Analyzing of King’s Balance of His Twin Appeals Jeffery House

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In 1963, Martin Luther King was arrested for a non-violent protest in Birmingham when racial segregation was at its peak. He wrote his letter from Birmingham jail in response to the criticism by the eight clergymen who called these protestors unwise and condemned their leaders. He began his letter by referring to the clergymen as peacekeepers and praised their sincerity while setting a tone for his main arguments.

Martin Luther King created a beautiful balance between religion and patriotism by placing religious versus for justice in regard to civil rights in America. He used references from religion and used scriptural texts from the Bible to evoke emotions of his followers. He does not emphasize religion over patriotism or patriotism over religion but he points out that acting on the religious teachings, it is possible to apply religious convictions in our relationships with our fellow citizens. He was religious and his religious preaching was the greatest force for driving the Civil Rights movement. The letter from Birmingham Jail was written to a group of his Christian followers and he used a lot of religious arguments to appeal to his followers.

He created a wonderful masterpiece with the right balance of his religious knowledge by using tenets of the faith and his political knowledge to support his arguments in favor of the anti-segregation movements.

He said in his letter that he had come to Birmingham because he saw injustice there. He left his town in the same way as prophets had left their homes to go and eliminate injustice in other towns. He further quoted Saint Augustine by including his saying in his letter that a law that does not provide justice is not at all a law. He then relates his religious point of view with his political views and said that Blacks have the right to speak against the law that does not fulfill its purpose. An unjust law is of no use and religion also allows to blindly follow the unjust law (editor, 2014).

# Furthermore, he addressed the comments of critics that segregation laws must be fought in courts rather than on streets but King explained that only direct action of Blacks can force White people to confront racism and make peace dialogues. As protestors were breaking laws and according to the Old Testament, the unjust laws are not to be followed so that is why protestors were breaking laws and express their patriotism with the country and with their people. They were breaking immoral and unjust laws just to show the right path to the people (Jones, 2010).

# He also extends his criticism on the leadership of clergymen who are also equally responsible for transforming a society. According to King, the present churches have fallen far from their true roots of early Christian origins. They had merged themselves in the society rather than becoming the source of inspiration for people. His opposition to segregation is religious. He believed that an unjust law allows majority to take hold of power and then majority can limit the actions of a minority. The law must apply rules equally to both Blacks and Americans. If it fails to do so then it is an unjust law and should not be practiced. He further elaborates that these laws do not provide basic rights to Blacks and they are not created on the basis of a true democratic system (Berry, 2005).

# Although Martin Luther King used many religious allusions in his letter to support his arguments but he emphasized more on patriotism by stating that the south is in dire need of having patriots who can participate in the civil rights movement. The letter is not a religious document but a motivational speech on why patriotism is important in ending racial discrimination.

# References

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