





MARTIN LUTHER KING'S SPEECHES WITH RESOURCES

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King's "Drum Major Instinct" sermon, given on 4 February 1968, was an adaptation of the 1952 homily "Drum-Major Instincts" by J. Wallace Hamilton, a well-known, liberal, white Methodist preacher. King encouraged his congregation to seek greatness, but to do so through service and love. King concluded the sermon by imagining his own funeral, downplaying his famous achievements and emphasizing his heart to do right.

➤ **27 August 1967 (Full text)**

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Delivered at the 11th Annual SCLC Convention Atlanta, Ga.

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[A Knock at Midnight](#)

Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him"?

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Delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, on 4 July 1965.

- **25 March 1965 (Full text)**
[Address at the Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March](#)

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[Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony](#)

- **18 September 1963 (Full text)**
[Eulogy for the Martyred Children](#)

Delivered at funeral service for three of the children—Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair, and Cynthia Diane Wesley—killed in the bombing. A separate service was held for the fourth victim, Carole Robertson.

- **23 June 1963 (Full text)**
[Speech at the Great March on Detroit](#)

Two months before the March on Washington, King stood before a throng of 25,000 people at Cobo Hall in Detroit to expound upon making “the American Dream a reality”. King repeatedly exclaimed, “I have a dream this afternoon”. He articulated the words of the prophets Amos and Isaiah, declaring that “justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream,” for “every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low”. As he had done numerous times in the previous two years, King concluded his message imagining the day “when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing with the Negroes in the spiritual of old: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”.

- **16 April 1963**
Letter From Birmingham Jail

An excerpt from Martin Luther King's Why We Can't Wait

Source: Annotated by Michael Wilson as part of his honors thesis research at Stanford University

http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/annotated_letter_from_birmingham.1.html

Resources

Stanford University, includes audio

The Martin Luther King, Jr.

Research and Education Institute

<http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/index.html>

The King Center

Established in 1968 by Mrs. Coretta Scott King, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change

<http://www.thekingcenter.org>

American Rhetoric, includes audio

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com>

Sermons and speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermons_and_speeches_of_Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.

I Have a Dream

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, [a great American](#), in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the [Declaration of Independence](#), they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that

all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. *We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." * We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."¹

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, **d**own in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

"I've Been to the Mountaintop" (Full text)

Thank you very kindly, my friends. As I listened to Ralph Abernathy and his eloquent and generous introduction and then thought about myself, I wondered who he was talking about. It's always good to have your closest friend and associate to say something good about you. And Ralph Abernathy is the best friend that I have in the world. I'm delighted to see each of you here tonight in spite of a storm warning. You reveal that you are determined to go on anyhow.

Something is happening in Memphis; something is happening in our world. And you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of taking a kind of general and panoramic view of the whole of human history up to now, and the Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" I would take my mental flight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark dungeons of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there.

I would move on by Greece and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon. And I would watch them around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and aesthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even go by the way that the man for whom I am named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church of Wittenberg. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating President by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there.

I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but "fear itself." But I wouldn't stop there.

Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the 20th century, I will be happy."

Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land; confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding.

Something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee -- the cry is always the same: "We want to be free."

And another reason that I'm happy to live in this period is that we have been forced to a point where we are going to have to grapple with the problems that men have been trying to grapple with through history, but the demands didn't force them to do it. Survival demands that we grapple with them. Men, for years now, have been talking about war and peace. But now, no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence. That is where we are today.

And also in the human rights revolution, if something isn't done, and done in a hurry, to bring the colored peoples of the world out of their long years of poverty, their long years of hurt and neglect, the whole world is doomed. Now, I'm just happy that God has allowed me to live in this period to see what is unfolding. And I'm happy that He's allowed me to be in Memphis.

I can remember -- I can remember when Negroes were just going around as Ralph has said, so often, scratching where they didn't itch, and laughing when they were not tickled. But that day is all over. We mean business now, and we are determined to gain our rightful place in God's world.

And that's all this whole thing is about. We aren't engaged in any negative protest and in any negative arguments with anybody. We are saying that we are determined to be men. We are determined to be people. We are saying -- We are saying that we are God's children. And that we are God's children, we don't have to live like we are forced to live.

Now, what does all of this mean in this great period of history? It means that we've got to stay together. We've got to stay together and maintain unity. You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite, favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery. Now let us maintain unity.

Secondly, let us keep the issues where they are. The issue is injustice. The issue is the refusal of Memphis to be fair and honest in its dealings with its public servants, who happen to be sanitation workers. Now, we've got to keep attention on that. That's always the problem with a little violence. You know what happened the other day, and the press dealt only with the window-breaking. I read the articles. They very seldom got around to mentioning the fact that one thousand, three hundred sanitation workers are on strike, and that Memphis is not being fair to them, and that Mayor Loeb is in dire need of a doctor. They didn't get around to that.

Now we're going to march again, and we've got to march again, in order to put the issue where it is supposed to be -- and force everybody to see that there are thirteen hundred of God's children here suffering, sometimes going hungry, going through dark and dreary nights wondering how this thing is going to come out. That's the issue. And we've got to say to the nation: We know how it's coming out. For when people get caught up with that which is right and they are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory.

We aren't going to let any mace stop us. We are masters in our nonviolent movement in disarming police forces; they don't know what to do. I've seen them so often. I remember in Birmingham, Alabama, when we were in that majestic struggle there, we would move out of the 16th Street Baptist Church day after day; by the hundreds we would move out. And Bull Connor would tell them to send the dogs forth, and they did come; but we just went before the dogs singing, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around."

Bull Connor next would say, "Turn the fire hoses on." And as I said to you the other night, Bull Connor didn't know history. He knew a kind of physics that somehow didn't relate to the transphysics that we knew about. And that was the fact that there was a certain kind of fire that no water could put out. And we went before the fire hoses; we had known water. If we were Baptist or some other denominations, we had been immersed. If we were Methodist, and some others, we had been sprinkled, but we knew water. That couldn't stop us.

And we just went on before the dogs and we would look at them; and we'd go on before the water hoses and we would look at it, and we'd just go on singing "Over my head I see freedom in the air." And then we would be thrown in the paddy wagons, and sometimes we were stacked in there like sardines in a can. And they would throw us in, and old Bull would say, "Take 'em off," and they did; and we would just go in the paddy wagon singing, "We Shall Overcome." And every now and then we'd get in jail, and we'd see the jailers looking through the windows being moved by our prayers, and being moved by our words and our songs. And there was a power there which Bull Connor couldn't adjust to; and so we ended up transforming Bull into a steer, and we won our struggle in Birmingham. Now we've got to go on in Memphis just like that. I call upon you to be with us when we go out Monday.

Now about injunctions: We have an injunction and we're going into court tomorrow morning to fight this illegal, unconstitutional injunction. All we say to America is, "Be true to what you said on paper." If I lived in China or even Russia, or any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand some of these illegal injunctions. Maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic First Amendment privileges, because they hadn't committed themselves to that over there. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right. And so just as I say, we aren't going to let dogs or water hoses turn us around, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around. We are going on.

We need all of you. And you know what's beautiful to me is to see all of these ministers of the Gospel. It's a marvelous picture. Who is it that is supposed to articulate the longings and aspirations of the people more than the preacher? Somehow the preacher must have a kind of fire shut up in his bones. And whenever injustice is around he tell it. Somehow the preacher must be an Amos, and saith, "When God speaks who can but prophesy?" Again with Amos, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Somehow the preacher must say with Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me," and he's anointed me to deal with the problems of the poor."

And I want to commend the preachers, under the leadership of these noble men: James Lawson, one who has been in this struggle for many years; he's been to jail for struggling; he's been kicked out of Vanderbilt University for this struggle, but he's still going on, fighting for the rights of his people. Reverend Ralph Jackson, Billy Kiles; I could just go right on down the list, but time will not permit. But I want to thank all of them. And I want you to thank them, because so often, preachers aren't concerned about anything but themselves. And I'm always happy to see a relevant ministry.

It's all right to talk about "long white robes over yonder," in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here! It's all right to talk about "streets flowing with milk and honey," but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do.

Now the other thing we'll have to do is this: Always anchor our external direct action with the power of economic withdrawal. Now, we are poor people. Individually, we are poor when you compare us with white society in America. We are poor. Never stop and forget that collectively - that means all of us together -- collectively we are richer than all the nations in the world, with the exception of nine. Did you ever think about that? After you leave the United States, Soviet Russia, Great Britain, West Germany, France, and I could name the others, the American Negro collectively is richer than most nations of the world. We have an annual income of more than thirty billion dollars a year, which is more than all of the exports of the United States, and more than the national budget of Canada. Did you know that? That's power right there, if we know how to pool it.

We don't have to argue with anybody. We don't have to curse and go around acting bad with our words. We don't need any bricks and bottles. We don't need any Molotov cocktails. We just need to go around to these stores, and to these massive industries in our country, and say, "God sent us by here, to say to you that you're not treating his children right. And we've come by here to ask you to make the first item on your agenda fair treatment, where God's children are concerned. Now, if you are not prepared to do that, we do have an agenda that we must follow. And our agenda calls for withdrawing economic support from you."

And so, as a result of this, we are asking you tonight, to go out and tell your neighbors not to buy Coca-Cola in Memphis. Go by and tell them not to buy Sealtest milk. Tell them not to buy -- what is the other bread? -- Wonder Bread. And what is the other bread company, Jesse? Tell them not to buy Hart's bread. As Jesse Jackson has said, up to now, only the garbage men have been feeling pain; now we must kind of redistribute the pain. We are choosing these companies because they haven't been fair in their hiring policies; and we are choosing them because they can begin the process of saying they are going to support the needs and the rights of these men who are on strike. And then they can move on town -- downtown and tell Mayor Loeb to do what is right.

But not only that, we've got to strengthen black institutions. I call upon you to take your money out of the banks downtown and deposit your money in Tri-State Bank. We want a "bank-in" movement in Memphis. Go by the savings and loan association. I'm not asking you something that we don't do ourselves at SCLC. Judge Hooks and others will tell you that we have an account here in the savings and loan association from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. We are telling you to follow what we are doing. Put your money there. You have six or seven black insurance companies here in the city of Memphis. Take out your insurance there. We want to have an "insurance-in."

Now these are some practical things that we can do. We begin the process of building a greater economic base. And at the same time, we are putting pressure where it really hurts. I ask you to follow through here.

Now, let me say as I move to my conclusion that we've got to give ourselves to this struggle until the end. Nothing would be more tragic than to stop at this point in Memphis. We've got to see it through. And when we have our march, you need to be there. If it means leaving work, if it means leaving school -- be there. Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike. But either we go up together, or we go down together.

Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness. One day a man came to Jesus, and he wanted to raise some questions about some vital matters of life. At points he wanted to trick Jesus, and show him that he knew a little more than Jesus knew and throw him off base....

Now that question could have easily ended up in a philosophical and theological debate. But Jesus immediately pulled that question from mid-air, and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man, who fell among thieves. You remember that a Levite and a priest passed by on the other side. They didn't stop to help him. And finally a man of another race came by. He got down from his beast, decided not to be compassionate by proxy. But he got down with him, administered first aid, and helped the man

in need. Jesus ended up saying, this was the good man, this was the great man, because he had the capacity to project the "I" into the "thou," and to be concerned about his brother.

Now you know, we use our imagination a great deal to try to determine why the priest and the Levite didn't stop. At times we say they were busy going to a church meeting, an ecclesiastical gathering, and they had to get on down to Jerusalem so they wouldn't be late for their meeting. At other times we would speculate that there was a religious law that "One who was engaged in religious ceremonials was not to touch a human body twenty-four hours before the ceremony." And every now and then we begin to wonder whether maybe they were not going down to Jerusalem -- or down to Jericho, rather to organize a "Jericho Road Improvement Association." That's a possibility. Maybe they felt that it was better to deal with the problem from the causal root, rather than to get bogged down with an individual effect.

But I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible that those men were afraid. You see, the Jericho road is a dangerous road. I remember when Mrs. King and I were first in Jerusalem. We rented a car and drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And as soon as we got on that road, I said to my wife, "I can see why Jesus used this as the setting for his parable." It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about 1200 miles -- or rather 1200 feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho, fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about 2200 feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the "Bloody Pass." And you know, it's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking. And he was acting like he had been robbed and hurt, in order to seize them over there, lure them there for quick and easy seizure. And so the first question that the priest asked -- the first question that the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But then the Good Samaritan came by. And he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

That's the question before you tonight. Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job. Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers what will happen to all of the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?" The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" The question is, "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?" That's the question.

Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation. And I want to thank God, once more, for allowing me to be here with you.

You know, several years ago, I was in New York City autographing the first book that I had written. And while sitting there autographing books, a demented black woman came up. The only question I heard from her was, "Are you Martin Luther King?" And I was looking down writing, and I said, "Yes." And the next minute I felt something beating on my chest. Before I

knew it I had been stabbed by this demented woman. I was rushed to Harlem Hospital. It was a dark Saturday afternoon. And that blade had gone through, and the X-rays revealed that the tip of the blade was on the edge of my aorta, the main artery. And once that's punctured, your drowned in your own blood -- that's the end of you.

It came out in the New York Times the next morning, that if I had merely sneezed, I would have died. Well, about four days later, they allowed me, after the operation, after my chest had been opened, and the blade had been taken out, to move around in the wheel chair in the hospital. They allowed me to read some of the mail that came in, and from all over the states and the world, kind letters came in. I read a few, but one of them I will never forget. I had received one from the President and the Vice-President. I've forgotten what those telegrams said. I'd received a visit and a letter from the Governor of New York, but I've forgotten what that letter said. But there was another letter that came from a little girl, a young girl who was a student at the White Plains High School. And I looked at that letter, and I'll never forget it. It said simply,

Dear Dr. King,

I am a ninth-grade student at the White Plains High School."

And she said,

While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. And I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy that you didn't sneeze.

And I want to say tonight -- I want to say tonight that I too am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting-in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream, and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1961, when we decided to take a ride for freedom and ended segregation in inter-state travel.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1962, when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, decided to straighten their backs up. And whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can't ride your back unless it is bent.

If I had sneezed -- If I had sneezed I wouldn't have been here in 1963, when the black people of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused the conscience of this nation, and brought into being the Civil Rights Bill.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have had a chance later that year, in August, to try to tell America about a dream that I had had.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been down in Selma, Alabama, to see the great Movement there.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been in Memphis to see a community rally around those brothers and sisters who are suffering.

I'm so happy that I didn't sneeze.

And they were telling me --. Now, it doesn't matter, now. It really doesn't matter what happens now. I left Atlanta this morning, and as we got started on the plane, there were six of us. The pilot said over the public address system, "We are sorry for the delay, but we have Dr. Martin Luther King on the plane. And to be sure that all of the bags were checked, and to be sure that nothing would be wrong with on the plane, we had to check out everything carefully. And we've had the plane protected and guarded all night."

And then I got into Memphis. And some began to say the threats, or talk about the threats that were out. What would happen to me from some of our sick white brothers?

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop.

And I don't mind.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!

And so I'm happy, tonight.

I'm not worried about anything.

I'm not fearing any man!

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!!

Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here this morning, to have the opportunity of standing in this very great and significant pulpit. And I do want to express my deep personal appreciation to Dean Sayre and all of the cathedral clergy for extending the invitation.

It is always a rich and rewarding experience to take a brief break from our day-to-day demands and the struggle for freedom and human dignity and discuss the issues involved in that struggle with concerned friends of goodwill all over our nation. And certainly it is always a deep and meaningful experience to be in a worship service. And so for many reasons, I'm happy to be here today.

I would like to use as a subject from which to preach this morning: "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution." The text for the morning is found in the book of Revelation. There are two passages there that I would like to quote, in the sixteenth chapter of that book: "Behold I make all things new; former things are passed away."

I am sure that most of you have read that arresting little story from the pen of Washington Irving entitled "Rip Van Winkle." The one thing that we usually remember about the story is that Rip Van Winkle slept twenty years. But there is another point in that little story that is almost completely overlooked. It was the sign in the end, from which Rip went up in the mountain for his long sleep.

When Rip Van Winkle went up into the mountain, the sign had a picture of King George the Third of England. When he came down twenty years later the sign had a picture of George Washington, the first president of the United States. When Rip Van Winkle looked up at the picture of George Washington—and looking at the picture he was amazed—he was completely lost. He knew not who he was.

And this reveals to us that the most striking thing about the story of Rip Van Winkle is not merely that Rip slept twenty years, but that he slept through a revolution. While he was peacefully snoring up in the mountain a revolution was taking place that at points would change the course of history—and Rip knew nothing about it. He was asleep. Yes, he slept through a revolution. And one of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution.

There can be no gainsaying of the fact that a great revolution is taking place in the world today. In a sense it is a triple revolution: that is, a technological revolution, with the impact of automation and cybernation; then there is a revolution in weaponry, with the emergence of atomic and nuclear weapons of warfare; then there is a human rights revolution, with the freedom explosion that is taking place all over the world. Yes, we do live in a period where changes are taking place. And there is still the voice crying through the vista of time saying, "Behold, I make all things new; former things are passed away."

Now whenever anything new comes into history it brings with it new challenges and new opportunities. And I would like to deal with the challenges that we face today as a result of this triple revolution that is taking place in the world today.

First, we are challenged to develop a world perspective. No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution. The world in which we live is geographically one. The challenge that we face today is to make it one in terms of brotherhood.

Now it is true that the geographical oneness of this age has come into being to a large extent through modern man's scientific ingenuity. Modern man through his scientific genius has been able to dwarf distance and place time in chains. And our jet planes have compressed into minutes distances that once took weeks and even months. All of this tells us that our world is a neighborhood.

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighborhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all

perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

John Donne caught it years ago and placed it in graphic terms: "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." And he goes on toward the end to say, "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind; therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." We must see this, believe this, and live by it if we are to remain awake through a great revolution.

Secondly, we are challenged to eradicate the last vestiges of racial injustice from our nation. I must say this morning that racial injustice is still the black man's burden and the white man's shame.

It is an unhappy truth that racism is a way of life for the vast majority of white Americans, spoken and unspoken, acknowledged and denied, subtle and sometimes not so subtle—the disease of racism permeates and poisons a whole body politic. And I can see nothing more urgent than for America to work passionately and unrelentingly—to get rid of the disease of racism.

Something positive must be done. Everyone must share in the guilt as individuals and as institutions. The government must certainly share the guilt; individuals must share the guilt; even the church must share the guilt.

We must face the sad fact that at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning when we stand to sing "In Christ there is no East or West," we stand in the most segregated hour of America.

The hour has come for everybody, for all institutions of the public sector and the private sector to work to get rid of racism. And now if we are to do it we must honestly admit certain things and get rid of certain myths that have constantly been disseminated all over our nation.

One is the myth of time. It is the notion that only time can solve the problem of racial injustice. And there are those who often sincerely say to the Negro and his allies in the white community, "Why don't you slow up? Stop pushing things so fast. Only time can solve the problem. And if you will just be nice and patient and continue to pray, in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out."

There is an answer to that myth. It is that time is neutral. It can be used wither constructively or destructively. And I am sorry to say this morning that I am absolutely convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation, the extreme rightists of our nation—the people on the wrong side—have used time much more effectively than the forces of goodwill. And it may well be that we will have to repent in this generation. Not merely for the vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence and indifference of the good people who sit around and say, "Wait on time."

Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. And without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation. So we must help time and realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

Now there is another myth that still gets around: it is a kind of over reliance on the bootstrap philosophy. There are those who still feel that if the Negro is to rise out of poverty, if the Negro is to rise out of the slum conditions, if he is to rise out of discrimination and segregation, he must do it all by himself. And so they say the Negro must lift himself by his own bootstraps.

They never stop to realize that no other ethnic group has been a slave on American soil. The people who say this never stop to realize that the nation made the black man's color a stigma. But beyond this they never stop to realize the debt that they owe a people who were kept in slavery two hundred and forty-four years.

In 1863 the Negro was told that he was free as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation being signed by Abraham Lincoln. But he was not given any land to make that freedom meaningful. It was something like keeping a person in prison for a number of years and suddenly discovering that that person is not guilty of the crime for which he was convicted. And you just go up to him

and say, "Now you are free," but you don't give him any bus fare to get to town. You don't give him any money to get some clothes to put on his back or to get on his feet again in life.

Every court of jurisprudence would rise up against this, and yet this is the very thing that our nation did to the black man. It simply said, "You're free," and it left him there penniless, illiterate, not knowing what to do. And the irony of it all is that at the same time the nation failed to do anything for the black man, though an act of Congress was giving away millions of acres of land in the West and the Midwest. Which meant that it was willing to undergird its white peasants from Europe with an economic floor.

But not only did it give the land, it built land-grant colleges to teach them how to farm. Not only that, it provided county agents to further their expertise in farming; not only that, as the years unfolded it provided low interest rates so that they could mechanize their farms. And to this day thousands of these very persons are receiving millions of dollars in federal subsidies every year not to farm. And these are so often the very people who tell Negroes that they must lift themselves by their own bootstraps. It's all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

We must come to see that the roots of racism are very deep in our country, and there must be something positive and massive in order to get rid of all the effects of racism and the tragedies of racial injustice.

There is another thing closely related to racism that I would like to mention as another challenge. We are challenged to rid our nation and the world of poverty. Like a monstrous octopus, poverty spreads its nagging, prehensile tentacles into hamlets and villages all over our world. Two-thirds of the people of the world go to bed hungry tonight. They are ill-housed; they are ill-nourished; they are shabbily clad. I've seen it in Latin America; I've seen it in Africa; I've seen this poverty in Asia.

I remember some years ago Mrs. King and I journeyed to that great country known as India. And I never will forget the experience. It was a marvelous experience to meet and talk with the great leaders of India, to meet and talk with and to speak to thousands and thousands of people all over that vast country. These experiences will remain dear to me as long as the cords of memory shall lengthen.

But I say to you this morning, my friends, there were those depressing moments. How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes evidences of millions of people going to bed hungry at night? How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes God's children sleeping on the sidewalks at night? In Bombay more than a million people sleep on the sidewalks every night. In Calcutta more than six hundred thousand sleep on the sidewalks every night. They have no beds to sleep in; they have no houses to go in. How can one avoid being depressed when he discovers that out of India's population of more than five hundred million people, some four hundred and eighty million make an annual income of less than ninety dollars a year. And most of them have never seen a doctor or a dentist.

As I noticed these things, something within me cried out, "Can we in America stand idly by and not be concerned?" And an answer came: "Oh no!" Because the destiny of the United States is tied up with the destiny of India and every other nation. And I started thinking of the fact that we spend in America millions of dollars a day to store surplus food, and I said to myself, "I know where we can store that food free of charge—in the wrinkled stomachs of millions of God's children all over the world who go to bed hungry at night." And maybe we spend far too much of our national budget establishing military bases around the world rather than bases of genuine concern and understanding.

Not only do we see poverty abroad, I would remind you that in our own nation there are about forty million people who are poverty-stricken. I have seen them here and there. I have seen them in the ghettos of the North; I have seen them in the rural areas of the South; I have seen them in Appalachia. I have just been in the process of touring many areas of our country and I must confess that in some situations I have literally found myself crying.

I was in Marks, Mississippi, the other day, which is in Whitman County, the poorest county in the United States. I tell you, I saw hundreds of little black boys and black girls walking the streets with no shoes to wear. I saw their mothers and fathers trying to carry on a little Head Start program, but they had no money. The federal government hadn't funded them, but they were trying to carry on. They raised a little money here and there; trying to get a little food to feed the children; trying to teach them a little something.

And I saw mothers and fathers who said to me not only were they unemployed, they didn't get any kind of income—no old-age pension, no welfare check, no anything. I said, "How do you live?" And they say, "Well, we go around, go around to the neighbors and ask them for a little

something. When the berry season comes, we pick berries. When the rabbit season comes, we hunt and catch a few rabbits. And that's about it."

And I was in Newark and Harlem just this week. And I walked into the homes of welfare mothers. I saw them in conditions—no, not with wall-to-wall carpet, but wall-to-wall rats and roaches. I stood in an apartment and this welfare mother said to me, "The landlord will not repair this place. I've been here two years and he hasn't made a single repair." She pointed out the walls with all the ceiling falling through. She showed me the holes where the rats came in. She said night after night we have to stay awake to keep the rats and roaches from getting to the children. I said, "How much do you pay for this apartment?" She said, "a hundred and twenty-five dollars." I looked, and I thought, and said to myself, "It isn't worth sixty dollars." Poor people are forced to pay more for less. Living in conditions day in and day out where the whole area is constantly drained without being replenished. It becomes a kind of domestic colony. And the tragedy is, so often these forty million people are invisible because America is so affluent, so rich. Because our expressways carry us from the ghetto, we don't see the poor.

Jesus told a parable one day, and he reminded us that a man went to hell because he didn't see the poor. His name was Dives. He was a rich man. And there was a man by the name of Lazarus who was a poor man, but not only was he poor, he was sick. Sores were all over his body, and he was so weak that he could hardly move. But he managed to get to the gate of Dives every day, wanting just to have the crumbs that would fall from his table. And Dives did nothing about it. And the parable ends saying, "Dives went to hell, and there were a fixed gulf now between Lazarus and Dives."

There is nothing in that parable that said Dives went to hell because he was rich. Jesus never made a universal indictment against all wealth. It is true that one day a rich young ruler came to him, and he advised him to sell all, but in that instance Jesus was prescribing individual surgery and not setting forth a universal diagnosis. And if you will look at that parable with all of its symbolism, you will remember that a conversation took place between heaven and hell, and on the other end of that long-distance call between heaven and hell was Abraham in heaven talking to Dives in hell.

Now Abraham was a very rich man. If you go back to the Old Testament, you see that he was the richest man of his day, so it was not a rich man in hell talking with a poor man in heaven; it was a little millionaire in hell talking with a multimillionaire in heaven. Dives didn't go to hell because he was rich; Dives didn't realize that his wealth was his opportunity. It was his

opportunity to bridge the gulf that separated him from his brother Lazarus. Dives went to hell because he was passed by Lazarus every day and he never really saw him. He went to hell because he allowed his brother to become invisible. Dives went to hell because he maximized the minimum and minimized the maximum. Indeed, Dives went to hell because he sought to be a conscientious objector in the war against poverty.

And this can happen to America, the richest nation in the world—and nothing's wrong with that—this is America's opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. The question is whether America will do it. There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will.

In a few weeks some of us are coming to Washington to see if the will is still alive or if it is alive in this nation. We are coming to Washington in a Poor People's Campaign. Yes, we are going to bring the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. We are going to bring those who have known long years of hurt and neglect. We are going to bring those who have come to feel that life is a long and desolate corridor with no exit signs. We are going to bring children and adults and old people, people who have never seen a doctor or a dentist in their lives.

We are not coming to engage in any histrionic gesture. We are not coming to tear up Washington. We are coming to demand that the government address itself to the problem of poverty. We read one day, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." But if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists.

We are coming to ask America to be true to the huge promissory note that it signed years ago. And we are coming to engage in dramatic nonviolent action, to call attention to the gulf between promise and fulfillment; to make the invisible visible.

Why do we do it this way? We do it this way because it is our experience that the nation doesn't move around questions of genuine equality for the poor and for black people until it is confronted massively, dramatically in terms of direct action.

Great documents are here to tell us something should be done. We met here some years ago in the White House conference on civil rights. And we came out with the same recommendations that we will be demanding in our campaign here, but nothing has been done. The President's commission on technology, automation and economic progress recommended these things some time ago. Nothing has been done. Even the urban coalition of mayors of most of the cities of our country and the leading businessmen have said these things should be done. Nothing has been done. The Kerner Commission came out with its report just a few days ago and then made specific recommendations. Nothing has been done.

And I submit that nothing will be done until people of goodwill put their bodies and their souls in motion. And it will be the kind of soul force brought into being as a result of this confrontation that I believe will make the difference.

Yes, it will be a Poor People's Campaign. This is the question facing America. Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. America has not met its obligations and its responsibilities to the poor.

One day we will have to stand before the God of history and we will talk in terms of things we've done. Yes, we will be able to say we built gargantuan bridges to span the seas, we built gigantic buildings to kiss the skies. Yes, we made our submarines to penetrate oceanic depths. We brought into being many other things with our scientific and technological power.

It seems that I can hear the God of history saying, "That was not enough! But I was hungry, and ye fed me not. I was naked, and ye clothed me not. I was devoid of a decent sanitary house to live in, and ye provided no shelter for me. And consequently, you cannot enter the kingdom of greatness. If ye do it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye do it unto me." That's the question facing America today.

I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a great revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." The world must hear this. I pray God that America will hear this before it is too late, because today we're fighting a war.

I am convinced that it is one of the most unjust wars that has ever been fought in the history of the world. Our involvement in the war in Vietnam has torn up the Geneva Accord. It has strengthened the military-industrial complex; it has strengthened the forces of reaction in our nation. It has put us against the self-determination of a vast majority of the Vietnamese people, and put us in the position of protecting a corrupt regime that is stacked against the poor.

It has played havoc with our domestic destinies. This day we are spending five hundred thousand dollars to kill every Vietcong soldier. Every time we kill one we spend about five hundred thousand dollars while we spend only fifty-three dollars a year for every person characterized as poverty-stricken in the so-called poverty program, which is not even a good skirmish against poverty.

Not only that, it has put us in a position of appearing to the world as an arrogant nation. And here we are ten thousand miles away from home fighting for the so-called freedom of the Vietnamese people when we have not even put our own house in order. And we force young black men and young white men to fight and kill in brutal solidarity. Yet when they come back home that can't hardly live on the same block together.

The judgment of God is upon us today. And we could go right down the line and see that something must be done—and something must be done quickly. We have alienated ourselves from other nations so we end up morally and politically isolated in the world. There is not a single major ally of the United States of America that would dare send a troop to Vietnam, and so the only friends that we have now are a few client-nations like Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, and a few others.

This is where we are. "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind," and the best way to start is to put an end to war in Vietnam, because if it continues, we will inevitably come to the point of confronting China which could lead the whole world to nuclear annihilation.

It is no longer a choice, my friends, between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence. And the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation, and our earthly habitat would be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine.

This is why I felt the need of raising my voice against that war and working wherever I can to arouse the conscience of our nation on it. I remember so well when I first took a stand against the war in Vietnam. The critics took me on and they had their say in the most negative and sometimes most vicious way.

One day a newsman came to me and said, "Dr. King, don't you think you're going to have to stop, now, opposing the war and move more in line with the administration's policy? As I understand it, it has hurt the budget of your organization, and people who once respected you have lost respect for you. Don't you feel that you've really got to change your position?" I looked at him and I had to say, "Sir, I'm sorry you don't know me. I'm not a consensus leader. I do not determine what is right and wrong by looking at the budget of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. I've not taken a sort of Gallup Poll of the majority opinion." Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus, but a molder of consensus.

On some positions, cowardice asks the question, is it expedient? And then expedience comes along and asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? Conscience asks the question, is it right?

There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right. I believe today that there is a need for all people of goodwill to come with a massive act of conscience and say in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "We ain't goin' study war no more." This is the challenge facing modern man.

Let me close by saying that we have difficult days ahead in the struggle for justice and peace, but I will not yield to a politic of despair. I'm going to maintain hope as we come to Washington in this campaign. The cards are stacked against us. This time we will really confront a Goliath. God grant that we will be that David of truth set out against the Goliath of injustice, the Goliath of neglect, the Goliath of refusing to deal with the problems, and go on with the determination to make America the truly great America that it is called to be.

I say to you that our goal is freedom, and I believe we are going to get there because however much she strays away from it, the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be as a people, our destiny is tied up in the destiny of America.

Before the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. Before the beautiful words of the "Star Spangled Banner" were written, we were here.

For more than two centuries our forebearers labored here without wages. They made cotton king, and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of the most humiliating and oppressive conditions. And yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to grow and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery couldn't stop us, the opposition that we now face will surely fail.

We're going to win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands. And so, however dark it is, however deep the angry feelings are, and however violent explosions are, I can still sing "We Shall Overcome."

We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

We shall overcome because Carlyle is right—"No lie can live forever."

We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right—"Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again."

We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right—as we were singing earlier today,

Truth forever on the scaffold,

Wrong forever on the throne.

Yet that scaffold sways the future.

And behind the dim unknown stands God,

Within the shadow keeping watch above his own.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair the stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

Thank God for John, who centuries ago out on a lonely, obscure island called Patmos caught vision of a new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, who heard a voice saying, "Behold, I make all things new; former things are passed away."

God grant that we will be participants in this newness and this magnificent development. If we will but do it, we will bring about a new day of justice and brotherhood and peace. And that day the morning stars will sing together and the sons of God will shout for joy. God bless you.

Unfulfilled Dreams

I want to preach this morning from the subject: "Unfulfilled Dreams." "Unfulfilled Dreams." My text is taken from the eighth chapter of First Kings. Sometimes it's overlooked. It is not one of the most familiar passages in the Old Testament. But I never will forget when I first came across it. It struck me as a passage having cosmic significance because it says so much in so few words about things that we all experience in life. David, as you know, was a great king. And the one thing that was foremost in David's mind and in his heart was to build a great temple. The building of the temple was considered to be the most significant thing facing the Hebrew people, and the king was expected to bring this into being. David had the desire; he started.

And then we come to that passage over in the eighth chapter of First Kings, which reads, "And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. And the Lord said unto David my father, 'Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was within thine heart.'" And that's really what I want to talk about this morning: it is well that it was within thine heart. As if to say, "David, you will not be able to finish the temple. You will not be able to build it. But I just want to bless you, because it was within thine heart. Your dream will not be fulfilled. The majestic hopes that guided your

days will not be carried out in terms of an actual temple coming into being that you were able to build. But I bless you, David, because it was within thine heart. You had the desire to do it; you had the intention to do it; you tried to do it; you started to do it. And I bless you for having the desire and the intention in your heart. It is well that it was within thine heart."

So many of us in life start out building temples: temples of character, temples of justice, temples of peace. And so often we don't finish them. Because life is like Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony." At so many points we start, we try, we set out to build our various temples. And I guess one of the great agonies of life is that we are constantly trying to finish that which is unfinishable. We are commanded to do that. And so we, like David, find ourselves in so many instances having to face the fact that our dreams are not fulfilled.

Now let us notice first that life is a continual story of shattered dreams. Mahatma Gandhi labored for years and years for the independence of his people. And through a powerful nonviolent revolution he was able to win that independence. For years the Indian people had been dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated by foreign powers, and Gandhi struggled against it. He struggled to unite his own people, and nothing was greater in his mind than to have India's one great, united country moving toward a higher destiny. This was his dream.

But Gandhi had to face the fact that he was assassinated and died with a broken heart, because that nation that he wanted to unite ended up being divided between India and Pakistan as a result of the conflict between the Hindus and the Moslems. Life is a long, continual story of setting out to build a great temple and not being able to finish it.

Woodrow Wilson dreamed a dream of a League of Nations, but he died before the promise was delivered.

The Apostle Paul talked one day about wanting to go to Spain. It was Paul's greatest dream to go to Spain, to carry the gospel there. Paul never got to Spain. He ended up in a prison cell in Rome. This is the story of life.

So many of our forebearers used to sing about freedom. And they dreamed of the day that they would be able to get out of the bosom of slavery, the long night of injustice. (Yes, sir) And they

used to sing little songs: "Nobody knows de trouble I seen, nobody knows but Jesus." (Yes) They thought about a better day as they dreamed their dream. And they would say, "I'm so glad the trouble don't last always. (Yeah) By and by, by and by I'm going to lay down my heavy load." (Yes, sir) And they used to sing it because of a powerful dream. (Yes) But so many died without having the dream fulfilled.

And each of you this morning in some way is building some kind of temple. The struggle is always there. It gets discouraging sometimes. It gets very disenchanting sometimes. Some of us are trying to build a temple of peace. We speak out against war, we protest, but it seems that your head is going against a concrete wall. It seems to mean nothing. (Glory to God) And so often as you set out to build the temple of peace you are left lonesome; you are left discouraged; you are left bewildered.

Well, that is the story of life. And the thing that makes me happy is that I can hear a voice crying through the vista of time, saying: "It may not come today or it may not come tomorrow, but it is well that it is within thine heart. (Yes) It's well that you are trying." (Yes it is) You may not see it. The dream may not be fulfilled, but it's just good that you have a desire to bring it into reality. (Yes) It's well that it's in thine heart.

Thank God this morning that we do have hearts to put something meaningful in. Life is a continual story of shattered dreams.

Now let me bring out another point. Whenever you set out to build a creative temple, whatever it may be, you must face the fact that there is a tension at the heart of the universe between good and evil. It's there: a tension at the heart of the universe between good and evil. (Yes, sir) Hinduism refers to this as a struggle between illusion and reality. Platonic philosophy used to refer to it as a tension between body and soul. Zoroastrianism, a religion of old, used to refer to it as a tension between the god of light and the god of darkness. Traditional Judaism and Christianity refer to it as a tension between God and Satan. Whatever you call it, there is a struggle in the universe between good and evil.

Now not only is that struggle structured out somewhere in the external forces of the universe, it's structured in our own lives. Psychologists have tried to grapple with it in their way, and so they say various things. Sigmund Freud used to say that this tension is a tension between what he called the id and the superego.

But you know, some of us feel that it's a tension between God and man. And in every one of us this morning, there's a war going on. (Yes, sir) It's a civil war. (Yes, sir) I don't care who you are, I don't care where you live, there is a civil war going on in your life. (Yes it is) And every time you set out to be good, there's something pulling on you, telling you to be evil. It's going on in your life. (Preach it) Every time you set out to love, something keeps pulling on you, trying to get you to hate. (Yes, Yes, sir) Every time you set out to be kind and say nice things about people, something is pulling on you to be jealous and envious and to spread evil gossip about them. (Yes, Preach it) There's a civil war going on. There is a schizophrenia, as the psychologists or the psychiatrists would call it, going on within all of us. And there are times that all of us know somehow that there is a Mr. Hyde and a Dr. Jekyll in us. And we end up having to cry out with Ovid, the Latin poet, "I see and approve the better things of life, but the evil things I do." We end up having to agree with Plato that the human personality is like a charioteer with two headstrong horses, each wanting to go in different directions. Or sometimes we even have to end up crying out with Saint Augustine as he said in his Confessions, "Lord, make me pure, but not yet." (Amen) We end up crying out with the Apostle Paul, (Preach it) "The good that I would I do not: And the evil that I would not, that I do." Or we end up having to say with Goethe that "there's enough stuff in me to make both a gentleman and a rogue." (All right, Amen) There's a tension at the heart of human nature. (Oh yeah) And whenever we set out to dream our dreams and to build our temples, we must be honest enough to recognize it.

And this brings me to the basic point of the text. In the final analysis, God does not judge us by the separate incidents or the separate mistakes that we make, but by the total bent of our lives. In the final analysis, God knows (Yes) that his children are weak and they are frail. (Yes, he does) In the final analysis, what God requires is that your heart is right. (Amen, Yes) Salvation isn't reaching the destination of absolute morality, but it's being in the process and on the right road. (Yes)

There's a highway called Highway 80. I've marched on that highway from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. But I never will forget my first experience with Highway 80 was driving with Coretta and Ralph and Juanita Abernathy to California. We drove from Montgomery all the way to Los Angeles on Highway 80—it goes all the way out to Los Angeles. And you know, being a good man, being a good woman, does not mean that you've arrived in Los Angeles. It simply means that you're on Highway 80. (Lord have mercy) Maybe you haven't gotten as far as Selma, or maybe you haven't gotten as far as Meridian, Mississippi, or Monroe, Louisiana—that isn't the question. The question is whether you are on the right road. (That's right) Salvation is being on the right road, not having reached a destination.

Oh, we have to finally face the point that there is none good but the father. (That's right) But, if you're on the right road, God has the power (Yes, sir) and he has something called Grace. (Yes, sir) And he puts you where you ought to be.

Now the terrible thing in life is to be trying to get to Los Angeles on Highway 78. That's when you are lost. (Yes) That sheep was lost, not merely because he was doing something wrong in that parable, but he was on the wrong road. (Yes) And he didn't even know where he was going; he became so involved in what he was doing, nibbling sweet grass, (Make it plain) that he got on the wrong road. (Amen) Salvation is being sure that you're on the right road. (Yes, Preach it) It is well—that's what I like about it—that it was within thine heart. (Yes)

Some weeks ago somebody was saying something to me about a person that I have great, magnificent respect for. And they were trying to say something that didn't sound too good about his character, something he was doing. And I said, "Number one, I don't believe it. But number two, even if he is, (Make it plain) he's a good man because his heart is right." (Amen) And in the final analysis, God isn't going to judge him by that little separate mistake that he's making, (No, sir) because the bent of his life is right.

And the question I want to raise this morning with you: is your heart right? (Yes, Preach) If your heart isn't right, fix it up today; get God to fix it up. (Go ahead) Get somebody to be able to say about you, "He may not have reached the highest height, (Preach it) he may not have realized all of his dreams, but he tried." (Yes) Isn't that a wonderful thing for somebody to say about you? "He tried to be a good man. (Yes) He tried to be a just man. He tried to be an honest man. (Yes) His heart was in the right place." (Yes) And I can hear a voice saying, crying out through the eternities, "I accept you. (Preach it) You are a recipient of my grace because it was in your heart. (Yes) And it is so well that it was within thine heart." (Yes, sir)

I don't know this morning about you, but I can make a testimony. (Yes, sir, That's my life) You don't need to go out this morning saying that Martin Luther King is a saint. Oh, no. (Yes) I want you to know this morning that I'm a sinner like all of God's children. But I want to be a good man. (Yes, Preach it) And I want to hear a voice saying to me one day, "I take you in and I bless you, because you try. (Yes, Amen) It is well (Preach it) that it was within thine heart." (Yes) What's in your heart this morning? (Oh Lord) If you get your heart right . . . [gap in tape]

Oh this morning, if I can leave anything with you, let me urge you to be sure that you have a strong boat of faith. [laughter] The winds are going to blow. (Yes) The storms of disappointment are coming. (Yes) The agonies and the anguishes of life are coming. (Yes, sir) And be sure that your boat is strong, and also be very sure that you have an anchor. (Amen) In times like these, you need an anchor. And be very sure that your anchor holds. (Yes, Glory to God)

It will be dark sometimes, and it will be dismal and trying, and tribulations will come. But if you have faith in the God that I'm talking about this morning, it doesn't matter. (Yes) For you can stand up amid the storms. And I say it to you out of experience this morning, yes, I've seen the lightning flash. (Yes, sir) I've heard the thunder roll. (Yes) I've felt sin-breakers dashing, trying to conquer my soul. But I heard the voice of Jesus, saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, (Yes, sir) never to leave me alone. (Thank you, Jesus) No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me. Never to leave me alone. (Glory to God)

And when you get this faith, you can walk with your feet solid to the ground and your head to the air, and you fear no man. (Go ahead) And you fear nothing that comes before you. (Yes, sir) Because you know that God is even in Crete. (Amen) If you ascend to the heavens, God is there. If you descend to hell, God is even there. If you take the wings of the morning and fly out to the uttermost parts of the sea, even God is there. Everywhere we turn we find him. We can never escape him. [recording ends]

The Drum Major Instinct

This morning I would like to use as a subject from which to preach: "The Drum Major Instinct." "The Drum Major Instinct." And our text for the morning is taken from a very familiar passage in the tenth chapter as recorded by Saint Mark. Beginning with the thirty-fifth verse of that chapter, we read these words: "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him saying, 'Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.' And he said unto them, 'What would ye that I should do for you?' And they said unto him, 'Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.' But Jesus said unto them, 'Ye know not what ye ask: Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' And they said unto him, 'We can.' And Jesus said unto them, 'Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.'" And then Jesus goes on toward the end of that passage to say, "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."

The setting is clear. James and John are making a specific request of the master. They had dreamed, as most of the Hebrews dreamed, of a coming king of Israel who would set Jerusalem free and establish his kingdom on Mount Zion, and in righteousness rule the world. And they thought of Jesus as this kind of king. And they were thinking of that day when Jesus would reign supreme as this new king of Israel. And they were saying, "Now when you establish your kingdom, let one of us sit on the right hand and the other on the left hand of your throne."

Now very quickly, we would automatically condemn James and John, and we would say they were selfish. Why would they make such a selfish request? But before we condemn them too quickly, let us look calmly and honestly at ourselves, and we will discover that we too have those same basic desires for recognition, for importance. That same desire for attention, that same desire to be first. Of course, the other disciples got mad with James and John, and you could understand why, but we must understand that we have some of the same James and John qualities. And there is deep down within all of us an instinct. It's a kind of drum major instinct—a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade, a desire to be first. And it is something that runs the whole gamut of life.

And so before we condemn them, let us see that we all have the drum major instinct. We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade. Alfred Adler, the great psychoanalyst, contends that this is the dominant impulse. Sigmund Freud used to contend that sex was the dominant impulse, and Adler came with a new argument saying that this quest for recognition, this desire for attention, this desire for distinction is the basic impulse, the basic drive of human life, this drum major instinct.

And you know, we begin early to ask life to put us first. Our first cry as a baby was a bid for attention. And all through childhood the drum major impulse or instinct is a major obsession. Children ask life to grant them first place. They are a little bundle of ego. And they have innately the drum major impulse or the drum major instinct.

Now in adult life, we still have it, and we really never get by it. We like to do something good. And you know, we like to be praised for it. Now if you don't believe that, you just go on living life, and you will discover very soon that you like to be praised. Everybody likes it, as a matter of fact. And somehow this warm glow we feel when we are praised or when our name is in print is something of the vitamin A to our ego. Nobody is unhappy when they are praised, even if they know they don't deserve it and even if they don't believe it. The only unhappy people about praise is when that praise is going too much toward somebody else. (*That's right*) But everybody likes to be praised because of this real drum major instinct.

Now the presence of the drum major instinct is why so many people are "joiners." You know, there are some people who just join everything. And it's really a quest for attention and recognition and importance. And they get names that give them that impression. So you get your groups, and they become the "Grand Patron," and the little fellow who is henpecked at home needs a chance to be the "Most Worthy of the Most Worthy" of something. It is the drum major impulse and longing that runs the gamut of human life. And so we see it everywhere, this quest for recognition. And we join things, overjoin really, that we think that we will find that recognition in.

Now the presence of this instinct explains why we are so often taken by advertisers. You know, those gentlemen of massive verbal persuasion. And they have a way of saying things to you that kind of gets you into buying. In order to be a man of distinction, you must drink this whiskey. In order to make your neighbors envious, you must drive this type of car. (*Make it plain*) In order to be lovely to love you must wear this kind of lipstick or this kind of perfume. And you know, before you know it, you're just buying that stuff. (*Yes*) That's the way the advertisers do it.

I got a letter the other day, and it was a new magazine coming out. And it opened up, "Dear Dr. King: As you know, you are on many mailing lists. And you are categorized as highly intelligent, progressive, a lover of the arts and the sciences, and I know you will want to read what I have to say." Of course I did. After you said all of that and explained me so exactly, of course I wanted to read it. [*laughter*]

But very seriously, it goes through life; the drum major instinct is real. (*Yes*) And you know what else it causes to happen? It often causes us to live above our means. (*Make it plain*) It's nothing but the drum major instinct. Do you ever see people buy cars that they can't even begin to buy in terms of their income? (*Amen*) [*laughter*] You've seen people riding around in Cadillacs and Chryslers who don't earn enough to have a good T-Model Ford. (*Make it plain*) But it feeds a repressed ego.

You know, economists tell us that your automobile should not cost more than half of your annual income. So if you make an income of five thousand dollars, your car shouldn't cost more than about twenty-five hundred. That's just good economics. And if it's a family of two, and both members of the family make ten thousand dollars, they would have to make out with one car. That would be good economics, although it's often inconvenient. But so often, haven't you seen people making five thousand dollars a year and driving a car that costs six thousand? And they wonder why their ends never meet. [*laughter*] That's a fact.

Now the economists also say that your house shouldn't cost—if you're buying a house, it shouldn't cost more than twice your income. That's based on the economy and how you would make ends meet. So, if you have an income of five thousand dollars, it's kind of difficult in this society. But say it's a family with an income of ten thousand dollars, the house shouldn't cost much more than twenty thousand. Well, I've seen folk making ten thousand dollars, living in a forty- and fifty-thousand-dollar house. And you know they just barely make it. They get a check every month somewhere, and they owe all of that out before it comes in. Never have anything to put away for rainy days.

But now the problem is, it is the drum major instinct. And you know, you see people over and over again with the drum major instinct taking them over. And they just live their lives trying to outdo the Joneses. (*Amen*) They got to get this coat because this particular coat is a little better and a little better-looking than Mary's coat. And I got to drive this car because it's something about this car that makes my car a little better than my neighbor's car. (*Amen*) I know a man who used to live in a thirty-five-thousand-dollar house. And other people started building thirty-five-thousand-dollar houses, so he built a seventy-five-thousand-dollar house. And then somebody else built a seventy-five-thousand-dollar house, and he built a hundred-thousand-dollar house.

And I don't know where he's going to end up if he's going to live his life trying to keep up with the Joneses.

There comes a time that the drum major instinct can become destructive. (*Make it plain*) And that's where I want to move now. I want to move to the point of saying that if this instinct is not harnessed, it becomes a very dangerous, pernicious instinct. For instance, if it isn't harnessed, it causes one's personality to become distorted. I guess that's the most damaging aspect of it: what it does to the personality. If it isn't harnessed, you will end up day in and day out trying to deal with your ego problem by boasting. Have you ever heard people that—you know, and I'm sure you've met them—that really become sickening because they just sit up all the time talking about themselves. (*Amen*) And they just boast and boast and boast, and that's the person who has not harnessed the drum major instinct.

And then it does other things to the personality. It causes you to lie about who you know sometimes. (*Amen, Make it plain*) There are some people who are influence peddlers. And in their attempt to deal with the drum major instinct, they have to try to identify with the so-called big-name people. (*Yeah, Make it plain*) And if you're not careful, they will make you think they know somebody that they don't really know. (*Amen*) They know them well, they sip tea with them, and they this-and-that. That happens to people.

And the other thing is that it causes one to engage ultimately in activities that are merely used to get attention. Criminologists tell us that some people are driven to crime because of this drum major instinct. They don't feel that they are getting enough attention through the normal channels of social behavior, and so they turn to anti-social behavior in order to get attention, in order to feel important. (*Yeah*) And so they get that gun, and before they know it they robbed a bank in a quest for recognition, in a quest for importance.

And then the final great tragedy of the distorted personality is the fact that when one fails to harness this instinct, (*Glory to God*) he ends up trying to push others down in order to push himself up. (*Amen*) And whenever you do that, you engage in some of the most vicious activities. You will spread evil, vicious, lying gossip on people, because you are trying to pull them down in order to push yourself up. (*Make it plain*) And the great issue of life is to harness the drum major instinct.

Now the other problem is, when you don't harness the drum major instinct—this uncontrolled aspect of it—is that it leads to snobbish exclusivism. It leads to snobbish exclusivism. (*Make it plain*) And you know, this is the danger of social clubs and fraternities—I'm in a fraternity; I'm in two or three—for sororities and all of these, I'm not talking against them. I'm saying it's the danger. The danger is that they can become forces of classism and exclusivism where somehow you get a degree of satisfaction because you are in something exclusive. And that's fulfilling something, you know—that I'm in this fraternity, and it's the best fraternity in the world, and everybody can't get in this fraternity. So it ends up, you know, a very exclusive kind of thing.

And you know, that can happen with the church; I know churches get in that bind sometimes. (*Amen, Make it plain*) I've been to churches, you know, and they say, "We have so many doctors, and so many school teachers, and so many lawyers, and so many businessmen in our church."

And that's fine, because doctors need to go to church, and lawyers, and businessmen, teachers—they ought to be in church. But they say that—even the preacher sometimes will go all through that—they say that as if the other people don't count. (*Amen*)

And the church is the one place where a doctor ought to forget that he's a doctor. The church is the one place where a Ph.D. ought to forget that he's a Ph.D. (*Yes*) The church is the one place that the school teacher ought to forget the degree she has behind her name. The church is the one place where the lawyer ought to forget that he's a lawyer. And any church that violates the "whosoever will, let him come" doctrine is a dead, cold church, (*Yes*) and nothing but a little social club with a thin veneer of religiosity.

When the church is true to its nature, (*Whoo*) it says, "Whosoever will, let him come." (*Yes*) And it does not supposed to satisfy the perverted uses of the drum major instinct. It's the one place where everybody should be the same, standing before a common master and savior. (*Yes, sir*) And a recognition grows out of this—that all men are brothers because they are children (*Yes*) of a common father.

The drum major instinct can lead to exclusivism in one's thinking and can lead one to feel that because he has some training, he's a little better than that person who doesn't have it. Or because he has some economic security, that he's a little better than that person who doesn't have it. And that's the uncontrolled, perverted use of the drum major instinct.

Now the other thing is, that it leads to tragic—and we've seen it happen so often—tragic race prejudice. Many who have written about this problem—Lillian Smith used to say it beautifully in some of her books. And she would say it to the point of getting men and women to see the source of the problem. Do you know that a lot of the race problem grows out of the drum major instinct? A need that some people have to feel superior. A need that some people have to feel that they are first, and to feel that their white skin ordained them to be first. (*Make it plain, today, 'cause I'm against it, so help me God*) And they have said over and over again in ways that we see with our own eyes. In fact, not too long ago, a man down in Mississippi said that God was a charter member of the White Citizens Council. And so God being the charter member means that everybody who's in that has a kind of divinity, a kind of superiority. And think of what has happened in history as a result of this perverted use of the drum major instinct. It has led to the most tragic prejudice, the most tragic expressions of man's inhumanity to man.

The other day I was saying, I always try to do a little converting when I'm in jail. And when we were in jail in Birmingham the other day, the white wardens and all enjoyed coming around the cell to talk about the race problem. And they were showing us where we were so wrong demonstrating. And they were showing us where segregation was so right. And they were showing us where intermarriage was so wrong. So I would get to preaching, and we would get to talking—calmly, because they wanted to talk about it. And then we got down one day to the point—that was the second or third day—to talk about where they lived, and how much they were earning. And when those brothers told me what they were earning, I said, "Now, you know what? You ought to be marching with us. [*laughter*] You're just as poor as Negroes." And I said, "You are put in the position of supporting your oppressor, because through prejudice and blindness, you fail to see that the same forces that oppress Negroes in American society oppress

poor white people. (Yes) And all you are living on is the satisfaction of your skin being white, and the drum major instinct of thinking that you are somebody big because you are white. And you're so poor you can't send your children to school. You ought to be out here marching with every one of us every time we have a march."

Now that's a fact. That the poor white has been put into this position, where through blindness and prejudice, (*Make it plain*) he is forced to support his oppressors. And the only thing he has going for him is the false feeling that he's superior because his skin is white—and can't hardly eat and make his ends meet week in and week out. (*Amen*)

And not only does this thing go into the racial struggle, it goes into the struggle between nations. And I would submit to you this morning that what is wrong in the world today is that the nations of the world are engaged in a bitter, colossal contest for supremacy. And if something doesn't happen to stop this trend, I'm sorely afraid that we won't be here to talk about Jesus Christ and about God and about brotherhood too many more years. (*Yeah*) If somebody doesn't bring an end to this suicidal thrust that we see in the world today, none of us are going to be around, because somebody's going to make the mistake through our senseless blunderings of dropping a nuclear bomb somewhere. And then another one is going to drop. And don't let anybody fool you, this can happen within a matter of seconds. (*Amen*) They have twenty-megaton bombs in Russia right now that can destroy a city as big as New York in three seconds, with everybody wiped away, and every building. And we can do the same thing to Russia and China.

But this is why we are drifting. And we are drifting there because nations are caught up with the drum major instinct. "I must be first." "I must be supreme." "Our nation must rule the world." (*Preach it*) And I am sad to say that the nation in which we live is the supreme culprit. And I'm going to continue to say it to America, because I love this country too much to see the drift that it has taken.

God didn't call America to do what she's doing in the world now. (*Preach it, preach it*) God didn't call America to engage in a senseless, unjust war as the war in Vietnam. And we are criminals in that war. We've committed more war crimes almost than any nation in the world, and I'm going to continue to say it. And we won't stop it because of our pride and our arrogance as a nation.

But God has a way of even putting nations in their place. (*Amen*) The God that I worship has a way of saying, "Don't play with me." (Yes) He has a way of saying, as the God of the Old Testament used to say to the Hebrews, "Don't play with me, Israel. Don't play with me, Babylon. (Yes) Be still and know that I'm God. And if you don't stop your reckless course, I'll rise up and break the backbone of your power." (Yes) And that can happen to America. (Yes) Every now and then I go back and read Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. And when I come and look at America, I say to myself, the parallels are frightening. And we have perverted the drum major instinct.

But let me rush on to my conclusion, because I want you to see what Jesus was really saying. What was the answer that Jesus gave these men? It's very interesting. One would have thought

that Jesus would have condemned them. One would have thought that Jesus would have said, "You are out of your place. You are selfish. Why would you raise such a question?"

But that isn't what Jesus did; he did something altogether different. He said in substance, "Oh, I see, you want to be first. You want to be great. You want to be important. You want to be significant. Well, you ought to be. If you're going to be my disciple, you must be." But he reordered priorities. And he said, "Yes, don't give up this instinct. It's a good instinct if you use it right. (Yes) It's a good instinct if you don't distort it and pervert it. Don't give it up. Keep feeling the need for being important. Keep feeling the need for being first. But I want you to be first in love. (Amen) I want you to be first in moral excellence. I want you to be first in generosity. That is what I want you to do."

And he transformed the situation by giving a new definition of greatness. And you know how he said it? He said, "Now brethren, I can't give you greatness. And really, I can't make you first." This is what Jesus said to James and John. "You must earn it. True greatness comes not by favoritism, but by fitness. And the right hand and the left are not mine to give, they belong to those who are prepared." (Amen)

And so Jesus gave us a new norm of greatness. If you want to be important—wonderful. If you want to be recognized—wonderful. If you want to be great—wonderful. But recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. (Amen) That's a new definition of greatness.

And this morning, the thing that I like about it: by giving that definition of greatness, it means that everybody can be great, (Everybody) because everybody can serve. (Amen) You don't have to have a college degree to serve. (All right) You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. (Amen) You only need a heart full of grace, (Yes, sir, Amen) a soul generated by love. (Yes) And you can be that servant.

I know a man—and I just want to talk about him a minute, and maybe you will discover who I'm talking about as I go down the way (Yeah) because he was a great one. And he just went about serving. He was born in an obscure village, (Yes, sir) the child of a poor peasant woman. And then he grew up in still another obscure village, where he worked as a carpenter until he was thirty years old. (Amen) Then for three years, he just got on his feet, and he was an itinerant preacher. And he went about doing some things. He didn't have much. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. (Yes) He never owned a house. He never went to college. He never visited a big city. He never went two hundred miles from where he was born. He did none of the usual things that the world would associate with greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. They called him a rabble-rouser. They called him a troublemaker. They said he was an agitator. (Glory to God) He practiced civil disobedience; he broke injunctions. And so he was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. And the irony of it all is that his friends turned him over to them. (Amen) One of his closest friends denied him. Another of his friends turned him over to his

enemies. And while he was dying, the people who killed him gambled for his clothing, the only possession that he had in the world. (*Lord help him*) When he was dead he was buried in a borrowed tomb, through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today he stands as the most influential figure that ever entered human history. All of the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned put together (*Yes*) have not affected the life of man on this earth (*Amen*) as much as that one solitary life. His name may be a familiar one. (*Jesus*) But today I can hear them talking about him. Every now and then somebody says, "He's King of Kings." (*Yes*) And again I can hear somebody saying, "He's Lord of Lords." Somewhere else I can hear somebody saying, "In Christ there is no East nor West." (*Yes*) And then they go on and talk about, "In Him there's no North and South, but one great Fellowship of Love throughout the whole wide world." He didn't have anything. (*Amen*) He just went around serving and doing good.

This morning, you can be on his right hand and his left hand if you serve. (*Amen*) It's the only way in.

Every now and then I guess we all think realistically (*Yes, sir*) about that day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator—that something that we call death. We all think about it. And every now and then I think about my own death and I think about my own funeral. And I don't think of it in a morbid sense. And every now and then I ask myself, "What is it that I would want said?" And I leave the word to you this morning.

If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. (*Yes*) And every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize—that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards—that's not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school. (*Yes*)

I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. (*Yes*)

I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody.

I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. (*Amen*)

I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. (*Yes*)

And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. (*Yes*)

I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. (*Lord*)

I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. (*Yes*)

Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. (*Amen*) Say that I was a drum major for peace. (*Yes*) I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. (*Yes*) I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind. (*Amen*) And that's all I want to say.

If I can help somebody as I pass along,

If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,

If I can show somebody he's traveling wrong,

Then my living will not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,

If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought,

If I can spread the message as the master taught,

Then my living will not be in vain.

Yes, Jesus, I want to be on your right or your left side, (*Yes*) not for any selfish reason. I want to be on your right or your left side, not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition. But I just want to be there in I

Why Jesus Called A Man A Fool

To my good friend Doctor Wells, to the officers and members of Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, my Christian brothers and sisters, I can assure you that it would take me the rest of my days to live up to that eloquent, beautiful introduction just made by this charming member of your congregation. It makes me feel very humble. And such encouraging words give me renewed courage and vigor to carry on in the struggle for freedom and human dignity. I'm deeply grateful to your esteemed pastor for extending the invitation for me to be with you. And I'm grateful to him for the support that he has given me in my humble efforts. You know, I learned a long time ago that you can't make it by yourself in this world. You need friends; you need somebody to pat you on the back; you need somebody to give you consolation in the darkest hours. And I'm so grateful to all of the friends in the city of Chicago and to the many ministers of the gospel who have given me that kind of support and encouragement.

As you know, we are involved in a difficult struggle. It was about a hundred and four years ago that Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the Negro from the bondage of physical slavery. And yet we stand here one hundred and four years later, and the Negro still isn't free. One hundred and four years later, we still have states like Mississippi and Alabama where Negroes are lynched at whim and murdered at will. One hundred and four years later, we must face the tragic fact that the vast majority of Negroes in our country find themselves perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred and four years later, fifty percent of the Negro families of our country are forced to live in substandard housing conditions, most of whom do not have wall-to-wall carpets; many of them are forced to live with wall-to-wall rats and roaches. One hundred and four years later, we find ourselves in a situation where even though we live in a nation founded on the principle that all men are created equal, men are still arguing over whether the color of a man's skin determines the content of his character. Now this tells us that we have a long, long way to go.

And I'm going to still need your prayer, I'm going to still need your support. Because the period that we face now is more difficult than any we've faced in the past. But this morning I did not come to Mount Pisgah to give a civil rights address; I have to do a lot of that; I have to make numerous civil rights speeches. But before I was a civil rights leader, I was a preacher of the gospel. This was my first calling and it still remains my greatest commitment. You know, actually all that I do in civil rights I do because I consider it a part of my ministry. I have no other ambitions in life but to achieve excellence in the Christian ministry. I don't plan to run for any political office. I don't plan to do anything but remain a preacher.

And what I'm doing in this struggle, along with many others, grows out of my feeling that the preacher must be concerned about the whole man. Not merely his soul, but his body. It's all right to talk about heaven. I talk about it because I believe firmly in immortality. But you've got to talk about the earth. It's all right to talk about long white robes over yonder, but I want a suit and some shoes to wear down here. It's all right to talk about the streets flowing with milk and honey in heaven, but I want some food to eat down here. It's even all right to talk about the new Jerusalem. But one day we must begin to talk about the new Chicago, the new Atlanta, the new New York, the new America.

And any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men (*Well*) and is not concerned about the slums that cripple the souls—the economic conditions that stagnate the soul (*Yes*) and the city governments that may damn the soul—is a dry, dead, do-nothing religion (*Yes, Amen*) in need of new blood. And so I come to you this morning, to talk about some of the great insights from the scripture in general, and from the New Testament in particular. I want to use as a subject from which to preach: "Why Jesus Called A Man A Fool." (*Yeah*) "Why Jesus Called A Man A Fool." (*Yeah*)

I want to share with you a dramatic little story from the gospel as recorded by Saint Luke. It is a story of a man who by all standards (*Yes, Speak, doc, speak*) of measurement would be considered a highly successful man. (*Yes*) And yet Jesus called him a fool. (*Yes*) If you will read that parable, you will discover that the central character in the drama is a certain rich man. (*Yes*) This man was so rich that his farm yielded tremendous crops. (*Yes*) In fact, the crops were so

great that he didn't know what to do. It occurred to him that he had only one alternative and that was to build some new and bigger barns so he could store all of his crops. (Yes) And then as he thought about this, he said, "Then I'm going to do something after I build my new and bigger barns." He said, "I'm going to store my goods and my fruit there, and then I'm going to say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'" (Yes) That brother thought that was the end of life. (All right)

But the parable doesn't end with that man making his statement. (My Lord) It ends by saying that God said to him, (Yes) "Thou fool. (Yes) Not next year, not next week, not tomorrow, but this night, (Yes) thy soul is required of thee." (Yes)

And so it was at the height of his prosperity he died. Look at that parable. (Yes) Think about it. (Yes) Think of this man: If he lived in Chicago today, he would be considered "a big shot." (My Lord) And he would abound with all of the social prestige and all of the community influence that could be afforded. (Yes) Most people would look up to him because he would have that something called money. (Yes) And yet a Galilean peasant had the audacity to call that man a fool. (Yes)

Now Jesus didn't call the man a fool because he made his money in a dishonest fashion. There is nothing in that parable to indicate that this man was dishonest and that he made his money through conniving and exploitative methods. In fact, it seems to reveal that he had a medium of humanity and that he was a very industrious man. He was a thrifty man, apparently a pretty hard worker. So Jesus didn't call him a fool because he got his money through dishonest means.

And there is nothing here to indicate that Jesus called this man a fool because he was rich. Jesus never made a universal indictment against all wealth. It's true that one day a rich young ruler came to him raising some questions about eternal life and Jesus said to him, "Sell all." But in that case Jesus was prescribing individual surgery and not setting forth a universal diagnosis. You know, Jesus told another parable about a man who was very rich by the name of Dives, and Dives ended up going to hell. There was nothing indicating that Dives went to hell because he was rich. In fact, when Dives got in hell, he had a conversation with a man in heaven; and on the other end of that long distance call between hell and heaven was Abraham in heaven. Now if you go back to the Old Testament, you will discover that Abraham was a real rich man. It wasn't a millionaire in hell talking with a poor man in heaven; it was a little millionaire in hell talking with a multi-millionaire in heaven. So that Jesus did not call this man a fool because he was rich.

I'd like for you to look at this parable with me and try to decipher the real reason that Jesus called this man a fool. Number one, Jesus called this man a fool because he allowed the means by which he lived to outdistance the ends for which he lived. (Yes) You see, each of us lives in two realms, the within and the without. (Yeah) Now the within of our lives is that realm of spiritual ends expressed in art, literature, religion, and morality. The without of our lives is that complex of devices, of mechanisms and instrumentalities by means of which we live. The house we live in—that's a part of the means by which we live. The car we drive, the clothes we wear, the money that we are able to accumulate—in short, the physical stuff that's necessary for us to exist. (My Lord)

Now the problem is that we must always keep a line of demarcation between the two. (*My Lord*) This man was a fool because he didn't do that. (*Yes*)

The other day in Atlanta, the wife of a man had an automobile accident. He received a call that the accident had taken place on the expressway. The first question he asked when he received the call: "How much damage did it do to my Cadillac?" He never asked how his wife was doing. Now that man was a fool, because he had allowed an automobile to become more significant than a person. He wasn't a fool because he had a Cadillac, he was a fool because he worshiped his Cadillac. He allowed his automobile to become more important than God.

Somehow in life we must know that we must seek first the kingdom of God, and then all of those other things—clothes, houses, cars—will be added unto us. But the problem is all too many people fail to put first things first. They don't keep a sharp line of demarcation between the things of life and the ends of life.

And so this man was a fool because he allowed the means by which he lived to outdistance the ends for which he lived. He was a fool because he maximized the minimum and minimized the maximum. This man was a fool because he allowed his technology to outdistance his theology. This man was a fool because he allowed his mentality to outrun his morality. Somehow he became so involved in the means by which he lived that he couldn't deal with the way to eternal matters. He didn't make contributions to civil rights. (*Yes*) He looked at suffering humanity and wasn't concerned about it. (*Yeah*)

He may have had great books in his library, but he never read them. He may have had recordings of great music of the ages, but he never listened to it. He probably gave his wife mink coats, a convertible automobile, but he didn't give her what she needed most, love and affection. (*Yes*) He probably provided bread for his children, but he didn't give them any attention; he didn't really love them. Somehow he looked up at the beauty of the stars, but he wasn't moved by them. He had heard the glad tidings of philosophy and poetry, but he really didn't read it or comprehend it, or want to comprehend it. And so this man justly deserved his title. He was an eternal fool. (*Yes*) He allowed the means by which he lived to outdistance the ends for which he lived. (*Yes*)

Now number two, this man was a fool because he failed to realize his dependence on others. (*Yes*) Now if you read that parable in the book of Luke, you will discover that this man utters about sixty words. And do you know in sixty words he said "I" and "my" more than fifteen times? (*My Lord*) This man was a fool because he said "I" and "my" so much until he lost the capacity to say "we" and "our." (*Yes*) He failed to realize that he couldn't do anything by himself. This man talked like he could build the barns by himself, like he could till the soil by himself. And he failed to realize that wealth is always a result of the commonwealth.

Maybe you haven't ever thought about it, but you can't leave home in the morning without being dependent on most of the world. You get up in the morning, and you go to the bathroom and you reach over for a sponge, and that's even given to you by a Pacific Islander. You reach over for a towel, and that's given to you by a Turk. You reach down to pick up your soap, and that's given to you by a Frenchman. Then after dressing, you rush to the kitchen and you decide this morning

that you want to drink a little coffee; that's poured in your cup by a South American. Or maybe this morning you prefer tea; that's poured in your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you want cocoa this morning; that's poured in your cup by a West African. Then you reach over to get your toast, and that's given to you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning you are dependent on more than half of the world.

And oh my friends, I don't want you to forget it. No matter where you are today, somebody helped you to get there. (Yes) It may have been an ordinary person, doing an ordinary job in an extraordinary way. Some few are able to get some education; you didn't get it by yourself. Don't forget those who helped you come over.

There is a magnificent lady, with all of the beauty of blackness and black culture by the name of Marian Anderson that you've heard about and read about and some of you have seen. She started out as a little girl singing in the choir of the Union Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And then came that glad day when she made it. And she stood in Carnegie Hall, with the Philharmonic Orchestra in the background in New York, singing with the beauty that is matchless. Then she came to the end of that concert, singing "Ave Maria" as nobody else can sing it. And they called her back and back and back and back again, and she finally ended by singing, "Nobody knows De Trouble I Seen." And her mother was sitting out in the audience, and she started crying; tears were flowing down her cheeks. And the person next to her said, "Mrs. Anderson, why are you crying? Your daughter is scoring tonight. The critics tomorrow will be lavishing their praise on her. Why are you crying?"

And Mrs. Anderson looked over with tears still flowing and said, "I'm not crying because I'm sad, I'm crying for joy." She went on to say, "You may not remember; you wouldn't know. But I remember when Marian was growing up, and I was working in a kitchen till my hands were all but parched, my eyebrows all but scalded. I was working there to make it possible for my daughter to get an education. And I remember one day Marian came to me and said, 'Mother, I don't want to see you having to work like this.' And I looked down and said, 'Honey, I don't mind it. I'm doing it for you and I expect great things of you.'"

And finally one day somebody asked Marian Anderson in later years, "Miss Anderson, what has been the happiest moment of your life? Was it the moment that you had your debut in Carnegie Hall in New York?" She said, "No, that wasn't it." "Was it the moment you stood before the kings and queens of Europe?" "No, that wasn't it." "Well, Miss Anderson, was it the moment that Sibelius of Finland declared that his roof was too low for such a voice?" "No, that wasn't it." "Miss Anderson, was it the moment that Toscanini said that a voice like yours comes only once in a century?" "No, that wasn't it." "What was it then, Miss Anderson?" And she looked up and said quietly, "The happiest moment in my life was the moment that I could say, 'Mother, you can stop working now.'" Marian Anderson realized that she was where she was because somebody helped her to get there.

In a larger sense we've got to see this in our world today. Our white brothers must see this; they haven't seen it up to now. The great problem facing our nation today in the area of race is that it is the black man who to a large extent produced the wealth of this nation. (*All right*) And the

nation doesn't have sense enough to share its wealth and its power with the very people who made it so. *(All right)* And I know what I'm talking about this morning. *(Yes, sir)* The black man made America wealthy. *(Yes, sir)*

We've been here—that's why I tell you right now, I'm not going anywhere. They can talk, these groups, some people talking about a separate state, or go back to Africa. I love Africa, it's our ancestral home. But I don't know about you. My grandfather and my great-grandfather did too much to build this nation for me to be talking about getting away from it. *[applause]* Before the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth in 1620, we were here. *(Oh yeah)* Before Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. *(All right)* Before the beautiful words of the "Star Spangled Banner" were written, we were here. *(Yeah)* For more than two centuries, our forebearers labored here without wages. They made cotton king. With their hands and with their backs and with their labor, they built the sturdy docks, the stout factories, the impressive mansions of the South. *(My Lord)*

Now this nation is telling us that we can't build. Negroes are excluded almost absolutely from the building trades. It's lily white. Why? Because these jobs pay six, seven, eight, nine and ten dollars an hour, and they don't want Negroes to have it. *[applause]* And I feel that if something doesn't happen soon, and something massive, the same indictment will come to America—"Thou fool!"

That man said he didn't know what to do with his goods, he had so many. Oh, I wish I could have advised him. *(My Lord)* A lot of places to go, and there were a lot of things that could be done. There were hungry stomachs that needed to be filled; there were empty pockets that needed access to money. America today, my friends, is also rich in goods. *(My Lord)* We have our barns, and every day our rich nation is building new and larger and greater barns. You know, we spend millions of dollars a day to store surplus food. But I want to say to America, "I know where you can store that food free of charge: *(Yes)* in the wrinkled stomachs of the millions of God's children in Asia and Africa and South America and in our own nation who go to bed hungry tonight." *(Yes)*

There are a lot of fools around. *(Lord help him)* Because they fail to realize their dependence on others.

Finally, this man was a fool because he failed to realize his dependence on God. *(Yeah)* Do you know that man talked like he regulated the seasons? That man talked like he gave the rain to grapple with the fertility of the soil. *(Yes)* That man talked like he provided the dew. He was a fool because he ended up acting like he was the Creator, *(Yes)* instead of a creature. *(Amen)*

And this man-centered foolishness is still alive today. In fact, it has gotten to the point today that some are even saying that God is dead. The thing that bothers me about it is that they didn't give me full information, because at least I would have wanted to attend God's funeral. And today I want to ask, who was the coroner that pronounced him dead? I want to raise a question, how long had he been sick? I want to know whether he had a heart attack or died of chronic cancer. These questions haven't been answered for me, and I'm going on believing and knowing that God is alive. You see, as long as love is around, God is alive. As long as justice is around, God is alive.

There are certain conceptions of God that needed to die, but not God. You see, God is the supreme noun of life; he's not an adjective. He is the supreme subject of life; he's not a verb. He's the supreme independent clause; he's not a dependent clause. Everything else is dependent on him, but he is dependent on nothing.

One day Moses had to grapple with it and God sent him out and told him to tell the people that "I Am sent you." And Moses wondered about it, and he said, "Well, what am I to tell the folk?" He said, "Just go on and tell them that I Am sent you. And then if you need a little more information, let them know that my first name is the same as my last, 'I Am that I Am.'" And God is the only being in the universe that can say that "I Am," and stop there. Whenever I say, "I am," I have to say, "I am because of"—because of my parents, because of my environment, because of hereditary circumstances. And each of you has to say you are because of something. But God is life supreme. Now God, the power that holds the universe in the palm of his hand, is the only being that can say, "I Am," and put a period there and never look back. And don't be foolish enough to forget him.

You know, a lot of people are forgetting God. They haven't done it theoretically, as others have done through their theories—postulated through the God-is-dead theology—but a lot of people just get involved in other things. (Yes) And so many people become so involved in their big bank accounts and in their beautiful expensive automobiles that they unconsciously forget God. So many people become so involved in looking at the man-made lights of the city that they forget to think about that great cosmic light that gets up early in the morning in the eastern horizon and moves with a kind of symphony of motion like a masterly queen strolling across a mansion and paints its technicolor across the blue as it moves—a light that man could never make. Some people have become so involved in looking at the skyscraping buildings of the cities that they've forgotten to think about the gigantic mountains, kissing the skies, as if to bathe their peaks in the lofty blue—something that man could never make. So many people have become so involved in televisions and radar that they've forgotten to think about the beautiful stars that bedeck the heavens like swinging lanterns of eternity, standing there like shining silvery pins sticking in the magnificent blue pincushion—something that man could never make. So many people have come to feel that on their own efforts they can bring in a new world, but they've forgotten to think about the fact that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. And so they end up going over and over again without God.

But I tell you this morning, my friends, there's no way to get rid of him. And all of our new knowledge will not diminish God's being one iota. Neither the microcosmic compass of the atom nor the vast interstellar ranges of interstellar space can make God irrelevant for living in a universe, where stellar distance must be measured in light years, where stars are five hundred million million miles from the earth, where heavenly bodies travel at incredible speeds. Modern man still has to cry out with the Psalmist, "When I behold the heavens, the work of thy hands and all that thou hast created; what is man, that thou is mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou hast remembered him?"

God is still around. One day, you're going to need him. (*My Lord*) The problems of life will begin to overwhelm you; disappointments will begin to beat upon the door of your life like a tidal wave. (Yes) And if you don't have a deep and patient faith, (*Well*) you aren't going to be

able to make it. (*My Lord*) I know this from my own experience. (*Yes*) The first twenty-five years of my life were very comfortable years, very happy years; didn't have to worry about anything. I have a marvelous mother and father. They went out of the way to provide everything for their children, basic necessities. I went right on through school, I never had to drop out to work or anything. And you know, I was about to conclude that life had been wrapped up for me in a Christmas package.

Now of course I was religious; I grew up in the church. I'm the son of a preacher, I'm the great-grandson of a preacher, and the great-great-grandson of a preacher. My father is a preacher, my grandfather was a preacher, my great-grandfather was a preacher, my only brother is a preacher, my Daddy's brother is a preacher. So I didn't have much choice, I guess. [*laughter*] But I had grown up in the church, and the church meant something very real to me, but it was a kind of inherited religion and I had never felt (*My Lord*) an experience with God in the way that you must have it if you're going to walk the lonely paths of this life. (*Yeah*) Everything was done, and if I had a problem I could always call Daddy, my earthly father; things were solved.

But one day after finishing school, I was called to a little church down in Montgomery, Alabama, and I started preaching there. Things were going well in that church; it was a marvelous experience. But one day a year later, a lady by the name of Rosa Parks decided that she wasn't going to take it any longer. She stayed in a bus seat, and you may not remember it because (*I do*) it's way back now several years, but it was the beginning of a movement where fifty thousand black men and women refused absolutely to ride the city buses. And we walked together for 381 days. (*Yes, sir*) That's what we got to learn in the North: Negroes have to learn to stick together. We stuck together. [*applause*] We sent out the call and no Negro rode the buses. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen in my life. And the people of Montgomery asked me to serve as the spokesman, and as the president of the new organization—the Montgomery Improvement Association that came into being to lead the boycott—I couldn't say no. And then we started our struggle together. (*Yeah*)

Things were going well for the first few days, but then about ten or fifteen days later, after the white people in Montgomery knew that we meant business, they started doing some nasty things. (*Yes*) They started making nasty telephone calls, and it came to the point that some days more than forty telephone calls would come in, threatening my life, the life of my family, the life of my children. I took it for a while in a strong manner.

But I never will forget one night very late. It was around midnight. And you can have some strange experiences at midnight. (*Yes, sir*) I had been out meeting with the steering committee all that night. And I came home, and my wife was in the bed and I immediately crawled into bed to get some rest to get up early the next morning to try to keep things going. And immediately the telephone started ringing and I picked it up. On the other end was an ugly voice. That voice said to me, in substance, "Nigger, we are tired of you and your mess now. And if you aren't out of this town in three days, we're going to blow your brains out and blow up your house." (*Lord Jesus*)

I'd heard these things before, but for some reason that night it got to me. I turned over and I tried to go to sleep, but I couldn't sleep. (*Yes*) I was frustrated, bewildered. And then I got up and

went back to the kitchen and I started warming some coffee, thinking that coffee would give me a little relief. And then I started thinking about many things. I pulled back on the theology and philosophy that I had just studied in the universities, trying to give philosophical and theological reasons for the existence and the reality of sin and evil, but the answer didn't quite come there. I sat there and thought about a beautiful little daughter who had just been born about a month earlier. We have four children now, but we only had one then. She was the darling of my life. I'd come in night after night and see that little gentle smile. And I sat at that table thinking about that little girl and thinking about the fact that she could be taken away from me any minute. (*Go ahead*) And I started thinking about a dedicated, devoted, and loyal wife who was over there asleep. (*Yes*) And she could be taken from me, or I could be taken from her. And I got to the point that I couldn't take it any longer; I was weak. (*Yes*)

Something said to me, you can't call on Daddy now, he's up in Atlanta a hundred and seventy-five miles away. (*Yes*) You can't even call on Mama now. (*My Lord*) You've got to call on that something in that person that your Daddy used to tell you about. (*Yes*) That power that can make a way out of no way. (*Yes*) And I discovered then that religion had to become real to me and I had to know God for myself. (*Yes, sir*) And I bowed down over that cup of coffee—I never will forget it. (*Yes, sir*) And oh yes, I prayed a prayer and I prayed out loud that night. (*Yes*) I said, "Lord, I'm down here trying to do what's right. (*Yes*) I think I'm right; I think the cause that we represent is right. (*Yes*) But Lord, I must confess that I'm weak now; I'm faltering; I'm losing my courage. (*Yes*) And I can't let the people see me like this because if they see me weak and losing my courage, they will begin to get weak." (*Yes*) I wanted tomorrow morning to be able to go before the executive board with a smile on my face.

And it seemed at that moment that I could hear an inner voice saying to me, (*Yes*) "Martin Luther, (*Yes*) stand up for righteousness, (*Yes*) stand up for justice, (*Yes*) stand up for truth. (*Yes*) And lo I will be with you, (*Yes*) even until the end of the world."

And I'll tell you, I've seen the lightning flash. I've heard the thunder roll. I felt sin-breakers dashing, trying to conquer my soul. But I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, (*Never*) never to leave me alone.

And I'm going on in believing in him. (*Yes*) You'd better know him, and know his name, and know how to call his name. (*Yes*) You may not know philosophy. You may not be able to say with Alfred North Whitehead that he's the Principle of Concretion. You may not be able to say with Hegel and Spinoza that he is the Absolute Whole. You may not be able to say with Plato that he's the Architectonic Good. You may not be able to say with Aristotle that he's the Unmoved Mover.

But sometimes you can get poetic about it if you know him. You begin to know that our brothers and sisters in distant days were right. Because they did know him as a rock in a weary land, as a shelter in the time of starving, as my water when I'm thirsty, and then my bread in a starving land. And then if you can't even say that, sometimes you may have to say, "he's my everything. He's my sister and my brother. He's my mother and my father." If you believe it and know it, you never need walk in darkness.

Don't be a fool. Recognize your dependence on God. *(Yes, sir)* As the days become dark and the nights become dreary, realize that there is a God who rules above.

And so I'm not worried about tomorrow. I get weary every now and then. The future looks difficult and dim, but I'm not worried about it ultimately because I have faith in God. Centuries ago Jeremiah raised a question, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" He raised it because he saw the good people suffering so often and the evil people prospering. *(Yes, sir)* Centuries later our slave foreparents came along. *(Yes, sir)* And they too saw the injustices of life, and had nothing to look forward to morning after morning but the rawhide whip of the overseer, long rows of cotton in the sizzling heat. But they did an amazing thing. They looked back across the centuries and they took Jeremiah's question mark and straightened it into an exclamation point. And they could sing, "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. *(Yes)* There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul." And there is another stanza that I like so well: "Sometimes *(Yeah)* I feel discouraged." *(Yes)*

And I don't mind telling you this morning that sometimes I feel discouraged. *(All right)* I felt discouraged in Chicago. As I move through Mississippi and Georgia and Alabama, I feel discouraged. *(Yes, sir)* Living every day under the threat of death, I feel discouraged sometimes. Living every day under extensive criticisms, even from Negroes, I feel discouraged sometimes. *[applause]* Yes, sometimes I feel discouraged and feel my work's in vain. But then the holy spirit *(Yes)* revives my soul again. "There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul." God bless you. *[applause]*

Where Do We Go From Here?

Dr. Abernathy, our distinguished vice president, fellow delegates to this, the tenth annual session of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, my brothers and sisters from not only all over the South, but from all over the United States of America: ten years ago during the piercing chill of a January day and on the heels of the year-long Montgomery bus boycott, a group of approximately one hundred Negro leaders from across the South assembled in this church and agreed on the need for an organization to be formed that could serve as a channel through which local protest organizations in the South could coordinate their protest activities. It was this meeting that gave birth to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

And when our organization was formed ten years ago, racial segregation was still a structured part of the architecture of southern society. Negroes with the pangs of hunger and the anguish of thirst were denied access to the average lunch counter. The downtown restaurants were still off-limits for the black man. Negroes, burdened with the fatigue of travel, were still barred from the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. Negro boys and girls in dire need of recreational activities were not allowed to inhale the fresh air of the big city parks. Negroes in desperate need

of allowing their mental buckets to sink deep into the wells of knowledge were confronted with a firm "no" when they sought to use the city libraries. Ten years ago, legislative halls of the South were still ringing loud with such words as "interposition" and "nullification." All types of conniving methods were still being used to keep the Negro from becoming a registered voter. A decade ago, not a single Negro entered the legislative chambers of the South except as a porter or a chauffeur. Ten years ago, all too many Negroes were still harried by day and haunted by night by a corroding sense of fear and a nagging sense of nobody-ness. (*Yeah*)

But things are different now. In assault after assault, we caused the sagging walls of segregation to come tumbling down. During this era the entire edifice of segregation was profoundly shaken. This is an accomplishment whose consequences are deeply felt by every southern Negro in his daily life. (*Oh yeah*) It is no longer possible to count the number of public establishments that are open to Negroes. Ten years ago, Negroes seemed almost invisible to the larger society, and the facts of their harsh lives were unknown to the majority of the nation. But today, civil rights is a dominating issue in every state, crowding the pages of the press and the daily conversation of white Americans. In this decade of change, the Negro stood up and confronted his oppressor. He faced the bullies and the guns, and the dogs and the tear gas. He put himself squarely before the vicious mobs and moved with strength and dignity toward them and decisively defeated them. (*Yes*) And the courage with which he confronted enraged mobs dissolved the stereotype of the grinning, submissive Uncle Tom. (*Yes*) He came out of his struggle integrated only slightly in the external society, but powerfully integrated within. This was a victory that had to precede all other gains.

In short, over the last ten years the Negro decided to straighten his back up (*Yes*), realizing that a man cannot ride your back unless it is bent. (*Yes, That's right*) We made our government write new laws to alter some of the cruelest injustices that affected us. We made an indifferent and unconcerned nation rise from lethargy and subpoenaed its conscience to appear before the judgment seat of morality on the whole question of civil rights. We gained manhood in the nation that had always called us "boy." It would be hypocritical indeed if I allowed modesty to forbid my saying that SCLC stood at the forefront of all of the watershed movements that brought these monumental changes in the South. For this, we can feel a legitimate pride. But in spite of a decade of significant progress, the problem is far from solved. The deep rumbling of discontent in our cities is indicative of the fact that the plant of freedom has grown only a bud and not yet a flower.

And before discussing the awesome responsibilities that we face in the days ahead, let us take an inventory of our programmatic action and activities over the past year. Last year as we met in Jackson, Mississippi, we were painfully aware of the struggle of our brothers in Grenada, Mississippi. After living for a hundred or more years under the yoke of total segregation, the Negro citizens of this northern Delta hamlet banded together in nonviolent warfare against racial discrimination under the leadership of our affiliate chapter and organization there. The fact of this non-destructive rebellion was as spectacular as were its results. In a few short weeks the Grenada County Movement challenged every aspect of the society's exploitative life. Stores which denied employment were boycotted; voter registration increased by thousands. We can never forget the courageous action of the people of Grenada who moved our nation and its federal courts to powerful action in behalf of school integration, giving Grenada one of the most integrated school systems in America. The battle is far from over, but the black people of Grenada have achieved forty of fifty-three demands through their persistent nonviolent efforts.

Slowly but surely, our southern affiliates continued their building and organizing. Seventy-nine counties conducted voter registration drives, while double that number carried on political education and get-out-the-vote efforts. In spite of press opinions, our staff is still overwhelmingly a southern-based staff. One hundred and five persons have worked across the South under the direction of Hosea Williams. What used to be primarily a voter registration staff is actually a multifaceted program dealing with the total life of the community, from farm cooperatives, business development, tutorials, credit unions, etcetera. Especially to be commended are those ninety-nine communities and their staffs which maintain regular mass meetings throughout the year.

Our Citizenship Education Program continues to lay the solid foundation of adult education and community organization upon which all social change must ultimately rest. This year, five hundred local leaders received training at Dorchester and ten community centers through our Citizenship Education Program. They were trained in literacy, consumer education, planned parenthood, and many other things. And this program, so ably directed by Mrs. Dorothy Cotton, Mrs. Septima Clark, and their staff of eight persons, continues to cover ten southern states. Our auxiliary feature of C.E.P. is the aid which they have given to poor communities, poor counties in receiving and establishing O.E.O. projects. With the competent professional guidance of our marvelous staff member, Miss Mew Soong-Li, Lowndes and Wilcox counties in Alabama have pioneered in developing outstanding poverty programs totally controlled and operated by residents of the area.

Perhaps the area of greatest concentration of my efforts has been in the cities of Chicago and Cleveland. Chicago has been a wonderful proving ground for our work in the North. There have been no earth-shaking victories, but neither has there been failure. Our open housing marches, which finally brought about an agreement which actually calls the power structure of Chicago to capitulate to the civil rights movement, these marches and the agreement have finally begun to pay off. After the season of delay around election periods, the Leadership Conference, organized to meet our demands for an open city, has finally begun to implement the programs agreed to last summer.

But this is not the most important aspect of our work. As a result of our tenant union organizing, we have begun a four million dollar rehabilitation project, which will renovate deteriorating buildings and allow their tenants the opportunity to own their own homes. This pilot project was the inspiration for the new home ownership bill, which Senator Percy introduced in Congress only recently.

The most dramatic success in Chicago has been Operation Breadbasket. Through Operation Breadbasket we have now achieved for the Negro community of Chicago more than twenty-two hundred new jobs with an income of approximately eighteen million dollars a year, new income to the Negro community. [Applause] But not only have we gotten jobs through Operation Breadbasket in Chicago; there was another area through this economic program, and that was the development of financial institutions which were controlled by Negroes and which were sensitive to problems of economic deprivation of the Negro community. The two banks in Chicago that were interested in helping Negro businessmen were largely unable to loan much because of limited assets. Hi-Lo, one of the chain stores in Chicago, agreed to maintain substantial accounts in the two banks, thus increasing their ability to serve the needs of the Negro community. And I can say

to you today that as a result of Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, both of these Negro-operated banks have now more than double their assets, and this has been done in less than a year by the work of Operation Breadbasket. [applause]

In addition, the ministers learned that Negro scavengers had been deprived of significant accounts in the ghetto. Whites controlled even the garbage of Negroes. Consequently, the chain stores agreed to contract with Negro scavengers to service at least the stores in Negro areas. Negro insect and rodent exterminators, as well as janitorial services, were likewise excluded from major contracts with chain stores. The chain stores also agreed to utilize these services. It also became apparent that chain stores advertised only rarely in Negro-owned community newspapers. This area of neglect was also negotiated, giving community newspapers regular, substantial accounts. And finally, the ministers found that Negro contractors, from painters to masons, from electricians to excavators, had also been forced to remain small by the monopolies of white contractors. Breadbasket negotiated agreements on new construction and rehabilitation work for the chain stores. These several interrelated aspects of economic development, all based on the power of organized consumers, hold great possibilities for dealing with the problems of Negroes in other northern cities. The kinds of requests made by Breadbasket in Chicago can be made not only of chain stores, but of almost any major industry in any city in the country.

And so Operation Breadbasket has a very simple program, but a powerful one. It simply says, "If you respect my dollar, you must respect my person." It simply says that we will no longer spend our money where we can not get substantial jobs. [applause]

In Cleveland, Ohio, a group of ministers have formed an Operation Breadbasket through our program there and have moved against a major dairy company. Their requests include jobs, advertising in Negro newspapers, and depositing funds in Negro financial institutions. This effort resulted in something marvelous. I went to Cleveland just last week to sign the agreement with Sealtest. We went to get the facts about their employment; we discovered that they had 442 employees and only forty-three were Negroes, yet the Negro population of Cleveland is thirty-five percent of the total population. They refused to give us all of the information that we requested, and we said in substance, "Mr. Sealtest, we're sorry. We aren't going to burn your store down. We aren't going to throw any bricks in the window. But we are going to put picket signs around and we are going to put leaflets out and we are going to our pulpits and tell them not to sell Sealtest products, and not to purchase Sealtest products."

We did that. We went through the churches. Reverend Dr. Hoover, who pastors the largest church in Cleveland, who's here today, and all of the ministers got together and got behind this program. We went to every store in the ghetto and said, "You must take Sealtest products off of your counters. If not, we're going to boycott your whole store." (*That's right*) A&P refused. We put picket lines around A&P; they have a hundred and some stores in Cleveland, and we picketed A&P and closed down eighteen of them in one day. Nobody went in A&P. [applause] The next day Mr. A&P was calling on us, and Bob Brown, who is here on our board and who is a public relations man representing a number of firms, came in. They called him in because he worked for A&P, also; and they didn't know he worked for us, too. [laughter] Bob Brown sat down with A&P, and he said, they said, "Now, Mr. Brown, what would you advise us to do." He said, "I would advise you to take Sealtest products off of all of your counters." A&P agreed next day not only to take

Sealtest products off of the counters in the ghetto, but off of the counters of every A&P store in Cleveland, and they said to Sealtest, "If you don't reach an agreement with SCLC and Operation Breadbasket, we will take Sealtest products off of every A&P store in the state of Ohio."

The next day [applause], the next day the Sealtest people were talking nice [laughter], they were very humble. And I am proud to say that I went to Cleveland just last Tuesday, and I sat down with the Sealtest people and some seventy ministers from Cleveland, and we signed the agreement. This effort resulted in a number of jobs, which will bring almost five hundred thousand dollars of new income to the Negro community a year. [applause] We also said to Sealtest, "The problem that we face is that the ghetto is a domestic colony that's constantly drained without being replenished. And you are always telling us to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps, and yet we are being robbed every day. Put something back in the ghetto." So along with our demand for jobs, we said, "We also demand that you put money in the Negro savings and loan association and that you take ads, advertise, in the *Cleveland Call & Post*, the Negro newspaper." So along with the new jobs, Sealtest has now deposited thousands of dollars in the Negro bank of Cleveland and has already started taking ads in the Negro newspaper in that city. This is the power of Operation Breadbasket. [applause]

Now, for fear that you may feel that it's limited to Chicago and Cleveland, let me say to you that we've gotten even more than that. In Atlanta, Georgia, Breadbasket has been equally successful in the South. Here the emphasis has been divided between governmental employment and private industry. And while I do not have time to go into the details, I want to commend the men who have been working with it here: the Reverend Bennett, the Reverend Joe Boone, the Reverend J. C. Ward, Reverend Dorsey, Reverend Greer, and I could go on down the line, and they have stood up along with all of the other ministers. But here is the story that's not printed in the newspapers in Atlanta: as a result of Operation Breadbasket, over the last three years, we have added about twenty-five million dollars of new income to the Negro community every year. [applause]

Now as you know, Operation Breadbasket has now gone national in the sense that we had a national conference in Chicago and agreed to launch a nationwide program, which you will hear more about.

Finally, SCLC has entered the field of housing. Under the leadership of attorney James Robinson, we have already contracted to build 152 units of low-income housing with apartments for the elderly on a choice downtown Atlanta site under the sponsorship of Ebenezer Baptist Church. This is the first project [applause], this is the first project of a proposed southwide Housing Development Corporation which we hope to develop in conjunction with SCLC, and through this corporation we hope to build housing from Mississippi to North Carolina using Negro workmen, Negro architects, Negro attorneys, and Negro financial institutions throughout. And it is our feeling that in the next two or three years, we can build right here in the South forty million dollars worth of new housing for Negroes, and with millions and millions of dollars in income coming to the Negro community. [applause]

Now there are many other things that I could tell you, but time is passing. This, in short, is an account of SCLC's work over the last year. It is a record of which we can all be proud.

With all the struggle and all the achievements, we must face the fact, however, that the Negro still lives in the basement of the Great Society. He is still at the bottom, despite the few who have penetrated to slightly higher levels. Even where the door has been forced partially open, mobility for the Negro is still sharply restricted. There is often no bottom at which to start, and when there is there's almost no room at the top. In consequence, Negroes are still impoverished aliens in an affluent society. They are too poor even to rise with the society, too impoverished by the ages to be able to ascend by using their own resources. And the Negro did not do this himself; it was done to him. For more than half of his American history, he was enslaved. Yet, he built the spanning bridges and the grand mansions, the sturdy docks and stout factories of the South. His unpaid labor made cotton "King" and established America as a significant nation in international commerce. Even after his release from chattel slavery, the nation grew over him, submerging him. It became the richest, most powerful society in the history of man, but it left the Negro far behind.

And so we still have a long, long way to go before we reach the promised land of freedom. Yes, we have left the dusty soils of Egypt, and we have crossed a Red Sea that had for years been hardened by a long and piercing winter of massive resistance, but before we reach the majestic shores of the promised land, there will still be gigantic mountains of opposition ahead and prodigious hilltops of injustice. (*Yes, That's right*) We still need some Paul Revere of conscience to alert every hamlet and every village of America that revolution is still at hand. Yes, we need a chart; we need a compass; indeed, we need some North Star to guide us into a future shrouded with impenetrable uncertainties.

Now, in order to answer the question, "Where do we go from here?" which is our theme, we must first honestly recognize where we are now. When the Constitution was written, a strange formula to determine taxes and representation declared that the Negro was sixty percent of a person. Today another curious formula seems to declare he is fifty percent of a person. Of the good things in life, the Negro has approximately one half those of whites. Of the bad things of life, he has twice those of whites. Thus, half of all Negroes live in substandard housing. And Negroes have half the income of whites. When we turn to the negative experiences of life, the Negro has a double share: There are twice as many unemployed; the rate of infant mortality among Negroes is double that of whites; and there are twice as many Negroes dying in Vietnam as whites in proportion to their size in the population. (*Yes*) [*applause*]

In other spheres, the figures are equally alarming. In elementary schools, Negroes lag one to three years behind whites, and their segregated schools (*Yeah*) receive substantially less money per student than the white schools. (*Those schools*) One-twentieth as many Negroes as whites attend college. Of employed Negroes, seventy-five percent hold menial jobs. This is where we are.

Where do we go from here? First, we must massively assert our dignity and worth. We must stand up amid a system that still oppresses us and develop an unassailable and majestic sense of values. We must no longer be ashamed of being black. (*All right*) The job of arousing manhood within a people that have been taught for so many centuries that they are nobody is not easy.

Even semantics have conspired to make that which is black seem ugly and degrading. (*Yes*) In Roget's *Thesaurus* there are some 120 synonyms for blackness and at least sixty of them are offensive, such words as blot, soot, grim, devil, and foul. And there are some 134 synonyms for

whiteness and all are favorable, expressed in such words as purity, cleanliness, chastity, and innocence. A white lie is better than a black lie. (Yes) The most degenerate member of a family is the "black sheep." (Yes) Ossie Davis has suggested that maybe the English language should be reconstructed so that teachers will not be forced to teach the Negro child sixty ways to despise himself, and thereby perpetuate his false sense of inferiority, and the white child 134 ways to adore himself, and thereby perpetuate his false sense of superiority. [applause] The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to American life and strip him of his personhood is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as the morning's newspaper. (Yes)

To offset this cultural homicide, the Negro must rise up with an affirmation of his own Olympian manhood. (Yes) Any movement for the Negro's freedom that overlooks this necessity is only waiting to be buried. (Yes) As long as the mind is enslaved, the body can never be free. (Yes) Psychological freedom, a firm sense of self-esteem, is the most powerful weapon against the long night of physical slavery. No Lincolnian Emancipation Proclamation, no Johnsonian civil rights bill can totally bring this kind of freedom. The Negro will only be free when he reaches down to the inner depths of his own being and signs with the pen and ink of assertive manhood his own emancipation proclamation. And with a spirit straining toward true self-esteem, the Negro must boldly throw off the manacles of self-abnegation and say to himself and to the world, "I am somebody. (Oh yeah) I am a person. I am a man with dignity and honor. (Go ahead) I have a rich and noble history, however painful and exploited that history has been. Yes, I was a slave through my foreparents (That's right), and now I'm not ashamed of that. I'm ashamed of the people who were so sinful to make me a slave." (Yes sir) Yes [applause], yes, we must stand up and say, "I'm black (Yes sir), but I'm black and beautiful." (Yes) This [applause], this self-affirmation is the black man's need, made compelling (All right) by the white man's crimes against him. (Yes)

Now another basic challenge is to discover how to organize our strength in to economic and political power. Now no one can deny that the Negro is in dire need of this kind of legitimate power. Indeed, one of the great problems that the Negro confronts is his lack of power. From the old plantations of the South to the newer ghettos of the North, the Negro has been confined to a life of voicelessness (That's true) and powerlessness. (So true) Stripped of the right to make decisions concerning his life and destiny he has been subject to the authoritarian and sometimes whimsical decisions of the white power structure. The plantation and the ghetto were created by those who had power, both to confine those who had no power and to perpetuate their powerlessness. Now the problem of transforming the ghetto, therefore, is a problem of power, a confrontation between the forces of power demanding change and the forces of power dedicated to the preserving of the status quo. Now, power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change. Walter Reuther defined power one day. He said, "Power is the ability of a labor union like UAW to make the most powerful corporation in the world, General Motors, say, 'Yes' when it wants to say 'No.' That's power." [applause]

Now a lot of us are preachers, and all of us have our moral convictions and concerns, and so often we have problems with power. But there is nothing wrong with power if power is used correctly.

You see, what happened is that some of our philosophers got off base. And one of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as

opposites, polar opposites, so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love. It was this misinterpretation that caused the philosopher Nietzsche, who was a philosopher of the will to power, to reject the Christian concept of love. It was this same misinterpretation which induced Christian theologians to reject Nietzsche's philosophy of the will to power in the name of the Christian idea of love.

Now, we got to get this thing right. What is needed is a realization that power without love is reckless and abusive, and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. (Yes) Power at its best [*applause*], power at its best is love (Yes) implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love. (Speak) And this is what we must see as we move on.

Now what has happened is that we've had it wrong and mixed up in our country, and this has led Negro Americans in the past to seek their goals through love and moral suasion devoid of power, and white Americans to seek their goals through power devoid of love and conscience. It is leading a few extremists today to advocate for Negroes the same destructive and conscienceless power that they have justly abhorred in whites. It is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our times. (Yes)

Now we must develop progress, or rather, a program—and I can't stay on this long—that will drive the nation to a guaranteed annual income. Now, early in the century this proposal would have been greeted with ridicule and denunciation as destructive of initiative and responsibility. At that time economic status was considered the measure of the individual's abilities and talents. And in the thinking of that day, the absence of worldly goods indicated a want of industrious habits and moral fiber. We've come a long way in our understanding of human motivation and of the blind operation of our economic system. Now we realize that dislocations in the market operation of our economy and the prevalence of discrimination thrust people into idleness and bind them in constant or frequent unemployment against their will. The poor are less often dismissed, I hope, from our conscience today by being branded as inferior and incompetent. We also know that no matter how dynamically the economy develops and expands, it does not eliminate all poverty.

The problem indicates that our emphasis must be twofold: We must create full employment, or we must create incomes. People must be made consumers by one method or the other. Once they are placed in this position, we need to be concerned that the potential of the individual is not wasted. New forms of work that enhance the social good will have to be devised for those for whom traditional jobs are not available. In 1879 Henry George anticipated this state of affairs when he wrote in *Progress and Poverty*:

The fact is that the work which improves the condition of mankind, the work which extends knowledge and increases power and enriches literature and elevates thought, is not done to secure a living. It is not the work of slaves driven to their tasks either by the, that of a taskmaster or by animal necessities. It is the work of men who somehow find a form of work that brings a security for its own sake and a state of society where want is abolished.

Work of this sort could be enormously increased, and we are likely to find that the problem of housing, education, instead of preceding the elimination of poverty, will themselves be affected if

poverty is first abolished. The poor, transformed into purchasers, will do a great deal on their own to alter housing decay. Negroes, who have a double disability, will have a greater effect on discrimination when they have the additional weapon of cash to use in their struggle.

Beyond these advantages, a host of positive psychological changes inevitably will result from widespread economic security. The dignity of the individual will flourish when the decisions concerning his life are in his own hands, when he has the assurance that his income is stable and certain, and when he knows that he has the means to seek self-improvement. Personal conflicts between husband, wife, and children will diminish when the unjust measurement of human worth on a scale of dollars is eliminated.

Now, our country can do this. John Kenneth Galbraith said that a guaranteed annual income could be done for about twenty billion dollars a year. And I say to you today, that if our nation can spend thirty-five billion dollars a year to fight an unjust, evil war in Vietnam, and twenty billion dollars to put a man on the moon, it can spend billions of dollars to put God's children on their own two feet right here on earth. [applause]

Now, let me rush on to say we must reaffirm our commitment to nonviolence. And I want to stress this. The futility of violence in the struggle for racial justice has been tragically etched in all the recent Negro riots. Now, yesterday, I tried to analyze the riots and deal with the causes for them. Today I want to give the other side. There is something painfully sad about a riot. One sees screaming youngsters and angry adults fighting hopelessly and aimlessly against impossible odds. (Yeah) And deep down within them, you perceive a desire for self-destruction, a kind of suicidal longing. (Yes)

Occasionally, Negroes contend that the 1965 Watts riot and the other riots in various cities represented effective civil rights action. But those who express this view always end up with stumbling words when asked what concrete gains have been won as a result. At best, the riots have produced a little additional anti-poverty money allotted by frightened government officials and a few water sprinklers to cool the children of the ghettos. It is something like improving the food in the prison while the people remain securely incarcerated behind bars. (That's right) Nowhere have the riots won any concrete improvement such as have the organized protest demonstrations.

And when one tries to pin down advocates of violence as to what acts would be effective, the answers are blatantly illogical. Sometimes they talk of overthrowing racist state and local governments and they talk about guerrilla warfare. They fail to see that no internal revolution has ever succeeded in overthrowing a government by violence unless the government had already lost the allegiance and effective control of its armed forces. Anyone in his right mind knows that this will not happen in the United States. In a violent racial situation, the power structure has the local police, the state troopers, the National Guard, and finally, the army to call on, all of which are predominantly white. (Yes) Furthermore, few, if any, violent revolutions have been successful unless the violent minority had the sympathy and support of the non-resisting majority. Castro may have had only a few Cubans actually fighting with him and up in the hills (Yes), but he would have never overthrown the Batista regime unless he had had the sympathy of the vast majority of Cuban people. It is perfectly clear that a violent revolution on the part of American blacks would find no

sympathy and support from the white population and very little from the majority of the Negroes themselves.

This is no time for romantic illusions and empty philosophical debates about freedom. This is a time for action. (*All right*) What is needed is a strategy for change, a tactical program that will bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible. So far, this has only been offered by the nonviolent movement. Without recognizing this we will end up with solutions that don't solve, answers that don't answer, and explanations that don't explain. [*applause*]

And so I say to you today that I still stand by nonviolence. (*Yes*) And I am still convinced [*applause*], and I'm still convinced that it is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for justice in this country.

And the other thing is, I'm concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice; I'm concerned about brotherhood; I'm concerned about truth. (*That's right*) And when one is concerned about that, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder murder. (*Yes*) Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth. (*That's right*) Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate through violence. (*All right, That's right*) Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that. [*applause*]

And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. (*Yes*) And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. (*No*) And I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love; I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. (*Yes*) For I have seen too much hate. (*Yes*) I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. (*Yeah*) I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate, myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities, and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. (*Yes, That's right*) I have decided to love. [*applause*] If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we aren't moving wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. (*Yes*) He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality.

And so I say to you today, my friends, that you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and angels (*All right*); you may have the eloquence of articulate speech; but if you have not love, it means nothing. (*That's right*) Yes, you may have the gift of prophecy; you may have the gift of scientific prediction (*Yes sir*) and understand the behavior of molecules (*All right*); you may break into the storehouse of nature (*Yes sir*) and bring forth many new insights; yes, you may ascend to the heights of academic achievement (*Yes sir*) so that you have all knowledge (*Yes sir, Yes*); and you may boast of your great institutions of learning and the boundless extent of your degrees; but if you have not love, all of these mean absolutely nothing. (*Yes*) You may even give your goods to feed the poor (*Yes sir*); you may bestow great gifts to charity (*Speak*); and you may tower high in philanthropy; but if you have not love, your charity means nothing. (*Yes sir*) You may even give your body to be burned and die the death of a martyr, and your spilt blood may be a symbol of honor for generations yet unborn, and thousands may praise you as one of history's greatest heroes;

but if you have not love (*Yes, All right*), your blood was spilt in vain. What I'm trying to get you to see this morning is that a man may be self-centered in his self-denial and self-righteous in his self-sacrifice. His generosity may feed his ego, and his piety may feed his pride. (*Speak*) So without love, benevolence becomes egotism, and martyrdom becomes spiritual pride.

I want to say to you as I move to my conclusion, as we talk about "Where do we go from here?" that we must honestly face the fact that the movement must address itself to the question of restructuring the whole of American society. (*Yes*) There are forty million poor people here, and one day we must ask the question, "Why are there forty million poor people in America?" And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising a question about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth. When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. (*Yes*) And I'm simply saying that more and more, we've got to begin to ask questions about the whole society. We are called upon to help the discouraged beggars in life's marketplace. (*Yes*) But one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. (*All right*) It means that questions must be raised. And you see, my friends, when you deal with this you begin to ask the question, "Who owns the oil?" (*Yes*) You begin to ask the question, "Who owns the iron ore?" (*Yes*) You begin to ask the question, "Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that's two-thirds water?" (*All right*) These are words that must be said. (*All right*)

Now, don't think you have me in a bind today. I'm not talking about communism. What I'm talking about is far beyond communism. (*Yeah*) My inspiration didn't come from Karl Marx (*Speak*); my inspiration didn't come from Engels; my inspiration didn't come from Trotsky; my inspiration didn't come from Lenin. Yes, I read *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital* a long time ago (*Well*), and I saw that maybe Marx didn't follow Hegel enough. (*All right*) He took his dialectics, but he left out his idealism and his spiritualism. And he went over to a German philosopher by the name of Feuerbach, and took his materialism and made it into a system that he called "dialectical materialism." (*Speak*) I have to reject that.

What I'm saying to you this morning is communism forgets that life is individual. (*Yes*) Capitalism forgets that life is social. (*Yes, Go ahead*) And the kingdom of brotherhood is found neither in the thesis of communism nor the antithesis of capitalism, but in a higher synthesis. (*Speak*) [*applause*] It is found in a higher synthesis (*Come on*) that combines the truths of both. (*Yes*) Now, when I say questioning the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. (*All right*) These are the triple evils that are interrelated.

And if you will let me be a preacher just a little bit. (*Speak*) One day [*applause*], one night, a juror came to Jesus (*Yes sir*) and he wanted to know what he could do to be saved. (*Yeah*) Jesus didn't get bogged down on the kind of isolated approach of what you shouldn't do. Jesus didn't say, "Now Nicodemus, you must stop lying." (*Oh yeah*) He didn't say, "Nicodemus, now you must not commit adultery." He didn't say, "Now Nicodemus, you must stop cheating if you are doing that." He didn't say, "Nicodemus, you must stop drinking liquor if you are doing that excessively." He said something altogether different, because Jesus realized something basic (*Yes*): that if a man will lie, he will steal. (*Yes*) And if a man will steal, he will kill. (*Yes*) So instead of just getting bogged down on one thing, Jesus looked at him and said, "Nicodemus, you must be born again." [*applause*]

In other words, "Your whole structure (Yes) must be changed." [applause] A nation that will keep people in slavery for 244 years will "thingify" them and make them things. (Speak) And therefore, they will exploit them and poor people generally economically. (Yes) And a nation that will exploit economically will have to have foreign investments and everything else, and it will have to use its military might to protect them. All of these problems are tied together. (Yes) [applause]

What I'm saying today is that we must go from this convention and say, "America, you must be born again!" [applause] (Oh yes)

And so, I conclude by saying today that we have a task, and let us go out with a divine dissatisfaction. (Yes)

Let us be dissatisfied until America will no longer have a high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds. (All right)

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes) until the tragic walls that separate the outer city of wealth and comfort from the inner city of poverty and despair shall be crushed by the battering rams of the forces of justice. (Yes sir)

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes) until those who live on the outskirts of hope are brought into the metropolis of daily security.

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes) until slums are cast into the junk heaps of history (Yes), and every family will live in a decent, sanitary home.

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes) until the dark yesterdays of segregated schools will be transformed into bright tomorrows of quality integrated education.

Let us be dissatisfied until integration is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to participate in the beauty of diversity.

Let us be dissatisfied (All right) until men and women, however black they may be, will be judged on the basis of the content of their character, not on the basis of the color of their skin. (Yeah) Let us be dissatisfied. [applause]

Let us be dissatisfied (Well) until every state capitol (Yes) will be housed by a governor who will do justly, who will love mercy, and who will walk humbly with his God.

Let us be dissatisfied [applause] until from every city hall, justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. (Yes)

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes) until that day when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together (Yes), and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid.

Let us be dissatisfied (Yes), and men will recognize that out of one blood (Yes) God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth. (Speak sir)

Let us be dissatisfied until that day when nobody will shout, "White Power!" when nobody will shout, "Black Power!" but everybody will talk about God's power and human power. [applause]

And I must confess, my friends (*Yes sir*), that the road ahead will not always be smooth. (*Yes*) There will still be rocky places of frustration (*Yes*) and meandering points of bewilderment. There will be inevitable setbacks here and there. (*Yes*) And there will be those moments when the buoyancy of hope will be transformed into the fatigue of despair. (*Well*) Our dreams will sometimes be shattered and our ethereal hopes blasted. (*Yes*) We may again, with tear-drenched eyes, have to stand before the bier of some courageous civil rights worker whose life will be snuffed out by the dastardly acts of bloodthirsty mobs. (*Well*) But difficult and painful as it is (*Well*), we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future. (*Well*) And as we continue our charted course, we may gain consolation from the words so nobly left by that great black bard, who was also a great freedom fighter of yesterday, James Weldon Johnson (*Yes*):

Stony the road we trod (*Yes*),
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days
When hope unborn had died. (*Yes*)
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place
For which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way
That with tears has been watered. (*Well*)
We have come treading our paths
Through the blood of the slaughtered.
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last (*Yes*)
Where the bright gleam
Of our bright star is cast.

Let this affirmation be our ringing cry. (*Well*) It will give us the courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. (*Yes*) When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair (*Well*), and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights (*Well*), let us remember (*Yes*) that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil (*Well*), a power that is able to make a way out of no way (*Yes*) and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. (*Speak*)

Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. Let us realize that William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again." Let us go out realizing that the Bible is right: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. (*Oh yeah*) Whatsoever a man soweth (*Yes*), that (*Yes*) shall he also reap." This is our hope for the future, and with this faith we will be able to sing in some not too distant tomorrow, with a cosmic past tense, "We have overcome! (*Yes*) We have overcome! Deep in my heart, I *did* believe (*Yes*) we would overcome." [applause]

A Knock at Midnight

The text below comes from the Strength to Love version, published in 1963.

Although this parable is concerned with the power of persistent prayer, it may also serve as a basis for our thought concerning many contemporary problems and the role of the church in grappling with them. It is midnight in the parable; it is also midnight in our world, and the darkness is so deep that we can hardly see which way to turn.

It is midnight within the social order. On the international horizon nations are engaged in a colossal and bitter contest for supremacy. Two world wars have been fought within a generation, and the clouds of another war are dangerously low. Man now has atomic and nuclear weapons that could within seconds completely destroy the major cities of the world. Yet the arms race continues and nuclear tests still explode in the atmosphere, with the grim prospect that the very air we breathe will be poisoned by radioactive fallout. Will these circumstances and weapons bring the annihilation of the human race?

When confronted by midnight in the social order we have in the past turned to science for help. And little wonder! On so many occasions science has saved us. When we were in the midnight of physical limitation and material inconvenience, science lifted us to the bright morning of physical and material comfort. When we were in the midnight of crippling ignorance and superstition, science brought us to the daybreak of the free and open mind. When we were in the midnight of dread plagues and diseases, science, through surgery, sanitation, and the wonder drugs, ushered in the bright day of physical health, thereby prolonging our lives and making for greater security and physical well-being. How naturally we turn to science in a day when the problems of the world are so ghastly and ominous.

But alas! science cannot now rescue us, for even the scientist is lost in the terrible midnight of our age. Indeed, science gave us the very instruments that threaten to bring universal suicide. So modern man faces a dreary and frightening midnight in the social order.

This midnight in man's external collective is paralleled by midnight in his internal individual life. It is midnight within the psychological order. Everywhere paralyzing fears harrow people by

day and haunt them by night. Deep clouds of anxiety and depression are suspended in our mental skies. More people are emotionally disturbed today than at any other time of human history. The psychopathic wards of our hospitals are crowded, and the most popular psychologists today are the psychoanalysts. Bestsellers in psychology are books such as *Man Against Himself*, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Times*, and *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. Bestsellers in religion are such books as *Peace of Mind and Peace of Soul*. The popular clergyman preaches soothing sermons on "How to Be Happy" and "How to Relax." Some have been tempted to revise Jesus' command to read, "Go ye into all the world, keep your blood pressure down, and, lo, I will make you a well-adjusted personality." All of this is indicative that it is midnight within the inner lives of men and women.

It is also midnight within the moral order. At midnight colours lose their distinctiveness and become a sullen shade of grey. Moral principles have lost their distinctiveness. For modern man, absolute right and wrong are a matter of what the majority is doing. Right and wrong are relative to likes and dislikes and the customs of a particular community. We have unconsciously applied Einstein's theory of relativity, which properly described the physical universe, to the moral and ethical realm.

Midnight is the hour when men desperately seek to obey the eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not get caught." According to the ethic of midnight, the cardinal sin is to be caught and the cardinal virtue is to get by. It is all right to lie, but one must lie with real finesse. It is all right to steal, if one is so dignified that, if caught, the charge becomes embezzlement, not robbery. It is permissible even to hate, if one so dresses his hating in the garments of love that hating appears to be loving. The Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest has been substituted by a philosophy of the survival of the slickest. This mentality has brought a tragic breakdown of moral standards, and the midnight of moral degeneration deepens.

As in the parable, so in our world today, the deep darkness of midnight is interrupted by the sound of a knock. On the door of the church millions of people knock. In this country the roll of church members is longer than ever before. More than one hundred and fifteen million people are at least paper members of some church or synagogue. This represents an increase of 100 per cent since 1929, although the population has increased by only 31 per cent.

Visitors to Soviet Russia, whose official policy is atheistic, report that the churches in that nation not only are crowded, but that attendance continues to grow. Harrison Salisbury, in an article in *The New York Times*, states that Communist officials are disturbed that so many young people

express a growing interest in the church and religion. After forty years of the most vigorous efforts to suppress religion, the hierarchy of the Communist party now faces the inescapable fact that millions of people are knocking on the door of the church.

This numerical growth should not be overemphasized. We must not be tempted to confuse spiritual power and large numbers. Jumboism, as someone has called it, is an utterly fallacious standard for measuring positive power. An increase in quantity does not automatically bring an increase in quality. A larger membership does not necessarily represent a correspondingly increased commitment to Christ. Almost always the creative, dedicated minority has made the world better. But although a numerical growth in church membership does not necessarily reflect a concomitant increase in ethical commitment, millions of people do feel that the church provides an answer to the deep confusion that encompasses their lives. It is still the one familiar landmark where the weary traveller by midnight comes. It is the one house which stands where it has always stood, the house to which the man travelling at midnight either comes or refuses to come. Some decide not to come. But the many who come and knock are desperately seeking a little bread to tide them over.

The traveller asks for three loaves of bread. He wants the bread of faith. In a generation of so many colossal disappointments, men have lost faith in God, faith in man, and faith in the future. Many feel as did William Wilberforce, who in 1801 said, "I dare not marry—the future is so unsettled," or as did William Pitt, who in 1806 said, "There is scarcely anything round us but ruin and despair." In the midst of staggering disillusionment, many cry for the bread of faith.

There is also a deep longing for the bread of hope. In the early years of this century many people did not hunger for this bread. The days of the first telephones, automobiles, and aeroplanes gave them a radiant optimism. They worshipped at the shrine of inevitable progress. They believed that every new scientific achievement lifted man to higher levels of perfection. But then a series of tragic developments, revealing the selfishness and corruption of man, illustrated with frightening clarity the truth of Lord Acton's dictum, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This awful discovery led to one of the most colossal breakdowns of optimism in history. For so many people, young and old, the light of hope went out, and they roamed wearily in the dark chambers of pessimism. Many concluded that life has no meaning. Some agreed with the philosopher Schopenhauer that life is an endless pain with a painful end, and that life is a tragicomedy played over and over again with only slight changes in costume and scenery. Others cried out with Shakespeare's Macbeth that life

is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

But even in the inevitable moments when all seems hopeless, men know that without hope they cannot really live, and in agonizing desperation they cry for the bread of hope.

And there is the deep longing for the bread of love. Everybody wishes to love and be loved. He who feels that he is not loved feels that he does not count. Much has happened in the modern world to make men feel that they do not belong. Living in a world which has become oppressively impersonal, many of us have come to feel that we are little more than numbers. Ralph Borsodi in an arresting picture of a world wherein numbers have replaced persons writes that the modern mother is often maternity case No. 8434 and her child, after being fingerprinted and footprinted, becomes No. 8003, and that a funeral in a large city is an event in Parlour B with Class B flowers and decorations at which Preacher No. 14 officiates and Musician No. 84 sings Selection No. 174. Bewildered by this tendency to reduce man to a card in a vast index, man desperately searches for the bread of love.

When the man in the parable knocked on his friend's door and asked for the three loaves of bread, he received the impatient retort, "Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." How often have men experienced a similar disappointment when at midnight they knock on the door of the church. Millions of Africans, patiently knocking on the door of the Christian church where they seek the bread of social justice, have either been altogether ignored or told to wait until later, which almost always means never. Millions of American Negroes, starving for the want of the bread of freedom, have knocked again and again on the door of so-called white churches, but they have usually been greeted by a cold indifference or a blatant hypocrisy. Even the white religious leaders, who have a heartfelt desire to open the door and provide the bread, are often more cautious than courageous and more prone to follow the expedient than the ethical path. One of the shameful tragedies of history is that the very institution which should remove man from the midnight of racial segregation participates in creating and perpetuating the midnight.

In the terrible midnight of war men have knocked on the door of the church to ask for the bread of peace, but the church has often disappointed them. What more pathetically reveals the irrelevancy of the church in present-day world affairs than its witness regarding war? In a world gone mad with arms buildups, chauvinistic passions, and imperialistic exploitation, the church has either endorsed these activities or remained appallingly silent. During the last two world wars, national churches even functioned as the ready lackeys of the state, sprinkling holy water upon the battleships and joining the mighty armies in singing, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." A weary world, pleading desperately for peace, has often found the church morally sanctioning war.

And those who have gone to the church to seek the bread of economic justice have been left in the frustrating midnight of economic privation. In many instances the church has so aligned itself with the privileged classes and so defended the status quo that it has been unwilling to answer the knock at midnight. The Greek Church in Russia allied itself with the status quo and became so inextricably bound to the despotic czarist regime that it became impossible to be rid of the corrupt political and social system without being rid of the church. Such is the fate of every ecclesiastical organization that allies itself with things-as-they-are.

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority. If the church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace and for economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of millions and cause men everywhere to say that it has atrophied its will. But if the church will free itself from the shackles of a deadening status quo, and, recovering its great historic mission, will speak and act fearlessly and insistently in terms of justice and peace, it will enkindle the imagination of mankind and fire the souls of men, imbuing them with a glowing and ardent love for truth, justice, and peace. Men far and near will know the church as a great fellowship of love that provides light and bread for lonely travellers at midnight.

While speaking of the laxity of the church, I must not overlook the fact that the so-called Negro church has also left men disappointed at midnight. I say so-called Negro church because ideally there can be no Negro or white church. It is to their everlasting shame that white Christians developed a system of racial segregation within the church, and inflicted so many indignities upon its Negro worshippers that they had to organize their own churches.

Two types of Negro churches have failed to provide bread. One burns with emotionalism, and the other freezes with classism. The former, reducing worship to entertainment, places more emphasis on volume than on content and confuses spirituality with muscularity. The danger in such a church is that the members may have more religion in their hands and feet than in their hearts and souls. At midnight this type of church has neither the vitality nor the relevant gospel to feed hungry souls.

The other type of Negro church that feeds no midnight traveller has developed a class system and boasts of its dignity, its membership of professional people, and its exclusiveness. In such a church the worship service is cold and meaningless, the music dull and uninspiring, and the sermon little more than a homily on current events. If the pastor says too much about Jesus Christ, the members feel that he is robbing the pulpit of dignity. If the choir sings a Negro spiritual, the members claim an affront to their class status. This type of church tragically fails to recognize that worship at its best is a social experience in which people from all levels of life come together to affirm their oneness and unity under God. At midnight men are altogether ignored because of their limited education, or they are given bread that has been hardened by the winter of morbid class consciousness.

In the parable we notice that after the man's initial disappointment, he continued to knock on his friend's door. Because of his importunity—his persistence—he finally persuaded his friend to open the door. Many men continue to knock on the door of the church at midnight, even after the church has so bitterly disappointed them, because they know the bread of life is there. The church today is challenged to proclaim God's Son, Jesus Christ, to be the hope of men in all of their complex personal and social problems. Many will continue to come in quest of answers to life's problems. Many young people who knock on the door are perplexed by the uncertainties of life, confused by daily disappointments, and disillusioned by the ambiguities of history. Some who come have been taken from their schools and careers and cast in the role of soldiers. We must provide them with the fresh bread of hope and imbue them with the conviction that God has the power to bring good out of evil. Some who come are tortured by a nagging guilt resulting from their wandering in the midnight of ethical relativism and their surrender to the doctrine of self-expression. We must lead them to Christ who will offer them the fresh bread of forgiveness. Some who knock are tormented by the fear of death as they move toward the evening of life. We must provide them with the bread of faith in immortality, so that they may realize that this earthly life is merely an embryonic prelude to a new awakening.

Midnight is a confusing hour when it is difficult to be faithful. The most inspiring word that the church must speak is that no midnight long remains. The weary traveller by midnight who asks

for bread is really seeking the dawn. Our eternal message of hope is that dawn will come. Our slave foreparents realized this. They were never unmindful of the fact of midnight, for always there was the rawhide whip of the overseer and the auction block where families were torn asunder to remind them of its reality. When they thought of the agonizing darkness of midnight, they sang:

Oh, nobody knows de trouble I've seen,

Glory Hallelujah!

Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,

Oh, yes, Lord,

Sometimes I'm almost to de groun',

Oh, yes, Lord,

Oh, nobody knows de trouble I've seen,

Glory Hallelujah!

Encompassed by a staggering midnight but believing that morning would come, they sang:

I'm so glad trouble don't last alway.

O my Lord, O my Lord, what shall I do?

Their positive belief in the dawn was the growing edge of hope that kept the slaves faithful amid the most barren and tragic circumstances.

Faith in the dawn arises from the faith that God is good and just. When one believes this, he knows that the contradictions of life are neither final nor ultimate. He can walk through the dark night with the radiant conviction that all things work together for good for those that love God. Even the most starless midnight may herald the dawn of some great fulfillment.

At the beginning of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, we set up a voluntary car pool to get the people to and from their jobs. For eleven long months our car pool functioned extraordinarily well. Then Mayor Gayle introduced a resolution instructing the city's legal department to file such proceedings as it might deem proper to stop the operation of the car pool or any transportation system growing out of the bus boycott. A hearing was set for Tuesday, November 13, 1956.

At our regular weekly mass meeting, scheduled the night before the hearing, I had the responsibility of warning the people that the car pool would probably be enjoined. I knew that they had willingly suffered for nearly twelve months, but could we now ask them to walk back and forth to their jobs? And if not, would we be forced to admit that the protest had failed? For the first time I almost shrank from appearing before them.

When the evening came, I mustered sufficient courage to tell them the truth. I tried, however, to conclude on a note of hope. "We have moved all of these months," I said, "in the daring faith that God is with us in our struggle. The many experiences of days gone by have vindicated that faith in a marvellous way. Tonight we must believe that a way will be made out of no way." Yet I could feel the cold breeze of pessimism pass over the audience. The night was darker than a thousand midnights. The light of hope was about to fade and the lamp of faith to flicker.

A few hours later, before Judge Carter, the city argued that we were operating a "private enterprise" without a franchise. Our lawyers argued brilliantly that the car pool was a voluntary "share-a-ride" plan provided without profit as a service by Negro churches. It became obvious that Judge Carter would rule in favour of the city.

At noon, during a brief recess, I noticed an unusual commotion in the courtroom. Mayor Gayle was called to the back room. Several reporters moved excitedly in and out of the room. Momentarily a reporter came to the table where, as chief defendant, I sat with the lawyers. "Here is the decision that you have been waiting for," he said. "Read this release."

In anxiety and hope, I read these words: "The United States Supreme Court today unanimously ruled bus segregation unconstitutional in Montgomery, Alabama." My heart throbbed with an inexpressible joy. The darkest hour of our struggle had become the first hour of victory. Someone shouted from the back of the courtroom, "God Almighty has spoken from Washington."

The dawn will come. Disappointment, sorrow, and despair are born at midnight, but morning follows. "Weeping may endure for a night," says the Psalmist, "but joy cometh in the morning." This faith adjourns the assemblies of hopelessness and brings new light into the dark chambers of pessimism.

The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life

I want to use as the subject from which to preach: "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life." (*All right*) You know, they used to tell us in Hollywood that in order for a movie to be complete, it had to be three-dimensional. Well, this morning I want to seek to get over to each of us that if life itself is to be complete, (*Yes*) it must be three-dimensional.

Many, many centuries ago, there was a man by the name of John who found himself in prison out on a lonely, obscure island called Patmos. (*Right, right*) And I've been in prison just enough to know that it's a lonely experience. (*That's right*) And when you are incarcerated in such a situation, you are deprived of almost every freedom, but the freedom to think, the freedom to pray, the freedom to reflect and to meditate. And while John was out on this lonely island in prison, (*That's right*) he lifted his vision to high heaven (*All right, He did*) and he saw, descending out of heaven, a new heaven (*All right*) and a new earth. (*That's right*) Over in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Revelation, it opens by saying, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. (*All right*) And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, (*All right*) coming down from God out of heaven." (*Oh yeah*)

And one of the greatest glories of this new city of God that John saw was its completeness. *(That's right)* It was not up on one side and down on the other, *(All right)* but it was complete in all three of its dimensions. *(Yes)* And so in this same chapter as we looked down to the sixteenth verse, John says, "The length and the breadth *(He did, he did)* and the height of it are equal." *(Yes, sir)* In other words, this new city of God, this new city of ideal humanity is not an unbalanced entity, *(No)* but is complete on all sides. *(Yes)* Now I think John is saying something here in all of the symbolism of this text and the symbolism of this chapter. He's saying at bottom that life as it should be and life at its best *(Yeah)* is a life that is complete on all sides. *(That's right)*

And there are three dimensions of any complete life to which we can fitly give the words of this text: length, breadth, and height. *(Yes)* Now the length of life as we shall use it here is the inward concern for one's own welfare. *(Yes)* In other words, it is that inward concern that causes one to push forward, to achieve his own goals and ambitions. *(All right)* The breadth of life as we shall use it here is the outward concern for the welfare of others. *(All right)* And the height of life is the upward reach for God. *(All right)* Now you got to have all three of these to have a complete life.

Now let's turn for the moment to the length of life. I said that this is the dimension of life where we are concerned with developing our inner powers. *(Yeah)* In a sense this is the selfish dimension of life. There is such a thing as rational and healthy self-interest. *(Yeah)* A great Jewish rabbi, the late Joshua Leibman, wrote a book some years ago entitled *Peace of Mind*. And he has a chapter in that book entitled "Love Thyself Properly." And what he says in that chapter, in substance, is that before you can love other selves adequately, you've got to love your own self properly. *(All right)* You know, a lot of people don't love themselves. *(That's right)* And they go through life with deep and haunting emotional conflicts. So the length of life means that you must love yourself.

And you know what loving yourself also means? It means that you've got to accept yourself. *(All right)* So many people are busy trying to be somebody else. *(That's right)* God gave all of us something significant. And we must pray every day, asking God to help us to accept ourselves. *(Yeah)* That means everything. *(Yeah)* Too many Negroes are ashamed of themselves, ashamed of being black. *(Yes, sir)* A Negro got to rise up and say from the bottom of his soul, "I am somebody. *(Yes)* I have a rich, noble, and proud heritage. However exploited and however painful my history has been, I'm black, but I'm black and beautiful." *(Yeah)* This is what we've got to say. We've got to accept ourselves. *(Yeah)* And we must pray, "Lord, Help me to accept myself every day; help me to accept my tools." *(Yeah)*

I remember when I was in college, I majored in sociology, and all sociology majors had to take a course that was required called statistics. And statistics can be very complicated. You've got to have a mathematical mind, a real knowledge of geometry, and you've got to know how to find the mean, the mode, and the median. I never will forget. I took this course and I had a fellow classmate who could just work that stuff out, you know. And he could do his homework in about an hour. We would often go to the lab or the workshop, and he would just work it out in about an hour, and it was over for him. And I was trying to do what he was doing; I was trying to do mine in an hour. And the more I tried to do it in an hour, the more I was flunking out in the course.

And I had to come to a very hard conclusion. I had to sit down and say, "Now, Martin Luther King, Leif Cane has a better mind than you." (*That's right*) Sometimes you have to acknowledge that. (*That's right*) And I had to say to myself, "Now, he may be able to do it in an hour, but it takes me two or three hours to do it." I was not willing to accept myself. I was not willing to accept my tools and my limitations. (*Yeah*)

But you know in life we're called upon to do this. A Ford car trying to be a Cadillac is absurd, but if a Ford will accept itself as a Ford, (*All right*) it can do many things that a Cadillac could never do: it can get in parking spaces that a Cadillac can never get in. [*laughter*] And in life some of us are Fords and some of us are Cadillacs. (*Yes*) Moses says in "Green Pastures," "Lord, I ain't much, but I is all I got." [*laughter*] The principle of self-acceptance is a basic principle in life.

Now the other thing about the length of life: after accepting ourselves and our tools, we must discover what we are called to do. (*Oh yeah*) And once we discover it we should set out to do it with all of the strength and all of the power that we have in our systems. (*Yeah*) And after we've discovered what God called us to do, after we've discovered our life's work, we should set out to do that work so well that the living, the dead, or the unborn couldn't do it any better. (*Oh yeah*) Now this does not mean that everybody will do the so-called big, recognized things of life. Very few people will rise to the heights of genius in the arts and the sciences; very few collectively will rise to certain professions. Most of us will have to be content to work in the fields and in the factories and on the streets. But we must see the dignity of all labor. (*That's right*)

When I was in Montgomery, Alabama, I went to a shoe shop quite often, known as the Gordon Shoe Shop. And there was a fellow in there that used to shine my shoes, and it was just an experience to witness this fellow shining my shoes. He would get that rag, you know, and he could bring music out of it. And I said to myself, "This fellow has a Ph.D. in shoe shining." (*That's right*)

What I'm saying to you this morning, my friends, even if it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, go on out and sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures; sweep streets like Handel and Beethoven composed music; sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry; (*Go ahead*) sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will have to pause and say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well."

If you can't be a pine on the top of a hill

Be a scrub in the valley—but be

The best little scrub on the side of the hill,

Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a highway just be a trail

If you can't be the sun be a star;

It isn't by size that you win or fail—

Be the best of whatever you are.

And when you do this, when you do this, you've mastered the length of life. *(Yes)*

This onward push to the end of self-fulfillment is the end of a person's life. Now don't stop here, though. You know, a lot of people get no further in life than the length. They develop their inner powers; they do their jobs well. But do you know, they try to live as if nobody else lives in the world but themselves? *(Yes)* And they use everybody as mere tools to get to where they're going. *(Yes)* They don't love anybody but themselves. And the only kind of love that they really have for other people is utilitarian love. You know, they just love people that they can use. *(Well)*

A lot of people never get beyond the first dimension of life. They use other people as mere steps by which they can climb to their goals and their ambitions. These people don't work out well in life. They may go for awhile, they may think they're making it all right, but there is a law. *(Oh yeah)* They call it the law of gravitation in the physical universe, and it works, it's final, it's inexorable: whatever goes up can come down. You shall reap what you sow. *(Yeah)* God has structured the universe that way. *(Yeah)* And he who goes through life not concerned about others will be a subject, victim of this law.

So I move on and say that it is necessary to add breadth to length. Now the breadth of life is the outward concern for the welfare of others, as I said. *(Yeah)* And a man has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow confines of his own individual concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. *(All right)*

One day Jesus told a parable. You will remember that parable. He had a man that came to him to talk with him about some very profound concerns. And they finally got around to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" *(All right)* And this man wanted to debate with Jesus. This question could have very easily ended up in thin air as a theological or philosophical debate. But you remember Jesus immediately pulled that question out of thin air and placed it on a dangerous curve between Jerusalem and Jericho. *(He did, he did)* He talked about a certain man who fell among thieves. *(Right)* Two men came by and they just kept going. And then finally another man came, a member of another race, who stopped and helped him. *(Oh yeah)* And that parable ends up saying that this good Samaritan was a great man; he was a good man because he was concerned about more than himself. *(Oh yeah)*

Now you know, there are many ideas about why the priest and the Levite passed and didn't stop to help that man. A lot of ideas about it. Some say that they were going to a church service, and they were running a little late, you know, and couldn't be late for church, so they kept going because they had to get down to the synagogue. And then there are others who would say that they were involved in the priesthood and consequently there was a priestly law which said that if you were going to administer the sacrament or what have you, you couldn't touch a human body twenty-four hours before worship. Now there's another possibility. It is possible that they were going down to Jericho to organize a Jericho Road Improvement Association. That's another

possibility. And they may have passed by because they felt that it was better to deal with the problem from the causal source rather than one individual victim. That's a possibility.

But you know, when I think about this parable, I think of another possibility as I use my imagination. It's possible that these men passed by on the other side because they were afraid. You know, the Jericho Road is a dangerous road. *(That's right)* I've been on it and I know. And I never will forget, Mrs. King and I were in the Holy Land some time ago. We rented a car and we drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho, a distance of about sixteen miles. You get on that Jericho road—I'm telling you it's a winding, curving, meandering road, very conducive for robbery. And I said to my wife, "Now I can see why Jesus used this road as the occasion for his parable." *(Yes)* Here you are when you start out in Jerusalem: you are twenty-two hundred feet above sea level, and when you get down to Jericho sixteen miles later—I mean you have sixteen miles from Jerusalem—you're twelve hundred feet below sea level. During the days of Jesus that road came to the point of being known as the "Bloody Path." So when I think about the priest and the Levite, I think those brothers were afraid. *(All right)*

They were just like me. I was going out to my father's house in Atlanta the other day. He lives about three or four miles from me, and you go out there by going down Simpson Road. And then when I came back later that night—and brother, I can tell you, Simpson Road is a winding road. And a fellow was standing out there trying to flag me down. And I felt that he needed some help; I knew he needed help. *[laughter]* But I didn't know it. I'll be honest with you, I kept going. *[laughter]* I wasn't really willing to take the risk. *(That's right)*

I say to you this morning that the first question that the priest asked was the first question that I asked on that Jericho Road of Atlanta known as Simpson Road. The first question that the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" *(That's right)* But the good Samaritan came by and he reversed the question. Not "What will happen to me if I stop to help this man?" but "What will happen to this man if I do not stop to help him?" This was why that man was good and great. He was great because he was willing to take a risk for humanity; he was willing to ask, "What will happen to this man?" not "What will happen to me?" *(All right)*

This is what God needs today *(Yes)*: Men and women who will ask, "What will happen to humanity if I don't help?" *(Oh yeah)* What will happen to the civil rights movement if I don't participate? *(Yes)* What will happen to my city if I don't vote? *(Oh yeah)* What will happen to the sick if I don't visit them?" This is how God judges people in the final analysis. *(Oh yeah)*

Oh, there will be a day, the question won't be, "How many awards did you get in life?" Not that day. *(Yeah)* It won't be, "How popular were you in your social setting?" That won't be the question that day. *(Yeah)* It will not ask how many degrees you've been able to get. *(All right)* The question that day will not be concerned with whether you are a "Ph.D." or a "no D." *(That's right)* It will not be concerned with whether you went to Morehouse or whether you went to "No House." *(Yes)* The question that day will not be, "How beautiful is your house?" *(That's right)* The question that day will not be, "How much money did you accumulate? How much did you have in stocks and bonds?" The question that day will not be, "What kind of automobile did you have?" On that day the question will be, "What did you do for others?" *(That's right)*

Now I can hear somebody saying, "Lord, I did a lot of things in life. I did my job well; the world honored me for doing my job. (*Oh yeah*) I did a lot of things, Lord; I went to school and studied hard. I accumulated a lot of money, Lord; that's what I did." It seems as if I can hear the Lord of Life saying, "But I was hungry, and ye fed me not. (*That's right*) I was sick, and ye visited me not. I was naked, and ye clothed me not. I was in prison, and you weren't concerned about me. So get out of my face. What did you do for others?" (*That's right*) This is the breadth of life. (*Oh yeah*)

Somewhere along the way, we must learn that there is nothing greater than to do something for others. And this is the way I've decided to go the rest of my days. That's what I'm concerned about. John, if you and Bernard happen to be around when I come to the latter-days and that moment to cross the Jordan, I want you to tell them that I made a request: I don't want a long funeral. In fact, I don't even need a eulogy (*No*) more than one or two minutes. (*All right*) I hope that I will live so well the rest of the days—I don't know how long I'll live, and I'm not concerned about that—but I hope I can live so well that the preacher can get up and say, "He was faithful." (*Yes*) That's all, that's enough. (*That's right*) That's the sermon I'd like to hear: "Well done my good and faithful servant. You've been faithful; you've been concerned about others." (*That's right*) That's where I want to go from this point on the rest of my days. (*Oh yeah*) "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant." I want to be a servant. (*Yes*) I want to be a witness for my Lord, to do something for others.

And don't forget in doing something for others that you have what you have because of others. (*Yes, sir*) Don't forget that. We are tied together in life and in the world. (*Preach, preach*) And you may think you got all you got by yourself. (*Not all of it*) But you know, before you got out here to church this morning, you were dependent on more than half of the world. (*That's right*) You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom, and you reach over for a bar of soap, and that's handed to you by a Frenchman. You reach over for a sponge, and that's given to you by a Turk. You reach over for a towel, and that comes to your hand from the hands of a Pacific Islander. And then you go on to the kitchen to get your breakfast. You reach on over to get a little coffee, and that's poured in your cup by a South American. (*That's right*) Or maybe you decide that you want a little tea this morning, only to discover that that's poured in your cup by a Chinese. (*Yes*) Or maybe you want a little cocoa, that's poured in your cup by a West African. (*Yes*) Then you want a little bread and you reach over to get it, and that's given to you by the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. (*That's right*) Before you get through eating breakfast in the morning, you're dependent on more than half the world. (*That's right*) That's the way God structured it; that's the way God structured this world. So let us be concerned about others because we are dependent on others. (*Oh yeah*)

But don't stop here either. (*No, sir*) You know, a lot of people master the length of life, and they master the breadth of life, but they stop right there. Now if life is to be complete, we must move beyond our self-interest. We must move beyond humanity and reach up, way up for the God of the universe, whose purpose changeth not. (*Right*)

Now a lot of people have neglected this third dimension. And you know, the interesting thing is a lot of people neglect it and don't even know they are neglecting it. They just get involved in other things. And you know, there are two kinds of atheism. Atheism is the theory that there is

no God. Now one kind is a theoretical kind, where somebody just sits down and starts thinking about it, and they come to a conclusion that there is no God. The other kind is a practical atheism, and that kind goes out of living as if there is no God. And you know there are a lot of people who affirm the existence of God with their lips, and they deny his existence with their lives. *(That's right)* You've seen these people who have a high blood pressure of creeds and an anemia of deeds. They deny the existence of God with their lives and they just become so involved in other things. They become so involved in getting a big bank account. *(Yeah)* They become so involved in getting a beautiful house, which we all should have. They become so involved in getting a beautiful car that they unconsciously just forget about God. *(Oh yeah)* There are those who become so involved in looking at the man-made lights of the city that they unconsciously forget to rise up and look at that great cosmic light and think about it—that gets up in the eastern horizon every morning and moves across the sky with a kind of symphony of motion and paints its technicolor across the blue—a light that man can never make. *(All right)* They become so involved in looking at the skyscraping buildings of the Loop of Chicago or Empire State Building of New York that they unconsciously forget to think about the gigantic mountains that kiss the skies as if to bathe their peaks in the lofty blue—something that man could never make. They become so busy thinking about radar and their television that they unconsciously forget to think about the stars that bedeck the heavens like swinging lanterns of eternity, those stars that appear to be shiny, silvery pins sticking in the magnificent blue pincushion. They become so involved in thinking about man's progress that they forget to think about the need for God's power in history. They end up going days and days not knowing that God is not with them. *(Go ahead)*

And I'm here to tell you today that we need God. *(Yes)* Modern man may know a great deal, but his knowledge does not eliminate God. *(Right)* And I tell you this morning that God is here to stay. A few theologians are trying to say that God is dead. And I've been asking them about it because it disturbs me to know that God died and I didn't have a chance to attend the funeral. They haven't been able to tell me yet the date of his death. They haven't been able to tell me yet who the coroner was that pronounced him dead. *(Preach, preach)* They haven't been able to tell me yet where he's buried.

You see, when I think about God, I know his name. He said somewhere, back in the Old Testament, "I want you to go out, Moses, and tell them 'I Am' sent you." *(That's right)* He said just to make it clear, let them know that "my last name is the same as my first, 'I Am that I Am.' Make that clear. I Am." And God is the only being in the universe that can say "I Am" and put a period behind it. Each of us sitting here has to say, "I am because of my parents; I am because of certain environmental conditions; I am because of certain hereditary circumstances; I am because of God." But God is the only being that can just say, "I Am" and stop right there. "I Am that I Am." And He's here to stay. Let nobody make us feel that we don't need God. *(That's right)*

As I come to my conclusion this morning, I want to say that we should search for him. We were made for God, and we will be restless until we find rest in him. *(Oh yeah)* And I say to you this morning that this is the personal faith that has kept me going. *(Yes)* I'm not worried about the future. You know, even on this race question, I'm not worried. I was down in Alabama the other day, and I started thinking about the state of Alabama where we worked so hard and may continue to elect the Wallaces. And down in my home state of Georgia, we have another sick

governor by the name of Lester Maddox. (Yes) And all of these things can get you confused, but they don't worry me. (All right) Because the God that I worship is a God that has a way of saying even to kings and even to governors, "Be still, and know that I am God." And God has not yet turned over this universe to Lester Maddox and Lurleen Wallace. Somewhere I read, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and I'm going on because I have faith in Him. (Oh yeah) I do not know what the future holds, but I do know who holds the future. (Yes) And if He'll guide us and hold our hand, we'll go on in.

I remember down in Montgomery, Alabama, an experience that I'd like to share with you. When we were in the midst of the bus boycott, we had a marvelous old lady that we affectionately called Sister Pollard. She was a wonderful lady about seventy-two years old and she was still working at that age. (Yes) During the boycott she would walk every day to and from work. She was one that somebody stopped one day and said, "Wouldn't you like to ride?" And she said, "No." And then the driver moved on and stopped and thought, and backed up a little and said, "Well, aren't you tired?" She said, "Yes, my feet is tired, but my soul is rested." (All right)

She was a marvelous lady. And one week I can remember that I had gone through a very difficult week. (Yes) Threatening calls had come in all day and all night the night before, and I was beginning to falter and to get weak within and to lose my courage. (All right) And I never will forget that I went to the mass meeting that Monday night very discouraged and a little afraid, and wondering whether we were going to win the struggle. (Oh yeah) And I got up to make my talk that night, but it didn't come out with strength and power. Sister Pollard came up to me after the meeting and said, "Son, what's wrong with you?" Said, "You didn't talk strong enough tonight."

And I said, "Nothing is wrong, Sister Pollard, I'm all right."

She said, "You can't fool me." Said, "Something wrong with you." And then she went on to say these words, "Is the white folks doing something to you that you don't like?"

I said, "Everything is going to be all right, Sister Pollard."

And then she finally said, "Now come close to me and let me tell you something one more time, and I want you to hear it this time." She said, "Now I done told you we is with you." She said, "Now, even if we ain't with you, the Lord is with you." (Yes) And she concluded by saying, "The Lord's going to take care of you."

And I've seen many things since that day. I've gone through many experiences since that night in Montgomery, Alabama. Since that time Sister Pollard has died. Since that time I've been in more than eighteen jail cells. Since that time I've come perilously close to death at the hands of a demented Negro woman. Since that time I've seen my home bombed three times. Since that time I've had to live every day under the threat of death. Since that time I've had many frustrating and bewildering nights. But over and over again I can still hear Sister Pollard's words: "God's going to take care of you." So today I can face any man and any woman with my feet solidly placed on the ground and my head in the air because I know that when you are right, God will fight your battle.

"Darker yet may be the night, harder yet may be the fight. Just stand up for that which is right." It seems that I can hear a voice speaking even this morning, saying to all of us, "Stand up for what is right. Stand up for what is just. Lo, I will be with you even until the end of the world." Yes, I've seen the lightning flash. I've heard the thunder roll. I've felt sin-breakers dashing, trying to conquer my soul. But I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. And I go on in believing that. Reach out and find the breadth of life.

You may not be able to define God in philosophical terms. Men through the ages have tried to talk about him. (Yes) Plato said that he was the Architectonic Good. Aristotle called him the Unmoved Mover. Hegel called him the Absolute Whole. Then there was a man named Paul Tillich who called him Being-Itself. We don't need to know all of these high-sounding terms. (Yes) Maybe we have to know him and discover him another way. (Oh yeah) One day you ought to rise up and say, "I know him because he's a lily of the valley." (Yes) He's a bright and morning star. (Yes) He's a rose of Sharon. He's a battle-axe in the time of Babylon. (Yes) And then somewhere you ought to just reach out and say, "He's my everything. He's my mother and my father. He's my sister and my brother. He's a friend to the friendless." This is the God of the universe. And if you believe in him and worship him, something will happen in your life. You will smile when others around you are crying. This is the power of God.

Go out this morning. Love yourself, and that means rational and healthy self-interest. You are commanded to do that. That's the length of life. Then follow that: Love your neighbor as you love yourself. You are commanded to do that. That's the breadth of life. And I'm going to take my seat now by letting you know that there's a first and even greater commandment: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, (Yeah) with all thy soul, with all thy strength." I think the psychologist would just say with all thy personality. And when you do that, you've got the breadth of life.

And when you get all three of these together, you can walk and never get weary. You can look up and see the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy. When you get all of these working together in your very life, judgement will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

When you get all the three of these together, the lamb will lie down with the lion.

When you get all three of these together, you look up and every valley will be exalted, and every hill and mountain will be made low; the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places straight; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh will see it together.

When you get all three of these working together, you will do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.

When you get all three of these together, you will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth.

When you get all three of these together... [*recording ends*]

Beyond Vietnam -- A Time to Break Silence

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight, and how very delighted I am to see you expressing your concern about the issues that will be discussed tonight by turning out in such large numbers. I also want to say that I consider it a great honor to share this program with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Commager, and Rabbi Heschel, and some of the distinguished leaders and personalities of our nation. And of course it's always good to come back to Riverside church. Over the last eight years, I have had the privilege of preaching here almost every year in that period, and it is always a rich and rewarding experience to come to this great church and this great pulpit.

I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I'm in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization which has brought us together: Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." And that time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty; but we must move on.

And some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its

religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movements and pray that our own inner being may be sensitive to its guidance, for we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King?" "Why are you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people," they ask? And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.

In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to try to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church -- the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate -- leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides.

Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, but rather to my fellow Americans.

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and

almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor -- both black and white -- through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated, as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So, I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. And so we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. And so we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years -- especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they ask -- and rightly so -- what about Vietnam? They ask if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today -- my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957 when a group of us formed

the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard of Harlem, who had written earlier:

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath --
America will be!

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that America will be -- are -- are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1954;¹ and I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for "the brotherhood of man." This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I'm speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the good news was meant for all men -- for Communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

And finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my

conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood, and because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned especially for his suffering and helpless and outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them.

This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation and for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954 -- in 1945 rather -- after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China -- for whom the Vietnamese have no great love -- but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war

even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization.

After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed as Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all this was presided over by United States' influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America, as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing -- in the crushing of the nation's only non-Communist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.

Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon, the only solid -- solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions they cannot raise. These, too, are our brothers.

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation Front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there were nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western words, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led the nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second struggle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954 they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a united Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be remembered.

Also, it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops. They remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the North. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred -- rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried in these last few minutes to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak of the -- for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote:

Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the heart of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism (unquote).

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our

present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war.

I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do [immediately] to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

Number one: End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

Number two: Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

Three: Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

Four: Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

Five: Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

Part of our ongoing -- Part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the Liberation Front. Then we must make what reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, making it available in this country, if necessary. Meanwhile -- Meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must continue to raise our voices and our lives if our nation persists in its perverse ways in Vietnam. We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service, we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. I am pleased to say that this is a path now chosen by more than seventy students at my own alma mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

Now there is something seductively tempting about stopping there and sending us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality...and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing "clergy and laymen concerned" committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala -- Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end, unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy.

And so, such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

In 1957, a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years, we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which has now justified the presence of U.S. military advisors in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru.

It is with such activity in mind that the words of the late John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent

revolution inevitable." Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin...we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say, "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is

nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best defense against communism. War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anticommunism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy, realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."² We in the West must support these revolutions.

It is a sad fact that because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."³

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.

This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing -- embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Muslim-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate -- ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: "Let us love one another, for love is God. And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us."⁴ Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day.

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. And history is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says:

Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word (unquote).

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood -- it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on."

We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall

surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message -- of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide,
In the strife of truth and Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong
Though her portions be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Guidelines for a Constructive Church

I would like to preach from the subject: "Guidelines for a Constructive Church." Over the last several weeks now, we've been reading a good deal in our newspapers about guidelines. Now this word has been applied basically to the public school systems across our nation, particularly in the South. The Supreme Court of our nation rendered a decision back in 1954 declaring segregation in the public schools unconstitutional. And that next year in 1955 it came back stating that every school district was to integrate "with all deliberate speed." And yet we came into 1966 with the terrible realization that only 5.2 percent of the Negro students of the South had been placed in integrated schools, which meant in substance that we haven't made 1 percent progress a year. And if it continued at that pace it would take another ninety-six years to integrate the public schools of the South.

And so the Department of Education decided that the process had to be speeded up on the basis of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. And this department decided to set forth certain basic guidelines that had to be followed. The guidelines stated in substance that the process of integration had to be speeded up; that all grades had to be integrated; that even faculties had to be integrated. And this plan, or these guidelines, was submitted to every school district and that school district had to decide whether it would follow the guidelines. If it refused to follow the guidelines then federal funds would be cut off. If it complied with the guidelines then federal funds would be continued. And so today there is a great discussion all over the educational world and the public school system about whether a school district or a school board will follow the guidelines.

This morning I would like to submit to you that we who are followers of Jesus Christ, and we who must keep his church going and keep it alive, also have certain basic guidelines to follow. Somewhere behind the dim mist of eternity, God set forth his guidelines. And through his prophets, and above all through his son Jesus Christ, he said that, "There are some things that my church must do. There are some guidelines that my church must follow." And if we in the church don't want the funds of grace cut off from the divine treasury, we've got to follow the guidelines. *(That's right)* The guidelines are clearly set forth for us in some words uttered by our Lord and Master as he went in the temple one day, and he went back to Isaiah and quoted from him. And he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me *(Yes, sir)* to preach the gospel to the poor, *(Yes, sir)* he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, *(Yes)* to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." These are the guidelines.

You see, the church is not a social club, although some people think it is. *(Make it plain)* They get caught up in their exclusivism, and they feel that it's a kind of social club with a thin veneer of religiosity, but the church is not a social club. *(Make it plain)* The church is not an entertainment center, although some people think it is. You can tell in many churches how they act in church, which demonstrates that they think it's an entertainment center. The church is not an entertainment center. Monkeys are to entertain, not preachers.

But in the final analysis the church has a purpose. The church is dealing with man's ultimate concern. And therefore it has certain guidelines that it must follow.

Now I wish time permitted me to go into every aspect of this text, but I want to just mention a few. Let us first think of the fact that if the church is following its guidelines, it seeks to heal (*Yes, sir*) the broken-hearted. Now there is probably no human condition more tantalizing than a broken heart. You see, broken-heartedness is not a physical condition; it's a condition of spiritual exhaustion. And who here this morning has not experienced a broken heart? I would say broken-heartedness comes basically from the trying experience of disappointment. And I don't believe there are many people here this morning under the sound of my voice who have not been disappointed about something. (*Yes, That's right*)

Here is a young man or a young woman dreaming of some great career and setting out in school to try to make that career possible, only to discover that they don't quite have the mental faculties, the technical know-how, to achieve excellence in that particular field. And so they end up having to choose life's second best, and because of this they end up with a broken heart. (*Make it plain*)

Here is a couple standing before the altar in a marriage that seems to be born in heaven, only to discover that six months or a year later the conflicts and the dissensions begin to develop; arguments and misunderstandings begin to unfold. (*Yes, sir*) And that same marriage which a year earlier seemed to have been born in heaven ends up in the divorce court, (*Yes*) and the individuals are left with a broken heart.

Here is a family, (*Make it plain*) a mother and father striving desperately to train their children up in the way that they should go. Working hard to make their education possible; working hard to give them a sense of direction, praying fervently for their guidance. And yet, in spite of all of this, one or two of the children end up taking the wrong road, (*Yes*) moving toward some strange and tragic far country. And the parents end up having to acknowledge that the children that they raised are prodigals lost in a far country, and they end up with a broken heart.

And then there comes life's ultimate tragedy, that something that always makes for a broken heart. Who this morning hasn't experienced it? When you must stand before the bier of a loved one. (*Yes, sir*) That day when the casket rolls down the aisle. That experience called death, which is the irreducible common denominator of all men. And no one can lose a loved one, no one can lose a mother or father, sister, brother, a child, without ending up with a broken heart. Broken-heartedness is a reality in life.

And Sunday after Sunday, week after week, people come to God's church with broken hearts. (*Yes, sir*) They need a word of hope. And the church has an answer—if it doesn't, it isn't a church. (*Yes*) The church must say in substance that broken-heartedness is a fact of life. Don't try to escape when you come to that experience. Don't try to repress it. Don't end up in cynicism. Don't get mean when you come to that experience. (*Make it plain*) The church must say to men and woman that Good Friday (*Yes, sir*) is a fact of life. The church must say to people that failure is a fact of life. Some people are only conditioned to success. They are only conditioned to fulfillment. Then when the trials and the burdens of life unfold, they can't stand up with it. But

the church must tell men (*Yes, sir*) that Good Friday's as much a fact of life as Easter; failure is as much a fact of life as success; disappointment is as much a fact of life as fulfillment. And the church must tell men to take your burden, (*Yes, sir*) take your grief and look at it, don't run from it. Say that this is my grief (*Yes, sir*) and I must bear it. (*Yes*) Look at it hard enough and say, "How can I transform this liability into an asset?" (*Yes*)

This is the power that God gives you. He doesn't say that you're going to escape tension; he doesn't say that you're going to escape disappointment; he doesn't say that you're going to escape trials and tribulations. But what religion does say is this: that if you have faith in God, (*Yes*) that God has the power (*Yes, sir*) to give you a kind of inner equilibrium through your pain. So let not your heart be troubled. (*No, sir*) "If ye believe in God, ye believe also in me." Another voice rings out, "Come unto me, all ye that labor (*Yes, sir, Yes*) and are heavy laden." As if to say, "Come unto me, all ye that are burdened down. Come unto me, all ye that are frustrated. Come unto me, all ye with clouds of anxiety floating in your mental skies. Come unto me, all ye that are broke down. (*Yes, sir*) Come unto me, all ye that are heartbroken. (*Yes*) Come unto me, all ye that are laden with heavy ladens, and I will give you rest." And the rest that God gives (*Yes*) is the rest that passeth all understanding. (*Yes it does*) The world doesn't understand that kind of rest, because it's a rest that makes it possible (*Yes*) for you to stand up amid outer storms, and yet you maintain inner calm. (*Yes*) If the church is true to its guidelines, (*Yes*) it heals the broken-hearted.

Secondly, when the church is true to its guidelines, it sets out to preach deliverance (*Yes, sir*) to them that are captive. (*Yes, sir*) This is the role of the church: to free people. This merely means to free those who are slaves. Now if you notice some churches, they never read this part. Some churches aren't concerned about freeing anybody. Some white churches (*Make it plain*) face the fact Sunday after Sunday that their members are slaves to prejudice, (*Yes, sir*) slaves to fear. You got a third of them, or a half of them or more, slaves to their prejudices. (*Yes, sir*) And the preacher does nothing to free them from their prejudice so often. (*Make it plain, Yes*) Then you have another group sitting up there who would really like to do something about racial injustice, but they are afraid of social, political, and economic reprisals, (*Make it plain*) so they end up silent. And the preacher never says anything to lift their souls and free them from that fear. (*Make it plain*) And so they end up captive. You know this often happens in the Negro church. (*Yeah*) You know, there are some Negro preachers that have never opened their mouths about the freedom movement. And not only have they not opened their mouths, they haven't done anything about it. And every now and then you get a few members: (*Make it plain*) "They talk too much about civil rights in that church." (*That's right*) I was talking with a preacher the other day and he said a few of his members were saying that. I said, "Don't pay any attention to them. (*Make it plain*) Because number one, the members didn't anoint you to preach. (*Yeah*) And any preacher who allows members to tell him what to preach isn't much of a preacher." (*Amen*)

For the guidelines made it very clear that God anointed. (*Yes, sir*) No member of Ebenezer Baptist Church called me to the ministry. (*No, sir*) You called me to Ebenezer, and you may turn me out of here, but you can't turn me out of the ministry, because I got my guidelines and my anointment from God Almighty. And *anything* I want to say, I'm going to say it from this pulpit. (*Make it plain*) It may hurt somebody, I don't know about that; somebody may not agree with it. (*Tell them*) But when God speaks, who can but prophesy? (*Amen*) The word of God is upon me

like *fire* shut up in my bones, (*Yes, That's right*) and when God's word gets upon me, I've got to say it, I've got to tell it all over everywhere. [*shouting*] (*Yes*) And God has called me (*Yes*) to deliver those that are in captivity. (*Yes, sir*)

Some people are suffering. (*Make it plain*) Some people are hungry this morning. (*Yes*) [*clap*] Some people are still living with segregation and discrimination this morning. (*Yes, sir*) I'm going to preach about it. (*Preach it; I'm with you*) I'm going to fight for them. I'll die for them if necessary, because I got my guidelines clear. (*Yes*) And the God that I serve and the God that called me to preach (*Yes; Amen*) told me that every now and then I'll have to go to jail for them. (*Make it plain*) Every now and then I'll have to agonize and suffer for the freedom of his children. (*Yes*) I even may have to die for it. But if that's necessary, I'd rather follow the guidelines of God (*Yes*) than to follow the guidelines of men. (*Yes*) The church is called to set free (*Yes*) those that are captive, (*Yes, sir*) to set free those that are victims of the slavery of segregation and discrimination, those who are caught up in the slavery of fear and prejudice. (*Make it plain*)

And then the church, if it is true to its guidelines, must preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (*Yes, sir, Make it plain*) You know the acceptable year of the Lord is the year that is acceptable to God because it fulfills the demands of his kingdom. Some people reading this passage feel that it's talking about some period beyond history, (*Make it plain*) but I say to you this morning that the acceptable year of the Lord can be this year. (*Yes*) And the church is called to preach it.

The acceptable year of the Lord is any year (*Amen*) when men decide to do right.

The acceptable year of the Lord is any year when men will stop lying and cheating. (*Amen, Make it plain*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when women will start using the telephone for constructive purposes (*Yes*) and not to spread malicious gossip and false rumors on their neighbors. (*Right*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is any year (*Any year*) when men will stop throwing away the precious lives that God has given them in riotous living. (*Make it plain*)

The acceptable year of the Lord (*Yes*) is that year when people in Alabama (*Make it plain*) will stop killing civil rights workers and people who are simply engaged in the process of seeking their constitutional rights. (*Make it plain*)

The acceptable year of the Lord (*Yes*) is that year when men will learn to live together as brothers. (*Yes, sir*)

The acceptable year of the Lord (*Yes*) is that year when men will keep their theology abreast with their technology.

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will keep the ends for which they live abreast with the means by which they live. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year (*That year*) when men will keep their morality abreast with their mentality.

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year (*Yes*) when all of the leaders of the world will sit down at the conference table (*Make it plain*) and realize that unless mankind puts an end to war, war will put an end to mankind. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord [*clap*] is that year when men will beat their swords into plowshares, (*Yes*) and their spears into pruning hooks: and nations will not rise up against nations, neither will they study war anymore. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year (*That year*) when men will allow justice to roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when we will send to Congress and to state houses of our nation (*Yes, sir*) men who will do justly, (*Yes*) who will love mercy, (*Yes*) and who will walk humbly with their God. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year (*Yes, sir*) when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain will be made low; the rough places would be made plain, and the crooked places straight; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will do unto others as they will have others do unto themselves. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men will love their enemies, (*Yes*) bless them that curse them, pray for them that despitefully use them.

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when men discover that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth. (*Yes*)

The acceptable year of the Lord is that year when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess the name of Jesus. And everywhere men will cry out, "Hallelujah, hallelujah! The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah, hallelujah!"

The acceptable year of the Lord is God's year. (*Yes*)

These are our guidelines, and if we will only follow the guidelines, we will be ready for God's kingdom, (*Yes*) we will be doing what God's church is called to do. We won't be a little social club. (*Make it plain*) We won't be a little entertainment center. But we'll be about the serious business (*Yes*) of bringing God's kingdom to this earth.

It seems that I can hear the God of the universe smiling and speaking to this church, saying, "You are a great church (*Glory to God*) because I was hungry and ye fed me. You are a great church because I was naked and ye clothed me. You are a great church because I was sick and ye

visited me. You are a great church because I was in prison and ye gave me consolation by visiting me." (*Yes, sir*) And this is the church that's going to save this world. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me (*Yes*) because he has anointed me to heal the broken-hearted, to set at liberty them that are captive, (*Amen*) and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

The American Dream

I planned to use for the textual basis for our thinking together that passage from the prologue of the book of Job where Satan is pictured as asking God, "Does Job serve thee for nought?" And I'd like to ask you to allow me to hold that sermon [*"Why Serve God?"*] in abeyance and preach it the next time I am in the pulpit in order to share with you some other ideas. This morning I was riding to the airport in Washington, D.C., and on the way to the airport the limousine passed by the Jefferson monument, and Reverend Andrew Young, my executive assistant, said to me, "It's quite coincidental that we would be passing by the Jefferson Monument on Independence Day." You can get so busy in life that you forget holidays and other days, and it had slipped my mind altogether that today was the Fourth of July. And I said to him, "It is coincidental and quite significant, and I think when I get to Atlanta and go to my pulpit, I will try to preach a sermon in the spirit of the founding fathers of our nation and in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence." And so this morning I would like to use as a subject from which to preach: "The American Dream." (*Yes, sir*)

It wouldn't take us long to discover the substance of that dream. It is found in those majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, words lifted to cosmic proportions: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by God, Creator, with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This is a dream. It's a great dream.

The first saying we notice in this dream is an amazing universalism. It doesn't say "some men," it says "all men." It doesn't say "all white men," it says "all men," which includes black men. It does not say "all Gentiles," it says "all men," which includes Jews. It doesn't say "all Protestants," it says "all men," which includes Catholics. (*Yes, sir*) It doesn't even say "all theists and believers," it says "all men," which includes humanists and agnostics.

Then that dream goes on to say another thing that ultimately distinguishes our nation and our form of government from any totalitarian system in the world. It says that each of us has certain basic rights that are neither derived from or conferred by the state. In order to discover where they came from, it is necessary to move back behind the dim mist of eternity. They are God-given, gifts from His hands. Never before in the history of the world has a sociopolitical document expressed in such profound, eloquent, and unequivocal language the dignity and the worth of human personality. The American dream reminds us, and we should think about it anew on this Independence Day, that every man is an heir of the legacy of dignity and worth.

Now ever since the founding fathers of our nation dreamed this dream in all of its magnificence—to use a big word that the psychiatrists use—America has been something of a schizophrenic personality, tragically divided against herself. On the one hand we have proudly professed the great principles of democracy, but on the other hand we have sadly practiced the very opposite of those principles.

But now more than ever before, America is challenged to realize its dream, for the shape of the world today does not permit our nation the luxury of an anemic democracy. And the price that America must pay for the continued oppression of the Negro and other minority groups is the price of its own destruction. (*Yes it is*) For the hour is late. And the clock of destiny is ticking out. We must act now before it is too late.

And so it is marvelous and great that we do have a dream, that we have a nation with a dream; and to forever challenge us; to forever give us a sense of urgency; to forever stand in the midst of the "isness" of our terrible injustices; to remind us of the "oughtness" of our noble capacity for justice and love and brotherhood.

This morning I would like to deal with some of the challenges that we face today in our nation as a result of the American dream. First, I want to reiterate the fact that we are challenged more than ever before to respect the dignity and the worth of all human personality. We are challenged to really believe that all men are created equal. And don't misunderstand that. It does not mean that all men are created equal in terms of native endowment, in terms of intellectual capacity—it doesn't mean that. There are certain bright stars in the human firmament in every field. (*Yes, sir*) It doesn't mean that every musician is equal to a Beethoven or Handel, a Verdi or a Mozart. It doesn't mean that every physicist is equal to an Einstein. It does not mean that every literary figure in history is equal to Aeschylus and Euripides, Shakespeare and Chaucer. (*Make it plain*) It does not mean that every philosopher is equal to Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Hegel. It doesn't mean that. There are individuals who do excel and rise to the heights of genius in their areas and in their fields. What it does mean is that all men are equal in intrinsic worth. (*Yes*)

You see, the founding fathers were really influenced by the Bible. The whole concept of the *imago dei*, as it is expressed in Latin, the "image of God," is the idea that all men have something within them that God injected. Not that they have substantial unity with God, but that every man has a capacity to have fellowship with God. And this gives him a uniqueness, it gives him worth, it gives him dignity. And we must never forget this as a nation: there are no gradations in the image of God. Every man from a treble white to a bass black is significant on God's keyboard, precisely because every man is made in the image of God. One day we will learn that. (*Yes*) We will know one day that God made us to live together as brothers and to respect the dignity and worth of every man.

This is why we must fight segregation with all of our nonviolent might. (*Yes, sir; Make it plain*) Segregation is not only inconvenient—that isn't what makes it wrong. Segregation is not only sociologically untenable—that isn't what makes it wrong. Segregation is not only politically and economically unsound—that is not what makes it wrong. Ultimately, segregation is morally wrong and sinful. To use the words of a great Jewish philosopher that died a few days ago,

Martin Buber, "It's wrong because it substitutes an 'I-It' relationship for the 'I-Thou' relationship and relegates persons to the status of things." That's it. (Yes, sir)

I remember when Mrs. King and I were in India, we journeyed down one afternoon to the southernmost part of India, the state of Kerala, the city of Trivandrum. That afternoon I was to speak in one of the schools, what we would call high schools in our country, and it was a school attended by and large by students who were the children of former untouchables. Now you know in India, there was the caste system—and India has done a marvelous job in grappling with this problem—but you had your full caste and individuals were in one of the castes. And then you had some sixty or seventy million people who were considered outcasts. They were the untouchables; they could not go places that other people went; they could not do certain things. And this was one of the things that Mahatma Gandhi battled—along with his struggle to end the long night of colonialism—also to end the long night of the caste system and caste untouchability. You remember some of his great fasts were around the question of making equality a reality for the Harijans, as they were called, the "untouchables." He called them the children of God, and he even adopted an untouchable as his daughter. He demonstrated in his own personal life and in his family that he was going to revolt against a whole idea. And I remember that afternoon when I stood up in that school. The principal introduced me and then as he came to the conclusion of his introduction, he says, "Young people, I would like to present to you a fellow untouchable from the United States of America." And for the moment I was a bit shocked and peeved that I would be referred to as an untouchable. (*Glory to God*)

Pretty soon my mind dashed back across the mighty Atlantic. And I started thinking about the fact that at that time no matter how much I needed to rest my tired body after a long night of travel, I couldn't stop in the average motel of the highways and the hotels of the cities of the South. I started thinking about the fact that no matter how long an old Negro woman had been shopping downtown and got a little tired and needed to get a hamburger or a cup of coffee at a lunch counter, she couldn't get it there. (*Preach*) I started thinking about the fact that still in too many instances, Negroes have to go to the back of the bus and have to stand up over empty seats. (Yes, sir) I started thinking about the fact that my children and the other children that would be born would have to go to segregated schools. I started thinking about the fact: twenty million of my brothers and sisters were still smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in an affluent society. I started thinking about the fact: (*Make it plain*) these twenty million brothers and sisters were still by and large housed in rat-infested, unendurable slums in the big cities of our nation, still attended inadequate schools faced with improper recreational facilities. And I said to myself, "Yes, I am an untouchable, and every Negro in the United States of America is an untouchable." And this is the evilness of segregation: it stigmatizes the segregated as an untouchable in a caste system. We hold these truths to be self-evident, if we are to be a great nation, that all men (*all men*) are created equal. God's black children are as significant as his white children. (Yes, sir) "We hold these truths to be self-evident." One day we will learn this.

The other day Mrs. King and I spent about ten days down in Jamaica. I'd gone down to deliver the commencement address at the University of the West Indies. I always love to go that great island which I consider the most beautiful island in all the world. The government prevailed upon us to be their guests and spend some time and try to get a little rest while there on the speaking tour. And so for those days we traveled all over Jamaica. And over and over again I

was impressed by one thing. Here you have people from many national backgrounds: Chinese, Indians, so-called Negroes, and you can just go down the line, Europeans, European and people from many, many nations. Do you know they all live there and they have a motto in Jamaica, "Out of many people, one people." And they say, "Here in Jamaica we are not Chinese, (*Make it plain*) we are not Japanese, we are not Indians, we are not Negroes, we are not Englishmen, we are not Canadians. But we are all one big family of Jamaicans." One day, here in America, I hope that we will see this and we will become one big family of Americans. Not white Americans, not black Americans, not Jewish or Gentile Americans, not Irish or Italian Americans, not Mexican Americans, not Puerto Rican Americans, but just Americans. One big family of Americans.

And I tell you this morning, my friends, the reason we got to solve this problem here in America: Because God somehow called America to do a special job for mankind and the world. (*Yes, sir, Make it plain*) Never before in the history of the world have so many racial groups and so many national backgrounds assembled together in one nation. And somehow if we can't solve the problem in America the world can't solve the problem, because America is the world in miniature and the world is America writ large. And God set us out with all of the opportunities. (*Make it plain*) He set us between two great oceans; (*Yes, sir*) made it possible for us to live with some of the great natural resources of the world. And there he gave us through the minds of our forefathers a great creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men (*Yes, sir*) are created equal."

Now that doesn't only apply on the race issue, it applies on the class question. You know, sometimes a class system can be as vicious and evil as a system based on racial injustice. (*Yes, sir*) When we say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," and when we live it out, we know as I say so often that the "no D." is as significant as the "Ph.D." And the man who has been to "No House" is as significant as the man who's been to Morehouse. (*Make it plain today*) We build our little class systems, and you know you got a lot of Negroes with classism in their veins. (*Sure*) You know that they don't want to be bothered with certain other Negroes and they try to separate themselves from them. (*Amen*)

I remember when I was in theological school, and we were coming to the end of our years there, a classmate—he came to me to talk with me—said that he wanted to invite his mother up. And she'd struggled in order to help him get through school. He wanted to invite his mother up, but he said, "You know, the problem is I don't know if she would quite fit in this atmosphere. You know, her verbs aren't quite right; and she doesn't know how to dress too well; she lives in a rural area." And I wanted to say to him so bad that you aren't fit to finish this school. (*Yes*) If you cannot acknowledge your mother, if you cannot acknowledge your brothers and sisters, even if they have not risen to the heights of educational attainment, then you aren't fit (*Have mercy*) to go out and try to preach to men and women. (*Amen*)

Oh, I'll tell you this morning, and you learn this and you discover the meaning of "God's image." You'll know what the New Testament means when it says that "I revealed it to babes and so often withheld it from the wise." And I have learned a great deal in my few years, not only from the philosophers that I have studied with in the universities, not only from the theologians and the psychologists and the historians, but so often from that humble human being who didn't have

the opportunity to get an education but who had something basic deep down within. (Yes) Sometimes Aunt Jane on her knees can get more truth than the philosopher on his tiptoes. (Yes, Amen) And this is what "all men are made in the image of God" tells us. We must believe this and we must live by it. (Yes)

This is why we must join the war against poverty (Yes, sir) and believe in the dignity of all work. What makes a job menial? I'm tired of this stuff about menial labor. What makes it menial is that we don't pay folk anything. (Yes, sir) Give somebody a job and pay them some money so they can live and educate their children and buy a home and have the basic necessities of life. And no matter what the job is it takes on dignity.

I submit to you when I took off on that plane this morning, I saw men go out there in their overalls. (Yes, sir, Every time) I saw them working on things here and there, and saw some more going out there to put the breakfast on there so that we could eat on our way to Atlanta. (Make it plain) And I said to myself that these people who constitute the ground crew are just as significant as the pilot, because this plane couldn't move if you didn't have the ground crew. (Amen) I submit to you that in Hugh Spaulding or Grady Hospital, (Preach it) the woman or the man who goes in there to sweep the floor is just as significant as the doctor, (Yes) because if he doesn't get that dust off the floor germs will begin to circulate. And those same germs can do injury and harm to the human being. I submit to you this morning (Yes) that there is dignity in all work (Have mercy) when we learn to pay people decent wages. Whoever cooks in your house, whoever sweeps the floor in your house is just as significant as anybody who lives in that house. (Amen) And everybody that we call a maid is serving God in a significant way. (Preach it) And I love the maids, I love the people who have been ignored, and I want to see them get the kind of wages that they need. And their job is no longer a menial job, (No, sir) for you come to see its worth and its dignity.

Are we really taking this thing seriously? "All men are created equal." (Amen) And that means that every man who lives in a slum today (Preach it) is just as significant as John D., Nelson, or any other Rockefeller. Every man who lives in the slum is just as significant as Henry Ford. All men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, rights that can't be separated from you. [clap] Go down and tell them, (No) "You may take my life, but you can't take my right to life. You may take liberty from me, but you can't take my right to liberty. You may take from me the desire, you may take from me the propensity to pursue happiness, but you can't take from me my right to pursue happiness." (Yes) "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights and among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." (Yes, sir)

Now there's another thing that we must never forget. If we are going to make the American dream a reality, (Yes) we are challenged to work in an action program to get rid of the last vestiges of segregation and discrimination. This problem isn't going to solve itself, however much [word inaudible] people tell us this. However much the Uncle Toms and Nervous Nellies in the Negro communities tell us this, this problem isn't just going to work itself out. (No, sir) History is the long story of the fact (Yes) that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges without strong resistance, and they seldom do it voluntarily. And so if the American dream is to

be a reality, we must work to make it a reality and realize the urgency of the moment. And we must say now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to get rid of segregation and discrimination. Now is the time to make Georgia a better state. Now is the time to make the United States a better nation. (Yes) We must live with that, and we must believe that.

And I would like to say to you this morning what I've tried to say all over this nation, what I believe firmly: that in seeking to make the dream a reality we must use and adopt a proper method. I'm more convinced than ever before that nonviolence is the way. I'm more convinced than ever before that violence is impractical as well as immoral. If we are to build right here a better America, we have a method (*Yes, sir*) as old as the insights of Jesus of Nazareth and as modern as the techniques of Mohandas K. Gandhi. We need not hate; we need not use violence. We can stand up before our most violent opponent and say: We will match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. (*Make it plain*) Do to us what you will and we will still love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good, and so throw us in jail. (*Make it plain*) We will go in those jails and transform them from dungeons of shame to havens of freedom and human dignity. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities after midnight hours and drag us out on some wayside road and beat us and leave us half-dead, and as difficult as it is, we will still love you. (*Amen*) Somehow go around the country and use your propaganda agents to make it appear that we are not fit culturally, morally, or otherwise for integration, and we will still love you. (Yes) Threaten our children and bomb our homes, and as difficult as it is, we will still love you. (*Yeah*)

But be assured that we will ride you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we will win our freedom, but we will not only win freedom for ourselves, we will so appeal to your heart and your conscience that we will win you in the process." And our victory will be a double victory.

Oh yes, love is the way. (Yes) Love is the only absolute. More and more I see this. I've seen too much hate to want to hate myself; hate is too great a burden to bear. (*You bet, Yes*) I've seen it on the faces of too many sheriffs of the South—I've seen hate. In the faces and even the walk of too many Klansmen of the South, I've seen hate. Hate distorts the personality. Hate does something to the soul that causes one to lose his objectivity. The man who hates can't think straight; (*Amen*) the man who hates can't reason right; the man who hates can't see right; the man who hates can't walk right. (*Yeah*) And I know now that Jesus is right, (*Yeah*) that love is the way. And this is why John said, "God is love," (*Yes, sir*) so that he who hates does not know God, but he who loves (*get in the door*) at that moment has the key that opens the door (*Yeah*) to the meaning of ultimate reality. So this morning there is so much that we have to offer to the world. (*Yes, sir*)

We have a great dream. (*Great dream*) It started way back in 1776, and God grant that America will be true to her dream.

About two years ago now, I stood with many of you who stood there in person and all of you who were there in spirit before the Lincoln Monument in Washington. (Yes) As I came to the end

of my speech there, I tried to tell the nation about a dream I had. I must confess to you this morning that since that sweltering August afternoon in 1963, my dream has often turned into a nightmare; (*Lord*) I've seen it shattered. I saw it shattered one night on Highway 80 in Alabama when Mrs. Viola Liuzzo was shot down. (*Lord, Lord*) I had a nightmare and saw my dream shattered one night in Marion, Alabama, when Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot down. (*Lord*) I saw my dream shattered one night in Selma when Reverend Reeb was clubbed to the ground by a vicious racist and later died. And oh, I continue to see it shattered as I walk through the Harlems of our nation (*Yes*) and see sometimes ten and fifteen Negroes trying to live in one or two rooms. (*Yes*) I've been down to the Delta of Mississippi since then, and I've seen my dream shattered as I met hundreds of people who didn't earn more than six or seven hundred dollars a week. I've seen my dream shattered as I've walked the streets of Chicago (*Make it plain*) and seen Negroes, young men and women, with a sense of utter hopelessness because they can't find any jobs. And they see life as a long and desolate corridor with no exit signs. And not only Negroes at this point. I've seen my dream shattered because I've been through Appalachia, and I've seen my white brothers along with Negroes living in poverty. (*Yeah*) And I'm concerned about white poverty as much as I'm concerned about Negro poverty. (*Make it plain*)

So yes, the dream has been shattered, (*Amen*) and I have had my nightmarish experiences, but I tell you this morning once more that I haven't lost the faith. (*No, sir*) I still have a dream (*A dream, Yes, sir*) that one day all of God's children will have food and clothing and material well-being for their bodies, culture and education for their minds, and freedom for their spirits. (*Yes*)

I still have a dream this morning: (*Yes*) one day all of God's black children will be respected like his white children.

I still have a dream this morning (*Yes*) that one day the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and every man will sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid.

I still have a dream this morning that one day all men everywhere will recognize that out of one blood God made all men to dwell upon the face of the earth.

I still have a dream this morning (*Yes, sir*) that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill will be made low; the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places straight; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

I still have a dream this morning (*Amen*) that truth will reign supreme and all of God's children will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. And when this day comes the morning stars will sing together (*Yes*) and the sons of God will shout for joy.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men (*All right*) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, (*Yes, sir*) that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

We open the doors of the church now. If someone needs to accept Christ, (*Yes, sir*) this is a marvelous opportunity, a great moment to make a decision. And as we sing together, we bid you come at this time by Christian experience, baptism, watch care. But come at this moment,

become a part of this great Christian fellowship and accept Christ (*Yes, sir*) as your personal savior.

Address at the Conclusion of the Selma to Montgomery March

My dear and abiding friends, Ralph Abernathy, and to all of the distinguished Americans seated here on the rostrum, my friends and co-workers of the state of Alabama, and to all of the freedom-loving people who have assembled here this afternoon from all over our nation and from all over the world: Last Sunday, more than eight thousand of us started on a mighty walk from Selma, Alabama. We have walked through desolate valleys and across the trying hills. We have walked on meandering highways and rested our bodies on rocky byways. Some of our faces are burned from the outpourings of the sweltering sun. Some have literally slept in the mud. We have been drenched by the rains. [*Audience:*] (*Speak*) Our bodies are tired and our feet are somewhat sore.

But today as I stand before you and think back over that great march, I can say, as Sister Pollard said—a seventy-year-old Negro woman who lived in this community during the bus boycott—and one day, she was asked while walking if she didn't want to ride. And when she answered, "No," the person said, "Well, aren't you tired?" And with her ungrammatical profundity, she said, "My feets is tired, but my soul is rested." (*Yes, sir. All right*) And in a real sense this afternoon, we can say that our feet are tired, (*Yes, sir*) but our souls are rested.

They told us we wouldn't get here. And there were those who said that we would get here only over their dead bodies, (*Well. Yes, sir. Talk*) but all the world today knows that we are here and we are standing before the forces of power in the state of Alabama saying, "We ain't goin' let nobody turn us around." (*Yes, sir. Speak*) [*Applause*]

Now it is not an accident that one of the great marches of American history should terminate in Montgomery, Alabama. (*Yes, sir*) Just ten years ago, in this very city, a new philosophy was born of the Negro struggle. Montgomery was the first city in the South in which the entire Negro community united and squarely faced its age-old oppressors. (*Yes, sir. Well*) Out of this struggle, more than bus [*de*]segregation was won; a new idea, more powerful than guns or clubs was born. Negroes took it and carried it across the South in epic battles (*Yes, sir. Speak*) that electrified the nation (*Well*) and the world.

Yet, strangely, the climactic conflicts always were fought and won on Alabama soil. After Montgomery's, heroic confrontations loomed up in Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, and elsewhere. But not until the colossus of segregation was challenged in Birmingham did the conscience of America begin to bleed. White America was profoundly aroused by Birmingham because it witnessed the whole community of Negroes facing terror and brutality with majestic scorn and heroic courage. And from the wells of this democratic spirit, the nation finally forced Congress (*Well*) to write legislation (*Yes, sir*) in the hope that it would eradicate the stain of

Birmingham. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave Negroes some part of their rightful dignity, (*Speak, sir*) but without the vote it was dignity without strength. (*Yes, sir*)

Once more the method of nonviolent resistance (*Yes*) was unsheathed from its scabbard, and once again an entire community was mobilized to confront the adversary. (*Yes, sir*) And again the brutality of a dying order shrieks across the land. Yet, Selma, Alabama, became a shining moment in the conscience of man. If the worst in American life lurked in its dark streets, the best of American instincts arose passionately from across the nation to overcome it. (*Yes, sir. Speak*) There never was a moment in American history (*Yes, sir*) more honorable and more inspiring than the pilgrimage of clergymen and laymen of every race and faith pouring into Selma to face danger (*Yes*) at the side of its embattled Negroes.

The confrontation of good and evil compressed in the tiny community of Selma (*Speak, speak*) generated the massive power (*Yes, sir. Yes, sir*) to turn the whole nation to a new course. A president born in the South (*Well*) had the sensitivity to feel the will of the country, (*Speak, sir*) and in an address that will live in history as one of the most passionate pleas for human rights ever made by a president of our nation, he pledged the might of the federal government to cast off the centuries-old blight. President Johnson rightly praised the courage of the Negro for awakening the conscience of the nation. (*Yes, sir*)

On our part we must pay our profound respects to the white Americans who cherish their democratic traditions over the ugly customs and privileges of generations and come forth boldly to join hands with us. (*Yes, sir*) From Montgomery to Birmingham, (*Yes, sir*) from Birmingham to Selma, (*Yes, sir*) from Selma back to Montgomery, (*Yes*) a trail wound in a circle long and often bloody, yet it has become a highway up from darkness. (*Yes, sir*) Alabama has tried to nurture and defend evil, but evil is choking to death in the dusty roads and streets of this state. (*Yes, sir. Speak, sir*) So I stand before you this afternoon (*Speak, sir. Well*) with the conviction that segregation is on its deathbed in Alabama, and the only thing uncertain about it is how costly the segregationists and Wallace will make the funeral. (*Go ahead. Yes, sir*) [*Applause*]

Our whole campaign in Alabama has been centered around the right to vote. In focusing the attention of the nation and the world today on the flagrant denial of the right to vote, we are exposing the very origin, the root cause, of racial segregation in the Southland. Racial segregation as a way of life did not come about as a natural result of hatred between the races immediately after the Civil War. There were no laws segregating the races then. And as the noted historian, C. Vann Woodward, in his book, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, clearly points out, the segregation of the races was really a political stratagem employed by the emerging Bourbon interests in the South to keep the southern masses divided and southern labor the cheapest in the land. You see, it was a simple thing to keep the poor white masses working for near-starvation wages in the years that followed the Civil War. Why, if the poor white plantation or mill worker became dissatisfied with his low wages, the plantation or mill owner would merely threaten to fire him and hire former Negro slaves and pay him even less. Thus, the southern wage level was kept almost unbearably low.

Toward the end of the Reconstruction era, something very significant happened. (*Listen to him*) That is what was known as the Populist Movement. (*Speak, sir*) The leaders of this movement

began awakening the poor white masses (*Yes, sir*) and the former Negro slaves to the fact that they were being fleeced by the emerging Bourbon interests. Not only that, but they began uniting the Negro and white masses (*Yeah*) into a voting bloc that threatened to drive the Bourbon interests from the command posts of political power in the South.

To meet this threat, the southern aristocracy began immediately to engineer this development of a segregated society. (*Right*) I want you to follow me through here because this is very important to see the roots of racism and the denial of the right to vote. Through their control of mass media, they revised the doctrine of white supremacy. They saturated the thinking of the poor white masses with it, (*Yes*) thus clouding their minds to the real issue involved in the Populist Movement. They then directed the placement on the books of the South of laws that made it a crime for Negroes and whites to come together as equals at any level. (*Yes, sir*) And that did it. That crippled and eventually destroyed the Populist Movement of the nineteenth century.

If it may be said of the slavery era that the white man took the world and gave the Negro Jesus, then it may be said of the Reconstruction era that the southern aristocracy took the world and gave the poor white man Jim Crow. (*Yes, sir*) He gave him Jim Crow. (*Uh huh*) And when his wrinkled stomach cried out for the food that his empty pockets could not provide, (*Yes, sir*) he ate Jim Crow, a psychological bird that told him that no matter how bad off he was, at least he was a white man, better than the black man. (*Right sir*) And he ate Jim Crow. (*Uh huh*) And when his undernourished children cried out for the necessities that his low wages could not provide, he showed them the Jim Crow signs on the buses and in the stores, on the streets and in the public buildings. (*Yes, sir*) And his children, too, learned to feed upon Jim Crow, (*Speak*) their last outpost of psychological oblivion. (*Yes, sir*)

Thus, the threat of the free exercise of the ballot by the Negro and the white masses alike (*Uh huh*) resulted in the establishment of a segregated society. They segregated southern money from the poor whites; they segregated southern mores from the rich whites; (*Yes, sir*) they segregated southern churches from Christianity (*Yes, sir*); they segregated southern minds from honest thinking; (*Yes, sir*) and they segregated the Negro from everything. (*Yes, sir*) That's what happened when the Negro and white masses of the South threatened to unite and build a great society: a society of justice where none would pray upon the weakness of others; a society of plenty where greed and poverty would be done away; a society of brotherhood where every man would respect the dignity and worth of human personality. (*Yes, sir*)

We've come a long way since that travesty of justice was perpetrated upon the American mind. James Weldon Johnson put it eloquently. He said:

We have come over a way

That with tears hath been watered. (*Yes, sir*)

We have come treading our paths

Through the blood of the slaughtered. (*Yes, sir*)

Out of the gloomy past, (*Yes, sir*)

Till now we stand at last

Where the white gleam

Of our bright star is cast. (*Speak, sir*)

Today I want to tell the city of Selma, (*Tell them, Doctor*) today I want to say to the state of Alabama, (*Yes, sir*) today I want to say to the people of America and the nations of the world, that we are not about to turn around. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*)

Yes, we are on the move and no wave of racism can stop us. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. The burning of our churches will not deter us. (*Yes, sir*) The bombing of our homes will not dissuade us. (*Yes, sir*) We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) The beating and killing of our clergymen and young people will not divert us. We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) The wanton release of their known murderers would not discourage us. We are on the move now. (*Yes, sir*) Like an idea whose time has come, (*Yes, sir*) not even the marching of mighty armies can halt us. (*Yes, sir*) We are moving to the land of freedom. (*Yes, sir*)

Let us therefore continue our triumphant march (*Uh huh*) to the realization of the American dream. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on segregated housing (*Yes, sir*) until every ghetto or social and economic depression dissolves, and Negroes and whites live side by side in decent, safe, and sanitary housing. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on segregated schools (*Let us march, Tell it*) until every vestige of segregated and inferior education becomes a thing of the past, and Negroes and whites study side-by-side in the socially-healing context of the classroom.

Let us march on poverty (*Let us march*) until no American parent has to skip a meal so that their children may eat. (*Yes, sir*) March on poverty (*Let us march*) until no starved man walks the streets of our cities and towns (*Yes, sir*) in search of jobs that do not exist. (*Yes, sir*) Let us march on poverty (*Let us march*) until wrinkled stomachs in Mississippi are filled, (*That's right*) and the idle industries of Appalachia are realized and revitalized, and broken lives in sweltering ghettos are mended and remolded.

Let us march on ballot boxes, (*Let's march*) march on ballot boxes until race-baiters disappear from the political arena.

Let us march on ballot boxes until the salient misdeeds of bloodthirsty mobs (*Yes, sir*) will be transformed into the calculated good deeds of orderly citizens. (*Speak, Doctor*)

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march*) until the Wallaces of our nation tremble away in silence.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march*) until we send to our city councils (*Yes, sir*), state legislatures, (*Yes, sir*) and the United States Congress, (*Yes, sir*) men who will not fear to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Let us march. March*) until brotherhood becomes more than a meaningless word in an opening prayer, but the order of the day on every legislative agenda.

Let us march on ballot boxes (*Yes*) until all over Alabama God's children will be able to walk the earth in decency and honor.

There is nothing wrong with marching in this sense. (*Yes, sir*) The Bible tells us that the mighty men of Joshua merely walked about the walled city of Jericho (*Yes*) and the barriers to freedom came tumbling down. (*Yes, sir*) I like that old Negro spiritual, (*Yes, sir*) "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." In its simple, yet colorful, depiction (*Yes, sir*) of that great moment in biblical history, it tells us that:

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, (*Tell it*)

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, (*Yes, sir*)

And the walls come tumbling down. (*Yes, sir. Tell it*)

Up to the walls of Jericho they marched, spear in hand. (*Yes, sir*)

"Go blow them ramhorns," Joshua cried,

"'Cause the battle am in my hand." (*Yes, sir*)

These words I have given you just as they were given us by the unknown, long-dead, dark-skinned originator. (*Yes, sir*) Some now long-gone black bard bequeathed to posterity these words in ungrammatical form, (*Yes, sir*) yet with emphatic pertinence for all of us today. (*Uh huh*)

The battle is in our hands. And we can answer with creative nonviolence the call to higher ground to which the new directions of our struggle summons us. (*Yes, sir*) The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. (*No*) There are no broad highways that lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions. But we must keep going.

In the glow of the lamplight on my desk a few nights ago, I gazed again upon the wondrous sign of our times, full of hope and promise of the future. (*Uh huh*) And I smiled to see in the newspaper photographs of many a decade ago, the faces so bright, so solemn, of our valiant heroes, the people of Montgomery. To this list may be added the names of all those (*Yes*) who have fought and, yes, died in the nonviolent army of our day: Medgar Evers, (*Speak*) three civil rights workers in Mississippi last summer, (*Uh huh*) William Moore, as has already been mentioned, (*Yes, sir*) the Reverend James Reeb, (*Yes, sir*) Jimmy Lee Jackson, (*Yes, sir*) and four little girls in the church of God in Birmingham on Sunday morning. (*Yes, sir*) But in spite of this, we must go on and be sure that they did not die in vain. (*Yes, sir*) The pattern of their feet as they walked through Jim Crow barriers in the great stride toward freedom is the thunder of the marching men of Joshua, (*Yes, sir*) and the world rocks beneath their tread. (*Yes, sir*)

My people, my people, listen. (Yes, sir) The battle is in our hands. (Yes, sir) The battle is in our hands in Mississippi and Alabama and all over the United States. (Yes, sir) I know there is a cry today in Alabama, (Uh huh) we see it in numerous editorials: "When will Martin Luther King, SCLC, SNCC, and all of these civil rights agitators and all of the white clergymen and labor leaders and students and others get out of our community and let Alabama return to normalcy?"

But I have a message that I would like to leave with Alabama this evening. (Tell it) That is exactly what we don't want, and we will not allow it to happen, (Yes, sir) for we know that it was normalcy in Marion (Yes, sir) that led to the brutal murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson. (Speak) It was normalcy in Birmingham (Yes) that led to the murder on Sunday morning of four beautiful, unoffending, innocent girls. It was normalcy on Highway 80 (Yes, sir) that led state troopers to use tear gas and horses and billy clubs against unarmed human beings who were simply marching for justice. (Speak, sir) It was normalcy by a cafe in Selma, Alabama, that led to the brutal beating of Reverend James Reeb.

It is normalcy all over our country (Yes, sir) which leaves the Negro perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of vast ocean of material prosperity. It is normalcy all over Alabama (Yeah) that prevents the Negro from becoming a registered voter. (Yes) No, we will not allow Alabama (Go ahead) to return to normalcy. [Applause]

The only normalcy that we will settle for (Yes, sir) is the normalcy that recognizes the dignity and worth of all of God's children. The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that allows judgment to run down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. (Yes, sir) The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy of brotherhood, the normalcy of true peace, the normalcy of justice.

And so as we go away this afternoon, let us go away more than ever before committed to this struggle and committed to nonviolence. I must admit to you that there are still some difficult days ahead. We are still in for a season of suffering in many of the black belt counties of Alabama, many areas of Mississippi, many areas of Louisiana. I must admit to you that there are still jail cells waiting for us, and dark and difficult moments. But if we will go on with the faith that nonviolence and its power can transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows, we will be able to change all of these conditions.

And so I plead with you this afternoon as we go ahead: remain committed to nonviolence. Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship and understanding. We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man. (Yes)

I know you are asking today, "How long will it take?" (Speak, sir) Somebody's asking, "How long will prejudice blind the visions of men, darken their understanding, and drive bright-eyed wisdom from her sacred throne?" Somebody's asking, "When will wounded justice, lying prostrate on the streets of Selma and Birmingham and communities all over the South, be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men?" Somebody's asking, "When will the radiant star of hope be plunged against the nocturnal bosom of this lonely night,

(*Speak, speak, speak*) plucked from weary souls with chains of fear and the manacles of death?
How long will justice be crucified, (*Speak*) and truth bear it?" (*Yes, sir*)

I come to say to you this afternoon, however difficult the moment, (*Yes, sir*) however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, (*No sir*) because "truth crushed to earth will rise again." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*Yes, sir*) because "no lie can live forever." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*All right. How long*) because "you shall reap what you sow." (*Yes, sir*)

How long? (*How long?*) Not long: (*Not long*)

Truth forever on the scaffold, (*Speak*)

Wrong forever on the throne, (*Yes, sir*)

Yet that scaffold sways the future, (*Yes, sir*)

And, behind the dim unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow,

Keeping watch above his own.

How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.
(*Yes, sir*)

How long? Not long, (*Not long*) because:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; (*Yes, sir*)

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; (*Yes*)

He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword; (*Yes, sir*)

His truth is marching on. (*Yes, sir*)

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; (*Speak, sir*)

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat. (*That's right*)

O, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant my feet!

Our God is marching on. (*Yeah*)

Glory, hallelujah! (*Yes, sir*) Glory, hallelujah! (*All right*)

Glory, hallelujah! Glory, hallelujah!

His truth is marching on. [*Applause*]

Acceptance Speech at Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Mr. President, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen: I accept the Nobel Prize for Peace at a moment when twenty-two million Negroes of the United States are engaged in a creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. I accept this award on behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice.

I am mindful that only yesterday in Birmingham, Alabama, our children, crying out for brotherhood, were answered with fire hoses, snarling dogs, and even death. I am mindful that only yesterday in Philadelphia, Mississippi, young people seeking to secure the right to vote were brutalized and murdered. I am mindful that debilitating and grinding poverty afflicts my people and chains them to the lowest rung of the economic ladder.

Therefore, I must ask why this prize is awarded to a movement which is beleaguered and committed to unrelenting struggle, and to a movement which has not yet won the very peace and brotherhood which is the essence of the Nobel Prize. After contemplation, I conclude that this award, which I receive on behalf of that movement, is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression.

Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Negroes of the United States, following the people of India, have demonstrated that nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later, all the peoples of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

The torturous road which has led from Montgomery, Alabama, to Oslo bears witness to this truth, and this is a road over which millions of Negroes are traveling to find a new sense of dignity. This same road has opened for all Americans a new era of progress and hope. It has led to a new civil rights bill, and it will, I am convinced, be widened and lengthened into a superhighway of justice as Negro and white men in increasing numbers create alliances to overcome their common problems.

I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept despair as the final response to the ambiguities of history.

I refuse to accept the idea that the "is-ness" of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal "ought-ness" that forever confronts him.

I refuse to accept the idea that man is mere flotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding events which surround him.

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.

I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of nuclear annihilation.

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.

I believe that even amid today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow.

I believe that wounded justice, lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations, can be lifted from this dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of men.

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.

I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, men other-centered can build up.

I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed and nonviolent redemptive goodwill proclaimed the rule of the land. And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid.

I still believe that we shall overcome.

This faith can give us courage to face the uncertainties of the future. It will give our tired feet new strength as we continue our forward stride toward the city of freedom. When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds and our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, we will know that we are living in the creative turmoil of a genuine civilization struggling to be born.

Today I come to Oslo as a trustee, inspired and with renewed dedication to humanity. I accept this prize on behalf of all men who love peace and brotherhood. I say I come as a trustee, for in the depths of my heart I am aware that this prize is much more than an honor to me personally. Every time I take a flight I am always mindful of the many people who make a successful journey possible, the known pilots and the unknown ground crew. You honor the dedicated pilots of our struggle, who have sat at the controls as the freedom movement soared into orbit. You honor, once again, Chief Lutuli of South Africa, whose struggles with and for his people are still

met with the most brutal expression of man's inhumanity to man. You honor the ground crew, without whose labor and sacrifice the jet flights to freedom could never have left the earth. Most of these people will never make the headlines, and their names will never appear in *Who's Who*. Yet, when years have rolled past and when the blazing light of truth is focused on this marvelous age in which we live, men and women will know and children will be taught that we have a finer land, a better people, a more noble civilization because these humble children of God were willing to suffer for righteousness' sake.

I think Alfred Nobel would know what I mean when I say I accept this award in the spirit of a curator of some precious heirloom which he holds in trust for its true owners: all those to whom truth is beauty, and beauty, truth, and in whose eyes the beauty of genuine brotherhood and peace is more precious than diamonds or silver or gold. Thank you. [applause]

Eulogy for the Martyred Children

This afternoon we gather in the quiet of this sanctuary to pay our last tribute of respect to these beautiful children of God. They entered the stage of history just a few years ago, and in the brief years that they were privileged to act on this mortal stage, they played their parts exceedingly well. Now the curtain falls; they move through the exit; the drama of their earthly life comes to a close. They are now committed back to that eternity from which they came.

These children—unoffending, innocent, and beautiful—were the victims of one of the most vicious and tragic crimes ever perpetrated against humanity.

And yet they died nobly. They are the martyred heroines of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity. And so this afternoon in a real sense they have something to say to each of us in their death. They have something to say to every minister of the gospel who has remained silent behind the safe security of stained-glass windows. They have something to say to every politician [Audience:] (*Yeah*) who has fed his constituents with the stale bread of hatred and the spoiled meat of racism. They have something to say to a federal government that has compromised with the undemocratic practices of southern Dixiecrats (*Yeah*) and the blatant hypocrisy of right-wing northern Republicans. (*Speak*) They have something to say to every Negro (*Yeah*) who has passively accepted the evil system of segregation and who has stood on the sidelines in a mighty struggle for justice. They say to each of us, black and white alike, that we must substitute courage for caution. They say to us that we must be concerned not merely about who murdered them, but about the system, the way of life, the philosophy which produced the murderers. Their death says to us that we must work passionately and unrelentingly for the realization of the American dream.

And so my friends, they did not die in vain. (Yeah) God still has a way of wringing good out of evil. (Oh yes) And history has proven over and over again that unmerited suffering is redemptive. The innocent blood of these little girls may well serve as a redemptive force (Yeah) that will bring new light to this dark city. (Yeah) The holy Scripture says, "A little child shall lead them." (Oh yeah) The death of these little children may lead our whole Southland (Yeah) from the low road of man's inhumanity to man to the high road of peace and brotherhood. (Yeah, Yes) These tragic deaths may lead our nation to substitute an aristocracy of character for an aristocracy of color. The spilled blood of these innocent girls may cause the whole citizenry of Birmingham (Yeah) to transform the negative extremes of a dark past into the positive extremes of a bright future. Indeed this tragic event may cause the white South to come to terms with its conscience. (Yeah)

And so I stand here to say this afternoon to all assembled here, that in spite of the darkness of this hour (Yeah Well), we must not despair. (Yeah, Well) We must not become bitter (Yeah, That's right), nor must we harbor the desire to retaliate with violence. No, we must not lose faith in our white brothers. (Yeah, Yes) Somehow we must believe that the most misguided among them can learn to respect the dignity and the worth of all human personality.

May I now say a word to you, the members of the bereaved families? It is almost impossible to say anything that can console you at this difficult hour and remove the deep clouds of disappointment which are floating in your mental skies. But I hope you can find a little consolation from the universality of this experience. Death comes to every individual. There is an amazing democracy about death. It is not aristocracy for some of the people, but a democracy for all of the people. Kings die and beggars die; rich men and poor men die; old people die and young people die. Death comes to the innocent and it comes to the guilty. Death is the irreducible common denominator of all men.

I hope you can find some consolation from Christianity's affirmation that death is not the end. Death is not a period that ends the great sentence of life, but a comma that punctuates it to more lofty significance. Death is not a blind alley that leads the human race into a state of nothingness, but an open door which leads man into life eternal. Let this daring faith, this great invincible surmise, be your sustaining power during these trying days.

Now I say to you in conclusion, life is hard, at times as hard as crucible steel. It has its bleak and difficult moments. Like the ever-flowing waters of the river, life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood. (Yeah, Yes) Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons, life has the soothing warmth of its summers and the piercing chill of its winters. (Yeah) And if one will hold on, he will discover that God walks with him (Yeah, Well), and that God is able (Yeah, Yes) to lift you from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope, and transform dark and desolate valleys into sunlit paths of inner peace.

And so today, you do not walk alone. You gave to this world wonderful children. [moans] They didn't live long lives, but they lived meaningful lives. (Well) Their lives were distressingly small in quantity, but glowingly large in quality. (Yeah) And no greater tribute can be paid to you as parents, and no greater epitaph can come to them as children, than where they died and what they were doing when they died. (Yeah) They did not die in the dives and dens of Birmingham (Yeah,

Well), nor did they die discussing and listening to filthy jokes. (*Yeah*) They died between the sacred walls of the church of God (*Yeah, Yes*), and they were discussing the eternal meaning (*Yes*) of love. This stands out as a beautiful, beautiful thing for all generations. (*Yes*) Shakespeare had Horatio to say some beautiful words as he stood over the dead body of Hamlet. And today, as I stand over the remains of these beautiful, darling girls, I paraphrase the words of Shakespeare: (*Yeah, Well*): Good night, sweet princesses. Good night, those who symbolize a new day. (*Yeah, Yes*) And may the flight of angels (*That's right*) take thee to thy eternal rest. God bless you.

Speech at the Great March on Detroit

My good friend, the Reverend C. L. Franklin, all of the officers and members of the Detroit Council of Human Rights, distinguished platform guests, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot begin to say to you this afternoon how thrilled I am, and I cannot begin to tell you the deep joy that comes to my heart as I participate with you in what I consider the largest and greatest demonstration for freedom ever held in the United States. [Applause] And I can assure you that what has been done here today will serve as a source of inspiration for all of the freedom-loving people of this nation. [Applause] [Audience:] (*All right*)

I think there is something else that must be said because it is a magnificent demonstration of discipline. With all of the thousands and hundreds of thousands of people engaged in this demonstration today, there has not been one reported incident of violence. [Applause] I think this is a magnificent demonstration of our commitment to nonviolence in this struggle for freedom all over the United States, and I want to commend the leadership of this community for making this great event possible and making such a great event possible through such disciplined channels. [Applause]

Almost one hundred and one years ago, on September the 22nd, 1862, to be exact, a great and noble American, Abraham Lincoln, signed an executive order, which was to take effect on January the first, 1863. This executive order was called the Emancipation Proclamation and it served to free the Negro from the bondage of physical slavery. But one hundred years later, the Negro in the United States of America still isn't free. [Applause]

But now more than ever before, America is forced to grapple with this problem, for the shape of the world today does not afford us the luxury of an anemic democracy. The price that this nation must pay for the continued oppression and exploitation of the Negro or any other minority group is the price of its own destruction. For the hour is late. The clock of destiny is ticking out, and we must act now before it is too late. (*Yeah*) [Applause]

The events of Birmingham, Alabama, and the more than sixty communities that have started protest movements since Birmingham, are indicative of the fact that the Negro is now determined to be free. (*Yeah*) [Applause] For Birmingham tells us something in glaring terms. It says first that the Negro is no longer willing to accept racial segregation in any of its dimensions.

[*Applause*] For we have come to see that segregation is not only sociologically untenable, it is not only politically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Segregation is a cancer in the body politic, which must be removed before our democratic health can be realized. [*Applause*] (*Yeah*) Segregation is wrong because it is nothing but a new form of slavery covered up with certain niceties of complexity. [*Applause*] Segregation is wrong because it is a system of adultery perpetuated by an illicit intercourse between injustice and immorality. [*Applause*] And in Birmingham, Alabama, and all over the South and all over the nation, we are simply saying that we will no longer sell our birthright of freedom for a mess of segregated pottage. [*Applause*] (*All right*) In a real sense, we are through with segregation now, henceforth, and forevermore. [*Sustained applause*]

Now Birmingham and the freedom struggle tell us something else. They reveal to us that the Negro has a new sense of dignity and a new sense of self-respect. (*Yes*) For years— (*That's right. Come a long way*) [*Applause*] I think we all will agree that probably the most damaging effect of segregation has been what it has done to the soul of the segregated as well as the segregator. [*Applause*] It has given the segregator a false sense of superiority and it has left the segregated with a false sense of inferiority. (*All right*) [*Applause*] And so because of the legacy of slavery and segregation, many Negroes lost faith in themselves and many felt that they were inferior.

But then something happened to the Negro. Circumstances made it possible and necessary for him to travel more: the coming of the automobile, the upheavals of two world wars, the Great Depression. And so his rural, plantation background gradually gave way to urban, industrial life. And even his economic life was rising through the growth of industry, the influence of organized labor, expanded educational opportunities. And even his cultural life was rising through the steady decline of crippling illiteracy. And all of these forces conjoined to cause the Negro to take a new look at himself. Negro masses, [*Applause*] Negro masses all over began to re-evaluate themselves, and the Negro came to feel that he was somebody. His religion revealed to him, [*Laughter. Applause*] his religion revealed to him that God loves all of his children, and that all men are made in His image, and that figuratively speaking, every man from a bass-black to a treble-white is significant on God's keyboard. [*Applause*]

So, the Negro can now unconsciously cry out with the eloquent poet,

Fleecy locks and black complexion

Cannot forfeit nature's claim.

Skin may differ, but affection

Dwells in black and white the same.

Were I so tall as to reach the pole

Or to grasp at the ocean at a span,

I must be measured by my soul

The mind is the standard of the man. [Applause]

But these events that are taking place in our nation tell us something else. They tell us that the Negro and his allies in the white community now recognize the urgency of the moment. I know we have heard a lot of cries saying, "Slow up and cool off." [Laughter] We still hear these cries. They are telling us over and over again that you're pushing things too fast, and so they're saying, "Cool off." Well, the only answer that we can give to that is that we've cooled off all too long, and that is the danger. [Applause] There's always the danger if you cool off too much that you will end up in a deep freeze. [Applause] "Well," they're saying, "you need to put on brakes." The only answer that we can give to that is that the motor's now cranked up and we're moving up the highway of freedom toward the city of equality, [Applause] and we can't afford to stop now because our nation has a date with destiny. We must keep moving.

Then there is another cry. They say, "Why don't you do it in a gradual manner?" Well, gradualism is little more than escapism and do-nothingism, which ends up in stand-stillism. [Applause] We know that our brothers and sisters in Africa and Asia are moving with jet-like speed toward the goal of political independence. And in some communities we are still moving at horse-and-buggy pace toward the gaining of a hamburger and a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. [Applause]

And so we must say, now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to transform this pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our nation. [Applause] Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of racial justice. Now is the time to get rid of segregation and discrimination. Now is the time. [Applause] (*Now. Now*)

And so this social revolution taking place can be summarized in three little words. They are not big words. One does not need an extensive vocabulary to understand them. They are the words "all," "here," and "now." We want *all* of our rights, we want them *here*, and we want them *now*. [Applause] [Recording interrupted]

Now the other thing that we must see about this struggle is that by and large it has been a nonviolent struggle. Let nobody make you feel that those who are engaged or who are engaging in the demonstrations in communities all across the South are resorting to violence; these are few in number. For we've come to see the power of nonviolence. We've come to see that this method is not a weak method, for it's the strong man who can stand up amid opposition, who can stand up amid violence being inflicted upon him and not retaliate with violence. (*Yeah*) [Applause]

You see, this method has a way of disarming the opponent. It exposes his moral defenses. It weakens his morale, and at the same time it works on his conscience, and he just doesn't know what to do. If he doesn't beat you, wonderful. If he beats you, you develop the quiet courage of accepting blows without retaliating. If he doesn't put you in jail, wonderful. Nobody with any sense likes to go to jail. But if he puts you in jail, you go in that jail and transform it from a dungeon of shame to a haven of freedom and human dignity. [Applause] And even if he tries to

kill you, (*He can't kill you*) you'll develop the inner conviction that there are some things so dear, some things so precious, some things so eternally true, that they are worth dying for. (Yes) [Applause] And I submit to you that if a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live. [Applause]

This method has wrought wonders. As a result of the nonviolent Freedom Ride movement, segregation in public transportation has almost passed away absolutely in the South. As a result of the sit-in movement at lunch counters, more than 285 cities have now integrated their lunch counters in the South. I say to you, there is power in this method. [Applause]

And I think by following this approach it will also help us to go into the new age that is emerging with the right attitude. For nonviolence not only calls upon its adherents to avoid external physical violence, but it calls upon them to avoid internal violence of spirit. It calls on them to engage in that something called love. And I know it is difficult sometimes. When I say "love" at this point, I'm not talking about an affectionate emotion. (*All right*) It's nonsense to urge people, oppressed people, to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. I'm talking about something much deeper. I'm talking about a sort of understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. [Applause]

We are coming to see now, the psychiatrists are saying to us, that many of the strange things that happen in the subconscious, many of the inner conflicts, are rooted in hate. And so they are saying, "Love or perish." But Jesus told us this a long time ago. And I can still hear that voice crying through the vista of time, saying, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that spitefully use you." And there is still a voice saying to every potential Peter, "Put up your sword." History is replete with the bleached bones of nations, history is cluttered with the wreckage of communities that failed to follow this command. And isn't it marvelous to have a method of struggle where it is possible to stand up against an unjust system, fight it with all of your might, never accept it, and yet not stoop to violence and hatred in the process? This is what we have. [Applause]

Now there is a magnificent new militancy within the Negro community all across this nation. And I welcome this as a marvelous development. The Negro of America is saying he's determined to be free and he is militant enough to stand up. But this new militancy must not lead us to the position of distrusting every white person who lives in the United States. There are some white people in this country who are as determined to see the Negro free as we are to be free. [Applause] This new militancy must be kept within understanding boundaries.

And then another thing I can understand. We've been pushed around so long; we've been the victims of lynching mobs so long; we've been the victims of economic injustice so long—still the last hired and the first fired all over this nation. And I know the temptation. I can understand from a psychological point of view why some caught up in the clutches of the injustices surrounding them almost respond with bitterness and come to the conclusion that the problem can't be solved within, and they talk about getting away from it in terms of racial separation. But even though I can understand it psychologically, I must say to you this afternoon that this isn't the way. Black supremacy is as dangerous as white supremacy. [Applause] No, I hope you will allow me to say to you this afternoon that God is not interested merely in the freedom of black

men and brown men and yellow men. God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race. [Applause] And I believe that with this philosophy and this determined struggle we will be able to go on in the days ahead and transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

As I move toward my conclusion, you're asking, I'm sure, "What can we do here in Detroit to help in the struggle in the South?" Well, there are several things that you can do. One of them you've done already, and I hope you will do it in even greater dimensions before we leave this meeting. [Recording interrupted]

Now the second thing that you can do to help us down in Alabama and Mississippi and all over the South is to work with determination to get rid of any segregation and discrimination in Detroit, [Applause] realizing that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. And we've got to come to see that the problem of racial injustice is a national problem. No community in this country can boast of clean hands in the area of brotherhood. Now in the North it's different in that it doesn't have the legal sanction that it has in the South. But it has its subtle and hidden forms and it exists in three areas: in the area of employment discrimination, in the area of housing discrimination, and in the area of *de facto* segregation in the public schools. And we must come to see that *de facto* segregation in the North is just as injurious as the actual segregation in the South. [Applause] And so if you want to help us in Alabama and Mississippi and over the South, do all that you can to get rid of the problem here.

And then we also need your support in order to get the civil rights bill that the President is offering passed. And there's a reality, let's not fool ourselves: this bill isn't going to get through if we don't put some work in it and some determined pressure. And this is why I've said that in order to get this bill through, we've got to arouse the conscience of the nation, and we ought to march to Washington more than 100,000 in order to say, [Applause] in order to say that we are determined, and in order to engage in a nonviolent protest to keep this issue before the conscience of the nation.

And if we will do this we will be able to bring that new day of freedom into being. If we will do this we will be able to make the American dream a reality. And I do not want to give you the impression that it's going to be easy. There can be no great social gain without individual pain. And before the victory for brotherhood is won, some will have to get scarred up a bit. Before the victory is won, some more will be thrown into jail. Before the victory is won, some, like Medgar Evers, may have to face physical death. But if physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children and their white brothers from an eternal psychological death, then nothing can be more redemptive. Before the victory is won, some will be misunderstood and called bad names, but we must go on with a determination and with a faith that this problem can be solved. (Yeah) [Applause]

And so I go back to the South not in despair. I go back to the South not with a feeling that we are caught in a dark dungeon that will never lead to a way out. I go back believing that the new day is coming. And so this afternoon, I have a dream. (*Go ahead*) It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day, right down in Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to live together as brothers.

I have a dream this afternoon (*I have a dream*) that one day, [Applause] one day little white children and little Negro children will be able to join hands as brothers and sisters.

I have a dream this afternoon that one day, [Applause] that one day men will no longer burn down houses and the church of God simply because people want to be free.

I have a dream this afternoon (*I have a dream*) that there will be a day that we will no longer face the atrocities that Emmett Till had to face or Medgar Evers had to face, that all men can live with dignity.

I have a dream this afternoon (*Yeah*) that my four little children, that my four little children will not come up in the same young days that I came up within, but they will be judged on the basis of the content of their character, not the color of their skin. [Applause]

I have a dream this afternoon that one day right here in Detroit, Negroes will be able to buy a house or rent a house anywhere that their money will carry them and they will be able to get a job. [Applause] (*That's right*)

Yes, I have a dream this afternoon that one day in this land the words of Amos will become real and "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I have a dream this evening that one day we will recognize the words of Jefferson that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." I have a dream this afternoon. [Applause]

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and "every valley shall be exalted, and every hill shall be made low; the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." [Applause]

I have a dream this afternoon that the brotherhood of man will become a reality in this day.

And with this faith I will go out and carve a tunnel of hope through the mountain of despair. With this faith, I will go out with you and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. With this faith, we will be able to achieve this new day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing with the Negroes in the spiritual of old:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God almighty, we are free at last! [Applause]

Letter From Birmingham Jail

MY DEAR FELLOW CLERGYMEN:

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine goodwill and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statements in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." 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. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct-action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns: and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom far beyond my own hometown. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through all of these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good-faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants—for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self-purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct-action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by-product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoralty election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Police Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run-off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run-off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct-action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to so dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent-resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we

have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we stiff creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you go forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I-it" relationship for an "I-thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and awful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a

majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

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.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white

moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to

accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely rational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self-respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best-known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do-nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble-rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they

refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black-nationalist ideologies—a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides—and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ..." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. 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 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. 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.

Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern,

would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely otherworldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious-education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great-grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction

that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent—and often even vocal—sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. 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. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handing the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. There will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. There will be the old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy-two-year-old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feets is tired, but my soul is at rest." There will be the young high school and college

students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Explanatory Text (The annotations added here were not annotated by King Institute staff and the Institute does not guarantee their accuracy. For more information, make sure to check the corresponding links in our Encyclopedia.)

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

"This response to a published statement by eight fellow clergymen from Alabama (Bishop C. C. J. Carpenter, Bishop Joseph A. Durick, Rabbi Hilton L. Grafman, Bishop Paul Hardin, Bishop Holan B. Harmon, the Reverend George M. Murray, the Reverend Edward V. Ramage and the Reverend Earl Stallings) was composed under somewhat constricting circumstances. Begun on the margins of the newspaper in which the statement appeared while I was in jail, the letter was continued on scraps of writing paper supplied by a friendly Negro trusty, and concluded on a pad my attorneys were eventually permitted to leave me. Although the text remains in substance unaltered, I have indulged in the author's prerogative of polishing it for publication." (Click here for the clergymen's statement to King)

Birmingham was the largest city in Alabama with a population of approximately 225,000. During the 1950s and 1960s, Birmingham was one of the most segregated cities in the South with strict city ordinances that made it unlawful for different races to mix and mingle in almost all social settings.

Outsiders Coming In

Because the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was a national organization that worked to support local, grassroots campaigns for civil rights, they were often accused of being outside agitators. When King worked with local groups such as the ACHMR, he often became the focus of media attention, resulting in local segregationists viewing him and SCLC as outsiders who were disrupting their community.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was established in 1957 to coordinate the action of local protest groups throughout the South. Under the leadership of King, the organization utilized the power and independence of black churches as the strength of its activities. SCLC differed from organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in that it operated as an umbrella organization of affiliates. Rather than seeking individual membership, it coordinated the activities of local organizations like the Montgomery

Improvement Association (MIA) and the Nashville Christian Leadership Council. SCLC trained local communities in the philosophy of Christian nonviolence, and through its affiliation with churches and its advocacy of nonviolence, sought to put the struggle for civil rights in moral terms. Headquartered in Atlanta, SCLC is now a nationwide organization with chapters and affiliates located throughout the United States. It continues its commitment to nonviolent action to achieve social, economic, and political justice and is currently focused on issues such as racial profiling, police brutality, hate crimes, and discrimination. For our online encyclopedia entry, [click here](#).

The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) was founded in Birmingham, Alabama, on 5 June 1956, after Attorney General John Patterson of Alabama outlawed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the state. Immediately after the disbandment of the NAACP, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth called a meeting of local ministers and community leaders at Sardis Baptist Church and the ACMHR was founded. Shuttlesworth was named president of the ACMHR by acclamation. In its Declaration of Principles, ACMHR announced its determination to press forward persistently for Freedom and Democracy, and the removal from our society any forms of Second Class Citizenship. With SCLC backing, in 1963 ACMHR conducted a sustained campaign of marches and nonviolent action to protest segregation in Birmingham. ACMHR and SCLC sought to desegregate public facilities and attain equal employment opportunities for Birmingham's black citizens by targeting the city's department stores. For our online encyclopedia entry, [click here](#).

St. Paul the Apostle (born A.D. 10, died A.D. 67)

Early in his life he was a enemy of the Christian church and worked to eradicate Christianity. On the road to Damascus, Paul had a mystical experience and the Gospel of Jesus Christ was revealed to him. After his conversion, he spent his life as a missionary, traveling, writing, and preaching the Gospel. His conversion from enemy of Christianity to Apostle suggests the importance of absolution of sin through faith and grace in Christianity.

Macedonia

On his second and third missionary journeys, Paul traveled in Macedonia to spread the gospel. Apparently, he expelled a demon from a girl who was clairvoyant. For this he was jailed, but he was freed by an earthquake. He was later jailed, beaten, and taken to Rome, where he was imprisoned and died.

Self-Purification

Self purification is the cleansing of anger, selfishness and violent attitudes from the heart and soul in preparation for a nonviolent struggle. This is a fundamental aspect of Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of active resistance/civil disobedience. The practice is deeply spiritual and philosophical and it is not simply ideological. This is an important distinction as it differentiates this type of action from other forms of ideological or revolutionary behavior. From the King center in Atlanta, here are the fundamental tenets of Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence described in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*. The six principles include: (1.) Nonviolence is not passive, but requires courage; (2.) Nonviolence seeks reconciliation, not defeat of an adversary; (3.) Nonviolent action is directed at eliminating evil, not destroying an evil-doer; (4.) A willingness to accept suffering for the cause, if necessary, but never to inflict it; (5.) A rejection of hatred, animosity or violence of the spirit, as well as refusal to commit physical violence; and (6.) Faith that justice will prevail.

Unsolved Bombings

Between 1948 and 1957, there were 48 unsolved racial bombings in Birmingham alone. During the 1960s there were over 40 unsolved bombings. This resulted in Birmingham often being referred to as Bombingham.

Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth

One of the founding members of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Fred Shuttlesworth brought a militant voice to the struggle for black equality. He drew King and the SCLC to Birmingham in 1963 for a historic confrontation with the forces of segregation. The scale of protest and police brutality of the Birmingham Campaign created a new level of visibility for the civil rights movement and contributed to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Born in Mt. Meigs, Alabama, Shuttlesworth was licensed and ordained as a preacher in 1948. He earned an A.B. (1951) from Selma University and a B.S. (1953) from Alabama State College. Shuttlesworth served as minister at First Baptist Church in Selma until 1952, and the following year he was called to Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that bus segregation in Montgomery was unconstitutional in November 1956, Shuttlesworth and the ACMHR made plans to challenge segregation on Birmingham's buses. The night before their

campaign was to begin, a bomb exploded under Shuttlesworth's parsonage at Bethel Baptist. The house was destroyed but Shuttlesworth escaped unharmed. In 1963, the SCLC joined forces with the ACMHR to protest segregation in Birmingham. SCLC leaders met secretly in January of that year to draw up initial plans for the Birmingham Campaign, known as "Project C" – C for confrontation. Shuttlesworth issued the "Birmingham Manifesto," which explained the black community's decision to act: "We act today in full concert with our Hebraic-Christian tradition, the laws of morality and the Constitution of our nation," Shuttlesworth proclaimed. "We appeal to the citizenry of Birmingham, Negro and white, to join us in this witness for decency, morality, self-respect and human dignity.

Alabama Christian Movement For Human Rights

The Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) was founded in Birmingham, Alabama, on 5 June 1956, after the Attorney General John Patterson of Alabama outlawed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the state. Immediately after the disbandment of the NAACP, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth called a meeting of local ministers and community leaders at Sardis Baptist Church and the ACMHR was founded. Shuttlesworth was named president of the ACMHR by acclamation. In its Declaration of Principles, the ACMHR announced its determination to press forward persistently for Freedom and Democracy, and the removal from our society any forms of Second Class Citizenship. With the backing of SCLC, in April and May of 1963, the ACMHR conducted a sustained campaign of marches and nonviolent action to protest segregation in Birmingham. ACMHR and SCLC sought to desegregate public facilities and attain equal employment opportunities for Birmingham's black citizens by targeting the city's department stores. Their demonstrations were met with arrests, assault by fire hoses and police dogs, and imprisonment.

Mayoralty Election

The Birmingham mayoralty election was to be held on March 5th, 1963. SCLC and ACMHR decided to postpone Project C, also known as Project Confrontation, for two weeks in order to prevent Bull Connor from using the presence of protesters to emotionally charge the election for his political advantage. The three candidates, Bull Connor, Albert Boutwell and Tom King were all segregationists. No candidate won a clear majority and the runoff between Connor and Boutwell further delayed the protests. Boutwell won the election on April 2nd, but he and other city officials refused to leave office. On May 23rd he was forced to vacate the office by the Alabama Supreme Court. King and others began Project C on April 3rd.

Connor, Theophilus Eugene "Bull" (1897-1973)

Bull Connor was an ardent segregationist who served for twenty-two years as commissioner of public safety in Birmingham, Alabama. Using his administrative authority over the police and fire departments, Connor worked to ensure that Birmingham remained, as Martin Luther King, Jr. described it, the most segregated city in America. In 1963, the violent response of Connor and his police force to demonstrations in Birmingham propelled the civil rights movement into the national spotlight.

Connor was born on 11 July 1897 in Selma, Alabama. After the death of his mother when he was eight, Connor traveled around the country with his father, who moved from job to job as a railroad telegrapher. Connor never graduated from high school, but he learned telegraphy from his father and used this skill to gain employment at radio stations and eventually become a radio broadcaster. His political career began in 1934 when he used his popularity as a Birmingham sportscaster to win a seat in the Alabama House of Representatives. After serving a term in the House, he was elected to the Birmingham City Commission and soon became known for his uncompromising opposition to integration. Upon his reelection as commissioner of public safety in 1957, he promised to uphold segregation in Birmingham to the utmost of my ability and by all lawful means. It was on his watch that the city earned the nickname Bombingham, with seventeen bombings of black homes and churches occurring between 1957 and 1963.

Direct Action

Direct action is a form of political activism which seeks to remedy social, political or economic ills. It is often immediate and confrontational. Direct action can include such activities as strikes, workplace occupations, sit-ins, revolutionary/guerrilla warfare, demonstrations, etc. Direct actions are sometimes a form of civil disobedience and can include illegal activities.

Sit-in

The sit-in campaigns of 1960 and the ensuing creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) demonstrated the potential strength of grass-roots militancy and enabled a new generation of young people to gain confidence in their own leadership. Although Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed pride in the new activism for being “initiated, led and sustained by students”; he often found himself the target of criticisms from SNCC activists who believed he was too cautious. The campaigns were initiated on 1 February 1960 when four black students

from North Carolina A&T College sat down at Woolworth's lunch counter in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. The students -- Joseph McNeil, Izell Blair, Franklin McCain, and David Richmond -- purchased several items in the store before sitting at the counter reserved for white customers. When a waitress asked them to leave, they politely refused; and to their surprise, they were not arrested. The four students remained seated for almost an hour until the store closed. The following morning about two dozen students arrived at Woolworth's and sat at the lunch counter. While no confrontations occurred, the second sit-in attracted the local media. By day three of the campaign, the students had formed the Student Executive Committee for Justice to coordinate protests which would culminate in a march of several thousand students. The Greensboro protesters eventually agreed to the mayor's request to halt protest activities while city officials sought "a just and honorable solution," but black students in other communities launched lunch counter protests of their own. By the end of the month, sit-ins had taken place at more than thirty locations in seven states. By fall of 1960 there were signs that the southern civil rights movement had been profoundly transformed by the fiercely independent student protest movement. Those who had participated in the sit-in campaign were determined to continue the direct-action tactics that were seizing the initiative from older, more cautious organizations such as King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Socrates (470 BC–399 BC)

Socrates was an ancient Greek philosopher who is widely credited for laying the foundation for Western philosophy. Most of what we know of Socrates comes from the writings of Plato. Socrates is often referred to a gadfly because he upset social norms by posing difficult philosophical questions that caused people to examine their lives and beliefs. This created a tension in the mind that had the effect of liberating individuals from the influence of socially accepted half-truths and myths. For these activities, Socrates was tried in an Athenian court on charges of corrupting the youth. Although he had the opportunity to escape and run from his fate, Socrates refused and he was sentenced to death.

Albert Boutwell

Albert Burton Boutwell (1904 - 1978). In the 1963 Birmingham mayoral election, the three candidates, Bull Connor, Albert Boutwell and Tom King were all segregationists. No candidate won a clear majority in the first election but Boutwell defeated Connor in a runoff on April 2nd. However, Connor and other city officials refused to leave office. On May 23rd Connor was forced to vacate the office by the Alabama Supreme Court. Boutwell took office and served for one term.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr (1892 –1971). Niebuhr was a very important and influential Protestant theologian known for his attempt to relate the Christian faith to the reality of the modern political world. He wrote many books that examined the role of the church in society and he served as the editor of the magazine Christianity and Crisis. According to Niebuhr, “individuals are morally sensible in their ability to consider the interests of others and to act on their behalf. Individuals can be unselfish. However, in a society or a group of individuals, it is difficult to handle the interest of the group by means of the human rational faculty because groups are only the collection of individuals\’ selfish impulses, not of their unselfish consideration for others. This collective egoism of individuals becomes more powerful. In every human group there is less reason to guide and to check impulse, less capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to comprehend the needs of others therefore more unrestrained egoism than the individuals, who compose the group, reveal in their personal relationships. Therefore, All social co-operation on a larger scale than the most intimate social group requires a measure of coercion.

The Nations Of Asia And Africa

After WWII, many nations in African and Asia were engaged in de-colonization movements to gain independence. India, Vietnam, Algeria, the Congo and Sudan are just a few examples of countries that gained independence from foreign occupiers. These movements became key battlegrounds during the Cold War, where both the united States and The Soviet Union vied for political allies.

Supreme Court's Decision Of 1954

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Brown is a landmark ruling of the United States Supreme Court which overturned Plessy v. Ferguson(1896). Brown made clear that the establishment of separate public schools for black and white students was inherently unequal. The Warren Court handed down a (9-0) decision that made racial segregation a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This legal victory, spearheaded by the NAACP, paved the way for the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 60s.

St. Augustine

Aurelius Augustine; St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was a Christian theologian, and a bishop in North Africa. Although born a Catholic, Augustine left the faith to become a Manichaean. He studied rhetoric and taught in various cities throughout the Roman Empire. Later in life, Augustine converted to Christianity and became a priest. In 396 he was made the bishop of Hippo. His writings have had a tremendous impact on the development of Christianity.

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was perhaps the greatest medieval philosopher and he is considered by many Roman Catholics as their most important theologian. Aquinas tried to show the harmony between faith and reason, and between Christianity and philosophy. Aquinas thought that through natural reason we discern what is good and bad. This reason is an impression of the divine light, or eternal law, upon us. A law is a prescription that we act or not act and laws must be directed to the common good. Laws that aren't for the common good are unjust. An unjust law isn't a law at all because it is out of harmony with eternal law.'

Martin Buber

Martin Buber (1878-1965) was Jewish philosopher, translator, and educator, and his work was very influential on 20th century theology. I-Thou or I-You describes a relationship that stresses the mutual, holistic existence of two beings. These beings interact with one another in their authentic existence, without any objectification of one another. The I-it relationship stands in opposition to I-You. I-It describes a relationship between a subject-I and an object-It. This causes the I to experience others beings as things, and this in turn allows for dehumanization.

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Paul Tillich

Paul Tillich (1886 –1965) was a German-American theologian and Christian existentialist. According to Tillich, in his book, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, “To be in the state of sin is to be in the state of separation. And separation is threefold: there is separation among individual lives, separation of a man from himself, and separation of all men from the Ground of Being. This three-fold separation constitutes the state of everything that exists; it is a universal fact; it is the fate of every life. And it is our human fate in a very special sense. For we as men know that we are separated. We not only suffer with all other creatures because of the self-destructive consequences of our separation, but also know why we suffer. For sin and grace are bound to each other. We do not even have a knowledge of sin unless we have already experienced the unity of life, which is grace. And conversely, we could not grasp the meaning of grace without having experienced the separation of life, which is sin. In grace something is overcome; grace occurs in spite of something; grace occurs in spite of separation and estrangement. Grace is the reunion of life with life, the reconciliation of the self with itself.”- Tillich's theology was the subject of King's dissertation.

First Amendment

US Constitution

Bill of Rights

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience is the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government or of an occupying power without resorting to physical violence. It is one of the primary tactics of nonviolent resistance. Henry David Thoreau developed the modern theory behind this practice in his 1849 essay *Resistance to Civil Government*. Thoreau's essay has been influential on many practitioners of civil disobedience, including Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Shadrach and others

The book of Daniel(3:1-30). King Nebuchadnezzar constructed a golden statue and requested that all bow down and worship it or suffer death by being thrown into a furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down and worship because of the Old Testament prohibition against worshipping idols. For this they were thrown into the furnace. They emerged from the furnace completely unharmed. Amazed that these men were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god other than their own God, King Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed that the God of these men is the one true God, for no other God can save in this way.

Hungarian Freedom Fighters

In 1945, near the end of WWII, the Soviet Union liberated Hungary from the Nazis. Soon, Hungary was dominated by the sphere of Soviet influence. On October 23rd, 1956, Hungarian students began demonstrating against Soviet domination. There was widespread revolt and many joined the freedom fighters, yet the Soviets crushed the uprising on November 10th. However, many see the uprising as the first crack in the iron curtain.

White Citizens Council

The White Citizens Council was founded in 1954. The WCC is sometimes referred to as a civilized version of the KKK, or a white collar Klan. They met openly and worked to thwart desegregation movements. They were white supremacists and were involved in many racist activities, however, they did not openly advocate violence or terrorism.

Ku Klux Klanner

Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is the name of several past and present organizations in the United States that have advocated white supremacy, anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, anti-Communism and nativism. These organizations have often used terrorism, violence, and acts of intimidation, such as cross burning, to oppress African Americans and other social or ethnic groups.

Drink Hemlock

After being found guilty by an Athenian jury, Socrates was sentenced to death. He drank a cup of poison hemlock.

Elijah Muhammad's Muslim Movement

Elijah Muhammad (1897-1975) was the leader of the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) in the mid-20th century. He was a major advocate of independent, black-operated businesses, institutions, and religion. Elijah Muhammad was born Elijah (or Robert) Poole on October 7, 1897. He was an early disciple of W.D. Fard, the founder of the Nation of Islam. Muhammad established Chicago as the center of the movement and built a Temple, schools, created a newspaper, and founded black owned businesses. The movement is very disciplined. Members have strict rules to follow regarding eating, drinking, and behavior. Members are forbidden from eating pork, smoking and drinking. The use of drugs, profanity, and dancing are also not permitted. All members are to be well dressed and groomed. Muhammad taught that blacks constituted the original human beings, but that a mad black scientist named Yakub had created a white beast through genetic manipulation and that whites had been given a temporary dispensation to govern the world. That period, however, was due to end soon; now the time was at hand for blacks to resume their former dominant role. It was understood that violent war would be likely before the transition could be completed. In the meantime, Muhammad advocated an independent nation for African Americans.

Zeitgeist

Zeitgeist is originally a German expression that means the spirit of the age. It is literally translated as Zeit=time and Geist=spirit. It describes the intellectual and cultural climate of a particular age or era.

Freedom Rides

During the spring of 1961, student activists launched the Freedom Rides to challenge segregation on interstate buses and bus terminals. Traveling on buses from Washington, D.C., to Montgomery, Alabama, the riders met violent opposition in the Deep South, garnering extensive media attention and eventually forcing federal intervention from the Kennedy administration.

Although eventually successful in securing an Interstate Commerce Commission ban on segregation in all facilities under their jurisdiction. On the 4th of May 1961, the Freedom Riders left Washington, D.C., in two buses and headed to Virginia. While they met resistance and arrests in Virginia, it was not until the riders arrived in Rockhill, South Carolina, that they encountered violence. There, Lewis and another rider were beaten, and another rider was arrested for using a white restroom. The ride continued to Anniston, Alabama, where on the 14th of May, riders were met by a violent mob of over 100 people. Before the arrival, Anniston local authorities had given permission to the Ku Klux Klan to strike against the Freedom Riders without fear of arrest. After a series of standoffs, one of the buses was firebombed, and its fleeing passengers were forced into the angry white mob. The violence continued at the Birmingham terminal where Eugene -Bull- Connor's police force offered no protection. Although the violence garnered national media attention, the series of attacks prompted James Farmer of CORE to end the ride. The riders flew to New Orleans, the original destination, bringing to an end the first Freedom Ride of the 1960s.

Amos

Amos was a prophet who gave his message to the Israelites in 750 BCE or 749 BCE. The reference is to Amos 5:24. Amos warns the people of Israel that the Lord is displeased with their behavior. People are overly concerned with earthly possessions, bodily desires and there is a shallow adherence to their religious values. Amos tells the people that God will soon judge them for their sins.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the leader of the great religious revolt of the sixteenth century in German. His theology challenged the authority of the papacy by emphasizing the Bible as the sole source of religious authority. According to Luther, salvation was attainable only by faith in Jesus as the messiah, and this faith was not mediated by the church. These ideas helped to inspire the Protestant Reformation and changed the course of Western civilization. Martin Luther began his assault on the papacy when he nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church. That document contained an attack on papal abuses and the sale of indulgences by church officials.

John Bunyan

John Bunyan (1628-1688), was a Christian writer and preacher, and author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the most famous published Christian allegory. Bunyan was imprisoned in 1660 for preaching without a license. He was confined for 12 years because he refused to desist from preaching. While in confinement, he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* which tells the story of Christian, who makes his way from the City of Destruction, to the Celestial City of Zion, the former symbolizing earth and the latter heaven.

Ralph and others

The writers that King refers to are Southern whites who have written extensively on racism, desegregation, and civil rights. They were all supporters of the civil rights movement.

Reverend Stallings

Stallings was one of the eight clergymen to whom the Letter From a Birmingham Jail was addressed. He was the pastor of Birmingham's First Baptist Church. Stallings was praised by King for desegregating his church in early 1963. Because of his moderate stance on civil rights and desegregation, Stallings was often the target of criticism from both conservative segregationists and liberal integrationists.

Spring Hills College

Spring Hill College is the oldest Jesuit college in the South and the third oldest Jesuit school in the United States. In 1954, Spring Hill College became the first college in Alabama to integrate its student body. They did so prior to the Brown decision.

Bus protests in Montgomery, Alabama

Sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks on 1 December 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott was an eleven-month mass protest that ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that public bus segregation is unconstitutional. The Montgomery Improvement Association coordinated the boycott, and its president, Martin Luther King, Jr., became a prominent civil rights leader as international attention focused on Montgomery. The bus boycott demonstrated the potential for nonviolent mass protest to successfully challenge racial segregation and served as an example for

other southern campaigns that followed. The MIA issued a formal list of demands: courteous treatment by the bus operator; first-come, first-serve seating for all, with blacks seating from the rear and whites from the front; and black bus operators on predominately black routes. Montgomery's black residents stayed off of the buses through 1956, as city officials and white citizens sought to defeat the boycott. The homes of both King and Ralph Abernathy were bombed, and the membership of the local White Citizen's Council doubled. City officials obtained injunctions against the boycott in February 1956 and arrested 156 protesters under a 1921 law prohibiting the hindrance of a bus. Despite this resistance, the boycott continued. Under increasing pressure to address the conflict in Montgomery, the federal district court ruled bus segregation unconstitutional on 4 June 1956 (*Browder v. Gayle*). The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling, and on 21 December 1956, the boycott officially ended. King's role in the bus boycott garnered international attention, and the MIA's tactics of combining mass nonviolent protest with a Christian tone became the model for challenging segregation in the South, a strategy highlighted by King in *Stride Toward Freedom*, his 1958 memoir of the boycott.

Governor Barnett

Governor Barnett Ross Robert Barnett (1898–1987) was the Democratic governor of the U.S. state of Mississippi from 1960 to 1964. He was a staunch segregationist who opposed James Meredith's attempt to integrate the University of Mississippi. Barnett's open defiance of federal law and his unapologetically racist views often caused him to clash with federal authorities.

Nullification

Nullification refers to the idea that sovereign States formed the Union and that these States reserve final authority over their affairs, especially regarding the authority of the Federal Government's power over State affairs. Essentially, they felt they could nullify or make void a Federal law that they disagreed with. The issue of State's rights was a central concern of the Civil War in the 1860s and the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Many Southern Governors refused to follow Federal law and claimed State's rights as their defense.

Governor Wallace

After pledging “Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!” in his 1963 inaugural address, Alabama Governor George Wallace gained national notoriety by symbolically standing at the entrance of the University of Alabama to denounce the enrollment of two African American students. His stature as an ardent segregationist was further heightened when he mobilized the Alabama National Guard to block school desegregation in Birmingham in 1963 and when he condoned the use of violence during the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965. Martin Luther King, Jr. described Wallace as one the most dangerous racists in America. George Corley Wallace was born on 25 August 1919 in Clio, Alabama. The son of a farmer, he worked his way through the University of Alabama Law School and graduated in 1942. After a brief stint in the United States Air Force, Wallace returned to Alabama to work as the state’s assistant attorney general. He was elected to the state legislature in 1947 and served as a district judge from 1953 to 1959. In his early political career, he maintained a moderate stance on integration; but after losing his first gubernatorial campaign to a candidate who was endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan, Wallace became an outspoken defender of segregation. He soon established a reputation as the fighting judge for his defiance of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; and four years later, he won the governorship on a segregationist platform. Between 1963 and 1987, Wallace served four terms as governor.

Infanticide and gladiatorial protests

The first recorded gladiatorial combat in Rome occurred when three pairs of gladiators fought to the death during the funeral of Junius Brutus in 264 BCE. These types of contests were common until Christianity became the most popular religion in Rome in 4th century AD. Infanticide was often practiced in the Roman Empire. A father would be presented with a child and he would decide whether the child should be raised, or left out in the elements to die. Visibly deformed children were almost always killed. Christians rejected this practice, and as their influence grew, the practice died out.

Ecclesia

Ecclesia or Ekklesia in Christian theology denotes both a particular body of faithful people, and the whole body of the faithful. In this reference he means the inner church as the true body of religion.

Albany, Georgia

Formed on 17 November 1961 by Albany, Georgia's Colored Ministerial Alliance, the NAACP, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and other civil rights organizations, the Albany Movement conducted a broad campaign that challenged all forms of segregation and discrimination. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined the coalition in December 1961, attracting national publicity to Albany. Although the Albany Movement was successful in mobilizing massive protests during December 1961 and the following summer, it secured few concrete gains due to the jailing of hundreds of protesters. It was the first campaign in the South to involve large numbers of black adults of varied class backgrounds in protests. Protests continued in Albany through July, when the Albany Movement invited SCLC and SNCC to share leadership in the campaign. Following his second arrest, King agreed on 10 August 1962 to leave Albany and halt the demonstrations, effectively ending the Albany Movement. While close to ninety-five percent of the black population boycotted buses and shops, the ultimate goals of the Movement were not met. King blamed much of the failure on the campaign's wide scope. The experiences in Albany, however, helped inform the strategy for the Birmingham Campaign that followed less than a year later.

Birmingham Police Force

The Birmingham police, led by Eugene Bull Connor, were notoriously harsh. They were often witnessed perpetrating civil right abuses or allowing others like the Klan to perpetrate crimes. During the civil rights struggles of 1963, police Commissioner Connor ordered the use of fire hoses and dogs to drive back the youthful demonstrators. Across the country, television stations fanned images of firefighters attacking citizens with powerful hoses and police carting children away in paddy wagons. This police riot in Birmingham drew national attention to the harsh realities of racial segregation in the South, and sparked more than a hundred black protests in cities and communities throughout the nation.

Chief Pritchett

Laurie Pritchett, police chief of Albany, Georgia, from 1959 to 1966, was primarily known for his role in containing the efforts of the Albany Movement, a group of civil rights organizations that in 1961 conducted a broad campaign against the city's institutionalized segregation. Pritchett's nonviolent approach to demonstrations, including arrests of Martin Luther King, Jr., were seen as effective strategies in bringing the campaign to an end before the Movement could secure any concrete gains. In late 1961, two years after Pritchett was appointed chief of police,

the Albany Movement brought civil rights activists to Albany to contest racial segregation in bus and train stations, libraries, parks, and hospitals, as well as discrimination in jury representation and in employment. In anticipation of the arrests of a large number of protestors, Pritchett arranged to have access to jails in nearby cities. He also ordered his officers to enforce the law without using violence and to make arrests under laws protecting the public order, rather than under the more legally unstable segregation laws. Pritchett was also careful to avoid the negative nationwide attention that police brutality could bring to his city and police department. Following an incident on July 24 in which officials assaulted peaceful demonstrators, including a pregnant woman, he quickly took control of the situation by declaring that he was an advocate of nonviolence and ordered his officers to refrain from using clubs or guns unless attacked. Pritchett, who had a close relationship with white newsmen covering the protests, was featured in several important magazines and newspapers for his belief in nonviolent law enforcement. The lack of violence in Albany resulted in very little media coverage of the actual protests. Although he and King were on opposite sides of the Albany struggle, Pritchett later maintained that King was a close personal friend. He died in High Point in 2000 at the age of 73.

T.S. Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot/ T.S. Eliot,(1888-1965), was a poet, dramatist and literary critic. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948. This quote is taken from the Eliot play, *Murder in The Cathedral*, which deals with the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket. In this scene, Becket is tempted by a figure who offers him martyrdom, which he rejects and he accepts his death as inevitable. The passage reads: Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain: Temptation shall not come in this kind again. The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

James Meredith

In January 1961, the night following John F. Kennedy's presidential inauguration, James Meredith decided to submit an application to the University of Mississippi (also known as Ole Miss), which was closed to African-American students. His application was rejected twice, but with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Meredith legally challenged the university's segregation policy. After enduring extended court battles, the defiance of Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett, and violent campus riots, Meredith was finally admitted on 1 October 1962. Meredith graduated from Ole Miss in August 1963 with a bachelor's degree in political science.

In 1966 Meredith began a solitary march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to encourage African-American voter registration. When a sniper wounded him on the second day of the march, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee rallied behind his cause. King, Stokely Carmichael, and Floyd McKissick were joined by hundreds of other marchers as they completed the march. By the late 1960s Meredith had moved to New York and received a law degree from Columbia University. Over the next several years, Meredith became more politically involved, making several unsuccessful bids for public office, including a run for the Republican Senate nomination in Mississippi.