

# Common GROUND

by Joseph Tkach

In an age of antiheroes, one American's reputation seems to be growing greater and greater as the years peel away. His name was Martin Luther King Jr.

It's been said of King, and the civil rights movement he represented, that they "subpoenaed the conscience of the American people."

In times like ours, it's good to stop one day a year and reflect back on those stirring days.

Theologian James Cone has written: "King was a public theologian. He turned the nation's television networks into his pulpit and classroom, and he forced white Christians to confront their own beliefs.... After King, no theologian or preacher dares to defend racial segregation. He destroyed its moral legitimacy."

Martin Luther King Jr. was a Christian. His power-base was the African-American and sympathetic white churches.

What we saw in the 1960s was a Christian confrontation with the unjust powers that be. That is something we can remember as we honor Martin Luther King's legacy.

Americans who seek to honor his memory can do no better than put into action the knowledge that it's every Christian's job to work toward bringing people of all races together.

Are we Christians ready to sign on as foot soldiers in the war against racism? □

