

The Movement Grows

Life would never be the same for Martin. A year ago he had been a young and unknown preacher. Now he was famous. He was known all across the United States and in other countries, too. He was Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of the fast-growing civil rights movement.

Suddenly all kinds of awards and honors began to pour in. Long articles were written about him in newspapers and magazines. He was asked to speak at meetings and dinners all across the coun-

try. He was offered many important and high-paying jobs.

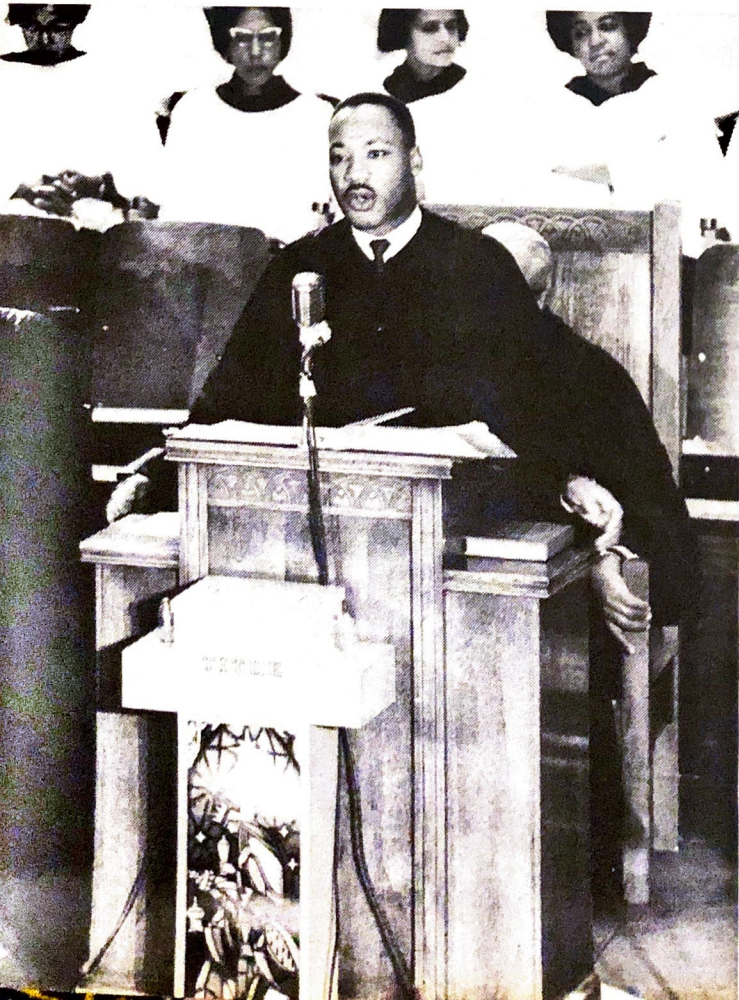
One award especially pleased Martin. It was an honorary degree from Morehouse—the college he had graduated from just a few years before. He sat at the award ceremony as President Benjamin Mays said, “You are mature beyond your years. You are wiser at 28 than most men are at 60. You are more courageous than most men can ever be.”

A few months later Martin and other black leaders from all across the South formed a new organization. It was called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the SCLC. Martin was elected its president. The SCLC had one purpose—to fight for Negro rights everywhere.

Life became a whirlwind for Martin. He helped plan other boycotts. He worked for the right to vote. He traveled hundreds of thousands of miles each year giving speeches to raise money for the SCLC. He wrote a book about the Montgomery bus

boycott. And all the while he tried to be a full-time pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

Finally Martin realized that things could not go on this way. Sadly he told the Dexter congregation that he must leave them. He was going to become co-pastor of Ebenezer, Daddy King's church. Then he would have more time to give to the SCLC. "I can't stop now," he told his congregation. "History has thrust something on me and I cannot turn away."



Martin tells his congregation at Montgomery's Dexter Avenue Baptist Church that he must leave them.

So Martin and the family moved to Atlanta. By now that family had grown. Yoki was big sister to a little brother named for his father—but everyone called him Marty.

Just as the Kings moved into their new home, another move was being made—a big step forward in the civil rights movement. On February 2, 1960, four Negro college students walked into a Greensboro, North Carolina, department store and sat down at the lunch counter. Negroes could buy things in the store. They could even buy food at the lunch counter—if they stood up. But only white customers could sit on one of the stools.

Nobody would serve the four black students, of course. So all day they just sat quietly. It wasn't easy. Most customers ignored what was going on. Some, however, cursed and shoved and even hit the students.

But the next day—and the next—the students were back. News of their brave action spread quickly through the colleges in the area.



Brave college students begin a new chapter in the civil rights struggle—the sit-in movement.

On the fourth day some white students from a nearby girls' school joined in the protest. Menus were offered to these white students. But they just shook their heads. They would not eat until everyone was served.

The student sit-in movement spread like wildfire all across the South. Two

weeks later there were ten sit-ins in progress. After two months there were fifty. For the first time blacks and whites were protesting together. "It's an idea whose time has come!" Martin exclaimed proudly.

Soon it seemed that there were sit-ins everywhere. Sometimes, to end one of them, a place would be closed down. Other times the protesters were arrested.

As they marched off to jail they sang proudly:

"We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today,
Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day. . . ."

"We Shall Overcome," an old hymn with new words, had become the song of the civil rights movement.

From the beginning Martin worked with the students. He begged them to follow the "Montgomery way." No matter what happened they must not hate or fight

back. "Hate cannot drive out hate," he said. "Only love can do that." And this mixture of love and nonviolent action was "the weapon that cuts without wounding. It is the sword that heals."

Before long Martin decided to take part in a sit-in himself. On a crisp October morning he and a group of students sat down together at a lunch counter in Atlanta's biggest department store. A few minutes later the police arrived and arrested everyone.

When Yoki heard that her father was in jail she was very upset. She was only four, but she already knew that jails were places for bad people.

"Why, Mommy?" she asked, tears streaming down her face. "Why did Daddy go to jail?"

"I knew my children would ask this question one day," Coretta said, "and I had thought a lot about how to answer it."

Now she took Yoki on her lap and began to speak slowly. "Your daddy is a

brave and kind man. He went to jail to help people. Some people don't have enough to eat. They don't have comfortable homes to live in, or enough clothes to wear. Daddy went to jail to help all people get these things."

Yoki stopped crying. But she still looked upset. "And don't worry," Coretta added softly, "your daddy will be coming back."

Coretta wondered if Yoki was old enough to understand what she'd just been told. A few days later her question was answered. Yoki had been going to a nursery school for both black and white children. Now a little white schoolmate tried to pick a fight. "Oh, *your* daddy," the little girl said in a mean tone of voice. "He's always going to jail!"

Yoki lifted her head. "Yes," she replied proudly. "He goes to jail to help people. And I'd like to go to jail with my daddy, too."