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Dr Johnson
Faculty
1 minute
Students

I would liked to have been in Washington 82 years ago.

I would liked to have met your academic forefathers who created
from dust and from poverty -- and yes, from nobility of spirit,
a school, humbly called a university, for the elevation of freedmen.

Howard University was not ^{only} dedicated to the cold obscurities called
"truth" and "enlightenment"! It was ^{also} born of dire need, dedicated
warmly to humanity.

Thousands of freedmen migrated to Washington after the
Emancipation Proclamation. They squatted in abandoned barracks,
and in vacant houses. They needed moral and spiritual leadership
to interpret their new freedom. They needed doctors to tend to
the sick. They needed lawyers to advise them of their rights,
and they needed teachers.

Your founders had a rare combination of practical insight
and imagination and benevolence. They saw the immediate needs of
the growing community. They saw the destiny of a liberated people,
and the responsibilities that went with freedom. Four years after

the Emancipation Proclamation your founders had the courage to initiate a new concept of brotherhood within the walls of their school. They opened their doors to all who came, and the privileged came to learn with the sons of slaves and the daughters of the trutees, and the poor came, and the men came with their wives.

The missionary founders envisaged an institution that would grow and develop and mature with its students. They had an indomitable faith in men. They knew then, as we know now, that free men justify their freedom. Their faith has been vindicated by countless men whom Howard University built and molded and developed and sent out into the world to make invaluable contributions to humanity. Governor Hastie has vindicated their faith, and Dr. Drew, Dr. Just, and Dr. Frazier. Your President, Dr. Johnson, ennobles that faith.

Free men do indeed justify their freedom. The eyes of the entire world have been focussed on Howard University's Dr. Ralph Bunche. His efforts toward peace with justice in the Middle East, and the respect he has earned from people the world over,

epitomize society's stake in the freedom of men. ^{yes} Freedom is a dynamic force. It gathers increased momentum with every liberation. It crosses oceans and deserts and it penetrates jungles and scales mountains.

When the Negroes in Mississippi can freely go to the polls to vote the Iron Curtain in Europe is ripped; and millions of Indonesians and Chinese take hope. Their newly-found opportunities will undermine totalitarian propaganda just as surely as they will inspire the lives of the Chinese coolies. It is an international principle that is at stake. Those who would enslave men are destined to failure when the most powerful nation in the world rededicates its faith in freedom. Already the rumblings are being heard. There are vociferous cries of emancipation in Indonesia. The democrats of Asia have awakened to their responsibilities to assure freedom from tyranny in their vast area. The Chinese are agonizingly struggling for liberation from a feudal economic system. And even from behind the Iron Curtain we have heard Marshal Tito's voice raised against the bondage of Moscow.

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There is a restless world-wide search for liberation.

Whole nations of individuals are groping for the freedom to find themselves, and to recognize their capacities and fulfill their destinies.

We in the United States are in a unique position to chart the future. Too often do we here tend to limit our vision as we view the picture of our national life. There are shadows in the scene. The Ku KluxKlan does still ride. Fear of insecurity is still with us. Poverty and privilege still victimize us. But we ought not forget that these shadows have sharpened the light.

In our slow "trial and error" democratic manner, we have steadily moved toward greater democracy and the enlargement of the area of human freedom.

The franchise has been extended. Our worker, both white and negro, were liberated from slavery in 1863.

Sweat shops have been destroyed. Yellow-dog contracts have been outlawed; other freedoms have been recognized. In spite

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of temporary set-backs, the trend has been toward liberation,
liberation at a geometric pace.

As I stand here this moment, there are men in the United States Senate planning a last desperate resistance against the age old drive toward full civil rights for every citizen of our country regardless of his color or religion or nationality. Those men would ignore a Golden Rule so that they can keep a Senate rule. They tamper with the morality of a determined nation of people. The people of our country carried a great moral burden for too long a time. We cried out for democracy in other nations at the same time that we denied democracy at home. This hypocrisy developed a national moral guilt. Americans realized that discrimination clashed with our credo, that it was wrong, -- dead wrong! The new thoughts played upon the old during the years of our indecision. We were a nation plagued with guilty consciences.

We made an auspicious step toward absolving ourselves of this sense of guilt with the publication of the precedent-breaking report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights, ~~Organized Labor,~~

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business, all religious groups, -- almost all sections of our public life were represented in this report which called -- in ringing words -- for an end to discrimination, the right of all citizens to live free of terror and oppression and to participate fully in the responsibility and benefits of their government. This was a landmark in our march toward the realization of genuine democracy. The next step, and the step we now face, is the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

Last summer at the convention of the Democratic Party, the decision was ~~announced~~ *honestly* made. When the delegates were challenged to get out of the " shadows of states' rights and to walk forth in the bright sunshine of human rights", they voted to relieve themselves of their guilty consciences. They voted against discrimination and against bigotry. They justified the freedom of free men.

Again on last November the second, our faith in the American citizen was tested and affirmed. There can be no doubt now about the American people's passion for liberation. They

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voted to liberate themselves from their guilt as well as to liberate minority groups from their displacement. The American voter showed to all the world that he had the courage of his convictions.

In spite of that great demonstration in November, a minority in the Senate of the United States withstands the national tide. They will fail, because history is against them, the people are against them, the times are against them, the President of the United States is against them. Our President risked his political career to bring the issue of civil rights to the people. He traveled many miles to proclaim his vigorous views on this issue. He has broken all precedent in the degree of his strength and leadership to the end that man's inviolate dignity shall be accorded to all men equally. President Truman has truly shown that he would rather be right than be President.

No, a minority of men in the Senate of the United States cannot frustrate a nation. A nation is awakening. Communities are coming alive. A groundswell is developing. Brotherhood is on the march. People are beginning again to feel democracy. In

their communities they are talking and acting for democracy.

Here on the ground level, in ^{the} ~~the~~ neighborhoods where Negroes and whites, Japanese and Indians, Christians and Jews live their lives and go about their daily business, here is the area in which understanding and justice and equality must take root.

In the stores and the factories, in the schools, and the universities, the bus terminals and the railroad stations,

What are the people in Pittsburgh, Detroit, Minneapolis, and Chicago doing? Millions are reading the provocative and challenging report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights. For the millions who bought and read that report, there developed a new insight into our failures to implement democracy and the need to make it function as a reality--in the schools and farms and factories--not a paper ideal.

From this effort came another effort to expose the problems here in our own Capital. The report of discrimination in the nation's capital was given wide publicity. Those incidents, as you so well know, described in that report cannot help but strike the hearts of readers. These studies are only one phase in the awakening of American communities.

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Would even the noble General Oliver Howard have dreamt that a city would adopt a Fair Employment Practices ordinance by the year 1946?

I am proud that I had the honor to be mayor of the City of Minneapolis when that ordinance was adopted by our City Council. Did your founders envision a Mayor's Council on Human Relations to promote inter-group relations? These Councils are finding their way into the pattern of community life.

Education against discrimination has an appeal in our communities that it has never had before. We are at long last beginning to reach into the hearts and minds of the people who must make democracy work.

There is a great change in the atmosphere. It is loaded with expectancy.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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I seem to sense the beginnings ~~of a new trial~~ of what I will call, a new trial of civilization? The doors will be opened to opportunity, ~~Those who have worked to build Howard University, and~~ ~~and to exert its influence felt in the community~~ sooner than any of us could have anticipated. The age of opportunity will bring with it, moreover, a heavy responsibility. ~~The freedmen in 1863 were taken from~~ ~~hands to be made responsible~~ released into an era which expected much of them but offered only limited opportunities. When the dream of brotherhood is our minority groups must be prepared finally realized, ~~the you of Howard University, and your~~ to step quickly into the opportunities that reveal themselves. ~~That~~ The members of the community of Howard University will have immediate need for all the resources of their education.

~~Preparedness~~ Your need to prepare for the responsibilities you will face when the doors to opportunity swing open is your justification for spending years in the ~~advanced~~ halls of Howard University. You have a chance to ~~educate yourselves~~ *serve* ~~to society as did other men~~ *who* walked through Howard's halls. You have a chance to contribute richly to the community about you--right now. Extend your knowledge to those less fortunate than you, use your education as a tool for shaping understanding *and equality* ~~and~~ ~~amity~~ ~~between~~ among men.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Recent events have ~~been~~ indeed stood brightly from the shadows.
In ~~Texas~~ Houston, Texas, Negroes and whites joined in a concentrated effort to free the Democratic party in their state from Dixiecrat control. That state convention is a milestone in the annals of Texan history.
In Arkansas, the state university ~~has~~ recently ~~become~~ has/become an interracial institution.
In Atlanta, Georgia, ~~a~~ ^{conference} ~~meeting~~ was held only a few weeks ago to integrate the work of ~~all~~ freedom-loving southerners.

These few examples ~~indicate~~ ^{form a base} a program for action. Many of you will return to your homelands in the South. It is there, in the heart of the Southland, that you will have to ~~crystallize~~ ^{public opinion} ~~the~~ ~~public opinion~~ ~~that~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~recognized~~. ~~You~~ ~~will~~ ~~need~~ ~~to~~ ~~share~~ ~~your~~ ~~education~~ ~~with~~ ~~your~~ ~~neighbors~~, and you will need to provide the leadership and the challenge ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~South~~ ~~that~~ ~~will~~ ~~bring~~ ~~victory~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~liberal~~ ~~forces~~ throughout the South. ~~You~~ ~~must~~ ~~send~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~Congress~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~United~~ ~~States~~ ~~the~~ ~~true~~ representatives ~~who~~ ~~will~~ ~~acknowledge~~ ~~their~~ ~~responsibilities~~ to the Negro citizens as well as the white. When we can deal with men ~~who~~ ~~represent~~ ~~the~~ ~~true~~ ~~spirit~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~South~~ ~~and~~ ~~are~~ ~~not~~ ~~afraid~~ ~~to~~ ~~take~~ ~~the~~ ~~dynamic~~ ~~surge~~ ~~of~~ ~~Southern~~ liberalism, our American dilemma will be a thing of the past. ~~The~~ ~~American~~ ~~dilemma~~ ~~will~~ ~~rest~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~history~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~glorious~~ ~~and~~ ~~adventurous~~ ~~adventure~~ ~~the~~ ~~story~~ ~~of~~ ~~our~~ ~~beginnings~~ ~~with~~ ~~slavery~~, and our survival with freedom.



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