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King's Use of Appeals

Logos

"In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action."

Dr. King was responding to the clergymen stating that his practices were violent. Therefore, he explained all the steps that went into his nonviolent approach so show that violence was never a part of his agenda.

Logos

"Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience."

Dr. King was making the statement that his peaceful protest was nothing but an act of civil disobedience and that this form of disobedience should be acceptable. He mentioned how for years before us, men have been using civil disobedience to make a difference peacefully. However, since he is doing it to fight against a racial battle that the government officials in that state fail to acknowledge; it is somehow a huge problem and an extremist act.

Ethos

"I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty-five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights."

Dr. King is responding to him being called an outsider. He used his credentials, and the prestigious organization that he works with to vouch for his involvement in the racial tensions that African Americans are facing.

Ethos

"I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some -such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle--have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms."

Dr. King was making the point that there are white people that understand the unfortunate circumstance that Black people were in and that they were doing all they could to publicize that. He mentioned many prominent white journalists and how they were writing about African American in a positive way.

Pathos

“Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation.”

Dr. King used this to show that the oppressed Black people did have some white people fighting with them. They were able to see and feel first-hand what all the verbal and physical abuse felt like. Also it showed how any white people who were not supporting the cause were in some way racist, selfish, or narrowminded.

Pathos

“For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail.”

Dr. King wrote this to make the point that he will remain relentless and keep fighting to make sure that Black people were getting equal rights. He explained how African Americans have faced intense amounts of oppression, in ways more violent than what they were experiencing in Alabama at the time; but they were still able to move past and flourish as people. Surely what they were facing in Alabama at the time served as more of a speed bump in comparison to the oppression they have faced over the years.