

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Monmouth College
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Thank you very kindly, Dr. Van Note. Members of the faculty and members of the student body of Monmouth College, ladies and gentlemen, I need not pause to say how very delighted and honored I am to be here and to have the privilege of being a part of your very significant lecture series.

I guess I'm happy to be here for several reasons. One of them is that I got a flight along with my assistant Reverend Lee from New York to Red Bank, a chartered plane, it's a rather small plane, and in spite of the clearness of this day, it was very turbulent in the air, a very bumpy flight. And whenever I get on these flights that are rather turbulent, I'm always happy to get on the ground. I don't want to give you the impression that I don't have faith in God in the air; it's simply that I've had more experience with Him on the ground. But in all seriousness, it is a great pleasure to be here.

I always consider it a rich and rewarding experience to 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 concerned friends of goodwill over this nation and over the world. So, I want to thank you for inviting me and for giving me this opportunity, and I certainly want to thank the president for these very kind and gracious words of introduction.

I would like to use as the subject for my talk this morning "The Future of Integration." And that is a desperate and even poignant question on the lips of thousands and millions of people all over our nation and all over the world. I get it frequently; I get it almost every time I talk to reporters. It is a question of whether we are making any real progress in the area of race relations. I always try to answer that question very realistically by saying on the one hand that we have made some significant strides in race relations but that we still have much to do and that there are many problems that are unsolved.

And, so, on the one hand, we have come a long, long way; but on the other hand, we must honestly face the fact that we still have a long, long way to go before the problem of racial injustice is solved. And, so, as I think with you this morning on the question of the future of integration, I would like to use this thesis as the basis of our thinking together: we've come a long, long way but we still have a long, long way to go.

I'd like to begin by dealing with the fact that we've come a long, long way. I think the first thing that I should mention at this point is that the Negro himself has come a long, long way in reevaluating his own intrinsic worth. Now, in order to illustrate this, a little 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. And 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 merely a thing to be used, not a person to be respected. The famous Dred Scott Decision of 1857 well-illustrated the status of the Negro during slavery. For in this decision, the Supreme Court of the United States 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. And 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 human beings cannot continue to do wrong without eventually reaching out for some thin rationalization to clothe an obvious wrong in the beautiful garments of righteousness.

And this is exactly what happened. Even religion and the Bible were used, or I should say misused, in order to justify the patterns of the status quo and in order to justify the prejudices that many people had. And, so, it was argued from some pulpits 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, "Servants, be obedient to your Master."

And then, one brother had probably read the logic of the great philosopher Aristotle. As you know, Aristotle did a great deal to bring into being what we now know as formal logic in philosophy. In formal logic you have syllogism which has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. And 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 made in the image of God" 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 reasoning that prevailed.

Living with the conditions of slavery and then later segregation, many Negroes lost faith in themselves. Many came to feel that, perhaps, they were less than human. 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 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 reevaluate themselves and 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.

He came to see that the basic thing about a man is not his specificity but his fundamentum; not the texture of his hair, or the color of his skin, but his eternal dignity and worth. And so the Negro could 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. If I were 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 the standard of the man."

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, to suffer, and sacrifice in order to be free. So in a real sense, we've come a long, long way since 1619.

But not only has the Negro come a long, long way in reevaluating his own intrinsic worth; if we are true to the facts, we must say that the whole nation has made strides in extending the frontiers of democracy and civil rights. I could point out many things at this point, but probably the most glaring expression of this is the fact that in our day, and in our generation, we have seen the demise of legal, of enforced segregation.

We all know the long legal history of the system of racial segregation. It had its legal beginning in 1896 when the Supreme Court of the 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. And, we all know what happened as a result of the old 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 bleakness of nagging injustice.

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

Then, a year later, Negroes by the thousands started the mass protest on a nonviolent level. This was the Montgomery bus boycott, which ended up in integrating buses all across the South. In 1957 came the first civil rights bill. Then, in 1964, came into being a very comprehensive civil rights bill with 10 titles. In 1965, after the Selma, Alabama movement, the voting rights bill came into being to rectify the long years of denial and instill the right to vote in the Negro community in the South.

All of these steps represented significant progress, significant strides. They revealed to us that we've come a long, long way. To put it figuratively in Biblical language, we've broken loose from the Egypt of slavery. We've moved through the wilderness of legal segregation and now we stand on the border of the Promised Land of integration. We've come a long, long way since 1896.

Now, this would be a marvelous place for me to end my speech this morning. First, it would mean making a relatively short speech, and that would be a magnificent accomplishment for a Baptist preacher. But secondly, it would mean that the problem is about solved now. You know it would be a wonderful thing if speakers all over our country could talk about this problem as a problem that used to exist but that no longer has existence. But, if I stop at this point, I would merely be stating a fact and not telling the truth. You know a fact is merely the absence of contradiction, but truth is the presence of coherence. Truth is the relatedness of facts.

Now, it's a fact that we've come a long, long way but it isn't the whole truth. And I'm afraid if I stop at this point, I will leave you the victims of a dangerous optimism. If I stop here, I will send us away the victims of an illusion wrapped in superficiality. So, in order to tell the truth, it is necessary to move on and not only talk about the fact that we've come a long, long way but to make it palpably clear that we still have a long, long way to go before the ideal of integration is a reality.

Now, I don't have to point out too much here. We need only open our newspapers every day and turn on our televisions and look around our communities. There's something every day to remind us that we are far from the Promised Land in the area of civil rights. We still see tragic violence occurring. In some states, for instance, the murder of Negroes and white civil rights workers is still a popular pastime.

Last year alone, more than 40 persons were killed in Alabama and Mississippi, and not a single one has been convicted. In the last 18 months, some 57 churches, Negro churches, have been burned to the ground in the state of Mississippi. Nothing has been done about it. It

seems that they have a new motto in Mississippi: not “attend the church of your choice,” but “burn the church of your choice.” How tragic this is.

In Grenada, Mississippi, where my organization is working at the present time, Negro children find themselves with the opportunity of an integrated, quality education. And on the first day of going to the previously all-white school, what do they confront? They find grown men beating little children with chains, with clubs, with sticks. All of this reminds us that we still have a long, long way to go.

But not only do we have the violence in a physical sense. Not only do we still have the lynchings in a physical sense. There is another kind of lynching that is just as brutal, just as detrimental, just as injurious to the personality, and that is to lynch one spiritually. By the thousands and the millions, Negroes all over the United States are still being lynched psychologically and spiritually.

Turn to the inner city, we find the Negro still living in dilapidated, deteriorating housing conditions. In fact, more than 40 percent of the Negro families of our country live in substandard housing units. They don't have the privilege of having wall-to-wall carpet. It ends up that they live with wall-to-wall rats and roaches in so many instances. This is a day-to-day fact of life in so many areas and in all of our major cities.

Then there is the problem of de facto segregation in the public schools. This is true in almost every city. Our organization has been working in Chicago over the last few months. Here's the second largest city in the United States. Ninety percent of the Negro students of Chicago attend school with more than 90 percent students of their own race, which means that the schools are more than 90 percent segregated.

More money is spent per pupil on suburban schools and on predominantly white schools than on schools in the Negro ghetto. So, every year all over this country, Negro students are finishing high school reading at a sixth-grade level, not because they are dumb, not because they don't have the native intelligence, but because the schools are overcrowded which they attend, substandard, devoid of quality. Because of these conditions, the real potential never comes into actuality. And this, again, is a fact of life in all of our major cities.

Then, there is the other problem, which is probably the most serious confronting the Negro community, and that is the economic problem. I would remind you this morning the vast majority of Negroes in the United States find themselves perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. The situation is not getting better. In fact, it is getting worse.

Twenty-five years ago, the unemployment rate between Negroes and whites was about the same. Today, two Negroes are unemployed to every one white. The unemployment rate of the nation as a whole is about four percent, but when you come to the Negro community it is about 12 and sometimes 14 percent. This means that the Negro is facing a major depression in his everyday life. If the unemployment rate of the whole nation was anywhere near the

unemployment rate in the Negro community, our nation would be facing a tragic depression more staggering than the depression of the '30s.

But not only do we find thousands and millions of Negroes walking the streets every day in search for jobs that do not exist, it's a little-known fact that most of the poverty-stricken Negroes in our country are working every day, but their wages are so low that they cannot purchase the basic necessities of life.

So it's not only unemployment that we face as a people, but it is underemployment, facing problems day-in and day-out of low, inadequate wages. And all of these things add up to misery and despair in so many instances. And we can readily see the social problems created by this kind of poverty. We can readily see the conditions that emerge as a result of this.

And it is an easy thing for people to look out and begin to say the school shouldn't be integrated or housing shouldn't be integrated because, if we integrate, this will pull the white race back a generation. You've heard all of these arguments. And then people will go on to say, you know, the Negro is a criminal. He has the highest crime rate in any city. And the arguments go on ad infinitum. But the individuals who project these arguments never go on to say that if there are lagging standards in the Negro community, they lag because of segregation and discrimination.

Criminal responses are environmental and not racial. And the fact is that poverty, social isolation, economic deprivation breed crime whatever the racial group may be and it is a tortuous logic to use the tragic results of segregation as an argument for the continuation of it. It is necessary to get back to the causal source. There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel that they have no stake in it. There's nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in it who feel that they have nothing to lose.

These are the people who will riot. These are the people who will engage in misguided, unfortunate actions. And this is exactly what happens in these tragic moments that we've experienced over the last two or three years with riots taking place across the nation. Certainly, we must condemn riots with all of our might. The answer to the race problem cannot be found in Molotov cocktails, bricks and bottles. And I have been strong in my condemnation of riots and I will continue to be. But on the other hand, we must be as strong in condemning the conditions which people live under every day that cause them to feel so desperate, so frustrated, so bitter, so disappointed, so lacking in attention that they engage in this unfortunate, misguided action.

A riot in the final analysis is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It is, as I said a few minutes ago, America's failed to hear that the economic plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the rising expectations of improvement have not been met. It has failed to see that large segments of white society are much more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity.

Our summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. As long as justice is delayed, as long as dreams are deferred, as long as hopes are blasted, we can have this kind of social disruption. And, so, it is necessary to get rid of the conditions which create the despair, the conditions which create the anger that we find in so many instances.

Now I would like to mention some of the things that must be done in order to go this additional distance. If we are going to have a truly integrated society, there are some things that must be done in a very positive way and I would like to mention some of these things that are so necessary and so vital at this point.

Now, first it is necessary for the nation as a whole to develop a massive action program if the problem in human relations is to be solved. I say a massive action program because the problem isn't going to be solved with token programs. The problem isn't going to be solved with surface programs. There must be massive action programs to make all the structural changes necessary.

For after all, our nation has the resources. Our nation has the know-how. The question is whether we have the will.

I believe firmly that \$10 billion a year over the next 10 years could bring an end to slums, could bring an end to the poverty that we face in our nation, and that isn't too much to ask. We are spending \$800 a second, \$2 billion a month, \$24 billion a year, in Vietnam. It will go up to \$35 billion in a few months. It seems to me that if a nation can spend that much money on a war in Vietnam and it can spend \$20 billion to put a man on the moon, it can spend billions of dollars to place God's children on their own two feet here on earth. The challenge is the question of whether we have the will.

It seems at times that we are more concerned about the size of the national gross product rather than about how many people benefit from it. It seems at times that we are more concerned about winning the war in Vietnam than we are about winning the war against poverty here at home. And so my contention is that a massive action program is necessary. It will take billions of dollars, and it is not too much to ask if we think of the fact that our nation this year has a national gross product of some \$730 billion, the richest nation in the world. So that action program must get under way if the problem is to be solved.

Now, we've got to get rid of one or two myths that are constantly disseminated around the nation if we are going to develop this action program. One myth is what I refer to as the myth of time. It is the notion that only time can solve the problems which we face in civil rights. I've heard this argument so often. Sometimes it comes from very sincere people, and they will say to the Negro and his allies in the white community, "just be nice and just be patient and just continue to pray and in a hundred or two hundred years the problem will work itself out."

Well, there is an answer to that myth and that is that time is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively. And I submit to you this morning that in many instances I am

convinced that the forces of ill will in our nation have used time much more constructively, or effectively I should say, than the forces of good will.

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 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. And, so, we must help time and the time has come for good people to stand up.

We hear a great deal these days over the last few months about the white backlash and I guess there is a white backlash. I prefer to call it a white front lash because what I see now is something coming out in the open that was probably already there, latent hostilities, latent prejudice. And unfortunately, we still have hovering over our nation a tragic doctrine of white supremacy and this makes for the racism all around. But the seeds for this backlash were planted somewhere years ago and so often the good people remain silent.

Edmund Burke said on one occasion that when bad men combine, good men must unite. And this is the challenge facing America. When bad men plot, good men must plan. When bad men bomb and burn, good men must build and bind. When bad men shout words of hatred, good men must unite and proclaim the glories of love. When bad men seek to preserve a deadening status quo, good men must unite to bring about the birth of justice.

And this is the great challenge. We must not allow this to become a day of the bigots; we must not allow this to become a day for the rabble. And this is what is happening. I saw it happen right in the state of Georgia, where I live, the other day. The people of the state of Georgia elected as the democratic standard bearer an outright racist, a man who's demonstrated that he is a psychopath, a man who will take axe handles and guns and seek to overthrow the government literally by refusing to comply with the Civil Rights Bill. This portends tragic days ahead if good people will not unite and see over our nation that this kind of thing cannot happen. So, the challenge is to use time effectively and for good people to unite to make justice a reality.

Now, the other myth that is constantly disseminated is the notion that legislation can't do anything to solve the problem. Now, we've heard this argument. It is the argument that you've got to change the heart and you can't change the heart through legislation. Well, certainly, if we're going to have an integrated society, hearts must be changed, and I would be the first to agree with that. But we must see the other side.

It may be true that integration cannot be legislated but you can legislate desegregation. It may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the law can't change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true 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 hearts of men, but it does

change the habits of men. And once you change the habits of men, pretty soon the attitudes will begin to be changed.

And there is a need for civil rights legislation. It is tragic indeed that the Congress of our nation failed to pass the Civil Rights Bill just a few weeks ago. That bill was dealing with two basic things: on the one hand administration of justice, and on the other hand, open housing. And there is no more critical problem facing our nation than the housing problem.

If white persons of our country cannot learn to live with Negroes, and refuse to learn, we are in for social chaos. There is no more dangerous trend than the constant building up of predominantly Negro central cities ringed by white suburbs. This is only inviting social disaster. And, so, the housing problem is a serious one and nowhere in this nation must we again tolerate housing discrimination because it is basic for the integration that we must have in our society.

And another thing that we must do if we are going to have an integrated society is to realize that our destinies are tied together. The Negro must realize this and the white man must realize this, that we are tied in a single garment of destiny. In a real sense, there can be no failure to face this because the failure to face it is only inviting again the kind of disaster that I spoke of earlier.

We've heard a lot of talk over the last few months of black power, and we've started hearing talk of white power. But I don't talk about black power or white power. I would prefer to believe in a kind of striped power, where black and white together, we work to achieve the legitimate power that all of God's children must have to function in life. The fact is that there is no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not intersect white routes. There is no white path to power and fulfillment, short of chaos, that does not share that power with black aspirations for freedom and human dignity.

What we must come to see is that we are tied together and every Negro is a little white and every white person is a little Negro. All of our music, our language, our material prosperity, even our foods, are an amalgam of black and white. So, the Negro needs the white man to save him from his fears. The white man needs the Negro to save him from his guilt. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. John Donne was right: "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." Then, 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."

This is true in America. No racial group is an island entire of itself. We are all tied together, and when there is injustice, in any race, it diminishes all people in this country. And, so, this is the challenge. If we are to go on in the days ahead, if we are to solve these problems, there must be a kind of divine discontent all around.

There are certain technical words in every academic discipline that seem to become clichés and stereotypes. Modern psychology has a word that is probably used more than any other

word in psychology. It is the word "maladjusted." Certainly, we all want to achieve the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic and schizophrenic personalities. But I must honestly say to you, my friends, that there are some things in our country and some things in the world to which I'm proud to be maladjusted, to which I call upon all people of good will to be maladjusted until the good society is realized.

I must honestly say that I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to adjust myself to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. But in a day when Sputniks and Geminis 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 a choice between violence and non-violence. It is either nonviolence or non-existence. 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 will be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not imagine.

Maybe there's need in our world for the formation of a new organization and I would like to join it, 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, could cry out in words that echo across the centuries, "Let justice roll 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-free and half-slave. As maladjusted as Woodrow Wilson, who lived right here and had the vision to see that there had to be a League of Nations. As maladjusted as Thomas Jefferson who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery could scratch across the pages of history words lifted to cosmic proportions, "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." As maladjusted as Jesus Christ, who could cry out, "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword." 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.

May I say in conclusion, that in spite of the tensions of this moment, in spite of the setbacks that I see all around, in spite of the disappointments that I face, the frustrating moments that I've seen over the last few months, in spite of the confusion all around, I still have faith in the future and I can still sing, "We shall overcome." Our goal is freedom. I believe we are going to get there because in spite of the slowness of our nation to respond, the ultimate goal of America is freedom.

Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. Before the Pilgrim fathers landed in Plymouth, we were here. Before the words of Jefferson were written that I just quoted, we were here. Before the majestic words of "The Star Spangled Banner" were written, we were here. For more than two centuries, our forbearers worked 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 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. We are going to achieve justice because Carlyle is right: "No lie can live forever." We are going to achieve it because William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth crushed to Earth will rise again." We are going to achieve it because James Russell Lowell is right: "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet, that scaffold sways the future."

And so, 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 and we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, all over America 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."

Thank you.