

# FOREWORD

Once again, Lewis V. Baldwin has corrected grievous errors committed by other chroniclers of Martin Luther King Jr. His earlier volumes have corrected the flaws of King “experts” who often overlook or ignore the critical aspects of King’s cultural development as an African American and the influence of that development from King’s home environment and family at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. In *There Is a Balm in Gilead*, Baldwin laid the foundation for aspects of King’s construct in his person and mission in erasing segregation from the United States and in pointing the nation toward a postracial era. He clearly presented the critical factors that made King who he was, thereby correcting the flaws of other King chroniclers to date.

In this work, Baldwin’s novel approach is to examine the prayer life of Dr. King. I do not know if Baldwin had access to Dr. King’s self-imposed “Day of Silence,” in which he abstained from the distractions of daily life, including the telephone, television, and radio. That day was spent in prayer and meditation and in developing a rigorous discipline of “think time,” which he devoted to mapping strategies for the nonviolent campaigns he led. It was this discipline, I believe, that gave King the spiritual and moral strength to withstand the tremendous pressures associated with the forms of resistance, including the possibility and eventuality of

his own death by murder. He often said to us, “I won’t make forty.” He had no martyr complex, but he knew how deeply embedded racism was in the body politic of the nation.

Generations from now, when writing about King has ceased, Baldwin’s work about the man and his mission will remain the most definitive. No one living or dead has discovered the “mother lode” as has Baldwin. In this work, Baldwin discovers the mystique of Martin Luther King Jr., and he carefully examines the key to King’s strength of spirit against seemingly impossible odds. Establishing justice in an unjust nation was more than a daunting challenge. Baldwin’s work, for generations to come, will help us better understand how King accomplished this through prayer and hard work and with the considerable help of the almighty God, in whom King trusted and believed. King’s prayer life patently revealed this, and Baldwin has revealed it to us.

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