

000624

Rev Battle  
Rev Robinson  
Aaron Henry

EXCERPTS FROM  
THE REMARKS OF  
THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
RALLY OF INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
BLACK CHURCHES OF THE TWIN CITIES

Minneapolis, Minnesota  
October 25, 1970

It is clear that the current Administration has misread the commitment of the American people to decency and fair play. A recent report of the Civil Rights Commission states that there has been a breakdown in government enforcement of civil rights laws.

Here again this administration has refused to provide leadership.

Our economy is in trouble. Jobs are down. Prices are up. Teenage unemployment - way up

But all we hear from our national leaders is the rhetoric of fear. There is no message of hope --- no inspiration --- only fear.

000025  
L Instead of bringing us together, they have divided us further.

L The great promise of the 1960s has not been realized. The failure has not been that of a lack of commitment from the American people.

The failure has been one of leadership. The plain fact is we haven't had the vigorous moral leadership needed to move this country to social justice, to inspire the necessary will and determination to fulfill our national goals.

need leadership

L People need a sense of a government that cares about them. Some people despair of the fairness of the system. They see that some laws are implemented while others are not. It is the responsibility of the government to not only fairly and impartially enforce the law, but to heal the rift in the nation.

L Civil Rights Commission Chairman, the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, has said, "The government's failure to practice what its laws preach has seriously undermined the credibility of the government's total civil rights efforts --- the country is badly split and on a collision course."

L We must avoid such a collision. We must have that example of positive moral leadership in order to counteract the

present widespread disillusionment with the responsiveness of the political system.

↳ In the mutuality of interest, we are all united, We all want our children to be healthy and well-educated. We all want our parents to enjoy dignity and security in their twilight years.

We all want the respect of our neighbors and the love of our children. Again and again Americans have demonstrated their willingness to share and sacrifice for the common good. People want to help others.

I believe, and I believe it strongly, that the majority of the people, both black and white, want to see this problem solved and they want to see it solved fairly and nonviolently.

↳ And this is where I think I as a liberal can do the most good. I think liberals can get this nation back together. It's not going to be an easy task, but I think we can find a common denominator, a mutuality of interest. We've got to conserve our gains and plan for new advances. My role and the role of all political leaders today must be to try and learn how to reconcile our differences, to be a healer, to show a better way.

L Yes, we have made great progress. It is important to recognize that so we can approach the future with faith.

L Faith in our ability to solve the remaining serious problems in the country.

L Yes, and faith in the system and in its institutions.

Let us look at the record.

L In 1960:

---There were 40 million poor people in a nation of 180 million --- 22%. Only 39% of the black children in America graduated from high school.

L--Black Americans in the South of this country could not eat a hamburger at a lunch counter.

L The elderly in America --- a large portion of them --- lived in mortal fear of the pressing financial burden of any major medical expense.

L Teachers in America were scandalously underpaid, and the average state in America pays just \$472 per year to educate a pupil.

---Non-white families in America earned only 52% of what white families earned.

---And in America in 1960, only 23% of the federal budget was spent for domestic programs.

That was the situation in 1960 in America. Now, let's take a look ~~ten years later~~ only 9 years later.

↳ The forty million in poverty have been reduced in eight years to 25 million.

↳ Instead of 39% of Negro children graduating from high school --- 58% graduated and three major civil rights bills are passed.

↳ Blacks not only sit at lunch counters, but on the Supreme Court, at the President's cabinet table, in the U. S. Senate, in Mayor's offices --- and we talk now, and properly so, not only about equal education, but compensatory education of black children.

↳ Non-white families earn not 52% of what whites earn, but 63%, and in cities, 68% --- still not enough, of course, but demonstrable progress.

The elderly in America are covered by a relatively effective system of medical insurance, and, if one were to quantify the amount of human misery that has been eliminated, it would be enormous.

Where Americans spent \$472 per pupil on education in 1960, they spent \$750 in 1968. Federal aid to education --- a major controversial issue for decades --- was enacted, and by 1969, nine billion dollars a year was being spent, and that was one reason that nearly seven million young Americans could be in college in 1970 --- more than double the 1960 figure.

Where 23% of the federal budget went to domestic concerns in 1960, 33% now goes.

And the military budget which in 1960 consumed 50% of expenditures, now consumes 42% --- and still too much, but better.

All in all, in my judgment, we are far, far better off in 1970 than we were in 1960.

It has been a period of truly amazing progress. I do not say that it is enough. Of that we can stop --- content with our success. No. There is much, much more that we must do. But let us be justly proud of what we have done. Our sacrifices have not been in vain.

000030

∟ We have invested in the future. That investment will pay off.

∟ But we must get on with the job.

∟ A hungry man may have civil rights, but he does not have justice. ∟ A man who cannot give his children adequate medical care is not free, and a man who cannot provide his family with decent housing is hard pressed to preserve hope and find pride in himself or his community.

∟ The issue confronting us is not whether this is true --- we all know that it is --- the issue confronting us is what we are prepared to do about it.

∟ We all know that in a country as rich as ours it makes no sense for anybody to be hungry, ill-housed, ill-clothed or lacking in proper medical care.

We are in the midst of a great public dialogue on this problem. Income maintenance, negative income tax, guaranteed annual wage are the new language of that debate. Questions raised concerning these proposals indicate the concern of Americans that we not substitute hand-outs for jobs and that we not destroy the initiative typical of the American spirit.

The true riches and power of America lie in the almost limitless productive capacity of our factories, our farms and the energy of our people. We have brought into fruitful production almost all of those capacities. However, the resources still significantly neglected in our society ~~is~~<sup>are</sup> our human resources.

Heretofore, we have assumed that our system provided for automatic upward mobility of all of our people. We have believed that our institutions, private and public, provided for all. We have tended to assume that only a few marginal individuals, non-strivers and non-achievers, were basically by their own choice outside the mainstream of the American way of life.

The evidence, established over the last twenty years and more, has conclusively destroyed the validity of those assumptions.

We now know that significant segments of our society are outside the mainstream of our life not by virtue of their choice but rather because they have been systematically excluded from participation. Prejudice, indifference, and technological change have left large segments of the Negro community, Americans of Spanish surname, American Indians and rural Americans, white and black, in the backwaters of our society.

We must stop putting a ceiling on opportunity and ambition --- that's what the existing welfare system does. The



existing problem is not so much that people on welfare lack ambition, It is that the welfare system drives ambition out of a man.

∟ We must start providing the floor on which the house of social justice shall be built. A good solid floor that will eliminate hunger, as well as insuring adequate shelter and medical care. I think that this America --- this last best hope of mankind --- can at least eliminate from within its own borders the humiliation of want and the gracelessness of penury.

∟ Let's put a floor in democracy's house --- a floor against hunger, against the cold and against misery.

∟ I seek to represent the people of Minnesota in the United States Senate to get that job done.

Yes --- this is an election year.

And I want to tell you just a little about my opponent.

∟ He calls himself a Middle-of-the-roader. Well, let me tell you that anybody driving to the right of him will be driving off of the shoulder of the road and in the ditch.

000033

∟ In ten years in the House of Representatives, my opponent has compiled an incredible voting record that is in direct opposition to the best interests of the people of Minnesota.

~~Congressman~~ On a score of issues that affect cities in America, ~~Clark~~ MacGregor has voted "no". The issues range from urban mass transportation, to rat control, housing, education, rent supplements, the war on poverty, Head Start, Medicare, health ~~services~~ model cities and the minimum wage. He voted "no" on many issues that many <sup>to call it</sup> moderate Republicans voted to support.

∟ In 1965 the ~~House of Representatives~~ <sup>Congress</sup> enacted Medicare legislation. This law enabled the elderly to get medical care under the provisions of the Social Security System. It was not an ultra-liberal program by any stretch of the imagination --- three out of four Congressmen voted for it. But not my opponent he voted no

∟ In 1967 the Congress considered a bill to provide funds so that cities could go to work to clean out the scourge of rats that infested so many areas. There are families in America where parents fear for the safety of their children at night because rats are on the prowl. My opponent voted "no".

∟ In 1966 my opponent considered the Model Cities Act, along with the rest of the Congress. This was the major effort

000634  
to revitalize American cities --- a concerted effort to use every tool to make cities thrive again. Any my opponent voted "no".

When the Congress considered the War on Poverty legislation --- designed to help poor Americans help themselves --- my opponent voted "no".

When the Congress considered the Elementary and Secondary Education Act --- the basic landmark law designed to help children get good schooling --- my opponent voted "no".

These voted and others like them brand my opponent as the "no" candidate; "no" for the Twin Cities; "no" for the state of Minnesota; "no" for the people of America.

↳ Where he says "no" I say "yes".

↳ "Yes" for the Twin Cities.

"Yes" for the State of Minnesota, and

"Yes" for the people of America.

↳ I have the faith.

↳ I have the trust.

000035

I have love in my heart for this great country and  
for the people of America.

I want to build America strong ---

---with hope,

---with jobs,

---with health care, and

---with education.

If we trust each other, we can do the job together.  
You give me the chance, and I'll do my share.

But I'll need your help.



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)