

(assent to correct beliefs) and pietism (Christianity as a matter of felt experience), these thinkers aim to show that theological integrity and a rich emotional life are connected.

This is not to say that the writers would defend excessive emotionalism in Christianity. They would commend our seeking control, comprehension and insight amid the chaos of modern life. But they also recognize that because Jesus commanded us to love, because Paul called joy a fruit of the Spirit, we therefore need to take seriously the role which these "affections" are to play in our lives. As Augustine made his

"heart" a *dramatis persona* in his *Confessions*, so must we consider the soul's motions, say these thinkers, if we are truly to embody the faith. In this way these theologians are taking up the challenge which Wesley and Edwards faced: to show the centrality of the affections in the Christian life while also making clear the linkages among emotion, belief and action.

James Fowler has said that Holmer's and Saliers's work on Christian virtues and affections, especially its refreshing freedom from dependence on modern psychology, is sorely needed today (*Practical Theology* [Harper & Row,

1983], pp. 160-161). They believe that affectivity does not easily fit into the university's artificial structures, but should not be left exclusively to psychologists and counselors. The theologian must see that the emotions have definite implications for the Christian life and that the Christian story has important implications for the affectional life. These authors demonstrate that a concern for emotional reality is neither merely a dispensable feature of hothouse revivalism nor just a regrettable artifact of the "me" generation. The emotional life is one of the essential bases of Christianity. ■

## AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

### Evaluating King's Life and Legacy

PRESTON WILLIAMS'S attempt (Feb. 25) to describe and critique my book *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* is misleading in a number of ways.

First, many of the review's readers might assume by the way Williams introduces a number of quotations he cites that they are my words, e.g., "his intent was to have us 'recognize [King's] humanity'" and "He aimed to 'demythologize one of our heroes.'" In fact, these are statements by Dr. King's friends and relatives (college classmate and Harvard professor Charles V. Willie, and King's sister, Christine King Farris, respectively). Clearer presentation might have made this important distinction more readily apparent to the Century's readers.

In that same vein, I also want to point out that although Williams states that "Garrow apparently wishes to destroy the cult he suggests is being built up around King," nowhere in *Bearing the Cross* do I speak of any King "cult," nor do I express or imply any desire to "destroy" Dr. King's image. I do not believe that any fair-minded and unbiased reader of my book would use either of

those words to describe its themes and messages.

Second, Century readers should know that, contrary to Williams's implications, the metaphor "bearing the cross" is not something I drafted and applied to Dr. King, but is King's own repeated metaphor for his life and calling. Here are three examples of Dr. King's comments on how that image reflected and expressed his own sense of mission: (1) in a letter to his wife, Coretta, during his October 1960 Georgia imprisonment he wrote, "This is the cross that we must bear for the freedom of our people"; (2) in an important January 1963 address to the National Conference on Religion and Race, held in Chicago, King said that "the cross we bear precedes the crown we wear. To be a Christian one must take up his cross, with all of its difficulties and agonizing and tension-packed content, and carry it until that very cross leaves its marks upon us and redeems us to that more excellent way which comes only through suffering"; and (3) in semiprivate remarks in May 1967 to the SCLC's staff he said, "When I took up the cross, I recognized its meaning. . . . The cross is something that you bear, and ultimately that you die on."

Third, Williams makes some questionable assumptions when he writes that King's "failures in the northern ghettos, in Vietnam peacemaking and in the war on poverty may not have been due to the fact that he [King] had discovered the root cause of all evil and was acting to abolish it, but rather to his forgetting the need for . . . a synthesis of extremes, and because hubris, not cross-bearing, led him to be a drum major in too many

parades. Since the events of these last days [*sic*; years] were incomplete as well as ineffective, it might be well for Garrow, and for us, to resist the temptation to speculate concerning their meaning."

I think Williams is wrong to speak of Dr. King's efforts in the 1966 to 1968 period, especially his forthright opposition to America's war in Vietnam, as "failures" or "ineffective." Such inaccurate, passing assertions badly undervalue King's contributions and achievements. Second, Williams's remark that hubris led Dr. King to tackle the issues of Vietnam and economic injustice in America neglects King's concern that the civil rights struggle not be limited simply to opposing racial discrimination but that it also address America's influence in the world and the distribution of wealth here at home.

Also problematic is Williams's recommendation that we avoid reflecting on the "meaning" of King's critiques of American military adventurism and American economic injustice. This would rob us of the most challenging and richly instructive parts of Dr. King's legacy, for those issues are still troubling many Americans today. Williams's desire to disregard these very valuable aspects of Dr. King's legacy shows that not only do Williams and I perceive differently Dr. King's own understanding of his calling, but that we also disagree most profoundly on the present-day importance of King's life and legacy.

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