

“RACIAL JUSTICE AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE”

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Mr. Chairman, members of the faculty, and members of the student body at Chapman College, ladies and gentlemen. I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here this evening and to be a part of your lecture series. I certainly want to express my personal appreciation to the committee for inviting me. It's a considerate and most rewarding experience to have the opportunity of discussing with college students and interested citizens all across our nation one of the vital issues of our day, and I do count it a real privilege to be here with you tonight.

Now I would like to talk with you about the whole question of progress in the area of race relations and the struggle for racial justice and along with this I would like to discuss the role of nonviolent resistance, the whole philosophy of nonviolence as a part of this struggle for racial justice. There are three basic attitudes that can be taken toward the whole question of progress in the area of race relations. The first attitude that can be taken is that of extreme optimism. The extreme optimists in the area of race relations would contend that we have made tremendous strides in the struggle for racial justice. He would point proudly to the progress that has been made in the area of civil rights over the last few decades. From this he would conclude that the problem is just about solved now and that we can sit down comfortably by the wayside and wait on the doming of the inevitable.

The second position in the area of race relations would contend that we have made only minor strides. He would argue that the deep rumblings of discontent from the South, the presence of federal troops in Little Rock, Arkansas, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and the birth of White Citizens Councils are all indicative of the fact that we are going backwards instead of forwards and that we are creating many more problems that we are solving. And from this the extreme pessimist would conclude that there could be no real progress in the area of race relations.

Now it is interesting to notice that the extreme optimist and the extreme pessimist agree on at least one point. They both feel that we must sit down and do nothing in the area of race relations. The extreme optimist says do nothing because integration is inevitable. The extreme pessimist says do nothing because integration is impossible.

But there is a third position that can be taken, namely the realistic position. The realist in the area of race relations seeks to combine the truths of two opposites while avoiding the extremes of both. So he would agree with the optimist that we have come a long, long way. But he would seek to balance this by agreeing with the pessimist that we have a long, long way to go. And it is this realistic position that I

would like to use as a basis for our thinking together this evening, as I talk about the struggle for racial justice and the progress we have made.

Now let us notice first that we have come a long, long way. Indeed, the Negro himself has come a long, long way in re-evaluating his own intrinsic worth. Now in order to illustrate this a little history is necessary. You will remember that it was in the year of 1691 that the first Negro slaves landed on the shores of the nation. They were brought here from the shores 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, not a person to be respected. He was little more than a depersonalized cog in the vast plantation machine. The famous Dred Scott decision of 1857 will illustrate the status of the Negro during slavery. This decision said, in substance, that the Negro was not a citizen of the United States. He was merely property subject to the dictates of his owner. This was the attitude that prevailed. And as slavery continued it became necessary to give some justification for it. And so there were those who even misinterpreted and misused the Bible. In order to give justification for slavery, they argued that the Negro was inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. The Apostle Paul's dictum became a watchword: "Servant be obedient to your master." Then one brother had probably read the *Logic* of the great philosopher Aristotle and he decided to put his argument in the framework of an Aristotelian syllogism. In the syllogism Aristotle used to talk about the major premise, and the minor premise, and the conclusion. And so this man could sway all men are made in the image of God, this was his major premise. And 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 argument that prevailed using the syllogistic method to prove the inferiority of the Negro.

While living with the conditions of slavery and then, later, segregation, many Negroes lost faith in themselves. Many came to feel that perhaps they were inhuman, perhaps 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. Even his cultural life was 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 fundamentum. Not

the texture of his hair of the color of his skin, but his eternal dignity and worth. And so the Negro could now unconsciously cry out with eloquent force:

“Fleecy locks and dark 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 the ocean at a span,
I must be measured by my soul;
The mind is standard of the man.”

And with this new sense of dignity and this new sense of self-respect a new Negro came into being with a new determination to struggle, suffer, and sacrifice in order to make justice and freedom reality.

So in a real sense we have come a long, long way since 1619. Not only has the Negro come a long, long way in re-evaluating his own intrinsic worth, the whole nation has come a long, long way in extending frontiers of civil rights. And if we are true to the facts we must admit this. Fifty years ago, or even thirty years ago, a year hardly passed when numerous Negroes were not viciously lynched in the South by some vicious mob. But the day mentioned was about ceased. Twenty-five or thirty years ago most of the southern states prevented Negroes from becoming registered voters through the poll tax. The poll tax has now been eliminated in all but three states. There has been some progress in the whole area of voter registration and securing the ballot on the part of the Negroes. Far from what it ought to be, but we have seen some strides here. At the turn of the century, there were very few Negroes registered voters in the South. By 1948 their number had moved to seven hundred and fifty thousand. Today it stands at one million, four hundred thousand.

There has been some progress in the economic justice. So today the average Negro wage-earner makes ten times more than the average Negro wage-earner of twelve years ago. The national income of

the Negro is now twenty billion dollars a year, which is more than all of the exports of the United States of the national income of Canada.

Probably more than anything else we have seen, the walls of segregation gradually crumble in this day and in this generation. For years it looked like we would never get away from this system known as racial segregation. You will remember that this system was given legal and constitutional validity by a decision rendered in 1896, known as the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision. This decision was rendered by the United States Supreme Court and it established the doctrine of “separate but equal” as the law of the land. We all know what happened as the result of the Plessy doctrine. There was always a strict enforcement of the separate without the slightest intention to abide by the equal. And so the Negro ended up as a result of the Plessy doctrine being plunged into the abyss of exploitation where he experienced the bleakness of naked injustice. But then something happened. Something else happened. The Supreme Court of the nation rendered a new decision. It was rendered on May 17, 1954. This decision said, in substance, that the old Plessy doctrine must go, that separated facilities are inherently unequal, and that to segregate a child on basis of his race is to deny that child equal protection of the law. And a result of this decision we stand today on the threshold of the most creative and constructive period in the history of our nation in the area of race relations. To put it figuratively in Biblical language, we’ve broken loose from Egypt of slavery. We have moved through the wilderness of segregation. And now we stand on the border of the promised land of integration.

When this decision was rendered in 1954, seventeen states and the District of Columbia practiced absolute segregation in the public schools. But today most of these states have made some move toward compliance. Some of them have made only token moves. But all but three states have made some move toward compliance. The three states that are still holding out in active resistance are the states of South Carolina, Alabama, and the Great Sovereign State of Mississippi. These are the states that are still holding out. At least we can see that there has been some progress and so we have come a long, long way since 1896 when the Supreme Court of our nation rendered the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, establishing the doctrine of separate but equal as the law of the land.

Now this would be a marvelous place to end my talk tonight. First, it would mean making a short speech and this would be a magnificent accomplishment for a Baptist preacher. But secondly, it would mean that the problem is solved in the United States and in the South. And it would be a wonderful thing if every speaker in our nation could talk about this as a past problem. But you see if I stop at this point I

will merely be stating a fact and not telling the truth. You see a fact is merely the absence of contradiction but truth is the presence of coherence. Truth is the relatedness of facts.

Now it is a fact that we have come a long, long way, but it isn't the whole truth. You have to add the other side. And if I stopped at this point I would leave you the victims of a dangerous optimism. If I stopped at this point I would 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 but we have a long, long way to go before racial justice is a reality in our nation. Now we don't have to look very far to see this. We can only open our newspapers or we can turn on the television and we see and we hear facts that reveal to us that there are still ugly conditions existing in our nation.

It is true as I had said earlier that lynchings have about ceased, but other things are happening in the nation just as bad. There are still legislative halls of the South ringing loud with such words as interposition and nullification. There are still those forces on the lunatic fringe which will use any method to prevent integration from becoming a reality. Even physical violence is often used. And so we can see occasionally schools being bombed. We can see the homes of leaders being bombed, or the homes of individuals who merely have the desire to be free being burned. These conditions still exist which reveal that we have a long, long way to go.

I mentioned voter registration and the fact that we have made some strides here. Here again, we have a long, long way to go, North and South, before economic justice is a reality where the Negro is involved. Forty-two percent of the Negro families of the United States still earn less than two thousand dollars a year, while just sixteen percent of the white families of America earn less than two thousand dollars a year. Twenty percent of the Negro families of the United States earn less than one thousand dollars a year, while just six percent of the white families of the United States earn less than one thousand dollars a year. Eighty-eight percent of the Negro families of the United States still earn less than five thousand dollars a year, while just fifty-eight percent of the white families of the United States earn less than five thousand dollars a year. This reveals that in the area of economic justice we have a long, long way to go.

But even more in the area of finally breaking down the barriers of segregation, there is a great deal that must be done. Now I mentioned a few minutes ago, figuratively speaking, that Old Man Segregation is on his death bed. But history has proven that social systems have a great last minute breathing power

and the guardians of the status quo are always on hand with their oxygen tent to keep the old order alive and so segregation is still with us. We still confront it in its glaring and conspicuous forms in the South. And we still confront it in its hidden and subtle forms in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and all over the United States. But if democracy is to live, segregation must die. Segregation is still the cancer in the body politics, which must be removed before our democratic and moral health can be realized. This means that all persons of good will must work with determination to get rid of this evil system known as segregation and its inseparable twin known as racial discrimination.

The thing about it is that we don't have long to do it. Now I know there are people who are saying all over, slow up for a while. They're saying this to the Negroes who are involved in the freedom struggle, they're saying this to their allies in the white community. Slow up, you're pushing things too fast. Occasionally they will say adopt a policy of moderation. Where moderation means moving on towards the goal of justice with wise restraint and calm reasonableness, then moderation is a great virtue which all men of good will must seek to achieve during this tense period of transition. But if moderation means slowing up in the move for justice and capitulating to the undemocratic practices of the guardians of the deadening status quo, then moderation is a tragic vice which all men of good will must condemn.

The fact is that we can't afford to slow up. We have our self-respect to maintain. But even more than that, because of our love for America, because of our love for democracy, we can't afford to slow up. There are approximately two billion, eight hundred million people in the world. The vast majority of these people live in Asia and Africa. For years, most of them have been dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated by some foreign power. Today they are gaining their independence. The wind of change is blowing all over Asia and Africa.

Twenty-five years ago there were only three independent countries in the whole of Africa. I remember in 1957 when Mrs. King and I journeyed to what was then known as the Gold Coast, to attend the independence celebration. It became the new nation of Ghana. We were all happy to know that there were seven independent countries in Africa. When I returned to Nigeria just a few months ago to attend the inauguration of Governor-General Azikiwe, I was so happy to think about the fact that within three years since I had been in Africa, fifteen new countries had come into being and today there were twenty-eight, or rather twenty-nine, new independent countries in Africa with the birth of the nation of Tanganyika just a day or so ago.

So that is happening in Africa. It is happening in Asia. And as the countries rise up, they are saying in no uncertain terms that racism and colonialism must go. The hour is late. The clock of destiny is ticking out and we must act now in the United States before it is too late.

Now I hasten to say that we must solve this problem not merely to appeal to Asian and African peoples, and not merely to meet the communist challenge. In the final analysis racial discrimination must be uprooted in American society because it is morally wrong. We must solve the problem of segregation because it stands against all the noble precepts of the Judeo-Christian heritage. We must solve this problem because segregation substitutes an I-it relationship for the I-thou relationship and relegates persons to the status of things. In the further analysis this problem must be solved not merely because it is diplomatically expedient but because it is morally compelling.

Now if the problem is to be solved, if we are to continue in the days ahead in order to make racial justice a reality, many forces must work together. Time will not permit me to mention all of the forces, but I would like to mention at least two.

First, if this problem is to be solved we must have powerful, forthright and vigorous leadership from the federal government. Now over the last two years we have had leadership mainly from the judicial branch of the government. Both the legislative and executive branches of the government have been all too silent, apathetic and sometimes hypocritical. If this problem is to be solved there is need for vigorous action on the part of all branches of government. There is need for new civil rights legislation. There is need for strong executive action from the president, and new executive orders in order to end certain discriminatory conditions that continue to exist. There is need for the continuation of judicial decrees which will clarify the constitution and make it clear that segregation cannot stand on the basis of the fourteenth amendment of our constitution.

Now in order to get this vigorous action we will have to get rid of two myths that tend to get around in our society both North and South. First, there is the myth of time. And these are the people who argue that only time can solve this problem which we face in our nation. They argue that you can't solve it through judicial decrees, or through executive orders, or through legislative acts. It will come through time, the slow process of time itself. Well, the only answer I have for this myth is that time is neutral. It can be used either destructively or constructively. And I think at points the people of ill-will and the reactionaries have used time much more efficiently and much more powerfully than the persons of

goodwill. It may well be that we will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic, loud words of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Somewhere along the way we must come to see that human progress never depends again on the goals of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and 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 insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social stagnation. We must help time, and the time is always right to do right.

Now the other argument, or the other myth, is what I call for lack of a better phrase, educational determinism. It is their idea that only education can solve this problem. Now those people who believe this at least give us something of a half-truth because it is true that education must play a great role in dealing with this problem. But it is not education alone. It is not either legislation or education. It is both education and legislation. The individuals who argue that only education can solve this problem can never see the role of legislation, or the role of judicial decrees or what have you.

Now it may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me and I think that is pretty important also. So that maybe the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. And this is what we seek to do through legislation in many instances. Religion and education will have to change bad internal attitude, but through legislation we can control the external effects of bad internal attitudes. And so there is a role for legislation, judicial decrees, and executive orders.

Let me give one example of where the federal government can solve a problem that is one of the tragic problems in our nation, all over America, not just in the South but all over—namely the housing problem. Housing discrimination is a notorious reality in every section of our country and I contend that the President of the United States could almost end housing discrimination overnight through the stroke of pen. It is backed up by the financing of the federal government, either through FHA, PHA, urban renewal or veteran's loans. The President of the United States could make it palpably clear that there can be no discrimination where federal loans are involved or where the federal government is backing up a particular loan. And this would bring an end to a great deal of the discrimination that we find in the area of housing. I talked with President Kennedy about this matter an hour about three weeks ago and I was very encouraged when I left and I think there is a probability that this kind of executive order may be issued in the not too distant future. And I think the President is also considering going on record calling for strong civil rights legislation in the next session of congress. And I think this is very important

because it reveals the need and the fact that there are some who recognize that there must be vigorous, forthright and determined action from the federal government.

Now there may be other agencies I could mention, the need for vigorous leadership from white liberals all over the nation, from moderates in the white South from organized religion. But time will not permit me to go into all of these. But I would like to mention the fact that if justice is to become a reality in the United States where the Negro is involved, he must take the primary responsibility for making it so; for the Negro cannot sit idly by and feel that others must be more concerned about his citizenship rights than he is himself...and so that he must work passionately and unrelentingly to make first-class citizenship a reality. And fortunately the movement which is taking the United States today in the movement which is taking place in the South, in the Negro community, is a movement which recognizes just this, and that is the determined effort on the part of the Negro to achieve freedom and human dignity. He is working through legislation, he is working through the courts, be even more he is working now through the realm of nonviolent direct action. And this is now becoming the major thrust of the Negro in the struggle in the South.

Now someone is asking, I'm sure, what do you mean when you talk about nonviolent direct action? What does this philosophy of nonviolence mean? How can it be used in order to achieve racial justice? Let me say first, that this philosophy says that the means that are used must be as pure as the end. And this is very important. I would say that this is the first basic principle of the philosophy of nonviolence, that the means must be as pure as the end.

Now in the struggles that have taken place in history and in the long philosophical debate over ends and means, there have been those who concluded that ends somehow could justify the means, even if the means were immoral, and even if the means were destructive. Even communism moves out on this idea. And so we can read Lenin saying that any means – lying, deceit, violence or any means – are justifiable in bringing about the end of a classless society. This is where nonviolence breaks with communism and any other system which would argue that the end justifies the means. For in the long run of history, destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends because the end is still distant in the means. So the philosophy of nonviolence puts it at the forefront that the means must be as pure as the ends. So this is a method that seeks to secure moral ends through moral means.

There is another point in the method that is very important. It avoids consistently injuring another. It is a way of consistently avoiding inflicting injury upon another. Now it avoids inflicting physical violence; that is external physical violence. So it has an external aspect. And so you read of our movement and you hear about this movement saying if you are hit, do not hit back. If you are faced with physical violence, do not return physical violence, so that is an external aspect. It is a refusal to inflict injury upon another, even in a retaliatory sense. It is the refusal to use physical violence at any point. But it is also a refusal to engage in any kind of violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot the opponent you refuse to hate the opponent.

Now People ask me all the time what in the world do you mean when you say love these people who are trying to destroy you, these people who are trying to block every progressive move toward an integrated society, these people who are using physical violence, who are threatening their children, who are bombing their homes? What do you mean when you say love them? How can you love such people? And I always have to pause and try to give the meaning of love in this context. Interestingly enough the Greek language comes to our aid at this point. There are three words in the Greek language for love. One is the word *eros*. Eros is a sort of aesthetic love, a journey of the soul to the realm of the divine. Plato talks about it a great deal in his *Dialogues*. It comes off to be sort of a romantic love. This is the feeling of *eros*. We've all read about *eros* in the beauties of literature and we've experienced it in our own lives. In a sense Edgar Allen Poe was talking about *eros* when he talks about his beautiful Anna Belle Lee with the love surrounded by the halo of eternity. In a sense Shakespeare was talking about it too 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;
It is the star to every wandering bark...”

You know I can remember that because I use to quote it to my wife when we were courting – that's *eros*.

The Greek language talks about *philia* which is another level of love in the sense it is a sort of reciprocal love, a love of intimate affection between personal friends – that you love people you like. It is friendship.

Then the Greek language talks about agape. Agape is more than a romantic or aesthetic love. Agape is more than friendship. Agape is understanding the creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. It is a spontaneous overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. Still others would say it is the love of God operating in the human heart. And so when we rise to love on this level we love men not because we like them, not because our souls are pure, but we love every man because God loves us. And we rise to the level of loving the person who does an evil deed while hating the deed that the person does.

And this is at the center of the philosophy of nonviolence. The love ethic. So you struggle to defeat the unjust system and yet at the same time an active attitude of goodwill and love for the perpetrators of the unjust system. And this is what I have said so often that I am in the South and in the United States, not to defeat the segregationist, but to defeat segregation. The aim is not to annihilate the person but to convert him, realizing that he has often been misled and he has often been taught all of these things that he believes.

And so this is a method that provides the individual with a means of struggling with determination, with courage, with vigor to get rid of the evil system and, yet, at the same time, maintain an attitude of love and understanding goodwill for those who know not what they do.

There is another thing about this method. It says that suffering can become a powerful social force and a powerful force for social transformation. Now violence also says suffering can become a powerful social force but there is this distinction. Those who advocate violence or those who advocate war, for instance, will see suffering as a powerful social force by inflicting something upon another. Nonviolence sees suffering as a powerful social force by allowing suffering to be inflicted upon yourself. It is self-suffering. It is not inflicting suffering on another, but a willingness to accept suffering with the feeling that unearned suffering is redemptive. And again this has always stood at the center of any nonviolent movement.

And so those who believe firmly in the way of nonviolence can stand before an unjust opponent, stand before an opponent who will use violence and say we will meet your capacity to inflict suffering by 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 noncooperation with evil is as much as a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. And so, put us in jail and we will still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children and we will still love you. Send your hooded propaganda agents around the country to make an appeal that we are not fit morally, culturally, or otherwise for integration and we will still love you. Send your perpetrators of violence into our communities at midnight hours 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 that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer and one day we will win our freedom. But not only will we win freedom for ourselves, but we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the process, and our victory will be double victory.

This is the meaning of the method of nonviolence and this is the power of nonviolence. It has a way of disarming the opponent. It exposes his moral defenses and weakens his morale and at the same time it works on his conscience. Now this solution to the problem or this method is not without successful precedent. It was used in a magnificent manner by Mohandas K. Gandhi who freed his people from the domination and the exploitation inflicted upon them for years. He used only the weapons of non-injury, soul force, moral principles and courage. And this method had also been used in a marvelous manner by hundreds and thousands of students in our own nation. They have taken our deep groans and passionate yearning for freedom and filtered them in their own souls and fashioned them into a courageous protest which is an epic known all over our nation. For all of these months they have moved in a uniquely meaningful orbit imparting light and heat to distant satellites. And as a result of their nonviolent, disciplined, yet courageous actions, they have been able to bring about integration at lunch counters in more than one hundred and fifty cities in the South. I submit that this is nothing less than revolutionary.

This method has also been used in a most constructive way in the Freedom Rides. This movement came into being to reveal that segregation is still the Negro's burden and America's shame. Many marvelous things have happened as a result of the Freedom Rides. Most of the cities of the South just two months ago had segregated facilities at bus terminals, now have integrated facilities. And only a few scattered communities in Mississippi and Alabama are still holding out, holding out in resistance, but by and large, communities all over the South have integrated their facilities and segregation is about dead in public transportation. And I'm convinced that the I.C.C. ruling which came into being and which took effect on the first of November came because of the pressure and power of the Freedom Rides.

And so this method of nonviolent resistance is a powerful method. It is a method which does something to transform the social situation and it is a method which does something to transform the individuals who will commit themselves to it. And so it will cause the Negro to go into the new age in America with a proper attitude. He will not seek to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage, thus subverting justice. He will not seek to substitute one tyranny for another. He will realize that black supremacy is as dangerous as white supremacy, and that 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 the worth of human personality.

And so this is the challenge. And as we think in terms of the additional distance ahead, we think in terms of the fact that we have a long, long way to go. Men and women of goodwill must rise up, work nonviolently with courage to destroy all of the remains of segregation and discrimination. This problem will not be solved until enough people who come to realize that it is morally wrong to practice discrimination and segregation against the individual on the basis of race.

And this problem must be solved all over the United States as I have implied all along. It is not just a sectional problem, it is a national problem. It is one thing to rise up with righteous indignation when a Negro is lynched in Mississippi, or when a bus is burned in Anniston, Alabama with Freedom Riders. The white people of goodwill must rise up with as much righteous indignation when a Negro cannot live in their neighborhood simply because he is a Negro, when a Negro cannot get a particular job or position in his firm simply because of the color of his skin, when a Negro cannot join a particular fraternity or sorority, or a particular academic society, because he happens to be a Negro. In other words, this problem will not be solved until there is something of a divine discontent invading our nation.

There are certain technical words in the vocabulary of 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 modern psychology. It is the word "maladjusted." This word has the ring and cry of modern child psychology. We certainly do all want to live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities.

As I come to the conclusion of my lecture, may I say to you this evening that there are some things for which I am proud to be maladjusted in our social order, and I call upon all men of goodwill to be

maladjusted to these things until the good society is realized. I never intend to adjust myself to the evils of segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few.

I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. And in a day when Sputnik and Explorers are dashing through outer space and guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death through the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. It is no longer the choice of violence or nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or non-existence. The alternative to the disarmament, the alternative to suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening of the United Nations and setting up a world police force and thereby disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation. I never intend to become adjusted to the madness of militarism and it may well be that salvation lies in the hands of the maladjusted and so that something, saying to all of us, let us be maladjusted.

As maladjusted as the Prophet Amos who in the midst of the injustices of his day could cry out in words that echo across the centuries, "Let justice run down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

As maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln who had the vision to see that this nation could not survive half-slave and half-free.

As maladjusted as Thomas Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery, could cry out in words of mystic and 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 among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

As maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who could say "Love your enemy. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that spitefully use you."

I am convinced that 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. This will be the great day of America. This will be the day when the American dream is realized. Certainly we must have faith in the future. Sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes it seems that racial

justice will never become a reality. But somehow those who are working with determination to make it a reality must realize that in the process and in the struggle for that which is right, we have a cosmic companionship. The arc of a moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

There is something in this universe that justified Carlyle in saying, “No lie can live forever.”

There is something in this universe that justified William Cullen Bryant in saying, “Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again.”

There is something in the very structure of the cosmos that justified James Russell Lowell in saying, “Truth forever on the scaffold; wrong forever on the throne – yet that scaffold sways the future.”

And so with this faith in the future and with this determination, I am convinced that we will be able to go the additional distance to make justice a reality. And this will be 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 all over this nation and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual,

“Free at last, free at last,
Thank God Almighty, we’re free at last.”

Thank you.