mark Juergensmeyer (Mark, 2004) argues that “despite its central tenets of love and peace, Christianity, like most traditions, has always had a violent side. The bloody history of the
tradition has provided images that are quite disturbing. This history and these biblical images have provided the raw material for theologically justifying the violence of contemporary Christian groups. For example, attacks on abortion clinics have been viewed not only as assaults on a practice that Christians regard as immoral, but also as skirmishes in a grand confrontation between forces of evil and good that has social and political implications. Among some of the notorious instances of Christian violence were the Inquisitions, Crusades, Wars of Religion and anti-Semitism. Other instances would be the accounts of warrior popes, acceptance of capital punishment, corporal punishment under the guise of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child,’ justification of slavery (this would be discussed in chapter two of this research), colonialism all over the world, with the excuse of converting the ‘pagan’ peoples of the world, the systemic violence women were subjected to by men. The Crusades, began 1095, as a religious driven military movement, the Crusades, fought mainly against Muslims, were efforts to recapture the “Holy Land” which lead to irrational claims of “crosses” appearing on chests of leaders, demoralization of non-Christians and mass murders of innocent men, women and children. The Inquisition was started around 1184, and the purpose of acting deterrent to those who would contemplate evil. It was believed by the Inquisitors that punishment did not take place primarily and per se for the correction and good of the person punished, but for the public good in order that others may become terrified and weaned away from the evils they would commit. During the Inquisitions church leaders often supported the enslavement and/or murder of “heretics. The Reformation, 1518, was another period of intense violence in Christianity. The intent of the Reformation was to restore Christianity to a more “pure” form. In order to do so, millions upon millions of Europeans were murdered as Catholics murdered Protestants and Protestants murdered Catholics. In some instances, those that “opposed” the church authority were
murdered and hung in cages as a reminder to all what happens to such persons. All of these instances would qualify as acts of intense violence, according to Freithem (2004). These accounts of violence in the history and tradition of the Christian religion were contradictions to the central message of the Christian religion.

In response to these factual charges of violence against the Christian religion in its history and tradition, J. Denney Weaver, a Christian apologist, rejected the claim that Christianity was a religion of violence as a result of the recorded violence in its traditions. His argument was based on the fact that certain aspects of Christianity might be used to justify violence yet, a genuine interpretation of Christianity's core message and teachings would be found to teach love and peace and would reject and also resist violence of any kind. According to Weaver (Weaver, 2001), "Jesus, the beginning point of Christian faith,... whose Sermon on the Mount taught nonviolence and love of enemies;; who faced his accusers nonviolent death; whose nonviolent teaching inspired the first centuries of pacifist Christian history and was subsequently preserved in the justifiable war doctrine that declares all war as sin even when declaring it occasionally a necessary evil, and in the prohibition of fighting by monastics and clergy as well as in a persistent tradition of Christian pacifism."
God’s Revelation continues and redemption is promised. Gordon H. Clark (1969: 12, 216) alludes to this when remarked:

Can man still be in the image of God? Yes, the image is still there. Paradoxical though it may seem, man could not be the sinner he is, if he were not still God’s image. Sinning presupposes rationality and voluntary decision. Animals cannot sin. If there were no responsibility, there could be nothing properly called sin. Sin is an offence against God, and God call us to account. If we were not answerable to God, repentance would be useless and even nonsense. Reprobation and hell would also be impossible....The fall and its effects, which have so puzzled some theologians as they studied the doctrine of the image, are most easily understood by identifying the image with man’s mind.... “Out of a man’s heart proceed evil thoughts.” Note that in the Bible the term heart usually designates the intellect, and only once in ten times the emotions; it is the heart that thinks. Sin thus interferes with our thinking. It does not, however, prevent us from thinking. Sin does not eradicate or annihilate the image. It causes a malfunction, but man still remains man.¹¹⁵

Anthony Hoekema, (1986:31) argues further that “there is a sense also in which human beings no longer properly bear the image of God, and therefore need to be renewed in that image. In this latter sense, we could say that the image of God has been marred and corrupted by sin. However, argues Hoekema, we must still see man as an image-bearer of God, but as one who by nature...images God in a distorted way.¹¹⁶ C. S. Lewis, (1966) also expressed this idea forcefully when he stated in a personal letter to a friend:

Indeed the only way in which I can make real to myself what theology teaches about the heinousness of sin is to remember that every sin is the distortion of an energy breathed into us....We poison the wine as He decants it into us; murder a melody He would play with us as the instrument. We caricature the self-portrait He would paint. Hence all sin, whatever else it is, is sacrilege.¹¹⁷

Thus, sin, though tragic, still did not leave man totally bereft of God’s image. It did not completely shatter the image of God within him such that it no longer existed. Christian theology of redemption holds the view that man still possesses the ability to discern right from wrong. He
still possessed the desire and capability to worship God. Reuel Lemmons, (1980: 97.546) supports this position when he states that:

The fall did not impair man’s ability to reason nor destroy his desire to worship. If so, then where did Abel’s sacrifice come from? If Calvin’s view were right, then the world would have been left completely without a witness to the very existence of God from Adam at least until Jesus. If the link were completely shattered, and man was a wandering star, consigned to the blackness of unrelatedness with God, then where did the Old Testament come from? The fact is that man was then and is now in the image of God. He never lost the capacity to respond to God, even though separated from god because of his rebellion. His sacrifices throughout the Patriarchal age, and his submission to ten commandment law in the Mosaic age, demonstrates the fact that his “image” was never totally shattered. He retained his capacity to recognize the law of the Lord, and even to correct his wayward ways through repentance. Although dimmed and obscured by rebellion, the image was still visible.118

It is clear that even after God had expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden as a result of their disobedience, the Bible still referred to them as being made in God’s image in subsequent passages of the Old Testament. For instance, in Genesis 5: 1-3 we read: “When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.”119 Here we find a clear indication the man never lost the image of God after the fall, otherwise, there would be no need for the Scriptures to declare that Adam and Eve were made in God’s image at this point in the Old Testament. By extension, this would mean that their offspring, though inheriting the corruption caused by the fall, still possessed the image of God. Addressing this fact that the whole of humanity did not lose the image of God as a result of man’s sin, Charles Lee Feinberg, (1972: 129: 234-246) writes: “Nowhere is there an indication in the Old Testament that the divine image and likeness are lost….When one contemplates Genesis 9: 6, James 3: 9, and 1 Corinthians 11: 7, it can be seen that it is incorrect to say unqualifiedly that the image of God
was lost through sin. There are references where man's nature after the fall is still the “work and creature of God” (see Deut. 32: 6; Isa. 45: 11; 54: 5; 64: 8; Acts 17: 25; Rev. 4: 11; Job 10: 8-12; Ps. 139: 14-16). The insurmountable obstacle to the position that the image of God is entirely lost through the fall is the fact that even fallen man is man and is not short of his humanity....That which relates to rationality, conscience, and self-consciousness cannot be less, for then, man would cease to be man.

In spite of the fall, man did not become a beast or a demon, but retained his humanity.”

Perhaps a stronger Old Testament scripture that buttresses this point further is found in Genesis 9:6, “Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.” As Feinberg pointed out, this passage is a clear indication that man still bears the image of God. The sin of Adam and Eve and the judgment of God upon them were recorded earlier in Genesis 3: 1-21. Also, in Genesis 8: 21, God was recorded as declaring that man’s heart had become inclined to sin as result of the fall, “The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.” Despite these two passages, one in which God pronounced judgment on humankind and the second in which God declares the human heart to be tainted by sin, yet in Genesis 9: 6, God still chose to forbid any human or animal to kill any human person because, as stated in the passage, man still bears the image of God. On this point Lewis Sperry Chafer (1943: 100: 479-496) commented: “To sin against man either by murder or by slander is reprievable on the ground of the divine image being resident in man. A definite sacredness appertains to human life. Man must respect his fellow man, not on the ground
of kinship, but on the ground of the exalted truth that human life belongs to God. To injure man is to injure one who bears the image of God.”

Genesis 9: 6 undoubtedly teaches that the human person still bears the image of God even after the fall. This idea was not only reflected in the Old Testament by passages and events immediately following the fall, it was also alluded to by passages that went far into the future. For instance, King David, writing approximately three thousand years after the initial sin of Adam and Eve, at least from the creationist account, said in Psalm 8: 4-6, “what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.” In other translation he says, “…You have made them little less than a god.”

In the context of the New Testament, the term “redemption” designates the ultimate sacrifice of his life that Jesus Christ had to pay for the liberation of the Human race. It presupposes the original supernatural state of the human person and his Fall from that original state through disobedience and sin. The Christian religion teaches that as a result of the Fall of man, the whole human race came under the servitude of evil and Satan. To redeem the human race, God had to step in through the action and life of Jesus Christ and by paying the ultimate sacrifice on the Cross, the human race was delivered from sin and death and restored to its original supernatural state at creation.

However, Christian theology teaches that man did not lose the image of God even at the Fall. God continued to be active in his life and indeed, in the whole universe. In the New Testament, St. Paul was quoted as saying, on the topic of head-coverings that, “Man ought not to
have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.”  

By making use of the present active participle, Paul shows that he was referring to contemporary man and he was not speaking in past tense. St. James added his voice to the discussion when he spoke about the evilness of the human tongue: “...but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.”  

To explain the significance of the verb “are made” used in this passage, William D. Mounce (1993: 219) states that:

The English verb “are made” (ASV) derives from the Greek gegonotas, which is the perfect participle of the verb ginomai. The perfect tense in Greek is used to describe an action brought to completion in the past, but whose effects are felt in the present. For example, when the Bible says “it is written,” this usually is stated in the perfect tense. That is to say, scripture was written in the past, but is applicable in the present. The thrust of the Greek expression, kath' homoiosin theou gegonotas (“who are made after the likeness of God”), is that humans in the past have been made according to the likeness of God and they still are bearers of that likeness.  

In this passage, James 3: 8-9, the writer of the book of James was trying to highlight the incongruity involved in using the tongue and to praise God and at the same time using it to curse the human person made in God’s image and likeness. Nowhere in all of the passages alluded to in this section does one get the idea that the image of God in man was completely lost because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Surely enough, sin did wreak a tragic havoc to man’s knowledge, psyche and ability to fully appreciate God but God’s image still resided in him.

Thus, Christian theology of Redemption teaches both that man still retained God’s image but at the same time needed redemption and this was achieved through the efficacious sacrifice of Jesus Christ by his death and resurrection; through his ultimate sacrifice, humankind has been restored to full grace in God. The full image of God in man is reflected in Jesus and all of humanity has a share in this perfection. As Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, 8: 17, “Now if
we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."128 If this is true, how then do we understand the idea of the Christian social teaching on the Just War? The answer to this shall form the next part of this research work.

2.20 Just War Theory and Nonviolent Action

Just war theory is concerned with the justification of how and for what reasons wars are fought. The justification falls under two classifications, it could either be theoretical or historical. On the theoretical level, the question of ethical justification of war comes into play; what are the ethical parameters guiding engagements during war and what forms should wars take. The historical aspect deals with the "just war tradition," it is concerned with the historical body of rules or agreements that have applied in various wars through the centuries. For example, there is the international agreement like the Geneva and Hague conventions directed at limiting certain types of warfare which lawyers may refer to in prosecuting transgressors. It is the role of ethics to examine these institutional agreements for consistency and coherence on a philosophical level and to determine whether such aspects should be kept or changed. The just war tradition also concerns the investigation of the thoughts of various philosophers and lawyers through the ages in order to understand their philosophical outlook and visions of war's ethical limits and whether their thoughts have contributed to the body of conventions that have evolved to guide war and warfare.129

The tradition of the ‘just war’ in the Western world owes its earliest beginning to Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who articulated the seven necessary conditions for a just war. These seven conditions are the principles that guide and still guide discussions on just war even in our
contemporary modern world. There have been modifications to the just war theory and even new formulations that are apart from the Christian tradition.

A discussion of the just war theory is relevant to any discussion on Nonviolence and nonviolent action seeing that most nonviolent activist like Gandhi and King made allowance in their philosophies of nonviolence for the justification of war; albeit, under very strict and unavoidable conditions. For instance, in the book, "Gandhi on Nonviolence," edited by Thomas Merton (1965), Gandhi was quoted as supporting the use of force and violence in the defense of oneself or in defense of family member and loved ones. As he puts it: "He who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest or their honor by non-violently facing death may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden." According to Adam Winkler, a law professor at UCLA, reflecting on King’s "complicated history with guns," he says: "Most people think King would be the last person to own a gun. Yet in the mid-1950s, as the civil rights movement heated up, King kept firearms for self-protection. In fact, he even applied for a permit to carry a concealed weapon. A recipient of constant death threats, King had armed supporters take turns guarding his home and family. He had good reason to fear that the Klan in Alabama was targeting him for assassination." This makes the discussion on just war even more expedient considering that King’s approach to nonviolent action seems to accommodate the use of occasional violence and force just as the just war theory does. For the scope of this research, I shall focus mainly on the original formulation of Thomas Aquinas as articulated in the excerpts of the 1983 peace pastoral of the US Catholic Bishops.

2.20.1 Principles Guiding Just War

Just Cause: War is permissible only to confront "a real and certain danger," that is, to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence, and to
secure basic human rights.

**Competent Authority:** In the Catholic-Christian tradition, the right to use force has always been joined to the common good. War must be declared by those with responsibility for public order, not by private groups or individuals.

**Comparative Justice:** The question in its most basic form is this: Do the rights and values involved justify killing? For whatever the means used, war, by definition, involves violence, destruction, suffering, and death. The category of comparative justice is designed to emphasize the presumption against war, which stands at the beginning of just war teaching. No state should act on the basis that it has "absolute justice" on its side. Every party to a conflict should acknowledge the limits of its "just cause" and the consequent requirement to use only limited means in pursuit of its objectives. Far from legitimizing a crusade mentality, comparative justice is designed to relativize absolute claims and to restrain the use of force even in a "justified" conflict. Given techniques of propaganda and the ease with which nations and individuals either assume or delude themselves into believing that God or right is clearly on their side, the test of comparative justice may be extremely difficult to apply.

**Right Intention:** Right intention is related to just cause. War can be legitimately intended only for the reasons set forth above as a just cause. During the conflict, right intention means pursuit of peace and reconciliation, including avoiding unnecessarily destructive acts or imposing unreasonable conditions (e.g., unconditional surrender).

**Last Resort:** For resort to war to be justified, all peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted.

**Probability of Success:** This is a difficult criterion to apply, but its purpose is to prevent irrational resort to force or hopeless resistance when the outcome of either will clearly be disproportionate or futile.
Proportionality: In terms of the *jus ad bellum* criteria, proportionality means that the damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms. Nor should judgments concerning proportionality be limited to the temporal order without regard to a spiritual dimension in terms of "damage," "cost," and "the good expected. A nation cannot justly go to war today without considering the effect of its action on others and on the international community. This principle of proportionality applies throughout the conduct of the war as well as to the decision to begin warfare. During the Vietnam War, our bishops' conference ultimately concluded that the conflict had reached such a level of devastation to the adversary and damage to our own society that continuing it could not be justified.132

2.20.2 *Jus in Bello*

*Jus in bello* is the International Law governing war. The Catholic Bishops Conference of America warned that even when all the seven conditions for a just war are obtained and the undertaking of violence and war could be understood not to be sinful or against the teachings of the Christian religion, still, the conduct of war remains subject to continuous scrutiny in light of two principle which have a special significance in our modern technological world and this is precisely because of the destructive capability of modern technological warfare. This is important when one considers that the just war theory was formulated at a time when opposing armies fought against each other with simpler tools of war and Christian morality provided a common ethical framework for the Western world. Today, in a postmodern climate, these conditions no longer hold as a result of advancements in science and technology. As modern warfare is conducted, there needs to be a corresponding updating of the just war thinking and ethics. The US Catholic Bishops Conference laid out two principles that should guide this constant reevaluation of the just war theory. These principles are proportionality and
discrimination. The first principle concerning proportionality invites the warring parties to consider not just what will happen as a result of the confrontation, but also what may happen. The other principle regarding discrimination is a bit more tricky but valid nonetheless. It is a clear fact that in any war, innocent persons would be affected negatively. This principle warns against harming innocent persons directly, regardless of the purpose or reason any of the parties may have for doing so. Thus, it is important not to go into an “all out war” since this might affect a large number of persons. The safety of innocent persons must be paramount. Only unjust aggressors should be targeted. “The principle of discrimination prohibits any form of direct and intentional attacks on innocent civilians.”

2.20.3 The Just War Theory and Challenges of Modern Warfare

Considering the fact that the age and time in which the just war theory war conceived and formulated is so different from our current scientific and technological age, it becomes important for the theory, firstly, to address the issue of how to reconcile the fact of how more highly efficient and destructive weapons of mass destruction possessed by more advanced nations of the world has shifted the balance of power and has put less capable nations at great disadvantage in any war situation. This also has implications for the principle of proportionality and discrimination since more innocent non-combatants are put more at risk. Secondly, the rise of non-state actors, like the Taliban and al-Qaeda, coupled with the availability of weapons of mass destruction, has changed the discussion in dramatic ways for those who seek to make a distinction between a just and an unjust war. How are these non-state actors to be evaluated in the light of the principle of war being sanctioned by a ‘competent authority.’ Thirdly, following from our second question, the need also arises as to how to view the roles of international institutions like United Nations Security Council with regards to sanctioning a war in defense or
support of any member nation of the UN. It was thinkers like Grotius and Kant who conceived of the idea of constructing international institutions for the purpose of regulating state conduct and maintaining peace among member nations. While this idea was seen to be important and necessary at the time they were formulated, questions have been raised in the twentieth century as to the objective nature of these international institutions. As Sara B. Hower and Steven P. Millies (2006) pointed out: "The possibility of a common frame of justice by which to judge state actions may increasingly depend more on consent than appeals to an objective moral order."\(^{134}\)

2.21 The Problem with Violence and Armed Resistance

It is part of human nature to take actions for self-preservation and so it is not surprising to find that people who are undergoing any kind of oppression could choose to rise up with armed struggles and violence as a way of dealing the violence and oppression they experience in the hands of their oppressors. King would argue, and rightly so, that, there may be some merit to the fact that all through history, the use of violent resistance and bloody wars have produced some of the desired results for the people who employed them. Countries have had to fight civil wars for independence or dominance, as the case may be. Be that as it may, it has to be said that whatever victory or gain that is achieved through this violent tactics is usually temporary and volatile. It never lasts and is always tainted with negative experiences and memories. Wars and violence has never brought any kind of permanent peace, they only create more social and political problems. Speaking on the issue of racial struggle in the United States of America, King rightly stated that, "violence in the long run in the struggle for racial justice is both impractical and immoral."\(^{135}\)
On the eve of Christmas in 1967, King delivered sermon titled “Peace on Earth” in which he barred his mind regarding the issue of war. He laments the bewildered state of the human race; a state in which there was neither peace within nor peace without. As he states:

Everywhere paralyzing fears harrow people by day and haunt them by night. Our world is sick with war; everywhere we turn we see its ominous possibilities. And yet, my friends, the Christmas hope for peace and good will toward all men can no longer be dismissed as a kind of pious dream of some utopian. If we don’t have good will toward men in this world, we will destroy ourselves by the misuse of our own instruments and our own power. Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force, but the very destructive power of modern weapons of warfare eliminates even the possibility that war may any longer serve as a negative good. And so, if we assume that life is worth living, if we assume that mankind has a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war? and so let us this morning explore the conditions for peace.  

King argues that perhaps the best reason why violence is impractical is because the opponents would love to see such violent resistance so that they may have the excuse to clamp down on the poor and oppressed. Violent resistance has always been used as an excuse by the oppressor to kill and imprison many innocent people. King tells the story of what happened in Birmingham, Alabama on the same issue: “I remember in Birmingham, Alabama, that “Bull” Connor (commissioner of Public Safety) was always happy when somebody on the sideline from the Negro Community threw rocks but he was always unhappy when we remained nonviolent. He knows how to deal with violence, but he does not know how to handle nonviolence.” Thomas Jefferson is often quoted as saying that “War is an instrument entirely inefficient toward redressing wrong; and multiplies, instead of indemnifying losses.” When people become intolerant towards each other and are unable to be flexible and kind towards each other, the result is usually war. The immorality of violence and war becomes more apparent in our modern times where the tactics and weapons of war have become highly
sophisticated and more deadly. The evils of war are more today than in times past when people only engaged each other with swords and sometimes it only involved two persons who represented the two opposing parties. Today, nations wage war against nations with the most brutal weapons of war. Conflict resolution has become a matter of the nuclear arms race whereby nations trying to outdo each other in acquiring the best and most destructive weapons of mass destruction.

The devastating and negative effects of the atomic bombs that destroyed two Japanese cities during the World War II are still been felt to date, with numerous people suffering terrible diseases and handicaps as a result of the radioactive materials that were released into the atmosphere because of the bombs. Almost everything from the water to the land and air was severely poisoned and medicines have been powerless to cure the diseases caused by these dangerous chemicals and gases used during the war. All these go to prove the impracticality and immorality of war and the unrealistic philosophy of an eye for an eye. To use violence as means of achieving peace is like “...a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody, says Martin Luther King Jr.”


This method is inadequate because, contrary to the aim it hopes to achieve, it only makes enemies of our enemies when the goal should be to make them friends. King points out that: “it is wrong because it seeks to annihilate the opponent rather than convert him. It is wrong because it leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue.” When people resort to violent
means as a way to conflict resolution and in any kind of struggle, it is the future generation of children and adults that would reap the legacy of bitterness, hatred, mistrust, suspicion and volatile peace. For this reason, it is important that we continue to look for more just and moral ways of dealing with oppression and violent situations and structures. That brings us to the next approach to resolving conflicts and dealing with oppressive situations, nonviolent resistance.

2.22 Summary

2.22.1 John Paul Lederach on the Moral Imagination and Avoiding Violence

A contemporary writer whose work on Peace building and conflict resolution greatly compliments King’s nonviolent active approach and whose suggestions hold much value for the cause of the nonviolent activist is John Paul Lederach. In his book titled, “The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace,” Lederach (2005) bares his mind on how peace could be built between contesting parties. He presents the idea that if societies can become better at employing the moral imagination in conflict situations, they can avoid resorting to violence altogether. The “moral imagination” is the ability to identify important turning points and opportunities in order to take advantage of them for peace-building. These opportunities might mean having the courage to try new ideas and going down paths that are unknown. It is the ability to imagine and come up with constructive processes that find their basis in the everyday existential challenges of violence and yet strive to transcend these negative and destructive patterns. In order to indentify these important moments of possibilities, the moral imagination has to be sharpened and active. To insist on applying or remaining stuck to a set of rules and strategies for resolving conflict can often be counter-productive and lead to a missing of such opportunistic moments. In Lederach’s own words:
...if we are to survive as a global community, we must understand the imperative nature of giving birth and space to the moral imagination in human affairs. We must face the fact that much of our current system for responding to deadly local and international conflict is incapable of overcoming cycles of violent patterns precisely because our imagination has been corralled and shackled by the very parameters and sources that create and perpetuate violence.141

Lederach, like King, advises against using the same old ways of reasoning in resolving crisis situations. As King states, “violence begets violence” and to insist of the doctrine of “an eye for an eye” would leave everyone blind. For this reason, like Lederach, King suggests a movement away from responding to violence with retaliatory violence such as is being witnessed between Israel and Palestine in modern times. The same creative and imaginative approach of King and Lederach would apply to local social issues such as King dealt with in his time. Lederach, advocates a change in the entire system of human relations; a situation whereby we begin to move away from old ideas that have not promoted peace-building and friendship over centuries, including the idea of always resorting to violence and war at every provocation. The foundation upon which he builds his theory is Morality, an area where his position finds resonance with that of King since King always insisted for instance on always taking the moral grounds in matters like the relationship between means and ends. For Lederach, the aim of transcending violence is facilitated by the ability to formulate, mobilize, and build the moral imagination. Just as King enumerated six principles that guide his philosophy of nonviolent action, so also does Lederach present us with four ways in which we can move from destructive violence to constructive social interaction as follow: 1. Moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships, one that includes even our enemies. 2. It requires the ability to embrace complexity without getting caught up in social schism. 3. It requires a commitment to the creative act. 4. It requires an acceptance of the risk that necessarily goes along with attempts to transcend violence.142
Quite clearly, Lederach agrees with King on the fact of seeing the other as a partner in the dialogue and not as an enemy. Although, Lederach uses the word “enemies” in relating to the other, while King used the word “opponent,” still their ideas are basically the same when one looks beyond the nomenclature. Lederach follows the line of reasoning that in oppressive and conflict situations, it is important that all parties concerned realize that none of them is an island and that they all live in an unavoidable web of social relationship and interaction and more so with the world becoming a global village and the dependence of nations upon each other for economic and cultural transactions. Martin Buber’s I-Thou thesis becomes inevitable if we are human persons are to live in peace and harmony and avoid conflict, violence and war. Furthermore, there is a need for all parties to be empathetic and try to understand their opponent’s point of view, difficult as this might be at times as the result of conditioning. Still, efforts must be sincerely made to understand the other’s pain and position. Each party should realize that life is not always “black and white,” there are many gray areas that make for complicated situations. Thirdly, Lederach encouraged creativity, the ability to be open to new possibilities and ways of looking at the same issue. And finally, the parties concerned must be open to and willing to take risks in order to advance peace and harmony. This may often be difficult and may lead to the leaders of either sides being ostracized and even killed as was evident in the lives of Gandhi and King. Perhaps the biggest contribution that Lederach made to the field of conflict resolution and avoidance of violence was his call to activists to begin to think beyond the traditional emphasis on the peace accord as being the most important step in arriving at peace. For Lederach, the peace accord is necessary but it is only the first step to achieving peace in a conflict situation. He believes that there must be a consistent effort at humanization since this is the solution to preventing violence. Such humanization processes could be built into
the human relational systems. Lederach opines that, to the extent that human persons and activists are able to be imaginative and creative, to that extent would they be able to eradicate violence and oppressive institutions.
Chapter 3

Spirituality and Strategy in King’s Christian Nonviolent Action

Dr. King’s spirituality was deeply influenced by the teachings of Jesus Christ. His vision of racial justice and equality was rooted in the Judeo-Christian heritage. It was his Christian religious conviction that led him to choose the more excellent way of love and nonviolent action over hatred, despair and violence.

King often pointed out that it was Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that inspired the “dignified social action” of the civil rights movement. He believed in creative suffering, in line with the Christian theology of suffering, acted as strong source of courage and encouragement for civil rights activists who endured persecution and police brutality. For King, Christianity was not merely a set of dogmas to be blindly followed and observed, rather, they were life-giving teachings, a lived experience and a way of life.

Kings’ understanding of God as a loving father played a very significant part in his spirituality. According to this understanding, God is a loving father who loves and cares for every man and woman, child and adult, black or white person. God is a very personal principle, a person, who was involved in the lives of every human person and indeed in all of created reality. As a result of his belief in God as a living and personal principle, King embraced Personalism as his philosophy and way of life. For King, God was the father of every human person and as a result, all human persons, sharing a common fatherhood in God, were related, they were brothers and sisters. Such was King’s belief and understanding of the relationship that ought to exist between blacks, whites, and every human person on earth. This conviction in the common humanity of all inspired his famous “I have a dream” speech. King dreamed of a day when
America lives up to its creed, when all people sit together at one table, and when freedom and justice reign. His famous “I have a dream” speech reached its highest point when he echoed the words of the prophet Isaiah: “I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low… and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.”

The fact that all human persons come from the One father who created all in his own image and likeness, it then followed, for King, that all human persons were equal in dignity regardless of color, race and creed. As King said asserted, “…Deeply rooted in our religious heritage is the conviction that every man is an heir to a legacy of dignity and worth. Our Judaeo-Christian tradition refers to this inherent dignity of man in the Biblical term “the image of God.” The “image of God” is universally shared in equal proportion by all men… Every man must be respected because God loves him… The worth of an individual does not lie in the measure of his intellect, his racial origin or his social position. Human worth lies in relatedness to God.”

King’s conviction regarding the power of nonviolent action was inspired by Jesus’ teaching on love of neighbor. Inspired by Jesus’ command for the love of friends and enemies alike, King extended his love and compassion beyond his racial affiliations to embrace the whites, even when they repeatedly oppressed and segregated against the Negroes. King was totally persuaded that only nonviolent love held any real hope for a justice and peace in a world filled with injustice and hatred. In the words of the prophet Micah, he hoped that one day all persons elected to public office would “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with (their) God.” His hope for an end to war was deeply rooted in Isaiah’s vision that people will “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

King saw in the Biblical promises of
“peace on earth and goodwill toward all” the antidote to despair. King was accused of being an extremist, to which he replied that he stood in a long line of extremists, including the prophet Amos, Jesus, the apostle Paul, the Protestant reformer Martin Luther, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. According to King, the question was not whether one was an extremist or not but rather, what kind of extremist would we be – extremists for hate or for love, for injustice or for justice, for evil or for goodness.

In what turned out to be his last speech, King drew from the biblical story of Moses: “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life...But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.”

In many parts of the Christian Scripture, Jesus exhorted his followers to nonviolence. The one challenge that has often arisen from all these exhortations has been that of interpretation. The way of putting Jesus’ exhortation to nonviolence has been interpreted in different ways. From the beginning of Christianity up until present times, Christians have had to make sometimes difficult decisions as to whether it was their duty to avoid and shun evil in the world or to be actively involved in eradicating it. There are groups in the Christian religion who have chosen to be actively involved in changing the evils in the world. Notable amongst them are the activists who belong to the Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. The Quakers hold to the belief that every human person bears the image of God and that in situations of oppression and evil, as Christians, they are called upon to act in a way that is most likely to reach ‘that of God’ in the other and so help to bring about a conversion from evil to good and this cannot be
achieved through violence means. The Quakers often take a shorthand description of the action against war known as the ‘Peace Testimony,’ or ‘Testimony against war.’ They refuse to bear arms and have also been involved in protests and demonstrations in opposition to unjust government policies of war. They have often been in confrontation with others who believe in the use of violence as means to a just end.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, a writer and mystic, has written quite extensively on Christian nonviolence from an ideological perspective. He had read Gandhi and was familiar with King’s activism since they both died in the same year. Merton’s focus in his writings was on the evils of war, and in particular, he was an ardent voice against the Vietnam War and the stock-pilling of nuclear weapons. He decried the lack of active involvement of the Catholic Church in protests and demonstrations against unjust laws and wars but he was also careful to warn against the inherent dangers of a hypocritical and dangerous philosophy that aimed to proclaim the truth and to help the adversary realize it. There was always the temptation to self-righteousness and a closed-mindedness that refuses to even consider the opponent’s point of view. He called activists to a constant introspection in their motives for activism and exhorted against the tendency to direct action aimed at proving the rightness and the determination of the activist, instead of aiming at opposing unjust institutions. As he states in his book *Faith and Violence*:

> The non-violent resister is not fighting simply for “his” truth or for “his” pure conscience, or for the right that is on “his side.” On the contrary, both his strength and his weakness come from the fact that he is fighting for the truth, common to him and to the adversary, the right which is objective and universal. He is fighting for everybody.”

King’s position on nonviolence would be discussed in chapters three and four, but for now let it suffice to say that he was mostly inspired by his Christian spirituality in his philosophy of nonviolent action. King raises the bar for activists and nonviolent resisters. He states that,
'The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but that he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love.'

While he acknowledged the importance of using nonviolence as a strategy and tactic, King warned that the 'tactics of nonviolence without the spirit of nonviolence may become a new kind of violence.' King's involvement and advocacy of nonviolent direct action was premised on the assumption that the powers that oppress are not always eager to give up power and position. As he declared in his Letter from Birmingham City Jail, showing his disillusionment with white moderates who had decried his use of street protests and marches to register the grievance of the blacks regarding the segregation law in the buses, "history is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily, hence the need for direct action."

The next chapter investigates the life, spirituality and strategy of Martin Luther King Jr. I shall begin with a background overview of events that preceded and led to King's involvement in black civil rights movement.

3.1 Background and Context to King's Civil Rights Movement

The background to Dr. King's Civil Rights Movement could be traced back the time of the slave trade and as the result of the harsh and inhuman conditions in which the African American slaves were subjected to. Historically, slavery began in America when the first African slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Young men and women were captured and sold to the white colonialists from the different parts of the African continent. In chains and shackles they were brought to work in the fields of North America. They aided in the production of lucrative crops like tobacco. Slavery was practiced throughout the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, and African-American slaves.
helped build the economic foundations of the new nation of America. In the year 1793, the
cotton gin was invented and this strengthened and increased the need for more slaves especially
in the South. By the mid-19th century, America’s expansion westward, along with a growing
abolition movement in the North, would provoke a great debate over slavery that would tear the
new nation apart. This resulted in the bloody American Civil War (1861-65). The Union won the
war and about 4 million slaves in the nation were freed. This, however, did not end the legacy of
slavery as the effects of the ill-treatment of the slaves continue to influence American history,
from the tumultuous years of Reconstruction (1865-77) to the emergence of the civil rights
movement in the 1960s.

3.1.1 Plight of the African American: From Slavery to the Time of King

The impetus for Martin Luther King’s involvement in and dedication to the Civil Rights
Movement for the emancipation of and justice for the African Americans was due in part to what
he experienced in the America of his time, from childhood to adulthood. Although the African
American was emancipated on paper but in reality, he was still in shackles and lived in situations
of injustice, inequality and discrimination just like in the slave old days.

3.1.2 Conditions in the years of Slavery in America

In the time when slavery was still legally practiced in America, the material conditions of
slave-life were predetermined by the status of the slave. During the early colonial period, slaves
and indentured servants enjoyed greater freedoms than black slaves would in later periods. But
even then, they belonged to the lowest, poorest ranks of society. In the late seventeenth and early
eighteenth centuries, slaves were condemned to impoverishment by the law. In many colonies,
slaves could not participate in wage-earning trade or labor. In others they were denied the right
to own property. The slave's resulting dependence on his or her master for the most basic
necessities -- food, clothing, shelter -- was integral to the preservation of the master's power and
the sustaining of the slave society.

The black slaves lived in sub-standard and crowded houses and neighborhoods. The ones
in the rural areas had to work long and difficult hours in the plantations and the one in the cities,
though treated a bit better, were still considered sub-human. The slaves were co-opted into the
military to fight in the war in Vietnam and they were twice the number of the whites. They were
not allowed to attend normal schools, rather they had to attend segregated schools which sub-
standard and not as equipped as the white schools. They were only employed in menial labor
while the whites got the better paying jobs.

In general, lives of enslaved men and women were shaped by a confluence of material
circumstances, geographic location, and the financial status and ideological stance of a given
slaveholder. The experience of slavery was never a comfortable one. Nevertheless, the kind of
labor assigned, the quantity and quality of food and clothing received, the type of shelter
provided, and the form of punishments dealt could lessen or increase the level of discomfort
slaves had to endure. These living conditions not only impacted the physical and psychological
state of the slave, but also had effects on the relationships that African Americans built with each
other and with whites in the age of slavery. 150

3.1.3 Plight of African Americans in King’s Time

A reading of King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (1968: 91) would reveal his
experience and understanding of the difficult and unjust situations the African Americans had to
endure in the 60s. 151 Responding to a group of clergymen who accused his trouble-making and
that his actions were “unwise and untimely,” King, out of respect for their status, sets about to
explain his position and why he felt the civil rights movement and the street marches and sit-ins could not wait. In his own words, King said:

"...We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters..."152

Granted that the 19th century was a time of radical transformation in the political and legal status of African Americans; blacks gained freedom and began to enjoy greater rights as citizens, though the full recognition of their rights still remained remote as experienced by King; still, many economic and demographic characteristics of African Americans at the end of the 19th century remain more or less the same from what they had been in the mid-1800s. As King would attest to, in his time, “vast majority of the twenty million Negro brothers were smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society.”153 He gave the account of how he was tongue-twisted and his speech stammered when he sought to explain to his six year old daughter why she couldn’t go to play in the amusement park that had just been advertised on television and how tears had welled up in her eyes when she was told that ‘Funtown’ is closed to colored children. Events like these, he said created in the minds of the young children, an inferiority complex and bitterness towards white people. King lamented the situation of his time when blacks were not allowed to rent motels and he had to sleep in the uncomfortable corners of his car. In those days, African Americans had to endure all sorts of humiliations; for instance, there were ‘nagging signs reading “white” and “colored”; they were referred to as “nigger,” and “boy” became their first names (however old they were) and their last names became “John.” As a “Negro,” they were haunted by night and harried by day and all the time living in constant fear.
of the whites and were never sure what would happen next. As King put it, the blacks were ...

"forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodyness"." 154 The way King wrote about his reasons for being impatient gives us a glimpse into the situation of the African Americans of his day. Gifted with his Christian spirituality and nonviolent strategies gleaned from Gandhi's philosophy, King was committed to standing up against injustice of his time and inspiring his followers to do the same. A logical next step for this research would be to delve into the life and activities of Dr. King and his involvement in the civil rights movement.

Before looking at King's life and ideas and how he influenced the Civil Rights Movement against segregationist laws in America, it is important to investigate some of the rationale of the white slaveholders for the practice of slavery in America. These arguments and justifications for slavery revealed much of the contradictions and hypocrisy that existed in the American society before and during King's time.

3.1.4 David Hume and the Justification of Racism

The philosopher David Hume is highly respected for his clarity of articulation and constructive use of skepticism. Despite all of his great contributions to the field of empiricism and philosophy, it is regrettable that he did not question his own racial prejudice which was partly an offshoot of the racial prejudice of time. As part of his contribution to the issue of racism, Hume said:

"I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any
symptom of ingenuity; tho’ low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning; but ‘tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly…”

The above quote was recorded in a footnote in Hume’s essay ‘Of National Character.’ Although Hume would latter revise some of his sentences in the 1777 version, as a result of criticisms, it is interesting to note that in the 1753 version, Hume would use the words ‘other species,’ not ‘races.’ To him, any ‘species’, one might add, ‘race,’ that was not white was not even considered as human, and even if they were, they would not be humans in the sense as the whites. His position would mostly be directed towards blacks since he would later be swayed by criticisms to modify his position towards other ‘species’ or ‘races’ except the blacks. Hume argued that climatic conditions, physical characteristics, social arrangement and political structures were evidence enough that the blacks were inferior to the rest of the species and were incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind.

From a critical standpoint, two conclusions could be drawn from Hume’s statements. Firstly, his position on peoples and cultures different from the Europeans were not objective, they had political motivations and undertones. His use of Europeans and the European culture as paradigms for judging which peoples and cultures were the best reveals his cultural and political bias and prejudices. Unfortunately for Hume, his racist statements and mindset greatly undermined his empirical and scientific philosophy precisely because, his statements had empirical evidences that were contrary. For instance, at the time Hume made his racist assertions, there were two black professors of philosophy in Europe. For any human individual to rise to ranks of professorship in the Europe of Hume’s time was an indication of very high intellectual and academic capabilities. There was also the Jamaican about whom he was referring in his statement above, Francis Williams, a well-educated schoolmaster who composed poetry in
Latin, though Hume would refer to him as a mere parrot who was simply repeating the comments of others but incapable of being original himself.

Secondly, as was stated earlier, Hume’s statements and positions about Africa, Africans, Indians and Asians were not founded upon empirical evidence which he had acquired by “experience and observation.” His racial law seemed to have been motivated by his desire to justify the conquering and domination of other peoples and cultures. As Eric Morton (2002) noted:

If, as Hume claimed, he was scrupulously obedient to an empirical methodology, then surely an empiricist as respected, experienced and erudite as Hume should have known, or could have discovered, that from the Nile to the Niger, from the Arctic to the Caribbean, from ancient times through European discovery, powerful cultures rose and fell on the African, North and South American continents leaving behind obvious legacies of civilization that would amaze any unbiased observer. After all, he had seen service in overseas governmental positions and he was recognized as being a product of the so-called “Enlightenment.”

Furthermore, an “empirical observation” of the African continent would have revealed to Hume that, even during and before his time, there had existed hundreds of civilizations ranging from the Egyptian dynasties dating as far back as 3000 B.C. to the Benin and Yoruba civilizations of Western Africa. From the Hausa/Fulani Caliphates, which were composed of politically powerful peoples with advanced cultures in arts and crafts. There were also the powerful Islamic Berber empires of the Maghrib; the Fatimids; the Sanhja; the Zenata, the Almoravid, and the Almohads which dates as far back as the seventeenth century. There was the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires that stretched from the northern salt mines in the Almoravid territory of Southern Morocco to the forest region of the coast of West Africa and Senegal in the West to Somalia in the east, and which existed from 2 A.D. to 1800 A.D., predating the Islamic culture that now dominates those territories. Again, Hume ignored the Ethiopia-Sudan-Punt
empires whose origins date from 981 B.C., or the history of the first Bantu speaking people of the Zimbabwe plateau who some archaeologists say are the forerunners of the present populations of most of continental Africa, and whose dominance of Zimbabwe and the neighboring regions lasted for centuries. Under the Rozwi rulers they built imposing structures and settlements, including the Great Temple ringed by an 800-foot granite wall which still stands. The Europeans who first settled in this region of Africa saw the ruins of Zimbabwe as proof that they were the legal and logical heirs of southern Africa because the temple and wall had to be evidence of original settlement by whites.157

Hume's philosophical and political racism had much influence on his theory of human nature which in turn added fuel to the already burning flame of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. His racial prejudice posited a distinct and superior white race with innate endowments that enabled it to achieve a perfection of governance and world dominance. He started off with a position and belief in the universality of human nature but he would later reconsider his position to reflect a racist and prejudiced outlook on human nature. It could be said that Hume's racist prejudices had great political and historical influences on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the conquest of the Americas, and the extermination of indigenous populations in overseas colonies that contributed to the growth of Western capitalism and imperialism.

A famous musician in Nigeria, Fela Anikulapo Kuti once said that "If a man wants to enslave you forever, he will never tell you the truth about your forefathers."158 This statement rings true in America and other societies where blacks have been and still continue to be marginalized and oppressed. For instance, the history books in America have only served to intensify the Negroes' sense of inferiority and worthlessness and to strengthen the anachronistic doctrine of white supremacy. So many Negroes and whites are almost totally oblivious of the
fact that the first American to shed blood in the American revolution which freed the country from British rule and oppression was a black seaman named Crispus Attucks. It was also a Negro physician, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, who performed the first successful heart surgery in America, and that another Negro medical doctor, Dr. Charles Drew, was largely responsible for developing the method of separating blood plasma and storing it on a large scale, a process that saved thousands of lives during the 2nd World War and has made possible many of the important advances in postwar medicine. American history books have for the most part overlooked the many Negro scientists and inventors who have made great contributions to advancing life in America. People like Norbert Rillieux, whose invention of an evaporating pan was revolutionary in the processing and refining of sugar. There was also the multi-million dollar United Shoe Machinery Company developed from the shoe-lasting machine invented by a Negro from Dutch Guiana, Jan Matzeliger. There was also the Negro, Granville T. Woods, an expert in electric motors, whose many patents speeded the growth and improvement of the railroads at the beginning of the 20th century. Negroes have also made great contributions in the area of music and sports to the American society.

3.1.5 Justification of Slavery and the Doctrine of Paternalism

"Paternalism" comes from the Latin *pater*, meaning to act like a father, or to treat another person like a child. In modern philosophy and jurisprudence, it is to act for the good of another person without that person's consent, as parents do for children. It is controversial because its end is benevolent, and its means coercive.

The doctrine of paternalism guided much of the American Southern rationale for slavery. As a public expression of humanitarian ideals drawn from both the American Revolution and the Great Awakening, which helped the expansion and spread of Christianity far and wide, Southern
plantation owners defined slavery not as an institution of brute force, but of responsible
dominion over a less fortunate, less evolved people. “Inspire a negro with perfect confidence in
you and learn him to look to you for support and he is your slave,” were the words of one
plantation owner. Of course, the documented brutality of slave owners, beyond the mere fact
of enslavement, demonstrated that planters were short on adherence to their own doctrine. The
diary of Bennet H. Barrow (1837), a Louisiana slave owner, documents almost daily beatings
and torturing of slaves, accompanied enigmatically by extensive moral explanations as to why
such punishments were necessary. Paternalism was thus more a justification, than an orientation,
for slavery.

3.1.6 Christianity and the Justification of Slavery

Slave owners who were Christians in America during the slave era have often used the
bible to convince themselves that owning slaves was okay and that the slaves should obey their
"earthly masters". The Christian slave-owners and indeed the Christian church during the slave
era, justified the concept and practice of slavery based on Genesis 9: 25-27. The account reads in
the Bible that, there was a worldwide flood which eventually ended. At the end of the flood,
there were only 8 humans alive: Noah, his wife, their six sons and daughters in law. Furthermore
the Bible reads that in Genesis 9: 22 “Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and
told his two brothers outside.” Noah’s son Ham had seen “the nakedness of his father.” So,
Noah laid a curse...not on Ham, who was the guilty person, rather, the curse was transferred to
Noah’s grandson Canaan. Such transference of sin from a guilty party to an innocent one is not
normal in the world’s religious and secular moral codes. It is normally considered highly
unethical. However, the curse extended to all of Canaan’s descendants:
“Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers. He also said, ‘Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem and may Canaan be his slave’.”

Some Christian slave-owners assumed that the so-called “curse of Ham” (Genesis 9: 25) was to cause Ham’s descendents to be black and to be cursed. It was believed that traditionally, Canaan had settled in Africa. The dark skin of Africans became associated with this “curse of Ham.” However, there is no evidence from Genesis that the curse has anything to do with skin color. Other Christian slave-owners have suggested that the “mark of Cain” in Genesis 4 was that he was turned dark-skinned. Again, there is no evidence of this in Scripture to this assertion. They also used the Scripture in Genesis 1: 28 “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” This passage, some white Christians believed, gave them the right to conquer and subdue every creature on earth, including the Negro race. This was how the slavery of Africans was religiously justified by the slave-owners. The author Anthony Pagden (1977), argued that slavery of the black race was justified on two levels; religious and scientific. As he writes:

"...this reading of the Book of Genesis merged easily into a medieval iconographic tradition in which devils were always depicted as black. Later pseudo-scientific theories would be built around African skull shapes, dental structure, and body postures, in an attempt to find an unassailable argument--rooted in whatever the most persuasive contemporary idiom happened to be: law, theology, genealogy, or natural science -- why one part of the human race should live in perpetual indebtedness to another."

Furthermore, Christian slave-owners who defended slavery noted that in the Bible Abraham had slaves. They point to the Ten Commandments, noting that "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house,... nor his manservant, nor his maidservant" was a clear testimony that slavery was permitted by in the Scriptures. In the New Testament, Paul returned a runaway slave,
Philemon, to his master, and, although slavery was widespread throughout the Roman world, Jesus never spoke out against it. With these arguments and others such as these, American slave-owners felt that they were carrying out God's plan by buying and using slaves. They argued that the slave institution was divine, and that it brought Christianity to the heathen from across the ocean. Slavery was, according to this argument, a good thing for the enslaved. John C. Calhoun (1837), in his "Speech on Slavery" to the U.S. Congress, said:

"...I hold it to be a good, as it has thus far proved itself to be to both, and will continue to prove so if not disturbed by the fell spirit of abolition. I appeal to facts. Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually."\(^{164}\)

Calhoun believed that it was the normal and natural state of things in the universe that the African race was meant to serve the European race and that is how it has been, and would continue to be. The wealth and prosperity of any "civilized society," he said must necessarily be built upon the sweat of a less civilized one. To quote him further, he said:

"...But I take higher ground. I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good - a positive good. I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved. I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other. Broad and general as is this assertion, it is fully borne out by history. ..."\(^{165}\)

It has to be said at this point that, in contemporary times and by recent secular and religious standards, slavery is immoral. The cursing of an individual's descendants into perpetual slavery because of an inappropriate act by an ancestor is immoral. Even the prophet Ezekiel (18:
20) as far back as the Old Testament condemned such unjust and unfair inheriting of the sins of an ancestor:

"The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him."  

These slave-owners, apart from using the Christian Bible as justification for the practice of slavery, also argued that to abolish the practice of slavery would have adverse economic, social, legal, humanitarian, and historical implications.

3.1.7 Making Slavery an Economic Necessity

The argument was that, the sudden end of the trade in slaves and the use of the slaves to promote the growth of the economy would negatively impact and even destroy the economy, especially in the Southern States where slaves were heavily relied upon as the foundation for sustaining the economy. The cotton industry would collapse, the tobacco crops would dry up and rot in the fields and the rice would cease to yield and be profitable.

3.1.8 Fear of Widespread Unemployment

The argument of the slave-owners here was that, to free all the slaves would be to create a chaotic situation of massive and widespread unemployment and this would lead to uncontrollable uprising, bloodshed and anarchy. They argued further that what happened in France during the French Revolution when the mob’s “rule of terror” reigned would also happen in America. The only way to avoid this was to maintain the status quo of the trade and use of slaves. The slave holders were made affluent by the slave community and to maintain this affluence and stability, the slave trade and use must be continued.  

3.1.9 Argument from Law

The slave-owners used the courts to argue their right to own and use slaves. The court had ruled, with the Dred Scott Decision, that all blacks—not just slaves—had no legal standing as persons in our courts—they were property, and the Constitution protected slave-holders’ rights to their property. The Dred Scott Versus Stanford (1857) was also known as the Dred Scott Decision. Dred Scott was a black slave who had lived in the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin before moving back to the slave state of Missouri, had appealed to the Supreme Court in hopes of being granted his freedom. The Dred Scott Decision was a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that people of African descent brought into the United States and held as slaves; or their descendants, whether or not they were slaves, were not protected by the Constitution and were not U.S. citizens.

Chief Justice Roger B. Taney the U.S. Supreme Court, a staunch supporter of slavery, intent on protecting southerners from northern aggression wrote in the Court’s majority opinion that, because Scott was black, he was not a citizen and therefore had no right to sue. The framers of the Constitution, he wrote, believed that blacks “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. Referring to the language in the Declaration of Independence that includes the phrase, “all men are created equal,” Taney reasoned that “it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration…”168 The Abolitionists in the North were incensed and this only increased their resolve to fight for the abolition of slavery, especially now that the Supreme Court ruling had brought the matter to national attention.
Furthermore, in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the Plessy v Ferguson case, upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the doctrine of "separate but equal." The Plessy v Ferguson case involved a thirty year old colored shoemaker named Homer Plessy who was jailed for sitting in the "White" car of the East Louisiana Railroad. Plessy went to court against the State of Louisiana and argued that the Separate Car Act violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. The presiding judge at the trial was John Howard Ferguson, a lawyer from Massachusetts who had previously declared the Separate Car Act "unconstitutional on trains that traveled through several states." In Plessy's case, however, he decided that the state could choose to regulate railroad companies that operated only within Louisiana. He found Plessy guilty of refusing to leave the white car. Plessy appealed to the Supreme Court of Louisiana, which upheld Ferguson's decision. In 1896, the Supreme Court of the United States heard Plessy's case and found him guilty once again. This decision by the U. S. Supreme Court acted as an impetus for the proliferation of Jim Crow laws all around the United States of America.

3.1.10 The Jim Crow Laws

Between the years 1876 and 1965, the United States of America enacted racist laws known as "The Jim Crow laws." These were laws enacted at both the state and local levels and they mandated de jure racial segregation in all public facilities in the Southern states. In 1890, law with a "separate but equal" status was made specifically for the African Americans. Under the Jim Crow segregation laws, African Americans were severely disadvantaged, particularly in Southern states.

Jim Crow was far more than just racist laws which institutionalized a caste system in America, it was a way of life that came to be strongly believed in and lived out by both White
Americans and endured by the African Americans. African Americans were relegated to second-class citizens under Jim Crow. Many Theologians and Christian ministers believed and taught that whites were the chosen people and that blacks were cursed to be servants, and that God supported racial segregation. Craniologists, eugenicists, phrenologists and social Darwinists strengthened the belief that blacks were innately intellectually and culturally inferior to whites. Even the children’s games portrayed blacks as inferior beings.

There were many among the white communities in America who condemned the practice of slavery and considered it immoral, unethical and unchristian. These voices came mainly from the North of America who did not have as many plantations as the South. Although serious efforts were made to oppose Jim Crow laws in Nashville as early as 1905, it was not until 1958, with the formation of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council, that Nashville's African American community would lay the foundation for dismantling racial segregation. In this section of our research, there shall not be counter-arguments for all the justifications put forward for slavery and oppression of the African American community above since the purpose of this section was simply to highlight the arguments by which slavery was justified in the years before and during Dr. King’s time with the purpose of setting forth the background to Dr. King’s civil rights movement and its subsequent effects. It should be kept in mind that the over-arching objective of this study is to show how strategy, informed and guided by spirituality in the life of Dr. King, gave focus and direction to the Civil Rights Movement and eventually led to the end of segregation in America. To give more background foundation as basis for answering the research question and objective of this study, an overview of various thoughts on the dangers of embarking on any worthwhile venture without the guiding wisdom of spirituality would be expedient.
3.2 Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)

Fig. 1: Picture of Martin Luther King Jr.

Born into middle class family on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King Jr., was a highly educated man. He changed his name from Michael to Martin. The son of a minister, he also became a minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He got a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Morehouse College in 1948 and then proceeded to Crozer Theological Seminary for his theological formation. After graduating from the Seminary in 1951, he went on to study at the Boston University where he graduated with a Ph.D. in 1955.

In 1957 he was elected to become the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Through this organization he provided new leadership to the growing civil rights movement. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of thirty five, making him the youngest man to have received the Prize. On April 4, 1968 he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee while preparing to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city.
3.2.1 Religious and Philosophical Influences in King’s Life

3.2.1.1 Christian Influence

The first role model for Martin Luther King Jr. as a young man was his father, Martin Luther King Sr. Referenced to as “Daddy King,” he instilled strong religious ideals in his son who would later take over from him as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. King Jr. learned about the subject of racial harmony from both of his parents and these lessons stuck with him all through his life and he would rely on these lessons as his bedrock in his fight against all forms of discrimination and prejudices.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ had a great forming influence on King. For him, following Christ as his disciple was not a matter of observing mere doctrinal stipulations, rather, it was his entire spirituality and way of life. His firm belief in the message of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures gave him moral values and convictions which he both applied to every aspect of his life and ideology and preached to his followers. His conviction that all people are made in the “image of God and therefore are equal, all have dignity and are children of the One Father, God,” is a clear reflection of his Christian heritage.171

King was also very much influenced by Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, particularly regarding Love of enemies and forgiveness of offenders. Quoting from the Gospel of Luke 23: 34, “...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,” King describes how Jesus’ forgiveness of his enemies even while hanging from the cross taught his disciples that “only through a creative love for their enemies could they be children of their Father in heaven and also that love and forgiveness were absolute necessities for spiritual maturity.”172
In his book *Strength to Love*, King’s Christian convictions shines out. The themes discussed in the book were actually sermons he had preached during his years as pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He preached about themes like “A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart,” “Transformed Nonconformist,” “Love in Action,” “Loving Your Enemies.” The way and manner King preached and articulated Christian themes showed that he was a man of deep Christian convictions and he also believed very strongly in putting into practice everything he preached. He took his Christian beliefs very seriously and sought to bridge the gap between his words and his actions. King spoke and taught the idea of a “beloved community.” He had the vision of an inclusive community and that one day humankind hand-in-hand would work together for justice and peace. His message was universal in its application. He did not try to proselytize and he believed that wisdom and righteousness exist in other secular and religious traditions. King’s message of universal brotherhood was inspired by Walter Rauschenbusch. King and his team conceptualized the idea of a “beloved community,” an inclusive vision of humankind striving together for peace and justice.

**3.2.1.2 Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918)**

The liberal theology of Walter Rauschenbusch had a strong influence in the formation of King’s theological, social and spiritual formation. The major characteristic of Rauschenbusch’s theology was his emphasis on the social gospel movement and the interest in social justice and the effects of social institutions and processes. As was also evident in King’s social message and theological approach, Rauschenbusch’s social gospel was partly a reaction against the excessively individualistic ethical perspective of much Protestant thought that had been influenced by the Calvinist traditions King’s social gospel as influenced by Rauschenbusch was
much more optimistic and held to the belief that an “inclusive human community” was possible and that the church could facilitate this if it became more involved at both social and personal levels. King, like Rauschenbusch, was of the view that the kind of capitalism as practiced in America during his time was contradictory to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In his complaint against the church for its role in maintaining the status quo, Rauschenbusch’s social gospel advocated for a more aggressive and direct approach from the church. The church should directly confront unjust and oppressive institutions instead of the indirect approach of using individual representatives. This was the approach that King tried to use in his social message. He was of the belief social and personal salvation was attainable and he saw proper education and moral instruction as the means to achieve these.

Rauschenbusch influenced King on three major levels. Firstly, in the advocacy of a more prophetic role of the church and for religion as a whole; secondly, for an active social change role for the church; and thirdly, that the Kingdom of God and the “beloved community” was an attainable ideal. The church just needed to move away from viewing the gospel message as merely relevant for personal salvation alone. Rather, the social gospel took account of the whole of man’s spirit, soul and body. It saw man as an integral whole and salvation should not just be concerned with only one aspect of man to the detriment of another. The total human person, spiritually, physically, socially, economically and politically must be accounted for and salvaged. King believed that moral progress was possible for human persons and for society as a whole and this is because the human person was redeemable since not every aspect of his person was affected by Original sin and corruption. Just as Rauschenbusch rejected the traditional Christian doctrine of Original sin, so also, King reinterpreted the traditional understanding to mean that Original sin was mostly transmitted socially and by shutting off or dealing with the institutions
and structures that promoted such sin, its transmission into human lives could be prevented. For King, social evil was an evident and existential reality but through concerted and deliberate active nonviolent efforts such evils could be eradicated and human morality promoted.

Much as King was influenced by Rauschenbusch, so also did he disagree with aspects of Rauschenbusch’s views. For instance, King faulted Rauschenbusch’s tendency of subscribing to the idea that progress was inevitable, as if conscious and deliberate efforts of the human person were not necessary. For King, moral progress in man and society was evolutionary and progressive and brought about by the conscious activities of people; through the gradual elimination of certain moral evils and the imbibing of new values and world vision. Also, King took issues with Rauschenbusch’s identification of the Christian religion with particular political and socio-economic system such as democracy and capitalism. For King, the type of socio-economic system practiced in the United States of America, capitalism, promoted corruption, greed, widening of economic gap between the wealthy and the less-privileged in society. King was persuaded that America’s economic system had to be changed and be replaced with a system that enabled every human person to succeed on an equal and level playing field. The situation in which only the few rich Americans were given more advantage over the rest only encouraged injustice, greed and a lack of empathy and concern for the poor of the land. Part of the good news of Jesus Christ was that all human persons were equal in dignity and must be liberated from any kind of shackles of oppression and be given equal opportunity to succeed and be happy; a creed that the American constitution embodied but which was in reality not the case. King was a staunch proponent for a new political and socio-economic system and he vehemently protested all unjust laws and practices that encouraged greed, injustice and oppression of the poor.
3.2.1.3 Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

At the time King was rounding up his bachelor’s degree at the Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, he came across and read the works of Reinhold Niebuhr, a Protestant theologian. He was captivated by the key ideas in Neibuhr’s theological book, The Nature and Destiny of Man (1941). Neibuhr’s concept of the human person held a strong and exciting attraction for King. In particular was Neibuhr’s representation of how the human person was both a child of nature and a spirit who stood outside of it. King felt that he came to have a fuller grasp of human group dynamics, human motives, and the connection between power and morality through Neibuhr’s theology of the relationship between the human person and society. In his own words, King states: Neibuhr helped me to recognize the complexity of man’s social involvement and the glowing reality of collective evil.” Neibuhr’s philosophical position on the nature of the human person helped to move King away from the once held and attachment to a “naively” optimistic view of the human person and the social gospel. King later confessed that he had become “absolutely convinced of the natural goodness of man and the natural power of human reason.”

While accepting Neibuhr’s realism, King had some criticism about what he considered as the shortcomings of his position. For instance, he believed that Neibuhr seemed to have confused and misunderstood the difference between the passive and active nonresistance to evil. As King would state:

“...he interpreted pacifism as a sort of passive nonresistance to evil expressing naïve trust in the power of love. But this was a serious distortion. My study of Gandhi convinced me that true pacifism is not nonresistance to evil, nonviolent resistance to evil. Between the two positions, there is a world of difference. Gandhi resisted evil with as much vigor and power as the violent resister, but he resisted with love instead of hate.
True pacifism is not unrealistic submission to evil power, as Neibuhr contends. It is rather a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, in the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflictor of it, since the latter only multiplies the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent, and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart.\textsuperscript{176}

The above criticism of Neibuhr’s position notwithstanding, King found much to be desired and applied from Neibuhr’s philosophy of the human person. For instance, Neibuhr’s realism enabled King to become aware of “the complexity of human motives ... and the reality of sin on every level of man’s existence.”\textsuperscript{177} King became acutely aware of the illusions of a superficial optimism regarding human nature and of a false idealism. King, though still holding firmly to his belief in the potential for good in every human person, also came to acknowledge the potential for evil in the human person. He warned of an “unwarranted optimism and tendency for self-righteousness” by pacifists. Thus, King arrived at a more realistic pacifism through the reading of Neibuhr. The pacifist was not one who was separate from the dilemmas and inconsistencies of society, rather, he also shares in the daily moral choices and struggles that are experienced by every social activist. Viewed from this perspective, King felt that Christian nonviolent pacifism would be more appealing.

\subsection*{3.2.1.4 Gandhi’s Influence on King}

Prior to encountering Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolent action, King was on the verge of despairing regarding the power of love to solve social problems. In the “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence,” King states how he was at the point of believing that Jesus’ “turn-the-other-cheek and the love-your-enemies philosophies were only valid when individuals are in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict, a more realistic approach was necessary.\textsuperscript{178}
As King began to read Gandhi’s works, he came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love, operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence, is one of the most potent weapons available to an oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. King stated that, for him, “Christ furnished the spirit and motivation and Gandhi furnished the method. For King, Gandhi was probably the first person in the history of social reforms to shift the interpersonal love ethic of Jesus Christ from individuals to a powerful social force on a macro level. In Gandhi, King came to discover the method for social reform which he had been seeking for a long time prior to reading Gandhi. As he states: “Love for Gandhi was a potent instrument for social change and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform which I had been seeking for so many long months...I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.”

King made a trip to India in 1959, a journey that helped to convince him that satyagraha could be effectively applied to the struggle by blacks in the United States of America for racial equality and integration. Gandhian thought, was for King, a method that was consistent with the Christian ethic of love. It was quite evident that Gandhi had a strong influence on King because, as King’s efforts in a nonviolent activism progressed, his words began to echo Gandhi’s own sentiments. For instance, at times when King discussed the topic of civil disobedience, he would say words like, “In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty.” This was clearly an echo of Gandhi’s thoughts on the same topic, who himself taught that people should respect the law as long as it was consistent with the truth. Gandhi taught that a person who chose to break the law in
obedience to his conscience and who willingly accepts the consequences of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice is in actuality expressing the highest respect for law. Just as Gandhi taught that suffering should be endured as a path to self-purification and spiritual growth, so also did King teach that suffering had a redemptive dimension and should be borne for the sake of achieving higher goals. By holding positions such as these, King felt that Gandhi’s thoughts were in consonance with his Christian theology of suffering that echoes’ Jesus’ words in Matthew 5: 10, “Blessed are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!”

3.3 Evolutionary Trends in King’s Thoughts

King’s initial studying of Gandhi’s satyagraha led him to an understanding of nonviolent direct action as merely a tactic for social transformation. But as he continued in his study of Gandhi, gradually, his perceptions began to change. He began to appreciate Gandhi’s philosophy on a more personal level and that meant that his understanding of nonviolent action began to take on a deeper dimension; a more personal and spiritual dimension. This was clearly evident in the following statement made by King:

Nonviolence in the truest sense is not a strategy that one uses simply because it is expedient at the moment; nonviolence is ultimately a way of life that men live by because of the sheer morality of its claim. But even granting this, the willingness to use nonviolence as a technique is a step forward. For he who goes this far is more likely to adopt nonviolence later as a way of life.

A close study of King’s life would reveal that his experiment with nonviolence underwent a gradual evolution from his original intellectual realization of its possibilities as a method for social change to its eventual adoption as a personal way of life. As William Watley (1985) noted in this regard:
This conversion was not only the result of the deeper insights he gained as he learned more and more about Gandhian nonviolence; much of that conversion process occurred through King's own experiments with the truth of nonviolence, as he lived it, applied it, refined it, and suffered through it, beginning in Montgomery.\textsuperscript{183}

Combining the teachings of Jesus Christ, Rauschenbusch, Neibuhr and Gandhi, King was able to fuse into a unified whole, a positive and realistic social philosophy of nonviolent action. The spiritual foundation for his philosophy came from the Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which laid emphasis on humility, self-criticism, forgiveness, and the renunciation of material gain. From Rauschenbusch, Neibuhr came ideas for his social gospel. Salvation was meant for the total person and not just for the soul of the human person. The role of the church as champion for social reform and transformation was founded on this social philosophy. Gandhi provided the seeds for the development of King's strategic nonviolent action. In Gandhi, King discovered the method for social reform, a step beyond the ethic of love that concerned only two individuals. There was method for nonviolent action that could be applied on a grander scale. The deep influence Gandhi exerted on King's philosophy and approach cannot be overemphasized. His influence was perhaps the greatest after that of Jesus and King's parents.

Like Gandhi, King brought together his spirituality, informed by his Christian faith and the lessons from his parents, and social issues in a dynamic philosophy of nonviolent activism. King dedicated his whole adult life, especially after assuming leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, to serving humankind at great personal sacrifice. Like Gandhi, King also made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.
3.3.1 King’s Analysis of Three Approaches to Conflict Resolution

It is proper and normal for people suffering under any kind of oppressive structure to do their possible best through various means to get rid of the forces of oppression. In our world today, there are three general methods used to deal with oppression and the structures that bring it about. These three methods are well articulated in Martin Luther King’s article on “The Meaning of Non Violence.” They are acquiescence, violent and armed resistance and non violent resistance.

3.3.1.1 Acquiescence

This refers to the tendency to agree to an item regardless of its content. This can happen in cases where individuals and groups decide that the one and only way to respond and to deal with oppressive structures and oppressive situations is through resignation to their fate and an acceptance of the oppression and oppressive structure. It is a position that gradually becomes accustomed to the status quo and is comfortable to let things remain as they are. They would prefer not to rock the boat since the effort of changing things or of challenging the status quo is too great and the dangers very real. For people who employ the method of acquiescence in dealing with oppression the cost of change is too great and accepting the oppression is much easier. But as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) states regarding the method of acquiescence, “...It may be the easy way at times, but it is not the moral way and it is not the courageous way; it is a cowardly way for the individual who adjusts to an evil system, and he must take some of the responsibility for the perpetuation of the unjust system.”

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3.3.1.2 Violent Resistance

This is a second alternative to conflict resolution. People who are undergoing any kind of oppression could choose to rise up with armed struggles and violence as a way of dealing the violence and oppression they experience in the hands of their oppressors. Martin Luther King Jr., would argue, and rightly so, that, there may be some merit to the fact that all through history, the use of violent resistance and bloody wars have produced some of the desired results for the people who employed them. Countries have had to fight civil wars for independence or dominance, as the case may be. Be that as it may, it has to be said that whatever victory or gain that is achieved through this violent tactics is usually temporary and volatile. It never lasts and is always tainted with negative experiences and memories. Wars and violence has never brought any kind of permanent peace, they only create more social and political problems. Speaking on the issue of racial struggle in the United States of America, MLK rightly stated that, “violence in the long run in the struggle for racial justice is both impractical and immoral.”

Martin Luther King Jr., argues that perhaps the best reason why violence is impractical is because the opponents would love to see such violent resistance so that they may have the excuse to clamp down on the poor and oppressed. Violent resistance has always been used as an excuse by the oppressor to kill and imprison many innocent people. Martin Luther King tells the story of what happened in Birmingham, Alabama on the same issue: “I remember in Birmingham, Alabama, that “Bull” Connor (commissioner of Public Safety) was always happy when somebody on the sideline from the Negro Community threw rocks but he was always unhappy when we remained nonviolent. He knows how to deal with violence, but he does not know how to handle nonviolence.” Thomas Jefferson is often quoted as saying that “War is
an instrument entirely inefficient toward redressing wrong; and multiplies, instead of indemnifying losses." 187 When people become intolerant towards each other and are unable to be flexible and kind towards each other, the result is usually war. The immorality of violence and war becomes more apparent in our modern times where the tactics and weapons of war have become highly sophisticated and more deadly. The evils of war are more today than in times past when people only engaged each other with swords and sometimes it only involved two persons who represented the two opposing parties. Today, nations wage war against nations with the most brutal weapons of war. Conflict resolution has become a matter of the nuclear arms race whereby nations trying to outdo each other in acquiring the best and most destructive weapons of mass destruction.

The devastating and negative effects of the atomic bombs that destroyed two Japanese cities during the World War II are still been felt to date, with numerous people suffering terrible diseases and handicaps. Almost everything from the water to the land and air was severely poisoned and medicines have been powerless to cure the diseases caused by these dangerous chemicals and gases used during the war. All these go to prove the impracticality and immorality of war and the unrealistic philosophy of an eye for an eye. To use violence as means of achieving peace is like "...a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody, says Martin Luther King Jr." 188

This method is wrong because, contrary to the aim it hopes to achieve, it only makes enemies of our enemies when the goal should be to make them friends. MLK points out that: "it is wrong because it seeks to annihilate the opponent rather than convert him. It is wrong because it leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue." 189 When people resort to violent
means as a way to conflict resolution and in any kind of struggle, it is the future generation of children and adults that would reap the legacy of bitterness, hatred, mistrust, suspicion and volatile peace. For this reason, it is important that we continue to look for more just and moral ways of dealing with oppression and violent situations and structures. That brings us to the next approach to resolving conflicts and dealing with oppressive situations, nonviolent resistance.

3.3.1.3 Nonviolent Resistance

Gene Sharp (1973), defined nonviolence as "...a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission, and who see struggle as essential, can wage their conflict without violence. Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. It is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics, especially how to wield powers effectively." True pacifism is active nonviolence and not a passive acceptance of evil nor a violent resistance of evil. Thus, the term “active nonviolence” or “true pacifism”, from a Kingian point of view refers to a method of nonviolence that does something in action and is aimed at social change. It does not turn and run in the opposite direction, it does not result to violent tactics after trying out nonviolence methods for a while. It is rather a method that uses different nonviolent tactics and strategies on a consistent basis to achieve its aim. In an article on “The Power of Nonviolence,” (1957), King speaks about his idea of nonviolence, he said: ...“We had to make it clear that nonviolent resistance is not a method of cowardice. It does resist. It is not a method of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil that he is standing against as the violent resister but he resists without violence. This method is nonaggressive physically but strongly aggressive spiritually.”
Nonviolent action as a method of conflict resolution and of dealing with oppressive situations and structures has many merits regardless of what many skeptics might say. It is a method of those who are committed to looking for nonviolent way to resolve violent oppressive situations. It is a method that is respectful and truly concerned about the good of the opponents. As much as proponents of nonviolence wish to make their positions known, they are also mindful and empathetic to the needs of the opponents. It works hard to bring about a win-win situation. To be sure, it is a method that is available to all and that has the least likelihood of alienating the opponents and enemies alike. It is a way of protest and resistance that does not continue the vicious cycle of revenge and an eye for an eye mentality, rather it helps to break the cycle of violence and hatred and revenge. It facilitates the possibility of conversion of the enemy and making a friend out of him. The few courageous persons who have tried this nonviolent method have often had the sympathy of the press and the people. Unlike the method of violent resistance, nonviolent resistance is much more constructive and usually has positive outcomes and may be as a result of the fact that nonviolent resistance, as means of conflict resolution and dealing with oppression usually aims at higher goals and the truth of a particular situation rather than focus on having victory over the other. Most of the major religions of the world have teachings that are congruent with nonviolence and therefore, would support this method of conflict resolution over others. Martin Luther King states, speaking on the method of nonviolence, “I feel that this is the method which must guide us through this tense period of transition...I believe that nonviolence is the method that can achieve the ideals and goals and principles of the new age.”192
Nonviolence has also been taken as the basis for a way of life because it is consistent with a belief that all humans are equal in dignity and share a common parentage and as such must be kind and loving to each other.

The fundamental basis for the practice of nonviolent action is the love of every human person while at the same time decrying the negative and inhuman behavior in him. It is something like what Jesus Christ did in loving the sinner while working on the individual person and on society to eradicate human and social evils. Thus, for King, to treat any human being as less than what they really are, that is, persons endowed with dignity inalienable rights is to do violence to their dignity as persons. What this nonviolent stance means by extension, at least for King, is that, activists must never consider any human being as an enemy, a theme he inherited from Gandhi. He rather advocated that they be considered as opponents. King teaches that opponents must always considered as persons created by God and endowed with dignity and rights. It means that, no matter how seeming or actually evil a person may appear, we must, in our own minds have love and compassion for them. That presupposes a fundamental psychological and spiritual metanoia that enables the one who practices nonviolence to believe in the goodness of every person, granted they may also have the capacity for evil. Human persons must be seen and treated as persons and not as things, following the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber.

3.4 Means and Ends in King’s Philosophy

In his Christmas sermon delivered in 1967 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, King gave voice to the topic of means and ends in his philosophy of nonviolent action. For King, the philosophy of nonviolent action is the affirmation that means must be as pure as the end.
Speaking on the topic of peace in relation to war, King states that: "...if we are to have peace in the world, men and nations must embrace the nonviolent affirmation that ends and means must cohere." The relationship between question of means and ends has dominated philosophical debates for years. There are those who believe that the end justifies the means and that means are not so important as long as we get to the desired end. It is not important whether the means are violent or not, whether they are just and truthful or not, as long as we get to the end of the pursuit, that’s all that matters. King would disagree totally with this way of thinking. He said that "...we will never have peace in the world until men everywhere recognize that ends are not cut off from means, because the means represent the ideal in the making, and the end in process, and ultimately you can’t reach good ends through evil means, because the means represent the seed and the end represents the tree." King laments the rather strange paradox that all the great people of the world have talked about peace. The conquerors of old who killed in the pursuit of peace; people like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, all sought a peaceful world order. Even Hitler, says King, claimed that he was fighting for peace. Leaders of nations speak about peace while at the same time dropping bombs on other nations. There was a contradiction here as far as King was concerned. There is no way we can attain a distant goal of peace by waging wars in the present. For King, peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, rather, it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. As he states: "We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means. All of this is saying that, in the final analysis, means and ends must cohere because the end is preexistent in the means, and ultimately destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends."

When trying to understand King’s moral high ground regarding the relationship between means and ends, one has to bear in mind the totality of his spirituality, personality and
philosophy guiding his nonviolent campaign. King does not set out merely to achieve proximate goals alone. Rather, his aim was to transform, in a fundamental way, the American society of his time. He had in mind, as the end result of the nonviolent method he advocated, a just, peaceful, moral and humane community; the Beloved Community.

3.5 King’s Spiritual Action for Social and Economic Justice

King tried to avoid the dichotomy between the sacred and secular, spirituality and activism and for this reason, his found a way to marry the two in a dynamic, holistic, unified and integrated spiritual activism that so many have come to find most appealing in the world today. For instance, through King’s involvement in the defense of Rosa Park who refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery Alabama bus, the black church and its leadership became also involved and this acted as an impetus for the black church coming out of its restricted confines to organize and rally blacks and some white supporters for a mass bus boycott that led to the end of the black segregationist bus laws. This blend of Christian spirituality and active resistance was replicated all over the United States of America and was very effective in ending unjust laws of segregation against blacks.

3.6 Spiritual Trends in King’s Philosophy and Strategy of Nonviolent Action

In articulating his philosophy of nonviolent action, one observes how King’s spirituality, strategy and methodology merge into one unified system. The idea to put down in writing, the philosophy that guided his Christian active nonviolent approach came after a reflection on the success of the Montgomery movement. His philosophy was at the same time a reflection of his spirituality and a methodology of nonviolence that is still applicable and often recommended for every kind peace Movements in the contemporary world. In his book, Stride Toward Freedom
(1958), King outlines his philosophy of nonviolent action. These fundamental principles were developed along six lines as follows:

First, nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it is active in its resistance of evil. To use nonviolence as merely a tool and because one lacks the courage to be violent does not make one nonviolent. Following the Gandhian philosophy, King advised that "if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight." Nonviolence is only for the strong and no one should be fooled by the phrase "passive resistance" as if this is a sort of "do-nothing-method" in which one quietly accepts evil out of fear.

Gandhi's advice to choose violence if the choice was only between cowardice and violence might seem to some as contradicting his spirituality and philosophy as a champion of nonviolent action but when considers that to choose cowardice is to encourage the status quo of injustice and inhuman treatment of the poor by the oppressor and unjust institutions, then perhaps the choice of violence becomes not so bad after-all. As Gandhi admitted, "The world is not entirely governed by logic. Life itself involves some kind of violence and we have to choose the path of least violence." While declaring that he would risk violence a thousand times rather than risk the emasculation of a whole race, Gandhi also emphasized his belief in nonviolence as being infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness as more manly than punishment.

King's brand of nonviolent action is an active force that is totally involved even in the face of danger, imprisonment and even death. There is no place for cowardice or even weakness in the kind of nonviolence he taught. His belief was that, if in the face of danger or oppression, a person chooses to use violent means as a counter-force, it is to be preferred to
cowardice since there is always hope that even the violent person may one day become nonviolent. It is not the same for a cowardly person. King’s position of advocating violence as a better choice to cowardice is totally a reflection of his Christian faith which encourages its adherents to willing and courageously face danger; even death as long as they were on the side of truth and right. In the Beatitudes, the Christian is called “Blessed” who accepts suffering and persecution for the sake of righteousness.  

Second, nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must use the methods of noncooperation or boycotts to express his protest while at the same time realizing that these are only means and not ends in themselves; the goal is redemption, reconciliation and the building of the beloved community. In this we also see King’s spirituality shining forth. His belief in not humiliating or defeating the opponent is in line with the spirituality of Isaiah in the Christian Scripture where it was said of God’s servant, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice…”

Third, nonviolence is directed “against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by evil.” As far as King was concerned, the “opponent” was not the human person but the ideas, structures and institutions that were unjust and oppressive. The evildoers were victims of evil as much as were the oppressed. In this thinking, King echoes St. Paul’s admonition that our struggle is ultimately not against particular people but systems—“the principalities and powers.”
Fourth, the nonviolent resister is willing to accept violence if necessary and without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back. King quotes Gandhi as saying that: “Rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom, but it must be our blood.”\textsuperscript{202} In line with his Christian spirituality and conviction, King taught that while one disturbed the peace through noncooperation and boycott, one must be ready to “turn the other cheek” and accept blows and insults, and even death without the desire to retaliate. Herein lies the difficulty and true test of the spirituality and method of active nonviolence. Christian doctrine teaches that suffering could be redemptive; a doctrine that King believed and also propounded. “Unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.”\textsuperscript{203} While it may seem unreasonable for anyone to have to endure such blows and imprisonment for standing up for justice and what they believed was right, King would admonish that: “Things of fundamental importance to people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering.”\textsuperscript{204}

Fifth, nonviolent resister avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The basis of such internal and external purity regarding violence towards the opponent is agape love. The nonviolent resister, in addition to not shooting the opponent, must also not hate him. The oppressed people of the world, in their struggle for human dignity and justice, must resist the temptation to become bitter and indulge in hate campaigns. The chain of hate has to be broken and it becomes incumbent on the nonviolent resister to practice non-retaliation with the ethic of love as the central and guiding principle.

When King uses the word “agape love” as the center of his nonviolent philosophy, he tried to distance it from a mere sentimental or affectionate emotion. “Love in this connection
means understanding, redemptive goodwill." To understand this further, King refers to the various understandings of love in Greek language. The Greek language is rich in synonyms; its words usually have various shades of meaning which are not found in the English language. In Greek there are three different words for love, according to King, and he discusses these words in their relation to his Christian spirituality as follows:

(a) The first Greek word for love, according to King, is *eros*, with its accompanying verb *eran*. These words describe the love of a man for a woman. It is passionate and sexual in nature. These words are not essentially bad, they simply describe the passion of human love.

(b) The second Greek word to describe love is *philia* with its accompanying verb *philein*. They describe real love, real affection. It is the love of a friend to another friend. "It is warm, tender affection, the highest kind of love."

(c) The third Greek word used for love is *agape* with its accompanying verb *agapan*. These words describe a love that is unconquerable, benevolent, invincible goodwill. To have agape love for someone means that "no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he or she treats us, no matter the kind of insults and injuries we suffer from such a person, we will never allow any bitterness to invade our hearts against that person. Rather we would regard such a person with that unconquerable benevolence and the goodwill which will seek nothing but the person's highest good." 

According to King, it is the agape kind of love that Jesus Christ exhorts his followers to have for their enemies. Followers of Jesus Christ are not expected to love their enemies in the
same way as they love their nearest and dearest. To love one's enemies with the kind of affection one has for one's nearest and dearest would be impossible and unrealistic. Love of enemies involves both the action of the heart as well as the will, especially the will. We have to will ourselves into loving our enemies since loving them from the heart does not come to us naturally. With such a practice of agape, it is possible to love those we do not like and who may not like us either. The power to love a person we do not like can be beyond us often and that is where Christ’s Spirit enables us and lifts us above our natural tendencies to anger and to bitterness to the point of having this invincible goodwill to all people.208

Often times many critics look on Christian nonviolence as mere passivism whereby a person simply accepts passively whatever evils that presents itself. It is probably for this reason that many who have committed their lives to working for change and justice in the world simply dismiss Jesus' teachings about nonviolence as impractical idealism. One cannot blame such people who think like this because to "turn the other cheek" suggests a kind of passivism whereby a Christian becomes a doormat for everyone to walk over. It is precisely because of such a passive quality that has made so many Christians cowardly and complicit in the face of injustice. To take a position of nonviolence towards evil and oppressive situations is not to counsel submission to the status quo, neither is it to advocate a retaliatory violent approach. So what precisely did Jesus mean by to “turn the other cheek?”

For King, Christian agape love is not an invitation to be complacent with the evils of others. It does not mean that we allow people to turn us into their carpet without us putting up any kind of resistance. To regard a person with unconquerable benevolence and an invincible goodwill is to love the person and hate the evil that he or she does. It is to resist and consciously
take measures to overcome the evil without developing any kind of bitterness and hatred for the person. It is only when the Christian has such a love for enemies that Christ's teaching about turning the other cheek begins to be bearable. Turning the other cheek is not what naturally comes to us as humans. To love the enemy and to turn the other cheek is not to accept the evil or to run away from it. Jesus was not telling his oppressed hearers not to resist evil. His entire ministry was at odds with such a ludicrous idea. He was, rather, warning against responding to evil in kind by letting the oppressor set the terms of our opposition. A proper translation of Jesus' teaching would then be, "do not retaliate against violence with violence." Jesus was very committed to opposing evil as much as the nationalists and Zealots of his time.

King describes agape as disinterested love. It does not seek its own good but the good of his neighbor. Agape springs from the need of the other person. This was what Scott Appleby alluded to in his book, "The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation," when he spoke about how religious actors could positively impact peacemaking and peace-building. As he puts it:

Religious actors need to utilize their faith-based dynamics within a broader spectrum of peacemaking and peace-building. The idea of the religious peace-builder is to bring the resources and riches of their faith to a more ecumenical, religious-secular, community-wide effort, rather than campaigning primarily for their own faith.\(^{209}\)

Furthermore, Agape is redemptive love and it is not a weak, passive love. It is love in action. It is a willingness to sacrifice in the interest of mutuality and does its best to restore community. Agape means, a recognition of the fact that all life is interrelated. Agape love, says King, is the only cement that can hold a broken community together.\(^{210}\)
Sixth, nonviolent resistance is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. "The believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future," King writes. Here, as every other place in his life and work, King's spirituality and religious convictions shine out. He was a man of deep faith and also admonished that the nonviolent resister be a person of deep faith because in difficult times, it is this faith in the future and that God was with his cause that carries him through. King acknowledges that there are true believers in nonviolence who found it difficult to believe in a personal God but even such persons still believe in some creative force that works for universal wholeness, it doesn't matter what name we choose to call this creative force. Thus, King anchored the whole of his philosophy, theology and nonviolent strategy on this hope.

These core principles explain why, for King, nonviolent action was "the morally excellent way." As he boldly expanded his campaign from Montgomery to Atlanta, Albany and eventually Birmingham, these principles guided his every move and decisions. He also articulated four basic steps of nonviolent action that must be applied in the actual implementation of any protest action. They are worth our consideration:

3.7 King's Four Basic Steps for Strategic Action

In his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) outlined four basic steps that must be observed before any nonviolent campaign can be carried out. They are: 1. Collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; 2. negotiation; 3. self purification; and 4. direct action.
Collection of Facts: This involves an assessment of the situation and an effort to understand the current state of affairs; it also assesses where the situation ought to be and all of the available options to move from the current situation to where the situation should be.

Negotiation: This involves sticking to and following the standard process of making change. This negotiation should be carried out with both external as well as internal parties.

Self Purification: “This step is the most vital to ensure that further actions for change are positive. Self-purification is “an internal acknowledgment that personal sacrifices are needed for the sake of progress.” Dr. King warned against skipping this step, since to do so could prevent the nonviolent resister from potentially acting with sincerity and love. It involves the setting of expectations that one’s direct actions may cause one pain and suffering, but one still must act with only sincerity and love. Often when this step is skipped, the natural reaction is to act with negative emotions and destructive actions ensue.” Self-purification is the cleansing of anger, selfishness and violent attitudes from the heart and soul in preparation for a nonviolent struggle. This step is so important such that King referred to it as the most important step. It is a fundamental aspect of King’s concept of active resistance and civil disobedience. The practice is deeply spiritual and philosophical and it is not simply ideological. This is an important distinction as it differentiates this type of action from other forms of ideological or revolutionary behavior. Self-purification involves a spiritual dimension, in fact, it could be said to highlight an aspect of King’s spirituality and it is clear to see how spirituality and strategic nonviolent action come together in King’s version of nonviolent resistance. The fourth step is:

Direct Action: This step comes after a thorough self examination and purification of motives and intentions in order to make sure that direct action is undertaken with sincerity of heart and knowledge that there are times in life when not to take action becomes more dangerous.
2.8 Influence of Christian Spirituality on King’s Political Nonviolent Philosophy

Dr. King’s nonviolent political philosophy was deeply influenced by his Christian spirituality to the extent that every aspect of his nonviolent philosophy, political involvement and nonviolent civil disobedience strategies was infused with Christian ethics and morals. His spirituality inspired his views and drives to uphold the values of democracy, freedom, public good, personal responsibility and empowerment.

King’s approach to prayer showed him to be a practical theologian and reflected his wishes and desires for justice, equality and peace in America and the world. Some of such desires were presented in the section of his book, “Thou O God.” His prayers showed him as a man who sought inner and outer peace and total commitment to God and human persons. One of such prayers is as follows:

“God grant that right here in America and all over this world, we will choose the high way; a way in which men will live together as brother, a way in which the nations of the world will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, a way in which every man will respect the dignity and worth of all human personality, a way in which every nation will allow justice to run down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream, a way in which men will do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. A way in which men will be able to stand up, and in the midst of oppression, in the midst of darkness and agony, they will be able to stand there and love their enemies, bless those persons that curse them, pray for those individuals that despitely use them.”

For King, as should be for any sensible human person, Racism is against everything that the Christian religion stands for because the Christian faith is all about lifting the human person from his fallen nature and restoring divine and human communion. King taught one basic fact: “that we should esteem all of God’s children regardless of color, that we should honor God’s image wherever and in whomever we find it. As we uphold King’s memory today we should view his task as incomplete as long as we devalue, obscure, or ignore the image in others. If we
cannot see Christ in all, then we will not see Christ at all. King said as much in his close of Paul’s imaginary letter to American Christians: “As gospel of John says, ‘God is love.’ He who loves is a participant in the being of God. He who hates does not know God.” King used his Christian spirituality to anchor his words and deeds on nonviolent action. He became the spiritual and political voice of African Americans, rallying supporters to his side in a flurry of appearances and demonstrations demanding social and political change.

King’s deep Christian spirituality and convictions led him to hold fast to the belief that justice would eventually prevail for the African American community. He called people to be brave and stand up and unite in the just cause of nonviolent resistance. His fundamental belief in the Christian moral ethics was unshakeable and informed all his work and struggles for social and economic justice for the oppressed of America. Against oppositions to his method of nonviolence and reconciliation with the oppressors, and advice from other black activists of his time; Malcolm X being one of such, King’s spiritual values kept him steadfast to his nonviolent approach. King held firmly to the belief, in line with Jesus and Gandhi, the spiritual truth expressed in many of the world’s religions that hate can only ever be truly overcome and extinguished by the practice of love, mercy and forgiveness. Prior to reading Gandhi’s religious and political perspectives on nonviolence, King had just about given up on the ethics of Jesus regarding the notion of love as the only way to true conflict resolution. He saw such ethics as only good in individual relationships. The ‘turn the other cheek’ philosophy, and ‘the love your enemies’ philosophy, were only valid in inter-personal relationship, between individuals; when racial groups and countries were in conflict, violence seemed a more realistic approach. But after reading Gandhi, he saw differently. He came to understand the power in nonviolent action and that only the principle of love as reflected in Gandhi’s Ahimsa could secure justice and lasting
peace in any oppressive situation. This understanding was a decisive turning point for King and he remained with it for the rest of his life.

For King, nonviolence was not just a practical tactic, it was not just a strategy for conflict resolution, it was a religious duty commanded by God. He believed in the ethical teachings of Jesus that only unconditional love mattered. As pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, King always taught that religious people are people who strive to obey God; if people of faith want to worship God and seek God's ways, they must renounce every trace of violence and complicity in systemic injustice, and overcome violence with active love and truth, by insisting on justice and peace. This is the only way to break the spiral of violence by inserting the spiritual presence of love and truth yet refusing to retaliate with further violence. For King, nonviolence is neither passive nor sterile but active and provocative. James Washington (1986: 224), in his book, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, quotes King as saying: "For myself, nonviolence means simply remembering who we are—all brothers and sisters; all of us equal; all of us sons and daughters of the God of peace; all of us created to love and serve our God and one another in that spirit of justice, peace and compassion. It maintains that all life is sacred; that everyone is redeemable; and the world has been created according to the law of nonviolence."

Furthermore, says King, "From this basic truth about the interconnectedness of human life flows our lifelong service to the poor, dedication to justice, resistance to evil, compassion for all, and worship of God. We could never hurt or kill another human being, much less remain silent in the face of nuclear weapons or widespread starvation. We love one another. For Christians, Jesus is the incarnation of the God of nonviolence. He serves the needy, heals the sick..."
and lives a contemplative nonviolence that pushes him to resist every form of violence. Like Gandhi marching to the sea, Jesus walks to Jerusalem on a campaign of revolutionary nonviolence where he turns over the tables of the money changers in the Temple in an act of peaceful civil disobedience, only to be arrested, jailed, tried, tortured and executed. But the community testifies that God raised him up and that he invited his followers to take up that same journey of nonviolent resistance, even to the point of death and resurrection. In line with King’s views on nonviolence and the resistance of violence and oppression, Walter Wink (1992:149) lays out the Christian attitude towards religion and war as follows:

The God whom Jesus reveals refrains from all forms of reprisal and demands no victims. God does not endorse holy wars or just wars or religions of violence. Only by being driven out by violence could God signal to humanity that the divine is nonviolent and is antithetical to the Kingdom of Violence...Jesus message reveals that those who believe in divine violence are still mired in Satan’s universe. To be this God’s offspring requires the unconditional and unilateral renunciation of violence. The reign of God means the complete and definitive elimination of every form of violence between individuals and nations.

All through his life, King experienced much violence to his person and family. His house was bombed in 1956 after the successful Montgomery bus boycott protesting the arrest of Rosa Parks and the segregationist laws in America, he was stabbed in the chest by a woman in 1958, his family received death threats. Despite all of the violence to his life and his family’s life, King never thought of retaliating or responding with violence. In 1956, when his house was bombed, many angry young African men had surrounded his house with the police barricading the area, yet when King got to the scene, the first thing he did was to check to see whether his wife and baby were okay. After confirming this, he came out and spoke to the angry African men who were brandishing guns and others kinds of weapons, he told them to calm down and not to hurt anyone and that Christianity exhorted them to love their enemies. His Christian beliefs told him
that violence and hatred could only be conquered by love and forgiveness. King held on to the convictions of his Christian spirituality which taught him to be tolerant, humane, egalitarian and unprejudiced. King’s Christian spirituality and message was totally contrary to the Christian message propounded by the far-right wings of the American South. They had distorted and manipulated the Christian message to fit in with their racist and oppressive practices and beliefs. King’s overriding passion was that black and white races should join together as one beneath a progressive, all-embracing Christian love for God and one another.

3.9 Importance of Spiritual Discipline: A Conceptual Approach

In the practice of nonviolent action for social transformation, the need for spirituality cannot be over-emphasized. In acquiring and growing in spiritual strength and wisdom there is need for the practice of spiritual discipline and this cuts across every religious and spiritual tradition. King, though guided by his Christian spiritual tradition and training, was a man of strong spiritual discipline. We shall take up the discussion on King’s spiritual discipline later; but first, a more conceptual discussion of spiritual discipline would suffice at this point.

3.10 What is Spiritual Discipline?

The term “spiritual discipline” connotes many things for various people, and a lot also depends on the meaning and understanding of spirituality for every spiritual or religious tradition. For some, spiritual disciplines evoke the idea of suffering and punishment in order to achieve certain spiritual benefits and strength. In many cases, spiritual discipline actually does involve some amount of suffering and punishment, although that is the primary intention of the exercise.
According to the second edition of the Encyclopedia of Religion, the word discipline could derive from one of two ways. On the one hand, it could derive from the Latin *discere*, “to learn,” and in this sense, it could be related to the English word *disciple*, “one who follows the instructions of a teacher.” However, the word *Discere* itself is a reflection of the Indo-European root “dek- (“take, accept”), and this is also found in the English words like *decent, docent, docile, dogma, and dogmatic; doctrine, doctor* (“one who teaches doctrine”), and thus indoctrinate. On the other hand, the word could derive from the Latin disciples, “pupil,” from *discapere,* “to grasp,” in the sense of “to take hold of mentally” and thus to understand. \(^{219}\)

Mahony (1987), in the Encyclopedia of Religion, describes the art of being disciplined as,

to be caught up by the teachings of a guide—whether that guide be a person, an ethic, a community, a historical tradition, or a set of ideas—and to organize one’s behavior and attitude according to those teachings. The person who undertakes such discipline may be understood, then, to be a disciple of that which is felt to be true, a captive of that which is valuable. Religious traditions do not tend to view this as “punishment.” Rather, they generally stress the notion that this very captivity allows one to become who he or she really is, or really could be. As Zen Buddhists have long noted, one is most free when one is most disciplined. \(^{220}\)

Following from Mahony’s understanding of what it means to be disciplined, it is possible to locate the place of discipline in every religious, spiritual and ideological tradition. Spiritual discipline has been a *sine qua non* for anyone in any religious traditions that longs for a transformative experience or complete understanding of themselves. This is particularly true of anyone intending to engage in any kind of social action for change. To be able to find the right kind of self-discipline, there is a need to for one to find a teacher or set of teachings, ideas or set of values to help and guide them in finding the right spiritual discipline and path. When the seeker or religious disciple finds the right guide, he or she then is obliged to practice various regimens that will help him or her along the way to self-transformation and spiritual strength. A person seeking to discipline himself through the guidance of a teacher of moral principles is one
who has come to the realization that what he or she has is not sufficient and that there is always room to become more human and humane, always more capacity to aspire to the ideal of humanness. That is why, as Mahony states, that:

Images of such discipline, therefore, often include themes of movement or passage. Mahayana Buddhists describe the spiritual endeavor *bodhicaryavatara*, “entering the path to enlightenment”; Jewish traditions speak of religious norms as *halakhah*, “the way to go”; and traditional Hindu literatures outline the three sacred “paths,” *marga*, of proper action, proper meditation, and proper devotion. Not infrequently, religious systems refer to the sacred cosmos as a whole with terms meaning “the Way,” like the Chinese *dao*.221

Spiritual discipline often differs from one religious tradition to another. Much depends on the emphasis and worldview each tradition believes and teaches. For some, it may be the attainment of enlightenment, for others, it is the movement from being to non-being, from self to non-self; it may be personal or impersonal. Whatever the spiritual practice or discipline, reaching the ideal set by each religion is usually the goal. The important thing to bear in mind is that, spiritual discipline is necessary if the seeker is to make any kind of progress in the spiritual life, and indeed, in life generally. Patience is also a very important element of spiritual discipline. The seeker of spiritual perfection must learn to be patient as that is in itself part of the discipline. He must listen and follow the instructions of his spiritual guide. As the Sufi mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi said: “whoever travels without a guide needs two hundred years for a two day’s journey.”222

3.11 Varieties of Spiritual Discipline

There are various types of spiritual disciplines and the difference between them is delineated by the kind of spiritual guide the disciple chooses to follow. The type of relationship that exists between the two is also different from one tradition to the other. Even with a particular religious tradition, the styles of spiritual guides and disciplines might differ. Mahony states that
when spiritual discipline is understood in a general way, “the different kinds of spiritual discipline may be understood as heteronomous, autonomous, or interactive in nature.”

Sometimes it might happen that individual disciplines and particular religious tradition might make use of a combination of two or all three. What does Mahony mean by these three terms? We shall take up the answer to this question in what follows.

3.11.1 Heteronomous Discipline

In this type of discipline, there is a submission of the will of the disciple to the authority of the master or spiritual guide. This authority may be personal or impersonal in nature but what is important here is that the disciple recognizes the central and complete authority of the teacher or master and willingly submits to obeying and carrying out all the instructions and guidelines of the teacher. The disciple serves the teacher as is found in the case of the Chan Buddhist who willingly sweeps the floor and does all kinds of domestic and farm chores for the teacher. The same can be found among the orthodox Hindu who has to obey the social regulations prescribed by the Dharmasastras. The Islamic traditions, says Mahony, bears a good example of heteronomous discipline. He states that:

Muslims repeatedly hear in the Qur’an the notion that a person’s sole purpose in life is to serve the will of God (Allah) by cultivating his or her potential in accordance with God’s “command” (amr). This submission (islam) to God is the purpose for which God sends through prophets and revealed literatures the divine “guidance” (hidayah). The central revelation, the Qur’an, describes itself as an invitation to come to the right path (hudan li- nal-nas) and is the source of the Islamic sacred law (shari’ah, literally “the way to the water hole,” an appropriate image for spiritual travelers in a desert region). Islamic tradition notes that examples of such guiding laws include what is known as fard or wajib—those duties and actions all Muslims must obey, such as daily prayer (salat), almsgiving (zakat), and fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (sawm).

The prophet Muhammad is a perfect example under the heteronomous discipline because it was said that he had heard the sacred instructions from divine teachers and obeyed those
instructions to the letter. He recited the Qur'an to the community in obedience to the instructions of the divine teachers.

In Islamic mystical traditions, it is the prerequisite of the disciple seeking union with God to first seek out a spiritual guide known in Arabic as shaykh. The Shaykh or teacher guides the disciple, known in Arabic as Murid, which means, “one who wishes to enter through the stages of the spiritual journey.” The Murid lives with Shaykh, who comes to know his disciple at very intimate levels, in the words of Mahony. The student is expected to reveal his innermost life to the teacher who then guides and advises on how to move toward perfection. The teacher or Shaykh works hard at carefully keeping the student in the right path and attentive to his or her spiritual duties and instructions. In the end, the teacher is able to bring the student through the difficult stages of spiritual disciplines and points the way to fana, a stage in which the disciple lets go of all human imperfections and attains the quality of divinity and holiness.

3.11.2 Autonomous Discipline

This is the opposite of the heteronomous approach to spiritual discipline. It is the kind of discipline whereby the teacher or guide actually lives in the disciple, not in a human way, but rather as ideologies and moral instructions. Unlike the heteronomous model whereby the teacher is outside of and physically present to the disciple, in the autonomous model of spiritual discipline, the teacher lives in the very depths of the disciple’s being, constantly teaching, guiding, disturbing and instructing the disciple unto the path of self-discovery and eventually, freedom and holiness.

The Gautama’s journey and path to enlightenment would be a good example of the autonomous model of spiritual discipline. It is said that, having lived a protected and comfortable life in his father’s secure palace, the Gautama, on encountering the outside world, was
overwhelmed by the suffering and pain he witnessed in the lives of the poor people and this created a hunger and thirst in him to understand the nature of life and to know the full truth. After living his father’s care, he sought wisdom and understanding as a wandering ascetic. He eventually found two respected teachers who he believed had all the answers to the nature of things and life in the world but soon left them to continue his personal search for the truth. It was his opinion that people did not know the full truth and he refused to accept the teachings of other persons.

In his spiritual search for the truth and understanding, Gautama, it is said, passed through four stages of meditation known in Pali as jhana. Each stage led him deeper into an understanding of the nature of suffering. At the end of his long journey of meditation, he gained enlightenment and this he achieved all alone without the help of an external teacher. The understandings he came away with after his meditation and enlightenment were, (1) that all conditioned existence is permeated by suffering; (2) that there is a cause of suffering (namely, desire); (3) that there is a way to end suffering (namely, to cease desiring); and (4) that the way to cease desiring is to follow a set of principles that is today known as the Eight Noble Path. According to Buddhist tradition, Gautama gained enlightenment through his own efforts and this they contend was because, prior to his achieving complete understanding, no one else had a complete knowledge of the truth until Gautama found it and became the Buddha through his personal search and meditation. He even admonished his disciples and anyone who would follow his teachings not to do so without questioning them. As Mahony notes the Buddha’s encouragement to others that, “as wise people test gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it, so are you also to accept my teachings only after examining them and not simply out of loyalty to me” (Jhanasara-samuccaya).
3.11.3 Interactive Discipline

In this model of spiritual discipline, the teacher is neither totally external nor totally internal to the disciple. There is room for interactive flexibility between student and teacher; teaching and learning is a continuous process of interactive sessions. It is a dialectical kind of spiritual discipline of self-discovery that leads to understanding and transformation. The internal desires, cultural orientation, general worldview of the disciple is acknowledged and respected and is balanced by the external authority of the teacher, tradition, and structures of the natural world, according to Mahony. There are no absolute authoritative commands and instructions without regard for the internal dispositions of the teacher and student.

The best examples of the interactive model of discipline could be found among artists, sculptors, musicians, and those in the fine arts. They constantly have to learn from their mistakes and by so doing, are able to arrive at the ideal that they seek. As Mahony puts it, “…the disciple undergoes experiences in which the ideal is made real through his or her own creative power, but that ideal itself determines the form in which the disciple can make it real. Not only is there disciplined action; there is also a cultivated interaction between the disciple and discipline itself. Interactive discipline involves attentive selflessness says Mahony.

According to Mahony, the three types of spiritual discipline, that is, the heteronomous, autonomous and Interactive models could either be taken individually or together. They are not mutually exclusive of each other. We shall now take a look at Mahony’s characterization of methods or modes of spiritual discipline.

3.12 Modes of Spiritual Discipline

In discussing the modes of spiritual discipline, Mahony begins with a broad categorization of the different kinds of ways in which discipline is actually practiced within the
three spiritual discipline approaches just mentioned above. They are: ecstatic discipline, constructive discipline, discipline of the body, discipline of the mind, discipline of the heart, and discipline of enduring personal relationships.

3.12.1 Ecstatic Discipline

This mode is very Platonic in its outlook in the sense that, it considers any form of spiritual ideal to be outside of the realm of human beings. It could lie in the other worlds, in the ocean bed, in the mountains or in the heavens. In order to reach it and be united to it, the disciple must adopt practices that would enable him or her to leave the human realm and be transported spiritually in to the other realms where connection could be made with the really Real. It is believed that the body is like a prison and very confining to the spirit and as such, the spirit has to cultivate practices that liberate the spirit from the body, a sort of “out of the body experience.” This kind of state of being able to leave the body is known as the “ecstasy.” This understanding of the place of the body and spirit in relation to the Ultimate Truth and Reality is present in every religion.

The actual practice of ecstatic spiritual discipline often includes the disciple depriving himself or herself of normal pleasures of the body. It could begin with a retreat into a secluded place where distractions are minimal. Then there is much fasting and meditation, reading of scripture and other esoteric practices. All the time the disciple is under the guidance of a master or teacher. The experience often ends with a sort of vision or ecstasy in which the seeker or disciple is visited by a guardian spirit and this leads to transformation of sorts. There is the idea of death and resurrection involved in the whole process. The seeker dies to self and the desires of the flesh and the world and rises with an inner transformation. Examples of such practices could
be found among the Shamanic traditions of Africa, the North American Indian, especially during an initiation into a Shamanic cult.

3.12.2 Constructive Discipline

In this mode of discipline, the disciple is guided into cultivating the already present and inherent virtues that reside in him. There is the acknowledgement of the negative dimensions of the human person but the focus of the discipline is not so much to put down these negative aspects of the human person, rather, it is to build up, develop and perfect the positive and good dimensions of the person. Sometimes, such constructive discipline could simply involve the repetition of a particular ritual in exactly the same way that it was practiced by the gods or the ancestors. Mahony alludes to this while writing about the Verdic Indian ritual. As he says:

"Such constructive discipline often takes the form of personal imitation of a paradigmatic figure or figures who are said to embody desirable qualities or to have undertaken beneficial actions. Many times, therefore, such discipline takes the form of the correct performance of a ritual. "we do here what the gods did in the beginning," the priests report while explaining why they officiate at the sacred rites of Verdic India."228

Constructive discipline, says Mahony, also appears in systems, whether religious or not, which assume that the seeker is already endowed with inherent qualities, albeit dormant, and which could be actualized with the help of a teacher and wise guide. The Christian religion is a good example of this kind of constructive discipline, contends Mahoney. He writes about the comments of the fifteenth-century monk, Thomas a Kempis:

Be faithful imitators of Jesus, and perfect imitators of Mary,"... "Be simple, like the simple children of God, without deception, without envy, without criticism, without murmuring, and without suspicion."229
3.12.3 Discipline of the Body

Closely related to the Ecstatic discipline is the discipline of the body and the relatedness is seen in the fact that both modes of discipline have a rather unsavory view of the human body. The human body in this mode is seen as a hindrance to spiritual progress and growth. In most religious traditions the body is often seen as always wanting pleasure and strives to please its own senses and this is a distraction for the spirit. In order to bring the body and its desires under control, there is need for spiritual practices that act as disciplines to the body.

The Christian religion once more comes to mind at this point as it has a history of such views of the body and the need to discipline it. In the Christian monastic tradition, the monk is expected to live an austere life in order to tame the senses and practice the way of perfection. As Mahony notes, “The life of a monk should always be as if Lent were being observed” even though “few people have the fortitude to do so.”

Mahony also pointed that in India, the rajayoga tradition, in particular, the Patanjali’s Yoga strain, also gives a good instance of the discipline of the body. The tradition stipulates eight steps to complete autonomy and is known as the “eight-limbed discipline.” The steps are (1) the restraint, from telling lies, stealing, abstinence from sexual contact and avoidance from envy of other people’s possessions. This is known as (yama); (2) niyama, comprised of the five traditional spiritual practices, cleanliness, mental equanimity, asceticism, scriptural study, and devotion to a master; (3) Mastering the various limber body postures that strengthen the body against the difficulties imposed by an ascetic life and practice. This is known as asamas. (4) Breath Control (pranayama) which is a practice in the control of the respiratory apparatus of the body for long stretches of time; (5) Withdrawal of all senses from their objects in an enstatic process known as pratyahara. To achieve this, the disciple has to practice the focusing of all his
attention on a particular object and disregarding every kind of distraction; (6) dharana, which is the training of the mind in the art of concentration. It is similar to the fifth stage in that it involves the practice of focusing and mind control; (7) dhyana. This involves deep meditation that predisposes the disciple to experience the divine light of the Absolute; and (8) Samadhi, which is the stage where the discipline brings the disciple to actualization of the whole spiritual exercise. The disciple understands pure being and knows total happiness and is set free from suffering and attachments.232

3.12.4 Discipline of the Mind

Mahony then moves on to discuss the discipline of the mind which, according to many religious traditions, needs to be brought under control just like the body. This is because, the mind, like the body, acts as a hindrance for the spirit and in order to set the spirit free from the prison of the mind and body. The mind often goes the way of analysis and this is not very helpful for the ways of the spirit. There is a need to break down concepts and categories which the mind usually creates to describe and define things and experiences. In Christian mystical tradition for instance, the via negative was a method that was employed to breakdown the categories built up by the human mind. It was the way of “unknowing” whereby the Absolute or Ultimate Reality is approached from the perspective of openness and non-clinging. This takes conscious practice and awareness of the mind’s tendencies to create categories and a willingness on the part of the seeker or disciples to work against these tendencies so that transcendence can be achieved.
3.12.5 Discipline of the Heart

This is a spiritual discipline practiced by many religious traditions. It involves having the understanding that love is all that matters and that everything that is real comes from and goes back to love. It is in loving and striving to steep everything in love that one comes closer to the truth and the Ultimate Reality. According to Mahony,

The cultivation of those attitudes and actions that help one see and know that love may therefore be called the discipline of the heart."...The Cistercian monks of the twelfth century Europe tended to see the religious quest as an ongoing apprenticeship in the ways of love. In his sermons on the Song of Songs, Bernard of Clairvaux urged his readers to remember that "when God loves, he wants nothing else than to be loved; for he loves for no other purpose than that he may be loved, knowing that those who love him are blessed by that very love" (83.4) 233

The more a disciple practiced the discipline of the heart, the more he or she is drawn deeper and deeper into the mystery of divine love; in this is to be found spiritual perfection.

3.12.6 Discipline of Enduring Personal Relationships

The idea in this spiritual discipline involves the observation of principles that serve to uphold the relationship between the human community and the deity or to maintain important familial and other interpersonal bonds.234 Mahony locates the Jewish tradition of mitzvah, which means ‘commandment,’ in this mode of discipline. The Ten Commandments and other Instructions given to the people of Israel by God was meant to establish a relationship between the two parties. A person seeking spiritual growth must discipline himself or herself in the keeping of these terms of the relationship. Such a relationship can also be found in the Hindu notion of varnasramadharma, the sacred duties determined by one’s vocation and stage of life, says Mahony.235

Through all of these modes and aspects of spiritual discipline, Mahony paints a conceptual picture of spiritual discipline. These kinds, the heteronomous, autonomous and
interactive spiritual disciplines, coupled with the modes in which they are expressed can be found in most religious and spiritual traditions of the world. They are indispensable for anyone seeking spirituality and anyone involved in any kind of peace movement or civil disobedience. The reason for this is that, through spiritual discipline, a person is schooled in all the virtues and capacities that are needed to endure the rigors of such demanding commitments as actions for social transformation.

King was no different in his need for spiritual discipline. In his life he trained himself in various kinds of spiritual discipline; especially that of trying to live up to what he preached since he was a preacher of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. A look at how King prepared himself through spiritual discipline for the hard and costly work of leading the civil rights movement in the sixties would be appropriate here.

3.13 Spiritual Discipline in the life of King

King was from a Christian home and had a Christian upbringing, yet, before the Montgomery bus boycott, the first of the many other boycotts of the Civil Rights Movements in 1955-1956, King had intimated that, for him, “the idea of a personal God was little more than a metaphysical category. When, however, he became overwhelmed and felt battered with fear and anxiety by the threats of physical violence at Montgomery, especially after he received disturbing threats, King, in his fear and desperation cried out to God and said, “I am afraid...I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I’ve come to the point where I can’t face it alone.”236 According to King, he felt the presence of the Divine as he had never experienced him before then. In his own words, “…I felt the presence of the Divine as I have never before experienced him. It seems as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice, saying, ‘Stand up for righteousness, stand up for truth, god will be at your side forever.’”237 Often times
during the Civil Rights Movement and meetings, King recounted this prayer experience and as Doug Weaver notes, “Historians note that prayer, as much as strategy sessions, characterized a king-led campaign.” In King could be found some spiritual modes of discipline that Mahony wrote about in his contribution on “Spiritual Discipline.” King strove to discipline his senses, body and mind and he made love the central focus and foundation for his nonviolent social action. His love of God was accompanied by his love of neighbor, his opponents. He believed and taught that the end could not justify the means; the means must be as pure as the end, hatred and violence were antithetical to the course of nonviolent love and action and therefore unacceptable. King made nonviolent love the discipline of his spiritual life. He believed in the theology of “Redemptive Suffering,” there was redemption in suffering love. King left a legacy of hope which was based on a committed and disciplined strength to love even his opponent nonviolently.

3.13.1 King’s Spiritual Discipline and Self-purification Process

In his letter from Birmingham jail, King explains the third of the four processes by which he and other youths prepared themselves to carry out sit-ins to protest the segregation laws that prevented the African Americans from being served lunch at the various lunch restaurants in counters. The Nashville lunch counter sit-ins was one of the most remarkable.

As he explains, prior to the actual sit-ins, in 1960, Rev. James Lawson ran workshops for students planning the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins. These workshops involved months of rigorous training, enduring verbal and physical abuse, which would help students withstand the insults, abuses, taunts, slurs and blows of the city’s toughest racists and segregationists. The point of these rigorous training and strengthening of mind and body was to help the young students maintain a resolute and peaceful composure and to take the moral high ground in high
stake conditions. These processes of self-purification, obviously was meant to help the nonviolent resister overcome and conquer his or her personal fears.

In these days of escalating injustices, increased police brutality, government monitoring and incarcerations, how can people come together to deal with the waves of despair that looks one in the eye and the inevitable suffering that often accompanies' the struggles and efforts for justice? Dr. King recognized the importance of self-purification as a necessary process to the strengthening of the mind and body and to the facing up to one's fears and inadequacies and placed much emphasis on it.

The peace movement based in New York, known as the PeaceUp CoRR, acronym for “Peaceful Uprising: Communities of Resilient Resistance,” has also come to accept Dr. King’s idea of self-purification as a necessary process for its peace campaigns. In its article titled: “Self Purification,” it said:

“PeaceUp recognizes this deeply introspective, soul-searching phase to be a necessary one, while also recognizing that the journey will look quite different for each individual and community. For example Tim spent months mourning for his future, giving up the idea that his would look anything like those of previous generations, before being ready to take spontaneous and bold action...For our community, self-purification has translated to engaging in honest conversations about our own fears, with a constant reassessment of our personal triggers and comfort zones. We’ve embraced singing together as a means of strengthening bonds as well as mourning.”

The process by which we engage in self-reflection and self-purification in preparation for nonviolent action could be articulated as practicing spirituality precisely because that is usually what spirituality invites its adherents to. Spirituality invites the activist to engage in honest internal and external conversations about our own fears, with a regular reassessment of our personal triggers and comfort zones. King’s principles and methodology of nonviolence outline a path to social change that still holds true today. In his strategy, the ends are already present in the means; the seeds of a peaceful outcome can be found in our peaceful means. He argues that if we
resist injustice through steadfast nonviolent action and build a movement along these lines, we take the high ground as demonstrated in the lives of Jesus and Gandhi and can redeem society and create a new culture of nonviolence.
Chapter 4

Integrating Spirituality and Nonviolent Action

4.1 Addressing Some Important Questions

One of the criticisms of this study, especially as I set about trying to present and defend it before academic and student body of the graduate school of philosophy and religion community of the Assumption University has been that many issues have been taken for granted and that there is a bit of naivety in the presentation. To address these concerns, I have decided to begin this chapter by addressing some of the questions raised regarding spirituality and nonviolent action. I shall also highlight in this chapter, some challenges inherent in social justice work that is bereft of spirituality. I also acknowledged that Spirituality alone would not bring about the desired social transformation. Rather, it has to be a combination of these two factors working in tandem. I shall then proffer ideas and suggestions for a more effective social justice work. I shall begin by addressing, albeit briefly, the question of whether spirituality and nonviolence have any kind of connection.

4.1.1 Is there a Connection between Spirituality and Nonviolence?

A review of the various teachings of spiritual and religious leaders of the major religions in the world would reveal the fact that they have all preached the doctrine of love and nonviolence. From the Buddha, Mahavira, Nanak, Christ to Muhammed, every spiritual leader has propounded moral codes that gave a strong status to nonviolence. Thus, in the Eastern and Western religious traditions, nonviolence is accepted as a philosophy of life and an article of faith. As Gandhi has clearly stated, “Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.”241
4.1.2 Is Nonviolence a tool of the Weak? A Critique of Nietzsche’s Views on

Christian Love and Compassion

The central themes and foundational principles guiding the virtue of nonviolence and nonviolent resistance are love and compassion. However, these values have been questioned by many and have been referred to as virtues of the weak and oppressed. Such critics assert that it is unrealistic to adopt nonviolence as a way of life and even more so in situations of violence and oppression. Nonviolence is considered by many as a sign of weakness and only those who are afraid to express themselves take on such ideologies. These criticisms are in many ways similar to that leveled against Christianity by Frederick Nietzsche in his critique of the virtues of Christian empathy and love. To articulate these criticisms, I shall formulate them in Nietzsche’s terms.

4.1.2.1 Nietzsche on Christian Love

A reading of Nietzsche would reveal his apparent admiration for the person of Jesus Christ, but he had no such admiration for the Christian Church. As such, Nietzsche’s criticism of Christian empathy and love was not so much directed at Jesus as to the Christian Church which, according to Nietzsche, had deviated from its prophetic role in the world and had become affluent and perverse. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, the Jesus Christ was the only true Christian, which is an absurd thought since Jesus never intended to found a Christian Church as exists today. But we must grant Nietzsche the benefit of doubt and say that he was simply referring to the holiness and righteousness of Jesus in contrast to that of the Christian Church. Nietzsche did however, level some attacks on some teachings of Jesus in the Gospels.
Of the virtue of Christian compassion as depicted in the Gospel of Matthew 9:36, “When he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them,” Nietzsche was very critical. For him, Compassion, or pity, as is sometimes used interchangeably, had a numbing and depressive effect which in turn paralyzed Christians from living life to the full just as nature intended. For Nietzsche, pity only leads to a slave mentality. He proffered an alternative to Christian pity or compassion, and this he called “the will to power.” He was of the opinion that human persons ought to try their best to assert their human nature through willpower and not allow religious and Church prohibitions limit their personal development, a sentiment that is not lost on modern day psychologist and their exhortations to self-assertion. Nietzsche contends that it was only normal, natural and imperative that human persons to acknowledge and assert their human nature through willpower. For him, there was nothing immoral or wrong about this.

Regarding the virtue of Christian love, Nietzsche was very critical. For him, any kind of such Christian self-sacrifice for others would not lead to the happiness of the human person. Practicing Christian sacrificial love would prevent a person from actualizing their full potential and prevent freedom and happiness. In Nietzsche’s opinion, Christianity with its moral injunctions was a non-progressive religion it puts too much emphasis on weakness, meekness and self sacrifice, virtues that hamper full human development and progress. Rather, he proposes that every human person should create his or her own moral imperative and try to actualize his or her full potential through the will to power. It is simply a fact of human biological nature to act in a strong and self-serving manner and so one should just go along with this impulse. Paying attention to Jesus’ injunctions on love and compassion is not only naturally inhuman, it also blocks natural human progress and fulfillment.
In much the same way, Immanuel Kant, in his explanation of how the categorical imperative is possible states that an action should not be considered moral if the choice is influenced by compassion or sympathy. Kant's moral philosophy denies any moral significance to kindhearted and benevolent emotion in human persons. He dismissed emotions like love, sympathy, compassion and gratitude in human persons as negative in the matter of ethical and moral choices. Emotions like compassion, pity and gratitude, for Kant, were morally insignificant in moral actions and are simply weak and misguided sentiment. As he says, "Such benevolence is called soft-heartedness and should not occur at all among human beings."\(^{242}\) Still again on the virtue of compassion, Kant would say, "Many question whether true compassion exists at all—or whether it is inherently motivated by self-interest."\(^{243}\) Ayn Rand, the Russian-American writer and philosopher, would tend to resonate with Kant's position on the idea of "inherently motivated self-interest as reflected in her work on *The Virtue of Selfishness*. Thus, for Kant, in the final analysis, all that matters is for a person to act out of cold and detached moral imperative.

With arguments like these, Nietzsche and Kant would seem to reflect the views and questions of those who criticize nonviolence as a way of life and dismiss it as impractical and unrealistic. For them nonviolence is only for the weak and powerless and it only fosters a status quo of depressive inertia. But is this really the case? Were Nietzsche and Kant right in their criticisms of Christian compassion? Are critics right in saying that nonviolence as a way of life is only for the weak and oppressed?
4.1.2.2 A Response to Critics of Nonviolence

Perhaps a good starting point of response to these criticisms of nonviolence whose central principles are based on the emotions of compassion, a subset of love, would be to examine role of this emotion in human life and relationships.

4.1.2.3 What is Compassion?

According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the word “Compassion” was derived from Old French, which in turn derived from the Latin words, “com” (with) and “pati” (to suffer). As a noun, it meant ‘suffering together with another, participation in suffering; fellow-feeling, sympathy.”244 Compassion, in ecclesiastical terms, is the virtue of empathizing with other’s suffering. It is considered a fundamental aspect of human emotion and very important for greater socio-cultural connectedness. In humanistic circles, it is regarded as foundational to the highest principles in philosophy, society, and personhood.

According to Dacher Keltner, (2004), recent studies on compassion seem to suggest that perhaps, compassion might be part of human nature after-all and not just some inherently motivated self-interest as argued by Kant and Ayn Rand. On the contrary, such studies argue persuasively for a view of human emotions such as love and compassion as rational, functional and adaptive progression of the human nature; a view close to Darwin’s explanation of human and animal expressions of emotion.245 According to this research, continues Keltner, “compassion and benevolence are an evolved part of human nature, rooted in our brain and biology, and ready to be cultivated for the greater good.”246

4.1.2.4 Human Biology, Nonviolence and the Virtue of Compassion

According to studies carried out by a the University of Wisconsin psychologist, states Keltner, experiments revealed that mothers who were allowed to look at pictures of their infant
babies not only experienced feelings of compassionate love when they gazed at their babies, they also exhibited unique activity in a region of their brains which was associated with the positive emotions. This was evidence that this particular region of the human brain was attuned to the first objects of compassion presented to it, which in this case was the human child. In a wider area of study, brain scientists at the Princeton University discovered that when subjects contemplated harm being done to others, a similar network of regions in their brains lit up. In Keltner’s view, these discoveries of how the brain reacted to human baby and to the sufferings of others strongly suggest that compassion is not simply a fickle or an irrational emotion. Quite to the contrary, it is an innate human response that finds resonance in sections of the human brain. In related experiments carried out at the Emory University, neuroscientists tested humans in activities that involved helping of others. This triggered activity in the caudate nucleus and anterior cingulate, parts of the human brain that became active when human persons receive rewards or experience pleasure. What this meant was that, pleasure was experienced when humans helped others. Thus, one could say from all these different experiments that the human brain seems conditioned to naturally respond to the suffering of others, and also experiences pleasure when he or she takes steps to alleviate such sufferings of others. These inherent human reactions to the sufferings of others and pleasure from helping others are not restricted to the brain area of human persons alone, according to cardiologists, the heart and other organs of the body tended to either constrict or dilate in response to either pleasure or fear of danger to our person. In the case of danger, the heart rate increases while in the case of pleasure derived either from helping others or from just feeling compassion for others, the heart rate relaxes and dilates.
Also, in the area of evolutionary theory, compassion is observed to manifest itself through nonverbal signals and such signs are to be found in humans. For instance, in Keltner's work, it was discovered through the observation of great apes, that animals and human conveyed compassion through the action of touch. For instance, the apes spend quite a long time grooming each other for lice and ticks, even when there were none in the environment. This act of grooming conveys a feeling of relaxation, calm and bond that helps to build communities and relationships amongst the apes. Even in situations of conflict, the act of touch is used as a reconciliatory tool. Touch conveys compassion and love. The same is true of human persons. The human body is covered with neural receptors that react to the sensation of touch and correspondingly experienced either soothing pleasure or threatening fear. Also, according to Keltner, it was discovered by researcher Nancy Eisenberg, that there is a particular expression of compassion on the faces of humans, characterized by "oblique eyebrows and a concerned gaze. In Keltner's view, when a human person exhibits this expression, he or she is likely to help others. The expression of compassion is good criteria for finding out good natured human persons that one would like to relate with on a long term basis, and it helps humans and even non-human animals to forge bonds of friendship.

Furthermore, sociobiologists today acknowledge that empathy is a fundamental human ability, and that the ability to be sympathetic and compassionate is vital for the survival of the human species. On the level of human psychology, psychologists claim that it is impossible to live an authentic human life without developing empathy, compassion and love.

From a relational perspective, compassion plays a big role in connecting people, both at the family and at the friendship levels. If this is true, how than can Nietzsche and other critics find compassion to be a negative in human affairs? As argued above, compassion is one of the...
natural values inherent in human persons and so is love, hate, sorrow, fear, cheerfulness, contentment and every other emotion observable in human persons.

In his article, "The Compassionate Instinct," Keltner (2004) describes an experiment carried out by Daniel Batson to answer the question of whether compassionate emotions translated into altruistic behavior or not. As Keltner remarked, it is one thing to have and establish that human persons have a natural inclination to compassion but it quite another to actually express it in action. According to Batson, write Keltner,

"when we encounter people in need or distress, we often imagine what their experience is like. This is a great developmental milestone—to take the perspective of another. It is not only one of the most human of capacities; it is one of the most important aspects of our ability to make moral judgments and fulfill the social contract. When we take the other's perspective, we feel an empathic state of concern and are motivated to address that person's needs and enhance that person's welfare, sometimes even at our own expense." 250

In one of such experiments carried out by Batson, Keltner describes how participants were exposed to the suffering of another person. He then tried to get the participants to imagine the pain the other person was going through. He then left the experiment in order to give the participants a free hand to be their true selves. In one of the studies, participants had to watch another person take shocks on behalf of one participant who had failed a memory task. Those participants who had reported feeling compassion for the suffering of the one taking shocks volunteered to take several shocks for the suffering person, and this was even when they knew fully that they were under no obligation to do so since they were free to leave the experiment anytime they chose. 251 With experiments like these, Keltner, concludes the following, that:

"Compassion is deeply rooted in human nature; it has a biological basis in the brain and body. Humans can communicate compassion through facial gesture and touch, and these displays of compassion can serve vital social functions, strongly suggesting an evolutionary basis of compassion. And when experienced, compassion overwhelms selfish concerns and motivates altruistic behavior." 252
To conclude this response to critics of nonviolence and its corresponding guiding values of love and compassion, it would suffice to say that even Nietzsche who denied the role of love and compassion in human nature and affairs seemed to have depended on these values in his last days. In his latter days, Nietzsche became quite sick. He suffered from severe headaches and had to give up his teaching position as university professor. He then made a journey around Europe and the Swiss Alps, with poor physical health. That was not a good place to be for Nietzsche, especially as he had come to consider the world as being without objective meaning. In 1888, Nietzsche had a mental breakdown through contacting syphilis and had to become dependent on his sister and mother’s love and compassion, the same Christian virtues he had repudiated.

4.2 The Power of Nonviolence

Inspired by men like Gandhi and Richard B. Gregg, in his book, The Power of Nonviolence, King tried to introduce the philosophy of nonviolent resistance to his contemporaries, King admits that it was not an easy sell. Nonviolence was a new and strange philosophy and many were not sympathetic to it since they could not understand its practicability in the kind of oppressive society and struggle they are in. Still, King had to try. He used the weekly mass meetings which were held twice each week to explain the nonviolent philosophy and method. King made it clear to them that:

...nonviolent resistance was not a method of cowardice. It does resist. It was not a method of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil that he is standing against as the violent resister but he resists without violence. This method is nonaggressive physically but strongly aggressive spiritually.253

Nonviolence as a philosophy and way of life was geared towards the transformation of the person and of society in general. In situations of conflict, persecution, injustice and oppressive laws as experienced by the African Americans in the years of the civil rights
movement, nonviolent resistance sought to raise the tension and injustice evident in a society and exposed them for what they were, to the extent that they could no longer be ignored or set aside either by the oppressor or the oppressed. Nonviolent resistance provoked society to make adaptive change without sending the society into a paralyzing chaos. Nonviolent action sought to show another way of dealing with injustice done committed on a people such that it gave no room or excuse for the oppressors to respond violently. Nonviolence had a disturbing effect on the oppressive institutions but at the same time kept within limits that held back their power to act violently against the nonviolent resisters.

4.2.1 Gandhi on the Power of Nonviolent Resistance

Gandhi had a strong influence in King’s formation and philosophy of nonviolent resistance. King admits that it was Gandhi that helped him organize his methods into a social force for change. Gandhi’s philosophy was influenced by his Hindu religion and the doctrine of ahimsa, which meant that one was to do no harm to human or animal life. Ahimsa, for Gandhi, was much more than just the avoidance of doing harm to others; it was also the expression of the deepest love for all human and animal life, including one’s opponents. This way of nonviolence also meant not having hatred or ill-will towards opponents. One very great aspect of Gandhi’s ahimsa was his refusal to see the other as enemy, even when he did not agree with their ways and injustices. He rejected the traditional dualistic dichotomy that separated “us” from “them.” It was much better to win the opponent’s friendship than make enemies of them even if this meant laying down one’s life in the process.

For Gandhi, violence was never the way to peace, even when it was used in the name of justice. The result of violence is more violence. Thomas Merton writes of Gandhi in this regard:
“In Gandhi’s mind, non-violence was not simply a political tactic which was supremely useful and efficacious in liberating his people from foreign rule. . . . On the contrary, the spirit of nonviolence sprang from an inner realization of spiritual unity in himself.”

4.2.2 Satyagraha (Soul Force) in Gandhi’ Nonviolent Resistance

Another important principle in Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolent resistance was what he called Satyagraha, which means “Soul-Force” or “The power of truth.” Satyagraha was the practical development of ahimsa and compassionate love. For him, it was a call to stand firmly for one’s convictions and ideals, albeit in a nonviolent way. The principle of Satyagraha could be understood as the nonviolent, yet militant dimension of Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence. It took the form of civil disobedience and non-cooperation with evil of any kind. Civil disobedience, for Gandhi, meant standing in the way of unjust institutions and even breaking a specific unjust law where and when necessary. This, for sure, might have obvious painful consequences, even to the point of making ultimate sacrifices, just like Gandhi and King made in their lives. Gandhi believed that it was part of being faithful to Satyagraha to be ready to suffer for one’s ideals and convictions. A good example of how Gandhi applied Satyagraha in practice could be seen in the famous Salt March of 1930, in which he resisted the monopoly of the British on the Salt Mines by organizing a march to the Salt Mines. This was done in favor of the Indian farmers who were being exploited by the British colonialists that exerted massive taxes on Salt.

The power of nonviolent resistance as reflected in Gandhi’s Satyagraha proved to be a very potent and powerful tool that Gandhi and his followers in India used to counter and frustrate the British rule of India. In one of the forms that Satyagraha took, which did not necessarily lead
to the breaking of any law, was the use of boycotts of British products, refusing to work for the British employers, pulling one's children out of British schools, refusing to supply the British with services, and not paying taxes. This same tactics was used by Gandhi in 1920 when the British murdered 400 unarmed protesters in India. Gandhi organized a nationwide Satyagraha which used the technique of non-cooperation as well as public demonstrations to withdraw Indian support from the destructive ruling power of the British colonialists.

Having seen the power that nonviolence as a philosophy and way of life and nonviolent resistance as a potent tool and method for resisting evil and injustice, the question could still be asked whether there was a way in which the application of nonviolence as a way of life could be considered unrealistic and scrupulous. A brief discussion on that would form the next part of this chapter.

4.3 Can the Principle of Nonviolence be taken too far?

This is a question that has often been asked in philosophical circles. Nonviolence is like other principles of compassion and love and could actually be taken to absurd levels. It is not the purpose of this study to argue for nonviolence to such extreme levels and this is because, it is just simply unachievable for human persons to exist to the point of doing no harm or injury to a single human person, animal, plant or micro-organism throughout the entire span of his or her life. If the definition of violence were restricted to just physical violence alone, perhaps a person might be able to claim that he or she never caused such physical harm to anyone all through his or her life. But when the definition of violence is extended to include psychological, emotional, spiritual abuse, then it is difficult to see how anyone could claim to be without some level of violence, whether intentionally or not. Human persons have to breath in order to survive and by the sheer act of breathing alone, a large number of germs and bacteria are killed. By the act of
walking we kill numerous tiny microscopic organisms. Also, it would be absurd not to do something to remove mosquitoes from one’s living quarters, especially when they could infect humans with malaria and dengue viruses. Doing harm or violence goes beyond just merely doing physical harm; it also includes emotional and mental harm. To that extent, it is virtually impossible to have a standard for measuring or gauging the extent to which an act may cause mental, emotional and psychological harm or violence. Thus, to the question, “can the principle of nonviolence be taken too far,” the answer is, yes it is possible if by nonviolence is meant absolutely doing no harm whether intentionally or not.

4.4 Challenges to Nonviolent Action for Social Justice that is bereft of Spirituality

The practice of nonviolent action is very demanding and most times seemingly very unrewarding and definitely quite painful. Whether one is trying to bring about a social, political and economic transformation either at the community, societal, institutional or global level, the challenges and dangers are as real as ever. This is because, part of the practice of nonviolent resistance demands that the activist be prepared to suffer all kinds of evils and even in the face of the threat of death, he is not to retaliate violently. It also demands that the activist not pursue personal and political interests, rather he is to be totally committed to the defense of objective truth and right for every human person. Achieving social justice, economic equality and political rights and freedoms often come at a costly price; sometimes the price might be imprisonment, rejection, and even death. Oftentimes, the nonviolent resister might become impatient with the slow process of the struggle such that he is tempted to opt for more seemingly efficient means that might not necessarily be nonviolent and soon he might begin to use rhetoric that promotes violence such as “fighting” for the cause of justice, mobilizing resources, employing tactical strategies, neutralizing the enemy. 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. It is more perilous when he is not grounded in a spirituality that helps him to remain focused, motivated, and humane. The nonviolent resister has to keep constantly in mind the purpose of his struggle, particularly when it seems that his struggle is becoming long and difficult. For instance, he must remind himself that his is not merely to show himself to be better and to prove his righteousness and virtues to the detriment and shame of the opponent, rather, it is to befriend as best possible the opponent he is trying to negotiate with. Thus, a high level of conscious awareness and mindfulness is required of the nonviolent resister if he is to avoid some of the pitfalls that come with the territory of his struggle.

One of such pitfalls and real dangers of using nonviolence merely as a tool and strategy without consideration for spirituality lies in the possibility of applying it from a false motive. For instance, when we try to bring about social change in order to show the other person or the opponent as evil and ourselves as the righteous ones, we are not only causing spiritual harm to the opponent but also to ourselves. Thomas Merton (1968: 15) captured this quite well in his book, *Faith and Violence*, when he said:

"We know that our unconscious motives may, at times make our nonviolence a form of moral aggression and even a subtle provocation designed (without our awareness) to bring out the evil we hope to find in the adversary, and thus to justify ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of "decent people.""^{257}

Cautioning further on the dangers of hidden motivations in nonviolent action, Merton states that, "...Wherever there is a high moral ideal there is an attendant risk of pharisaism and nonviolence is no exception. Pharisaism only leads to division and a hardening of heart
and position on both sides." Merton's caution squares quite well with the discovery of unconscious motivations in the field of psychology. Unconscious motivations refer to hidden and unknown desires that are the real reasons for the things that people do. The idea that human behavior is driven by unconscious motives and drives was put forth by Sigmund Freud who said the mind is like an iceberg, and that only a small part is revealed to conscious awareness, while the bigger, deeper reasons for human behavior and actions lie beneath the surface. Merton, following Freud's angle, stated that, "We know that our unconscious motives may, at times make our nonviolence a form of moral aggression and even a subtle provocation designed, without our awareness, to bring out the evil we hope to find in the adversary, and thus to justify ourselves in our own eyes and in the eyes of "decent people."  

Another pitfall that regularly presents itself to the nonviolent activist is the constant possibility of burning himself out physically, mentally and emotionally. This comes about as the direct result of a lack of healthy balance to his lifestyle because of being so committed and totally involved in the struggle for justice, equality and right of the oppressed people, nature and the environment. There is a need for a healthy balance of every aspect of the activist's life. The activist needs to the proper amount of self-care, adequate sleep, proper eating habit, exercise and recreational time, quality moments with family and friends, solitude for spiritual meditation and renewal. Failure to pay attention to these other important aspects of life could lead to exertion, exhaustion, and a form of spiritual, mental and even physical burnout. Signs of burnout would include feelings of desperation and despair, negativity and impatience, a movement from being optimistic to becoming cynical and pessimistic, splintering into factions of the union and comradeship that once existed among members of a movement, confusion about goals, means and ends. Also, being constantly
barraged and confronted by the pain, sufferings and devastation of people and the environment and the seemingly enormous task of righting the wrong could lead to burnout. Soon it becomes quite clear that moral and righteous anger are not sufficient for providing the stability and motivation for the long haul of bringing about social transformation.

Another danger of social activism without spirituality is the potential for division that could come about as a result of the inability on the part of the activist to transcend personal prejudices and biases. Such internal and preconceived prejudices leads to a lack of openness, objectivity and willingness to acknowledge the possibility that the opponent could be right or might have some elements of the truth and is not so inhumane as might have been viewed previously. Under such conditions, it is not unusual for emotions and tempers to run high as various social issues and outlooks are discussed. This often leads to division and polarization whereby the activist could begin to view the situation as a matter of “us” versus “them”, “our” position alone or nothing. When situations such as these arise, frustrations and bitterness result and it becomes quite difficult to make any meaningful progress. Soon the goal becomes that of defeating the opponent and winning instead of being focused on collaboration, reconciliation, dialogue in order to address the original issues that caused the disagreements in the first place. As a result of the bitterness antipathy that such close-mindedness engenders, there is never a real end to strife and violence, especially when one side seemingly wins and the other loses. The vicious cycle of anger, bitterness and hostility continues and social transformation is impeded; all as a result of a righteous anger that was not informed and grounded in spirituality.

Social, economic and political activism has to be grounded in spirituality, otherwise, it becomes unsustainable in the long haul. The activist either becomes frustrated or simply
burns out and could even become bitter and resentful. There is a need for constant replenishment of physical, emotional and physical resources if the nonviolent activist is to last the often marathon nature of any peace of civil efforts for justice and right. Such spirituality or spiritual replenishment could come either from a religious tradition or from a non-religious source. In the case of King, his spiritual replenishment came from his Christian religion, of which he was a firm believer in.

4.5 Spirituality alone is Insufficient for Social Transformation

The idea in this section is not to repudiate a purely strategic nonviolence. There is nothing wrong with evolving strategies for the hard task of social and economic transformation. It is important that we care for people’s rights and work for justice and equality. What we must however guard against is a dualistic approach to resolving the world’s problems. This study simply seeks to address and call attention to a more holistic approach to problem solving and conflict resolution. It should not be a situation of “either or” but a case of “both and.” Not exclusive activism and strategic nonviolence.

An activist that practices spirituality alone and holds to the conviction that spirituality and inner transformation alone would lead to societal transformation is both naive and unrealistic. To hold to an exclusive view of spirituality as a method for social transformation without activism is to fall into the temptation of directly or indirectly dissociating oneself from a hands-on realistic social, economic and political engagement in the world. Attitudes like these only lead to a maintaining of the oppressive status quo and also leave the poor of the land abandoned in their hour of suffering and need. It does not also encourage actual efforts to address the need for peace and environmental dangers being currently faced in the world.
On the contrary, King embraced a theology for the social gospel which he imbibed from Walter Rauschenbusch. His Christian spirituality, though inspired by love and compassion and the desire to for a more fundamental transformation of society was such that did not shirk the responsibility to get its hands dirty and be involved in the difficult and dangerous task of actual active nonviolent resistance. Spirituality was not weakness and for King, was definitely not naively idealistic. The message of Jesus Christ, Gandhi and Rauschenbusch, as imbibed by King, led him to concrete action for change. He preached the good news of racial equality, economic, political and social justice not just in words but also through nonviolent organized social and civil actions that saw him and members of his civil rights movement take to the streets in Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham. King, like Rauschenbusch, understood the need to bridge the gap and dualism between spirituality and work in real life situations. He endeavored to give life to the gospel message by applying its message of liberation and redemption to the lives of the people in dire need of the good news. Christian Spirituality ought not just to be concerned with the salvation of the soul of the human person but for the total well-being of the entire person; mind, body, soul and spirit. Thus, in situations of social injustice and economic inequality, activists ought be consciously holistic in their approach to social change. What is being proposed in this study is an approach that blends spirituality and strategy in an active involvement to bring about both remote and proximate social change. Such a method should be grounded in political or economic ideology and at the same time in spirituality. The method proposed here has been variously described in different terms, such as, "spiritual activism" (Goldstein, 2011a) and "sacred activism" (Harvey, 2009).
4.6 When does Spirituality become a Weapon of Violence?

Without doubt, spirituality, like religion, has many positive aspects and has brought much progress to the human person as well as to the world at large. Yet, it has to be conceded as a fact of history that spirituality could also become an instrument for indoctrination and radicalizing human persons and thereby moving them to acts of violence and even war. History is filled with spiritual leaders who have used core principles of spirituality as a means to prey upon weak, poor, misguided and uneducated people. These so-called leaders manipulate and brainwash their followers using spirituality as an ideological tool.

Religious extremists and fanatics can often turn out to be some of the most dangerous people on earth. From the time of the Crusades, inquisition of the Middle Ages to the misguided actions of people like Adolph Hitler and more recently, Behring Brevik of Norway who killed seventy-seven innocent people,\(^\text{262}\) the use of religion and spirituality as an ideological tool to scare, intimidate and control has been part of the human race for centuries. The likelihood of such manipulation and use of religion and spirituality as tools of oppression still continuing is real as long as human persons continue in their search for meaning and purpose. Misguided spiritual and religious leaders will always be quick to take advantage of the weak and gullible. This brings us right to the next logical question. If spirituality is such as could be used either positively or negatively, how then can a person make a distinction and a judgment as to the right and healthy spirituality to imbibe and cultivate? The next part of this study is a response to this question.
4.7 Distinguishing between Spiritualities

There is the saying that “not all that glitters is gold.” Spirituality, like any other way of life could become an avenue of abuse and ideological weapon. To this extent, it becomes necessary at this point of our study to lay down some ground rules and criteria for judging between true and false spirituality, positive and negative spirituality.

Spirituality is often distinguished among each other according to various criteria. One may distinguish spirituality from a qualitative perspective, that is, whether it is a healthy spirituality or a rigid spirituality. We may also distinguish spiritualities according to religious traditions or family. One may also distinguish spirituality according to ideologies, for example, feminist spirituality, according to devotions and religious commitment, for example, in the Catholic Church there is the Eucharistic spirituality, the Marian spirituality, Biblical spirituality for the Protestant and Evangelical churches. In Islam there is the Shiite and the Sunni spiritualities. In Buddhism, there is the Theravada and the Mahayana spiritualities. The distinctions are usually not mutually exclusive. For instance, a healthy spirituality may be Catholic, Sunni, Theravada or from any persuasion whether religious or not. In the same way, negative and rigid spirituality may also be found in any religious or ideological tradition.

4.7.1 Positive and Negative Spirituality

The fact that there are different kinds of spirituality raises the question of how to judge between spiritualities regarding which one is healthy and which is not. Ordinarily, spirituality ought to be a positive term but to say that all spiritualities are therefore positive and healthy would be presumptuous optimism and somewhat naïve. I do not believe that all spirituality is
healthy and positive, some could be negative and unhealthy and even dangerous. How then can one tell the difference? Are there objective criteria for distinguishing between spiritualities? I believe that there ought to be such criteria and they should be on four levels: on the level of Self; on the Level of Others; on the level of the world Environment and on the level of connecting with something greater than ourselves that gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

(a) Level of Self: On this level, the test of a positive and healthy spirituality is discerned from the results it produces in the life of the person who practices it. Such a spirituality empowers the person to be internally free of most psychological baggage, to be healthy and health conscious without over-doing it, to be happy, hopeful and realistic about life. It is liberating in every sense of the word and orients the self to love and compassion, both for self, for others and for the world environment.

Level of Other: At this level, any true and positive spirituality is such that encourages a happy and healthy relationship with the other. Such spirituality is able to discern the interconnectedness that exists amongst every human person, regardless of race, color, religion, ideology and culture. In the words of Martin Buber, such a spirituality operates on I-Thou principle. It treats human persons as ends in themselves and not as means to achieve ends. It also encourages a healthy and positive relationship between self and others.

(b) Level of the World Environment: At this level, a positive and healthy spirituality is that which is in tune with the environment and treats the earth with respect and dignity. There is no exploitation of the earth and its resources, no cruel treatment of animals and plants.
There is a conscious effort to move away from the nuclear arms race that threatens to destroy our world.

(c) Level of Communion with a Transcendent Ultimate Reality: A positive spirituality, while having a sense of the inner life, is also drawn to make connection with a reality outside and transcendent than the self. Such communion is said to be positive because it enhances the general well-being of the human person and promotes a deep connection with others and the world around.

4.8 Is being Human Synonymous with being Spiritual?

The question above could be also be rephrased to read, “Can a person be human without being spiritual?” The fact that such a question could be raised at all suggests that not everyone is taken in by the Christian argument of the human person being created in the image and likeness of God and therefore, since God is spiritual, it follows that the human person is also a composite of body and spirit. In what follows, the views of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas would be brought to bear on the subject, with the hope of arriving at a more philosophically acceptable understanding of how the human person is necessarily a composite of body and spirit. The words “spirit” and “spiritual” here are used interchangeably with “soul” according to the usage of Aquinas. Prior to exploring Aquinas’ understanding of the human person, it is important to appreciate two opposing views with regard to the nature of the human person. The opposing view is Dualistic in perspective and the second is Physicalistic.
4.8.1 Dualistic View of the Human Person

The philosophers that readily come to mind with regards to the dualistic view of the human person are Plato and Rene Descartes; Plato in his theory of ideas and forms and Descartes in his writings contained in his Meditations on First Philosophy. In Descartes’ view, human persons are composed of two distinct elements: mental and physical, mind and body. These are connected and influence each other, how? Descartes did not elaborate. For him, the mind is completely different from the body. He identified human persons with their minds, not their bodies. The real person is not the body but the mind or the soul as Descartes sometimes said. In the “Philosophical Writings of Descartes,” translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (1985: ii, 54), Descartes is quoted as saying:

My essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is true that I may have (or, to anticipate, that I certainly have) a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other I have a clear and distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it. 263

4.8.1.1 Physicalist View of the Human Person

This view holds that human persons are composed of only one element, matter of body. This matter of body is constitutive of the mind or mental states and processes. The ‘Identity Theory,’ is a version of Physicalist view. The Identity Theory holds that mind and body are one and the same, they are identical precisely because mental states or events are nothing but brain processes under the guise of another nomenclature. This theory holds that human persons can be identified with a set of physical states.
4.8.2 Aquinas’ Understanding of the Human Person: A Response to Critics

Typically, Aquinas takes a middle position between the two extremes of Dualism and Physicalism. He disagrees with the Descartes’ dualistic view that human persons are essentially incorporeal, the mind being the more important than the body. He also denies that human persons are nothing but a conglomeration of physical processes. According to Aquinas, human persons are composite individuals, a view that he shares in common with Aristotle’s De anima. According to Aristotle, human persons are composed of complex unities both mental and physical, and just two elements, body and soul. For him, it makes no sense to ask whether the soul and the body are one, for they are, though distinct in function and character. It is like asking whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one.

So, while Aquinas would agree that it was not improper to speak of human persons in terms of ‘body’ and ‘soul,’ still he does not conclude that human persons are therefore body plus soul. In Aquinas’ view, human persons are composed of mental and physical units, in line with Aristotle’s ‘complex unities,’ and they are not simply be reduced to each other. A human person is ‘a compound whose substance is both spiritual and corporeal,’ says Aquinas. When Aquinas’ uses the word ‘anima’ to refer to the ‘soul,’ he understood it from his Latin training to mean ‘that which gives life.’ Thus, in speaking of the ‘soul,’ he was referring to ‘principle of life.’ As Aquinas says, “Inquiry into the nature of the soul presupposes an understanding of the soul as the root principle of life in living things within our experience.” In his view, anything alive has a soul. According to him, human persons are bodies of a certain kind, bodies with a certain kind of life (soul). In his commentary on Aristotle, Aquinas states that:
There had been much uncertainty about the way the soul and body are conjoined. Some had supposed a sort of medium connecting the two together by a sort of bond. But the difficulty can be set aside now that it has been shown that the soul is the form of the body. As Aristotle says, there is no more reason to ask whether soul and body make one thing than to ask the same about the wax and the impression sealed on it, or about any other matter and its form. For, as is shown in the Metaphysics, Book VIII, form is directly related to matter as the actuality of matter; once matter actually is it is informed ... Therefore, just as the body gets its being from the soul, as from its form, so too it makes a unity with this soul to which it is immediately related.264

In quoting Aristotle, Aquinas reiterates a central theme in his discussion of the nature of the human person, that is, 'the soul is the form of the body.' Aquinas was referring to substantial form when he speaks of the soul's relation to the body. In his view, with regards to living things, the principle of life, the soul, is what we get as we get the things with all their essential features and characteristics. Thus, the soul is the form of the body in the sense that living bodies of certain kinds have a principle of life.

Following from the above, Aquinas would posit that human persons are living things of a certain kind which for him is 'the animal kind.' Human persons are creatures of flesh and blood in very much the same way that cats, dogs, birds, as different from non-living things like rocks and furniture. By implication, what Aquinas meant was that much of what is true of non-human animals is also true of human persons. For instance, they are both capable of conscious locomotion and have biological characteristics. They are capable of reproducing and taking care of their young. They have needs for food and security. According to Aquinas, these characteristics are essential to human persons just as they are to non-human animals and as such none could just dispense of any one of these characteristics. They are part of what is physical and material in human persons. Aquinas does not reduce the human person to his mental processes just like Descartes did. For him, the body is not to be distinguished from the mind and mental processes. As Aquinas states:
For as it belongs to the very conception of 'this human being' that there should be this soul, flesh and bone, so it belongs to the very conception of 'human being' that there be soul, flesh and bone. For the substance of a species has to contain whatever belongs in general to every one of the individuals comprising that species.\textsuperscript{265}

In his rejection of the Platonic view that posited the soul as separate from the body as form to matter, and as mover to moveable, Aquinas argues that if our souls moved our bodies as Platonic views assert, then our souls and our bodies would be distinct things and could not make up one thing distinct in its own right. For him, human persons would be a collection of things rather than a unity. Furthermore, if the soul is using the body as the Platonists claim, then it means that human persons are essentially immaterial. Aquinas does not agree with this view. Rather, for him, human persons are real creatures of nature with sense organs and as a result cannot be essentially immaterial.\textsuperscript{266}

From what has been said, it is clear that Aquinas believes that the human body is an essential element in the human person. Yet, he also holds the position that understanding and willing are not physical processes and this was that lead him to take the position that the human person is a composite of both body and soul. He believes that the soul can survive the death of the body.

\textbf{4.8.3 Making a Connection between ‘Spirit’ and ‘Soul’}

This study has been focused on spirituality and nonviolence, and in trying to discuss exactly what is meant by the ‘spirit’ or ‘spirituality,’ the words ‘spirit’ and ‘soul’ have been used interchangeably and this for the very reason that often times, the two concepts are used as synonyms. Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle seemed to have also used these two terms in much the same sense even while they sought to understand them and make distinctions between them.
Socrates, for instance, used the idea of the ‘soul’ quite a lot in his discussion and he sometimes replaced it with the ‘spirit’ without making any kind of differentiation between them. In order words, he used the two terms interchangeably. Plato, on the other hand held to the idea that the soul was a fixed entity that accepts spiritual matters and was quite different from matter. The soul longed to be free from its prison of the body, or matter, and return to its origin. He is quoted as saying, “How can we realize the difficult sublime issues without a spiritual soul? And how can we judge it?”

As is evident from the Plato’s statement above, he did not differentiate between the soul and the spirit. Every other philosopher that came after Plato used the two terms in much the same way as he did.

Having addressed these pertinent questions regarding the relationship of the human person to the spirit, we shall now return to the subject spirituality and nonviolence and how both of these factors can become important and positive agents for good in a violent and war-torn world.

4.9 Toward an Active Spirituality of Nonviolence

The focus of this study has been to highlight the fact that spirituality should be the basis and stabilizing element in the life of any nonviolent activist’s strategic and tactical struggle for social change and transformation. Holding to and applying either spirituality or strategic methods in exclusive manner in order to bring about social transformation is inadequate. In this study an alternative path for social justice initiatives and efforts is proposed. This alternative path or approach is founded upon spiritual worldviews and practices which when made part of the activist’s struggle for social justice, helps to sustain and drive his or her efforts and work. When activists engage in such holistic approaches that combine spirituality and strategy in the efforts to secure social justice, the activist becomes
more enriched and empowered to pursue the course of civil rights and nonviolent resistance for as long as is required and this is because, the activist does not practice a spirituality that is socially disengaged, that is, withdrawing from the world to pursue enlightenment and self-realization, neither is she or he a spiritually disengaged social activist, that is, focusing solely on the sociopolitical goals without careful and constant evaluation and consideration as to how such goals are formed and achieved. In this alternative approach, the nonviolent activist finds an inextricable connection between spiritual principles and the pursuit of justice and equality for all. Edwards and Post (2008:3) captured this idea quite well when they said of spiritual activists:

They take on the difficult work of organizing the downtrodden into groups capable of exerting social and political pressure through persuasion and protest, and do so with reliance on a background picture of a universe in which love and justice go with, rather than against, the grain of Ultimate Reality.268

4.9.1 Importance and Benefits of Spirituality

4.9.1.1 Spirituality Builds up Inner Composure

Through spiritual practices, one builds up a reservoir of spaciousness, calmness and composure that can help us gain access into our deepest capacities even while we experience great turmoil, tension, conflict and difficulty in life. Through practice of spirituality, one gains the ability to connect deeply and compassionately with one's experience and self at every moment; and this, without passing judgment, without clinging or rejecting, allowing space for what is to arise and to be able to engage these with wisdom. Spirituality enables the activist to become more compassionate and accepting of his own strengths and weaknesses, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of society and peoples. It is only with such enablement that real and meaningful change can be brought about both on the personal and the societal levels.
4.9.1.2 Spirituality and Inner Freedom

Spirituality helps us to develop a sense of inner and outer freedom. Many have followed the way of religion as a way to get to some sort of spirituality and this has worked well for those who have come to understand the deeper and core messages and experiences that their religion makes available to them. On the other hand, so many have been trapped by religion because they have remained only on the external levels of their religion and all they understand about religion are sets or rules and obligations to be fulfilled. On this level, religion becomes a repressing element in their lives: Do not do this, do not do that. Such dogmatic adherence to only the externals of religion has led to religious fundamentalism in almost every religion on earth. People are ready to kill their fellow human persons and degrade the earth and its resources on account of religion.

4.9.1.3 Spirituality and Respect for Life

Spirituality on the other hand tends to move its people away from whatever does harm to either oneself or to the other. There is a deeper appreciation of life and everything in creation and as such, people and things are treated with respect and dignity that is due to them. There is a kind of freedom of spirit that the awareness and practice of spirituality introduces to the human person. No longer are people bound by mere rules and regulations, rather, they operate at higher levels of human consciousness that has its basis as love, compassion, justice courage and wisdom. Such awareness and practice of spirituality leads the human person to discover an inner core where he or she finds an abundance of energy, inspiration, wisdom and transcendence. At this level, St. Augustine’s words ring true, our hearts come to rest and the searching ends. Spirituality enables its practitioner to come out of him or herself so that they can be themselves.
A fifteen minutes sincere prayer and meditation in the secret of one’s room is more likely to uplift one’s spirit than the one hour sermon by the pastor, Imam, guru or the fifteen minutes homily by the priest. That is not to say anything less about the benefits of a good sermon. With awareness and spirituality, religion takes on a new meaning and richer dimension, but without it, religion becomes empty and sometimes dangerous. Spirituality takes us away from the rather simplistic teachings of heaven and hell where one is trained to be good here on earth so that when one dies one goes to heaven. At this level, heaven is no longer a place in some distant and future place beyond the skies, rather, heaven is experienced all around us, in our relationships, in every place where love and unity exist, even in the enjoyment of nature and beautiful experiences.

4.9.1.4 Spirituality and the Sense of Integration

Another benefit of spirituality is that it brings about a sense of wholeness and unity with self, others and for the religious minded people, a connection with a reality greater than oneself. We no longer see life from a perspective of “I versus you”, “we versus them.” The dualistic understanding of reality gives way to a unified understanding of reality. There is a love for every human person and the flames of racial segregation and discrimination begin to dim and a new consciousness and awareness of the interconnectedness and unity of all peoples and things is born in us and in our world. Life becomes a win-win situation and not I win you lose but rather, we all win. This new found way of life through the awareness and practice of spirituality has much positive implications for how we deal with conflict situations. Nonviolence is no longer seen as unrealistic and stupid but rather, a natural offshoot of a new appreciation of the unity and
dynamic relatedness of every human person, one to another, and of the need to treat the earth and its resources with respect.

4.9.1.5 Spirituality and Personal Well-Being

Other benefits derived from spirituality are, a sense of well-being and inner and outer self-confidence. This is because through the practice of prayer and spirituality, one gets in touch with one’s real self and the false or ego self begins to lose its grip on us and determine our behavior and how we act, react and make choices and decisions. We no longer feel the need to cower to other people just to please them. We become more authentic human persons as Soren Kierkegaard alluded to when he wrote his paper on “authentic and inauthentic” existence. We no longer get our self-worth from external things and events.

4.9.1.6 Spirituality and Creativity

Following closely on the heels of the new found inner-strength and self-confidence brought about by a new awareness of who we are and our self-worth is a sense of our creative abilities. We spin out ideas and are able to actualize these ideas through the impetus of the newly found inner strength. Spirituality leads us to connect with the creative aspects of our humanity. We become creative and dynamic, full of life and desire to create new ideas and things and we make more positive contributions to life. It is a known fact that people who have made any kind of real difference in our world today have been people who have practiced and are practicing some form of spirituality, people like The Buddha, Jesus Christ, Muhammed, Albert Einstein, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and so many more.
4.9.1.7 Spirituality and Psycho-Physical Health

On the biological and psychological levels, spirituality has been known to promote good physical and psychological health. Research has shown that those who are more religious or spiritual tend to experience many health benefits. Spirituality has been used to deal with stress, illnesses and sufferings of all kinds. According to a study from the University of Florida in Gainesville and Wayne State University in Detroit, older adults use prayer more than any other alternative therapy for health; ninety-six percent of study participants use prayer specifically to cope with stress. Regular meditation calms down the restlessness of the mind, and creates a sense of inner peace and relaxation and this in turn can help the mind to stay focused and healthy. If one just imagines a society where spirituality is a normal way of life it is possible to see a society where relationships are improved, fewer mistakes are made and love thrives. When an individual human person is of a sound mind, the society will benefit positively from it.

4.10 Arguing for an Alternative Approach that Merges Spirituality and Work for Social Justice

There are a number of reasons why it is important for nonviolent activists engaging in the work for social justice and transformation to have as their support and way of life, some sort of spirituality that has love, compassion and appreciation for every sentient and non-sentient being. In the following paragraphs I shall lay out some arguments that support my position, that is, of the necessity of following a more holistic approach in social activism. This approach combines spirituality and nonviolent strategy in the difficult task of securing social justice and equality for all.
To begin with, I would like to argue for the position that every form of conflict being experienced in the society, every kind of injustice, turmoil, war and social disorder begins within the human heart. In Christian Scripture, the apostle Paul points to this fact when he stated in the book of James that all the troubles being experienced in the world has its origin from the heart of every human person. In his own words he asks:

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.

Such conflicts and disunity would continue in our world until we are able to deal with the inner disturbances and conflicts we experience within. This was why Gandhi stated that: “You must be the change you want to see in the world.” For there to be any success at all in the work of the nonviolent activist, if he or she is to bring about social transformation, there has to be personal transformation starting from himself. The reasoning upon which this position is based is simply on the fact that, unjust and oppressive societies and institutions are made up of individual human persons, just as good institutions and social structures are also made up of individual human persons. Thus, the general state of any society and social institution is usually a reflection of the general state of mind of human persons living in such societies and institutions. The task of changing society and social structures must begin not from the outside but from the inside of every human heart, especially in the heart and minds of those who must champion the cause of justice and right. This is where spirituality becomes of vital importance both in the lives of the social activists and in society as a whole. Spirituality invites every human person to reflect on thoughts and actions and on the inner disunity often experienced in order to consciously address the faults found within. In the life of the social activist, this inner reflection and questioning of motives, prejudices, and even
violent streaks must be a constant exercise while at the same time doing the work of justice and peace in society. The challenge is to be able to combine spiritual self-reflection and purification with the strategic and tactical work of social justice.

In addition to the point just made, the practice of spiritual activism, that is, to have a holistic blend of spirituality and active nonviolent strategy in the work of social justice enables the activist to have a spiritual impetus in his struggle for justice and peace in society. Spirituality helps in a much needed and indeed very important task of constantly reflecting on the motives for which one is involved in nonviolent resistance. This is very important in order to guard against what Merton refers to as pharisaism. It also protects the nonviolent activist from spiritual, psychological and physical burnout, fear, uncontrollable anger and self-deceit as he engages in the difficult task of changing society. Thus, the need for constant awareness, compassion and love in the work for social justice cannot be overemphasized. There is a need to consciously keep a check on one’s motives, hold regular retreats, both individually and collectively, in order to regularly evaluate progress, challenges, motivations, needs and overall well-being of each individual as the struggle continues. Through constant spiritual reflection, the activist becomes aware of when he is either becoming negative and bitter towards the opponent and takes steps to make necessary corrections so that the work of bringing about social transformation is not hindered. As a famous UNESCO quote goes, “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

Spirituality often leads to a greater awareness and recognition of the common humanity shared by every human person on earth. Furthermore, it also there is an awareness of the dynamic connections that exist between everything there is in the universe. This fact is
most important for activists concerned with engaged in the protection and preservation of the earth and its resources. When, through spirituality, activists come into a greater realization of the interconnectedness that exists between human persons, there is a heightened level love and compassion for every all. The rights and dignity of every human person becomes important even when they are in opposition to the activist’s views and ideologies. There is also a greater appreciation of the importance of respecting every plant and animal life, the atmosphere, the earth’s resources and indeed everything religion, ideology, culture and tradition held by every individual human person. The activist becomes a person of love and compassion through the practice of spirituality.

In this study, the importance of applying the right means in order to achieve a good end has already been mentioned as part of King’s spirituality. Spirituality sensitizes the nonviolent activist to this important link between means and ends. In spiritual activism, one cannot avoid discussions on means and ends and this is because the strategies and tactics one uses are as important as the expected ends one has in mind.

There those who have argued that the ends achieved will justify any means. They do not agree with the nonviolent methods of those who hold the position that means must be as pure as the end. For them, such nonviolent action that insists on the purity of means is merely symbolic; as against their own method, which is more realistic. They suggest that those who hold to the purity of means in relation to ends have never seen real battle, neither have they experienced real action, they are merely passive in their style of nonviolence. In the words of Leroy Pelton (1974: 252), what they attempt to do is to “proclaim that all “means-and-end moralists” are strangers to the world of action and are passive non-doers.” This argument seems to ignore some of the important philosophical issues involved in the consideration of the relative importance of means
to ends. There are activists who acknowledge that nonviolent action may well prove to be the best means for achieving the ends sought. There are still others who see nonviolence in particular contexts as simply a method of last resort. For instance, Saul Alinsky (1972: 38, 39), an American social activist has argued that:

If Gandhi had had weapons...and the people to use them, this means would not have been so unreservedly rejected as the world would like to think....If he had had guns he might well have used them in an armed revolution against the British which would have been in keeping with the traditions of revolutions for freedom through force. Gandhi did not have the guns and if he had had the guns he would not have had the people to use the guns.273

In Alinsky's view, "Means and ends are so qualitatively interrelated that the question has never been the proverbial one, "Does the End justify the Means?" but always has been "Does this particular end justify this particular means?"274

The point Alinsky misses is that King, just like Gandhi, had higher ideals in mind when he argued for the moral grounds of the necessity of purity of means to ends. King sought not just to fight for the dignity and equal treatment of the African Americans in the United State, he also aimed for a fundamental change of heart for both the individual person and society as a whole. In line with Aldous Huxley (1938: 9) who claimed that "Good ends...can only be achieved by the employment of appropriate means," and that "The end cannot justify the means, for the simple reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced,"275 Gandhi (1961: 10) maintained that "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree: and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."276 Huxley (1938: 138), quoting mystic, Thomas a Kempis, a canon regular of the late medieval period and the probable author of The Imitation of Christ, says that "All men desire peace but very few desire those things which make for peace," he adds further that "the thing that
makes for peace above all others is the systematic practice in all human relationships of nonviolence." Quoting Gandhi, Huxley states that:

If violence is answered by violence, the result is a physical struggle. Now, a physical struggle inevitably arouses in the minds of those directly and even indirectly concerned in it emotions of hatred, fear, rage and resentment. In the heat of conflict all scruples are thrown to the winds, and all the habits of forbearance and humaneness, slowly and laboriously formed during generations of civilized living, are forgotten. Nothing matters any more except victory. And when at last victory comes to one or other of the parties, this final outcome of physical struggle bears no necessary relation to the rights and wrongs of the case: nor in most cases, does it provide any lasting settlement to the dispute.

King’s Christian spirituality obviously informed his philosophical thoughts on means and ends. He was convinced that the manner in which the conflict for truth is waged will itself manifest or obscure the truth. To fight for the truth by using dishonest, violent, inhuman, or unreasonable means would simply betray the truth one is trying to vindicate. The absolute refusal of evil or suspect means is a necessary element in the witness of nonviolence. It is of utmost importance that the nonviolent activist understands and recognizes the strategies and tactics he employs in the pursuit of social justice and peace are as important as the outcome expected at the end of the struggle. This realization moves the spiritual activist to constantly try to align his actions for justice and peace with his or her dreams for the same. Thus, spirituality facilitates in the nonviolent activist an awareness of the impact for good or evil of his methods and strategies; are they violent, dishonest, unkind, immoral, manipulative and disrespectful of the opponent’s dignity and point of view? These and other questions are what spirituality forces the nonviolent activist to ask as he engages in the work for social justice.

Humility, that is, the ability to recognize one’s strengths and weaknesses and also to do the same in regard to others is a very important factor that spirituality introduces and heightens in the life of the nonviolent activist. Humility, an outcome of the practice of
spirituality, disposes the nonviolent activist to accept the things that cannot be changed, try to change the ones that can while, through wisdom, learns to live with life’s contradictions and paradoxes. In the struggle and efforts to secure social justice and peace, often the nonviolent activist comes face-to-face with situations and truths that are ambiguous, complex and extremely difficult to address. As is often the case, the truth of a particular situation can be unclear and ambiguous. Yet, the nonviolent activist, with the help of spirituality, is able live with such unclear and even paradoxical situations hoping for better clarity as time goes on. According to Goldstein, (2011d:1), such readiness to accept and live with paradoxes and unresolved issues with calmness, dignity and integrity “…relieves us from the need to always classify into either/or, right and wrong.” Perhaps the greatest obstacle to genuine interreligious discussion between religions has been the issue of each party taking very unyielding positions and insisting on particular prejudiced position that one’s “truth” is the only and absolute truth. Usually that is the effect of “religiosity.” When, however, the nonviolent activist truly practices spirituality, there is born in the heart the openness and willingness to also see reality through the lenses of the other party or persons. Such openness enables in the activist the possibility of gaining a wider vision and much deeper appreciation and understanding that it is okay not to be right always, that the opponent, just like himself, also has elements of the truth, and that living with an opponent that does not share one’s political, religious and social views is possible. Spirituality in social justice work makes the nonviolent activist a perpetual learner, always ready and open to learn new things, new ways and different ways of addressing the social, political, economic and environmental issues.

Just as important to being open to new ideas and new ways of approaching life’s challenges, spirituality also helps the activist to reach deep down within his inner resources to
find the strength to endure hardships, sufferings, persecution and pain associated with the work for justice and peace, and indeed with life as a whole. Part of the challenges of being a social activist or a nonviolent resister has to do with emotional and psychological trauma often encountered while trying to comfort people experiencing injustice, hunger, depression, and even loss of loved ones. Without the support structure that spirituality provides, absorbing all of these suffering experienced by people could lead to emotional and psychological burnout for the social activist. This is where spirituality becomes very important in the life of the activist. Through the practice of spirituality, the activist is able to maintain an emotional distance from the traumatic aspects of his work in order to avoid emotional and psychological harm to his or her person. This attitude towards suffering is not meant to make the activist into a stoic who never feels the pain and suffering of the other in an empathetic way, rather, he or she remains open to such sufferings that others may experience but is also able to transcend the emotional set-back attached to these feelings in order to be free to address the causes of the suffering in the first place. While deep sensitivity, empathy and compassion are needed, so also is the need for some level of detachment and this qualities are what spirituality teaches and instills in the social nonviolent activist.

4.11 World’s Need for Spirituality

In his book "Everything Starts from Prayer: Mother Teresa's Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of All Faiths," Anthony Stern (1998), a New York area psychiatrist and author, quotes Mother Teresa in one of her Meditations on Spiritual Life as follows:

"There are different kinds of poverty. In India some people live and die in hunger. But in the West you have another kind of poverty, spiritual poverty. This is far worse. People do not believe in God, do not pray. People do not care for each other. You have the poverty
of people who are dissatisfied with what they have, who do not know how to suffer, who give in to despair. This poverty of heart is often more difficult to relieve and to defeat.\textsuperscript{280}

There is an obvious disconnection between the modern world and spirituality today and the effects are being felt at various levels and in the lives of the human person and in society as a whole. When we go out these days, what do we see? We see rude people with hearts of stone, children screaming at their parents because they were raised without challenges, without discipline and without having to earn anything. We see people who do not want to work but are constantly looking for easy money and the easy life. We see the healthy, pushing aside the old and infirm. Young people who have not been taught that it is a noble thing to give up their seats in the bus for older people. We see the weak being trampled by the strong. On the television we see so much war and a lack of love between peoples and nations. Because of our lack of true spirituality, we will destroy any trace of civilization.

It might be argued that all these malaises have been with us since the creation of the world and that there is no need to blame them on the lack of spirituality or a spiritual tradition. This may be true but can we when we reflect on the benefits of a spiritual tradition and the values it holds for both the human person and society as a whole; lessons like love of self and others, respect for life and the whole of creation, dignity and sanctity of life and the human person, the need for honesty, truthfulness, justice and fairness, equality and racial integration, respect for gender equality, call to nonviolence, the invitation to focus on important rather than transient realities and so on, we have to admit that our world is much better off with some form of positive spirituality than without it.

To further highlight the absence of and therefore the desire of people for some sort of spirituality in our modern world, we notice a strange pseudo-nostalgic attraction of most people
for certain kinds of movies like "The Lord of the Rings, and Harry Potter. It might be argued that people love these kinds of films today because of their entertainment value but on closer scrutiny perhaps this love and desire for such films might be hiding a deeper longing in the human heart. St. Augustine once said: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." The reason for such desire and love of such films as Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings could be attributed to the spiritual poverty being experienced in modern society today, says Antonio Hernandez, (2003) in his article titled: "Strange Longings: Our Spiritual Poverty." Writing further, Hernandez argues that modern society ‘lacks tradition and culture’ and that "J. R. R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings was written in a desperate attempt to “create” a “mythology” proper to England...J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series was designed to assuage the loneliness and emptiness of people’s lives." Perhaps it is the same kind of emptiness and restlessness of the human heart that St. Augustine referred to in his Confessions.

Howard Clinebell, equipped with thirty years of psychological counseling experience, has discovered about seven spiritual hungers common to every human person and by extension common to society. Without the fulfilling of these needs, the human person will continue to be in a state of crisis and society would remain in constant turmoil as we presently experience in our modern world. These spiritual needs are, that: All people need to experience regularly the healing and empowerment of love - from others, self, and an ultimate source. Everyone needs to experience renewing times of transcendence - moments that expand us beyond the immediate sensory spheres. Everybody needs vital beliefs that give some sense of meaning and hope the midst of losses, tragedies, and failures. Every person needs to have values, priorities, and life commitments - usually centered in issues of justice, integrity, and love - that guide us in personally and socially responsible living. Each
human being needs to discover and develop their inner wisdom, creativity and love of their
unique transpersonal/spiritual self. All people need a deepening awareness of oneness with
other people and with the natural world, the wonderful web of all living things. Every human
being needs spiritual resources to help heal the painful wounds of grief, guilt, resentment,
unforgiveness, self-rejection, and shame. We also need spiritual resources to deepen our
experiences of trust, self-esteem, hope, joy and love of life. Spirituality can help people
maintain good mental health. It can help them cope with everyday stress and can keep them
grounded. Tolerant and inclusive spiritual communities can provide valuable support and
friendship. There is some evidence of links between spirituality and improvements in
people’s mental health.

4.12 Acquiring and Developing Spirituality

Spirituality and spiritual renewal manifest itself within a myriad of activities. Meditation,
prayer, reading great works of literature, listening to music, and communicating with nature are a
few examples of activities spiritual leaders may utilize in renewing their spirituality (Covey,
1989). Thompson (2004), describes the method of self-talk as effective means of renewing one’s
spiritual dimension. Self-talk entails “conversing with oneself in positive terms about one’s
performance. He believes that this process allows individuals to realign their personal values and
principles and redefine the meaning they derive from their work.

According to the Journal of College Student Development in the United States, “The
need for greater meaning is the central crisis of our times (Abdulah, 1995; Zohar & Marshall,
2000). In US society, questions of spirituality are no longer primarily confined to private
conversations among personal confidants. These conversations are spilling over into our public lives (Secretan, 1997).

The challenge that comes with spirituality though, is that while we have a sense of it, we cannot directly perceive it, it is beyond time and space. This sense of the spiritual comes from our perception that there is more to life than what we see and experience. We have a sneaking suspicion that something more is out there. Spirituality has become the attempt to be part of this “other side”. It is this quest for answers to the deep questions of life that are being asked by more and more people all over the world these days that usually lead to the pursuit and practice of spirituality. Questions like “What is the meaning of life? Is there more to life than meets the eye? Is there a God? Is there life after death? Does life have a purpose and an intended end?

The path and practice of spirituality through silent meditation also lead to enlightenment from the Buddhist perspective. This practice of silent meditation involves the discipline of sitting still, whether in a lotus position or on a chair, for stretches of time daily. It also involves the practice of renunciation and letting go of unnecessary burdens and worries of life. The silence helps to create a space where the divine and the individual meet and then true peace and wisdom is achieved. Silent Meditation is not something normal for most people in our ever busy society today and that is why there is a need for courage and discipline in this exercise.

Spirituality is a journey inwards in the region of the heart where, through silence, prayer and meditation, a space is created for an encounter and an on-going relationship with the divine reality, for some people, known as God. For others it would also be through meditation, silence and renunciation of worldly attachments. Still for others it would involve the recitation of the beads and other spiritual meditative practices. There are varied ways and routes through which this connection with the divine can be achieved.
Almost all established religions of the world would have practices and methods that, when practiced, can open the practitioner up to the divine reality known as God in Monotheistic religions or lead to enlightenment in other religions.

For other seekers of peace and union with the divine reality, who are unaffiliated with any established religion, the path might be through the practice of Yoga, Taichi and other mind-focusing techniques. All of these practices that are known as spirituality are meant also to lead to inner balance of the body, soul, mind and spirit. Spirituality often leads to clarity of vision and perception and a detachment from materialism.

4.13 Summary

From all that has been said above, it should be clear at this point that spirituality and the practice of it as foundation and support for social action for justice is very important if the transformation of both the individual and of society and social institutions is to take place. Thus, the need for and importance of practicing spirituality on a regular basis both individually and communally cannot be overemphasized. To separate spirituality and nonviolent action for social change is to fall into the error often made by many in the work of social justice, that is, the error of dualism and of separation of these two important and mutually inclusive dimensions of nonviolent action for justice and social change. Spiritual practices help to bring about a sense of equilibrium to an ordinarily challenging work of social and nonviolent activism. As mentioned in the section on how to acquire and develop spirituality, the idea of being both contemplative and active in the work of social justice is what is being proposed in this work. There is a need to sustain a regular practice of contemplation as a way of life in social justice work; practices such as the practice of silence for periods of time daily, prayer and meditation, spiritual retreats, yoga, spiritual counseling and lectio-divina. The job if inner work is so necessary if there is to be
positive results in the outer work of social action for change. Spirituality helps to maintain motivation and energy levels that are necessary for the difficult task in social justice work or nonviolent resistance. For Christian nonviolent activists, it is important that they ground themselves in the Gospels just as King did. This ensures a rich supply of spiritual encouragement and inner strength and also acts as a constant reminder of the need to maintain good work ethic and morality. To do this is to be constantly reminded of the need to be humble, to always align needs the ends. Spirituality of the gospels helps the activist to evaluate his motives, and strategies in order to see whether they are in line with good ends projected. Spirituality of the Gospels also helps the activist develop respect every human person and indeed as a result of a deepened awareness of the interconnectedness of everything that exists, everything sentient and non-sentient in the universe, and also to be discerning and to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life's needs such as family, friends, recreation, exercise, good eating and sleeping habits. The Gospels also remind the nonviolent activist of the redemptive dimensions of suffering and so he or she is better able endure the sufferings experienced in the course of the work for social justice. With all that has been said above, it is without doubt incontrovertible that spirituality is indispensable in nonviolent social action.
Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

In my research study on the relevance of spirituality in the Christian nonviolence and nonviolent resistance of Martin Luther King J., the following were my findings, that:

5.1.1 King’s Christian spirituality played a vital role in shaping the way and manner in which he practiced nonviolence and indeed nonviolent resistance during his time of leading the African Americans in Civil Rights Movement against segregationist laws and other forms of injustice that discriminated against African Americans since their arrival in the United States of America. I traced in chapter three of this study the historical record of injustices meted out to the African American community since the time of slave trade up until the time of King’s Civil Rights Movement, which was given impetus by the incident in Montgomery in which Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat for a Caucasian man. This incident sparked off the first boycott of the bus transportation and brought the King’s nonviolent resistance into limelight. I also discussed in the same chapter, the trends and influences of Christian spirituality on the philosophy and ethics of King as he guided and led the Civil Rights Movement based on his philosophy of nonviolent resistance.

5.1.2 Nonviolent social action demands a grounding in spirituality, just as Gandhi advised:

“...as Gandhi saw, the fully consistent practice of nonviolence demands a solid metaphysical and religious basis both in being and in God. This comes before subjective good intentions and sincerity.”286

To buttress this finding, I discussed in chapter four, the dangers inherent in a nonviolent resistance that was bereft of spirituality. I also contrasted this finding with a discussion on
the futility of adhering only to spirituality as a way of bringing about social change in an oppressive and violent situation such as King found himself.

5.1.3 The old and tested dualistic approach that separated spirituality and work for social justice is unsustainable in the long haul since taking any one extreme brought with it much hazards and drawbacks. I discussed the problem of dualism in nonviolent social action in chapter four and proposed an integration of both spirituality and strategy as the best combination for a consistent, humane, ethical and love-centered social action for change.

5.1.4 Compassion and love are inherent human evolutionary traits and are vital for the sustenance of the human species and society. This was dealt with in chapter two of this study. It is the conclusion of this study that to practice and to be spiritual were part and parcel of what it means to be a human person.

5.1.5 Nonviolence and nonviolent action are not ideologies of the weak and powerless peoples of the earth, rather, are ways of life and a powerful and potent tool for resisting evil. This was expressed quite well in the philosophy of King and of Gandhi and was dealt with in chapters three and four of this study. Spirituality provides that stabilizing force and inner strength needed for any involvement in the usually difficult task of nonviolent social action.

5.1.6 Spirituality is part of our human make up as attested to and argued by St. Thomas Aquinas. This finding was discussed in chapter two of this study. It is the position and conclusion of this study that to be human is to be spiritual based on Thomistic argument, arguments from the human sciences and biological sciences.
5. 2 Toward a Spirituality of Nonviolent Civil Resistance

"A spirituality that is only private and self-absorbed, one devoid of an authentic political and social consciousness, does little to halt the suicidal juggernaut of history. On the other hand, an activism that is not purified by profound spiritual and psychological self-awareness and rooted in divine truth, wisdom, and compassion will only perpetuate the problem it is trying to solve, however righteous its intentions. When, however, the deepest and most grounded spiritual vision is married to a practical and pragmatic drive to transform all existing political, economic, and social institutions, a holy force - the power of wisdom and love in action - is born. This force I define as Sacred Activism." 287

As we move forward into the twenty first century, the realities of a postmodern world continue to confront us daily. Much progress is been made in the fields of science and technology, arts and the culture, social sciences and indeed in almost every aspect of human endeavor. At the same time, we are also confronted with the stark reality of a world that is hooked on violence and war, a world where big corporate businesses hold nations in a stranglehold of corruption and greed. We live in a world of war and injustice where most of the peoples of the world go hungry daily and are exploited by big corporations and greedy politicians and people’s rights to live decently as human persons are taken away from them. The need for social activism that awakens the people to their rights and that confronts and stands in the way of these corporations has never been greater.

There is a definite need for a spirituality that acts as the framework for every sphere of life and especially in nonviolent social action in our world. A spirituality of nonviolent action is the best and perhaps the only alternative for bringing about a just and peaceful world. There is a definite need for spirituality that moves into concrete action to bring about change at all levels of human and social endeavor. Such a spirituality has to engage fully in the struggle for justice and peace. As John Dear once wrote, "In a culture of violence like ours, what we need from people of faith and conscience are active spiritualities of nonviolence. Now more than ever, we need the
faith-based nonviolence practiced by Abraham Heschel, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mohandas Gandhi.

There is a need for the merging of both spirituality and nonviolent action in such a way that they become molded into one unified way of life and strategy for confronting structures that perpetuate injustice and violence and that struggles to bring about justice and peace to a broken world. There should no longer be a dualistic conception of spirituality and nonviolence. In our contemporary world, given the culture of violence, war and injustice, activists must become spiritual seekers as well and contemporary spiritual seekers must also become activists deeply engaged in the struggle for social equality and justice on every level of human endeavor. Activists and spiritual seekers need to become connected to forge a vision of action that is inspiring, hopeful and rooted in deep spiritual wisdom and love. More and more, there is a movement among nonviolent social activists to avoid a separation of spirituality and nonviolent action. Some spiritual seekers, for instance, approach spirituality as a subtle way of dissociating themselves from hands-on realistic social, economic, and political engagement with the world. Spirituality like this only allows social evils to continue and the status quo of corruption and injustice maintained. Activists, on the other hand, are sometimes, in their exuberance and desire to bring about social change, often engaged in struggles for social justice that lead them to complete exhaustion, burn out and angry and divisive rage and are often cut off from the healing and transforming wisdom of the spiritual traditions and simple techniques, prayers, and practices that could strengthen, sustain and inspire them in their dangerous and often difficult struggles.

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. As a matter of fact, it could even prove to be counter-productive. Spirituality, which, in most cases, is aligned with ethical considerations, often acts in the activist, as 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. In the practice of nonviolence, the means does not always justify the ends as was portrayed in the life and philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. This idea was rightly brought out in the following statements of Thomas Merton (Merton, 1968), ‘...he who resists force with force in order to seize power may become contaminated by the evil which he is resisting and, when he gains power, may be just as ruthless and unjust a tyrant as the one he has dethroned.’ Merton’s warning was already foreshadowed by George Orwell in his book, Animal Farm (Orwell, 1946). In this bestseller, Orwell captures quite well the dangers involved in a revolution that is not guided by moral integrity, a quality that spirituality helps to engender. George Orwell, whose real name was Eric Arthur Blair, wrote Animal Farm as a metaphor about the Russian Revolution, about how a revolutionary government could become worse that its monarchist predecessor. This metaphor could also be applied to many political organizations, labor unions, peace and nonviolent movements. The important lesson is that the organization’s leaders often manipulate the organization for personal benefit, and end up being as bad, if not worse, than the real or imaginary evils from which they were trying to protect their followers.

What is needed in our modern milieu are people who can bring into fusion the deep spiritual knowledge, experience, and practice of spirituality with wise, determined and sustained action for justice and peace. Such fusion of spirituality and nonviolent activism was well
exemplified in the lives of great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama, Dorothy Day and Desmond Tutu. Each of these individuals had the courage to meet the challenges of our modern times with the wisdom gained from being steeped in spirituality and spiritual practices, an inner strength derived from inner contemplative life and experience, and added to these, decisive action for socio-political transformation of their various situations. Combining spirituality and nonviolent action provides the activist with a system of thought and traditional wisdom that act as framework and support for the kind of transformative change that is sustainable and lasting. We find ourselves embroiled in deep economic, political, spiritual and social crises and hence a call to action. The kind of action needed to bring about a just and lasting peace and social and economic equality has to be guided by the wisdom and inspiration and nourishment that spirituality and contemplative inner life can provide. It has to be both contemplative and active.

There is need for humility if the practice of nonviolence is to have any credibility. This means that there must be a readiness and openness on the part of the nonviolent resister to learn something new from the opponent. This is especially true in situations where a 'new truth' is made known and the nonviolent resister is required to evaluate it and accept it if he finds it to be true. He must be willing to admit that the opponent is not completely inhumane, unreasonable and wrong. This is important because when the opponent understands that we are willing to see him as a human person, listen to him and even consider his position, this helps him to lower his guards and makes the opponent more open to dialogue and change. What this means is that the nonviolent resister must constantly be carrying out self-reflection in order to understand his own insecurities and reasons for his mistrust of the opponent. He must be totally convinced of where
he or she stands on issues and yet open-minded enough to listen to the other without fearing that his own convictions would suffer.

The need for a lived spirituality of active nonviolence has never been greater in our world as the world seeks a way to secure social justice and economic equality for all. A spirituality of active nonviolence is a way of life which holds out hope that one day, every human being would be seen as equal and there would be love and respect for everyone and everything in the universe. A spirituality of nonviolent action is an invitation to always stand up for the truth in a spirit of love and compassion. It is an invitation to take a stand for justice and peace and to bring about the reign of God's Kingdom and a world where every nation on earth shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and study war no more.

5.3 Vision of Justice and Peace Inspired by a Spirituality of Active Nonviolence

King's philosophy, spirituality and method of nonviolent action had love as its central foundation and were motivated by his vision of the "Beloved Community." King might have started out as an ideologue that had the naïve optimism that the potentiality of that community could be actualized in time and history, but his reading of Reinhold Neibuhr's Christian realism soon brought him down to reality. He did not despair about the possibility of achieving his envisioned community. King's vision of a beloved community was a vision that saw the complete integration of society, a community of love and justice, a community where men and women would be brothers and sister to each other and friends to all.

In much the same way, it is my purpose in this study to promote the idea that when people begin to renounce violence in order to embrace a spirituality of active nonviolence,
together they begin to evolve a new vision of a nonviolent world; a world where there would be
no more injustice, no more bombs, no more handguns, racism, sexism, economic inequality. I am
not under any illusions that a spirituality of nonviolence would immediately solve all the world’s
problems but at least we would have set the ball in motion for the building of a community of
love and respect and compassion just like King envisioned. As a spirituality of nonviolent action
takes control in people’s hearts and minds, people begin to appreciate the seriousness of the
world’s present environment, the social and racial discrimination, poverty and economic
inequality, violence and war, accumulation and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,
they would also begin to realize that change can only come through embracing a nonviolent but
active spirituality inspired by love and compassion and appreciation for the interconnectedness
of everyone and everything in the world. Through such spirituality, a new paradigm for how
people work and how they define success, how they integrate the fullness of who human persons
are and what they know into the struggle for justice and peace.

Part of my vision for the world that would be brought about through the practice and
praxis of a spirituality of nonviolent action is economic fairness for all. This was also a vision
shared by King in his beloved community. King wanted to bring about a socialist approach to the
sharing of the wealth of the nation such that no one is left behind. All the wealth and resources of
any nation ought to be distributed in such a way that it serves the needs of every human person
living in that country. The current situation whereby there is a wide chasm between the rich and
the poor, an inequality brought about by a selfish, cold and inhumane capitalist economic
system, is simply not sustainable and immoral. As long as such conditions exist, the world would
always be a in state of turmoil and anarchy. King repeatedly denounced the economic system of
the United States that catered mainly to the rich one percent to the detriment of the other ninety
nine percent who had to continually struggle to get by. For King, that was not God’s intention for human persons. In the same way, I believe that until such economic inequality as exists in societies is remedied, the vision of a beloved community would remain simply just that, a vision. It is my hope that in the nearest future, this vision of a community of love, justice and peace would come to actually be a reality and this would happen sooner when people begin to embrace a spirituality that is supported by active nonviolence.

Furthermore, this vision of a community of love, justice and peace would become a reality in our world when, through the practice of a spirituality of nonviolent action, people begin to understand and embrace the interrelatedness of human existence. With such understanding comes the impetus for treating every human person with justice and fairness. As King once said, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” To deny any one person his constitutional rights is to violate the rights of all human persons. Racism and economic depravity is an injustice that is capable of undermining every facet of a society. I believe that as the result of the interrelatedness of every human person, we all become our brother’s keeper and we have an obligation to look out for one another’s good. As King once said, “Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.”

5.4 Towards a More Compassionate World

No one would deny the fact that there is a need for more compassion in a broken world such as we live in today. To the extent that we as human persons realize the rich legacy of love and compassion bestowed upon us through our long evolutionary journey, to that extent would our society experience an awakening of love, justice, forgiveness, healing and peace. When we realize that love and compassion are part of who we are and when we do not continue to assume
that selfishness, greed, corruption, pride, hatred, racism and competitiveness are all that define us, to that extent would we and indeed, our society be healthy.

Quite clearly, recent and continuing scientific findings are redefining our understanding of what actually lies at the bottom of who we are as human persons. Through science, we come to see that compassion and love are deeply rooted in our brains and biological makeup. When we as human persons express these natural and inherent emotions and values, we foster friendship and meaningful relationships as a community. Clearly, we need to reassess our assumptions about human nature or else we might focus on the negative emotions and inclinations too much to the detriment of the human species.

To conclude this study, it would be appropriate to use this medium to invite the reader to a deep reflection on the whole theme of a spirituality of nonviolence and nonviolent action since these have been the purpose of this research study. An active nonviolence that is inspired by a spirituality of love, compassion and courage is proposed here as the best viable alternative to violence, acquiescence and mere strategy of social reform. A spirituality of active nonviolence accomplishes more in the heart and minds of those committed to it. The nonviolent resister discovers new strength daily and self-worth through the practice of spirituality. Activists find within, an inexhaustible source of vitality and zest for life and action that they never knew they had through the practice of spirituality. King puts it aptly like this:

“But the nonviolent approach does something to hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them new self-respect. It calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not know they had. Finally, it so stirs the conscience of the opponent that reconciliation becomes a reality.” 292
A spirituality of nonviolence lies at the heart of every religion and if the *imago Dei* theory is accepted as presented earlier in this study, indeed, spirituality and nonviolence lie at the heart of every human person. Human persons are created by God to be nonviolent, regardless of what the politics and cultures of the modern world tell us. As King once said, the night before he was killed: “The choice before us is no longer between violence or nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.”

Justice and Peace in the world is totally attainable through the means of nonviolence that is supported by a spirituality of love. We as the human race really have no other choice. If we had we would have tried it. Indeed many other alternatives have been tried in the centuries all to no avail. It would not be easy but neither is it impossible. What is important to start applying nonviolent spirituality in conflict and social issues. There are those who are pessimistic and who even believe that it is part of human nature to be violent but there are also those of us who believe to the contrary that our true nature is to be nonviolent and compassionate. This conviction is not born out of naïve optimism; rather, it is very realistic, concrete, discerning, practical and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of every human person. It is not practical idealism but practical and realistic. There is no doubt in my mind and heart that love and love alone is the most potent force in the world. It is the only remedy for an ailing world that thrives on violence. If our world is to survive, then love is the answer and a nonviolent approach to every conflict. The injunction of “an eye for an eye” as is currently being practiced between Israel and Palestine is totally unsustainable. Sooner or later, if they do not embrace the nonviolent way, destruction is the only end that awaits them. Retaliation of hate and violence only increases the presence of violence and evil in the world but a spirituality of nonviolent action offers the most sensible alternative.
As nonviolent activists continue to engage the oppressive powers that be in the struggle for social justice and equality for all, they must practice spirituality in order to find strength to endure and the dignity not to become bitter and hateful. Nations and peoples must put an end to war and violence or else we shall all perish. The world needs to commit to the way of nonviolence and the nonviolent activist has to lead the way, inspired by a spirituality of love and compassion that is at the same time active in eradicating violence and injustice. There has to be found in our world, new ways of settling our differences that moves far away from violence and war. Even when King and Gandhi made allowance for the possibility of some sort of violence in the situation that one cannot practice nonviolence, what they saw as a negative good in order to stop the spread of an evil force, still, even they would also admit that solution was far from the ideal. The time is right for us to speak out against war and violence and corruption and greed such as are experienced in Wall Street, but this has to be done nonviolently and with the wisdom and courage that spirituality supplies.

Attaining world peace through a spirituality of nonviolent action might seem daunting but it is achievable. All the hatred and manipulation must stop and be replaced with a more sensible approach and nonviolence inspired by spirituality is such an approach. We must pursue peace through the right means, in other words, means and ends must be aligned and because the end exists in the means, the violence and destruction through which the world hopes to achieve peaceful ends can only bring more misery and pain. We must find the courage to stop the vicious cycle of hate and war through the practice of active nonviolence enabled by spirituality of love, wisdom, courage and compassion.

I do not take a position of passive nonviolence, I do not as yet believe in pacifism that does nothing in action. What I propose as the way forward is a practical and down-to-earth
nonviolent method that allows it to be watered by the well-springs of spiritual wisdom and strength. My vision for the world was well stated by King when he echoed the words of the prophet Isaiah and looked forward to a time when the nations and peoples of the world "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"..."then the lion and lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid."
Endnotes

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142 Ibid. p. 5


149 I used the current terms “African Americans” in referring to black slaves in America during the years of slavery for the purpose of respecting the sensibility of our present times. In those days, they were referred to as “Negroes,” a term that is considered today as derogatory and unacceptable.


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153 Ibid.

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This was an infamous footnote in Hume’s essay: “Of National Characters” in the 1753-1754 edition of Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects.


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Autobiography

The Researcher is a Redemptorist Missionary Priest from Nigeria. With a Bachelors Degree in Philosophy, he has lived in Thailand for five years where he obtained a Masters Degree in Educational Administration from the Assumption University. He has a keen interest in spirituality and active nonviolence. He is involved in spiritual direction, retreat preaching and parish pastoral work and has also started and led various spiritual prayer groups. He has a vision of what he would like the world to be. This vision includes justice and peace, religious unity and understanding amongst all religions of the world. He also dreams of a world where economic justice and fairness is a reality and not just a dream. He is a firm believer in innate human goodness while recognizing human capacity for evil. A combination and practice of a positive spirituality of nonviolence is for him the way to achieving justice and peace in our world.