

Address delivered by

THE REVEREND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., Ph.D.

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at St. Paul's Church, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

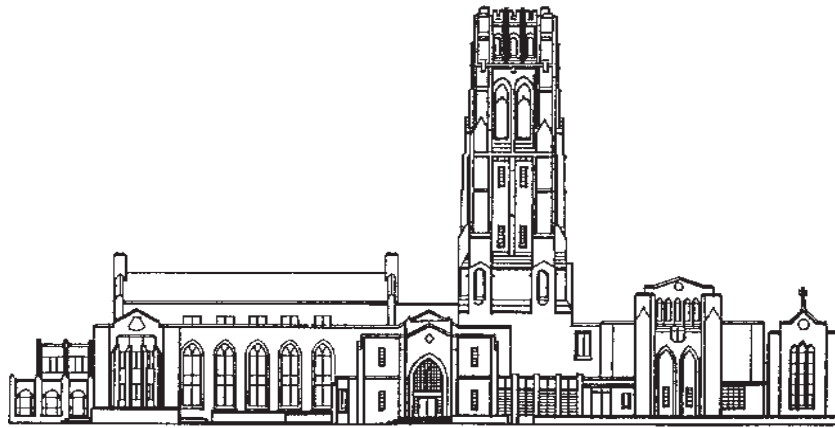
THE RIGHT REVEREND BEVERLEY D. TUCKER'S INTRODUCTION

If I were asked to select the two great Christian leaders of this year, I would unhesitatingly select these two: Pope John XXIII and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

It may seem strange to mention these two great men together, because the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestants have been separated for 400 years. Pope John has accomplished a great deal toward lifting the iron curtain which has separated Christian people from one another. The Second Vatican Council has accomplished much to open communications between these once-divided groups.

Our speaker today, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., is lifting another iron curtain. He is dedicating his ministry to lifting the curtain that divides two segments of our population that our country may be one. He is performing his mission with courage, yet with great Christian humility. Against the violence perpetrated upon his people he is not retaliating with violence, but praying that God will bless his persecutors and remove the barriers of suffering and segregation. It is a great honor to me to present the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

(Bishop Tucker was the Sixth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, 1938 - 1952.)



Bishop Tucker, the Reverend Mr. McCracken, ladies and gentlemen:

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be in Cleveland this afternoon and to have the privilege of seeing you and having a few words with you.

As you know, I am just in from Birmingham, Alabama, where we are at the present time engaged in a mighty struggle for freedom and human dignity. We have had our difficult moments in Birmingham. We have had our frustrating moments. But I think it is one of the most significant struggles taking place in our nation today, because for years Birmingham has been the worst big city in race relations in the United States and the most thoroughly segregated city in our country. I am convinced that if we can get a breakthrough for freedom and justice in that community, it will have repercussions all over the South, and it will mean that our work in other communities will be less difficult.

So I bring greetings to you from Birmingham. I bring special greetings from the thousands and thousands of Negro citizens of that community who have suffered and sacrificed over these few days while we have been engaged in this intensified phase of the struggle. And they want you to know how much they appreciate the backing, the moral support, and financial support which thousands and thousands of people of good will have given all over this country. So it is a real pleasure to be here. I want to express my personal appreciation to Bishop Tucker for these very kind and gracious words of introduction.

When I think about what is happening in Birmingham, Alabama, and when I think about our struggles all over the South and over the nation, I am always reminded of the fact that in reality we are really working to make the American dream a reality. And I would

like to take a few minutes this afternoon to say something about the American dream. And I choose this subject because America is basically a dream, a dream yet unfulfilled. It is a dream of a nation founded on certain basic principles. The substance of the dream is found in these sublime words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The first thing that we notice in this dream is the amazing universalism. It does not say *some* men, it says *all men*. It does not say all *white* men but it says *all men*, which includes black men. It does not say all *Protestants* but it says *all men*, which includes Roman Catholics. It does not say all *Gentiles*, it says *all men*, which includes Jews. There is something else at the center of this great document which distinguishes our democratic form of government from totalitarian systems. It says that we all have certain basic rights that are neither derived from nor given by the state. In order to discover where they come from, it is necessary to move back behind the dim mist of eternity. They are God given. Very seldom if ever in the history of the world has a passage expressed in such a profound eloquence and unequivocal language the dignity and worth of human personality. The American dream reminds us that every man is the heir of the legacy of dignity. This is a great dream.

But ever since the founding fathers of our nation dreamed this dream, America has been something of a schizophrenic personality tragically divided against herself. On the one hand we have proudly professed the great principles of democracy, but on the other hand we have sadly practiced the very antithesis of those principles. Indeed slavery and racial segregation have been strange paradoxes, and the nation founded on the principle that all men are created equal is now more than ever before challenged to realize this great dream.

For the shape of the world today does not permit our nation the luxury of an anemic democracy, and the price that our nation must pay for the continued oppression of the Negro and other minority groups is the price of its own destruction. In a real sense, the hour is late, the clock of destiny is ticking out. We must act now before it is too late.

I must hasten to say that we must solve this problem not merely to meet the communist challenge, as important as it happens to be. We must solve this problem not merely to appeal to Asian and African peoples, as important as that happens to be. In the final analysis, racial discrimination must be uprooted from American society because it is morally wrong. We must get rid of racial segregation because racial segregation stands against all of the basic precepts of our Judeo-Christian heritage. We must solve this problem because segregation substitutes an I-It relationship for the I-Thou relationship. It relegates persons to the status of things. So it is that we must move on in Birmingham and all over the South and all over the nation to solve this problem, not merely because it is diplomatically expedient but because it is morally compelling. And so wherever people are assembled today, wherever people are working today to get rid of racial and economic injustice, they are the real saviours of democracy: they are working to make the American dream a reality.

I would like to mention a few of the things that we must do all over our nation in order to make this dream a reality. First I think we must always be aware of the fact that we are living in a world that has become one world, and before the dream of democracy, the dream of brotherhood, can become a reality here, we must have a world of strength. The world in which we live is geographically one. Now we must move to make it one in terms of brotherhood.

It is true that the geographical wonders of our age have come into being to a large extent because of man's scientific ingenuity. Through our scientific genius we have been able to probe distances and shrink time. Our jet planes have compressed into minutes distances that once took days and weeks and months. I know it isn't the usual thing for a preacher to quote Bob Hope, but I think he has adequately described this age. He says, "It is an age in which it is possible to take a non-stop flight from Los Angeles, California, to New York City, a distance of some 3,000 miles, and if on taking off in Los Angeles you develop hiccoughs, you will 'hic' in Los Angeles and 'cup' in New York City." You know, it is possible, because of time difference, to take a flight from Tokyo, Japan, on Sunday morning and arrive in Seattle, Washington, on the preceding Saturday night. If our friends meet you at the airport and ask you when you left Tokyo, you will have to say, "I left tomorrow." This is the kind of world in which we live.

Now this is a bit humorous, but I am trying to underscore this simple fact to all of us. It is simply this: that through our scientific genius we have made of this world a neighborhood. Now, through our moral and ethical commitment, we must make of it a brotherhood. No nation can live alone, no individual can live alone. We are all tied together.

I remember some months ago Mrs. King and I journeyed to that great country known as India. I never will forget the experience: to meet and talk with the great leaders of India, to meet and talk with people all over the cities and villages of that vast country. The experiences that we had there will remain dear to me as long as thought and memories shall linger.

But there were depressing moments. How could one avoid being depressed when

one sees with his own eyes millions of people going to bed hungry at night? How could one avoid being depressed when one discovers that, out of India's population of more than 400 million people, almost 370,000,000 make an annual income of less than \$80 a year? Most of these people have never seen a doctor or a dentist. How could one avoid being depressed when one sees millions of people sleeping on the sidewalk at night – no bench to sleep on – no houses to enter. As I faced these conditions, something within me cried out, "Can we in America stand idly by and not be concerned?" The answer came, "Oh no, because the destiny of the United States is tied up with the destiny of India and every other nation." I started thinking of the fact that we in America spend more than one million dollars a day to store surplus food, and I said to myself, "Now I know where we can store that food free of charge – in the wrinkled stomachs of the millions of people in Asia and Africa, in South America, and even in our own nation, who go to bed hungry at night." Perhaps we spend far too much of our national budget establishing military bases around the world, rather than establishing bases of genuine concern and understanding. What I am saying is simply this: that all life is interrelated. We are born into an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single bond of destiny. Whatever affects one man directly affects all men indirectly.

For some strange reason, *I* can never be what *I* ought to be until *you* are what *you* ought to be, and *you* can never be what *you* ought to be until *I* am what *I* ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality. John Donne pointed this out some years ago and phrased it in memorable language: "No man is an island entire in itself. Every man is a piece of the continent or part of the mainland." He goes on to say, "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. Therefore never send to learn for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee." This

we must realize if the American dream is to become a reality.

Another thing that is basic and necessary if we are to solve the problem in our nation, whether it be North and South or East and West, is to rid ourselves of the notion once and for all that there are superior and inferior races. This notion of racial inferiority still lingers in spite of the fact that our great scientific disciplines have refuted the idea. The anthropological scientists – including great anthropologists like Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Melville Herskovitz, and others – have made it clear through their long years of study that there are no superior or inferior races. There are superior and inferior individuals academically within all races. Through medical science, we have discovered that there are only four kinds of blood and that these four blood types are found within all racial groups. Yet in spite of this, there are those who still argue that the Negro is inferior.

There was a time when all this was argued from the standpoint of the Bible, strangely enough. They used to argue that the Negro was inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. Then the Apostle Paul's dictum became a watchword, "Servants, be obedient to your master." Then one brother had studied the logic of the great philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle did a great deal to bring into being formal logic. There is a big word in formal logic known as a syllogism, which has a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. This brother put his argument about the inferiority of the Negro in the framework of an Aristotelian syllogism. He said, "All men are made in the image of God." This was the major premise. The minor premise was "God, as everyone knows, is not a Negro. Therefore, the Negro is not a man." And these ideas to a degree are still voiced sometimes on religious grounds. In fact, I heard of someone in Mississippi the other day saying that "God

was a charter member of the White Citizens Council.”

Today the arguments are on subtle sociological and cultural ground. That is: the Negro is not culturally ready for integration. If you integrate the schools and neighborhoods and all of the other areas seeking integration, you will put the white race back a generation. Then, the argument goes on, the Negro is a criminal. They go on endlessly, and the persons who set forth these arguments never say that it is their irresponsibility that has created lagging standards in the Negro community. They lag because of segregation and discrimination. Poverty and ignorance breed crime, whatever the racial group may be. These things are environmental and not racial. They result from the social isolation, the economic deprivation, and all of the other things that go along with discrimination. And it is tortuous logic to use the tragic results of segregation as an argument for its continuance. It is necessary to get to the causal root. We must, all over America, get rid of the notion once and for all that there are superior and inferior races.

Now we must see the necessity for developing an action program to destroy segregation and discrimination in our midst. This means that all over this nation we must develop a concrete action program. The Church itself has a significant role to play in this area. Certainly before the Church can move out into the arena of social action, it must remove the yoke of segregation from its body. One of the tragic facts that we must face is that 11 o'clock on Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour in America, an hour in which we stand and sing "In Christ there is no East or West." The most segregated school is the Sunday School. Thank God we are beginning now to shake the lethargy from our souls. Messengers of the Gospel and church groups all over this nation are coming

to see that if we are to be true to our Christian witness, if we are to be true to Jesus Christ, we must take a stand on this issue. This means we must support meaningful, constructive civil rights legislation.

There are always those who say legislation can't solve the problem. There is a half-truth involved here. It is true that legislation cannot solve the whole problem. It can solve some of the problem. It may be true that morality can't be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be true that legislation cannot 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 keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important.

Yes, we need religion and education to change hostile attitudes, but we need legislation to control the external effects of these hostile attitudes. Yes, we need an action program which will work for meaningful legislation to abolish discrimination all over our nation. As we move forward toward the American dream, it will be necessary for those who have been the victims of segregation and discrimination to work passionately for their own freedom. This is what I have tried to teach all over the South and over the nation: we cannot sit idly by and think others will be and should be more concerned about our citizenship rights than we are. We must work ourselves to make integration a reality. This must be supplemented by non-violent direct action.

This is the approach that we are using in Birmingham, Alabama, and now in communities all over the south. Sometimes it will take the form of sit-ins or stand-ins or kneel-ins, or mass marches to dramatize the issue and expose the injustice and bring it to the surface where everybody can see it. I insist that it must be non-violent if it is to be constructive. Now there are two or three

things that I would like to say about non-violence, because this method has a basic philosophy. 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. He does not know how to handle it. If he doesn't beat you, wonderful! If he beats you, you develop the quiet courage of accepting blows without retaliating. If he doesn't put you in jail, fine! Nobody with any sense loves to go to jail, but if he puts you in jail, you go into 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 quiet courage of dying if necessary without killing. There is something about this that is powerful, that disarms the opponent.

The second thing about this method is that it has a way of giving the individuals in the struggle the opportunity to work to secure moral ends through moral means. One of the great debates of history has been over the whole question of means and ends. Sometimes men have argued that the ends justify the means. I think this is one of the weaknesses, along with many others, of communism. They live with the idea that the end justifies the means. And read Lenin as he says, "Lying and deceit, withholding and concealing the truth, and even violence are all justifiable means to bring about the goal of the classless society."

This is where non-violence breaks with communism and any other system which argues that the end justifies the means. In the long run, the end is pre-existent in the means, and the means represent the ideal in the making and the end in process. And so we have a method of struggle which makes it possible for the individuals involved to struggle for a moral end with a moral means. The other thing about this method is that it keeps the love ethic at the center. It says that it is possible to resist an evil system and yet maintain an attitude of active good will for the

perpetrators of that evil system.

Now when I talk about love at this point I am not talking about emotional love. I am not talking about the kind of love that you have in a romantic relationship, the word Eros which would be used in Greek. I am not talking even about friendship, the word Pelago, which is used in Greek. I am talking about Agape, understanding, creative good will for all men, an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. I think this is what Jesus meant when he said, "Love your enemies." And I'm happy he didn't say "Like your enemies." It's pretty difficult to like some people. Jesus said love them because love is greater than like. When one rises to Agape love, he loves every man, not because his ways appeal to him, but because God loves him. This is what we are trying to place at the center of our movement.

So we can stand before our most violent oppressor, even those who bombed the home of my brother in Birmingham, Alabama, Saturday night and who tried to bomb the room where I was staying at the motel – we can say we will beat your physical force with soul force. 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. Do to us what you will and we will still love you. We will match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will go on in our struggle to be free, and in the process you may not like it but we will still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children, and we will still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities at the midnight hour and drag us out into some wayside road and beat us and leave us half-dead, and as difficult as it is, we will still love you. Dare to send your propaganda agents over the country. Make it appear that we are not fit morally, culturally, and otherwise for integration, and we will still love you. But be you assured that we will wear

you down by our capacity to 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 our message. This is the message of non-violence. And I believe that this is the message that will transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

And so the great challenge now is to move on toward the realization of the American dream. We must work all over the country to do it. As I have said so often, the problem of racial injustice is not just a sectional problem. No area of our country can boast of clean hands in the realm of brotherhood. Certainly it is one thing for white people of good will in the North to rise up with righteous indignation when buses are crammed with Freedom Riders in Anderson, Alabama; or when courageous James Meredith confronts a howling, jeering mob as he seeks to go into the University of Mississippi; where the church is burned in Sansaoni, Georgia; where Negroes are seeking to learn how to register to vote; and Negro children are arrested in Birmingham, Alabama, simply because they want to be free. It is just as important for white people of good will to rise up with righteous indignation in the North when the Negro cannot live in their neighborhood and when the Negro cannot get a particular position in their firm, or when a Negro cannot join their professional society. In other words, all over America, if this problem is to be solved, there must be a sort of divine discontent.

There are many technical words in every academic discipline which become stereotyped and cliché. I want to mention one of these words. It is the word *maladjustment*. It is a great technical word in modern

psychology, which has become a ringing cry. It is the product, or the modern child, of psychology.

We all want to live the well-adjusted life in order to avoid neurotic personalities, but I must be honest with you by saying that there are some things within our social order to which I am proud to be maladjusted, and to which I call all men of good will to be maladjusted until the good society is realized.

I must confess that I will never adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I will never become adjusted to religious bigotry. I will never adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many and give luxuries to the few. I will never become adjusted to the madness of militarism: the self-defeating effects of physical violence. In a day when Sputniks and Explorers are dashing through outer space, guided ballistic missiles are carving highways of death throughout the stratosphere, no nation can win a war. There is no longer a choice between violence and non-violence. *It is either non-violence or non-existence.* The alternative to disarmament, the alternative to suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and working toward disarming the whole world, may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation. I never intend to adjust to the madness of militarism.

It may well be the greatest need of the hour, the greatest need of our world, to have more maladjustment. This is why I am calling for the immediate formation of a new organization, "The International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment." There is a need for men and women to be as maladjusted as the prophet Amos. In his day, in the midst of injustices, his proud words echo across the centuries, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." There is a need for

men and women today to be as maladjusted as Abraham Lincoln, who had the vision to see that this nation could not exist half-slave and half-free. There is a need for us to be as maladjusted as Jefferson, who in the midst of an age amazingly adjusted to slavery cried with words rising to cosmic proportions, "All men are created equal." There is a need for men to be as maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth, who could stand amid the men and women of his day, amid the intricacies of the formidable military machinery of the Roman Empire, to say, "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword," and cry out, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you."

Through such maladjustment, we will be able to emerge from the darkened midnight of man's inhumanity to man into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

With this faith, we will be able to go on to carve a tower of hope on the mountain of despair and bring into being that great dream and create right here in America a nation where all men will live together in brotherhood and where every man will respect the dignity and worth of the human personality.

We will have a long way to go before the problem is solved, but I am happy to say we are making strides. I close by quoting the words of an old Negro slave preacher whose grammar and diction lacked distinction, but who uttered words of great symbolic profundity in the form of a prayer:

"Lord, we ain't what we want to be; we ain't what we ought to be; we ain't what we gonna be; but thank God we ain't what we was."