



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

THURSDAY
P. M.

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
38th QUADRENNIAL SESSION OF
THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCHES
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
MAY 2, 1968

*That it is an
undeveloped nation*

I think, today, of two earlier conventions here in Philadelphia.

One I know only from history: The first Convention of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. That was in 1816 -- a half century back in the night of slavery before the daybreak of the Emancipation.

Richard Allen, - your first bishop, had been born here -- a slave who later bought his way out of bondage.

It was here in Philadelphia, in the St. George Methodist Church, that Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, kneeling in prayer, were asked to move to a special seat in a section set aside for Negroes. They left the service, along with their brothers and sisters; and the formation of this great body, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, resulted from that action.

Your heritage is from men and women who stood up for freedom back before most people even knew what it meant -- and from those who sustained it through the century and a half of its loneliness.

A hundred and thirty years later, at another Convention here in Philadelphia -- this time of the Democratic Party -- the issue was strangely the same.

A group of us -- small at first -- demanded at that Convention that humanity be placed above politics. We could not claim Richard Allen's courage. It was more than a century too late for that. Only our convictions matched his.

The demands we made then seem timid now: for platform planks that the poll tax be abolished -- that lynching be made a federal crime -- that segregation by race in the armed forces be stopped -- that a fair employment practices commission be established.

I was privileged to lead that fight -- to protest before that Convention this nation's too small "faith in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God" -- to answer, when they said we were "rushing the issue of civil rights" that "We are already 172 years late."

We won that fight.

Those who disagreed left the Convention. It was a turning point in the history of civil rights.

We won the election in November.

We passed -- eventually -- those laws, and others beyond them.

Yet I speak of this today in more humility than pride.

For even now -- another 20 years later -- words spoken at that convention in 1946 are still true: "People -- human beings -- this is the issue of the 20th century."

Four weeks ago, I sat in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and heard the minister say in his prayer -- standing behind the coffin of Martin Luther King -- "Do we face, Oh Lord, community or chaos?"

The Poor People -- mostly black of skin, some brown, some yellow, some red, a few white -- march on Washington.

The President's Commission on Civil Disorders reports that we are moving toward two societies, one black, one white separate and unequal.

We have civil rights today -- that the courts will protect; but so much less can even yet be said of human rights -- which depend on the respect of neighbors and are real only in terms of the self-respect of the individual.

I count this, along with peace, the central issue of our times. I expect, in the months ahead, to contribute the best that is in me to the formulation -- through democracy's essential process -- of a new and a complete national commitment to human rights: to meet and to meet now the hard, tough problems two centuries of the indecent denial of human equality in this country has created.

This means meeting the problems of hard-core unemployment -- of rats and roaches and rotten houses -- and disease and ignorance -- in America's urban and rural slums.

It means listening closely, as I have this week through the offices of the government, to the demands of the Poor People's marchers in Washington -- for theirs is an authentic voice of the America which has been left out.

It means dealing squarely and effectively with those who defeat their own cause by violence and riots and civil disorders -- for they undermine the determined efforts of those of us who are trying hardest to make equal rights into equal results.

It means doing everything possible to serve the ends and to use the means set out in the Report of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders.

I propose at the same time -- and here today -- to call upon the forces of good that are at work within this society.

I did not mention idly either your history or mine. I know what the African Methodist Episcopal Church stands for. I think you know what I stand for. We can say to one another what would be misunderstood if others -- black or white -- were to say it.

This is that the vast majority of people in this country who are white are not racist; the overwhelming majority of people in this country who are black are not rioters; and most of us, black and white, are praying today and working today for the same today for the same things for our children.

We know we haven't done our job well -- but most of us are trying mighty hard now to do it right.

We know that time is running out on us now for meeting a crisis which has been more gain in the last five years than in the hundred years before them.

We know that action-- hard action -- has to be taken; that the costs are high for doing what has to be done -- and that these costs have to be paid; that the worst mistake will be to rely on words when deeds are called for.

But it is high time for that great working majority of Americans who do believe deeply in each other, who do think of people as people, who love each other without the stain of prejudice or the strain of self-consciousness -- to say so and to let our voices be heard above those who teach division, who preach despair and destruction, and who prophecy chaos and catastrophe.

The sense I find at this Conference today is the sense not of Negro spokesmen -- or white -- but of American leaders.

Not white moderates or black moderates but responsible people.

Not racial militants but social militants.

Not black power or white supremacy but social justice.

Not the other America but the only America.

Soul brothers? Yes, In the brotherhood of M A N.

It is vitally important that we be clear about the basic elements in the essential understanding among us.

We find no satisfaction in the superficialities of opportunity that is equal in form but not in fact.

Jobs are important -- but they aren't enough if they mean only the right of a person who is black to work for a person who is white. The freedom to work has to include the opportunity to own -- to be a proprietor as well as an employee.

That means developing an active and working partnership between government and business to make financing, insurance and training in business techniques available in inner-city neighborhoods where "private enterprise" has too often meant exploitation by somebody else.

In most of our cities, it means helping to build a whole structure of new, locally owned businesses that communities will value and protect because they are their own.

Open housing doesn't count unless it is in an open neighborhood and in an open economy.

It doesn't count unless it is in a neighborhood in the fullest sense. And I think our cities must once again become clusters of neighborhoods where a good life is really possible for all.

An integrated school is no good to a child who comes there with an empty stomach, or from an environment of insecurity and tension, or to be taught by inferior teachers.

Equal opportunity is a fraud unless it includes the full opportunity to develop everything that contributes to self-respect. The true measure of opportunity is what it permits of pride.

More than this:

All we are doing and propose to do will fall short until there is a full sharing -- black and white, "majority groups" and "minority groups" -- of participation and responsibility.

The trouble with most government programs today is that they are based on somebody's doing something for somebody else. The programs that show the greatest promise are those that permit the largest possible participation and responsibility on the part of those who are principally involved.

This is proven by the OIC program established here in Philadelphia, by the Urban League's recruitment and training programs, and by such projects as PRIDE, Inc. in Washington.

The Negro community should have and should take a far larger part than it has up to now in the operation of the necessary machinery of law and order. We must move swiftly and imaginatively to give Negroes a major share in the protection of their neighborhoods -- and others as well.

There is much more than amusement in the recent proposal of one civil rights organization to start an "Adopt a cop" program.

It is especially with the younger generation that there must be joint participation and responsibility in meeting today's situation.

Every major industry is today recruiting talent, and many are giving special consideration to the "hard-core" or "minority group" unemployed. Opportunities are expanding. You can best find the young men and women who are still estranged and often hostile, and match them up to the right program, and then provide that encouragement and aspiration that is missing and without which the case is lost.

This is in your tradition.

In 1856, before the Land Grant Act, you bought a building and 13 acres in Green County, Ohio, to open a door of opportunity to slaves who found their way across the Ohio River. You named it Wilberforce University, after that great British foe of the slave trade. For over 100 years you have been guiding your young through the fog and mist of ignorance to the marvelous light of knowledge and opportunity.

Today, more than ever before, when the prophets of despair would divide our country into warring camps, our young people need the assurance that education pays off, that jobs are available to the prepared mind and that America needs their skills and productivity as much as they need a job and a meaningful career.

I have said that this is one of the two central issues of our time, and asserted plainly that it requires action going beyond what has been discussed here -- that good will among good people is not good enough.

I have sought at the same time to assert the essential importance of recognizing fully the elements of "community" we have established.

I propose to face squarely every weakness we have,
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This includes the moral and spiritual imperatives
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I propose to marshal the spirit of that great working
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And the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard what
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Cong Barrett
Cong Byrne
Cong Green
Cong Nick
Cong Eibberg

Greetings from President Johnson

✓ Sen Clark
✓ Mayor Tate
✓ Bishop Bright
Bishop Hickman

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PRIDE

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ARDON B. JUDD, JR.
1750 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

May 2, 1968

BY HAND

Mr. Ted Van Dyk
Office of the Vice President
Executive Office Building
Room 176
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Ted:

Please find enclosed two copies of the
verbatim, unedited transcript of Vice President
Humphrey's speech which he delivered to the 38th
Session of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
at The Spectrum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on
May 2nd.

Yours sincerely,

Ardon B. Judd Jr.

Ardon B. Judd, Jr.

/ ABJ/fbm

Enclosure

{*only 1 copy found in files}
{K. Johnson}
{Nov. 1973}

ADDRESS OF THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
Vice President of the United States

AT THE 38th QUADRENNIAL SESSION OF THE A.M.E. CHURCH
Thursday, May 2, 1968
The Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Ladies and gentlemen, isn't it wonderful to have such good friends who say such nice things about you?

Bishop Bright, Bishop Hickman, my old friend Bishop Baker, the other Bishops and the very charming wives of the Bishops: I am very happy that I can have your influence. (Applause) The Deputy Mayor, Mr. Charles Bowser, who has been so helpful in giving us the direction of our Youth Program in this city, the members of the delegation of the Congress from this wonderful area of America, Philadelphia, and this great State of Pennsylvania, I want to salute in particular a champion of people's rights, of their aspirations and their hopes, one who is an independent-minded man, fearless, but works his heart out for the people, and that is my good friend Senator Joseph Clark. (Applause)

I indeed take great pride in saying that the political leadership here in this community, under Congressman Green, is of the very best. (Applause) Congressman Green and

GILBERT BOND

Congressman Barrett and Congressman Byrne and Congressman Nix and Congressman Eilberg, and all of these good men -- I want to thank you first of all for accompanying me on this visit, for coming here with me so that we can pay our respects to this great spiritual movement, that we can join here in the 38th Quadrennial Session of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches. What a special pleasure this is and, by the way, I salute also and pay my respects to Ambassador Clancy, the Ambassador of the Republic of Liberia. (Applause) I visited the Ambassador's homeland and we had a wonderful time there with President Tubman and the other officers of government. The Ambassador is Liberia's representative to Israel. He is a fine public servant for his people and his country.

Well, there is so much that I want to say, Mr. Mayor and members of Congress, Bishops, ladies and gentlemen. First, I want to say that I had a wonderful, wonderful visit here about two months ago, maybe two and a half months ago, in the office of Bishop Bright. I walked over to the building and I just walked in on him, unannounced, unnoticed, and I think uninvited, but I came in to see him. (Applause) We spent an hour together -- an hour of fellowship; an hour of joy and pleasure, and he was kind enough at that time to indicate that I might be invited to come here today and, really,

that's why I am here. I admire this good man so much.

Bishops and your associates, we have people here from fifty states of our great United States of America, people here from Africa, from South America, from Canada. This is not only a conference; it is an international conference and it is a national conference. (Applause)

I listened and I participated in the singing of "America." So did you. It was beautiful and every word has great meaning to us, and I can't think of any people in the world that have a greater right to sing with full heart and with full voice that magnificent hymn of ours, that great patriotic song, "America," because it was the land where your fathers died -- from the beginning (applause), not only the land of pilgrims' pride, but when young men and women in our schools finally get their chance to study Negro history, as they ought to (applause), they are going to learn that the blood of the American Negro was given in the battle for our freedom and our liberty. Even before the Negro was free himself, he fought for our freedom, for my freedom. (Applause)

Well, I have a message for you today, Bishop Bright, and I want to share it with you. I am an old hand at Methodist meetings, I should tell you. My father was a Methodist layman. He was preparing to give the layman's service on the day that he was stricken and taken from us. I

know what it means to attend a good Methodist camp meeting, too. If I get filled up with a hallelujah spirit ahead of you, don't let it bother you a bit. (Laughter and applause) I have got a lot of it and it is apt to get away from me a little bit here.

Today, I think of two earlier conventions held here in Philadelphia. One I only know from the history books, the first convention of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. That was in 1816, a half century back in the night of slavery before the daybreak of emancipation.

Richard Allen, your first Bishop, had been born here, a slave who later bought his way out of bondage. It was here in Philadelphia, in the St. George Methodist Church, that Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, kneeling in prayer, were asked to move to a special seat in a section set aside for Negroes. And they left -- they left that service, along with their brothers and sisters, and the formation of this great body, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, resulted from that action. (Applause)

So, we speak of your heritage, and you can be proud of it. Your heritage is from men and women who stood up for freedom back before most people even knew what it meant (applause) -- and from those who sustained it through the century and a half of its loneliness.

One hundred thirty years later, at another convention here in Philadelphia -- this time of the Democratic Party -- the issue was strangely the same. A group of us, a small group at first, demanded at that convention that humanity be placed above politics. (Applause) Now, we could not claim Richard Allen's courage. First of all, we weren't bishops. No, we couldn't claim his courage. It was more than a century too late for that. Only our conviction matched his.

The demands we made then, those demands that Mayor Tate told you of a moment ago, seem mighty timid now. We asked for platform planks in a political party's program: that the poll tax be abolished; that lynching be made a federal crime; that segregation by race in the Armed Forces be stopped; and that a Fair Employment Practices Commission be established. (Applause) My good friends, my fellow Americans, what modest requests -- and yet what results.

I was privileged to lead that fight from Convention Hall platform, to protest before that convention that this nation's too little "faith in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God," and to answer -- when they said that we were "rushing the issue of civil rights," I said, "We are already 172 years late." (Applause)

We won that fight. We won it! Those who

disagreed left the convention. It was the turning point in the history of civil rights, and we not only won the fight at the convention; we won the election in November.

(Applause)

But more importantly, friends, we passed, eventually, those very laws that we asked for, and others far beyond them.

Yet I speak of this today in more humility than pride, for even now, a little more than twenty years later, words spoken at that convention in 1946 are still true: "People -- human beings -- this is the issue of the twentieth century."

Four weeks ago, I sat in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and heard the minister say in his prayer, standing behind the coffin of Martin Luther King, "Do we face, O Lord, community or chaos?" That is the question, isn't it?

The poor people -- mostly black of skin, some brown, some yellow, some red, a few white -- march on Washington. The President's Commission on Civil Disorders reports that we are moving toward two societies, one black and one white, separate and unequal.

We have civil rights today that the courts will protect; but, oh, so much less can even yet be said of human

rights (applause), which depend on the respect of neighbors and are real only in terms of the self-respect of the individual.

I count this, along with peace, the central issue of our times. I expect, in the months ahead, to contribute the best that is in me to the formulation, through democracy's essential process, of a new and complete national commitment to human rights (applause): to meet and to meet now the hard, tough problems two centuries of the indecent denial of human equality in this country has created. I know the task is great. I know the difficulties are many. All the more glorious our victory when we attain it! (Applause)

What I say means the meeting of the problems of hard-core unemployment. It means meeting the problems of rats and roaches and rotten houses. (Applause) It means meeting the problems of disease in the poor people of the ghetto, and ignorance in America's slums and in her rural areas.

And it means listening closely, as I have this week in the offices of the government, to the demands of the poor people's marchers in Washington -- for theirs is an authentic voice of the America which has been left out, ostracized.

Yes, it means dealing squarely, honestly,

effectively with those who defeat their own cause by violence and riots and civil disorders (applause) -- for, my fellow Americans, those who engage in such undermine the determined efforts of those of us who are trying hardest to make equal rights into equal results. And that's what we want.

It means doing everything possible to serve the ends and to use the means set out in the report of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders.

I propose at the same time -- and here today -- to call upon the forces of good and decency that are at work within this society to correct these inequities and these social injustices -- and I call upon you for your help.

(Applause)

You see, I do believe that there are great forces of good and decency in our country -- great forces -- and I also believe with that great English statesman, Edmund Burke who once said, "Evil triumphs when good men fail to act." (Applause) So, as good people, we shall act.

I did not mention idly either your history or mine. It had a purpose. I know what the African Methodist Episcopal Church stands for. I think you know, too, what I stand for. (Applause) We know each other. We can say to one another what might be and what would be misunderstood

if others, either black or white, were to say it.

And we can say just this, that the vast majority -- I repeat, the vast majority of the people of this country who are white are not racists (applause), and the overwhelming majority of people in this country who are black are not rioters (applause); and most of us, black and white, are praying today and working today for the same thing, for our children. We want the same things. (Applause)

We want an education for those children. We want a decent home in which to live. We want a good income to provide a good standard of living. We want to be treated as men and women, all of us, black or white. That's what this country stands for. (Applause)

But in all candor, we haven't done our job well -- but most of us are trying mighty hard now to do our job well and to do it right. (Applause)

We know that time is running out on us now for meeting a crisis which has been building up for two centuries, but we know, too, that there has been more gain in the last five years than in the hundred years before. (Applause)

And we know that action, hard action, prompt action, has been taken. We know that the costs are high for doing what has to be done, and we know that the costs are even higher for failing to do what has to be done. (Applause)

We know these costs have to be met -- that the worst mistake will be to rely on words when deeds -- deeds, national deeds, individual deeds -- are called for. (Applause)

But, my fellow Americans, it is high time for that great working majority of Americans who believe, and believe deeply in each other, who do think of people as people, who love each other without the stain of prejudice or the strain of self-consciousness -- it is time for that great majority to say so and to let our voices be heard (applause) -- to let our voices be heard above the division, above those who teach division, who preach despair, who advocate violence and destruction, and who prophesy chaos and catastrophe. That is not what we want.

The sense that I find in this Conference today is the sense not of a Negro spokesman -- or a white spokesman -- but of American leaders, every one of you here (applause) -- not white moderates or black moderates, but responsible people; not racial militants but social militants (applause); not black power or white supremacy but social justice for everyone. (Applause)

I sense here your commitment in this Conference not to what they call "the other America," but the only America, our America. (Applause)

Soul brothers? Yes, soul brothers in the brotherhood of man. (Applause)

Remember, it was God Almighty who gave to man -- not to the beast in the field but to man -- soul, spirit, and gave it to every man. (Applause)

Of course we are soul brothers. We worship the same God, we live in the same country, we walk the same streets -- of course we belong together. (Applause)

Let no one deny us. Let no one deny us, my friends. Remember what Benjamin Franklin said once in this city: "We either hang together or we will hang separately." (Applause)

I almost got to be a Methodist preacher here. (Laughter)

VOICE: Keep it up!

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I'll do so. I taught Sunday School in a Methodist Church for a long, long time, so I am just loaded up.

Well, friends, it is vitally important -- vitally important -- that we understand our unity. It is vitally important that we declare the basic elements in the essential understanding among us. We find no satisfaction in the superficialities of opportunity that is equal in form but not in fact. Jobs are important, yes, but they aren't enough if

they mean only the right of a person who is black to work for a person who is white. (Applause) The freedom to work has to include also the opportunity to own, to be the proprietor, to be the boss. (Applause)

That means equal opportunity. That means developing the working partnership between government and business to make financing, insurance and training in business techniques available in inner-city neighborhoods where "Private Enterprise" has too often meant exploitation of the people there by somebody else. (Applause)

In most of our cities, it means helping to build a whole structure of new, locally owned businesses that communities will value and protect because they are their own. One sure way of preventing destruction of property is when the people themselves own it. (Applause)

We know the great British philosopher, John Stuart Mill, once said, "If a man has nothing to do for his country, he shall have no love for it." (Applause) Ponder that. Let me put it another way: If a man has something to do for his country, if he has a stake in it, he will love it, he will defend it, he will take care of it. (Applause)

Open housing -- I have fought for it, the Pennsylvania delegation has fought for it. Your Mayor has taken a magnificent stand for it all over America. But, open housing

doesn't count unless it is an open neighborhood and in an open economy. It has to be open all the way.

And it doesn't count unless it is in a neighborhood in the fullest sense -- a neighborhood of neighbors, not strangers; a neighborhood of friends, not enemies; and I think our cities must once again become clusters of neighborhoods where a good life is really possible for all. An integrated school is of little good to a child who comes there with an empty stomach or from an environment of insecurity and tension, or taught by inferior teachers.
(Applause)

Equal opportunity is a fraud unless it includes the full opportunity to develop everything that contributes to self-respect and human dignity. (Applause) The true measure of opportunity in this land of ours is that it permits of pride -- pride in yourself, pride in your people, pride in your name and your family and your country -- humble pride in being an American. That's what we want. (Applause)

Now, just a little bit more. All we are doing, and proposing to do -- and we have been doing much, much more than some wanted us to do.

Oh, you know, I must say I meant to bring the greetings of the President to you. (Applause) I know why some people said they didn't like President Lyndon Johnson --

because as a Southerner, he came to the White House and fought for every American, regardless of race, color or creed.

(Applause)

Quite frankly, I honor our President all the more for the enemies he has made. (Applause)

Well, I said we ~~have~~ tried to do some things and we propose to do more, but all of it will fall short unless there is a full showing -- black and white -- majority groups and minority groups -- of participation, being partners and having responsibilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, those are the two words for our time: Be a participant; be in on it, not only government for the people but government of the people and by the people -- all of the people. That's what we mean by participation. (Applause)

And not only arousing people's emotions but responsibility -- responsibility, like this beloved Bishop and others who represent this country, Bishop Bright, a responsible American. (Applause) Through his work and his prayers, he has done more for social justice in this country than many people who shout from the housetops. (Applause)

I didn't have that written in here, Bishop, but I surely feel it in here, I'll tell you that, and it came out honestly and sincerely.

The trouble with most of the government programs today is that they are all too often based on somebody's doing something for somebody else. The programs that show the greatest promise are those that permit the largest possible participation and responsibility on the part of those who are principally involved -- in other words, programs that help yourself help yourself. (Applause)

This is proven by the OIC program of my good friend, Dr. Leon Sullivan right here in Philadelphia, established here in this city; by the Urban League's Recruitment and Training programs; by such projects as Pride, Inc. in Washington, D. C.

The Negro community should have and should take a far larger part than it has up to now in the operation of the necessary machinery of law and order. (Applause) We must move swiftly and imaginatively to give Negroes in America a major share in the protection of their neighborhoods -- and other neighborhoods, as well. (Applause)

You know, we are making progress, but we need to make it faster -- we need to make it faster. Let me tell you a little story. You know, I moved into Southwest Washington from Northwest Washington. Northwest Washington was pretty much an all-white community. Southwest Washington is where the slums used to be and they cleaned them out under an urban

renewal plan and we have high-income housing, medium-income housing, low-income housing all within three blocks.

In fact, the little boys from a public housing unit only three blocks down the street come to see me Sunday mornings. I take them up into my apartment and we have Coca-Cola together.

I want to show you how things work. I moved in that neighborhood, which was predominantly Negro, and you know, I have lived there and the property values didn't go down one nickel (laughter and applause), and the folks haven't told me to leave. We are getting along just beautifully. As a matter of fact, it can be that way in every city in these United States of America. (Applause)

You know, there is much more than amusement in the recent proposal of one civil rights organization to start an "Adopt A Cop" program -- yes, indeed, to adopt a policeman. Maybe he will be your brother. Maybe it will be your sister, maybe it will be mine -- but become acquainted, adopt one.

It is especially with the younger generation that there must be joint participation and responsibility in meeting today's situation. Our appeal must be to our young above all others. We must have the patience to talk with them, the patience to work with them, and we must have the

performance to show them that we are honest men and women and that we keep our word. (Applause)

Every major industry is today recruiting talent, and many are giving special consideration to the "hard-core" or "minority group" unemployed. Opportunities are expanding. Things are changing. We are moving from protest to progress, and we are moving faster than most people ever dreamed of. Yes, you right here in this audience -- and I speak especially now to you -- you can find the young men and women who are still angry, estranged and hostile, and you can match them up to the right program and then provide them with that encouragement and aspiration that is missing and without which the case is lost. I want you to be the missionaries for opportunity. Get that old Methodist spirit and find a young person and help him find his way to decency. (Applause)

You didn't build this great church by sitting on the laurels of yesterday -- not one bit. You built this church, you created this church, by a determination to save souls. Well, let me tell you, my dear friends, there are souls to be saved by the thousands and some of those souls can be saved if you talk to them and help them find a job, bring them back to school, give them the help they need. (Applause)

You can do it better than I can do it, and I come to you asking you to make this Conference a Conference

of dedication, a Conference to help the youth of America, your youth, to become part of the country and to have a part in it and a place in the country. (Applause)

Now, this is your commission. In 1856, before the Land Grant Act, you bought a building and 13 acres in Green County, Ohio -- you see, I have been checking up on you. You bought that building and 13 acres in Green County in Ohio to open a door of opportunity to slaves who found their way across the Ohio River. You named it Wilberforce University. (Applause) You named it after that great British foe of the slave trade. For over one hundred years you have been guiding your young through the fog and the mist of ignorance to the marvelous light of knowledge and opportunity.

What a remarkable record! I would like to say to my white brethren, Could we have done so well in one hundred years from slavery to this? I doubt it. (Applause)

Today, more than ever before when the prophets of despair would divide our country into warring camps, our young people need the assurance that education pays off, that jobs are available to the prepared mind, and that America needs their skills and needs them desperately, and needs their productivity as much as they need a job and a meaningful career.

You see, the nation needs them and they need the nation. Let's help them find it. (Applause)

I have said that this is one of the two central issues of our time, and asserted plainly that it requires action going beyond what has been discussed here -- that good will among good people is just not enough.

I have sought at the same time to assert the essential importance of recognizing fully the elements of "community" that we have established. I propose to face squarely every weakness we have, not to run from a single one, and to face up to every mistake that we have made.

I propose also to lead from the strength that we have, and this includes the moral and the spiritual imperatives that have been generated by the African Methodist Episcopal Church. (Applause)

My dear friends, if you will but let me, I propose to marshal the spirit of that great working majority of all Americans who believe firmly that among the rights of man none is more important, more fundamental, and more essential than the right to be respected because a man belongs to the human race. (Applause)

And now I leave you with these words: And the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard what things we can do together, united, determined and unafraid.

(Prolonged applause.)



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