

*“The value of life lies not in longevity,  
but in what people do to give it significance.”*

- REV. DR. BERNARD LAFAYETTE, JR.

Bernard later worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), serving as National Program Administrator of the Poor People's Campaign in 1968. In what would later be known as Dr. King's final hours, while staying at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King spoke with Bernard about the need to “institutionalize and internationalize nonviolence.” Bernard embraced that charge as the guiding mission of his life. For decades thereafter, he dedicated himself to teaching what became known as Kingian Nonviolence and helping build what Dr. King called the Beloved Community.

Bernard was once married to civil rights activist Colia Liddell LaFayette Clark. Two sons were born during that union: James A. LaFayette, Sr and Rev. Bernard LaFayette, III. Later, found the love of his life in Katherine “Kate” Bulls. They were married on November 29, 1969, and shared 57 years of love, devotion, partnership, and family. Their bond was a source of joy and strength, and together they built a life a rooted in faith, service, and enduring affection.

A distinguished scholar and educator, Bernard earned a Master of Education from Harvard University in 1972 and later received his Doctorate from Harvard University in 1974. Over the course of his career, he served in numerous academic and leadership roles, including positions at Gustavus Adolphus College, Alabama State University, Columbia Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt Divinity School, American Baptist College—where he later served as president—the University of Rhode Island, Emory University, and Auburn University. Through these roles he mentored countless students and leaders, helping new generations understand the discipline, strategy, and moral vision of nonviolent social change.

Bernard also traveled extensively throughout the United States and around the world teaching the principles of Kingian Nonviolence. Alongside longtime colleague and friend Captain Charles Alphin, Sr., he helped train activists, educators, community leaders, and students in countries across Africa, South America, the Middle East, and beyond. Wherever he went, he carried the message that lasting change comes through courage, love, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

During the 1980s, Bernard served as Senior Scholar in Residence at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and as Dean of the Summer Nonviolent Institute at the King Center, both under the leadership of Mrs. Coretta Scott King. In these roles he helped carry forward Dr. King's philosophy by training new generations of leaders in the principles and discipline of nonviolent social change.

## A LEGACY OF PEACE.

