

Chancellor Thomas Ellett —

✓ Ben Youngdahl —

Luther Reuber
Oscar

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

YOUNGDAHL LECTURE

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

OCTOBER 28, 1965

Non-Political
Y.D.S. here
N.Y.
Phil-
Springfield Ohio
L As I was preparing this lecture and thinking of
my old friend Ben Youngdahl, there came to my mind
the well-known lines of the British poet, Stephen
Spender:

"I think continually of those who were truly great —

The names of those who in their lives fought for life,

Who wore at their hearts the fire's center...

Born of the sun, they traveled a short while toward the sun,

And left the vivid air signed with their honor."

As I leaf through the many addresses and papers Ben Youngdahl has presented in his professional field, I find again and again the depth of his belief in the dignity of man. -

In 1949 Ben Youngdahl wrote: "A recipient of public assistance is still a citizen and a person with all the rights and dignity given to all people in our democracy." -

In 1952 he said: "Regardless of what programs we espouse or administer, the end result in our minds is always the person, supreme, divine."

In 1963 he sounded a note of impatience. ~~He said:~~
"It's about time we shake loose from the time-worn assumption that people who are compelled to receive public assistance are necessarily immoral or weak."

↳ The words of Ben Youngdahl have been words of
common sense and responsibility -- and concern for
his fellow man. ~~They have been words taking into~~
~~account the fact that, in our complex modern society,~~
words reaffirming that
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words of
Concern
Compassion
Conscience.

↳ Lately we have become concerned -- and rightly
so -- about the condition of the Negro family.

↳ Statistics tell us that almost a quarter of such
families are headed by a woman. ~~there is no husband~~ — only the woman
the mother

↳ In many other families, where the husband is
present, he is unemployed while the wife goes out
to work — the breadwinner.

✓ The social scientists, therefore, say that in much of the Negro community, and particularly in the cities, a kind of matriarchy prevails, *Keep*

✓ We urgently need to reinforce the fragile structure of the Negro family -- particularly by opening up more and better jobs for Negro men, so that they can be respected and self-respecting breadwinners for their own families.

✓ But there is another side to the picture. And it can be clearly seen in our American experience.

✓ Our Jewish fellow-citizens are mostly descended from penniless immigrants from the ghettos of Russia and Eastern Europe.

h Yet, in a generation or two, they have risen to outstanding achievement in business, in the professions, and in the academic world.

L It is the tremendous pride of the Jewish mother in the educational and cultural achievements of her children that has made the difference -- that has helped her children move out of the slums to a better life.

L The Negro mother has had, in the past, a pretty realistic notion of the odds in our society against her children. / Her aspiration has, typically, been a much more modest one -- but in view of the odds, a brave and a worthy one.

Often in the back pages of our newspapers there appears the story of a Negro couple who have attained their 50th wedding anniversary, or a Negro woman who has reached the age of 100.

This is their only opportunity to say to their fellow citizens what they consider most important in their lives. And, time after time, the mother will put it in some such phrase as this:

"I raised five children, and none of them got into trouble."

That is human dignity in its most basic form.

If we can cherish and maintain that dignity, we will have moved a long way keeping more children out of the courts and in the schools.

Incidentally, it is worth taking note of that word "trouble" -- ^{it is} the thing that many Negro mothers are constantly afraid their children will get into, and from which they tirelessly, even desperately, seek to defend them.

It's important to note that "trouble" is far more often in the world outside the family than in it. A child psychiatrist, Robert Coles, who has made a close study of many Negro families, makes this observation:

"There are considerable strengths in the Negro family, psychological strengths that have enabled Negro children....to survive ordeals that I frankly find it hard to imagine my children surviving."

∟ "My observations convince me that the critical time for Negro children is the early teens when they face not the internal strain of the family but the external one of the outside world in all its clear-cut unfriendliness and rejection."

∟ Let us move from general principles to individual human experience.

∟ Dr. Coles interviewed one Negro mother whose youngest son had just been graduated from high school with honors and a scholarship to college, while his two older brothers had made a mess of their lives. ∟ Here is what the mother had to say, in her own words:

↳ "They say we're lazy and we don't pay much attention to the law, and sure enough I have two boys to prove it and one to disprove it, so it's two to one against us in this family. But I'd like to tell people why I think my two boys went bad.

↳ "I preached and hollered at all three the same. Those older boys were good boys just like the little one, and I remember when they wanted to study and be somebody, just like him. But they never had a chance. They were born too soon. That was it.

↳ "They went to school until it didn't make any sense to go there, because we had no money and they thought they should try to get jobs. So they left school and tried. They tried and tried and there wasn't anything for them.

↳ "Most people keep busy, so the time flies along and they don't know what it is to just sit and feel useless... I'll tell you what happens, you just fold up and die.

↳ "That's what drugs and liquor mean. They mean you've died. I mean you have hung up on the world, because you keep on calling and there just ain't no answer on the other end of the line. ↳ I watched my boys go bad like milk you know is standing too long. There's no use for it, so it gets sour.

"Now, at least one is going to be O.K. And
I'll tell you, it's because he was born at the
right time. I know it in my bones that he
would have turned out just like the others,
except for what's happening now, with the
integration and all that.

↳ "He says he's glad it happened to him, but
he feels bad because people think he's so special.

↳ But the truth is he was given a choice and his
brothers weren't, so he feels dishonest sometimes.

↳ But I tell him, it's not you who are dishonest, son,
it's the world, and they are finally coming around
to knowing it, so we should all thank God for that. //

↳ There is a great deal of human dignity in those
words -- the kind of dignity we should maintain
and nurture.

Human
Dignity

Some of us have not ~~in the past~~ been as fully aware of the importance of human dignity as we might be -- in spite of the forceful and persistent way in which Ben Youngdahl and others have kept reminding us.

Too often in the past we have overloaded caseworkers -- so that, instead of being able to carry out their professional responsibilities for nurturing the dignity and self-respect of the recipient families, they have become mere conduits for public funds.

Worse still, there were some years ago insistent and indignant demands for the publication of the names of those who are receiving relief, in order to expose the "chiselers."

Now, I am the first to condemn the chiseler of public funds, whether he be in a high place or a lowly one.

But this would have been the worst way of going about exposing chisellers ~~on relief~~. It would have humiliated 999 honest but unfortunate citizens for every petty chiseler it turned up.

< That is not the way to enhance human dignity. It is a sure way to destroy it, and I am glad that we hear little of it nowadays.

< In the past, also, there have been too many 3 A.M. gangbuster raids on recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, to determine whether there was a man in the house.

< I think these were disgraceful. There must be better ways of finding this out -- if we must.

< Fortunately, 1961 legislation made it possible for the states to give Aid to Families with Dependent Children where the father was present but unemployed.

< I am glad to say that 18 of our states, mostly the more industrialized ones, are doing so.

< I hope that more states will follow their example, and also that the District of Columbia will. ^{and keep} It

certainly would if it had home rule, as our nation's capital should. and will have!

But, there is a new day in our
care of and help to the needy

- 15 -

~~We must defend the human dignity of the
recipients of relief, and we shall continue to do
so. But I am glad to say that we have turned~~
the corner, and are putting our major stress on
positive steps to enhance dignity and self-respect --
including getting those who are potentially
employable off relief and into the mainstream of
the American economy.

It's not only good morals, but good economic
sense to turn a tax-eater into a taxpayer.

As many of you know, but too many Americans have forgotten, a major turn in this direction came with the passage of the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962 -- a program to change the whole direction of public welfare and place its emphasis upon prevention and rehabilitation.

↳ The Congress then recognized that public welfare had to become more than a salvage operation, confined to picking up the debris of human lives -- that it had to become a positive, constructive force in society.

↳ Public welfare must seek to strengthen and preserve the family unit. ↳ It must take a leading role in the attack on such problems as dependency, juvenile delinquency, family breakdown, illegitimacy, ill health and disability.

Unless we do deal with these problems, they tend to regenerate themselves from generation to generation weakening the whole fabric of our society.

Last year the attack along this front was greatly broadened and strengthened with the launching, under President Johnson's leadership, of war against poverty.

War on Poverty

Significantly, the major legislation supporting this war bears the name of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Ec. opport

That word "opportunity" is significant. The Great Society is not a welfare state -- it is a state of opportunity.

L This war on poverty is something entirely
new. It is experimental. It is controversial.

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has been vigorous criticism of the welfare system
and welfare administrators. Here is a sample from
Joseph Kraft's widely syndicated column.

"The essence of the poverty program is that
the regular welfare programs have long since been
outmoded...And this whole outmoded system is
sustained by a huge welfare bureaucracy that
is committed heart and soul to doing exactly what
it used to do."

Well, ~~like~~ ^{should be accustomed} public officials, welfare administrators
are used to criticism. We both must take to

heart President Truman's admonition: "If you
can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen."

But at least criticism today is coming from a new and rather refreshing direction. Instead of being criticized for doing too much, you are today criticized for doing too little.

∠ But criticism and self-criticism -- painful as they may be -- are good for any profession. And if that criticism is sometimes to the mark, it should be heeded.

∠ Today there is room for everyone in the war against poverty -- experienced welfare administrators and neophytes too.

∠ The important thing is that all who participate should devote most of their time and energy to fighting poverty, and not each other.

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your colleagues at this great university, and by
the people of this state and this nation.

But, knowing you, I think that you derive a much deeper satisfaction from the knowledge that the gospel of human dignity which you have been preaching these many years -- human dignity even for "the last, the lost, and the least", as you like to say -- has not fallen on deaf ears. It has been the foundation stone of the society we Americans are building today.

I hark back to the words of the Negro mother, which I quoted earlier: "You keep on calling and there just ain't no answer on the other end of the line."

Now, thanks to you and to people like you,
the whole American people are answering -- late
in the day perhaps, tragically too late for some,
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Statistics tell us that almost a quarter of such families are headed by a woman.

In many other families, where the husband is present, he is unemployed while the wife goes out to work.

The social scientists, therefore, say that in much of the Negro community, and particularly in the cities, a kind of matriarchy prevails.

We urgently need to reinforce the fragile structure of the Negro family -- particularly by opening up more and better jobs for Negro men, so that they can be respected and self-respecting breadwinners for their own families.

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MR. HUBERT HUMPHREY

LECTURE AT
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY FIELD HOUSE

FIRST ANNUAL BENJAMIN E. YOUNGDAHL LECTURE

CLAYTON REPORTING COMPANY

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CLAYTON 5, MO.

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MR. HUBERT HUMPHREY

(Applause) Thank you very much. Thank you
Chancellor Eliot, not only for your gracious and kind introduction, but also for those happy reflections and memories.

One of the reasons that I wanted to come to Washington University was to remind you and the officers of this great university that I have been a teacher of Political Science. Politics is a rather uncertain business, and I like to keep my credentials in order (laughter).

I am just simply delighted to be here in the presence, and I trust, in honor of and in tribute to a great American and a very dear and personal friend, your own Dr. Ben Youngdahl, one of the great teachers and great leaders of our country. And I am very pleased to have been honored by the reception of the Mayor of St. Louis and his wife and the officers of this great university.

This is supposed to be a lecture, and I gather that, as one of the newspaper men who was traveling with me said, "Mr. Vice-President, I gather this is a non-political speech." And I suppose it will have to be that way (laughter). One does have to make sacrifices to make character (laughter).

I want you young folks to know that, but since it is not political, I do want to thank the Young Democrats for greeting me at the door (applause). I want to thank the Young Republicans for attending the lecture (applause).

1 It will be rather difficult for me to shift gears; and
2 if occasionally I should move out into drive or go into
3 forward or neutral or reverse, you will know that it is
4 only because in the last few days I have been to a Midwestern
5 political conference out in Bismarck, North Dakota; into
6 New York City where they are having some sort of political
7 contest; into Philadelphia last night, and then I stopped
8 in Springfield, Ohio on the way here to St. Louis today, to
9 say a word in behalf of a very fine young man that's running
10 for Congress out there.

11 Now, I haven't mentioned any political party, and as
12 a Democrat I wouldn't think of doing that; but these were very
13 happy occasions for me, and this is even happier. There is
14 nothing that I would rather do than to be in the presence of
15 students, to be on a college platform, to have the privilege
16 of sharing some thoughts with thoughtful people, concerned
17 people, and particularly, young people that are going to have
18 tremendous responsibility, not only in the future, but have
19 it now.

20 I'm often asked, as I go around, about what I think
21 about the many activities that young people engage in these
22 days, and I seldom am critical because I was engaged in a
23 number of those same activities when I was a bit younger
24 myself.

25 What impresses me is the fact that students today on

1 our college campuses are concerned. They do take a part in
2 the public affairs of our time. They do want to be heard.
3 I have said, and I must repeat it, that everyone has the right
4 to be heard, but not necessarily taken seriously. It depends
5 upon what you have to say (applause).

6 But this whole democracy of ours depends upon an
7 intellectual ferment, and it depends above all upon a deep
8 concern about what is happening in our time and what will
9 happen in the days ahead. Sometimes we have characterized
10 our democracy in the simple, easy formality, or shall I
11 say, symbolism of, shall I say, the three "D's" of discussion,
12 of dissent, and of debate, and I would add the fourth,
13 decision, because ultimately you have to make up your mind
14 what you want to do.

15 Today I want to talk to you, not about every item in
16 the spectrum of public life or of the social and clinical
17 forces, but rather to concentrate our attention upon matters
18 of public welfare, the needs of the needy and how we can
19 open the gates of opportunity to people who have found those
20 gates closed to them for generations, yes, for two to three
21 centuries.

22 I can think of no better occasion to speak of matters
23 of public welfare, rehabilitation, assistance to the needy,
24 education, and the opening up of the gates of opportunity
25 than at Washington University in the Ben Youngdahl Lecture

FR

1 Series. And I gather that I am one of the first to partici-
2 pate in this series; and if so, I consider it a very high
3 honor.

4 And, as I was preparing for this lecture, and not speech,
5 and thinking of my old friend, Ben Youngdahl, there came to
6 my mind some well-known lines of that British poet,
7 Steven Spender. I never can remember the exacts words, so
8 I always have to go to the reference books. I was taught
9 that as a graduate student.

10 It isn't so important that you remember everything you
11 read; it's just to remember where you read it and in what
12 book so you can go back and refer to it, except in examina-
13 tions, I might say. You ought to be reasonably accurate then,
14 or at least have a considerate professor.

15 Steven Spender said, "I think continually
16 of those who were truly great, the names of those
17 who, in their lives, fought for life, who wore at
18 their hearts the fire's center, born of the sun; they
19 traveled a short while towards the sun and left
20 the vivid air signed with their honor."

21 There could be no more graphic and dramatic description
22 of the qualities of leadership and greatness than what
23 Steven Spender has written. And as I leaf through the many
24 pronouncements and addresses and papers of Dr. Youngdahl,
25 papers that he presented in his professional field, I find

FR

1 again and again the depth of his belief in people and
2 the dignity of man. And may I underscore the importance of
3 the understanding of that phrase "the dignity of man"
4 because ultimately the contest between the totalitarian and
5 the free man centers on this point.

6 It's not just a matter of the means of production nor
7 even the organization of society, it's man's view about his
8 fellow man and man's relationship to the infinite, to Divine
9 Providence. And it just so happens that those of us who do
10 claim to be free men, who say that we are the children of
11 democracy, that we have accepted as an article of faith this
12 quality of human dignity that man's institutions are estab-
13 lished for the glorification of man, and that man is not
14 established for subservience and glorification of the states
15 or of the institutions. These are simple political lessons,
16 but we must never forget them.

17 I suppose that the heart and core of the whole demo-
18 cratic concept of the whole democratic tradition is a
19 spiritual concept. At least, I think so; and one of the
20 privileges of living in a free society is you can think out
21 loud. You don't have to talk to yourself; you can talk to
22 your neighbor.

23 Democracy is based upon the principle that man was
24 created in the image of his maker, and as such, he is more
25 than flesh and blood and bone. He is soul, and he is spirit,

7
1 and because he is that, he must be free. And because he is
2 soul and spirit and mind and heart, he has dignity. He may
3 not always act dignified. He may be very undignified at
4 times, but under it all there is at least a belief, a faith
5 in dignity.

6 And it's to this great belief and tradition that
7 Ben Youngdahl has given a lifetime of service. He comes
8 from a great family. I know them all. And as we were
9 saying in the car on the way to this grand meeting, every
10 one an individualist, everyone unto themselves, and yet a
11 common denominator of belief in and faith in humanity,
12 human dignity.

13 Ben Youngdahl, you will remember these words; you
14 wrote these in 1949:

15 "The recipient of public assistance is still a
16 citizen and a person with all the rights of dignity
17 given to all the people in our democracy."

18 My fellow Americans, those words of 1949 need to be remem-
19 bered in this year of 1965, when there is so much wealth, so
20 much power, so much affluence in our nation. Everyone is
21 not quite so fortunate.

22 In 1952, this distinguished teacher and Dean of your
23 School of Social Work wrote,

24 "Regardless of what programs we espouse or
25 administer, the end result in our minds is always

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1 the person, supreme, divine."

2 He said it all so much better than I've been able to
3 say it. In 1963 -- 1963, he sounded a note of impatience. I
4 know how he feels. I become impatient, too. And he said,

5 "It's about time we shake loose from the time-
6 worn assumption that people who are compelled to
7 receive public assistance are necessarily immoral
8 or weak."

9 The words of Ben Youngdahl have been words of common
10 sense and responsibility. I guess that is why his community
11 wanted to honor him with this series of lectures. His words
12 have been of concern for his fellow man, and I wish to say
13 to my friends, the students, and I hope that I, too, am a
14 student, because I surely try to learn each day, and I want
15 to stay young at heart.

16 I can say that despite all the power that this nation
17 symbolizes and has, and despite this tremendous wealth, which
18 is -- in fact, it's so great that it is almost beyond our
19 comprehension -- fifty per cent of the total gross national
20 product of the world is ours. The other three billion, four
21 hundred million get the balance of the other fifty per cent.

22 How blessed and how fortunate we are, and don't you ever
23 forget it; but with all of this, there is a quality of
24 character in America which I think stands out above power,
25 above wealth, above inventions and above discoveries, and

1 its this quality of concern, this quality of compassion,
2 and this quality of conscience. And it's only the strong
3 nation or the strong individual that expresses concern and
4 compassion and conscience. It's only the strong nation
5 that can ever afford to admit its limitations and its weak-
6 nesses, and we have admitted them.

7 We have admitted discrimination, and we're righting an
8 old wrong. We have admitted that we have been the victims
9 of prejudice, and we are righting that old wrong. We have
10 admitted that we have been the victims of segregation, and
11 we are righting that old wrong. Only a great country dares
12 admit that in its wealth it has poverty, and that in its
13 democracy it has inequality.

FR 14 And we intend to do something about the poverty, and
15 we are eradicating once and for all, at least by law, and
16 pray God soon by practice, every vestige of inequality,
17 bigotry, prejudice and discrimination (applause).

18 What this teacher has said and what I am trying to say
19 are words reaffirming that the individual is precious. Now,
20 lately, we have been concerned, and rightly so, about the
21 condition of the Negro family. It's difficult to select
22 any group in our society for discussion, lest you be mis-
23 understood, but I want to say to all of us that are here
24 today that our concern in this matter is not only over our
25 Negro family, but over our own inadequacies, all of us,

1 the fact that we, too, have been the victims of our own
2 inadequacy, limitations.

3 Statistics tell us that in almost a quarter of such
4 families -- I refer now to the Negro families -- there is no
5 husband, only the woman, the mother. In many other families
6 where the husband is present, he is unemployed because he
7 has been untrained. He has been the victim of separate but
8 equality, but it was only separate. He has been denied the
9 chance to be a man; therefore, he goes unemployed while his
10 wife can get menial domestic labor and goes out to work; and
11 she becomes the breadwinner. The social scientists, there-
12 fore, say that in much of the Negro community, and particularly
13 in the great cities, a kind of matriarchy prevails.

FR 14 I remind you that many of these fellow Americans have
15 come from areas of America where there has been no urban
16 life, where they have never known the discipline of modern
17 industry, where they have never known the pressures and the
18 tensions of urban living, and they have been forced into our
19 ghettos, and they now become the product, the result of that
20 environment.

21 It goes without saying, therefore, that all of us,
22 working together, urgently need to reinforce the fragile
23 structure of the family, and in this instance, the Negro
24 family, particularly, by opening up more and better jobs;
25 and this includes the training for the job for Negro men,

1 so that they can be respected and self-respecting bread-
2 winners for their own families.

3 But there is another side of the picture, and it can
4 clearly be seen in our own American experience. Our Jewish
5 fellow citizens are mostly descended from penniless immigrants
6 from the ghettos of Russia and Eastern Europe. Yet, in but
7 a generation or two, they have risen to outstanding achieve-
8 ment, in business, in the professions and in the academic and
9 cultural world.

10 It's this tremendous pride of the Jewish mother in the
11 educational and cultural achievements of her children that has
12 made the difference, that has helped her children move out
13 of the slums and to the good life, to the better life. And
14 to the eternal credit of the Jewish community, those of
15 Jewish faith, they are the most generous people of the
16 world. They give to Jew and Gentile, to Catholic, Protestant
17 and Jew, unstintingly. They are great citizens.

18 The Negro mother has had, however, in the past, a
19 pretty realistic notion of the odds in our society against
20 her children. Her aspiration has typically been of a much
21 more modest one, but in view of the odds, and the odds against
22 her were plenty, a brave and worthy one. Often in the back
23 pages of our newspapers, there appears a story of a Negro
24 couple who has just attained their fiftieth wedding anniver-
25 sary, and it's generally in the back page; or a Negro woman

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1 who has reached the age of a hundred. This is their only
2 notice. This is their only opportunity to say to their
3 fellow citizens what they consider most important in their
4 lives.

5 Time after time the mother will put it in such a phrase
6 as this: "I raised five children," says the mother, "and
7 none of them got into trouble." Now, that is her human
8 dignity in its most basic form. If we can cherish and main-
9 tain that dignity, we will have moved a long, long way in
10 keeping more children out of the courts, out of the insti-
11 tutions, and in the schools and in the neighborhoods; and,
12 incidentally, it's worth taking note of this word "trouble".
13 It means different things to different people. It's the
14 thing that many Negro mothers are constantly afraid their
15 children will get into, and from which they tirelessly,
16 even desperately, seek to defend them.

17 Remember, so many of these families lived in the environ-
18 ments of trouble, the other America that you don't even know,
19 an America that I only know because my public life takes me
20 to it. But it's a world as foreign from what you and I
21 know ordinarily as outer space, only less clean and indeed
22 less exciting.

23 It's important to note that trouble is far more often
24 in the world outside of the family than in it. A noted
25 child psychiatrist, Robert Coles, who has made a very close

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1 study of many of the Negro families, makes this observation.
2 Now, I take a few moments to quote, as if I was your teacher,
3 for the next few minutes. And Robert Coles knows what he
4 speaks.

5 "There are considerable strengths in the
6 Negro family, psychological strengths, that have
7 enabled the Negro children to survive ordeals that
8 I, frankly, find it hard to imagine my children
9 surviving."

10 I can surely agree to that in my own personal life.

11 "My observation," says Mr. Coles, "convinces
12 me that the critical time for the Negro children is
13 the early teens when they face not the internal
14 strain of the family, but the external one of
15 the outside world in all of its clearcut unfriendli-
16 ness and rejection."

17 I quote these passages to you because I think too many
18 of us, white, like to sort of blame all the problems on
19 the family and the family structure, its fragility, when,
20 in fact, a goodly number of the problems, in fact, most of
21 the problems, are related to the very environment in which
22 this family is forced to live, and that is the environment
23 that we helped to create.

24 Let us move, therefore, from general principles to in-
25 dividual experiences. Dr. Coles interviewed one Negro mother,

1 and this is one of hundreds, but one that I selected because
2 I think it is typical of the responses that he had. This
3 mother whose youngest son had just graduated from high school
4 with honors and a scholarship to college, while his two
5 older brothers had made a mess of their lives, and here is
6 what the mother had to say in her own words. This is a very
7 moving story, and the story of life is always more moving than
8 any fiction that can be written.

9 This mother said, speaking of her boys, and remember
10 she loved them,

11 "They say we're lazy, and we don't pay much
12 attention to the law. Sure enough, I have two boys
13 to prove it and one to disprove it. So, it's two
14 against one. It's two to one against us in this
15 family, but I'd like to tell people why I think
16 my two boys went bad. I preached, and I hollered
17 at all three the same."

18 Mothers, I think, understand that.

19 "These older boys were good boys, just like
20 the little one; and I remember when they wanted
21 to study and be somebody just like him, but they
22 never had a chance. They were born too soon;
23 that was it. They went to school until it didn't
24 make any sense to go there because we had no
25 money, and they thought they should try to get

1 jobs.

2 "So they left school, and they tried, and
3 they tried, and there wasn't anything for them.
4 Now, most people keep busy, so the time flies
5 along, and they don't know what it is just to sit
6 and feel useless. I'll tell you what happens;
7 you just fold up and die.

8 "That's what drugs and liquor means; they
9 mean you died. I mean you have hung up on the
10 world because you keep calling, and there just
11 ain't no answer on the other end of the line.

12 "I watched my boys go bad like milk. You
13 know, when standing too long, there is no use for
14 it, so it gets sour. Now, at least one is going
15 to be okay, and I'll tell you it's because he
16 was born at the right time. I know it in my
17 bones that he would have turned out just like
18 the others except for what is happening now
19 with the integration and all of that.

20 "He says he's glad it happened to him, but
21 he feels bad because people think he's so special.
22 But the truth is that he was given a choice, and
23 his brothers weren't, so he feels dishonest some-
24 times. But I tell him, 'It's not you who are dis-
25 honest, son, it's the world, and they are finally

1 coming around to knowing it.' So we shall all
2 thank God for that." End of the mother's statement.

3 My fellow Americans, that is the story of too many
4 lives, but it is also the story of hope. It is the story
5 of despair for two, and the story of hope for one. It is
6 the story of a dismal and degrading past for all, the story
7 of a promise and a hopeful future for many. That is what
8 this year 1965 is all about. 'That is what civil rights'
9 demonstrations are about. That is what we're trying to do,
10 this one out of the three.

11 This one out of the three, that was the scholarship
12 student, the honor student. This is what we are seeking to
13 achieve in the many programs that we call the Great Society.
14 This is what the Civil Rights Act of 1964 meant, and this
15 is what the Voting Bill means, and this is what we mean by
16 the War on Poverty, and this is what we mean by Housing and
17 Urban Development.

18 And may I say even more significantly, this one of the
19 three that was the promise, this one of the three is what we
20 mean when we talk about America the Beautiful. So you see
21 you can tell great lessons in simple words that really do
22 not need a long dissertation to get at the truth.

23 Now, there is a great deal of human dignity in the words
24 of this mother, the kind of dignity that we should maintain,
25 encourage and nurture. Some of us have not been as fully

1 aware of the importance of human dignity as we ought to be.
2 We've been more concerned about money or position or power.
3 In spite of the forceful and persistent way in which
4 Ben Youngdahl and others kept reminding us of dignity, we
5 gave it a low priority. Too often in the past, for example,
6 we have overlooked the peace workers so that instead of
7 being able to carry out their professional responsibilities
8 for nurturing and developing and encouraging human dignity
9 and self-respect of the recipient families, they have become
10 mere conduits for public funds.

11 Very frankly, much of our welfare program has been what
12 I call a check book philosophy; rather than to rebuild lives,
13 just pay for the mistakes, just keep people on relief. It's
14 easier that way for some; it doesn't bother you so much,
15 particularly if you can disassociate yourself from them.
16 It's wrong, and we know it, and we are paying a high price
17 for that kind of philosophy and action.

18 There were some years ago insistent and indignant
19 demands for publication of the names of the families, the
20 individuals, who were receiving relief, in order to expose
21 the "chiselers". I want to be the first to condemn any
22 chiseler of private or public funds, whether he is in a
23 high place or low place; and there have been chiselers in
24 both. The poor have no monopoly on chiseling.

25 But this would have been the very worst way of exposing

1 chiselers. It would have humiliated nine hundred and ninety-
2 nine honest but unfortunate citizens for every petty chiseler
3 it turned up. That is not the way to enhance human dignity.
4 It is the surer way to destroy it. And I'm glad we hear
5 very little of it now a days; that is behind us.

6 And yet many an election is won on that. Many a
7 demagogue parades up and down the political trails saying
8 he has exposed those chiselers; and he was chiseling on
9 lives of people, chipping away their dignity, chipping away
10 the nine hundred and ninety-nine to find the guilty one.

11 In the past there have been too many 3:00 a.m. "Gang
12 Buster" raids on the recipients of aid to families with
13 dependent children to determine whether there was a man in
14 the house. I think these were disgraceful raids. There
15 must be better ways of finding this out, if we must.

16 And fortunately, in 1961, the Congress made it possible
17 for the states to give aid to families with dependent children
18 where the father was present but was unemployed. I am glad
19 to say that eighteen states have adopted this. More should,
20 and one of these days the District of Columbia will have its
21 own home rule, and then our Capitol will cleanse itself of
22 some of its limitations.

23 But there is a new day in our care of and help to the
24 needy. We must defend human dignity of the recipients of
25 relief, and we will continue to do so. But we have turned

1 a very important corner, and we are putting our major stress
2 on positive steps to enhance dignity and self-respect,
3 including getting those who are potentially employable off
4 of relief and into the main stream of the American economy.

5 And I might add that voices that are raised outside
6 would do more for their country if they were concerned about
7 the people in America that suffer (applause) -- that suffer
8 these human indignities, rather than try to proclaim them-
9 selves as knowledgeable experts in matters of national
10 security and foreign policy (applause).

11 What I speak of is not only good morals, but
12 it's good economic sense to turn what some people call a
13 tax eater into a taxpayer, but better yet, let me say, to
14 help people become first-class citizens with all the privi-
15 leges, rights and duties, rather than to be the recipients
16 of public assistance.

17 Now, a major turn in this direction came with the
18 passage of the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962, a program
19 that changed the whole direction of public welfare and
20 placed its emphasis upon prevention and rehabilitation. The
21 Congress then recognized that public welfare had to become
22 more than a salvage operation confined to picking up the
23 debris of human lives, that it had to become a positive and
24 consutructive force in society.

25 Public welfare must seek to strengthen and preserve

1 the family units. It must take a leading role in the attack
2 on such problems as dependency, delinquency, family break-
3 down, illegitimacy, ill health and disability. And unless
4 we do deal with these problems, they tend to regenerate
5 themselves from generation to generation, weakening the
6 whole fabric of our society.

7 And last year we made the great break-through. The
8 attack all along the front was greatly broadened and strenth-
9 ened with the launching under President Johnson's leadership
10 of a war that everyone can support, in which there can be
11 no conscientious objectors, in which you can tear up no cards,
12 the War on Poverty (applause).

13 But rather than term it negative, let's make it posi-
14 tive, and the legislation was positive. It is known as
15 The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and the key word is
16 "opportunity". The Great Society that we speak of is not a
17 welfare state; it's at best, and our hope, a state of
18 opportunity.

19 The War on Poverty is something entirely new. It's
20 experimental; it's controversial. It's not designed to make
21 poverty more acceptable or even respectable. It's designed
22 to get at the root causes. And may I say that this is the
23 most difficult assignment. This is not fighting the battle
24 of the depression, because most people are employed today.

25 The few unemployed, the four point six per cent left

1 unemployed, are the unskilled, the inadequately trained, the
2 victims of automation, the aged, and indeed a growing number
3 of the teen-agers, and a large percentage of them are what
4 we call the minority groups.

5 We have witnessed now for better than four generations
6 families locked into a cycle of poverty as if they were
7 imprisoned, and we seek now to fashion a key that will open
8 that prison. We seek now to break the chains that have bound
9 these people to those prison walls. Whether we can do it,
10 only time will tell, but I know we must make the effort.

11 I say this to you because I can hear now those that
12 will be the critics; I can hear them saying the money that
13 will be wasted. I can hear them criticize some of the
14 projects that will be launched. Oh, how I wish that people
15 were as tolerant in our effort to find the answers to social
16 troubles as we are to find the answers to disease itself.

17 We have spent millions, yeah, billions seeking the
18 answer to cancer, and yet we do not know it. But you do not
19 ostracize the doctor; you do not ask to tear down the
20 laboratory; you do not deny the funds. Instead, you say we
21 need more doctors; we need new laboratories; we must have
22 more of the funds. We must try, try, try, try until we find
23 the answer.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, may I say that this long linger-
25 ing social infection called poverty has taken even a greater

1 toll than cancer. And we must find the answer to poverty,
2 the poverty of the purse, the poverty that comes with help-
3 lessness, with hopelessness, with despair, the poverty of
4 the life of the human being, and I think we are going to.

5 And I appeal to the young in this audience, above all,
6 to have the faith that we will find that answer, if for no
7 other reason that it is in your interest, those of you that
8 are not poor, because this rich American society, like any
9 great organic structure or like any instrument or institution
10 will be held back by that incipient infection called poverty.

11 We will never be able to do our best. And as surely
12 as I stand before you, we will be called upon in the years
13 ahead to do better than we have done thus far. If there is
14 any hope for a better world, it's here. If there's any chance
15 for mankind to lift himself out of the morass and despair of
16 illiteracy and ignorance and hunger, it's because we will
17 help. And we will only be able to help as much as we have
18 the strength to sustain that effort.

19 Now, there have been many criticisms written of the
20 welfare programs thus far, and I want to say that some of
21 those criticisms may be well founded. But public officials
22 and welfare administrators alike should be mighty accustomed
23 to criticism.

24 Harry Truman had the best way of explaining what we
25 ought to be able to do. He said, "If you can't take the

1 heat, get out of the kitchen."

2 And I want to say that we have to be able to take the
3 heat because sometimes this criticism is rather refreshing,
4 and it gives us new direction. Instead of being criticized
5 for doing too much today, we're being criticized for doing
6 too little. That is a switch. But criticism and self-
7 criticism, painful as they are, are also good for any pro-
8 fessional. And if that criticism is sometimes on the mark,
9 it should be heeded.

10 Today there is room for everyone in this war against
11 poverty, as I have said, particularly experienced welfare
12 administrators and neophytes, too. And the important thing
13 is that we all participate, all who should devote most of their
14 time and energy to fighting poverty and not each other.
15 And when I speak of this War on Poverty, particularly to a
16 college audience, I do not speak only of the efforts of your
17 government, important as they are, I speak to you as a
18 citizen with extra privilege and extra responsibility.

19 As I leave you today, I want to remind you of that
20 responsibility. You are the fortunate ones; I have been
21 fortunate. I was given an education in the public schools
22 of my state, at a great state university, in fact, two of
23 them. I will never be able to repay that debt.

24 What student is it who thinks that his tuition fee
25 pays for the library. What kind of wealth do you think you

1 have that can pay for Shakespeare's drama, for the writings
2 of the Greeks and the Romans, for the Scriptures themselves,
3 and for the poetry of the great poets. Your little pittance
4 of a tuition, large as it may seem at the time, is but a
5 small, little down payment. At least it seems that way to
6 me.

7 I think, therefore, that while at times we complain
8 about these costs of education, that we ought to remember that
9 the real cost is not having an education, not having it.
10 All the statistics are manifoldly clear. Statistics prove
11 little they say, but they are helpful to remind one.

12 A college-trained student is predestined to have a
13 better life than a high school graduate, and a high school
14 graduate is bound to have a better life than the graduate of
15 an elementary school. It's as clear as the numbers on the
16 calendar, not a shadow of a doubt. If only you have considered
17 life in the terms of dollars, the facts are there. Every
18 college graduate earns two times in his life what a high
19 school graduate earns, and a high school graduate earns three
20 times in his life what an elementary school graduate earns.

21 These are statistics verified by public and private
22 sources, but more importantly, I think that the purpose of
23 a college education is to learn how to enjoy life, how better
24 to use life. So I call upon college students today to be
25 the self-appointed crusaders for a better life, not only for

1 yourself, but somebody else, because surely if we believe
2 that America can't isolate itself from a world, how do you
3 think that you can isolate yourself from a community.

4 We're all the victims of, or we are all the beneficiaries
5 of the environment in which we live. My hope and prayer has
6 been that I could live to be a hundred, for many reasons;
7 I'd like to see what is going to happen, but more importantly
8 I'd like to live that long so that with a lifetime of public
9 service, I could start to pay the interest on the debt that
10 I owe this country for the privilege of an education. I
11 think it would take that long before one even was able to
12 bite into the principal.

13 So take it seriously, you are needed. I have young
14 people say, 'What is it I could do; what difference does it
15 make?' I will tell you what difference it makes. The
16 Peace Corps needs you, in this war on illiteracy and hunger
17 and poverty in the world, and it needs you desperately.
18 And the greater the Peace Corps, the less the possibility
19 of the need of any other kind of corps.

20 This world of ours is divided between the rich and
21 the poor, and the rich get richer and fewer in numbers, and
22 the poor get poorer and larger in numbers. The gap between
23 the rich and the poor grows, and every leader, spiritual and
24 political, has told us that if this gap continues to widen,
25 it spells disaster, and it does.

1 As surely as I stand before this audience today, if in
2 the balance of my lifetime the gap between the rich and the
3 poor continues to grow, this world of ours will be torn
4 into shreds. When man has created the instruments of his
5 own destruction, but that same man has created the instruments
6 of his own salvation, the same mind, the same intellect,
7 the same science, the same technology which has created and
8 invented these fabulous and unbelievable, horrendous instru-
9 ments of destruction can also develop and can release and
10 make applicable new inventions and discoveries for a better
11 life.

12 We can heal the sick, and we can feed the hungry, and
13 we can teach the illiterate; we can. And the purpose of --
14 my purpose of being here today is not merely to honor
15 Ben Youngdahl, even though that is enough for any man, my
16 purpose here is to arouse in young Americans the desire to
17 serve mankind, the desire to serve it here at home first,
18 and then to serve in broader areas abroad.

19 I witness young people that (applause) -- I witness
20 young people that seek to help others obtain the right to
21 vote, that teach them how to register, that teach them indeed
22 how to vote, and they go to far away places; more power
23 to them. I have encouraged this, but let me say that you can
24 do a job right at home, too, in the very areas of America
25 where there is no inhibition, where there is no impediment,

1 where there are no laws that restrict us, where there are no
2 social practices that deny us, even in those areas, American
3 people are poor voters; very, very, all too often, too little
4 interested in their government and in their country.

5 You do not need to travel to Afghanistan, Pakistan,
6 India or the Middle East or Africa to serve the poor. You
7 are needed today in "Vista", Volunteers in Service and Training
8 for America. You are needed in hospitals and community
9 centers. You are needed in the slums and the ghettos. You
10 are needed in the health centers and recreation centers.
11 You are needed as teachers.

12 Oh, what a great demand there is going to be. We've
13 passed these tremendous programs of Aid to Education, and
14 some people think that is it, because if you can aid education,
15 your problems are over. But, my dear friends, the money is
16 available, but where are the teachers. The money is avail-
17 able, but the buildings as yet have not been constructed,
18 and the curriculum has not as yet been changed. There is
19 work to be done.

20 I encourage young Americans today to be volunteers.
21 This is a volunteer generation. More young people have
22 volunteered for social service in the last decade than the
23 preceding one hundred years. Let that be to their eternal
24 credit. But we need to double the number of volunteers.
25 You are needed.

1 You are needed to encourage others, lest it be too
2 late.

3 This was the statement; this was the lesson of your
4 own prophet. And it is rare that a prophet is honored in
5 his own country, but Ben Youngdahl is so honored. And it's
6 even rarer, may I say, for a prophet who sees his own
7 prophecies coming true.

8 And you, Ben Youngdahl, are doubly fortunate, as you
9 deserve to be. You are highly honored, respected and ad-
10 mired by your colleagues at this great university and by
11 the people of this state and nation. But knowing you, I
12 think that you derive a much deeper satisfaction from the
13 knowledge that the gospel of human dignity that you have been
14 preaching these many years, human dignity even for the last,
15 the lost and the least, as you like to say, has not fallen
16 on deaf ears. It has not fallen on deaf ears in
17 Hubert Humphrey.

18 You have been an inspiration to me; you have been an
19 inspiration to thousands, and I hope that somehow the words
20 that I utter today can be an inspiration to some young man or
21 some young woman to do more than they ever intended to do for
22 somebody else. Because the only way that I know to make the
23 dream of this great republic of ours come true is for us to
24 believe in the validity of that dream, to believe in our
25 vision, to believe in our hopes.

1 This is a nation that you were taught to believe is
2 one nation, not two, not north and south, but one nation
3 under God, recognizing our place in the universe, with deep
4 humility, indivisible, not divided on a basis of race,
5 creed or religion, with liberty and justice for all. Because
6 if there is not liberty and justice for all, there is no
7 liberty or justice for any.

8 I commend to you the message of your country.
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