



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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Speech Transcript

To the distinguished president of Southern Methodist University, Dr. Tate, members of the faculty and members of the student body, ladies and gentlemen. I need not pause to say how very delighted and honored I am to be on the campus of this great institution of learning and to be a part of your lecture series. And I certainly want to express my personal appreciation to Mr. Moore and Mr. Cox and all of you for extending the invitation.

It is always a very rich and rewarding experience when I can take a brief break from the day-to-day demands of our struggle for freedom and human dignity and discuss the issues involved in that struggle with college and university students and concerned people of goodwill all over the country and all over the world. And so it is a delightful pleasure to be here with you today. I come with a deep appreciation for the rich and noble heritage of this marvelous institution of learning.

I would like to have you think with me this afternoon on the subject of the future of integration. I guess probably more than any other question, the one that I get over and over again as I journey around our nation is the question whether we are making any real progress in race relations. It is a poignant and desperate question on the lips of thousands and millions of people all over this nation. And I guess the only answer that I can give to that question is what I consider a realistic one. It avoids the extremes of both a deadening pessimism and a superficial optimism. I would say that we have come a long, long way in our struggle to make justice a reality for all men, but we have a long, long way to go before the problem is solved. And it is this realistic position that I would like to use as the basis for our thinking together this afternoon as we think of the future of integration and as we think of progress in race relations. We have come a long, long way, but we still have a long, long way to go.

Now let us notice first that we have come a long, long way, and in order to illustrate this, a bit of history is necessary. You will remember that it was in the year 1619 that the first Negro slaves landed on the shores of this nation. They were brought here from the soils of Africa. Unlike the Pilgrim fathers, who landed at Plymouth a year later, they were brought here against their will. Throughout slavery, the Negro was treated in a very inhuman fashion. He was a thing to be used rather than a person to be respected. He was merely a depersonalized cog in a vast plantation machine.

The famous Dred Scott decision of 1857 well-illustrated the status of the Negro during slavery. For in this decision, the Supreme Court of our nation said in substance that the Negro is not a citizen of the United States. He is merely property subject to the dictates of his owner. It went on to say that the Negro has no rights that the white man is bound to respect. With the growth of slavery, it became necessary to give some justification for it. It seems to be a fact of life that men cannot continue to do wrong without eventually reaching out for some thin rationalization to clothe an obvious wrong in the beautiful garments of righteousness. This is exactly what happened during the days of slavery. Even religion was used, or I should say misused, to crystalize the patterns of the status quo and to justify the system of slavery. And so it was argued from some pulpits that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. The Apostle Paul's dictum became a watchword: That servants be obedient to your master.

Then one brother had probably read the logic of the great philosopher Aristotle. You know Aristotle did a great deal to bring into being what we now know as formal logic in philosophy, and formal logic has a

big word known as syllogism. Syllogism has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. So this brother decided to put his argument of the inferiority of the Negro in the framework of an Aristotelian syllogism. He came out with his major premise: All men are created in the image of God. Then came his minor premise: God, as everybody knows, is not a Negro. Therefore, the Negro is not a man. This was the kind of reasoning that prevailed. Living with the system of slavery and then later rigid standards of segregation, many Negroes lost faith in themselves. Many came to feel that perhaps they were less than human. Nagging clouds of inferiority actually formed in their mental sky.

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. Even his cultural life was gradually rising through the steady decline of crippling illiteracy. All of these forces conjoined to cause the Negro to take a new look at himself. Negro masses all over began to re-evaluate themselves. The Negro came to feel that he was somebody. His religion revealed to him that God loves all of his children and that all men are made in his image and that the basic thing about a man is not his specificity but his fundamentalness, not the texture of his hair or the color of his skin but his eternal dignity and worth. So the Negro can now consciously cry out with the eloquent cohort; African looks 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 from pole to pole or grasp the ocean with a span, I must be measured by my soul. The mind is the standard of the man. With the new sense of dignity, this sense of self-respect, a new Negro came into being with a new determination, to struggle, to suffer and to sacrifice in order to be free. And so in a real sense, we have come a long, long way. Since 1619, the Negro has come a long, long way in re-evaluating his own intrinsic worth. But not only that. If we are to be true to the facts, we must point out that the whole nation has made significant strides in extending the frontiers of democracy and civil rights.

Fifty years ago, or even 25 years ago, a year hardly passed when numerous Negroes were not brutally lynched in the South by vicious mobs. But, fortunately, lynchings have about ceased today, which reveals we've made strides. At the turn of the century, there were very few Negroes registered to vote in the South. Many, many patterns came into being, many conniving methods to keep the Negro from being a registered voter, but other forces were at work so that by 1948 the number of registered Negro voters in the South had leaped to 750,000. By 1960, that number had leaped to a little better than 1,300,000. By 1964, it had gone to 2 million. Since that time, we've gotten the Voting Rights Bill enacted, and thousands and thousands of new Negro voters are now registered as a result of the Voting Rights Bill of 1965. This reveals that we have made strides.

In the economic area, we've seen some changes, and so the average employed Negro — and I am stressing employed because later I will talk about unemployment — but the average employed Negro earns four times more than the average Negro wage earner of 10 years ago. The annual income of the Negro is now more than \$30 billion a year, which is more than all the exports of the United States and more than the national budget of Canada. This means that we've seen some progress.

But probably more than anything else or in any other area, we've seen the walls of legal segregation gradually crumble in our day and in our age.

We all know the history of legal segregation. It had its beginning in 1896 when the Supreme Court of our nation rendered a decision known as the Plessy vs Ferguson decision, which established the doctrine of separate but equal as the law of the land. But we all know what happened as a result of the Plessy doctrine. There was always a strict enforcement of the separate without the slightest intention to abide by the equal. The Negro ended up being plunged into the abyss of exploitation, where he experienced the

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bleakness of nagging injustice.

Then something else happened in 1954. After examining the legal body of segregation, the Supreme Court pronounced it constitutionally dead on May 17 of that year. It said in substance the old Plessy doctrine must go, separate facilities are inherently unequal, that to segregate a child on the basis of his race is to deny that child equal protection of the law.

Then along with that we saw other developments.

After the Birmingham movement in 1963 and the brutality of Bull Connor's dogs and fire hoses, President Kennedy stood before the nation and said the problem of civil rights is not merely a political issue, not merely an economic issue; it is at bottom a moral issue, and it is as old as the scriptures and as modern as the Constitution. And on the heels of that speech to the nation, President Kennedy submitted to Congress the most comprehensive civil rights package ever presented by any president of our nation. Congress debated the issue for several months; finally that bill was passed, signed by President Johnson on July 2, 1964.

The Civil Rights Bill is now the law of the land, and I am happy to say as a native Southerner, as one who loves the South and lives in the South, that by and large communities have complied with this bill, particularly the public accommodations section of it, with amazing good sense.

There are still pockets of resistance, but fortunately major communities have complied. This reveals to us that changes are taking place. To put it figuratively, in biblical language, we've broken loose from the Egypt of slavery. We have moved through the wilderness of legal segregation, and now we stand on the borderland of integration. I am convinced the system of segregation is on its deathbed today, and the only thing uncertain about it is how costly the diehards and the extreme segregationists will make the funeral. We've come a long, long way since 1896.

Now this would be a wonderful place for me to end my speech this afternoon. First, it would mean making a relatively short speech, and that would be a magnificent accomplishment for a Baptist preacher. But it would also mean the problem is about solved now, and you don't have much to do.

It would be a marvelous thing if speakers all over our nation could talk about this problem in terms of a problem that once existed but that no longer has existence. But if I stop now, I will merely be stating fact and not telling the truth. You see, a fact is merely the absence of contradiction, but the truth is the presence of coherence. Now it is a fact that we have come a long, long way, but it isn't the whole truth.

And in order to tell the truth, I must give the other side, and if I stop at this point, I may leave you the victims of a dangerous optimism if I stop now. I may leave you the victims of an illusion wrapped in superficiality. So, in order to tell the truth, it is necessary to move on and say not only have we come a long, long way, we still have a long, long way to go before the problem of racial injustice is solved in our country. Now I need not dwell on this point. We need only turn on our televisions and open our newspapers and look around our community. We see that the problem is still with us.

I mentioned the fact that lynchings have about ceased, but we must recognize that civil rights workers are still being brutally murdered. And in some of our states today, the murder of Negro and civil rights workers is still a favorite pastime. In the last four or five years, some 26 Negro and white civil rights workers have been brutally murdered in the state of Alabama alone. If we will check the list, we will discover that in most cases nobody has been convicted. People are walking scot-free in the streets of our communities who have murdered persons who were simply seeking to gain their basic rights as citizens.

The same thing has happened, and the numbers are probably larger, in the state of Mississippi. And so these things continue to exist. We mount our movements trying to get a little justice. We still see homes being bombed. We still see churches being burned down. Over the last 18 months, more than 52 Negro churches have been burned in the state of Mississippi alone. It seems they have a slogan there now which doesn't say "Attend the Church of your Choice" but "Burn the Church of your Choice."

Oh, how tragic this is. This reveals we still have a long, long way to go if the equal administration of justice is to be a reality.

I mentioned the fact that we have made great strides in voter registration. We have made significant strides and even greater strides since the Voting Rights Bill came into being, but we must be eternally vigilant at this point. There are still communities that are using various schemes and methods to keep the Negro from becoming a registered voter in large numbers. And so these patterns are used, and there is a need in those areas for more federal registrars. So even in this area there is still work that must be done.

I mentioned the fact that we've made strides in the economic area. I used \$30 billion as the actual figure for the collective income of the Negroes. This sounds big. This sounds good. My friends, if we are to be honest, we must look at the other side, and there is a tragic gulf there. Forty-one percent of the Negro families of our country still earn less than \$2,000 a year, while just 17 percent of the white families earn less than \$2,000 a year. Twenty percent of the Negro families earn less than \$1,000 a year, while less than 5 percent of the white families earn less than \$1,000 per year. Eighty-eight percent of the Negro families earn less than \$5,000 per year, while 58 percent of the white families earn less than \$5,000 per year.

The problem is becoming more serious today because of automation and cybernation. The Negro has been denied educational opportunities in many instances. The Negro has been denied apprenticeship training in so many instances. And so for this reason we have often been limited to unskilled and semiskilled labor. These are the jobs that are passing away today with the impact of automation, and it is making for great unemployment.

In cities like Detroit, the Negro is 28 percent of the population and 72 percent of the unemployed. In a city like Chicago, where we are working in the slums now, the Negro population is about 27-28 percent. Yet the Negro is almost 70 percent of the unemployed.

I need not remind you of the dangers here. There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel they have no stake in it, who feel they have nothing to do. These are the people who will riot. And in spite of the pleas for nonviolence, they often fall on deaf ears out of the frustrations of poverty, out of the frustrations of being left on the periphery of life, pushed out of the main stream of life. Out of the heaving desperation surrounding their days, they often end up seeing life as a long and desperate corridor with no exit sign. And so it is necessary to develop massive public works programs. It is necessary to develop massive training programs. It is necessary to lift the minimum wage and extend the coverage so that all of God's children will have the basic necessities of life.

We live in a great nation, the greatest nation, the richest nation on the face of the earth, and I submit this afternoon that any nation that can spend billions of dollars to put a man on the moon can spend billions of dollars to put a man on his own two feet here on earth.

I was in Sweden and Norway some months ago. As we journeyed around Scandinavia, we saw no poverty. We saw no one in need of health care who couldn't get it, medical care who couldn't get it. We saw no slums. We saw no lack of quality education. And I said to myself, if these small countries in our world can solve these problems, certainly the United States with a national gross product this year of more than

\$700 billion can solve the problems so that nobody will have to live with poverty. We must see that still by the millions, we have many, many people perishing on the lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of prosperity. And so this reveals that we have a long, long way to go in the economic area.

Now I mentioned that we have made numerous strides in breaking down the barriers of legal segregation. And I would like to say that something else is happening that all people of goodwill must be concerned about. Massive resistance has given way in the South to a sophisticated kind of resistance embodied in tokenism. If we are to have a truly integrated society, it will never develop through tokenism. We get a few Negroes in formerly all-white schools and say we have integrated schools. We get a few Negroes in fairly good jobs in plants, and we begin to say we have equal job opportunities in plants. And then it goes right on down the line in other areas.

The fact is that this kind of tokenism is much more subtle and can be much more depressing to the victims of the tokenism than all-out resistance. And so we have a long, long way to go in dealing with this problem, but it is not only a Southern problem that we face, it is a national problem.

The ghetto in the North is not being dispersed; if anything, it is being intensified. Segregation in schools in the North is not decreasing; it is increasing. And so it means that there must be a national movement, a national coalition of conscience to solve a problem that pervades our nation. So it may be true that, figuratively speaking, Old Man Segregation is on his deathbed, but we must always realize that social systems have a great last-minute breathing power, and the guardians of the status quo are always on hand with their oxygen tents to keep the old order alive. And so segregation is still with us. We still have a long, long way to go before the problem is solved. May I say to you this afternoon that I am convinced that if democracy is to live, segregation must die.

Segregation is a cancer in the body politic which must be removed before our moral and democratic health can be realized. We don't have long to solve this problem. There is a bit of urgency about it. The shape of the world today no longer affords us the luxury of an anemic democracy. There is a revolt all over the world against colonialism, imperialism and racism. And all over the world people are saying racism and colonialism must go.

I've talked with leaders in Asia, Africa, South America and even Europe who said to me over and over again that if America does not solve the great problem of racial injustice, she can become a second-rate power in the world with no moral or political voice. And so the hour is late, and the crux of destiny is kicking out. We must act now before it is too late. But I would not like to leave you with the impression that we must solve this problem merely to appeal to Asian and African peoples. I would not like to leave you with the impression that we must solve this problem merely to meet the communist challenge, as important as that is.

In the final analysis, racial injustice must be uprooted from American society because it is morally wrong. We must solve this problem not merely because it is diplomatically expedient, but because it is morally compelling. We must solve this problem because it is sinful to segregate any of God's children and to trample over them with the iron feet of oppression. And so the challenge in the days ahead is to work passionately and unrelentingly for the solution to the problem and to go that additional distance necessary to make justice a reality for all people.

Now if we are to solve the problem, it is necessary to develop a massive action program to get at it on a continuing basis North and South. Now in order to develop the kind of action program that will really solve the problem, we must get rid of one or two myths that are constantly disseminated.

One is what I refer to as the myth of time. I'm sure you have heard this. It is a strange notion that there

is some miraculous quality in the very flow of time that tends to heal all ills. You've heard it from those who said to the Negro and his allies in the white community, "Just be nice and patient, and in 100 or 200 years the problem will work itself out." They contend that only time can solve the problem. It is my contention that there is an answer to that myth and that is that time is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively. And I am absolutely convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation, the extreme right in our nation, have often used time much more effectively than the forces of goodwill. We may have to repent in this generation not merely for vitriolic words and the violent actions of the bad people who bombed a church in Birmingham, Alabama, 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 time and persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God. Without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the primitive forces of social stagnation and irrational emotionalism. We must help time, and we must realize the time is always right to do right.

Now there is another myth that is constantly disseminated. It is the notion that legislation cannot solve the problems of racial injustice. Those who argue on the basis of this myth contend that you've got to change the heart. Well, as I said earlier this afternoon to many of my fellow clergymen here in Dallas, I'm with anybody who believes in changing the heart. I have nothing against changing the heart. I happen to be a preacher, and I am in the heart-changing business. And I preach Sunday after Sunday, week after week, about regeneration, conversion and the new birth. I believe in getting hearts changed.

And I believe also that it is true that if we are to solve the problem ultimately, the white person must see the Negro as his brother. And he must treat him right because it is natural and because the Negro is his brother and not merely because the law says it. If we are to solve the problem ultimately, every person must rise to the majestic heights of being obedient to the unenforceable. I recognize this.

But after saying this, I think we must see the other side and see the wrongness of the notion that legislation can't help. It may be true that you can't legislate integration, but you can legislate desegregation. It may be true that morality can't be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can restrain him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important also.

It may be true that the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless, and over and over again we see this. While the law may not change the hearts of men, it does change the habits of men. I can say to you that things are different all over the South as a result of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. I can say to you this afternoon that things are different all over the South as a result of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill.

And in Alabama, after the May primaries, I predict that at least three Negroes will be elected sheriff in the black belt counties of Alabama. Negroes will for the first time go to the state legislature of Alabama. Negroes will be mayors of cities and in other capacities, and the white elected officials in those areas will not feel they have to be racist and use racist campaign slogans in order to be elected.

All of this is as a result of the Negro vote, and that vote will do a great deal to make it possible for qualified Negroes to be elected. But it will also free many white political leaders who deep down in their hearts wanted to do the right thing. They have confronted the situation where Negroes could not vote, and so they went along with things as they were and never stood up against the evils that deep down in their hearts they wanted to stand up against. And so there is a need constantly for positive, forthright, creative legislation to solve the problem of racial injustice.

President Johnson in a few days will be presenting his Civil Rights package to Congress for this session, Martin Luther King Jr. 1966 SMU Speech

which will deal with the question of the administration of justice, proper administration of justice, and the old question of discrimination in housing, cutting off federal funds in any housing situation where there is any discrimination on the basis of race. This legislation will need the support not only of people of goodwill in the North. It will need the support of people of goodwill in the South. And so we must refute the myth of time and the myth that legislation cannot help in the solution of the problem.

Let me also say that if we are to go on in the days ahead, we must continue to challenge the remaining vestiges of segregation and discrimination with nonviolent, direct action. I know there are those who would say the days of demonstrations are over. I wish I could be as optimistic. As long as injustice is around, it will be necessary to bring that injustice to the surface. As long as you have consciences that will allow themselves to doze and go to sleep, it is necessary to do something to sear the conscious, to dramatize the issue, to call attention to it. My contention is that as we bring these things to the surface and deal with them, we must deal with them nonviolently. And we need the support of all people of goodwill as we develop a nonviolent assault on the evils of segregation and discrimination.

I would like to say a few words about this philosophy that we hear about, since it has been the undergirding philosophy of our whole movement. First, I'd like to say that nonviolence, I am convinced, is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in that struggle for freedom and human dignity. It 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 a quiet courage of accepting blows without retaliating. If he doesn't put you in jail, wonderful. Nobody with any sense loves to go to jail. But if he puts you in jail, you go in that jail, and transform it from a dungeon of shame into a haven of freedom and human dignity. Even if he tries to kill you, you develop the inner conviction that there are some things so precious, some things so eternally true, some things so right that they are worth dying for.

And if a man has not discovered something that he would die for, he isn't fit to live. The nonviolent method says that there is power in this approach precisely because it has a way of disarming the opponent and exposing his moral defenses.

Secondly, it is possible to work to secure moral ends through moral means. One of the great debates of history has been on the whole. I guess with the many philosophical differences I have with communism, one of the greatest is found right here. Communism says in the final analysis that any method is proper to bring about the goal of the classless society. This is where nonviolence would break with communism or any other system which argues that the end justifies the means. For we recognize that the end is pre-existent in the means. The means represents the ideal in the end in process. And in the long run of history, destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends.

And so if one is working for a just society, he should use just methods in bringing about that society. If one is working for the goal of an integrated society, then he must seek to work with integration as a fact as he moves toward that. This is why I've always insisted that in our demonstrations and in our work, it isn't enough to have Negroes participating, but it is necessary to have white persons participating. This is why on my staff of the Southern Leadership Conference — I have a staff of 200 and some people — some 50-60 are white persons because we are seeking to achieve by the very methods we use and the means, the very end we seek. And so the nonviolent method says that it is possible to seek to secure moral ends through moral means.

There's another thing about this method. When it is true to its nature, it says that it is possible to live true to the love effort. In other words, the love effort stands at the center. Now I want you to understand me here when I speak about love. People ask me all the time, what in the world are you talking about? You

certainly can't be telling us to love these people who are oppressing us and who are killing our children and who are bombing our churches. And I always have to stop and try to explain what I mean when I talk about love in this context.

I'm not talking about emotional bonds. I'm not talking about some sentimental or affectionate feeling. And I think it would be nonsense to urge oppressed people to love their violent oppressors in an affectionate sense.

Fortunately the Greek language comes to our aid in trying to describe the meaning of love in this context. There are three words in Greek for love. One is the word Eros. Eros is sort of an aesthetic love. Plato used to talk about it a great deal in his dialogs, the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. This comes to be a sort of romantic love. And in this sense we all know about Eros. We have experienced it and read about it in all the beauties of literature.

In a sense, what Poe was talking about was Eros when he was talking about his beautiful Annabel Lee with the love surrounded by the halo of eternity. And Shakespeare was talking about Eros when he said, "Love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds, / Or bends with the remover to remove / O no, it is an ever-fixed mark / That looks on tempests and is never shaken." You know, I can remember that because I used to quote it to my wife when we were courting. That was Eros.

And then the Greek language talks about Philia, which is a kind of intimate affection between personal friends. This is a very beautiful love. This is the kind of love that you have for the people you like. This is the kind of love you have for your roommate and those people that you get along with very well and that you go out with. This is Philia. This is friendship.

Then the Greek language came out with another word. This is the word Agape. Agape is more than romantic or aesthetic love. Agape is more than friendship. Agape is understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. Theologians would say that it is an overflowing love that is the love of God operating in the human heart. When one rises to love on this level, he loves every man not because he likes him, not because his ways appeal to him, but because God loves him, and he rises to the level of loving the person who does the evil deed by hating the deed the person does. I think this is what Jesus meant when he said to love your enemies. And I'm so happy he didn't say to like your enemies. I must confess that there are some people pretty difficult to like. But Jesus said love them, and love is greater than like. Love is understanding, creative goodwill for all men. When you stand up against the evil system and yet understand the perpetrator of that evil system.

You may be in Selma, Alabama, and you may have a sheriff by the name of Jim Clark, who calls you all kinds of names and inflicts upon you the most tragic brutality. And you just keep on marching and standing up for what is right. But as you look at Mr. Clark you know he's that way because somebody taught him that. You know he's that way because his culture has so patterned things that he's grown up thinking that he's superior and Negroes are inferior. You know that even his church didn't help him out to clarify his views too much on that problem. And so he ended up being taught something that he grew up believing.

And so you, out of love, stand up because you want to redeem him, and the object is never to annihilate your opponent but to convert him and bring him to that brighter day when he can stand up and see that all men are brothers. This is something of what the nonviolent method says. And so this is what we try to do. We haven't always been true to it, but we have tried. Some, out of anger, have strayed away. But by and large we've stayed with it.

Somehow we've lived with it at its best and been able to look into the face of our most violent opponent

and say we will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we will still love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws because non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good, so throw us in jail, and we will still love you. Threaten our children, and bomb our churches and our homes and, as difficult as it is, we will still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities at the midnight hour, and drag us out on some wayside road and beat us and leave us half dead, and we will still love you. But be assured we will wear you down with all the lashings that we suffer. One day we will win our freedom. 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.

This is what the nonviolent method says at its best. It has brought us a long, long way, and it will help those of us who have been on the oppressed end of the old order to go into the new order with the right attitude. Not with bitterness, not with the desire to retaliate, not with the desire to get even with those who inflicted injustice upon us all of these years, but with a desire to forgive and forget and move on to a moral balance. We will not seek to substitute one tyranny for another, thereby subverting justice. We will not seek to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage.

This is why I say that a doctrine of black supremacy is as dangerous as a doctrine of white supremacy. God is not interested merely in the freedom of black men and brown men and yellow men, but God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race and the creation of a society where all men will live together as brothers. And every man will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. And so that is the need to stand up, that is the need for all people of goodwill in this nation to become involved participants.

For all too long we have had silent onlookers, but now there must be more involved participants who solve this problem and get rid of this one huge wrong of our nation. There must be a kind of divine discontent.

You know there are certain technical words in every academic discipline which soon become stereotypes and clichés. Every academic discipline has its technical nomenclature. Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other word in psychology. It is the word maladjusted. It is the ring and cry of modern child psychology, and certainly we all want to avoid the maladjusted life. We all want to live a well-adjusted life in order to avoid the neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But I must honestly say there are some things in our nation and the world for which I am proud to be maladjusted and wish all men of goodwill would be maladjusted until the good society is realized.

I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to a religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few, leaving millions of people smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.

In a day when Sputniks and Explorers and Geminis are dashing through space, and guided missiles are causing highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence; it is either nonviolence or nonexistence. The alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to passionate and determined negotiated settlements of conflicts in the world, like Vietnam, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation, and our earthly habitat will be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine.

And so we need maladjusted men and women where these problems are concerned. It may well be that our whole world is in need of the formation of a new organization, the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment. Men and women who will be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos, who in the midst of the injustices of his day cried the words that echoed across the centuries, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half slave and half free. As maladjusted as that great Virginian Thomas Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery, could scratch words across the pages of history, words lifted to cosmic proportions, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." As maladjusted as Jesus Christ, who could say to the men and women around the Galilean hills, "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that spitefully use you." And through such maladjustment, we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

And so the plea facing us today is to move on that additional distance that we have to go with understanding, with a concern for brotherhood, with the removal of all prejudices, with an understanding that all of God's children are significant.

And I close with a personal faith, and that is the glowing faith in the future that I believe somehow we will solve this problem, however difficult, however much opposition we have. Our goal is freedom, and somehow our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. And I believe we are going to get to that goal of freedom 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 Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before Thomas Jefferson etched across the pages of history the words I just quoted, we were here. Before the beautiful words of "The Star-Spangled Banner" were written, we were here. And for more than two centuries our forebears 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. And I say to you this afternoon that if the inexpressible cruelties of slavery couldn't stop us, the opposition that we now face will surely fail.

We are 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 I can sing anew, "We shall overcome," and 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, "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne."

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind them unknown stands God within the shadows keeping watch above his own. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain the slab of stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discourse of our nation into a beautiful, sensitive brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children all over this nation, black men and white men, Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Gentiles, will be able to join hands and sing the words of the old Negro spiritual "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty we are free at last."

Thank you.