

KING AND X: CONVERGING TOWARD A COMMON SOLUTION

1. Research the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X before they became national figures. List the five most important events in each man's life that you believe shaped their role and influence on the civil rights movement. Consider factors such as family, church, education, and experiences with whites. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

2. Analyze the following documents:

- a. Read Malcolm X's letter to King on the reverse side of the quotations page.
- b. King's statement following the assassination of Malcolm X

"I think it is even more unfortunate that [Malcolm X's murder] occurred at a time when [he] was reevaluating his own philosophical presuppositions and moving toward a greater understanding of the nonviolent movement and toward more tolerance of white people in general."

- c. Malcolm X's statement from "The Ballot or the Bullet:"

"Although I am still a Muslim, I'm not here tonight to discuss my religion. I'm not here to try to change your religion. I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem.... Whether we are Christians or Muslims or nationalists or agnostics or atheists, we must first learn to forget our differences. If we have differences, let us differ in the closet; when we come out in front, let us not have anything to argue about...."

- d. King's statement on Black Power:

"There is a concrete, real black power that I believe in. I don't believe in black separatism. I don't believe in black power that would have racist overtones, but certainly if black power means the amassing of political and economic power in order to gain our just and legitimate goals, then we all believe in that. And I think that all white people of good will believe in that."

3. Answer the following:

- a. What most surprised you about what you read in these documents? Why?
- b. How does this information affect your original perception of both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- c. List three ways in which you see the ideas of Dr. King and Malcolm X converging.