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THE CEREMONIAL SPEAKING OF BENJAMIN ELIJAH MAYS:
SPOKESMAN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, 1954-1975

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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in

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by

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ABSTRACT

Benjamin Elijah Mays (1894- ), President of Morehouse College from 1940 to 1967, active civil rights advocate, and member of the Atlanta School Board since 1969, helped in focusing attention on the need for implementing social change in the structure of American society. Initially Mays spoke from the church pulpit but as his popularity as a public speaker increased in the Fifties and Sixties, he spoke at many colleges and universities to advance his plea for social change. Hence, this study reports, describes and evaluates the ceremonial speaking of Mays from 1954 to 1975. It focuses specifically upon six commencement addresses and three eulogies.

Serving as a background for the analysis of Mays speaking, chapters include information about his early family life, his education, his speech training, and his professional career. The rhetorical analysis of the nine selected speeches takes into account the speaker, his speech, his audience, and the occasion. Finally, an appraisal is made of the man and his effectiveness as a ceremonial speaker.

Mays was always eager to give an address so that he
could dramatize the plight of the needy and subsequently set into motion his pleas for social change. In his speeches he attempted to discuss the major social problems in the United States. Mays pled for peace among nations, aid for the impoverished, harmony between races, and justice for the oppressed. In the same way Mays was responsive in accepting speaking engagements, his early speech training disciplined him to be equally as earnest in the preparation and delivery of his speeches. His ministerial training prepared him to speak to diverse listeners. Mays preferred a formal speech structure to assure clarity of ideas; and he appealed mainly to self-esteem, ethnocentrism, and fair play to achieve his goals. These appeals to the conscience resulted in a speaking popularity desired by many black speakers.

Mays was effective in speaking to audiences on sensitive social issues at a time when discussion created bitter opposition. In short, Mays was popular because of his ability to identify with his cause and because of his experience and authority in dealing truthfully and unselfishly with the prevailing social issues of the day.
INTRODUCTION

Benjamin E. Mays, retired president of Morehouse College of Atlanta, Georgia, has become recognized as a significant spokesman for the black community. He has spoken often and has written much about the problems of integration and equal rights. His long and distinguished speaking career deserves study and analysis.¹

Benjamin Mays' thirty-seven year speaking career makes it desirable to limit this study to his ceremonial speeches. The purpose of this investigation, therefore, is to report, describe and evaluate selected ceremonial speeches delivered between 1954 and 1975. These speeches include six commencement addresses and three eulogies. The writer proposes to pursue a neo-Aristotelian approach, which entails an analysis of the aspects of the speaker, his speech, his audience, and the occasion.

Since no previous biographical study other than Mays' autobiography has been made, the discussion of his background is necessarily extensive because it is important

¹See Appendix A for Biographical Summary.
to understand Mays' beginning, his struggle to become "educated" and to put into perspective his problems in attempting to cope with a white-oriented community.

Plan of the Study

Specifically, this study is a rhetorical analysis and evaluation of the ceremonial speaking of Benjamin Elijah Mays from 1954 to 1975.

Chapter I sketches Mays' background and southern educational and social conditions during that period. In addition the chapter considers his speech training, his speech preparation, sources of ideas, rhetorical theory, delivery and style.

Chapter II discusses the professional career of Mays and describes the events that stimulated him to speak out for social change.

Chapters III and IV concentrate on the commencement addresses and eulogies respectively. The rhetorical analysis involves a consideration of the following: nature of the audience, goals, themes, organization, forms of support, emotional appeal and style. Concluding each chapter is an assessment to determine the effectiveness of the speaker.

Chapter V discusses the effectiveness of Mays as a
ceremonial speaker.

Sources

In approaching the study of a black speaker, even one as well known as Benjamin Mays, several problems confront the critic. Marcus Boulware, retired speech professor at Florida A. and M., explains the difficulties of studying a black rhetorician as follows:

The Negro press generally has not made accessible reports on the speeches of orators during the last sixty years; space limitations have prevented many Negro newspapers from publishing detailed accounts of addresses delivered by black leaders; modern newspapers . . . publish only highlights . . .; and most researchers are dependent considerably upon correspondence.2

In addition, the writer learned in a conversation with Charles Boudreaux, director of research at The Louisiana Weekly newspaper in New Orleans, that most black newspapers were not placed on microfilm before 1960 and are indexed according to dates only. Newspapers out of Los Angeles and Chicago have larger staffs and consequently more exhaustive coverage, and therefore, have more complete indexing.

In Atlanta, where Mays spent the major portion of

his life, The Atlanta Constitution and the Atlanta Journal are indexed by subjects from 1970, but during that period covers Mays primarily as a member of the Atlanta School Board. In earlier years little space is devoted to blacks in the Atlanta papers. During the Fifties articles on Mays report the academic and financial progress of Morehouse College under his direction. On the other hand, numerous references to his speaking are made by the New York Times as far back as the Forties. However, these sources only comment on the occasion, topic, participants, and may summarize the speech text or include a brief quotation from the speech. Speech texts are rarely available, but reports confirm dates, and subjects and reflect Mays' focus on church, education, war and peace, poverty, and civil rights.

Furthermore, no collection of the speeches other than sermons by Mays is extant, and no previous studies of his speaking have been found. Fortunately, in interviews Mays supplemented information in his autobiography Born To Rebel. His book Disturbed About Man contains seventeen sermons, but without giving date or place of delivery. Universities and colleges awarding honorary degrees to Mays supplied background materials and copies of commencement
addresses. The National Urban League forwarded the eulogy of Whitney Young, and a family member supplied the eulogy of Emory Jackson. Nine personal interviews of colleagues and former students of Mays gave appraisals of the man and the speaker. The articles in newspapers and magazines by Mays further reveal his views and his concern for social change.
Varying birth dates are given for Benjamin Elijah Mays, but he states that August 1, 1894, his birth date given by the 1900 United States census, is the date that he accepts.\textsuperscript{1} He was born in Epworth County, ten miles from the town of Ninety-Six, South Carolina, the youngest of eight children - three girls and five boys. His parents, Hezekiah Mays and Louvenia Carter Mays were born in slavery. His mother recalled nothing about pre-war conditions; his father remembered little, for he was only nine years old when the Civil War ended. Knowledge of Mays' ancestors was limited. Benjamin learned nothing about his forebears beyond his grandparents; but the lack of knowledge did not weaken family pride in its African heritage. His mother and father were proud of their dark-skin, and proud of their children who ranged from black to dark brown. They demonstrated racial pride by placing pictures of Frederick

Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and Paul Laurence Dunbar on the walls of their home.

The level of education of the family was typical of that of rural blacks of that period. Benjamin's mother was illiterate, and his father, taught by a slave master's son, could read printing but he had difficulty with script. Only Benjamin's brother Hezekiah finished high school; the others went no further than the fifth grade.

Influences

Young Benjamin Mays was influenced greatly by his father, his mother, and his church. The Mays' were renters who owned their own mules, a status symbol in the community. The children did farm work even though many hated it. But Benjamin loved the farm and struggled to be a good farmhand. He was distressed with the "quarreling, wrangling, sometimes fighting"\(^2\) at home. His father, with a low tolerance for liquor, was sometimes abusive and violent. Disillusioned and saddened by his mother's distress, Benjamin made a vow at twelve years of age never to drink liquor. The elder Mays, far from sober at times, demanded diligence and hard work from his wife and children.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 9.
Mrs. Mays supplied mainly the religious influence. She led the children nightly in evening prayer, and was usually joined by her husband in prayer. Benjamin often read the Bible before evening prayer, while his father read occasionally when he was in the mood. Frequently, Benjamin read the Bible to his mother, especially after a family quarrel. Mrs. Mays believed so sincerely that God answered prayers, that she was given to strong emotional demonstrations when moved by the words of Scripture. The depth and sincerity of her religious faith greatly influenced young Mays, who prayed to God for help.

Mount Zion Baptist Church was a place of worship and a social center of the family. Mays said, "there was no other place to go." The family usually rode to services in the mule-drawn wagon, but sometimes they walked the four miles whenever necessary. They went happily for "this was the one place where the Negroes in the community could be free and relax from the toil and oppression of the week."  

The Reverend James F. Marshall, the only leader available, had hardly more than a fifth grade education, but he knew the Scriptures and his people. He had a special

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3Ibid., p. 13.
skill in arousing the congregation. Mays explains:

He could moan and did. Almost invariably he made some of the people shout. If he did not moan a bit and make the people shout, his congregation felt he had not preached well. The intellectual content of his sermon was not nearly as important as the emotional appeal.\(^4\)

However, Mays remembered that Rev. Marshall counselled his people to endure injustice and oppression. Marshall accepted the system as did other Negro and white ministers and "made no effort to change it." Rev. Marshall took special interest in Benjamin, seeing in the young man the potential of a future preacher. The congregation although impressed with his oral presentations were unable to contribute money for Mays' education, but they gave him their blessings and encouragement.

**Social Conditions in Education**

The illiteracy of slaves changed little after Emancipation. Blacks were seen not as equals, but simply as freed slaves. Communities remained static. Reconstruction brought only a "rebirth of white domination" because after a short time southern states were permitted to direct their self-rehabilitation. The post war governments passed

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 14.
restrictive laws and made no attempt to fulfill the black man's dream of "forty acres and a mule." Because their economic limitations remained unchanged, Negroes had no alternative but to work on plantations for small wages or to share their crop. Woodward explains in Origins of the New South that "the lives of the overwhelming majority of Negroes were still circumscribed by the farm and plantation." Even though the same was true for many white people, the Negroes, with few exceptions, "were farmers without land" who, having no choice, worked "from sun to sun" for six dollars in some areas to fifteen dollars a month in others.

Disfranchised and being on the lowest rung of the ladder, blacks had little access to education. Even most whites considered education non-essential; and blacks viewed schooling as useless for a farm worker. Mary Ellison, author of The Black Experience: American Blacks Since 1865, writes that southern whites opposed black formal education because they felt it "artificially hoisted Negroes out of

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their appointed role of manual labourers." For example, a Virginian Alsen F. Thomas, thought that "Education elevates the negro, hence renders him less tractable and less willing to fulfill the duties of a subservient class."

In 1901 Professor Richard Heath Dabney of the University of Virginia opposed industrial education for Negroes on the ground that it created "competition in industry for white Southerners." A South Carolinian Isaac Seabrook admitted that black workers were essential to southern growth but he rationalized that they "lacked race pride or the ambition that could drive forward individuals or races." A few southern educators suggested that only through completely integrated education could "a strong and healthy South develop."7

The poor quality of education for blacks in the South was evident in many ways. "Black school terms were shorter than white school terms,"8 and teachers worked in primitive buildings, used inferior teaching methods and "were too often barely literate themselves and could impart little value to their pupils."9 The school term for blacks in South

7Ellison, pp. 42-50.
8Ibid., p. 39.
9Ibid., p. 44.
Carolina ran from November through February in contrast to the white schools that ran six months. During September and October black children were sent to the fields to pick cotton; beginning early in March, they returned to farm work.

Education

The Brickhouse School

Benjamin Mays began his education when his oldest sister Susie taught him "to say the alphabet, to count to a hundred, and to read a little."\(^{10}\) At age six he entered the ungraded "Brickhouse School," which was not brick but named after a nearby large white-owned brick house. The one-room wood frame building had a wood stove in the center, dividing the boys from the girls. The black teacher was a graduate from the high school at Benedict College in Columbia, S.C. Young Mays excelled in all subjects of the limited curriculum. Unfortunately, any study for him at home was restricted because the few books were limited to "the Bible, a dictionary, picture books about Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass and Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Sunday school books." When available the Atlanta Journal and the Greenwood Index provided reports on current events.

\(^{10}\)Mays, Born To Rebel, p. 11.
The limited curriculum later annoyed Mays, and a quality education seemed remote in a school which was ungraded and remained open only four months in a year. Frustrated because of mediocrity in educational offerings, young Mays challenged anyone who did not approve of his aspiration to continue his education elsewhere. In order to make the move, Mays sought the answers to numerous questions:

(1) How could I overcome my father's immutable opposition to my insatiable desire to get an education;

(2) . . . how could I get money to go away to school;

(3) how could I be free in this world;

(4) how could I walk the earth with dignity and pride;

(5) how could I aspire to achieve, to accomplish to "be somebody" when there were for Negroes no established goals;

(6) how could I get a better school; and 

(7) how could I remain in school more than four months out of the year?11

The greatest opposition to Benjamin's leaving home to seek further education came from his father, who felt that additional learning would not make his son better able to

11Ibid., p. 35.
plow, plant, or harvest crops. Nor did he think that it was necessary to preach, because "God called men to preach; and . . . would tell them what to say!" The father regarded education as a device to make men dishonest and foolish. Benjamin's mother, who was more sympathetic with his ambitions, gave him "her love and her prayers." Influenced by his mother, Benjamin prayed while working in the fields or while walking alone in the moonlight. His prayer was, that God enable him "to get away to school."

During this time many young rural blacks who dissatisfied with the limited rural opportunities moved to northern cities in order to take advantage of the recent surge in industry. George Brown Tindall points out in The Emergence of the New South (1913-1945) that this "great migration" (1915) became the base for "the emergence of the New Negro."13

Seeking a different escape, Benjamin remained behind until his pastor persuaded the father to permit his son to enter a small Baptist Association School in McCormick, S. C. At fifteen years of age Benjamin was still attending a

12Ibid., p. 36.

school no better than the Brickhouse School four months a year. After two years at the Baptist Association School, becoming dissatisfied, Mays considered joining the migration North to become a railway clerk. However, his desire to obtain a quality education proved stronger than the pull of railroading. Benjamin discovered that he could attend the high school at South Carolina State College for six dollars a month. Seventeen years old and with ten dollars in his pocket and no blessing from his father but with his mother's prayers, Benjamin entered the seventh grade at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg, S. C.

South Carolina State College High School

Mays chose South Carolina State College over Benedict College in Columbia, S. C. because it was less expensive. Beginning with the third grade, the college included elementary and secondary schools (when Mays entered in 1911). Upon arrival there he was delighted to encounter a black president who was a graduate of Oberlin College in Ohio, and an all black faculty, with some having degrees from Benedict College, Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith) in North Carolina, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Fisk University in Tennessee, and other
Achieving a high score on the entrance examination, Benjamin was advanced one grade, placing him in the eighth grade. After two years at State College, returning home regularly at the end of February, Mays was nineteen years old and had never been able "to remain in school more than four months in any year." During his third year in Orangeburg he decided to remain for a full term, which led to the inevitable break with his father, who vehemently disapproved.

He needed six dollars a month for tuition. His brother John promised to send him three dollars for the next two months. Determined to stay in school, Benjamin supplemented his meager income with a job cleaning outhouses. However, he was encouraged when he learned of the annual recruitment of students for summer jobs by the Pullman Company.

South Carolina State College was not designed to prepare Negroes for literary and professional pursuits, but for work in agriculture and trades. Each student was required to select a craft. Mays started out in harness making and shoe repair. Becoming disinterested, he turned subsequently to house painting because he could earn money

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14 Mays, Born To Rebel, pp. 37-41.
at it by taking odd jobs on Saturdays. In 1916 Mays graduated at age twenty-one at the head of his class. "Being valedictorian," he said, "did not prove that I was good. I really wanted to compete with white students."\(^{15}\) In his autobiography, Mays explains his dilemma:

I wanted to go to New England primarily for one reason: My total environment proclaimed that Negroes were inferior people, and that indictment included me. The manner in which white people treated Negroes; the difference in school buildings; in the length of time the schools ran; the difference in salaries paid Negro and white teachers; the inability of Negroes to vote; the brutal treatment of Negroes, including lynching; the economic dependence of Negroes upon whites; the way in which news about Negroes was handled in the press; and, most of all, the manner in which Negroes accepted their denigration tended to make each generation believe that they were indeed inferior. Although I had never accepted my assigned status - or lack of it - I knew that I had to prove my worth, my ability. How could I know I was not inferior to the white man, having never had a chance to compete with him?

Virginia Union College

Investigating several northern institutions, Mays discovered many were too expensive, some had curricula for which he was academically unprepared, and others were not

\(^{15}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 47.}\)
open to blacks. Therefore, he entered Virginia Union in Richmond, Virginia, in September 1916. It was here among the racially mixed faculty that he first encountered whites who were interested in blacks. Here he found Negro professors who were as competent as their white colleagues. It was also here that Mays first saw segregation in a large southern city. After attending a segregated theater once he vowed never again to patronize a segregated facility voluntarily. He contends that "there is a difference between voluntary segregation and compulsory segregation. One has to accept compulsory segregation or pay the penalty, but one does not have to accept voluntary segregation."

Mays did well in his first semester at Virginia Union, studying mathematics, English, German, and Latin; "all marks were 90 and above." However, excelling in mathematics, he was asked to teach college algebra to those who had failed during the first semester. Student-teaching along with a dining hall job, supplemented what he had saved from working as a summer Pullman porter.

Although he was happy at Virginia Union, Mays still

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16 Ibid., p. 52.

yearned to study in a college in New England. Answering his dream, two professors, Roland A. Wakefield and Charles E. Hadley, graduates of Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, recommended Mays to Bates' President George Colby Chase. Bates College

Benjamin Mays entered Bates College in September 1917, where, "the weather was cold but the hearts were warm." Bates is a small nondenominational private college in Lewiston, Maine. While Bates is classified as highly competitive in admission policy, the prominence of the school can also be ascertained from its maintained affiliations with "most competitive" Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, and "highly competitive" Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York. The enrollment at Bates represented superior students from all over the world. Satisfied with his acceptance to a prominent New England School, the young man from South Carolina soon discovered he was living in a different world where there were few Negroes. In this overwhelmingly white environment he was determined to demonstrate his

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18 Ibid.
19 Mays, Born To Rebel, p. 54.
The expenses at Bates exceeded Mays' small income and since he was a transfer student, he was unable to get a scholarship, even though he brought a "straight A" record from Virginia Union. Mays had only ninety dollars, but Bates did permit him to borrow from the college loan fund in order to finance the year's expense of $400. Mays was on scholarship in his junior and senior year. In addition, he worked as student helper in the library; served as janitor in a small academic building; washed dishes in a local restaurant; worked as Pullman porter for the New York Central Railroad during summers and holidays; and painted floats one summer in a Boston shipyard. 

The pleasant experiences at Bates College far outnumbered any discouraging incidents. Academically Mays excelled, receiving twenty-two A's, thirteen B's, six C's and one D. Having achieved the dignity he sought, he was one of fifteen to graduate "with honors" in 1920. 

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21 Mays, Born To Rebel, p. 55.
22 Ibid., p. 58.
University of Chicago

Mays was interested in Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts but a white seminary representative urged him to return to Virginia Union University. However, remembering Professor Nix at South Carolina State College, who helped him complete high school in three years, Mays, following Professor Nix's example, enrolled at the University of Chicago. In spite of his bleak financial resources, Mays entered the Divinity School in January 1921, with forty-three dollars. The tuition was low, and Mays was able to support himself by washing dishes at the place where he earned his meals and some cash. When he was unable to continue after completing three quarters of the work toward a doctorate in religion, he accepted a teaching job at Morehouse.

During interruptions of graduate study Mays accepted employment at Morehouse College, South Carolina State College, the Tampa Urban League, the National YMCA, and the Institute of Social and Religious Research; but determined to complete his doctorate Mays returned to the University of Chicago in September 1932, at age 37. During this stay he publically protested campus discrimination, demanding equal

24Ibid., p. 2.
seating at public affairs, and equal housing in the
dormitory. Because he was unsympathetic to the Communist
ideology, he refused to permit Communist students to
publicize the incidents.

Mays received his doctorate from the University of
Chicago in March 1935. His dissertation entitled The
Negro's God as Reflected in His Literature was a survey of
the development of the idea of God in black literature
from 1760-1935. In 1938 the study was published under its
original name by New York's Chapman and Grimes, Inc.

Speech Training

A love for recitation started young Mays toward a
speaking career, spanning almost forty years. He began by
presenting short selections in the ungraded one-room school-
house in South Carolina. His teacher encouraged him to
participate in other speaking activities. At the Exhibition,
consisting of songs, dialogues and speeches, held annually
at the end of the school year, Mays, encouraged by the
generous applause, always gave a speech.

Each Sunday in June Children's Day was held at Mount
Zion Baptist Church in Epworth County, S. C. At age nine,
Mays delivered a portion of the Sermon on the Mount from
memory. He remembers with pride, "... the house went
wild: old women waved their handkerchiefs, old men stomped their feet, and the people generally applauded long and loud."

Because of Mays' platform ability, the pastor took special interest in the young man, pushing him into many church-related speaking activities. Of course at home he read the Bible for his mother, unaware that he was establishing a frame of reference for much of his later preaching.

Mays received no formal speech training at the high school of South Carolina State College, but he won two public speaking prizes and graduated valedictorian of his class in 1915, giving the valedictory address, entitled "Watch the Leaks."

In an interview Mays said that while in high school he received assistance from the professor of Latin and public speaking. Mays could not recall the name of his teacher, but in describing this experience, he said:

For declamation contests the professor would train me. I don't know if that was much training or not, for he would tell students how to gesture. After that I never followed those directions. I don't think one can determine when to make a gesture. One makes the gesture where it automatically comes. I see gestures as unconscious movements."

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25 Mays, Born To Rebel, p. 17.

26 Interview: Benjamin E. Mays, April 6, 1977, Atlanta, Georgia.
During his one year at Virginia Union in Richmond, Virginia, Mays received no additional speech training or speaking experiences. Before entering Bates College he read in the college catalog about the annual declamation contest. In preparation he decided to memorize the Supposed Speech of John Adams\textsuperscript{27} for his entry in the event he was accepted at Bates in the fall. All summer he rehearsed the selection before the mirror of a Pullman car on the New York Central Railroad. When he was accepted at Bates College, Mays entered this speech in the declamation contest. With the help of Mrs. Fred Pomeroy, wife of Mays' biology professor, and Grosvenor Robinson, professor of speech, Mays was chosen one of the six finalists. Having studied speech in Boston, Mrs. Pomeroy was eager to help students. In an interview, Mays explained, "Mrs. Pomeroy was not concerned with gestures but with expression, pronunciation, enunciation, and saying what you mean." Mays won first prize in the sophomore declamation contest and thereby attracted the attention of A. Craig Baird, then professor of rhetoric and argumentation at Bates (1913-1925).

\textsuperscript{27}From Daniel Webster's eulogy for Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, in Faneuil Hall August 2, 1826, in celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Declaration.
As debate coach, Professor Baird urged Mays to try out for the debate team. Reluctant at first because of time needed for preparation and because of outside employment, but always drawn to areas of competition, Mays gladly accepted the invitation. Although he made the varsity, he did not participate his junior year because of a large number of experienced debaters. The cautious debating committee by-passed the inexperienced Mays. In his senior year Mays did debate and was selected captain of the debating team. Remembering Professor Baird, who left Bates in 1925 to become Professor of Speech at the University of Iowa, Mays said in an interview, "Professor Baird came to my room three or four nights urging me to go out for debating . . . I am glad he convinced me. The experienced proved to be invaluable. Indeed, I have great respect for Professor Baird."  

Aside from debating at Bates, Mays was among the finalists in both the junior and senior oratorical contests. His classmates elected him Class Day Orator. He served as president of the Bates Forum and the Philhellenic Club, and was a member of the Y.M.C.A. Cabinet.  

While at the University of Chicago he had a semester

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28 Mays, Bates Alumnus.

29 Interview: Mays, April 6, 1977.

30 Mays, Bates Alumnus.
course in argumentation and debate once a week, which completed his formal speech training. Reflecting on his formal speech training and altering an earlier sentiment on the value of speech training, Mays recalled:

One does not learn how to speak by having formal courses in public speaking. You learn to speak by speaking, you learn to walk by walking, to dance by dancing. When people respond to what you say, it doesn't matter whether you gesture or not. A lot of men in political life who develop into good speakers perhaps never had a course in public speaking. The occasion sometimes determines what a man will say and how he will say it. . . . A man running for political office must impress the people - he must say certain things. Take Ronald Reagen, I don't particularly like him politically, but he is very forceful as a speaker. He was on the stage before politics. I'll bet Reagen hasn't had any formal training in public speaking. If people like what you say. . . . that will make it a good speech.

I never heard William Jennings Bryan speak but once, and that was when I was a student at Bates College. This great orator could never get elected President of the United States. Therefore, it must be more than oratory.

Bryan impressed me in that he said, "you have to believe in what you say. When Cicero spoke people said 'didn't he speak fine,' and that was the end of it. But when Demosthenes spoke, they said, 'let's go against those. Let's do something about what this man is saying.' So, I think there is no one formula for success in public speaking.31

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31 Interview: Mays, April 6, 1977.
At Morehouse, Mays coached the debate team for two years. He gained additional speaking experience while pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church where he learned how to adapt his presentation to a mostly unschooled congregation. He learned the need for precise organization and brevity which made him a popular speaker in the community. Mays explains in his autobiography that at the University of Chicago in 1924 he gained additional speaking experiences when he helped organize a forum to discuss the existing race problems at the University and in the nation. As Chairman of the forum, Mays had the opportunity to fraternize with other speakers from the university community and visitors to the University.

On February 26, Mays gave his first formal speech to the Negro Older Boys' Conference of the Y.M.C.A. at Benedict College, Columbia, S. C. He delivered this inspirational speech entitled, "The Goal", to high school students mainly from South Carolina. Later, as spokesman for the Tampa black community in their fight for social justice, Mays' speeches were persuasive. As President of Morehouse College Mays gave deliberative and epideictic speeches.

Mays was one of thirteen Americans selected to attend

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the World Conference of Y.M.C.A. in Mysore, India, in 1937, and in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1938. He represented the United States at the Oxford Conference on Church, Community, and State, at Oxford University in England in 1937. In 1939, he served as leader in the Youth Conference in Amsterdam, Holland. In 1948, Mays was delegate to the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, Holland. He attended the Central Committee meetings of the World Council of Churches in Chichester, England and Toronto, Canada in 1950; in Rollo, Switzerland in 1951; and in Lucknow, India in 1952 and in 1953. He participated in the Commission on the Church Amidst Racial and Ethnic Tensions in Geneva, Switzerland in 1953. Mays has delivered addresses in approximately 250 colleges, universities, and schools in the United States, and probably double that number in churches.

34Henderson, Bates Alumnus, p. 2.
39Appendix A: Biographical Summary, Section IV.
Sources of Ideas and Preparation

In an interview Mays stated, "I drew upon my theological training; I never gave a sermon without using a series of related biblical references." Mays consistently noted the interpretations of biblical scholars in order to compare or to evaluate differing views for later use in his presentations.

For development of ideas, Mays uses his experiences and attempts to relate them to those of his audience. He explained, "I use the experiences of the people sitting out in front of me, experiences I know they have had. We are all bothered by the same things - birth, courtship, marriage, sickness, death, anxiety."

Mays also turned to many literary sources, including Shakespeare, Tennyson and Longfellow. In addition, he stated, "I use things I picked up in psychology and philosophy which illustrate the point I am trying to make. I rely on everything I have learned."

Mays reported that he rarely makes a formal outline before constructing his speech. Not sacrificing careful preparation, however, Mays uses his own method of preparation. Because of his love for genuine eloquence he prepared with thoroughness:

As a result of my argumentation and debate course, and the debate skills developed under
A. Craig Baird, I learned to make out a brief and to follow it precisely. That technique became a fixed habit with me. I jotted down the things I wanted to touch on—what I wanted to do. For example, in preparing for funerals, I asked, "What is the purpose of a funeral anyway?" (1) to console the grieved, (2) to exalt the living, and (3) to emulate the virtues of the deceased. With these things in mind, one builds his talk out of the experiences of the people. Each occasion dictates what should be said.40

Nathaniel Veale, present Director of Alumni Affairs at Morehouse College and former student worker for Benjamin Mays, said, "Dr. Mays wrote his speeches, then I typed them on a set of large index cards, using our special large print typewriter because Dr. Mays did not like to use his reading glasses. This he could see without using his glasses."41

Brailsford Brazeal, former Mays colleague, said, "He took great pains to develop a good speech. He always practiced, never taking his speaking for granted."42

Wendell Whalum, former student organist for Mays in campus speaking situations and later colleague and traveling organist for sermons and eulogies, emphatically pointed out that, "The Mays speeches were strictly his. No one could

40Interview: Mays, April 6, 1977.

41Interview: Nathaniel Veale, May 9, 1977, Atlanta Georgia.

42Interview: Brailsford Brazeal, May 9, 1977, Atlanta, Georgia.
draft the distinct Mays jargon which somehow related to each person present." 43 Mays said, "When I speak now, I am speaking from the accumulated experiences of years." 44

Rhetorical Theory

Saint Augustine theorizes that rhetoric should be instructive, "supplying both a point of view toward Christian preaching and a small body of general principles for practical use." Augustine also argues that scriptural interpretation depends upon "... the mode of ascertaining the proper meaning," and he urges the preacher to practice in, "The careful use of logical reasoning and definition to keep meanings straight ... to employ logic as a tool of expression ... to curb ambiguities ..." Augustine is also credited here with the re-establishment of the pursuit of Truth as the guiding principle of public speaking. 45

In discussing his concepts of speaking, Mays does not refer to any rhetorical theorists. However, upon a close examination of his theory, one is struck by the similarities to that of St. Augustine, who followed the Ciceronian

43 Interview: Wendell Whalum, May 9, 1977, Atlanta Georgia.

44 Interview: Mays, April 6, 1977.

concept. Mays sees content as the essential element in all speaking situations. Explaining his position, he stated:

One must first have a message to give with the ultimate purpose to teach. Not teaching so much to learn, but teaching to make people think. The speaker must first believe in what he is saying. Words must be illustrative and vivid, so as to stimulate within an audience the ability to not only read but to interpret as well. If the truth is said, the sincerity of presentation will provide the desired effect. There is no difference in people. The trained have emotions, the untrained have emotions. The truth is essential whether speaking to a man with a Ph.D. or whether to a simple man from the farm. The main objective is to put the message into his language, relating it to his experiences, which, if applicable, will teach, will impress, and hence, will affect the emotions.46

These goals are almost identical to the doctrines of Cicero, "to teach, to delight, and to move."

Mays, like Augustine, sees rules as helpful during the early stages of speech training, but he contends each speaking situation differs, consequently, requiring key adjustments. Mays does not see himself as a moralist, for he is constantly cognizant of the tempo of his audience, which he feels is the determining factor for the testimony to be presented. Embodying the concept of Aristotle's three elements of a speech - the speaker, the subject, and the persons addressed, Mays emphasizes the latter, saying,

46Interview: Mays, April 6, 1977.
"if the audience understands the speech and if they are impressed with the sincerity of presentation, and if they are forced to think, it will be a good speech, whether they agree with it or not."

Delivery and Style

Marcus Boulware defines oratory as a means of effective public speaking which includes the classical style of the ancient orators and the conversational manner of modern speakers. He disagrees with the common belief that oratory is a natural gift, not requiring any training mainly because this belief emphasizes the importance of delivery over information. Speaking specifically of black orators, Boulware contends:

they . . . are well educated and their quality of speaking has evolved from the unlettered and strictly emotional variety of the logical, refined, and cultured. They combine exposition with argument and persuasion, and their messages are sound and informative.

. . . many of them interpret the Negro citizen and his achievements, and call attention to his disabilities in a manner designed to get a favorable hearing. Negro orators employ language that reflects the aspirators hopes, interests, and habits of their audiences. Through this medium, they are able to establish with their hearers a rapport that is often astounding. 47

Boulware characterizes the black orator as "a special pleader, an advocate for minority rights . . . who talks chiefly to small and more intimate groups."48

Possibly because their speeches were usually given to small groups, black speakers were rarely mentioned in the media. This discrimination of the media could explain the limited coverage of blacks in the Atlanta newspapers before 1950. A typical account at that time rarely evaluated Benjamin Mays as speaker. These accounts usually identified Mays either as President of Morehouse College, or as President of the Atlanta Board of Education, and offered a short excerpt from his speech.

In an interview, Mays described his own delivery and style. Even though influenced by preachers in early life, Mays did not want to emulate them. He explained, "they would moan and whoop, aiming to arouse the basic emotion of the people. I aim to not only make them feel, but to think deeply as well." Mays sees good audience contact as essential because "blacks generally reject readers"; therefore, "a man should be so familiar with a passage that there is no need to read verbatim."

Early in Mays' speaking career he spoke extemporaneously, using an outline. "Now," he said, "I apologize

48 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
to the people for a manuscript, telling them that between 25 and 45 I got up, spoke, and walked; between 45 and 65, I used notes and outlines; and after 65, I used manuscripts because I don't trust my memory that way anymore."

In addition, nine of Mays' colleagues were interviewed for information on Mays as a speaker. All were asked to describe Mays' mode of delivery, concentrating on the physical and vocal factors; to describe his style of speaking, including correctness, clearness, appropriateness, embellishment and economy of language.

Samuel Cook, President of Dillard University, former student and colleague of Mays, recalled the "sheer power" of the "tall, slim, dark, gray-haired man," whom he heard speak extemporaneously for over thirty years.49

Daniel Thompson, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Dillard University, described Mays as the latter stood in the pulpit of the Riverside Church in New York:

His six foot, slender figure, with beautiful white hair, contrasted by very black skin, amid a sea of white faces (choir members) in the background, was truly the most dramatic, impressive sight I have ever seen; his presence was so great that anything he said would have gone over well.50

Melvin Watson, a colleague from Morehouse, saw Mays

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50 Thompson, May 23, 1977.
as "an impressive man - tall and thin with a strong face, using passive type gestures, while permitting his voice to provide the dramatization." Robert Brisbane, another colleague, described Mays' appearance as simply "regal."

Nathaniel Veale, former student worker for Mays, remembered Mays always in a dark suit and tie with a white shirt. "He tied his tie in an unusual way to us students, the old style wrap-around. Not many could tie a knot like that. Yet, we saw his appearance as impeccable."52

Wendell Whalum, former student and colleague, said, "His eyes would make one sit up. His face does the work, his hands serve as a necessary extension of his facial expression. One feels the full impact in the raising of a finger, or a change in volume or rate. The voice is soft, using a conversational tone."53

Cook agreed with Whalum's assessment:

Mays uses a concentrating stare, a slight move of the hands, and a variation in rate and volume for emphasis. His conservative movement is merely standing on tip-toe over the podium to emphasize a point. He never paced the floor like Dr. Mordecai Johnson, or engaged in dramatics as Dr. Howard Thurman. Mays' voice

51 Interview: Melvin Watson, May 9, 1977, Atlanta, Georgia.

52 Veale, May 9, 1977.

53 Whalum, May 9, 1977.
is high and raspy in its slow deliberative delivery, while magnified with precise vocal pauses.54

"Mays walked the floor when he had something biting to say. Movement was a sign that Mays meant business," explained Brailsford Brazeal, former colleague.55

Robert H. Brisbane saw Mays' delivery as unique in that "the pauses highlight certain points; and he raises his volume and changes his pitch and pace, producing a cadence distinctly different from other good speakers and preachers.56

All agree Mays used notes sparingly and that he had a good memory. In addition, most believed his debate experience was instrumental in developing his analytical mode of presentation.

The only noted weakness in delivery is that of infrequent pronunciation errors. Aware of certain words picked up as a youngster in a poverty stricken South Carolina, Mays fought to eliminate habitual errors. Most agreed that when Mays was tired those words surfaced. The consensus was that the influence was barely evident and in view of Mays' simple, unembellished style, really negligible. One interviewee, choosing to remain anonymous, felt that the


55Brazeal, May 9, 1977.

56Interview: Robert H. Brisbane, May 9, 1977, Atlanta, Georgia.
minute pronunciation errors were a result of faulty learning during childhood, but that the effect was more complex than it appeared. He contends:

Mays could not completely identify with that segment of the people, who had worked to advance, who had been mistreated and insulted by whites, as he remembered so vividly, and yet not have retained his early language patterns. There was no need for Mays to feign faulty speech patterns for effect. Listeners could identify Mays with the University of Chicago or identify him with the rural life of South Carolina. This quality gives him an authority in both places because Mays is Mays; he never attempted to sound like a New Englander from Bates College, or a westerner from some prestigious section of the United States.

Another interviewee saw this pronunciation problem as a strength. Listeners, consequently, recognized him as a Southerner, as they recognized John F. Kennedy as a New Englander and Winston Churchill as an Englishman.

The Mays style is unique, unlike any other speaker. Cook called the Mays style epigrammatic, yet mystical, because it inspires and provokes thought. Veale, on the other hand, sees the style as distinctive among black orators: "he is not like the mystic Howard Thurman, or the forceful, late Malcolm X, or the bitter Stokely Carmichael, or the shrewd late Adam Clayton Powell. Each had his own type of presentation and each appealed to various segments of society - Dr. Mays speaks to all."
Seeing Mays as an educator, a minister, a writer, and a traveler, all in one, Brazeal said, "Mays shifts his role according to his speaking engagement. When on a panel he is more deliberative; when in a pulpit he is more emotional."

Watson concurred with the others in attributing Mays' strength in speaking to his style. Watson explains:

He is good in analysis. Mays taught algebra and logic in his early years at Morehouse. He applied a great deal of his techniques in logic to his speeches. He is methodical not ornate - clearly outlines material, and draws heavily on history for examples to clarify. His pet literary references are striking and brief, consequently, easy to remember.

Daniel Thompson sees the Mays style as the most interesting of modern black orators. Using a historical approach, Thompson described the Mays style as closely synonymous with the antebellum oratorical style which he explained to be that style designed for non-literate overworked, tired people. The speaker had to assume no one could read or write and had to remember constantly that the people were tired. The speaker had to make his discussions interesting or everyone would go to sleep or not be alert enough to follow. Thompson concluded that the Mays oratorical style originated from a typical antebellum preacher style. He explained:
I would place the rank antebellum preacher style in the center, with Martin Luther King, Jr. - the preacher type, and Bennie Mays - the intellectual type, on opposite sides. King used the rhythmic antebellum preacher style. If one happened to sleep through two points, he could pick up the third and still understand because of the repetition. Mays, on the other side, perfected the intellectual interpretation of this antebellum style. He begins with a simple, flawless, non-debatable phrase. For example, "A man is potentially good and he is potentially evil." Actually this is a common translation of Rousseau's concept that man is a "tabula rasa." Mays is intellectual in the sense that if you are an intellect, if you have read what he has read, you will know where he got his idea. He does not burden his audience with quotes. A non-literate would not know one authority from another, but he would understand. This is where the genius lay - translations of ideas and concepts, which lead to an understanding of points four and five, while missing points two and three. Mays' authority rests in his practical illustrations for theoretical statements . . . the style of Jesus, whose parables were everyday examples.57

Mays exhibits little, if any, humor in his speeches. All agree that when Mays had many serious matters to discuss he sought to get quickly to the point. Any humor he used was reserved for light affairs such as the crowning of the homecoming queen. Brazeal suggested: "Mays never told jokes, the brief, witty sayings may be called humorous, but they were so subtle that we usually did not get them. So, Dr. Mays moved away from that." "He may smile, but never laughed," remembered Whalum.

57Thompson, May 23, 1977.
All stressed that Mays is different from most orators. Today Mays in his twilight years uses the same approach and delivery of the past, except today, he writes out his entire speech and delivers it from a manuscript.
CHAPTER II

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND SOCIAL SETTING

Morehouse College: As Teacher

Benjamin Mays began his professional career in 1921 when John Hope, then President of Morehouse College, invited Mays to teach college mathematics and high school algebra at Morehouse College. Accepting the teaching position at a salary of $1,200 for an eight month period, Mays moved to Atlanta nearer his wife, who taught at Sumter, South Carolina. Graduating from Bates College with honors in philosophy, which included psychology, and four years of college mathematics, Mays was prepared for his assignment which included mathematics, psychology, religious education and the first calculus course offered at Morehouse College. In addition, he took on the extracurricular coaching of the debate team.

The Atlanta, Georgia, of 1921 was filled with social and racial unrest. The Ku Klux Klan and the Interracial Commission opposed each other. The Klan encouraged hostility and brutality, while the Commission sought racial harmony. Mays states:

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All injustices . . . cannot be attributed to the Ku Klux Klan. The foundation upon which the Klan stood had been laid in laws and customs decades before the second birth of the Klan in 1915. Not only in the major areas—the right to vote . . . to economic security . . . to decent housing—was the Negro deprived. But these basic denials proliferated also in countless ways to guarantee that every Negro should be consistently subjected to humiliating injustices and insults calculated to destroy his self respect, his pride, and his sense of manhood . . . whether he was a college professor, doctor, minister, janitor or maid.1

At Morehouse College Mays found President Hope, trapped by the system, working to bring equality for the Negro, but "within the segregated pattern." No one taught the students to be submissive or aggressive. Rather, they were taught "never to accept the system in their own minds as being inescapable or right."

Mays apparently could now put things in perspective, and could direct his energies toward dispelling racism with the help of others. To achieve this end, he stressed the elements contributing to the proud and honorable tradition of Morehouse men. He saw the future in the Morehouse student who would spread out eventually over the entire country, armed with the doctrines for equality.

Shiloh Baptist Church

In January, 1922, Mays accepted the pastorate at the

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1Benjamin E. Mays, Born To Rebel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 75.
Shiloh Baptist Church, a small church three blocks from Morehouse College. There were 125 members, consisting mainly of unschooled common laborers and domestic workers. In spite of his inexperience, Mays was accepted by the congregation. In his three year career (1922-25) as pastor, which began and ended at Shiloh Church, Mays was apparently successful because of his ability to address the needs of his congregation.

South Carolina State College

Returning to the University of Chicago and subsequently receiving a M.A. degree in March, 1925, Mays was offered a position to teach English at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg. Disappointed with the minimal improvement in the curriculum, Mays opposed graduating unqualified seniors, and the segregationist policy which existed even in an all black state college. Mays was shocked that the inequality between blacks and whites, taken for granted, was "unprotested, unquestioned." He explains:

Segregation with equality would have been wicked enough; segregation with built-in inequality was adding insult to injury. Segregation and inequality are inseparable twins, equally evil in origin, equally evil in manifestation. If there could be equality in a legally segregated society, the reason for segregation would disappear.  

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2Ibid., p. 122.
After spending a summer in graduate school at the University of Chicago, Mays, widowed since early 1923, married Sadie Gray (1925), also a graduate student and teacher at South Carolina State. Since the college refused to alter its ruling prohibiting a man and wife to teach there, the Mays' had to relocate.

Tampa Urban League

Jesse O. Thomas, Field Director of the National Urban League, needed an executive secretary for the Tampa Urban League and a case worker for the Family Service Association. Mr. and Mrs. Mays accepted the positions and moved to Tampa, Florida, in September, 1926. Evaluating the Tampa situation, Mays explained:

Physicians, ministers, school teachers, and mail clerks were the Negro leaders in Tampa. The most prestigious position for a Negro in Tampa in 1926 was that of Executive Secretary of the Tampa Urban League - I was expected to be both the chief liaison man between the black and white worlds, an almost impossible job . . . There was no paucity of problems . . . Theoretically at least, the executive secretary was free to map programs for improvement and relief. Hercules himself might well have been daunted in the face of this Augean stable: 3

Often exasperated with the same injustices, Mays attempted to work within the system, hoping to create change.

3Ibid., p. 107.
He could not understand Tampa's claim concerning ideal "negro-white relations," because when both races assembled, blacks were confined to a designated section. He could not understand patronizing references to "our good Negroes." Mays asked, "Were 'our good Negroes' good only as long as they stayed in their places, accepting the status quo without complaint - preferably with gratitude?" Dedicated to honesty, Mays and his wife decided to "serve with integrity rather than expediency."

Fighting the deeply ingrained prejudices and the blatant social injustices, Mays and his wife encountered the ultimate hurdle - "the battles of titles." Both insisted on referring to black women as Miss or Mrs., written and orally, in the hope of elevating Negro pride and self respect.

The passage of time did little to change the Mays' defense of "titles." As late as August, 1977, he expressed his admiration for Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune because, "... although born in the South where it was anathema for Whites to address Black women by the titles Miss and Mrs., Mrs. Bethune was never Mary to anyone. No White person dared to address her in any fashion other than as Mrs. Bethune. Living this proud example in a hostile world, the fact that
she was free in a segregated society, made her the most extraordinary Black woman I have ever known."  

Mays published an article, "It Cost Too Much" in the Tampa Bulletin, a Negro paper, April 7, 1928. In the article he protested the segregated seating policy of reserving 900 main floor seats for whites, when only 68 were present, while a packed balcony of blacks stood to see a black student production *From Darkness to Light* which depicted the progress made by Negroes from slavery to 1928.

Mays was annoyed that the article aroused censure from the Chairman of the Board of Education. Refusing to accept the status quo, Mr. and Mrs. Mays resigned and moved to Atlanta where Mays became student secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. Mrs. Mays worked with the Georgia Study of Negro Child Welfare and later joined the faculty of the Atlanta University School of Social Work.

Y. M. C. A.

The new job may have been different for Benjamin Mays, but his role was similar - to inspire black students "to aim high and to reach for the unattainable goals." As National

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Student Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., Mays saw segregation with a new "hat". Noting the segregation in the annual Y.M.C.A. conference, Mays remarked that, "the 'Christian' in the name Young Men's Christian Association is non-operative when it comes to the races." Disgusted with the policies of the Y.M.C.A., Mays urged boycotting the Blue Ridge conference, an action that resulted in the eventual abandonment of the color bar in 1951.

Director of Study of United States Negro Churches

In 1930 Mays was invited by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, a Rockerfeller financed agency, to direct a study of Negro churches in the United States. The project was "the first comprehensive contemporary study of the Negro church," and was designed "to give an accurate description of the Negro church . . . in the United States."5 After fourteen months of research and ten months of writing, the results of the study were published as a book, The Negro's Church (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research). It covered 691 Negro churches in twelve cities, and 185 Negro rural churches. A conclusion drawn as late as 1968, at the Second Annual Convocation of the National Committee of Black

Churchmen, was reflected much earlier in Mays' book, *The Negro's Church*, "that Negroes have always wanted to own and control their churches and they have always felt that the white church did not speak specifically to their needs."\(^6\)

**Howard University**

Released from a commitment to teach at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Benjamin Mays accepted the deanship of the Howard University School of Religion at Washington, D. C. in 1954. He admitted that he accepted the position because he liked the challenge of making the School of Religion into a first-rate institution, and the opportunity to work with Mordecai Johnson, the first black president of Howard.

The School of Religion was housed in a deteriorated frame building; the library was grossly inadequate, salaries were low, and the school had low prestige. Only twenty-eight students were enrolled, fourteen with college degrees in the graduate school and fourteen combining two years of college with two years of theological work. Mays set out to increase enrollment, upgrade faculty, improve the physical plant, enlarge and improve the library, establish an endowment, and

seek accreditation by the American Association of Theological Schools. During his six years at Howard University, Mays achieved his objectives except the establishment of an endowment. The long, precarious road toward attainment of these objectives ultimately led to his greatest achievement - the accreditation of the school by the American Association of Theological Schools on December 15, 1939, making it the second Negro seminary to qualify.

Morehouse College: As President

In 1940 Benjamin Elijah Mays became the sixth president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. He instilled the idea of excellence in Morehouse students; "The sky was their limit," they were told. Mays emphasized black pride long before "black identity" became fashionable. Even so, some faculty members were reluctant to accept Mays because they feared that he would destroy the school through stressing academic performance over athletic prowess. Some ministers saw him as modernistic and doubted his ability to guide an orthodox, conservative Baptist institution. Mays explained that these ministers questioned the University of Chicago Divinity School from which he graduated because they thought that the professors were "agnostics, infidels, and atheists." Therefore, becoming a victim of guilt by association, Mays' ability to lead was questioned.
Morehouse College, like most other institutions, was plagued with student, faculty and personnel dissatisfaction, and consequently low morale. To combat this atmosphere, Mays promptly established three concrete objectives: (1) to secure more money; (2) to increase the faculty in size; and (3) to improve the quality of faculty.

To elevate the school's financial status Mays first required all students to pay in full all accumulated back fees before they registered for new courses. His stern insistence immediately earned him the nickname "Buck Benny." However, he was equally as insistent in seeing that students serve on all major committees involving campus responsibilities. Mays quietly admitted that, "... to be president of a college and white is no bed of roses. To be president of a college and black is almost a bed of thorns."7

The "bed of thorns," however, did not interfere with Mays' accomplishments. The Morehouse endowment increased from one million to over four and a half million. The Morehouse faculty as well as the Board of Trustees were selected according to stringent qualifications. All sexual, national, ethnical, racial or religious lines were ignored in the ultimate selection. Faculty doctorates increased from

7Mays, Born To Rebel, p. 196.
8.7 percent in 1940 to 54 percent in 1967. Enrollment increased from 38 illiterate former slaves to almost 1,000 young men. Mays states:

In 1967 Morehouse graduates were studying in forty-five of the best graduate and professional schools in the nation. One out of every eighteen Negroes earning doctorates had received the A.B. or B.A. degree from Morehouse. One of every nine Morehouse graduates had earned an academic or professional doctorate.8

In January, 1968 Mays' dream was gratified; the first chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in a black southern college was established at Morehouse College.

In fund raising, Mays' biggest disappointment was his inability to get "white" Atlanta to accept Morehouse as a part of the educational structure of the city. In a 1961 issue of Ebony magazine, Mays states:

We are not asking for money for Negro students . . . for predominantly Negro institutions. This is not a missionary enterprise. We are asking for four million because Morehouse is a good college. If it isn't good enough for students of any race, it is not good enough for Negroes.9

After the 1954 Civil Rights decision, Mays was concerned that white colleges, able to provide scholarships, would recruit the best black students. Consequently, Mays revamped his program to achieve the necessary atmosphere

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8Ibid., pp. 183-4.
to develop serious study and professional honesty in quest of academic excellence. Promoting academic emphasis subsequently put a premium on the honor student. One Morehouse professor saw the concentration as a means of "trying to arrange it so the bright student would have as much prestige as a football star."\(^{10}\)

The *Journal of Negro History* summarized Mays career at Morehouse:

Benjamin Mays, the most able leader in the Atlanta University system for 27 years, is an example for the future because he has led Morehouse College to its highest Pisgah and into the promised land with a crowning chapter of Phi Beta Kappa to mark this achievement!\(^{11}\)

Lerone Bennett, senior editor of *Ebony* magazine, said that Morehouse "which is sometimes called the College of Presidents, has produced leaders for 18 institutions . . .
Morehouse still turns out preachers and teachers, but it is also producing an increasingly large number of scientists, bankers, businessmen and foreign service personnel."\(^{12}\) The *New York Times* refers to the college as "an institution whose alumni read like a Who's Who of Afro-America's recent intellectual, cultural and political history;"\(^{13}\) while Great

\(^{10}\) *Tbid.*, p. 27.

\(^{11}\) *Journal of Negro History*, LIII (January, 1968), p. 100.


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Negroes Past and Present calls Morehouse "the black Oxford of the South."  

In 1967, President of New York University, James M. Hester, attributes Morehouse's success to Mays' "strong character, noble personality, keen intelligence, and firm commitment to the demands of liberal education." Hugh M. Gloster, the current President of Morehouse College, saw his job of successor to Mays as "a formidable task" following the man he called "a paragon among presidents." A Hampton, Virginia, Baptist minister agreed, "... for trying to succeed Dr. Mays is like trying to succeed Jesus." Merriman Cunningham, then President of the Danforth Foundation, at a meeting of the Southern Fellowship Fund in Nashville, Tennessee, unconsciously verbalized the thoughts of many when he referred to Mays as, "Bennie Morehouse, the President of Mays College."  

Atlanta Board of Education  

Upon retiring from Morehouse College, Benjamin Mays traveled around the world and affiliated with national and 

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16 Ibid., pp. 16-18.
international organizations.\textsuperscript{17} In July, 1967, the recent retiree served as co-chairman with Chairman, Walter P. Reuther, President of United Auto Workers, on the Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty. The \textit{New York Times} identifies the Crusade as "A private organization (22 man board) that draws its membership from religious, labor, business and grass roots groups concerned with the poor."\textsuperscript{18}

In 1969 Mays was elected secretary treasurer of the National Sharecroppers Fund whose purpose according to the \textit{New York Times}, was to help people to live a good life in their own communities, rather than leave and perhaps find themselves on city welfare rolls.\textsuperscript{19}

In October, 1969, Mays was elected as the first black member of the Atlanta Board of Education, and three months later, while the city encountered civil strife, Mays was elected president of the Board. Re-elected by acclamation in 1971, Mays "pledged to do an even better job."\textsuperscript{20} A few months later he criticized the Urban League for ignoring the problem of halting the white flight to the

\textsuperscript{17}See Appendix A for Biographical Summary, Section III.  
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Atlanta Constitution}, January 5, 1971, p. 8-A.
suburbs. Mays re-emphasized that, "the problem is what we do to stabilize this city and keep it from becoming all black."21

Reg Murphy of the Atlanta Constitution calls Mays courageous for, "he broke the silence of the liberal community. He spoke up for the use of intelligence rather than kneejerk reactions in trying to solve the problems... He will not have won friends."22

Aside from local problems Mays liberally expressed his views on national issues: housing, Viet Nam, Black leaders, "white flight," busing, and black colleges.23 He signed a petition to Congress, to the President, to aspirants for the presidency, to the public and to the young men affected by the Viet Nam war, urging that, "the amnesty be instituted, at latest, shortly after an armistice in Viet Nam, whether that be proclaimed or defacto."24

In October, 1971, Mays became concerned about black leadership, which, as he saw it, had failed to set aside internal differences, and was therefore weakened by jealousy

21Atlanta Constitution, April 15, 1971, p. 7-D.

22Atlanta Constitution, April 6, 1971, p. 4-A.

23"Dr. Benjamin E. Mays," Ebony, XXVI(July. 1971), pp. 92-94.

and feuding. At the first Annual Leadership Appreciation Banquet, sponsored by Union Baptist Church in Atlanta, he said, "black leadership has failed not only to provide moral guidance, but has not met its responsibility to help lift the economic plight of their masses. Leadership must be positive."25

In October, 1972, the Atlanta Board voted to appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court a new desegregation order for a new plan to correct 106 of the 153 Atlanta totally segregated schools by November. The order handed down would require extensive busing for the Atlanta system which owns no buses. Mays, the Chairman of the Board, voted against the appeal calling it "an effort in futility." He "called upon politicians to allow the Board to come up with a desegregation plan that hopefully will not require massive busing."26

In April, 1973, the Atlanta Board adopted a controversial, minimum desegregation school plan. Many race experts felt the plan would affect the total integration picture in the United States. The plan, endorsed by many black Atlantanians called for, "token busing and leaves most of Atlanta's 21,000 white children in predominantly white

25Atlanta Constitution, October 24, 1971, p. 20-A.
schools and . . . 75,000 black students in predominantly black schools."27 National civil rights groups opposed the plan calling it a compromise. The "compromise" was so constructed that, "in return for minimal disturbance of the status quo the city would give blacks half the key jobs in the school administration, still controlled by whites."
The New York Times explained that black middle class feared "the economic consequences of racial turmoil; increasing 'combat fatigue' on both sides; and wide-spread disenchantment of quality education for blacks in white schools."
Lennie King, an Atlanta activist of the Sixties, called the plan "a compromise," but he saw it as the only solution which would guarantee quality education for blacks. Andrew Young, then U. S. Representative from Georgia, saw the plan as "a way for blacks to gain more power in city government." State Representative, Billy McKinney, liked the plan because "it would not disturb neighborhoods - black neighborhoods!"28

Opposition came mostly from liberal whites and organizations representing lower class blacks. N.A.A.C.P. headquarters in New York said, "the compromise went against the racial goals and in particular meant nothing nationally."29

28Ibid.
29Ibid., p. 20.
To this remark Mays replied calmly, "the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers fear the plan might set a national pattern."

More explicit in the Atlanta Constitution, Mays replied, "I am disappointed it is called the compromise plan instead of the Atlanta plan... It is a good solution."³⁰

Presenting a slightly different view, Mays said in 1975:

I believe in an integrated education. All black and white people live together in this country. We aren't going anywhere and neither are they...

There is a great fear that too many blacks in a school means the quality of that school is lowered. But there is no proof that white kids who graduate in an integrated system are any less prepared than if they graduated in all white systems.³¹

Confronted with the problems of the Seventies, Mays continues his career at age 83 giving priority to his duties as President of the Atlanta Board of Education. He serves on numerous committees, commissions and boards, and is called upon regularly to deliver speeches around the country. Apparently the respect for the quality of work by Mays has not diminished. One high ranking Atlanta school official said, "His stamina never ceases to amaze me... his leadership has been nothing less than excellent. Although I do not always agree with his views on desegregation, he has definitely

³⁰Atlanta Constitution, September 4, 1973, p. 4-A.
³¹Atlanta Constitution, May 4, 1975, p. 5-C.
helped us to cope with many of the problems that have literally strangled some of the country's big city school systems."32

In Black Enterprise, Jacob Wortham states that, "Although Mays considers himself an 'integrationist,' school desegregation is not one of his top priorities."

Mays explains his position:

I don't believe that racial integration in the schools is a must if we are to have first class institutions. Given the money, well trained teachers and good facilities, an all black school can be just as good as any white school . . . If a black child must sit next to a white child to be stimulated, then we are saying that the black child is inferior.33

In 1976 Atlanta's Mayor Maynard Jackson acknowledging a career that covers several decades, proclaimed April 10, 1976, Benjamin E. Mays Day. Mays was referred to as a man who had dedicated his intellect and creative energies to the struggle for equality and dignity for all people and one who has touched the lives of thousands. Jackson said, "Mays continues to touch lives in a positive fashion here in Atlanta as well as elsewhere. Mays has been a stabilizing influence in the city during times of crisis in education."34


33 Ibid.

34 Atlanta Constitution, April 15, 1976, p. 4-A.
Mays' newspaper column "My View" appears regularly in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a weekly newspaper, in which he has expressed analysis of national and international issues since 1946. Mays acclaims with pride the abundance of activity in his present career, for "If a man ever stops looking to the future he's finished. There must be a tomorrow and something to do."35

35Wortham, p. 27.
CHAPTER III
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES

Commencement addresses are traditional at the closing festivities of a school or college when degrees or diplomas are conferred. Gray and Braden explain that the address is designed "to strengthen or intensify existing attitudes or opinions." This type speech generally seeks an emotional rather than an intellectual response. They also state that since "the occasion is a most significant aspect of the stimulating speech," the speaker must conform to "the traditions, customs, precedents, and rituals" of the event. They further suggest that the speaker has a duty to "live up to the expectations of the program planners and prepare to meet the listeners in a spirit consistent with the other events on the agenda." Alan Monroe sees the speaker as poised physically, letting his voice suggest his depth of feeling in order to instill in his audience a deep feeling of reverence or devotion.

In her book, Commencement, Gertrude Jones describes

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the commencement generally as the culmination of the inspiration fostered by the school. She regards its purpose as threefold:

1. To recognize the attainment of a level that has been set up by one society's established institutions - recognition;

2. To sum up the experience gained thus far in life's "quest for values" - retrospection;

3. To open the doorway leading to a new and higher level of experience - inspiration.²

The format is usually structured in keeping with the formality of the occasion. While the speaker is expected to inspire the audience, who is likely to be in general agreement with his theme, the subject must be realistic and well within the comprehension and interest of the audience. The speaker must be cognizant of time limitation, remembering that the major concern is the awarding of degrees.

It must be noted that Benjamin Mays had ample experience with commencement exercises, for he actively officiated as college president until he retired in the Summer of 1967. Aside from his administrative affiliation, he participated in many commencement exercises as well,

having received forty-three honorary degrees\textsuperscript{3} over a span of thirty-two years, from the first honorary degree awarded by Howard University in Washington, D. C. in 1945 until his most recent honorary degree came from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas in 1977. At many of these institutions Mays served as commencement speaker and was cited generally for his devotion to education and commitment to human rights and brotherhood. At St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, he was referred to as an "... exemplar of integrity, model of courage, and champion of human rights." At Dillard University, President Samuel DuBois Cook identified Mays as "a pace setter, a tradition shatterer, and a precedent maker." Regarded as an accomplished preacher early in his career, seemingly the numerous speech invitations and subsequent commendations suggest that Mays was acclaimed as a commencement speaker.

\textbf{Campus Protest in the Sixties}

The Sixties served as a peak in Mays' career as commencement speaker, but at the same time the turbulent period symbolized the academic protests, which began when the first wave of student dissent swept across the United States with the advent of the Free Speech Movement at

\textsuperscript{3}See Appendix A for Biographical Summary, Section II.
Berkeley in 1964. The strong united student front could not be ignored by professors and administrators who were accused of concentrating on irrelevant education. However, few activities escaped the reproach of student criticism. The cloak of reverence was stripped from the stately tradition of commencement as dissident students rejected what they called remote speech topics, thereby, forcing anxious speakers to take another look at their roles.

Speaker reaction varied from disbelief to a disturbed concern. As a result, campus speakers used great caution in their presentations. For example, Vice President Hubert Humphrey spoke on peace, while other speakers defended the policy in Viet Nam and attempted to show that there was prospect in the global battles. Some speakers dismissed the dissent and called it a temporary substitute for the panty raids and only pranks. Others noted the increased momentum, but still did not approve the new activism. Sol M. Linowitz warned the students that "true involvement calls for far more than carrying a banner or joining a march."4 R. Sargent Shriver reminded students that they must decide not "should I act?" but "which side am I on?" Carl T. Rowan advised the black student not to concentrate "so exclusively

4"Dissent on Dissent," Newsweek, LXV (June 21, 1965), p. 86.
on street demonstrations that he forgets other fields of battle." William Manchester, summarized the situation with words from John Kennedy - "Instead of Leadership we have problem solving teams. Instead of judges we have referees... and in lieu of grace and style we have the cult of informality, which in some obscure way is regarded as democratic virtue."

Characteristic of most arguments, some speakers agreed with the student stand for relevancy. Concurring, Secretary of Labor, W. Willard Wirtz reprimanded commencement speakers for having "a good deal in common with grandfather clocks: standing usually some six feet tall, typically ponderous in construction, more traditional than functional, relating essentially commonplace information." Others compared them with Polonius, and criticized this type speaker for "speaking only to himself and to his own generation, confessing his own failures or omissions or hopes, and interpreting the world in his own image."

In spite of speaker response, protests escalated by June 1966, and in many instances graduates were joined by sympathizing faculty members. Protesting the presentation of an honorary degree to Robert McNamara, "a dozen N.Y.U.

faculty members and 131 graduates ... walked out of their commencement exercises to protest U. S. military action in Viet Nam. 6 Picket signs outside read: "No Honors for War Criminals." In the same year, without incident, Mays received honorary degrees from three universities: Morris College, Sumter, South Carolina; Ricker College, Houlton, Maine; and Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

June 1967 was considered a tranquil year for major universities. Consequently, universities and colleges and the government used caution in light of the calm. Those members of Lyndon Johnson's cabinet who identified with policies in Viet Nam turned down invitations. Universities and colleges used a low-key approach. They invited speakers who would not disturb the campus: The University of Michigan invited Zakir Husain, President of India; Yale awarded an honorary degree to the jazz immortal, Duke Ellington; Hubert Humphrey spoke on peace at four colleges; Roy Wilkins, of the N.A.A.C.P., appeared at Oberlin. At his granddaughter's school, Shipley School for Girls, Dwight Eisenhower discussed the "perils of the miniskirt." 7

The following year, the class of '68 at Columbia University saw two commencements. One took place in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, normally the substitute location when it rained. The other was staged on the steps of Low Library by the 300 protesting graduates who had walked quietly out of the cathedral when Richard Hofstadter began the commencement address.⁸ Most commencement ceremonies that year were quiet and peaceful, as was the situation when Benjamin Mays addressed the 4,191 graduates at Michigan State University.

Considering the number of graduates in a given year, the widely publicized protesting students were relatively small in number. Yet, there was the uncertainty of the effect of activist influence, for unpredictable students require little notice to bring about disruption. Playing it safe, political leaders of 1969 continued to avoid graduation ceremonies. To escape demonstration, the Nixon Administration followed the same hands off policy as the Johnson Administration. On the other hand, universities had to use varying means to avoid or control any disturbances. Under the threat of disruption by radicals, UCLA called off the procession and the awarding of honorary degrees to HEW

Chief Robert Finch and Presidential Aide Daniel Patrick Moynihan. "The ceremony proceeded without disruption."9 At Notre Dame, President Theodore Hesburgh, "laid down a stern line on protests" before the arrival of the speaker, Moynihan. Brandeis University successfully gave degrees to "unprotestables" such as Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ramsey Clark. For the second time in its 268-year-history, Yale's commencement speaker was a senior who expressed the graduates' opposition to the Viet Nam war. At Harvard University, a spokesman for the students for a Democratic Society ran overtime and "was eventually hooted and led off the podium;" the regular student speaker, a law graduate, spoke for the "moderate majority."10

Despite the decline in furor for change, the commencement speakers remained aware of turmoil and dissension. They were not totally optimistic, for they saw that protests did change many universities. Consequently, to survive before the new audience and gain an effective response, they too must change in order to keep in step with the graduates. These students, naturally, were not all ac-activists, but the national coverage by the media put them right at the scene of the youth revolution. Subsequently,


exposure from the media would prepare them to formulate future judgments in evaluating the commitment of the university and the relevancy of a commencement address. Speakers were now required not only to remember the activist, but also to consider the newly aware silent majority who sat by awaiting change.

**Mays Escapes Campus Unrest**

Characterized as neither businessman nor politician, Mays was obliged to utilize his ministerial training and speaking experiences to adapt to potentially restless listeners. Because his speech subjects were less controversial, he was not seen as a controversial figure and, therefore escaped the campus protest. Circumstances, luck or skill may account for Mays' triumph, but as the protest philosophy escalated in 1964, Mays was speaking to a polite audience at a small liberal arts college for men - St. Vincent College, in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. In 1965 while commencement speakers spoke out against the activism at major universities, Mays spoke of values to a predominantly black audience at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. Before quiet audiences, during the protest lull of 1967, Mays received honorary degrees from Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Morgan State College, Baltimore, Maryland; and Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.
Even though attitudes had changed on his own campus at Morehouse, Mays was not a victim of the academic protests and student discontent. For one thing in 1967 during the heat of national unrest, Mays delivered his final commencement address as President of Morehouse College and retired at age 72. Before a warm cheering audience, he received a honorary degree from the college where he had been President for twenty-seven years.

Social Setting

The settings for Mays' commencement addresses ranged from the 80,000 seat Spartan Stadium of Michigan State University in East Lansing, to the intimate oak tree-lined quadrangle of the Dillard University campus in New Orleans. The audience also reflected diversity. The Michigan State address was delivered to parents and friends of 4,191 graduates; the Dillard address was delivered to parents and friends of some 200 graduates. As might be expected, the diversity in audience size displayed little difference in the degree of pomp and ceremony, the characteristics of the audience, and the structure of the commencement exercise.

In order to get a picture of the schools discussed, a brief current profile of the six institutions will serve to indicate differences in type, location, size, religious affiliation, and finances.

Bucknell University, founded in 1846, is located in a town of 6,000 in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. This private institution, built on 300 acres of land, has an enrollment of 3,200 graduate and undergraduate students. Sixty percent of these students are Protestant. Bucknell's admission policies are ranked as "highly selective," resulting in eighty-eight percent of the freshmen in the top fifth in their high school graduating classes and ninety-five percent in the top two-fifths. More than two-thirds of the faculty
members hold doctorate degrees. Tuition is two thousand dollars and fifty percent of the student body received financial aid.

The University of Liberia, the major educational institution of the country is located in Monrovia, Liberia, on the continent of Africa. It was founded as a college in 1862 and became a university in 1951. It incorporates Liberia College, Teacher's College, School of Law, College of Agriculture and Forestry, College of Business and Public Administration, College of Medicine and College of Science and Technology. The University has one hundred and ninety faculty members for an enrollment of 1,980 students. No information was given on the tuition or the admission policies.

Michigan State University, founded in 1855, covers two thousand acres in East Lansing, Michigan, and has an enrollment of 47,796 graduate and undergraduate students. The admission policy is classified as "selective", but the university has "enrolled more national merit scholars than any other institution of higher learning." Eighty percent of the freshmen were in the top fifth of their graduating classes and ninety percent were in the top two-fifths. The tuition was $630 and $1,485 for out-of-state students. Fifty percent of the students received financial aid.

Emory University, private and formerly Methodist
related, is located on 500 acres in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded in 1836, it has an enrollment of 7,334 graduate and undergraduate students. The admission policy is considered "highly selective", with eighty percent of the freshmen in the top fourth of their graduating classes. The tuition is twenty-four hundred dollars and only twenty percent of the students received financial aid. Ninety percent of the faculty members above instructor level hold doctorates; consequently, the "faculty compensation is above the national average."

Centre College is located on 50 acres in the small town of Danville, Kentucky, four miles from Louisville, Kentucky. Formerly Presbyterian, Centre was founded in 1819 and has an enrollment of 800. The admission policy is "very selective", with seventy percent of the freshman from the top fifth of their graduating classes; ninety percent were in the upper two-fifths. The tuition is two thousand dollars and only thirty-eight percent of the students received financial aid.

Dillard University, with an enrollment of 1,186, is located on sixty-two acres in New Orleans, Louisiana. This university, founded in 1869, is still affiliated with the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. Admission is open to high school graduates with the required fifteen units from a recognized high school. Tuition is
thirteen hundred dollars and ninety-five percent of the students received financial aid.

Audiences

At these universities, Mays spoke to four predominantly white audiences and two predominantly black audiences, namely, the University of Liberia and Dillard University. Mays stated that his "philosophy for dealing with the predominantly black and predominantly white audiences is essentially as in one," and that he usually considers "a current topic that would be of interest to the graduates in the senior class and to the faculty and commencement listeners." However, Mays explained that he was aware of existing job discrimination against blacks and, therefore, selected his subject according to the needs of those to whom he was speaking.

The descriptions of the institutions suggest that Mays' audiences differed on economic and educational levels. Traditionally, at these universities, the predominantly white audiences included a larger number of alumni and guests in addition to faculty, family and friends. The amount of tuition, financial aid, and admission policies of the predominantly white universities suggest that their audiences were generally middle to upper middle class with third or fourth generation college graduates. Possibly they
would have attended many such occasions and would, therefore, be more demanding of a commencement speaker.

The audience at predominantly black University of Liberia probably was highly selective since the small discriminating student population represented only a limited segment of the people. On the other hand, predominantly black Dillard University has an open door admission policy; students are accepted from all levels of academic preparation. However, they must meet the standards established by the university in order to remain beyond the first semester. Of those who remain, ninety-five percent received financial aid which denoted the general economic status of attending students. It can then be assumed that a large number of students are from poor families, a condition which may indicate a smaller number of middle or upper middle class relatives and friends in the commencement audience. In an article Mays explains that investigation of the educational status and the economic background of the majority of the parents and relatives of black students prove they cannot "assume a superior air toward the average and less-than-average citizens in the community, for the vast majority of them will be taking that attitude toward their parents, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and near kin."11 Granted

progress has been made in many areas economically with the availability of better jobs, but education has moved along at a slower pace. With this fact in mind, the audience at Dillard University may have been less sophisticated and knowledgeable of commencement exercises in general and commencement speakers in particular. The new experience may contribute to a larger interest in the awarding of degrees than in what a speaker had to say. However, since Mays chose a religious theme for this church related institution, he was probably accepted readily as a preacher.

The barely one hundred graduates and their guests at Centre College certainly created an intimacy for the speaker which was impossible to achieve for the guests and friends of the 4,141 graduates at Michigan State University.

Bucknell and Emory Universities probably had similar audiences in that they had "highly selective" admission policies, were private with some religious affiliation, and over fifty percent of their faculty members had doctorates. The difference was that Emory, a southern university, had twice as many students, but only twenty percent received financial aid in comparison to fifty percent at northern Bucknell University.

Goals

Mays utilized the same goals for the commencement addresses as he did generally for his sermons: to inform
and stimulate his audience of the need for social change. The commencement listeners, however, were different because they represented varying segments of society. The speaker would have less in common with them than he would as preacher in a church. Therefore, Mays had to make his message relevant for the restless graduate, and stimulating for the disinterested and undecided listener.

Prior to the period of fashionable requests for black speakers, Mays was compelled to argue his convictions from the pulpit in black churches and in articles written for journals and black owned newspapers, for at that time speaking in public involved certain risks for a black man. Originally Mays argued mainly that the church had a role in correcting social ills;\textsuperscript{12} but by the late Forties his goal was to attract the attention of society by attacking the racial and economic status of the schools. Believing that "segregation in education restricts and circumscribes the mind," and "puts a limit to free inquiry and investigation," Mays argued that "legalized segregation inevitably resulted in inferior schools, inferior accommodations, and inferior jobs."\textsuperscript{13}


Believing effective interchange to be the answer to many problems, Mays contends that "most of the white people of the South - and the North, too, for that matter - have never known the cultured and trained Negro." As a result, "Negroes and white people in the South never had honest communication and if what is communicated is false, it can hardly be called communication."\(^{14}\) Mays explains that the May 17, 1954 decision of the United States Supreme Court acted as an instrument which paved the way for honesty between the races.

Escalating his speaking by accepting "every invitation to speak for the people," Mays chose the platform from which to reinforce his written arguments. His concern was with a truly honest approach in communication. He outlined two simple prerequisites for a successful public speaker: "First, the speaker should be sure that his message has real content, and second, the speaker should say only what he believes." Explaining this pulpit oratory, Marcus Boulware, former Speech Professor at Florida A and M University, describes his theory as an embodiment of "the public speaking of Jesus Christ who spoke his doctrine as utmost truths."\(^{15}\)

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In an interview in 1977, Mays concurred with this earlier declaration by stating that his major goal in any speech was "to tell the truth." He apparently followed the tenets of John Broadus who explains that "the preacher's aim is to convince the judgment, kindle the imagination, move the feelings, and give a powerful impulse to the will in the direction of truth's requirement."\(^\text{16}\)

Since Mays concerned himself with telling the truth, his primary goal was to have his audience believe his assertions. Then, technically his immediate goal was to achieve the elusive favorable response. Thonssen, Baird, and Braden contend that "response is a major determinant of rhetorical effectiveness;" and that "by its inherent nature, speech seeks response."\(^\text{17}\) Therefore, the main concern of any speaker is mastering the necessary skills needed for gaining an effective response. Using this criterion, the writer assumes that Mays believed his listeners were aware of the existing conditions. Evidently he chose to (1) make the audience believe there was a need for change; (2) reorder systematically their thinking; and (3) as Alan Monroe puts


it - "to direct them toward a definite course of action"\textsuperscript{18} by making the aroused feelings lasting.

Apparently Mays divided his audience into two groups and devised a strategy to inform those auditors who knew least about the subject while stimulating those who were more knowledgeable. Ultimately most would be on the same level when he presented his recommendations, either implicit or explicit. It is not always clear whether Mays sought only a covert response or whether he opted for an overt response. The subtlety of his approach makes it difficult to determine. The persistent concern for social change compels one to expect an immediate call for action, rather than the optimistic belief in the future action of man.

Considering the earlier statements by Mays, one can assume that in his speeches he sets out to fulfill his desire to build "good human relations based on truth, honesty, and sincerity."\textsuperscript{19} Mays' heritage instilled the impetus for change within him and apparently his ultimate goal was to create a similar momentum in the hearts of modern society.


\textsuperscript{19}Mays, \textit{Atlanta Monthly}, December, 1960, p. 89.
Themes

Mays' used the same themes for social change in the commencement addresses that he used in his sermons: war, poverty, racism, and social justice. Striving for a lasting arousal of emotions, Mays addressed himself to the stimulation of man's attitudes in recognizing the need for implementing change.

Many of Mays' commencement addresses before 1960 reflected his customary practice of using religious texts to develop his themes. Mays was equally as direct and explicit in his commencement addresses as he was in the sermons, but the themes were not as deeply embodied in Scripture as they were in the sermons. In the address at Bucknell University given June 13, 1954, he demonstrated his usual reliance on a biblical text. This address was given in the wake of the Supreme Court decision Oliver Brown et al. versus Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, declaring segregation in the public schools unconstitutional. The fact that Bucknell is a private institution, in a small northern Pennsylvania town with sixty percent of the student body Protestant, apparently provided Mays with an audience likely to sympathize with the biblical concepts of a southern Baptist college president. Being a black speaker before a predominantly white audience probably influenced Mays' strategy very little. Seemingly, Mays was primarily
concerned with the economic status of his audience and their subsequent assistance; the fact that his audience was white was incidental.

The address at Bucknell was based on a passage from St. Luke (16:19-31), relating to the fate of the rich man who ignored the beggar at his door. Speaking to an affluent audience, Mays made a strong plea for the development of a social conscience, while explaining two of his social change themes: the existence of poverty and the need for social justice. Revealing his knowledge of world conditions and magnifying the growing destitution at home, Mays spoke of a large number of people dying of slow starvation, specifically referring to the "starving millions in Asia."

Emphasizing the need for social justice in "trying times," Mays stressed that man should begin worrying about his brother, implying that no one can escape involvement because "the destiny of each man is tied up with the destiny of another." To point out the importance of this concept, he explained the importance of good human relationships, stating that "we are so interlaced and interwoven that what affects one touches all."

By 1960, at the University of Liberia, Mays followed the trend of the Sixties and spoke on the practical aspects of gaining an education. The university which consisted of a small enrollment comprised less than one-tenth percent of
the million and a half population. These Liberians were probably interested in a realistic outlook to their problems. Consequently, Mays held biblical references to a minimum. Though far removed from the college campuses of the United States, Mays spoke as an interested black man to a black audience, and was concerned with stimulating attitudes toward improving conditions for the less fortunate. Therefore, he addressed himself to the question, "Education - To What End?" Reaching out to the graduates, Mays told them of the selfish reasons for obtaining an education which would only revolve around the individual. Then he embellished his address emphasizing possible tremendous achievements if education is pursued for unselfish reasons, for reasons designed to help "elevate the masses."

Once back in the United States, Mays remembered the hostile world of the early twentieth century when he was a poor young man struggling to get a quality education. Noting present conditions, Mays asserted to his audiences at Michigan State and Emory that the world was no different for the elements of war, poverty, and racism still exist. Seemingly, he tried to do more than guide the youth into the so called "hostile" world; instead he attempted to prepare them for its realities.

The speeches at Michigan State and at Emory Universities were identical. The timely theme was "The priorities
of colleges and universities should be to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism." Mays entitled the earlier speech at Michigan State, "The Universities Unfinished Work;" however, two years later, with only a few changes, he called his address at Emory University, "The Three Enemies of Mankind." Explicit in the introduction of his first theme, probably because of the anti-war feelings of most college youths, Mays asserted: "When it comes to war, it can be argued with considerable logic that man is not any more civilized today than he was ages ago."

Secondly, apparently directed at the typically complacent American, he argued that "... poverty is not only in far off South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, but poverty is here in the affluent U.S.A." Mays introduced his theme on racism with a definition by Ruth Benedict, noted anthropologist and author of Patterns of Culture:

Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority. It is the dogma that the hope of civilization depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure. It is the dogma that one race has carried progress throughout human history and alone ensure future progress.

In "The Challenge of the Seventies," his speech at Centre College, Mays introduced three of his social change themes. Apparently mindful of the turbulent Sixties and describing his feelings, Mays opened with a quotation by
Thomas Paine: "These are the times that try men's souls."
Reflecting this condition, he discussed the war in Viet
Nam and the spreading of the war into Cambodia. He
questioned the wisdom of the United States in spending
more money for expeditions to the moon than for "the
29,900,000 Americans in the United States living in poverty."
He pointed out that the racial problem "... is the most
explosive problem confronting the United States today."
Aside from the old problems of war, poverty, and race, Mays
reminded these students of the problems of a population
explosion, water and air pollution, and the increased drug
problem.

Mays attested to the uncordial treatment of an
aggressive society, but occasionally he lacked first hand
experience. For instance, he was too young for one war and
too old for another, yet he maintained a knowledge of the
demoralizing effects of war because he lived through a
period when blacks agonized over the fact that they were
permitted to fight abroad, but they were not permitted to
vote at home. Mays was "fifty-two years old when he was
permitted to vote for the first time."20

In speaking to the predominantly black audience at
Dillard University, Mays was strongly concerned with

20Lerone Bennett, Jr., "The Last of the Great
Schoolmasters," Ebony, XXXII(December, 1977), p. 76.
advancement. In an effort to enhance change, Mays commented on the many facets of minority problems. To intensify these problems, he pointedly utilized Scripture at this small private church related college. He used the biblical story of the achievements of Abraham and Terah as an adjunct for the proposition - "satisfaction must never be your lot."

The idea was that Terah was complacent because he became satisfied when he attained success in Hanan and remained there even though his goal was to journey on to Canaan. Abraham, on the other hand, was left with the responsibility of going on to Canaan where he not only formed a great nation, but was "immortalized in history and eternity."

Mays explained to his listeners the need to achieve above their capacities in order to avoid complacency. Again he pointed out the continuing problems of war, poverty, and race. To this predominantly black group he added the problems of "white flight" which he inferred maintains segregated housing, and the "black on black" crimes which significantly retard black growth. Meaning that not only is the population of blacks affected by the crimes, but the image presented to the general public is detrimental to the cause of those seeking assistance for the black man in need.

Organization

Mays structured his commencement addresses using the
classical Aristotelian division for epideitic speeches: the exordium, preparing the way; the exposition, explaining the theme; emotional proof, amplifying the theme; and the peroration, inspiring the auditors. Similarly, John Broadus describes the formal elements of a sermon as the introduction, discussion, and conclusion. In examining the organization of these speeches the writer will consider the following areas: the development of speech divisions, the proportioning of materials, and the general adaptation to the specific audience.

Opening statements differed from speech to speech because Mays sometimes used varying pleasantries to establish ethical appeal before going into his formal introduction. For example, with the predominantly black audience in Liberia and with the predominantly southern white audience in Atlanta, Mays opened with conventional courtesies. At the University of Liberia he expressed his delight at being honored, extending greetings from Morehouse College. Modestly, Mays acknowledged that sixty nations were represented, and, ". . . yet you have invited me, an American . . . you have conferred upon me a signal honor which I hardly deserve, but which I shall cherish as long as I live. You

not only honor me today, but most of all you honor Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A." Evidently attempting to create an atmosphere of harmony between the two schools, Mays reminded the audience that, "Morehouse is not in Atlanta, Georgia, alone, but throughout the United States and the world wherever Morehouse men are found. Morehouse is here in Liberia, and we are proud of the work being done by Morehouse men in Liberia."

At Emory University in Atlanta, Mays expressed his gratitude for being invited. He admitted good heartedly to the audience that, "Nobody came here this early in the morning just to hear me speak . . . The trustees, the president and faculties are here in the line of duty. Members of the graduating class . . . to get diplomas. The rest . . . to see . . . graduates." Mays closed his opening remarks by saying, "So whether you like it or not, you are stuck with me for approximately twenty minutes beginning now." This line may be misunderstood if taken out of context, but considering the affable tone of the other remarks, Mays made the statement in light humor with the promise of a short talk.

Apparently following the tenets of Cicero "to teach first before using techniques of pathos," Mays revealed his religious proposition early in the introduction of his speech "His Goodness Was Not Enough" at Bucknell University.
He first read a passage from St. Luke (Luke 16:15-31), based on Dives, a rich man, and Lazarus, a beggar, who sat humbly by seeking only crumbs from the table. Specifically, Mays stated his theme: "To explain why a man, who in the traditional sense was a good man and despite that fact, is condemned and consigned to a place of torture and torment." Mays proceeded to explain the often misinterpreted version of the parable from St. Luke that Dives was condemned because he was rich and Lazarus was rewarded because he was poor. Instead, Mays viewed Dives as a man lacking social conscience and Lazarus as a victim of social injustice.

Attempting to show similarity between the social injustices of biblical times with that of modern times, Mays described the poor who lack sufficient food, proper health programs, and necessary education. Balancing his materials, he drew a parallel to show the selfishness of Dives with his wealth as equal to the selfishness of modern man with his possessions. To this university audience, at a school where ninety-five percent of the freshmen were in the upper two-fifths of their high school class, Mays argued that social justice is a basic right for all and must not be based on class and selfish existence.

Issuing a warning, Mays closed his speech at Bucknell University by summarizing the ultimate fate of
Dives who because of his lack of social conscience, built "a gulf so fixed and so wide that it was too late for Dives to make amends."

Concerned for the prevailing problems of economic growth in Liberia, Mays spoke to the select few who unfortunately represented an insignificant number of the million and a half inhabitants. But Mays knew that he had to reach the intellectuals of the country in order to change the conditions of the masses. Therefore, "Education - To What End?," the address at the University of Liberia, was briefly introduced with a few statements on the virtues of nations spending billions of dollars for education leading to his theme - "Education For What?"

Using the problem-solution-benefit organization, Mays (1) gave the purpose of education explaining the selfish and unselfish reasons for acquiring an education, (2) emphasized the need for the unselfish application of education in order to help elevate the masses, and (3) established the role of education in creating a better life in Liberia for everyone.

Mays reasoned that education is an indispensable weapon mainly because an educated man, a trained race or a literate nation is better qualified to defend itself against the strong and the unscrupulous; and the trained mind can be persuaded to incorporate needed change.
Mays closed by offering a challenge and by predicting that the University of Liberia would "play its part in furthering the cause of peace, in abolishing poverty, in eliminating disease, and in extending the reality of freedom."

Speaking at the nation's first land-grant college, Michigan State University, in 1968 and at the prestigious private college, Emory University, in 1970, Mays gave identical addresses. He introduced the addresses by predicting future accomplishments of man: "Diseases will be conquered . . . a man placed on the moon, . . . the comforts of life will be multiplied, . . . an increase in college graduates." However, he pointed out that man still had not conquered three of the major enemies of mankind: war, poverty, and racism. Mays stated his assertive proposition that the priorities of universities should be to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism.

In "The Universities' Unfinished Work" at Michigan State and "Three Enemies of Mankind" at Emory University, Mays divided the problem into four areas, each based on the proposition that the university should assume the responsibility of educating students how to live in a world without war, poverty, and racism, rather than educating them simply how to get ahead in the world. Mays argued that the resulting benefits would: First, produce a United Nations which will be "made to work so that the behavior of big
nations will come under its judgment as well as that of small nations;" Second, insure social justice for the poor in the United States, "where no family of four will get less than $3,300 a year income, where every able-bodied man will be guaranteed a job with a minimum adequate wage, where good schools exist, and where recreational facilities and schools are adequate;" Third, exterminate racism, not only for the good of the United States, but for the good of the world, thereby, laying the foundation for a permanent peace. Lastly, Mays argued that educators should define the kind of world they are trying to build; they should devise ways to measure progress in goodness and in developing right attitudes as is done in measuring progress in intellectual development; and they should develop skills to make students into that kind of citizen.

At Michigan State and at Emory University Mays predicted in his conclusion that most graduates would be successful in their chosen fields. He reminded them of the importance of social justice for all Americans. However, at Methodist related Emory University Mays added a segment to his conclusion and cautioned the graduates not to doubt their ability to contribute to American society as one individual. He reminded them that, "great ideas are born for the most part in the mind of one man," and that, "every man is called of God . . . to do something worthwhile." At
both universities Mays challenged the graduates, "to join in a crusade to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism."

Changing times apparently brought about a shift in focus and attitude for Benjamin Mays. Seemingly in 1970 he was now not as concerned with stimulating an awareness of the need for social change as he was stimulating a dissatisfaction with existing conditions. In 1970, speaking to the audience at Centre College in Kentucky, where only thirty-eight percent of the student body received financial aid, Mays evidently felt he could dispense with preliminaries. Pointedly he introduced his speech "The Challenge of the Seventies" with a quotation from Thomas Paine - "These are the times that try men's souls." This sentence served as the theme for the speech.

The discussion was divided into two parts: problems and recommendations. In the approximately twenty-five minute speech, Mays again asserted that the problems of war, poverty, and racism are conditions which continue to contribute to the overall twisted values of the United States. He explained how "leaders appropriate money far more freely for expeditions to the moon than for the physical well-being of the nation . . . and would rather outdo Russia in space than provide adequate food for millions of poor Americans."

Mays pointed out the role of the graduates in dealing
with the problems of war, poverty, and racism. Probably realizing that those untouched by these problems may lack concern, Mays argued against taking a laissez-faire attitude and cautioned against avoiding involvement by blaming the less fortunate for their conditions.

The conclusion of the speech was almost as brief as the introduction. Mays closed by challenging graduates to abolish war, eliminate poverty, and eradicate racism. Additionally, he asked them to "blot out drug addiction, control the increase in population, and save us from air and water pollution."

Opening the speech at Dillard University, a denominational religious college, Mays used the rhetorical question - "Abraham or Terah, Which?" He told the parable of Terah who set out for the land of Canaan, but upon arriving in Haran and becoming successful, settled and many years later died there. However, before Terah's death and in spite of success, it became Abraham's responsibility to leave Haran and go to Canaan where he built a great nation. Following his interpretation of the parable, Mays explained the interpretation of an American preacher who called Terah complacent; Mays disagreed and pointed out that it was Terah's idea to leave Ur in the first place and he was not a failure in Haran, but was a successful man. However, leading to his theme, Mays considered the other view that if
Terah did not continue because he was satisfied, "... then that is a condition to be deplored." With this condition in mind, Mays stated his recommending proposition: "Satisfaction must never be your lot."

In developing his theme, Mays compared the success of Terah who stayed in Haran with the greatness of Abraham who moved on to Canaan. Obviously, Mays attempted to instill in the graduates that they must not become satisfied with the achievements of their ancestors, but must build and accomplish in order to achieve benefits for themselves and for mankind. Mays insisted that with diligence they could help "erase poverty and crime, war and disease, discrimination and segregation, injustice and man's inhumanity to man."

After emphasizing the tragedies of complacency, Mays pointed out two kinds of ideals: personal development and service to the people. Using the parable as a reference for emphasizing the ideals, Mays reminded the graduates not to be satisfied because their elders had brought them from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, because "... we are a long way from Canaan."

As in previous speeches, Mays argued briefly for social change, pointing out that the racial situation is not only a race problem but is also a class problem; that war in Viet Nam proved nothing except tremendous deaths and scores of wounded men, and high expenditures; and that
poverty, unemployment, and crime are still highly visible.

Mays closed his speech reminding the predominantly black audience of their courageous ancestors who existed under the most austere conditions. He offered words of encouragement and predicted that they would take up the struggle for human rights where their elders stopped.

The speech is often difficult to follow because Mays did not stress logical interrelations of premises and sub-points. In all points he emphasized an avoidance of complacency. Seemingly, he spoke from the premise that "it will take all you've got to cope with the problems of our times." Therefore, he advised graduates to continue their education. Even though the argument against complacency is strong, coherence of paragraph relationship is lacking. So many references are made in an attempt to show a parallel between modern times and the biblical reference that it is difficult to follow the speaker's shifts in ideas. After a while, ideas are reduced to a hodgepodge of information. The problem may stem from the introductory information when Mays stated his disagreement with the interruption of another preacher that Terah was a complacent person. Mays explained that Terah was not a failure and maybe he did not leave Haran because he was not called by God to leave as Abraham had been called to go to Canaan. Mays stated that "it is not the purpose of this emphasis to condemn Terah and praise
Abraham, the purpose here is to point out to you that if Terah stayed in Haran because he became satisfied, . . . then that is a condition to be deplored." The hypothetical "if" created a question in the mind of the listener as the speech progressed. Mays did praise the subsequent achievements of Abraham which inadvertantly condemned the actions of Terah. But contradiction is presented when the speaker pointly criticized Terah: "I do criticize him for apparently becoming complacent and satisfied in Haran, living there many years after he left Ur of the Chaldees when his goal was Canaan." The writer feels that if the speaker had taken a positive position on the action of Terah rather than a hypothetical position, the listener may have been on firmer ground. However, by the end of the speech, the listener should have been aware of Mays' contention against complacency, for he attested to the avoidance of self satisfaction in numerous instances.

Forms of Support

Mays employed illustrations, quotations, statistics, and epigrams to heighten his appeal for social change. Because of tight time schedules, he had limited time in which to impress his audiences. Mays typically used explicit forms of amplification to assure speedy understanding and subsequently gain substantial agreement. Gray and Braden describe amplification as the process by which speakers
"repeat, enlarge, review, expand, and even exaggerate and dramatize" in order to highlight concepts and ideas. Mays applied this process of amplification to his commencement speeches.

Illustration. In the two speeches based on parables, Mays used numerous illustrations as amplification. For example, at Bucknell he used an illustration to introduce his speech.Apparently hoping to develop interest and create a mental picture of the unjust biblical situation, Mays told the graduates about Dives, a selfish rich man, who was presented as doomed for Hell. The illustration was designed to identify similar attitudes encountered by man in a selfish society; however, all illustrations were not biblical. For instance, he explained to the graduates that maybe they did not believe in Hell, but argued that if there is no Hell, God should create one. Using modern examples, Mays magnified his contention:

There ought to be a Hell for a man like Nero who burned innocent Christians alive; . . . A Hell for Hitler and his associates - who killed 6,000,000 Jews; . . . A Hell for Mussolini; . . . A Hell for Jumbulinganada, a notorious criminal of South India, . . .

Similarly, Mays combined biblical and modern illustrations to dramatize his contention that "God is no respector of persons."
... God called Abraham, a rich man, and made him the Father of his people; ... God called Moses, a keeper of the flock and made him the lawgiver and the great emancipator. God called Lincoln from a Kentucky log cabin ... God called the two Roosevelts, born with silver spoons in their mouths, ... God called Ramsey McDonald from a two room cabin in Scotland ... He called Churchill ... He called George Washington, a wealthy Virginian ... He called Booker Washington, the slave-born, ... He made Milton a great poet, but he made Shakespeare greater than Milton.

At Dillard arguing the plight of Terah, Mays tried to instill in the graduates the desire to think "lofty thoughts and to accomplish great things." He listed many who had achieved greatness at early ages.

Coleridge wrote his "Ancient Mariner" at 25. Goethe and Victor Hugo produced works of enduring value at 20. Lord Bacon began to philosophize at 16. Julius Caesar began his career at 17; William the Conqueror before 20 ... Rembrandt famous at 24. Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann were real producers at 20, having produced something original by 13. Jesus ... at 12, Booker T. Washington at 30. Countee Cullen and Lanston Hughes ... in their twenties. Dunbar and Martin Luther King, Jr. ... in their thirties.

To emphasize the role of education at the University of Liberia, Mays used an illustration to defend his position that an educated man or a trained nation is better qualified to defend itself, because "strong nations for the most part exploit weak nations, that strong races usually take advantage of weak races, and that strong individuals are inclined
almost always to push weak individuals around." Clarifying his position, Mays admitted that he had never "known a nation, however religious, seen a race, however democratic . . . , known an individual, however Christian . . . who would not take advantage of the ignorant, the weak and the coward."

In protesting the war in Viet Nam, Mays reminded the graduates at Michigan State and at Emory University that "man is not any more civilized today than he was ages ago." Using examples to clarify, he noted that centuries ago, "the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians sought to settle their differences on the battlefield. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Carthaginians resorted to the sword in order to achieve their objectives." He cited the modern experience of learning nothing from wars because two decades after World War I, came World War II, followed by the war with Korea, and then the war in Viet Nam.

Dramatizing the plight of the poor in "The Challenge of the Seventies," Mays contended that "We are what we are by luck or the grace of God," that no one can determine whether he will be a genius or a moron. He used the illustration of two babies born at the same time, one from wealthy parents and the other from poverty stricken parents. Explaining, Mays said:
By virtue of the origin of their births, the son of the wealthy parents will experience cultural surroundings . . . and his educational advantages will be unlimited. The poor boy may never go beyond the fifth grade. Why should the wealthy boy think he is better and look down on his brother in poverty? Neither chose his parents . . . or their places of birth.

Apparently Mays wanted to set the record straight for his small audience at Centre College who may erroneously have believed the racial situation had improved greatly in the United States. He told the audience in Kentucky that "few blacks are better off in 1970 than they were in 1950." Speaking of the economic inequality between black and white in the United States, Mays argued that for the masses this condition was hardly any better than it was twenty-five years ago. Reaching for the minds of his listeners, he cited; "poor housing, unemployment, low paying jobs, poor schools, slums and ghettoes." He stirred up the unforgettable images of the riots in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, and Washington as reminders of the still existing racial problem.

Quotation. Persons interviewed by the writer stated that Mays always recited his quotations from memory and that he was careful to select quotations easily recognizable to the audience. Mays used quotations in all parts of his speech, but his chief method was to leave a lasting impression stirring the emotions of his audience with poetry
in his conclusions.

As might be expected, Mays used biblical quotations at Bucknell and Dillard Universities. However, these were few in number. At Bucknell, Mays supported his statement that one man's destiny is tied up with another, by interpreting a quotation from Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me." He used a quotation from St. Luke (16:36) to amplify his belief that the man who lacks a social conscience creates a great gulf between himself and people: "Besides all that, a great gulf yawns between us and you, to keep back those who want to cross from us to you and also those who want to pass from you to us."

At Dillard, showing admiration for the enterprising actions of Abraham and explaining why Abraham left Haran for Canaan, Mays pointed out how God told Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing."

Mays quoted words of Omar Khayyam in the conclusion of the address at Bucknell University in order to impress the graduates that once history is made, it can never be changed.
The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety or Wit
    Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

At the University of Liberia, Mays recited a poem by
John Donne to remind his audience that "we are tied together
with an inescapable destiny."

No man is an Island, apart to himself;
Each man is a piece of the Continent,
    a part of the Mainland;
If a clod of earth be washed away by
    the sea,
Europe is the less, as though a promontory
    were.
Every man's death affects me, because
    I am involved in humanity;
Therefore send not to learn for whom the
    bell tolls:
It tolls for thee!

This poem was obviously a favorite because Mays used the
same quotation at Bucknell University and Centre College.

To the Liberians, Mays magnified his statement that
education should make one sensitive to the needs of the world
with a quotation from Eugene Debs: "As long as there is a
lower class, I am in it. As long as there is a criminal
element, I am of it. As long as there is a man in jail, I
am not free."

At Centre College Mays stated the same quotation to
support his statement that "the destiny of each and every
person is the destiny of all men."

He used quotations only in the introduction for the
speeches at Michigan State and at Emory University. To
amplify his statements concerning the potentials of man, Mays called on Shakespeare who makes Hamlet says:

What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable; In action how like an angel; In apprehension how like a God!

Still enhancing the future role of man, Mays quoted Alexander Pope who says in his *Essay on Man*:

Go, wondrous creature! Mount where science guides; Go, men sure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; Instruct the planets in what orbs to run; Correct old time, and regulate the sun.

Mays quoted the words of Disraeli to express his expectation of the university's role as "a center of light, liberty, and learning." This quotation led to his proposition that "the university's work will never be finished."

Statistics. As expected, Mays employed few statistics in his ceremonial speaking to support his statements. However, he did use the statistics as a type of shock treatment to inform and stimulate the thinking of his listeners. Often the audience was aware of the social ill mentioned but they did not know the degree of negligence. Therefore, Mays enhanced his message on social change by using overwhelming statistics concerning social injustices. For instance, at Michigan and Emory Universities Mays utilized statistics to amplify his contention that "education is wholly irrevellant when it comes to providing ways to build a war-free world."
Quoting statistics to clarify his position against satisfaction to the predominantly black audience at Dillard University, Mays reminded them not to become complacent because integration only appears to be successful. Evidently employing statistics to shock the black audience, Mays argued the growing existence of black on black crime. He explained:

In 1974 one person was shot to death every minute with a hand gun somewhere in the United States. Only 20% of the killings... are done by criminals... Last year 1974 99.6 percent of all blacks murdered in Chicago were killed by blacks. Of the 682 blacks murdered in Chicago in 1974, 675 had blacks as their executioners.

Epigrams. Mays was personally pleased with his skill in the use of epigrammatic statements, of which he was particularly adept in wording. Because of the nature of his appeal, Mays was determined to gain a lasting response. The usually applicable witty sayings were applied to guarantee not only audience acceptance but audienced rememberance as well. Taken out of context, the epigrams lose some of their penetration, but essentially they demonstrate a skill in phrasing complementary to ceremonial speaking. For example, Mays told his audience at Bucknell that, "There is no virtue in poverty per se, and there is no vice in wealth per se."

In order to restate the premise that "God is no respector of persons," Mays said, "He calls the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the lettered and the unlettered to do his
work." He reminded the audience that everyone owes a debt of gratitude to God, "no man can lift himself by his own bootstraps."

In Monrovia, Mays summed up his argument that the purpose of education is to help mankind with the statement, "to whom much is given, much is required."

Emphasizing the university's role at Michigan State and Emory Universities Mays told the audiences that, "... the town should come to gown and the gown should go to town so that there will be no unnecessary gap between those who live on the boulevards and those who live in the slums."

Discouraging complacency, Mays remarked at Dillard that, "We should not be satisfied with good if better is achievable and never with better if the best can be attained."

**Emotional Appeal**

Gray and Braden define appeals as "any procedure which will bring about some response, whether it be to impel the listeners to think, to feel, or to act." Motives are "the strivings toward these goals or end results" in an attempt to influence human behavior. As is traditional in ceremonial speaking, Mays appealed to the emotions of his listeners, but he also used logical appeal. Seeing nothing unusual in this approach, Thonssen, Baird, and Braden contend that emotional expression and logical expression are not
exclusive of each other. Consequently, Mays' appeal for social change was directed to the mind and to the heart so that the two played supporting roles in manipulating the audience to obtain his desired response.

The numerous speaking engagements provided Mays with considerable understanding of typical human reactions. The problem Mays faced was the problem of choice of motive to fit the various groups. Apparently dealing with different races amounted to dealing with different socio-economic classes: those who needed help and encouragement and those who were needed to provide assistance for the less fortunate. The degree of help requested depended on the economic level of the school and its accompanying audience, and not on the predominant race present. As stated in his autobiography, Mays contended that the race problem was a class problem. Therefore, accepting the fact that people respond in accordance to their feelings, Mays proceeded to seek agreement by appealing mainly to fair play, altruism, ethnocentrism, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

As might be expected, Mays used mainly an altruistic appeal in his religious speech at Bucknell University. Based on a passage from St. Luke, "His Goodness Was Not Enough" made a strong plea for the development of a social conscience. Using the biblical characters of Dives and Lazarus as a parallel for middle and upper middle class man and the poor of
the land, Mays explained that Dives should have done more than give to charity, he should have helped to build a society where no man needed to beg. Implying that outside intervention is necessary for the welfare of hopeless persons trapped within the system, Mays described the poor people of the earth who were starving mentally and physically. He reminded his audience that the strong and healthy "must be concerned about the plight of other peoples." Realizing that racial prejudice was less prevalent in a small northern town, Mays emphasized the dangers of class distinction instead. In explaining how Dives saw Lazarus as only a beggar, not worthy of the crumbs from his table, Mays made his altruistic appeal by requesting that the audience not be guilty of the same attitude. He reasoned:

The test of good religion is not how we treat our peers and those above us, but how we treat those beneath us; not how we treat the man highest up, but how we treat the man farthest down, . . . but the real test of my religion would be how I treat the man who has nothing to give - no money, no social prestige, no honors. Not how I treat the educated, but how I treat the man who can't write his name.

In Monrovia Mays knew that the graduates before him represented only a small segment of the population of Liberia. Therefore, in appealing to self-actualization, he explained that "the use of education for the common good is mandatory because trained minds are rare," and that only "a small
percentage of the total population of the world is college trained." Mays reinforced his appeal to duty by reminding his listeners that "man can fulfill his true destiny in this life only in proportion as his skills are used in the service of mankind." Because education is so vital in this country, Mays did not let up on his appeal to self-actualization, instead he set up a hypothetical situation to amplify his appeal:

For if one has a better mind than his fellows, more wealth than his fellows, is more favorably circumstanced than his fellows, has a better opportunity to develop than his fellows, he is obligated to use his skills in the interest of the common good.

Beyond presenting the practical values of education and arguing for needed social change in his address at the University of Liberia, Mays appealed to the self-esteem of his listeners. Aware of the problems in the country and the need for additional technology, he assured the graduates that trained minds would accomplish the necessary changes among nations, and the "University of Liberia will play its part."

Once Mays explained the intricacies of the "three major enemies" of mankind at Michigan State and Emory Universities, he obviously had to consider the complexity of his two audiences before making his appeals. Before the huge audience in Spartan Stadium at Michigan State University
and before the basically southern audience of the much smaller private Emory University, Mays was more general in his appeals. He had the advantage of Michigan State being a northern university in East Lansing and possibly because of education and location would be more liberal toward change. However, even though Emory University was located in the South, it was also located in metropolitan Atlanta, and because of education and upper-class socio-economic status, the audience might also be more liberal toward change.

For those who accepted his argument that "the destiny of white and Negro America is still one destiny," Mays appealed to fair play. Seeking help by expounding on the proud American heritage for freedom, Mays asked his predominantly white audience at Michigan State and at Emory Universities:

... to strive to desegregate and integrate America to the end that this great nation of ours, born in revolution and blood, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal, will truly become the lighthouse of freedom where none will be denied because his skin is black, and none favored because his eyes are blue; where the nation is militarily strong but at peace, economically secure, but just; learned, but wise; and where the poorest will have a job and bread enough to spare.

Possibly because of the vastness of the audience and because of the unlikeliness of personally identifying with
problems of the needy, Mays made his appeal more general. Therefore, in appealing to self-actualization, he recommended that the graduates solve the conflict between society and change. After reminding all of their duty to society, Mays asked the graduates at Michigan State and Emory Universities to develop their potentials to the fullest extent by becoming "involved in worthy programs designed to make a better world." Mays requested that they not turn their backs on the poor, but rather do their part "to enable them to rise to positions of respectability and honor."

In defining the role of educators, Mays included them in his appeal to self-actualization by reminding them of their duties as educated men "to create a world where good men will be free and safe to work to improve society and to make men better." It is interesting to note that Mays omitted the explicit statement to the educators at Emory University, where he presented the same argument but recommended by implication. One explanation is that Mays made an additional appeal to fair play in his address to the southern audience at Emory University which was not given at Michigan State University. Admitting that many in the audience were cynical about him and his motives and considered his statements about war, poverty, and racism to be mere facts of life, Mays disagreed and attempted to
stimulate a sense of justice. He reasoned that it was only fair to at least try to bring about change. He explained that "peace is better than war; an adequate standard of living is due every living creature; and black and white can live in the same community in peace and with justice." Making a final appeal to a sense of justice, Mays assured his audience that "no man can maintain the integrity of his soul by giving allegiance to a lesser good."

Appealing to ethnocentrism, Mays attempted to acquaint the northern audience at Michigan State with the wretched side of poverty by reconstructing the deplorable case of a twenty-six year old woman with two children and a disabled husband unable to work trying to live on two-hundred dollars a month. He explained that the woman had eaten a piece of steak three months ago for the first time in her life. Continuing his appeal for compassion for other classes, he told of another woman who had twelve children and an income of $25.00 per week, plus $30.00 more monthly from a working son. Mays explained that "after this woman pays rent, electricity, and heat, she has $90.00 a month to get food for thirteen. There are no free lunches, and she cannot get welfare because she cannot tell welfare where the husband is. The food stamp program, even if she had it, would be
grossly inadequate."

These two case stories were omitted from the Emory University address. Perhaps Mays felt this audience from and around the city of Atlanta would be more familiar with the deplorable conditions of the poor than the people from around the less urban community of East Lansing.

Speaking in Danville, Kentucky to the small audience at the exclusive Centre College, Mays expressed dissatisfaction with the twisted values of national political leaders in respect to their treatment of war, poverty, and racism. He specifically pointed out the discord and lack of progress in the areas of poverty and race relations. Because of the apparent upper class status of this audience, Mays chose to appeal to a sense of altruism. Obviously attempting to create a philanthropic atmosphere, he reminded them that "poverty will never knock on your door." Turning to the graduates, Mays asked them to accept the problems inherited from an earlier generation. He explained that they must solve the problems because "most . . ., being white, will never know what it is to be black and robbed of opportunities, opportunities which you will have for the sole reason that you were born white." He reminded them of the plight of the poor who were not always too lazy or lacking in mental ability to work. Striking out at excessive pride, Mays
argued that "we are largely what we are by luck or the grace of God." Emphasizing this contention, he reconstucted illustrations to defend his position that there are "two things a man cannot choose: his parents and his place of birth."

Clearly appealing to an upper class status at Centre College, Mays commented on the quality of education given to the graduates, and that they were among "the favored few." Appealing to self-actualization, he urged the graduates to "do something worthwhile which others can do; but by all means do that unique, distinctive thing which if you do not do it, it will never be done." Graduates were cautioned never to take a laissez-faire attitude toward the problems of their generation, but instead become "sensitive souls who hear the call to respond to the needs of our time."

For his predominantly black audience at church related Dillard University, Mays established his case by giving a lengthy discussion contrasting the biblical roles of Abraham and Terah. Emphatically against any form of complacency, Mays appealed strongly to self-actualization, as he did many years earlier before the predominantly black audience in Monrovia. Speaking at Monrovia in the Sixties, Mays apparently saw the need to provide encouragement in racially torn Africa. In speaking to the audience at Dillard University in the Seventies, in light of some improvements
in social conditions, Mays apparently felt the need to stimulate a desire to work for additional improvements.

Agreeing that some change had taken place, Mays seemingly strove to build an awareness of still existing social problems. Consequently, he warned the audience against a growing satisfaction with present accomplishments. He reminded the graduates that it was their duty to continue their education in some form after graduation. Switching briefly to an appeal to altruism, he urged them not to be "content to move on to Canaan for mere selfish reasons."

Apparently using "Haran" to represent a current status in life and "Canaan" to represent a future status, Mays strategically interspersed his appeals with biblical references to either Abraham or Terah to heighten his appeal.

After lengthy biblical and modern illustrations, Mays appealed to self-esteem. He personally identified with the problems of continued discrimination, but explained that if enslaved ancestors had survived and multiplied for 246 years of cruel bondage, and his generation had lived through condoned lynching, political disfranchisement, and state supported segregation, he knew the graduates would not be turned around by anyone. Using a positive approach, Mays showed his confidence in the ability and determination of the graduates by stating, "I know . . . you will continue our struggle to the end."
Style

Often style is mistakenly related to delivery or to speaking mannerisms of a speaker. However, according to Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, rhetorical style is "the way in which a language pattern is used, under a given set of conditions, (1) to make ideas acceptable and (2) to get the response sought by the speaker." Continuing they contend that style or language is important only to the extent that it helps prepare and subsequently open the minds of the hearers to the ideas developed in the speech.

Since commencement addresses are classified as epideictic or ceremonial speaking which appeals to the emotions, language must then serve as a stimulus in order to affect reactions in the listeners. I. A. Richards, in his discussion of emotions and attitudes, states that, "The attitudes evoked are the all-important part of any experience." Richards describes the emotional experience as having two main features: "... a diffused reaction in the organ of the body brought about through sympathetic systems, The other is a tendency to action of some definite kind or groups of kind." The idea behind these principles is that

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22 Ibid., p. 515.


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emotive language is used to support emotional attitudes which, subsequently, through stimulation will produce the desired response. Therefore, these principles can be applied to epideictic speaking which attempts to persuade people through their passions. The epideictic speaker is concerned primarily with putting his listeners in a favorable frame of mind.

The attitudes of the listeners are always a speaker's major concern and Mays was no different; he sought approval from all segments of his audience. His concern was reflected in his concentration on directness, correctness, and clearness of style. He rejected the use of charming phrases to project humor, or the use of slang to establish identification with the young. Instead Mays' language was serious throughout. Appropriately, he was constantly aware that his goal was to stimulate his audience and not to entertain them. Consequently, his oral style was simple, direct, and appropriate for the occasion and the listeners.

The imposed time requirement compelled Mays to be brief, placing the burden of audience understanding on his use of language. Therefore, to achieve the desired understanding and subsequent agreement, Mays chose concreteness over abstractness, and favored the explicit applications of words.
An example of concrete language can be best seen in the one contention used in all of the commencement addresses considered. After surveying the problems demanding change, Mays stated simply and clearly: "The destiny of each and every person is the destiny of all men." Even though the wording varies slightly in each address, the conflict between society and change can be understood readily by those listeners in agreement. Complacent listeners are at least made to think about the reluctance of an affluent society to handle the problems of war, poverty, racism, and social injustice.

Most of Mays' emphasis was devoted to stimulating his affluent audience at Bucknell with emotive descriptions of the plush existence of Dives and the inhuman existence of Lazarus. However, he did use emotive words to magnify his quest for social change. Speaking of poverty, Mays described the poor people who had "diseased emaciated bodies" and who were "dying" of "slow starvation." To stir the feelings against war, Mays used names like Nero, Judas, Hitler, Napoleon and Mussolini, whom he referred to as war lords who committed political suicide.

On the other hand, Mays used the names of "Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi and Nehru of India, Saint Francis of Assisi, Lincoln and Booker T. Washington of America, Schweitzer of France, and Tubman of Liberia," for his audience at the University of Liberia to show great men of history who "identified themselves with the common man."
Mays employed antithesis to impress his listeners when he told the audience in Monrovia that there is a fundamental selfishness or defect in human nature. He explained: "We respect strength and not weakness, courage and not cowardice, knowledge and not ignorance, the man who stands on his feet in a manly way and not the man who cringes and not the man who cringes and kowtows." Continuing the contrast of ideas to stimulate those of better circumstances, Mays reminded them that "The poor do not have an equal chance to bargain with the rich. The ignorant man starts out handicapped when confronted with the man who knows. The coward is licked as soon as he faces the fearless."

Mays opened his speech at Michigan State and Emory Universities with repetition of the word "will" eleven times.

Setting the pace for future accomplishments, Mays said:

We will do many things, ... Longevity will be ... extended. ... diseases will be conquered. Cancer will be cruel. We will ... place man on the moon. Passenger planes will fly a thousand miles an hour. We will develop, ... comforts ... will be multiplied. We will increase the number of college graduates ... More brilliant scholars will be born.

Typically, Mays used emotive language and sentences to stimulate the imagination of his listeners. Mays felt confident that most people oppose war and ignorance and perhaps only wanted to stir and not inform his auditors.

For instance, in dealing with war and using startling
statistics, Mays told the people that in the last 3,500 years there was a war somewhere on the earth "nine out of every ten hours." He told the northern and southern audience that "Goodness is as important as literacy. An honest heart is as important as a brilliant mind." He reminded them of popular leaders of the common man: "Jesus, John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.,” explaining that all were men of peace, and all were murdered.

On more controversial ground, Mays took a stand in his address at Michigan State University. He protested the attitudes of the "racist" and the "Black Power" advocate who argue for "separatism." He omitted this statement at Emory University in the South. Perhaps he felt the terms would stir negative responses in the southern audience.

However, Mays dramatized the plight of the poor before both audiences, using emotive charged sentences to prod the imagination of affluent listeners. He described the nutritional anemia of pregnant mothers who were so ill-nourished that they were routinely given blood transfusions during childbirth. He discussed the pregnant mothers who were so nutritionally motivated for iron and calcium that they ate clay, and they ate starch for calories to supplement their food. Supplying possibly new information, he told of thousands of babies born each year to these mothers who subsequently develop protein deficiency and later permanent
brain damage as a direct result. Mays described the children who went to school without breakfast and were sent home because they were in pain and too hungry to learn. Some mothers, he continued, kept their children home "so that at least they can cry themselves to sleep from hunger in their mother's arms."

To those less familiar with his emphasis on the deplorable urban conditions of the poor, Mays told of the people in cities who "go to the city dump digging for food." He explained that the people go there looking for "cheese, butter, meat, doughnuts, or whatever is edible that has been thrown away." Apparently, Mays felt confident in accomplishing his plea for social change by emphasizing the conditions of the poor before the middle and upper middle class audience at Michigan State and Emory Universities.

Using the same strategy of discussing startling information before a similar audience at Centre College, Mays attempted to impress them with the death rate of the newborn babies of poor mothers, explaining that the infants died mainly because of "malnutrition." He told of the irreversible brain damage caused by "protein deprivation," and how "protein and iron deficiency" caused "nutritional anemia."

Indicating that racism caused the widening gulf of
economic inequality between black and white, Mays spoke of the "slums" and "ghettoes" which were increasing steadily. He reminded them of the "riots" in the cities of Los Angeles, Detroit, Newark, etc. He described the campus demands of black students which resulted in the wanton killing of six blacks, "shot in the back" by the National Guard in Augusta, Georgia, and the killing of two blacks at Jackson State College in Jackson, Mississippi. Mays evidently assumed these incidents had not been publicized in the small northern community of Danville, Kentucky.

As at Bucknell University, Mays placed most of his emotive language in his Scriptural message about Abraham and Terah for his audience at Dillard University. However, he did utilize the device of antithesis to argue against complacency for the youth satisfied with varying segments of change. For example, he said, "The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency; not in our doing too much, but rather in our doing too little; not in our living above our ability, but rather in our living below our capacities." As examples of premature achievers, he listed the names of great men from history who achieved at an early age: Coleridge who wrote his "Ancient Mariner" at 25; Geothe and Victor Hugo who produced works of value at 20; Julius Caesar who began his career at 17; Michelangelo who produced great works by 19; and others. Hoping to
influence by naming contemporary blacks who had achieved at a young age, Mays cited Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Because of the emphasis Mays placed on the themes for social change, he often duplicated his selection of emotive words. Attempting to mobilize the attitudes of the predominantly black audiences at Monrovia and at New Orleans, Mays attempted to dramatize the plight of the poor with the parable of the rich farmer who heard the "diseased, emaciated bodies" cry out for health, the "starving stomachs" cry out for bread, and the "illiterate minds" cry out for literacy.

Assessment

One may assume that Benjamin E. Mays was a successful commencement speaker because he received numerous speech invitations from many universities and colleges. With a variety of audiences it can be further assumed that Mays' apparent success is attributed to his effective speaking to various levels of people. Aside from the graduates at commencement exercises, a speaker must be prepared to consider the interest levels of all listeners, namely, faculty and guests. His skill is best demonstrated by his making each message relevant to all.

As expected, Mays considered the graduates first in
his presentation. With years of experience as a teacher and as a college president, Mays was in a position to identify with the graduates who were aware of mass arrests, court injunctions, suspensions, and negotiations of the Fifties and Sixties. It was obviously difficult to speak with the traditional sense of nostalgia, while at the same time remain aware of the radical chants of disenchanted students who opposed the war in Viet Nam, who protested the delay in civil rights, and who cried out for an end to poverty and unemployment. Conscious of youth protest, Mays capitalized on the demands for change in the university by appealing for change in the structure of the American system. Young and old alike could relate his argument that the policy of preparing students to live in harmony should take precedence over concern for advancement in an affluent society.

To the general audience, Mays clearly focused on the here and now, often the slogan of the youth. Reflecting on national problems, Mays denounced war, poverty, racism, and social injustices. He contended that man generally avoided the truth concerning these problems because it was convenient to look the other way. Just as Booker T. Washington attempted to disprove the erroneous belief of nineteenth century southern whites that education would make the free black men criminals and antisocial, Mays attempted to prove to twentieth century man that poverty forces the poor into criminal
acts and makes their behavior antisocial. Mays went a step further in dealing with the complexities of twentieth century man and argued that war drains the country financially; that racism stifles the growth of the country; and that social injustice destroys the brotherhood in man. Beyond the practical value of appealing for social change, he expounded on the personal benefits gained in providing change for all. His concern for social justice for everyone obviously removed any suspicious of any ulterior selfish motives. His pleas were based on the premise that man must change because "the destiny of each and every person is the destiny of all men."

Mays was not pretentious in his presentation; a simple direct style and contemporary subject matter describe his strength best. The simultaneous technique of explaining scripture while seeking social change, permitted the audience to carefully examine their own motives in response to the subtle attack on their individual weaknesses. Mays never lashed out with verbal assault; consequently, the auditors felt comfortable with the preacher-educator who was flexible enough to speak to everyone. His use of non-religious support blended with religious appeal obviously balanced his amplification, thereby, impeding the alienation of any listener. However, his consistency in the use of varied amplification is reminiscent of the "commonplaces" used by
ancient Greek rhetoricians. In *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, George Kennedy, describes commonplaces as memorized sayings, used again and again, and inserted into a speech like arguments to support some position. These commonplaces served as building blocks from which a speech could be constructed.

Finally, Mays was evidently cognizant of the interest span of most listeners and apparently agreed with the philosophy of James A. Winans who explains in *Speech-Making* that "too many words and phrases ... make style tiresome. It is better to be brief than to be tedious." Mays followed the timely warning of Winans that "audiences like brevity, that is, they like short speeches," in as much as the time range for his speeches was between twenty-five minutes to thirty-five minutes. Therefore, Mays utilized his time by applying a speech development which established a common ground with the audience for a careful intermingling of social truths with humane feelings.

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CHAPTER IV

Eulogy

The simplicity or elaborateness of burial rites reflect basic cultural differences. The funeral orations which often accompany these rites reveal similar differences, ranging from the grand speaking style of the early Greek orators to the elaborate rhythmic chants of tribal cultures. Traditionally the Baptist eulogist was highly emotional and other worldly, concentrating on providing spiritual and literal interpretations from the Bible. Applying a different approach, Mays emphasized the relevance of the deceased individual and his role in economic, political and social issues. In "The Black Church," Richard I. McKinney, Professor of Theology at Morgan State College (Baltimore, Maryland), explains that the ministerial attention given to contemporary issues is called "social gospel."\(^1\) This gospel provided "consolation, encouragement, hope, and renewal." In order to distinguish Mays' divergence from a traditional Baptist approach to the eulogy, it is important to examine

the emergence of the speech which began with early funeral orations.

Development

Aristotle, who classified the categories of speaking during the fourth century, describes the eulogy as, "based upon the noble deeds - real or imaginary - that stand to the credit of those eulogized."\(^2\) This epideictic or ceremonial oratory first came into prominence in the form of Greek funeral orations, which in the early fifth century replaced the ancient Greek custom of poetic laments. These early funeral orations were designed to honor the dead killed in war during the year. In *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Kennedy uses the funeral oration delivered by Pericles in 440 B.C. to explain the three-fold structure that consisted of the following: The praise, which followed a brief introduction, dealt first with ancestors of the dead and in a general way the greatness of the country. Secondly, it was devoted to those who had died; the lament; and the consultation.\(^3\) William Thiele lists the introduction as a part of the formal structure, and the praise as the second


and longest part of the oration. Further, according to Thiele, Thucydides' description of the sequence of events, shows that the funeral speech followed the interment. The only extant Greek funeral orations are those of Demosthenes, 320 B.C.; Gorgias, 427 B.C.; Hyperides, 322 B.C.; and a dialogue by Plato called Menexenus. The fragments of Gorgias' speech are "generally considered to be our earliest representative of a funeral speech." Whereas Greek speakers concerned themselves with generalities rather than particulars, the Roman speakers addressed themselves to "the virtues of the ruling oligarchy," and to "the praise of a distinguished man, ordinarily by his closest agnate." 

The Roman ceremony consisted of a procession, after which the funeral orator spoke "first on the virtues of the departed, then on the virtues of his ancestors, one by one." 

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5Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Greece, pp. 154-158.

6Thiele, p. 68.


8Ibid.
Traditionally, the Roman funeral speech was preserved so that "virtues and achievements" of the deceased "could be recited at the next funeral of one of his worthy descendants."

Christian funerals, however, emphasized "the preparation of the corpse with no Christian funeral ritual given" in the New Testament, nor is there "a specific word meaning funeral." The Hebrews lacked any formal speeches because emphasis was placed on "the procession to the place of interment." Subsequently, the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs "led to the offering of prayers, which led slowly to the practice of Christian funeral orations."

In America the early white Christians basically followed the rites of their ancestral European cultures. For the most part, the blacks followed their ancestral African culture. This phenomenon occurred in spite of the fact that the slaves were absolutely controlled by slave owners who taught them Christianity "in order to inculcate obedience." Although the slaves brought elaborate funeral

9Thiele, pp. 80-81.
10Ibid., p. 102.
11Ibid., p. 81.
traditions to America, the retention of African gods was made difficult, if not impossible, by the white slave owner. The slaves, therefore, accepted outwardly the white man's forms of worship, thereby abandoning the more physically active aspects of the funeral rites for the more accepted vocal expressions in the form of sporadic informal talks about the dead. All remaining African ritual practice became more restrained; and whenever the slaves engaged in the emotionalism inherent in their ancestral funeral traditions, such practices were regarded as fetishism.

When the institution of slavery ended and blacks migrated to other parts of the United States without their elders, the ancestral rituals were lost to future generations. Yet the belief in the funeral as the true climax of life survived in the "attitudes toward the dead as manifested in meticulous ritual cast in mold of West African patterns."13 Often the funeral was separate from the interment in order to plan carefully for the "funeral pageant"14 which turned into an elaborate social event. Extensive ceremonies, numerous funeral speakers, and expensive burials reflect a carry over of the West African pattern where the importance


14Ibid., p. 201.
of the dead determined the elaborateness of the occasion.

The physical characteristics of modern black funerals have been described generally as highly emotionalized and are believed to be characterized by a strong African influence. Herskovits disagrees. He views the American Negro's religious excitement or hysteria, as a combination of an emotional camp meeting, an early American revival, and an American Indian ritual. The jerking, swaying, trembling, quivering, twitching, groaning and head rolling, of the American revivicalistic period are the same phenomenon "found in United States black 'shouting' churches."¹⁵ These churches are usually rurally located or have small memberships composed mainly of less educated members. Consequently, all services are as sophisticated or traditional as the church environment.

Generally, the main purpose of an eulogy is to revere the dead in some well defined, traditional manner. Most eulogies are simple, brief memorial addresses. According to John Broadus, the eulogy must also have purpose. He recommends that "the preacher seize the opportunity to recommend the gospel of consolation and to impress the need of personal piety, that we may be ready to live and ready to die."¹⁶ Furthermore, Broadus advises the preacher to speak

¹⁵Ibid., p. 219.
only the truth about the departed without any exaggerated praises or discussion of any embarrassing transgressions. Consistent with Broadus's recommendations, Mays explained that his approach is threefold: to console the grieved, to exalt the living, and to pay homage to the virtues of the deceased. Mays insisted that the major portion of any eulogy is determined by the occasion which dictates what should be said.  

Benjamin Mays grew up in the environment of the rural nonliterate preacher who served as spokesman for the masses of black people. Even though Mays admired and respected the black preacher, he did not imitate him. In his autobiography, Mays suggested that he did not agree entirely with the philosophy of the rural preacher. He resented the prejudicial treatment of blacks, and the minister's failure to address himself to the problem. Mays realized the limitations of the preacher, a victim of discrimination, but he could not agree with the use of religion "as an opiate" to train people "to endure and survive oppressive conditions."  

17Benjamin E. Mays, Interview - April 6, 1977.  
emphasis placed on emotional content and undue attention
given to the "other world." Mays did not approve of the
circus-like atmosphere created at funerals where the
preacher "preached" the deceased into hell or heaven. Ulti­
mately, the early dissatisfaction with ministerial speech
practices combined with formal training and exposure to
practices in urban societies were influential in the develop­
ment of Mays' customary formal speech structure. Utilizing
this structure in his eulogies, Mays made the funeral more
than an elaborate social event and equalized the importance
of intellectual content with that of emotional content.

Mays As Eulogist. Benjamin Mays, educator-minister,
was called upon to deliver thousands of eulogies to a broad
range of people from diverse racial and socio-economic
backgrounds. It can be assumed that Mays was asked because
of his respected position in the community as educator and
because of his reputation as both a preacher and an orator.

As a "people's preacher," Mays grew up at a time
when blacks were allowed limited educational opportunities
and when they had only one institution - the Church. Semi­
literate ministers were "the dominant influence"\(^\text{19}\) and

controlled the lives of their congregations with sermons based upon the Bible. Mays knew the pain of poverty and the humiliation of a segregated society. Consequently, he knew the significance of his position and what people wanted to hear at a funeral - the truth. He knew how to speak to their level of understanding in practical terms without resorting to emotionalism.

Mays established himself among his peers through preaching in local churches on Sunday mornings and nationally at the annual National Baptist Convention. From these numerous speaking experiences, Mays evolved as the "peacher's preacher" or the "speaker's speaker."

Daniel Thompson, noted sociologist, explained that "prior to the Martin Luther King, Jr. era, Benjamin Mays was seen as the most prominent speaker of humanistic subjects." As a result, Mays was in demand by the masses and also by his peers who often felt honored to have the distinguished man preach the funeral for their congregations.

As indicated in the previous chapter, Mays usually assumed the advocacy role as a spokesman for social change in his epideitic oratory. The eulogy was no exception. However, instead of assuming a purely personal posture as

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in his sermons and commencement addresses, Mays augmented his advocacy by paying homage to the men with whom he shared more than a genetic relationship but who also had similar philosophies concerning the state of mankind.

Well experienced in speaking before national and international audiences, Mays stimulated attitudes toward change while at the same time attempting to enhance the memory of the deceased proponents of change.

This chapter discusses eulogies delivered for three black Americans active in the civil rights movement of the Sixties. Concurring with the social change philosophy of each man, Mays apparently was a natural choice to serve as a eulogist. These eulogies demonstrate how Benjamin Mays used this medium to magnify the social change contribution of his colleagues and reaffirm his personal commitment to their causes. This chapter considers the eulogies of Martin Luther King, Jr., April 9, 1968; Whitney Young, March 16, 1971; and Emory O. Jackson, September 16, 1975.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a student at Morehouse

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King was born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1948, continuing his education at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania and received his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1955. King was ordained a minister in 1947. He was the recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. He was president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference which was founded in 1960. King was assassinated April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.
College during the presidential tenure of Benjamin Mays. Following the Supreme Court decision of 1954, he became known worldwide as "the black leader who best articulated the aspirations of the civil rights movement, and came to be regarded as the movement's symbolic leader." His philosophy in Gandhiism projected "increasing political and social equality," but was regarded as "less effective in the task of achieving economic equality." By the early Sixties King's methods of nonviolence provided impetus for national sit-ins and for black and white Freedom Riders who went South to test the Supreme Court's desegregation decision. By spring of 1963, King's concern for the economic plight in the cities caused him to speak out for increased employment as well as for speedy desegregation. Later, King solicited the assistance of President Kennedy, who subsequently proposed "a sweeping civil rights bill to outlaw segregation in all public accommodations, end discrimination in federally assisted programs of all kinds, and empower the Justice Department to initiate suits for school desegregation."

\[\text{\underline{Footnotes:}}\]

\[22\] Foner, p. 456.


\[24\] Foner, p. 458.
In 1968, King was invited by local black leaders to lead a march in support of the city's virtually all black garbage collectors. These "leaders escalated the garbage strike into a protest against all the conditions of ghetto life,"25 which resulted in three hours of street violence, sixty injuries, 280 arrests and a single fatality, 250 riot-trained state troopers and 4,000 National Guardsmen. Seven days later, April 4, 1968, King was killed by an assassin's bullet as he stood on the balcony of a Memphis motel.

The death of Martin Luther King, Jr. brought outrage and shame to an already-war-troubled country. Disappointed, many black Americans saw the death as "a violent testimony to the ultimate failure of nonviolence as a force for change."26 President Johnson's announcement of a proposed peace in Viet Nam fell flat in an atmosphere of dismay. Subsequent rioting which broke out in 125 cities was considered a demonstration of despair among the poor blacks.

The scene of the three hour funeral march attracted the attention of "an estimated 120 million"27 television viewers. Businesses and schools were closed in tribute.


Gregory Peck announced the postponement of the Academy Awards presentations. Baseball's major leagues delayed their opening day. "Throughout the nation flags flew at half staff in honor of the martyred Negro leader, and dignitaries from all over the United States and abroad were arriving in Atlanta for his funeral."28

King's funeral march consisted of "resonant spirituals and the elegiac toll of mourning bells."29 "A cross of white flowers led the way," followed by "the flags of the United States, the United Nations and the Church."30 Following were 200,000 Americans, black and white, "who walked the sun beaten streets . . . in temperatures that reached 82 degrees." Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King had served as co-pastor with his father for eight years, was the scene of the funeral services. In attendance were "six Presidential aspirants, 23 senators, 47 congressmen, three governors, a Supreme Court Justice, plus a miscellany of sports figures . . . and show-biz stars."31

Following the service, the cherry wood casket was placed on a sharecropper's cart drawn by two mules. Dressed in denim, King's disciples circled the wagon. The four mile march ended at the quadrangle of Morehouse College where Benjamin E. Mays, at age seventy-two, eulogized the man "whose eloquence he had expected to ease his own passage."32

The service scheduled for 2:00 P.M., began instead near 3:00 P.M. under cloudy skies. The crowd of thousands stood on the grassy Morehouse College campus to hear Mays whose white hair gleamed in stark contrast to his maroon academic robe. Standing before the red brick building of Harkness Hall, Mays spoke to the "somber, subdued . . . throng of thousands."33

The huge audience heard the soft-spoken Mays mainly from a carefully placed public address system. Traditionally, the funeral audience is composed of family, friends, church members, and guests. However, the listeners on this day were varied and was only homogeneous in that they were predominantly King's sympathizers. Among the assembled were many seeking social status for attending the highly publicized funeral and saw it as an "old time" social event; others


33Atlanta Constitution, April 10, 1968, 33:5.
were curiosity seekers.

Aware of the funeral plan, Mays remembered that his audience had walked over four miles in the funeral march after long hours spent in and around Ebenezer Baptist Church. He faced listeners who were emotionally and physically drained from the long walk in eighty degree weather. Because of these circumstances, the planned one hour service at Morehouse was shortened. The six speakers who were each to give two minute statements did not speak; instead they were merely introduced. Following brief musical selections, Mays was asked to "cut short his speech at the request of the family." 

Theme

Mays realized that his greater audience, not restricted to the crowd before him on the Morehouse College campus, included people from over the world who were interested in how black Americans would respond to an assassination of one of their own leaders. He also was aware of the newspaper and television coverage which would carry his words of solace far beyond the immediate setting.

The lateness of the ceremony, the constant movement, and the restlessness of the crowd affected the solemnity of

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34 Atlanta Journal, April 10, 1968, 30:2.
the ceremony. Aware of these problems, Mays knew that he needed to gain attention before attempting to stimulate his listeners.

Mays first attempted to heighten their appreciation for King's philosophy and his subsequent contributions. Secondly, he sought to make them appreciate the social change advocated by King. Third, he chose to deal with current needs of the people.

In order to enhance appreciation for King, Mays emphasized King's belief that violence is ethically and morally wrong; that God and the universe object to violence; that violence is self-defeating; and that only love and forgiveness can break the vicious circle of revenge. Mays reminded the audience of the significance of King's civil rights marches, which "gave people an ethical and moral way to engage in activities designed to perfect social change without bloodshed and violence."

Because Mays' philosophy parallels so closely that of Martin Luther King, Jr., he used a narrative about King as a means to introduce his own themes for social change: war, poverty, racism, and social justice. In Mays' opening statement, he touched upon each of these themes:

God called the grandson of a slave on his father's side, . . . and said to him: "Martin Luther, speak to America about war and peace; about social justice and racial
Mays paid reverence to the actions of King while attempting to revitalize his listeners. Because of the explosive atmosphere surrounding the death of King, Mays called for justice not retribution and directed his efforts toward illuminating King's philosophy and King's subsequent contributions to the civil rights movement. Serving as an advocate for continued focus on the social changes which King sought, Mays justified his pleas to the living to hold firmly the memory of a man who gave his life in search of social justice.

Organization

Utilizing the approach explained by Gray and Braden, Mays attempted "to reinforce existing attitudes and to activate dormant ones."35 As in earlier speeches, Mays utilizes the classic speech divisions. He opened his eulogy with remarks of condolence to the family, the nation, and the President of the United States. Mays explained his sadness and feelings of inadequacy in being chosen to

eulogize the man he had wished to eulogize him.

Following the opening courtesies and preliminaries, Mays presented the theme of his speech which was centered around a single line from Scripture - "Truly God is no respecter of persons." To clarify this statement, Mays explained that God chose the grandson of a slave to speak to America about its social conditions.

In the body of the speech, Mays reconstructed King's accomplishments in perfecting social change; expressed his dream of a desegregated and integrated America; expounded on his bravery in advocating nonviolence; and described his suffering when confronted with opposition. Mays used illustrations from the life of King as amplification for the statements.

The conclusion focused on the epigrammatic phrase which appeared in many of Mays' ceremonial speeches - "each in his time." Explaining the phrase, Mays said that "each man must respond to the call of God in his lifetime and not in somebody else's time." Mays concluded with the often stated epigrammatic phrase from his sermon "The Unattainable Goal" - "it isn't how long one lives, but how well."

Obviously because of the conditions surrounding the death of King, Mays deviated from a traditional closing and requested an overt response. He reprimanded the American
people in general and the Memphis officials in particular for the assassination of King. Through this censure he apparently made two pleas to two different segments of American society. First, he asked "the American people to repent and make democracy equally applicable to all Americans." In order to be consistent with King's philosophy, Mays was compelled to acknowledge the rash of riots which occurred in several major cities following the announcement of King's assassination. Hence, Mays made a second plea to the disturbed people who reacted to King's death with violence. Mays pled with these listeners to avoid attaching dishonor to King's name by rioting in the streets. He urged all to eliminate racial prejudice.

Emotional Appeals

In order to affect inspiration, encouragement, and reassurance, Mays appealed primarily to his audience's sense of reverence for Christianity, self-esteem, guilt, and duty. It must be remembered that Mays had a close father-son type relationship with King. Reporters noted that the shock of the sudden death was demonstrated in Mays' voice which "reflected obvious signs of age and dejection over the loss of a friend." 36 Mays' own personal

admiration for Martin Luther King, Jr. served as stimulus in his attempt to create an atmosphere of gratitude for the assassinated civil rights leader.

**Christianity.** In appealing to Christianity, Mays asked the crowd to "give thanks to God that he gave America . . . Martin Luther King, Jr." He pointed out that King believed God was against the pursuit of violence; therefore, nonviolence would prove effective in the abolition of injustices. Mays explained how King, in seeking peace, believed "the only way to peace and brotherhood is through nonviolence, love, and suffering." Seeking unity, Mays asked "black and white alike to search their hearts; and if there be prejudice in their hearts against any racial or ethnic group, . . . exterminate it." He asked the crowd to pray that the assassin is brought to justice. He requested that all pray, as King would have, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

**Self-esteem.** Mays appeared to direct his energies more to the development of feelings of pride in the work of King rather than to subject his listeners to any pathetic appeals for pointless race pity toward the unexpected death. Instead Mays reflected on the humble social status of King, the grandson of a slave, who was chosen to speak to the needs of America. He also expounded
on the greatness of King who devoted his life to solving problems and later died "striving to desegregate and integrate America." Mays told of King's moral courage and his love for all people, especially for "the man farthest down." Mays explained the mental and physical suffering endured by King in his nonviolent commitment. Evidently concerned with the die-hards who resented change, Mays attempted to suggest that King was proud of his race and his country and wanted only justice, and therefore, was not ahead of his time.

**Guilt.** Mays appealed to a sense of guilt in the extensive audience. He told the American people that they were partly responsible for the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. Mays blamed the Memphis officials for the unjust salary which caused the garbage collectors strike in the first place. He appealed to the American people "to repent and make democracy equally applicable to all Americans."

**Duty.** To those Americans who were engaged in or who advocated rioting in several major cities, Mays reminded them that it was their duty, out of love and respect for King, not to dishonor his name by trying to solve the problems by rioting in the streets, perpetrating the same violence that King so strongly detested.
Forms of Support

In order to amplify and enhance his emotional appeal, Mays relied mainly on use of the illustration and the analogy. He sought to stimulate his audience through suggesting mental pictures. Apparently, he hoped the amplification would create a more memorable experience and later would spur the listeners to support the appeal for social change.

Offering to show how King had not lived a life of peaceful negotiations, but one of tribulation, Mays illustrated how King had experienced mental and physical suffering:

- House bombed; living day by day (for thirteen years) under constant threats of death; maliciously accused of being a Communist; falsely accused of being insincere and seeking the limelight for his own glory; stabbed by a member of his own race; slugged in a hotel lobby; jailed thirty times; occasionally deeply hurt because friends betrayed him.

Mays reminded the crowd of King's desire to respond to his calling. He told them that King had to respond in his time as did Paul, Galileo, Copernicus, Martin Luther, Gandhi, and Nehru. Emphasizing that no man is ahead of his time, Mays cited,

- Abraham, leaving the country in obedience to God's call; Moses leading a rebellious people to the Promised Land; Jesus dying on a cross; Galileo on his knees recanting; Lincoln dying
of an assassin's bullet; Woodrow Wilson crusading for a League of Nations; Martin Luther King, Jr. dying fighting for justice for garbage collectors . . .

In this eulogy, Mays used more analogies for amplification than any other type of support. Seemingly, Mays felt confident in using contemporary and biblical comparisons. Using contemporary references, Mays compared the courage of King with that of Mahatma Gandhi. He suggested that King's courage was more courageous than soldiers who faced death under pressure, while King faced death without pressure. He saw King as "more courageous than those who advocate violence . . . for they carry weapons of destruction for defense." Mays emphasized how King differed from his assassin. "The assassin is a coward: he committed his dastardly deed and fled. When Martin Luther disobeyed an unjust law, he accepted the consequences of his actions."

Mays used a biblical analogy to amplify his contention that King was summoned by God to call attention to social problems. Mays explained:

If Amos and Micah were prophets in the eighth century, B.C., Martin Luther King, Jr. was a prophet in the twentieth century. If Isaiah was called of God to prophesy in his day, Martin Luther was called of God to prophesy in his time. If Hosea was sent to preach love and forgiveness centuries ago, Martin Luther was sent to expound the doctrine of nonviolence and forgiveness . . . If Jesus was called to preach the Gospel to the poor, Martin Luther King, Jr. fits that designation.
Mays' use of illustrations and analogies for amplification demonstrated his desire to achieve a large measure of understanding from his audience. In similar fashion, Mays reflected his special concern for clarity by avoiding flowery language. Because of the brevity required in the twenty minute eulogy, Mays spoke in a direct and simple style, which indicates that he was concerned more with the practical than with the purely aesthetical.

**Style**

Mays utilized the language that could be understood by all. Daniel Thompson observed that, "no one needed a dictionary when he heard speeches by Dr. Mays." Therefore, his words were generally concrete references: "the American people," the President of the United States," "the Memphis officials," and "the immortal John Fitzgerald Kennedy." He specified how an unarmed Mahatma Gandhi won his challenge over the British Empire. In a similar case, he named the exact cities when referring to the location of civil rights marches led by King. Obviously Mays left nothing to chance in understanding his message.

Hoping to achieve vividness, Mays used emotive and

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37Thompson, Interview - November 30, 1977.
figurative language to stimulate further the feelings of his listeners. He opted for achieving vividness and concreteness rather than chance the uncertainty of abstractness. He employed many of the emotive words associated with the troubled Sixties: "dogs," "jail," "death," "war," "prejudice," "riots," "freedom." He referred to the "Washington Monument" where King proclaimed his memorable words, "I have a dream!" Because of King's exposure through the media, the emotive references probably stirred the imagination of the listeners who were familiar with the vivid telecasted scenes of assault.

Mays utilized the rhythmic quality of figurative language to strengthen his plea for the ordinary man who was championed by King. He explained that "God is no respector of persons," to point out the insignificance of social status in a just society. He used the words of King and his followers to amplify determination in achieving justice: "We shall overcome someday; black and white together." Quoting from Browning, Mays demonstrated King's belief in faith in God over faith in weapons:

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.
Clarifying the concept, Mays described how King never carried a gun or a knife for defense because he relied on a just God and believed that "thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

In enhancing King's philosophy that violence is ethically and morally wrong, Mays used parallel sentences to amplify King's belief in nonviolence: "He believed that nonviolence would prove effective . . . He was convinced people . . . could be moved . . . He believed that nonviolent direct action was necessary . . . He believed that the nonviolent approach . . . would prove . . ."

The best example of parallel sentence construction was found in Mays' rhythmic exposition on King's dream of future social changes in America. Mays reflected that:

He died striving to desegregate and integrate America to the end that this great nation of ours, born in revolution and blood, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal, will truly become the lighthouse of Freedom, where none will be denied because his skin is black and none favored because his eyes are blue; where our nation will be militarily strong but perpetually at peace; economically secure but just; learned but wise; where the poorest — the garbage collectors — will have bread enough to spare; where no one will be poorly housed; each educated up to his capacity; and where the richest will understand the meaning of empathy.

Fearing ambiguity, Mays used a few figures of speech to add color or brilliance to his speech. He did not choose to sacrifice certain clarity on the chance that an abstract
speech device might be more popular or dramatic for his listeners. Consequently, the figures of speech used were familiar to most members of his audience. A classic example is the reference by Mays to his age as "three score years and ten." In another instant, mindful of his advanced years and saddened over the premature death of King, Mays stated that his friend had been "cut down in the flower of his youth." Turning to the people, Mays reminded them of the purpose of the eulogy, to help the family "carry the load." He referred to the despicable conditions of segregation as the "walls of separation;" but he saw a future nation as "the lighthouse of freedom." Supporting his contention that every man must respond to the call of God in his lifetime, Mays claimed that "every man is within his star," no man is ahead of his time.

Assessment

Mays, an advocate for social change, apparently capitalized on the uniqueness of the tragedy of King's death in order to further the work of the slain apostle of non-violence. King's well publicized pleas for equal rights and social justice in America provided the weapons Mays needed to stimulate his already informed audience of the need to look ahead and continue King's work for humanity. The needless death apparently provided the impetus Mays
required to promote effectively his inspirational message for change to a highly sensitive audience.

The entire focus of Mays' address was directed toward paying tribute to King for his persistence in a struggle to establish nonviolence as a unique means for perfecting social change. Mays praised the moral courage of King while describing the unwarranted suffering which surrounded the life of the civil rights leader. In acknowledging the mortal worth of King, Mays disclosed King's faith in God and America. Ultimately, Mays concentrated on establishing King as a man worthy of emulation.

This pragmatic approach surely did not obscure the grief felt by Mays for the man who had referred to him as "my spiritual mentor."\(^{38}\) The drive within Mays appeared to be controlled by an all-consuming desire to see that Martin Luther King, Jr. did not die in vain. Consequently, Mays utilized the momentum of national coverage to dramatize the deplorable social conditions which still existed after numerous pieces of legislation. This action probably assured Mays that the inspiration, encouragement, and reassurance of his speech would prove that King's mission on earth had not ended with his death.

Whitney M. Young, Jr.

Whitney Young became a public figure in the United States when he became executive director of the National Urban League in 1961. Young re-evaluated the program and directed his initial interest in the movement to getting jobs for blacks by bringing together the black community and the white business world. However, there was a shift in emphasis from a purely civil rights movement for blacks in the Sixties to a human rights movement for all people in the early Seventies. Many political and social doors were opened to minorities as a result of the civil rights movement, but the economic situation for the poor remained basically the same. Therefore, Young focused his attention on jobs for the poor. He gained recognition as a man with visions for the future of America's underprivileged. Andrew J. Young, then head of Atlanta's Community Relations Commission, explains that Whitney Young in 1961 changed the National Urban League from basically a social welfare agency to a well established and respected organization which he

39Young was born July 31, 1921 in Lincoln Ridge, Kentucky. He attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology in engineering for two years. In 1946 he received a B.S. degree from Kentucky State College and the following year he received a M.A. degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota. Young was dean of the School of Social Work at Atlanta University from 1954 to 1961. In 1961 he became executive director of the National Urban League. Young was the recipient of a Medal of Freedom, highest U.S. civilian award. Young died of a heart attack while swimming in Lagos, Nigeria, March 11, 1971.
put to work "for meaningful reform of our society." Young further explains that Whitney Young projected a need for "jobs from industry, a Marshall Plan for the cities and a guaranteed minimum income for all Americans."

Fellow delegate to the African-American Dialogues in Lagos, Nigeria, Ernest Dunbar stated that Whitney Young had many critics because of his less visible behind-the-scenes negotiations. Concurring with Andrew Young's evaluation, Dunbar agrees that Whitney Young" worked prodigiously to make the National Urban League into an action oriented social agency that would open up new employment opportunities" but that "few understood Young's sophisticated strategies." As a result, Young was criticized for being middle-class, for moving too slowly and becoming too accommodationist in his approach.

The death of Whitney Young did not create the public disbelief which was associated with the King assassination but the loss of the prominent civil rights leader did shock the country. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., Young was on a mission seeking solutions for the impoverished. Whitney Young's body was flown from Lagos, Nigeria to the United States where the funeral service was held at 10:00 a.m. on


March 16, 1971, at the Riverside Church in New York City. A trilogy of eulogies was given: Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, "The Past;" Dr. Howard Thurman, "The Present;" and Dr. Peter H. Samson, "The Future." Whitney Young outlined his funeral service in "a previously undisclosed letter to his wife." However, the eulogy delivered the following day by President Richard M. Nixon at a memorial service in Lexington, Kentucky was unplanned.

The funeral audience at the Riverside Church consisted of dignitaries, colleagues, artists, and mainly middle class citizens. They listened to two solos by the operatic singer, Leontyne Price, and the musical selections of the string quartet from the Symphony of the New World Orchestra. The formal funeral service was consistent with the customary ritual held at the Riverside Church, located in an exclusive section of New York City. The formality of the church services, coupled with Young's low-key approach and philosophy did not appeal to the masses. Hence, unlike the King

42Dr. Howard Thurman, Dean Emeritus, Boston University.

43Dr. Peter H. Samson, Pastor Community Unitarian Church, White Plains, N. Y. (Young's pastor).

44"Dr. Benjamin E. Mays," Ebony, XXVI(July, 1971), p. 43.

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funeral, few curious people were in attendance. Mays, therefore, assumed that his hearers were knowledgeable and needed only to be reminded of the achievements of Whitney Young. With this in mind, Mays hoped that his part of the trilogy, approximately six minutes long, would be appropriate.

**Theme**

Asked to do a profile of Young for the opening segment of the trilogy, Mays chose to stimulate his audience by recalling the achievements of the deceased and revitalizing an appreciation for Young's dedication to attaining human rights. Apparently indicating an action worthy of emulation, Mays applauded the eternal benefits received by Young as a result of his help for the underprivileged as follows:

> If it is true that among the truly great men of history are to be found those who had great compassion for "the least of these" and if it is true that immortality is guaranteed to those who respond helpfully, sympathetically, and understandingly to human needs, then Whitney Young qualifies.

Consequently, Mays sought to stimulate admiration, respect and loyalty for the man who worked diligently to improve social conditions.

**Organization**

Mays retained the classical form of speech organization.
His six minute eulogy included a brief introduction and conclusion, with the greater part of the development devoted to his discussion.

The introduction, which focused on social change, attempted to magnify the significance of the occasion by focusing on the theme: "Every man who has sympathy for the man farthest down . . . must choose the profession in which he will work, the battleground on which he will fight and the method he will use." Mays alluded to his usual social themes while amplifying Young's philosophy toward social conditions. He recalled Young's adamant belief that:

(poverty) every stomach be adequately fed, every body well clothed, each family decently housed and every mind amply trained;
(racism) no man should be denied because his skin is black, none favored because his eyes are blue; and
(social justice) it is possible for peoples of different races and cultures to live together in harmony and mutual respect. . .

No direct reference is made to the grieving family, but the praise given to Young in the brief address apparently served as a tribute to them.

Assessing Young's contributions in the discussion, Mays lauded Young's selection of social work for his life's profession in order to "serve his country and black people best." Mays discussed Young's dedication to abolish poverty and to provide better housing, jobs, decent wages,
and better education for the poor. He praised Young for his commitment to the black man who "sits at the bottom of economic world." Mays called Young's method "effective nonviolence," and praised his belief that "black and white cannot elude each other." Finally, Mays reminded the listeners that Young was driven by a sense of mission and was never satisfied with the results.

The conclusion restated the theme by recalling the dedication of Whitney Young who was responsive to the needs of "the least of these." To close the speech Mays recited an anonymous poem entitled, "God's Minute," which he suggested described the role Young accepted.

**Emotional Appeal**

In an attempt to gain cooperation, Mays appealed to self-esteem and self-actualization in his listeners. His appeal was not as religious as it had been for Martin Luther King, Jr. This lack of religious appeal can probably be attributed to the differences in the two funerals: First, King was a Baptist minister; second, the funeral was held in a Baptist church where King had been co-pastor with his father; third, King appealed to the masses; and fourth, Mays was allowed more time for the King eulogy. Young, on the other hand, was Unitarian and not a preacher, whose funeral was held in a nondenominational upper class church.
Mays was given approximately six minutes to give his part of the eulogy. As a result, Mays did not have time or the need to employ complex appeals.

**Self-esteem.** Utilizing the available time, Mays appealed to the pride of the people by reminding them of Whitney Young's choice of social work over many other professions, because he desired to better serve people. He explained how Young accepted the job as Director of the National Urban League because the position provided him the opportunity to work for "jobs for thousands upon thousands . . . and to help other thousands to advance on the job, and to get business and government more deeply involved in programs designed to lift America's poor to a place of decency and respectability."

**Duty.** In an attempt to appeal to sense of duty, Mays recalled Young's method of attack for human rights which was "direct community involvement of educators, industrialists, the middle class, government and the poor."

Other appeals were limited and not easily distinguished, an understandable approach since the time limit was restricted. This audience was generally more intelligent and more knowledgeable than the average funeral audience, therefore, they did not require excessive enlightenment. However, it may be assumed that Mays felt American apathy did
exist, which is evident by his concentrated efforts at revitalization of constructive attitudes toward the needs of the poor.

Forms of Support

Basically, Mays employed description to make the deeds of Whitney Young seem vivid and impressive. He attempted to stir the feelings of his audience toward the poor by amplifying the needs of "the man farthest down." He described Young's concern for programs directed toward the elevation of the economic status of the poor and specified how Young told business and government the truth, that it was their responsibility to improve the social conditions of all people.

Mays stated a quotation from Young to illustrate his unbiased philosophy on human relations:

If we must polarize in this country, let us not polarize on the basis of race or religion or economic status, but let us polarize on the basis of decent people versus indecent people - between those who are good and those who are bad.

Style

In his oral style Mays was direct and chose simple words. To achieve clarity he followed factual lines concerning the career of Young. He called Young a "committed man" who always "told the truth." Hoping to
stimulate the listeners, Mays used emotive language in that he referred to the needs of "the poor and the illiterate," who needed to be raised to a level of "decency and respectability." His figurative language was limited to a few phrases which were simply pleasing to the ear. Leading to amplification of his theme, Mays gave Whitney Young his highest tribute in describing him as "a man possessed with a dream and driven on by a sense of mission," and as one "who had compassion for the least."

Assessment

Unlike the traditional emotional Baptist minister, Mays was not known for highly emotionalized preaching. Instead he was noted for his memorable messages and his epigrammatic phrases. Therefore, Mays was a logical choice to deliver one of the eulogies for Whitney Young. Mays had spoken at the Riverside Church on numerous occasions. Because of his familiarity with the typical audience and the usual formality associated with the church, Mays believed that his purpose would best be accomplished by enhancing the dedication shown by Young. In his own thinking concerning social change, Mays paralleled that of Young; therefore, he could easily follow the tenets of a funeral oration by sincerely commending the altruistic actions of
the deceased. Mays obviously realized that the huge audience was made up of more people who could help in the cause for social change than those who needed help. Therefore, in his brief message he inspired the influential audience toward a continuance of or a cooperation in an extension of the work for human rights initiated by Whitney Young.

Emory O. Jackson

Mays delivered the last eulogy examined in this study for Emory Overton Jackson, a lesser known figure than Martin Luther King, Jr. and Whitney Young. National attention was not given to the life or death of Emory Jackson, well known and respected within his own region.

For the main thrust of his address Mays focused on the career of Jackson as managing editor of the *Birmingham World* newspaper since 1943, and as writer of a syndicated column with the Scott chain of black weekly newspapers. Jackson was considered an influential writer and speaker on

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45Jackson was born September 8, 1908 in Buena Vista, Georgia. He graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and held honorary doctorate degrees from Morehouse College, Daniel Payne College (Alabama), and Birmingham Baptist Bible College. He was a public school teacher in Alabama before becoming managing editor of the *Birmingham World newspaper* in 1943. Jackson died of cancer September 10, 1975.
civil rights. A foe of racism, Jackson became known as "the Black Moses of the Black Press." Within his own community and surrounding areas, he worked for voter education and registration, equal job opportunities, and education for black citizens. Also, he was generally regarded as the proponent for equalization of teacher's salaries in Alabama and for full participation in the major political parties. Recognizing the dedication of Jackson, the Birmingham Grid Forecasters dedicated its twenty-fifth silver anniversary All-Sports banquet to Jackson's memory January 15, 1976. They lauded him as a vigorous, persistent, and courageous advocates of human freedom and justice. Jackson was seen as "a fine man, a crusading editor, a militant scholar, and impressive educator and a champion of causes."46

The funeral was held September 16, 1975, at 3:30 p.m. at the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Jackson, a Baptist, was an active member of the smaller Sardis Baptist Church in Birmingham. The predominantly black audience consisted of the traditional funeral gathering - family, friends, church members and guests. More intimate than the funeral of Whitney Young,

this gathering involved an audience who listened to two selections by a combined Sardis Baptist Church Choir and Sixth Avenue Baptist Church Choir, and one solo by a church member. Along with the traditional scripture-prayer by the minister of Sardis Baptist Church, the audience heard six two-minute tributes:

Mr. C. A. Scott, General Manager of the Atlanta Daily World;
Dr. Hugh L. Gloster, President of Morehouse College;
Dr. Wayman C. Matherson, Chairman of the Board of Directors Y.M.C.A.;
Mr. James A. Cotton, Field Representative for Congressman John H. Buchanan, Jr.
Mr. Robert Johnson, Associate Publisher of Jet Magazine;
Dr. Sanford D. Bishop, President of Bishop State College.

Following these brief speeches, Benjamin Mays delivered a fifteen minute eulogy.

Theme

Unlike the other occasions, Benjamin Mays was the main speaker and delivered the only eulogy. It was his goal to stimulate the attitudes of his audience while traditionally honoring the dead. For an apparent goal in Jackson eulogy, Mays hoped to instill an appreciation for the dedication of Jackson in fighting deplorable social
conditions in spite of unrelenting adversaries. More indirectly than in the other eulogies, Mays urged his listeners to continue the work for social betterment. Instead he relied on implication concerning future action, which would be dependent upon his ability to amplify the deeds of Emory Jackson.

For his subject, Mays used "Each in His Time." The theme was that "no man is ahead of his time." Having a similar philosophy to that of Jackson, Mays had no difficulty in projecting appreciation for a man he suggested was born free and was not ahead of his time.

Organization

The approximately fifteen minute speech followed the traditional pattern of organization. In the introduction, as in the Young eulogy, he did not refer to the grieving family and friends; instead Mays moved directly into his address suggesting that "every man is called of God if he believes it strong enough."

Stating that Jackson was born free, Mays divided his discussion into three major divisions: the freedom of man, the three classes of man, and man in his time. In the simple but specific divisions, Mays described first the conditions of segregation and discrimination in Birmingham, Alabama, in order to enhance the stand taken by Jackson who
felt free enough to disagree. Showing some cynicism, probably because of early unhappy racial experiences, Mays declared that there are three classes of people: "those who walk the low road, slaves to the worst that's in man; those who walk the middle road; and those who walk the high road." He pointed out explicitly that of the three classes, the only free man was the man who walked the high road. He lauded the fact that Jackson chose the high road and persistently clashed with critics who felt he moved too fast and was ahead of his time. Approving the actions of Jackson, Mays insisted that each man was in his time. Amplifying this theory, as in the King eulogy, Mays cited the men of biblical and modern history who did their jobs "in their time."

Briefly closing the address, Mays concluded that the future "is always with those who walk the high road doing their thing in their time." Mays was consistent in that he used the single logical strain of freedom to tie his thoughts together. The point was that all men are born free and remain free only if they choose the high road and thereby accept the prevailing responsibilities during their life time. With the closing poem by John Oxenham, Mays indicated the belief that Emory O. Jackson chose the high road in life.
Emotional Appeal

Hoping to stir the imagination of his audience, Mays appealed to their sense of Christianity, self-esteem and self-actualization.

Christianity. Unlike the audience for the Martin Luther King, Jr. eulogy, this church audience was not subjected to the distractions experienced by the outside audience. Therefore, the overall spiritual atmosphere was probably more conducive to a Christian appeal. The first words and the first contention of the speech clearly indicated this observation. Mays opened by saying: "Every man is called of God, if he believes it strong enough." The implication was that Emory Jackson believed; therefore, he was called of God. Subsequently, individual listeners would conclude that they too believe. Reinforcing this appeal to Christianity, Mays told the group of Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the prophets who believed and did the work of God in their time.

Self-esteem. Mays attempted to instill a sense of self-esteem in his audience for the work of Emory Jackson, who he explained believed that "he was sent into the world with a legacy from our enslaved ancestors to fight for freedom, with a purpose, with a dream that someday black people would be free." For this predominantly black
audience, Mays was evidently confident that he could speak to the needs of the people, for he continued his appeal by expounding on his belief that "few Birmingham citizens stood as tall as Emory Jackson in the struggle for civil rights." He reminded the crowd that Jackson fought for civil rights long before the coming of Martin Luther King, Jr., and that he fought for teachers long before Thurgood Marshall won the May 17, 1954 decision of the United States Supreme Court.

Self-actualization. Utilizing the apparent solidarity of the funeral audience and seeking self-actualization, Mays reminded his listeners of their duty to themselves. He told them that "each man must do his thing in his time" or it will never get done. He explained that truly free people are the ones who walk the high road and have little regard for being on an unpopular side, for they worry little about social status; instead they leave "the consequences to God."

Forms of Support

In order to amplify his theme, Mays mainly used the same forms of support: illustrations and quotations. However, unlike the Young eulogy, Mays employed extensive biblical illustrations and quotations. He argued that those who chose the high road are the only truly free people.
Amplifying this statement, Mays highlighted his ideas by using verbatim passages taken from his sermon "Each in His Time."

No man is really free who is afraid to speak the truth as he knows it, or who is fearful to take a stand for that which he knows is right. No man is really free who must debate the question "what will happen to my job and social status if I take the right but unpopular side?"

In this sense Mays concluded that Emory Jackson was a free man.

Mays continued his amplification by repudiating the statements of Jackson's critics who claimed that he was moving too fast and was ahead of his time. Again using a passage from the same sermon to ridicule the senseless judgment, Mays gave an illustration of people these critics would also censure. He lauded those -

pioneers in science who expounded unpopular theories, the prophets of religion who cried out for social justice, the political statesmen who advocated the establishment of a government that would give the people freedom, and those who called for social reform to abolish child labor, racial and sex discrimination, and reform to enact programs to rid our nation of unemployment and slums.

Using biblical illustrations, Mays explained the plight of Amos who had to prophesy in his time in Judah but not in Israel and not in Bethel. He told of Jeremiah and of Isaiah who had to do their jobs in their respective
times.

In his conclusion Mays used modern illustrations depicting the scientists who built on their findings and "from them man has benefited." Believing that the emancipation of women was a moral right, Mays used an illustration of Susan B. Anthony in her quest for women's rights taken verbatim from his sermon "Each in His Time." These illustrations served a dual purpose in supporting Mays' final assessment that "the future is always with those who walk the high road doing their thing in their time."

Mays used biblical quotations to describe the position taken by God's workers for social justice in their time. He spoke of Amos who told the leaders: "Take away from me the noise of your songs, and the melody of your lyrics; I will not listen, but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a perennial stream." Mays quoted Micah who told the people, "You have been told, O Man, what is good and what the lord requires of you: only to do justice, and to love kindness and walk humbly with your God." Isaiah told the people: "... put away the evil of your doing before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good, seek justice, restrain the oppressor; ..."
Style

Mays' language is always simple, direct, and precise. His prime concern was clarity, consequently, the style differs little from speech to speech. Basically, he continued to achieve vividness in his speech with the use of such stylistic devices as repetition, emotive words, and figurative language. However, the usage of the slang phrase "did their thing," did pose an informality of language not normally heard in a Mays speech. The once popular slang attracted attention to the dominant formal style of Mays. Apparently the over-used phrase was thrown in for effect, but instead reflected an indiscriminate use which detracted from the intended effect.

Evidently bitter over the self-satisfaction and apathy of black Americans, Mays pointedly stated that unlike Jackson "some men and some women are born slaves." Amplifying this statement he used repetitive phrases to describe these people who "walk like slaves, work like slaves, talk like slaves, look like slaves, grin like slaves, cringe and kowtowel like slaves when in the presence of white people."

Mays used repetition to enhance his belief that Jackson was born free. This description afforded Mays the opportunity to establish a vivid scene demonstrating the
the atrocities of racial discord in Birmingham during the Sixties. His scene is paradoxical in that he called Jackson free while describing the bondage like practice which existed in Birmingham during the days of Jackson.

He was free, fighting against segregation and discrimination in the Birmingham that I knew decades ago. He was free in the Birmingham I knew when black people had to go to the train through a segregated gate, . . . Jackson was free . . . when every restaurant, hotel, motel and every white church was closed to Negroes . . . Jackson was free in that Birmingham and said it loud and clear that this is ungodly, unchristian and undemocratic. He was free in Bull Connor's Birmingham.

Using this technique Mays was able to not only describe social conditions and highlight Jackson's advocacy for social change, but he injected himself in order to attest to his awareness and disapproval of social injustices.

Mays used emotive words to stimulate the memory of his audience by reminding them of the cruel acts of an earlier Birmingham. He spoke of the public facilities and the church door which was closed to Negroes with "locks of steel." He described this city in Alabama as "Bull Connor's Birmingham." He cited the black girls who were "bombed" and "killed" in a church. He tried to recreate the scene of "dogs, waterhoses, and policemen" who were turned on "peaceful" marchers. He reminded them of a Governor who "stood in the door" of the University of Alabama to keep
blacks out.

Mays softened the sting of his style by making a few references to Jackson with figurative language. Using one simile twice to describe the free status of Jackson, Mays referred to him as "free as the wind that blows, free as the birds that fly." Putting words into the mouth of the deceased Jackson, Mays explained that the free man, Jackson, could ask God "if he had earned the right to wear a crown of righteousness in his kingdom." Using an appropriate reminder of the road to choose, Mays closed the eulogy with a poem by John Oxenham used in the sermon "Each In His Time."

To every man there openth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low, ...

Assessment

The eulogy for Emory Jackson was presented in a traditional atmosphere. Lacking was the awe of the King assassination and the publicity of the Young funeral which usually accompanies the tightly scheduled affairs for the nationally prominent. Mays was the sole eulogist, and, therefore, concentrated on delivering the traditional funeral oration for a Baptist before a predominantly black audience within a Baptist church. Now able to speak to a
more tightly knit group, Mays followed the tenet of Broadus that the preacher, "is not a mere eulogist of the dead . . . his utterances as to the departed must be only a part of what he says, usually a small part."47

Always concerned with brevity, Mays limited his concentration to social justice. Unlike the sermons where he could present detailed analysis of individual areas in need of social change, Mays combined the social needs under social justice. Consequently, he set out to illuminate the beastly social conditions in Birmingham; to extol Jackson's commitment for social change; and, to present his own concern for social change.

Summary

Benjamin E. Mays knew personally the three men he eulogized and because of philosophies similar to his own, he testified willingly and sincerely in honor of their dedication to social change. His eulogies reflect the social changes which took place during that time. When King was assassinated in 1968, the civil rights movement was at its peak. Amid a tragic atmosphere, Mays focused his attention on King's commitment to change by expounding on the social ills of war, poverty, racism, and social injustice. By 1971 when Young died, educational and social doors were opened mainly to middle class blacks which

47Broadus, p. 303.
prompted an escalation of a human rights movement to supercede the civil rights movement. Mays now emphasized Young's concern for the plight of the lower class who too sought a piece of the American dream. By the time Jackson died in 1975, the war in Viet Nam was nearing an end and racial tension had eased somewhat; therefore, Mays eulogized Jackson in a quest for social justice.

Mays used classical, modern, and Christian references to amplify the achievements of the three men. His tall dignified appearance and his soft voice presented a quality in keeping with the overall formality of his speeches. Lacking the histrionics of the stereotyped black Baptist preacher, yet concerned with paying homage to the advocates of change, Mays employed pursuits of the intellect as an alternative for pursuits of the purely emotional. Therefore, Mays spoke first, to enhance the dedication of the men who promoted assistance for the subordinate groups in America; second, to emphasize the need for continued social change in order to assure a better America for everyone; and third, to call attention to the existing inconsistencies in economic opportunities for the poor.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Benjamin Elijah Mays is described as a distinguished scholar, inspirational preacher, and effective orator. For over forty years he has been invited to speak to varied audiences. This fact suggests a successful speaking career. At this writing, at age eighty-three, Mays is still invited to speak for more occasions than he can accept; but he limits his speaking schedule to a few times a month. These continuing invitations raise two questions: (1) Why is Benjamin Mays preferred over other black orators?; and (2) Why is he invited to speak to diverse audiences?

Seemingly, the Sixties served as a heyday for the speaking career of Mays. Maybe this popularity can be traced to a national interest in speakers for civil rights. Or, even more, it may be that the media gave preferential treatment to newsworthy militant and non-militant blacks who proposed change in the social structure of the United States. At any rate, Mays, a recognized educator and preacher, was invited annually for ceremonial speaking engagements at many universities and colleges. He was also invited to deliver numerous eulogies for noteworthy persons. Mainly, Mays was
invited to speak at predominantly white schools. Some may suggest that these invitations were extended because it was fashionable for whites to use black speakers to show their liberalism. Others may point out that during that period, colleges and universities gave in to pressure groups who demanded black speakers. Some may also say that Mays was favored because his non-controversial and even accommodating presentations would not likely offend alumni, trustees, and faculty. Yet, the fact that Mays was chosen attests to his recognition as a respected orator. This honored position undoubtedly can be explained by examining three reasons why Benjamin Mays was probably selected as a speaker: (1) his wholesome philosophy on life; (2) his established record as preacher, educator, and administrator; and (3) his effective rhetorical techniques.

First, Mays' philosophy of life was probably established when his parents instilled in him the rewards of honesty and diligence. One can best describe Mays' view toward life by merely pointing out his belief in the natural virtues of justice, temperance, prudence, and fortitude; and in the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity or love. Mays believes wholeheartedly in these virtues and apparently designs his life-style accordingly. Living an ascetic life unaffected by status or prestige, his main luxury is buying a new car every six or seven years. It is also significant
that Mays has had the wisdom, foresight, and endurance to
anticipate the eventual changes in the racial situation in
the United States and adjust to these changes. Refusing to
become bitter as a result of discrimination against black
people, he has always advocated nonviolence as a means of
achieving change. His sincerity in his approach to change
and his belief in the values of right and wrong have gained
him a sound and respected following. His concern for truth
and fairplay earned him the respect of all who have known
him. From childhood, Mays has believed in abstaining from
all forms of immorality; and, in this regard, has demanded
much more of himself than from his subordinates. Hence,
his integrity as President of Morehouse College was morally
and financially untarnished. No evidence has ever been
found to indicate that Mays was suspect of chicanery during
his professional career.

Mays' belief in equal opportunities for all people and
his belief in a nonviolent approach to social change vir-
tually assured institutions that he would be neither
offensive or condescending to the audience. This facet of
his character surely served as a factor in the frequent
selection of Mays as speaker.

Secondly, Mays was a well-known educator and theologian
when he became popular on the speaking circuit. Once, edu-
cated, he did not flee the South to seek fame and better
living conditions in the North. Rather, he returned to the South to fight the embarrassing and humiliating racial problems confronting the black man. Later, when he became a respected preacher and administrator, Mays expressed his objections to existing social conditions mainly from the church pulpit and in written articles. As preacher, Mays gained international recognition because of his participation in four conferences by the World Council of Churches. At these conferences, through consulting with representatives of seventy-two nations, Mays heard the presentation of every racial problem in the world. Conferring with great leaders in Europe and Asia, Mays' travels and contacts provided him with invaluable knowledge about social conditions around the globe. The publicity, which accompanied this exposure and participation of Mays, made his reputation more secure than ever before.

Although Mays worked in many capacities, he became known generally as an administrator during his twenty-seven years as President of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Determined to establish pride, integrity, and scholarship among the all black men students, in a city which housed the headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan, Mays became known for his diligence in overcoming curricular problems and striving for academic excellence. His reputation as an administrator
dedicated to elevating the academic status of Morehouse was evident in his establishing an open-door policy in the selection of students, faculty, and trustees, and in his disregarding discriminatory policies in race, color, religious affiliation, or geographical origin. During his administrative career, Mays is credited with acquiring accreditation for the Schools of Religion at Howard University (1939) and Morehouse College (1961); the accreditation of Morehouse College; and after fourteen years of effort, the establishment of a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at Morehouse College (January, 1968). Additionally, Mays played a prominent part in the successful merger (1959) of five seminaries to create the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta (May, 1961).

Mays' record as an administrator was enhanced as his speaking engagements increased. His associations and friendships with such men as Charles Merrill, Trustee; Maxwell Hahn of Field Foundation; and William H. Danforth of the Danforth Foundation likewise enhanced his status in the academic and social community. Equally important, he served on commissions for Presidents Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson. When Senators Eugene Talmadge and Richard Russel accused Mays of being non-objective and subversive because of his stand against the status quo in Atlanta, Ralph McGill,
editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, defended Mays' character and subsequently developed a life long friendship with him.

Institutions apparently recognized the value of Mays' practical knowledge on current events, his rich source of personal contacts, and his record of solid participation in educational and cultural affairs. In brief, they invited him because they thought him to be knowledgeable, about current issues.

Lastly, Mays was particularly adept in his use of rhetorical techniques. Because of his ministerial training, Mays, considered a student of rhetoric, was trained to speak the words of Scripture before varied audiences. As educator, Mays possessed a familiarity with both the teaching and administrative aspects of the educational system. A combination of the two disciplines in training and experience produced a qualified orator who skillfully spoke before a diversity of races and classes of people. It was always evident that in spite of Mays' diverse audiences, he was always thorough in researching his topics and demonstrated a willingness to use an assortment of support as amplification for his appeals. Therefore, when Mays presented the shameful conditions confronting the poor, the ignorant, and the oppressed, he always employed a direct simple style. Forever seeking understanding of his message, Mays remained
serious in his presentation and made very few demands on his listeners. His soft conversational tone, used to put the audience at ease, had a natural calmness, humility and intelligence which made his ideas more believable. Unaffected by the attainment of degrees and honors, Mays usually displayed humility in the presentation of his speeches. Traditionally dressed in a dark suit or academic garb, Mays projected an appearance of modesty and stability. His tall, slim composed figure allowed the audience to relax as it responded to his messages. The well-paced unassuming delivery projected a feeling of patience and understanding and posed no threat to the attitudes of the listeners.

Meanwhile, Mays championed the cause of the poor by skillfully appealing to the emotions of the financially secure. For each of the themes - war, poverty, racism, and social justice - Mays utilized a general concept to polarize the thinking of his listeners by creating a shared mental linkage before pleading his case. Hopefully, the polarization would nullify the most negative attitudes toward change and instead, establish a positive attitude which, in Waldo Braden's words will "establish a stable conviction of the understanding before attempting to move the will."  

Having no time to ponder past indignities, Mays spoke for immediate change. His early struggle to get an education was plagued with several financial problems, compounded by acts of racism. Mays’ ability to identify with the problems of the poor and the oppressed made him a popular speaker. Distressed by the American system, he pointed out the injustices experienced by many American citizens. At commencement exercises for three decades, Mays pleaded the cause of the oppressed by echoing in similar words the 1896 declaration of Justice John Marshall Harlan: "the destines of the two races in this country are indissolubly linked together."

Among other distinguished black speakers, Mays was distinctive in his presentation. He was not like the informal Rev. Jesse Jackson who often, in casual dress, speaks in colloquial language mainly to black audiences while encouraging them to adopt the strategy of self-help to alleviate their suffering. Mays was not an everyday people’s preacher as were Martin Luther King, Jr. and Adam Clayton Powell, who, while seeking national attention to dramatize the needs of the poor and black, took to the streets and walked with the people. Instead, Mays remained on the platform reaching for the understanding and empathy of his listeners who in turn might be moved to intercede for the needy. While some speakers commanded that their
listeners save themselves by becoming prepared to die, Mays pleaded with his listeners to save themselves by helping others. Aware of differing attitudes toward any type of deviation from the status quo, Mays tactfully emphasized the intense need for substantial social change. His technique looked for harmonization with his audience rather than alienation from them. In fact, universities and colleges felt assured that Mays' speeches rather than offending the general audience, would appeal to them.

Undoubtedly, Benjamin Elijah Mays, educator, theologian, and civic leader, has made his presence felt as a speaker on the American scene. Colleagues, former students, and associates who have heard his stirring oratory over a long period of time have commented at length upon Mays' effectiveness as a speaker. Daniel Thompson, for example, who has heard Mays speak since 1945, attributes the educator's success to his charisma, which he defines as "the gift of communicating without excessive effort."

According to Thompson, people are relaxed with Mays because he is relaxed. In comparing the speaker to Martin Luther King, Jr., Thompson feels the presence of Mays was more lasting, mainly because much of the charisma surrounding King could be ascribed to his experiences in fighting for civil rights. However, Mays was a charismatic figure who
electrified a crowd even when the audience knew little about him. This illuminating presence, Thompson believes, would have permitted Mays to be as effective as Roosevelt in the latter's "fireside chats." President Samuel Cook of Dillard University who states that he has never heard Mays deliver a bad speech in over thirty years, credits this phenomenon to Mays' "capacity to articulate the fundamental truths of the human race . . . and fundamental insights into human nature," compounded by his "unforgettable utterances."

Mays' colleagues view his effectiveness in a similar manner. While Melvin Watson, for example, remembers Mays' skill in analyzing and simplifying concepts for the average listener, Wendell Whalum, recalls Mays for his uncanny ability to inspire and provoke thought. Three other associates have also lent their voices to this growing chorus of praise of Benjamin Mays' speaking ability. One of these, Nathaniel Veale, remembers Mays as an inspirational speaker who presented a "father image," while at the same time, possessing the ability to establish models for Morehouse men to surpass. Another, Brailsford Brazeal, feels Mays was effective because of his emotionalism, which gave him a humane quality. Finally, Jessie Eubanks credits Mays' effectiveness to his seriousness. According to Eubanks, "He did not rely on humor to fool the public and thereby
entertain but dealt seriously at all times with his facts."

At any rate, on many levels of society, the 83 year old Mays is readily accepted in Atlanta and around the United States. Currently he is President of the Atlanta School Board, his first elected public office. In short, refusing to accept the stereotyped roles often forced upon American aged, Mays believe that practical education never ends. "You must grow or you die." he is often heard to utter. Still dedicated to affecting social change, Mays continues to observe a modified speaking schedule, explaining in January, 1978, that "my job is to keep the pressure on for justice."3

Mays' effectiveness has been lasting. Although he supported civil rights marches and human rights demonstrations, he has never been known for active participation. Nevertheless, he is known for an illustrious life-long speaking career, dedicated to changing attitudes and gaining substantial support for the needs of the impoverished and the oppressed. Lerone Bennett claims that Mays "played a major role in redirecting the historical wave of today."4

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Richard Raymer, a white member of the Atlanta Board of Education, refers to Mays as "the most widely respected citizen in Atlanta today." It may be, Daniel Thompson concluded, that the progressive atmosphere associated with Atlanta "may just be partly due to Bennie Mays."

In the *Harvard Theological Review*, Richard McKinney broadens the scope of Mays' influence by listing him as one of three of the "outstanding Black clergymen who have exerted a tremendous impact upon American life."5

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APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

I. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1916: Graduated High School Department, South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina: Valedictorian

1920: Graduated with honors, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

1925: Master of Arts degree, University of Chicago

1935: Ph.D. University of Chicago

1935: Elected member Phi Beta Kappa, Bates College and Delta Sigma Rho, Bates College

II. HONORARY DEGREES

1945: Doctor of Laws, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

1945: Doctor of Divinity, Howard University, Washington, D. C.

1945: Doctor of Laws, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia

1946: Doctor of Letters, South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, S. C.

1947: Doctor of Divinity, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

1950: Doctor of Humanities, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts

1954: Doctor of Divinity, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

Supplied by Benjamin E. Mays - Last revision June 10, 1977
1955: Doctor of Divinity, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

1959: Doctor of Divinity, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan

1960: Doctor of Laws, University of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia

1962: Doctor of Humane Letters, Keuka College, Keuka Park, New York

1963: Doctor of Laws, St. Augustine's College, Raleigh, North Carolina

1964: Doctor of Education, St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pennsylvania

1965: Doctor of Laws, Lincoln University, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania

1966: Doctor of Divinity, Morris College, Sumter, South Carolina

1966: Doctor of Divinity, Ricker College, Houlton, Maine

1966: Doctor of Humane Letters, Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina

1967: Doctor of Humane Letters, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia

1967: Doctor of Laws, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

1967: Doctor of Laws, Morgan College, Baltimore, Maryland

1967: Doctor of Letters, Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa

1968: Doctor of Laws, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan


1969: Doctor of Civil Law, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont
1970: Doctor of Humane Letters, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
1970: Doctor of Humane Letters, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
1970: Doctor of Laws, Centre College of Kentucky, Danville, Kentucky
1970: Doctor of Humanities, Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina
1971: Doctor of Humane Letters, Yeshiva University, New York, New York
1971: Doctor of Letters, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
1971: Doctor of Humane Letters, Pratt Institute, New York, New York
1972: Doctor of Laws, Alderson-Broaddus College, Phillippi, West Virginia
1972: Doctor of Humane Letters, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
1974: Doctor of Humanities, Lander College, Greenwood, South Carolina
1974: Doctor of Divinity, Interdenominational Theological center, Atlanta, Georgia
1974: Doctor of Sacred Theology, Olivet College, Olivet, Michigan
1974: Doctor of Humane Letters, Edward Waters College, Jacksonville, Florida
1975: Doctor of Humane Letters, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
1975: Doctor of Humane Letters, Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana
1975: Doctor of Humane Letters, Kean College, Union, New Jersey
1975: Doctor of Laws, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

1976: Doctor of Humane Letters, Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida

1977: Doctor of Laws, Bishop College, Dallas, Texas

III. POSITIONS HELD AND GRADUATE STUDY

1. 1921 Three quarters - graduate study, University of Chicago

2. 1921-24: Taught higher mathematics, Morehouse College; Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

3. 1924-25: Graduate study, University of Chicago


5. 1926-28: Executive Secretary, Tampa Urban League, Tampa, Florida

6. 1928-30: National Student Secretary, YMCA

7. 1930-32: Directed study of Negro churches, USA, under auspices of the Institute of Social and Religious Research

8. 1932-34: Completed work for the doctorate - University of Chicago

9. 1934-40: Dean School of Religion, Howard University, Washington, D. C. and brought the School to national attention and Class A rating by the American Association of Theological Schools

10. 1940-67: President, Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. One of the outstanding Negro colleges, with full membership in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Through efforts of President Mays, Morehouse was the fourth Georgia college to be approved for a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa - Delta of Georgia
11. 1967 Retired from presidency of Morehouse college 6/30/67 after 27 years of distinguished service. Elected President Emeritus

12. 1968-69: Visiting Professor; advisor to President, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan


14. Elected to Atlanta Board of Education

15. Elected President of Atlanta Board of Education


17. 1971-72-73 Reelected President of Atlanta Board of Education

18. 1973 Reelected to Atlanta Board of Education 1974-1978

19. 1974 Reelected President of Atlanta Board of Education

20. Chairman, Benedict College Board of Trustees

21. Chairman of the Board - National Sharecropper Fund

22. Member of the Board, The Institute of International Education North Eastern Region

23. Member of the Board - Butler Street YMCA - Atlanta, Georgia

24. Consultant - United Board for College Development

25. Member of the Board - United Negro College Fund

26. Member of the Board and Cabinet - University of Chicago Alumni Association
27. Member of the Board - Paine College
28. Member of the Board - Religious Heritage of America
29. Member of the Board - Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change

IV. NATIONAL AND WORLD CONNECTIONS


2. One of thirteen Americans to attend World Conference of YMCAs in Mysore, India, in 1937.


5. Leader in Youth Conference, Amsterdam, Holland, 1939.

6. Former Member of Board of Southern Education Foundation.

7. Member Delta Sigma Rho, Delta Theta Chi, Omega Psi Phi fraternities; and Phi Beta Kappa Society.

8. Former Member of Board of National YMCA.

9. Vice President of the World Student Service Fund.


11. Member, Central Committee, World Council of Churches, 1949-53


15. Former Trustee, Danforth Foundation.

16. Former Trustee, National Fund for Medical Education.

17. Co-Chairman, Citizens Crusade Against Poverty.

18. Has delivered addresses in approximately 250 colleges, universities, and schools in the United States; and probably more than twice that number of churches.

V. HONORS


2. On Schomberg Honor Roll of Race Relations, 1944.

3. Recipient of Letter Award for promoting racial friendship, 1945.

4. Alumnus of the Year, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 1949.

5. Recipient Second Annual State Fair Negro Achievement Award, Texas, 1950.


15. Older Adult Award, State Conference on Aging, Atlanta, 1968.


17. Man of the Year Award, Society for the Advancement of Management, Greenville, South Carolina, 1968.

18. Myrtle Wreath Award, Atlanta Chapter Hadassah, Atlanta, 1969.

19. Award of Achievement, Black Educational Services, Chicago, 1970.


22. Citation, First Annual Convention, American Baptist Churches of the South, Richmond, Virginia, 1971.


25. Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Award - given by Martin Luther King Center, 1977.


31. Atlanta University Reading Center Award - for support of the Reading Center during my 27 years as President of Morehouse, 1977.

"His Goodness Was Not Enough"

Bucknell University
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania
June 13, 1954

In the New Testament passage I just read to you the rich man is not named. It was not until the 14th century that the rich man was referred to as Dives. Dives is a Latin adjective meaning "rich." It is used that way in the Vulgate—the Latin version of the Bible used by the Roman Catholics. Chaucer, the father of English poetry, used it as a proper name in the 14th century and related it to the rich man in this chapter. Since that time, we call him Dives.

In this passage Dives is pictured as going to Hell, and Lazarus, the beggar, is consigned to a place in Heaven. Perhaps you, like many people of our time, do not believe in Hell. And yet I am inclined to believe that if there is no Hell, God ought to create a Hell. There ought to be a Hell somewhere. There ought to be a Hell for a man like Nero who burned innocent Christians alive; and a Heaven for the Apostle Paul. A Hell for Hitler and his associates— who killed 6,000,000 Jews, and a Heaven for Albert
Schweitzer; a Hell for Mussolini, a Heaven for Abraham Lincoln; a Hell for Jumbulinganada, a notorious criminal of South India, a Heaven for Mahatma Gandhi. But all this is beside the point. It is not my purpose in this address to split hair as to whether there is or is not a Hell. My purpose is to explain the reasons why a man, who in the traditional sense was a good man and despite that fact, is condemned and consigned to a place of torture and torment.

With apology to orthodoxy, I believe this passage has been grossly misinterpreted. I do not believe that Dives is condemned to Hell just because he was rich. Some of the finest men of ancient and modern times were and are rich. Abraham whom God called to be the Father of a great people was a rich man. Some of the best men I know are men of wealth. Some people are rich and accumulate great fortunes because they are thrifty and industrious. Jesus, Himself, complimented and rewarded the man who had one talent and did not use it. It was not his wealth that sent Dives to a place of torment and torture.

I do not even believe that Lazarus went to Heaven because he was poor. There are those who are poor because they are lazy, trifling, and good-for-nothing. There is no virtue in poverty per se, and there is no vice in wealth per
There is nothing here to indicate that Dives was a bad man. No indication that he exploited the poor. Nothing to show that he was immoral, a drunkard, or a gambler. It is quite possible that Dives was a decent, respectable, law-abiding citizen. Nor is there anything to prove that Lazarus was a good man. He might have earned his sores through riotous living, and he might have earned his poverty because he was lazy and good-for-nothing.

Let me tell you, if I may, why I believe Dives is consigned to Hell. This man goes to Hell not because he was rich and not because he was bad, but because of his attitude toward life and his attitude toward people. Dives is pictured as going to Hell because he had no social conscience. Here is a man whom God had blessed. He fared sumptuously every day, and dressed in purple and fine linen. His barns were filled with plenty, and his presses were bursting open with new wine. In modern every day parlance he had houses and lands, stocks and bonds, and bank accounts galore. He had economic security, social standing and prestige, but he had no concern for the beggar lying outside his door.
At the other extreme of the economic ladder sat Lazarus, a man whom life had beaten and licked—so beaten that he was willing and satisfied to catch the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Apparently there was no ill-will, hatred, jealousy or rancour in his heart against Dives because of his superior status. Lazarus was so weak that he could not push away the dogs that came to lick his sores. But Dives was not moved. He did not care. He did not even see Lazarus. Dives should not only have given charity, but he should have been interested in building a society where no man needs to beg and where every man has bread and enough to spare, and where each person has an opportunity to develop a sound mind in a sound body. Dives is symbolic of a type.

This man Lazarus was not asking for much. He was not seeking to invade the privacy of Dives' home. He was not seeking social equality. He was not asking for porterhouse steak nor Smithfield ham; nor ham and eggs—not even for hot rolls and coffee; only the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But Dives did not care. He had no social conscience.

Whether Dives realized it or not, he was his brother's keeper. He was responsible for what happened to
Lazarus. They tell me that more than half of the peoples of the earth never know what it is to get enough to eat and to have a balanced diet. More than half of the peoples of the earth are dying of slow starvation. More than half of them have diseased bodies. More than half of the peoples of the earth can neither read nor write. I have seen the starving millions of Asia. I have seen their diseased emaciated bodies. Not many months ago walking down the streets of Bombay, Mrs. Mays and I saw a strange figure approaching us, such as we had never seen before. Our Indian friend said that the strange looking figure was a leper. If we have bread enough and to spare, and if our bodies are strong and healthy, we must be concerned about the plight of other peoples. Whether we like it or not, our destiny is tied up with their destiny, and their welfare is ours. Jesus, in the 25th Chapter of Matthew, makes it clear that our relationship to God is dependent upon our relationship to man. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me." Dives goes to Hell not because he was rich and not because he was bad. Dives was a good man, a decent respectable, law-abiding citizen. He went to Hell because he had no social conscience. He did not care.
Dives is condemned for another reason. He evidently drew false distinctions based on class. He saw Lazarus not as a human being, not as a child of God, not as one born in God's image, but Dives saw Lazarus as a diseased beggar not only unfit to associate with him, but unworthy of the crumbs that fell from his napkin. I make bold to assert that if the man at his gate had been a Roman official, say the Emperor, or even Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judea, it would have been a different story. If the beggar had been a Roman Senator, a learned scribe or Pharisee, a judge of the Sanhedrin Court, or an aristocratic Sadducee, Dives would not have given him crumbs, but he would have invited the man in, given him the best wine, and prepared the best of food. 

It hardly dawned upon Dives that God is no respecter of persons; that He calls the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the lettered and the unlettered to do His work. He did not realize that God called Abraham, a rich man, and made him the father of his people; and the same God called Moses, a keeper of the flock and made him the lawgiver and the great emancipator. 

God called Lincoln from a Kentucky log cabin and according to H. G. Wells, made him one of the six great men of history. God called the two Roosevelts, born with silver
spoons in their mouths, and made them great. God called Ramsey McDonald from a two-room cabin in Scotland and made him a great premier. He called Churchill, more favorably circumstanced, and made him a great premier. He called George Washington, a wealthy Virginian, and made him a great American. He called Booker Washington, the slave-born, and made him great. He took Milton, an aristocrat and university trained, and made him a great poet, but he took Shakespeare the son of a bankrupt butcher and a mother who could not write her name and made him greater than Milton. Dives did not understand this. He did not know that God is no respector of person. He drew false distinctions based on class.

The test of good religion is not how we treat our peers and those above us, but how we treat those beneath us; not how we treat the man highest up, but how we treat the man farthest down; not how we treat the President of the United States, but how we treat the man in the slums. It is reasonable to suppose that I would be gentle and kind to the millionaire who might someday endow my college, give me money for a building, or endow scholarships. But the real test of my religion would be how I treat the man who has nothing to give—no money, no social prestige, no honors.
Not how I treat the educated, but how I treat the man who can't write his name. Someone has wisely said: "There is but one virtue, to help human beings to free and beautiful life. But one sin to do them indifferent or cruel hurt. The love of humanity is the whole of morality. This is humanism, this is goodness, this is the social conscience."

This man goes to Hell because he thought that which he had accumulated belonged to him, and that he alone was responsible for his wealth. He did not realize that we own nothing, that we bring nothing into this world and we carry nothing out. Everything that Dives made he died and left behind. All that we accumulate we will leave for others--houses and lands, stocks and bonds, bank accounts. The gold we horde, the oil the nations fight about, we will leave. We may horde ever so much, but we can use only a certain amount. We can sit in only one chair at a time, ride in only one car at a time, live in only one house at a time, and eat only so much steak at a time.

Dives not only made the mistake of believing that what he had belonged to him, but he acted as if he alone accumulated it. He thought that he was self-made, an island apart to himself. He did not realize that for what he was and what he had accumulated he owed a debt of gratitude to
God and to the people. He was wealthy, but the people and God made him wealthy. No man can lift himself by his own bootstraps.

One may come into this world with a brilliant mind. He may develop it and use it to good advantage, but he is not responsible for his brilliant mind. His mind comes from his ancestors and God. No other American gets the fame and prestige that is experienced by a President of the United States. But no man alone can make himself President. If Mr. Eisenhower goes down in history as a great President, the people and history will make him great. Marian Anderson has a great voice, but without the acclaim of the people, Marian Anderson would not be great. One man through blood, sweat, and genius may become rich, but without the people to use the materials he creates there would be no accumulated wealth. We owe everything to God and the people. The destiny of each man is tied up with the destiny of another. We are so interlaced and interwoven that what affects one touches all. We are all bound together in one great humanity. This Dives did not understand. John Donne, the English poet and cleric expresses it this way:

"No man is an Island apart to himself
Each is a part of the Continent, a part of the Mainland
If a clod of earth be washed away by the sea
Europe is the less as, though a promontory were,
Every man's death affects me,
Because I am involved in humanity
Therefore send not to learn for whom the bell
  tolls
It tolls for thee."

The tragic part of the story is in verse 26: Besides
all that, a great gulf yawns between us and you, to keep
back those who want to cross from us to you and also those
who want to pass from you to us." That's a way of saying
it was too late. Any man who has no social conscience, who
draws false distinctions based on class, who believes that
he is selfmade, that what he has belongs to him and not to
the people establishes a great gulf between himself and the
people, and between himself and God.

The time does come in the lives of individuals and in
the lives of nations when it is too late to make amends. It
happened to Nero, to Judas and Hitler. They all committed
suicide. It happened to Napoleon. He died in exile on St.
Helena Island. It happened to Mussolini. He was killed by
his countrymen and his body and that of his mistress were
hanged for ridicule on the streets of Milan. When a great
gulf yawns separating us from God and the people, it's too
late.

Omar Khayyam expresses it in these words:

"The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Between Dives who had no social conscience, who drew
distinctions based on class, who thought that what he had
belonged to him and that he owed nothing to Lazarus and its
people- between him and the people and between him and God
a great gulf was fixed- a gulf so fixed and so wide that it
was too late for Dives to make amends.
"Education - To What End?"

University of Liberia
January 8, 1960

The Honorable William V. S. Tubman, President of
the Republic of Liberia, members of the Board of Trustees,
President Weeks of the University of Liberia, members of the
faculty and student body, ladies, and gentlemen:

The intelligence has come to me that more than sixty
nations are represented here during this Inaugural Week to
do honor to the distinguished President of this Republic.
And yet you have invited me, an American, to give the Con­
vocation Address on this auspicious occasion. By so doing,
you have conferred upon me a signal honor which I hardly
deserve, but one which I shall cherish as long as I live.
You not only honor me today, but most of all you honor
Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., where an able
faculty and 728 male students send greetings and are
diligently at work in an effort to enlighten their minds
and to add to the sum total of human knowledge.

But let me hasten to say that Morehouse College is
not in Atlanta, Georgia, alone, but throughout the United
States and the world wherever Morehouse men are found.
Morehouse is here in Liberia, and we are proud of the work

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being done by Morehouse men in Liberia - the Reverend Daniel Horton and his son, A. Romeo Horton. Not only do we have young graduates here and in other parts of Africa, but, a few years ago, we at Morehouse had the good sense to confer honorary degrees upon the President of this Republic and also upon your Minister of Finance (Mr. Charles Sherman).

It is gratifying to note that the nations of the earth, government and private citizens, spend billions in money each year to educate their citizens. The professional and technically trained man spends easily one-third of his life getting a formal education. The well-to-do spend thousands in dollars and in other currencies to get a formal education. The poor boy or girl, if ambitious, struggles in sweat, blood, and tears to achieve that precious thing which we call "education." President Tubman made it plain in his inaugural address on Monday that this Government plans to spend more and more each year to educate the minds of Liberians. Why this universal concern for an educated citizenry? What is the purpose of education? Education to what end? Education for what? It is this question which I shall attempt to answer in this address.
Generally speaking, education is designed to train the mind to think clearly, logically, and constructively; to train the heart to feel understandably and sympathetically the aspirations, the sufferings, and the injustices of mankind; and to strengthen the will to act in the interest of the common good. To state the purpose in Christian perspective, the aim of education should be to glorify God and to serve mankind.

Specifically speaking, education should be sought for its own sake. It should be sought for the enrichment of life, for the sheer enjoyment of knowing how to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, and between that which is first rate and that which is second rate. For it is better to be able to count and read than not to be able to count and read. It is far better to be literate than to be illiterate even if one does nothing with his literacy. It is good for its own sake to understand why nations and civilizations rise, decay, and fall. It is enjoyable for its own sake to be able to spend an afternoon with the great writers: Dante and Horace, Shakespeare and Tennyson, Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Goethe. It is wonderful to be able to enjoy Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and Paul in the 13th Chapter of First Corinthians. It is stimulating to be able
to understand the prophetic utterances of Amos and Isaiah. It is mighty fine to be able to understand philosophy; to be able to argue with Plato in The Republic, to debate with Aristotle and to split hairs with Socrates. It is good to be able to appreciate art - to visit Vatican City and enjoy the works of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Education is good for its own sake. Although enjoyment for the sake of enjoyment may be a selfish aim, it is nevertheless a worthy goal.

There is another selfish reason why education is so precious. An educated man, a trained race or a literate nation is much better qualified to defend itself against the strong and the unscrupulous than an untrained man, race or nation. Whether we like it or not, there is a fundamental selfishness or defect in human nature. We respect strength and not weakness, courage and not cowardice, knowledge and not ignorance, the man who stands on his feet in a manly way and not the man who cringes and kowtows. History shows that strong nations for the most part exploit weak nations, that strong races usually take advantage of weak races, and that strong individuals are inclined almost always to push weak individuals around - even a blood relative, or a weak brother or sister. As one who believes in the power
of religion to transform mankind, I reluctantly make this confession. I have seldom, if ever, known a nation, however religious, seen a race, however democratic in its pronouncement, known an individual, however Christian in his confession, who would not take advantage of the ignorant, the weak and the coward. Whether nation or individual, the weak will be exploited, the ignorant will be cheated, the lazy and the idle will be trodden upon, the coward will be kept running and the jittery will be kept bouncing. The poor do not have an equal chance to bargain with the rich. The ignorant man starts out handicapped when confronted with the man who knows. The coward is licked as soon as he faces the fearless. This is the nature of man— not as I would like for it to be but as it is in 1960. Leadership comes from strength and not weakness, respect comes from knowledge and not ignorance, and nations are advanced on economic power and not poverty. Selfish though this purpose is, it is the only way one can respect himself and be respected by others; the only way to keep the strong and the unscrupulous off your neck.

Up to now the purposes of education have been defined in selfish terms and narrowly conceived. If I should stop here I would be untrue to myself and play false to my
own beliefs and convictions. Education is not designed merely to lift one above his fellows, but rather its purpose is to equip man to help his fellows - to elevate the masses, the less fortunate. For if one has a better mind than his fellows, more wealth than his fellows, is more wealth than his fellows, is more favorably circumstanced than his fellows, has a better opportunity to develop than his fellows, he is obligated to use skills in the interest of the common good. To use education for the common good is mandatory because trained minds are rare - only a small percentage of the total population of the world is college trained. And to whom much is given, much is required.

Furthermore, man can fulfill his true destiny in this life only in proportion as his skills are used in the service of mankind. A surgeon's skill will keep him from being pushed around, but the real purpose of surgery is to relieve human suffering and to extend life - not money alone and not mere social security. An engineer's knowledge will give him prestige and social standing in the community, but his engineering skills are given him to build roads and bridges, skyscrapers and cables, provide systems of communication, transportation, and electric power to the end that civilization may be advanced and human life made more
enjoyable. A lawyer's skill may give him respect among his neighbors, but the main purpose of law should be to extend the reign of justice, not only among the economically secure but among the lowly and the poverty-stricken. Political office does bring power and prestige, but the main purpose of education in government and skill in politics is to launch programs designed to raise the economic level of the people, to abolish disease, to educate the masses, and to extend freedom to each and every citizen. For after all, we are what we are by God's grace by the gift of our fellows or by sheer luck, and maybe all three. No man can choose the country into which he is born. No man can choose the cultural and economic environment into which he is born. No man can choose the quality of his mind. Perhaps it will always be a minority that can boast sufficient ability to benefit by a college or university education. If so, the more brilliant mind is a gift of God and not of man. The brilliant mind is not of its own creation; so if we raise above our fellows, let us give the glory to God and the people.

This point was beautifully brought home to me as I listened on Monday to the inaugural address of President Tubman as he outlined his program for the nation during
the nation during the next four years and beyond. As I study the progress during the 16 years of his administration, I see a living example of what we mean when we say that the purpose of education is not to lift one above his fellows but to identify oneself with the people and to provide skills so that those less fortunate may have a more abundant life. It is for this reason that history will record the greatness of President Tubman. The truly great men of history are those who identified themselves with the common man, such as Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi and Nehru of India, Saint Francis of Assisi, Lincoln and Booker Washington of America, Schweitzer of France, and Tubman of Liberia.

I am convinced that in the parable of the rich farmer, Jesus condemns him and calls him a fool not because he tore down his barns and built greater barns; but mainly because as he tore down his barns diseased bodies cried out for health, starving stomachs cried out for bread, and illiterate minds cried aloud for literacy. All of these were in evidence as this man failed to share and tore down his barns and built greater barns. Education aims to sharpen insight so that we can see man not as he is but as he can be and ought to be. One sees not only the potential of a Cicero
born with a silver spoon in his mouth but also the potential of a Horace, the son of a former slave; not only the potential of Milton, born in favorable circumstances, but also the potential of a Shakespeare, whose father was a bankrupt butcher and whose mother could not write her name; not only the potential of George Washington, the rich Virginia planter, but also the potential of Booker Washington, a slave; not only the potential of Nehru, born a Brahman, but also the potential of a lower-caste man, Mahatma Gandhi.

Education should make one sensitive to the needs of the world. The world can hardly be secure as long as more than half of the peoples of the earth are starving, more than half have diseased bodies, and more than half can neither read nor write. I share the thoughts of Eugene Debbs, who said: "As long as there is a lower class, I am in it. As long as there is a criminal element, I am of it. And as long as there is a man in jail, I am not free."

Another writer says it this way: "There is but one virtue to help human beings to free and beautiful life, but one sin to do them indifferent or cruel hurt. The love of humanity is the whole of morality. This is humanism, this is goodness, this is the social conscience."
Whether we like it or not, the ultimate destiny of every man is the same. The destiny of the rich is irrevocably tied in with the destiny of the poor, the learned with that of the unlearned, the great with the small. John Donne, the English poet and cleric, expresses it beautifully when he says:

"No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were. . . Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send out to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

The final end of education which I shall mention in this address is to create in the individual a wholesome state of dissatisfaction - what I call divine discontent with ordinary, mediocre performance. To make one dissatisfied with the good if the better is attainable, and dissatisfied with the better if the best can be achieved. Satisfaction means stagnation and death. It comes from two Latin words which mean "enough done." The student who is satisfied with his teaching will never teach better. The artist who is satisfied with his past performance will hardly make new discoveries. The man who is satisfied with his poverty will
never have bread enough and to spare. One writer expresses it this way: "No vision and we perish; no ideals and we are lost. Our hearts must ever cherish some faith at any cost. Some hope, some dream to cling to. Some rainbow in the sky."

Education, college or university, is designed to make one restless and dissatisfied with things as they are: dissatisfied with war, poverty, disease, and illiteracy. Thorwaldsen, the great Danish sculptor, dramatizes the sad plight of the satisfied man. Thorwaldsen had made a great statue of Christ. It was so marvelous that people from far and near came to see it. They came in large numbers to congratulate Thorwaldsen; but as they congratulated him tears began streaming down his face. The more the people congratulated him, the more he cried. Finally someone asked him why the tears? "Why do you cry? This is the finest piece of art we have ever seen." Thorwaldsen was heard to exclaim: "My genius is decaying, my genius is decaying, for this is the first piece of art I have ever been completely satisfied with. I shall never create a great work of art again."

An Thorwaldsen was right. When satisfaction comes, a man ceases to grow; he stagnates and dies. Nothing is worse than a state of satisfaction. Louis Untermeyer prayed
that he would never be satisfied. His poem was impressive.

God, though this life is but a wraith,
Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
Give me the heart to fight - and lose!

Ever insurgent let me be,
Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to vision girt
With beauty, and with wonder lit-
But let me always see the dirt
And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums-
But never let me dare forget
The little ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half done,
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
And when at last, the fight is won,
God, keep me still unsatisfied.

It is clear from what I have said up to now that
education may not make a man good. It may not make a people
wise. It may not make a nation just. Nevertheless, educa-
tion is an indispensable weapon if the mind is to be
developed, the welfare of the people advanced, and if the
nation is to survive.

When peace is established among the nations, trained
minds will establish it. When poverty is abolished, trained
minds will abolish it. When cancer, heart disease, tuber-
culosis, malaria, and leprosy are completely eliminated,
trained minds will do it. When freedom and independence come to aspiring peoples, trained minds will accomplish it.

And it is to this task that the colleges and universities of the world must dedicate themselves. And the University of Liberia will play its part in furthering the cause of peace, in abolishing poverty, in eliminating disease, and in extending the reality of freedom. In this task we are comrades in arms.

Let me say again how grateful I am to the Government of Liberia and to President Weeks for the opportunity to be here. And to you, President Tubman, I pray that your next four years will be more glorious than the past sixteen. God's blessing upon you and your country!
"THE UNIVERSITIES' UNFINISHED WORK"

Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
June nine 1968

We will do many wonderful things with the mind in the years ahead. Longevity will be further extended. The number of people living ninety and one hundred years will increase. Many more diseases will be conquered. Cancer will eventually be cured. We will very soon place a man on the moon. Passenger planes will fly a thousand miles an hour. We will develop more deadly implements of war. The comforts of life will be multiplied many times. Soon we will have more leisure time than we know how to use. We will increase the number of college graduates and the number of Ph.D.'s will be tripled. More brilliant scholars will be born. Shakespeare was partly right when he makes Hamlet say, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable; In action how like an angel; In apprehension how like a God!" Modern man has more than fulfilled the expectation of Alexander Pope when he says in his Essay on Man: "Go, wondrous creature! Mount where science guides; Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the
tides; Instruct the planets in what orbs to run; Correct old time, and regulate the sun." I hope the university will always be what Disraeli says it is, "A center of light, liberty, and learning." In this sense, the university's work will never be finished.

But a university must be more; and as marvelous as man is he has not yet conquered three of major enemies of mankind: War, Poverty, and Racism. It will not be enough for our universities to train their graduates how to make themselves secure in the economic and educational world, and forthwith insulate themselves from the basic issued of our time. The day has come for educational institutions to train their students to be seriously concerned about the urgency and the commitment to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism.

Education has done very little toward creating a world in which mankind can live without war. And I am not wise enough to give you a blueprint as to what the role of education in this area should be. I do know, however, that the trained mind has provided the instruments that are capable of destroying the human family. To the contrary, education has not trained the mind to appreciate human values so that man will be able to live in a world without war. When it comes to war, it can be argued with considerable logic that
man is not any more civilized today than he was ages ago. Centuries before the dawn of the Christian era, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians sought to settle their differences on the battlefield. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Carthaginians resorted to the sword in order to achieve their objectives. We do the same thing. We are much wiser than they, certainly much better educated, but we do not know how to make universal peace. We thought when we fought World War I that we were fighting the war that would end wars. Americans fought and died on the battlefields of Europe under the slogans: We are fighting to make the world safe for democracy; and We are not fighting for self-determination so that each nation will have the right to determine its own destiny. Woodrow Wilson believed that, and made us believe it, too, that World War I was the last war in history - the war to end wars.

We did not learn anything from that tragic experience. Millions died, millions more were crippled and maimed in both mind and body. Two decades after World War I, we found ourselves in World War II (between 1939 and 1945), engaged in the same folly. We followed the second World War with Korea. And for a decade we have been bogged down in Vietnam, and only God knows what the end will be. We have more colleges and universities than ever before,
establishing more at the rate of one a week. But educa-
tion is wholly irrelevant when it comes to providing ways
to build a war-free world.

We have fought 3,300 wars in three thousand years.
I read recently that in the last 3,500 years man has been
at war somewhere on the earth nine out of every ten hours.
In can be argued with considerable evidence that education
has given us more facts and better tained minds, but it has
hardly made us any more sensitive to the perils of war.

Education has not necessarily made man better. We
are spending two billion dollars a month in the Vietnam War
alone; and some forty-five billion dollars on past, present,
and future wars and for national defense. With this amount
of money, we could endow every college and university in
the United States with $22,500,000 each, and, at five per
cent, each of the two thousand colleges and universities
would have an additional income of $1,125,000 a year.

Our universities do not educate to this condition.
When it comes to the need to eliminate war, our educational
institutions are largely irrelevant. Our purposes for
existence seem to be mainly to help students to develop their
minds in order that they might be able to get ahead in the
world; and not how they might use their minds to establish
programs designed to eliminate the conditions that keep man-
kind forever at war. Some university should list as one of
its major objective a blueprint for universal peace. The question of mankind's survival on the earth is too critical a matter to be left entirely in the hands of politicians and heads of states. Make no mistake: We will abolish war or war will abolish mankind. The United Nations must be made to work so that the behavior of big nations will come under its judgment as well as that of small nations.

The second problem confronting mankind, and to which universities should give priority, is the question of poverty - poverty not only in far-off South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, but poverty in the affluent U.S.A. When we speak of half of the people of the earth not getting enough to eat, are malnutritioned, and have diseased bodies, we are unaware of the amount of hunger and malnutrition that exist in our own country. Within the last ten months, it has been my privilege to be a member of a team to study hunger and malnutrition in the United States. Hunger and malnutrition exist in every section of our country - north, south, east, and west.

The Federal Government admits that in 1967 there were 8,876,700 families in the United States in poverty; or 29,900,000 persons (15% of the population) recognized by the Federal Government as impoverished. In 1967, it is estimated that there were fifty million children of school age in the United States and six million of them came from
poor families, families with annual incomes below $3,300. Only two million received free lunches, leaving four million poor children without lunch, or they had to buy it. Millions of these kids are hungry at home and have no money with which to buy food at school. These are the poor - black and white, red and brown, Catholic and Protestant.

There is evidence that many children go to school without breakfast, are too hungry to learn, and are in such pain that they must be taken home. In some cases, mothers keep their children from school "so that at least they can cry themselves to sleep from hunger in their mother's arms". Right here in the United States, in some areas there are pregnant mothers so ill-nourished that a minimum of blood transfusion must be given routinely to each pregnant mother during childbirth as a part of her regular prenatal care. Studies have been made that show that some pregnant mothers do not get sufficient iron, calcium, and calories, so the nutritionally motivated craving for iron and calcium leads them to eat clay, and to eat starch for calories to supplement their food. There are thousands of babies being born daily who have protein deficiency during their early years, and it has been established that protein deficiency in early childhood can cause permanent brain damage, causing I. Q. deficits of as many as 18 to 22 points,
from which the child will never recover. Thousands of these kids are not inherently dumb. Our society has neglected them. Were they properly fed, they would develop good minds and some of them would be brilliant. There are people in the United States, and possibly in your city, who get the city dump digging for food. When the dump trucks come, the people are there going through the garbage to get cheese, butter, meat, doughnuts, or whatever is edible that has been thrown away.

I have recently talked with widows living on $45.00 per month, mothers with seven children trying to make it on $200.00 a month. I know of a case where a woman, 26, two children, and a husband unable to work, are virtually starving. The lady said to an interviewer, "One thing we always got is milk, cuz my Ma keeps a goat. We don't always eat the same time either. One day I'll fix macaroni for lunch, the next day spaghetti, or potatoes, so we get a little variety, too. I had steak once about three months ago. A friend of my husband's was serving it and invited us over. Imagine that, me going 26 years without tasting steak! I took one little, bitty bite, and said, "Boy, it sure was worth waiting for!"

We found another case where a woman has twelve children, ages three and a half to twenty-one. Their income
is $25.00 per week, and $30.00 more monthly from a son who is working. After this woman pays rent, electricity, and heat, she has $90.00 a month to get food for thirteen. There are no free lunches, and she cannot get welfare because she cannot tell welfare where the husband is. The food stamp program, even if she had it, would be grossly inadequate.

Our college and universities must not, certainly should not, educate ourselves and our students away from the problems of the poor. We should know the condition and circumstances under which the poor people live in the slums and ghettos of our cities and, wherever feasible, the universities should become involved so that we will help to build a United States where no family of four will get less than $3,300 a year income, where every able-bodied man will be guaranteed a job with a minimum adequate wage, where good schools exist, and where recreational facilities and schools are adequate. The town should come to the gown and the gown should go to the town so that there will be no unnecessary gap between those who live on the boulevards and those who live in the slums. The problems of poor people should be the concern of the university, and how to eliminate poverty should be one of its major objectives. We must eliminate poverty not only because it's right so to do, but because
there will be security for none of us until we do.

The third and final enemy of mankind which our colleges and universities should work to abolish is racism. It is difficult for us to understand that racism does exist in the United States; however, some of us did not have to be told by the President's Commission on Civil Disorder that it does exist. We know it from years of bitter experience. Ruth Benedict defines racism as follows: "Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority. It is the dogma that the hope of civilization depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure. It is the dogma that one race has carried progress throughout human history and alone ensure future progress." Anyone, whether black or white, who believes that he is superior to members of another race, and in his behavior treats the other person as an inferior, has earned the right to be called a racist.

Slavery and segregation, which have been with us in this country for a total of 350 years, are proof that there is racism in this country. Virtually all civil rights legislation and all victories in federal courts designed to make out democracy applicable to Negroes, came about through some kind of coercion. Negroes are the only people in the United
States who have had to spend tens of millions of dollars to get what the Constitution guarantees them, and what all Europeans who come to this country get by virtue of being born white. No other ethnic or racial group has had to sit-in and demonstrate in order to have places of public accommodation opened to them. No white group has had to sue in federal courts in order to get the ballot. No white group has had to coerce Congress to pass a bill to prohibit discrimination in housing. No other group found it necessary to sponsor a March on Washington, 250,000 strong, to make Congress know that we will pay any price to eliminate second class citizenship in this country. Fourteen years after the May 17, 1954, decision of the United States Supreme Court outlawing segregation in the public schools, many sections of the nation are resisting the court orders; 85% of our public schools are still segregated. Martin Luther King, Jr. should never have been assassinated, with the approval of thousands, because he wanted America to live up to its pronouncements. It is not only good for the United States to exterminate racism, but it is good for the world that we do it because there will be no permanent peace on earth until we do.

The President's Commission on Civil Rights has spoken about racism far more eloquently than I can. Despite Black
Power, or those who argue for separatism, the destiny of white and Negro America is still one destiny. It must be one of education's aims to strive to desegregate and integrate America to the end that this great nation of ours, born in revolution and blood, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal, will truly become the lighthouse of freedom where none will be denied because his skin is black, and none favored because his eyes are blue; where the nation is militarily strong but at peace, economically secure, but just; learned, but wise; and where the poorest will have a job and bread enough and to spare.

Educators should define the kind of world we are trying to build. We should have ways of measuring the progress in goodness, and in the developing of right attitudes, just as we measure the progress in intellectual development. After defining the kind of society we want to build, we should develop skills and techniques designed to make our students that kind of citizens. We should begin in the kindergarten to develop people who believe in our Christian principles and democratic ideals. Goodness is as important as literacy. An honest heart is as important as literacy. An honest heart is as important as a brilliant mind. The attempted assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy makes it all the more urgent that we build
the kind of world which I have tried to describe. Senator Kennedy was committed to a program of peace. He wanted poverty abolished, and racism exterminated. It is too bad that we live in a world where men like John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi are in as much danger of being killed as murderers and thieves. It is our responsibility, as educated men, to create a world where good men will be free and safe to work to improve society and to make men better.

I predict that most of you will be very successful in your chosen field. Some of you will become famous. Some of you will accumulate great wealth. Some of you will occupy positions of prestige and power. My best wishes go with you. Whatever you do, however, I implore you to become involved in worthy programs designed to make a better world. I hope you will never turn your back on the millions who are poor, but rather do your part to enable them to rise to positions of respectability and honor. I hope you will never be satisfied until America is committed to the proposition that equality, freedom, and justice are the God-given rights of every American.

I challenge you, members of the classes of 1968, to join in a crusade to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism.
"Three Enemies of Mankind: A Challenge to the University"

Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia
June 8, 1970

President Atwood, Members of the Board of Trustees, Members of the Faculties, Members of the Graduating Classes, ladies and gentlemen:

I am indeed grateful that President Atwood has honored me by inviting me to address you on this momentous occasion. However, I am not deceived. I am not naive. I know that nobody came here this early in the morning just to hear me speak. The trustees, the president and faculties are here in the line of duty. The members of the graduating classes are here to get their diplomas. The rest of you are here to see your sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, husbands and wives, sweethearts and friends graduate. You really didn't come to hear me; but tradition has decreed that you cannot graduate today without first listening to me or feigning to listen. So, whether you like it or not, you are stuck with me for approximately twenty minutes beginning now.

We will do many wonderful things with the mind in the
seventies and in the decades to come. Longevity will be further extended. The number of people living ninety and one hundred years will increase. Many more diseases will be conquered. Cancer will be cured. We will soon place a man on Mars. Passenger planes will fly a thousand miles an hour. We will develop more deadly implements of war. The comforts of life will be multiplied many times. Soon we will have more leisure time than we know how to use.

We will increase the number of college graduates and the number of Ph.D.s will be tripled. Shakespeare was partly right when he has Hamlet say, "What a piece of work is man! How noble; how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable; In action how like an angel; In apprehension how like a God!" Modern man has more than fulfilled the expectation of Alexander Pope when he says in his Essay on Man: "Go, wondrous creature! Mount where science guides; Go measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; Instruct the plants in what orbs to run; Correct old time; and regulate the sun." I hope the university will always be what Disraeli says it is, "A center of light, liberty, and learning."

But a university must be more; and as marvelous as man is he has not yet conquered three of the major enemies of mankind; War, Poverty, and Racism. It will not be enough for our universities to train their graduates how to make
themselves secure in the economic, political, and educational worlds and forthwith insulate themselves from the basic issues of our time. The day has come for educational institutions to train their students to be seriously concerned about the urgency and the commitment to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism.

Education has done virtually nothing toward creating a world in which manking can live without war. The trained mind has provided the instruments that are capable of destroying the human family. To the country, education has not trained the mind to appreciate human values so that man will be able to live in a world without war. When it comes to war, it can be argued with considerable logic that man is not any more civilized today than he was ages ago. Centuries before the dawn of the Christian era, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians sought to settle their differences on the battlefield. We do the same thing. We are much more knowledgeable than they, certainly much better educated, but we do not know how to make universal peace. We thought when we fought World War I that we were fighting the war that would end wars. Americans fought and died on the battlefields of Europe under the slogan: We are fighting to make the world safe for democracy; for self-determination so that each nation will have the right to determine its own destiny. Woodrow Wilson believed that World War I would be the last
war in history, the war to end wars, and he made us believe it, too.

We did not learn anything from that tragic experience. Millions died, millions more were crippled and maimed in body and mind. Yet two decades after World War I we found ourselves in World War II. We followed the second World War with Korea. And for a decade we have been bogged down in some way in Vietnam, and now Cambodia, and only God knows what the end will be and when.

We have more colleges and universities than ever before but education is wholly irrelevant when it comes to providing ways to build a war-free world. We have fought 3,300 wars in three thousand years. I read recently that in the last 3,500 years man has been at war somewhere on the earth nine of of every ten hours. It can be argued with considerable evidence that education has given us more facts and better trained minds but it has hardly made us any more sensitive to the prerils of war.

We are expanding two billion dollars a month in the Vietnam War alone; and some forty-five billion dollars on past, present and future wars and for national defense. With this amount of money, we could endow every college and university in the United States with $22,500,000 each and at five percent of each of the two thousand colleges and universities would have an additional income of $1,125,000 a
Our universities do not educate to this condition. Our purpose for existence seems to be mainly to help students develop their minds to establish programs designed to eliminate the conditions that keep mankind forever at war. Some university should list as one of its major objectives a blueprint for universal peace. The question of man's survival on earth is too critical a matter to be left entirely in the hands of politicians and heads of states. Make no mistake: We will abolish war or war will abolish mankind. And the United States cannot forever police the world.

The second problem confronting mankind, to which universities should give priority, is the question of poverty - poverty not only in far-off South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, but poverty in the affluent U.S.A. In 1967, the federal government admitted that there were 8,876,700 families in the United States in poverty; or 29,900,000 - 15% of the population - recognized by the federal government as impoverished. In 1967 it was estimated that there were fifty million children of school age in the United States and six million of them came from poor families, families with annual incomes below $3,300. Only two million received free lunches, leaving four million hungry
children without lunch every day. This situation has not improved in the past three years.

Many children go to school without breakfast, are too hungry to learn, and are in such pain that they must be taken home. In some cases, mothers keep their children from school so that "at least they can cry themselves to sleep from hunger in their mothers' arms." Right here in the United States there are pregnant mothers so ill-nourished that blood transfusions are given routinely as a part of their regular pre-natal care. Studies have been made that show that some impoverished pregnant mothers do not get sufficient iron, calcium and calories and in some cases the nutritionally motivated craving for iron and calcium leads them to eat clay and to eat starch for calories to supplement their food. There are thousands of babies born daily who have protein deficiency during their early years, and it has been established that protein deficiency in early childhood can cause permanent brain damage, causing I.Q. deficits of as many as 18 to 22 points, from which the child will never recover. There are people in the United States who go to the city dumps digging for food. When the dump trucks come, these people go through the garbage to get cheese, butter, meat, or whatever edible that has been thrown away. These are the poor - black and white, red and brown, Catholic and Protestant.
Our college and universities must not, certainly should not, educate ourselves and our students away from the problems of the poor. We should know the conditions and circumstances under which people live in the slums and ghettos of our cities, and become so involved that we will help to build a United States where no family of four will have to live on an annual income of less than $5,000, where every able-bodied man will be guaranteed a job with an adequate minimum wage, where schools are adequate, and where recreational facilities are available. The problems of the poor should be the concern of the university, and how to eliminate poverty should be one of its major objectives.

The third and final enemy of mankind which our colleges and universities should work to abolish is racism. It is difficult for some of us to understand that racism does exist in the United States. Ruth Benedict defines racism as follows:

Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority. It is the dogma that the hope of civilization depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure. It is the dogma that one race has carried progress through human history and alone ensure future progress.
Anyone, whether black or white, who believes that he is superior to members of another race, and in his behavior treats the other person as an inferior, has earned the right to be called a racist.

Slavery and segregation, which have been with us for a total of 350 years, are proof that there is racism in this country. Virtually all civil rights legislation and all victories in federal courts designed to make our democracy applicable to Negroes, came about through some kind of coercion. Negroes are the only people in the United States who have had to spend tens of millions of dollars to get what the Consitution guarantees them and what all Europeans get when they come to this country simply by virtues of being born white. No other ethnic or racial group has had to sit-in and demonstrate in order to have places of public accomodation opened to them. No white group has had to sue in federal courts in order to get the ballot. No white group has had to coerce Congress to pass a bill to prohibit discrimination in housing. No other group has found it necessary to sponsor a MARCH ON WASHINGTON, 250,000 strong, to make Congress know that we will pay any price to eliminate second class citizenship in this country. Sixteen years after the May 17, 1954, decision of the United States Supreme Court outlawing se-gregation in the public schools many sections of the nation
are resisting court orders. Our public schools are still largely segregated.

Despite these conditions, I believe that the destiny of black and white America is still one destiny. It must be one of education's aims to strive to desegregate and integrate America to the end that this great nation of ours, born in revolution and blood, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal, will truly become the lighthouse of freedom where none will be denied because his skin is black, and none favored because his eyes are blue; where the nation will be militarily strong but at peace, economically secure but just, learned but wise, and where the poorest will have a job and bread enough and to spare.

Educators should define the kind of world we are trying to build. We should have ways of measuring the progress in goodness, and in developing right attitudes, just as we measure the progress in intellectual development. We should begin in the kindergarten to develop people who believe in our Christian principles and democratic ideals. For goodness is as important as literacy and an honest heart is as important as a brilliant mind. It is too bad that we live in a world where men like John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi are in as much danger of being
killed as murderers and thieves.

I hear your silent refutations. I read your cynical minds: War, poverty, and racism, you say, are as old as man. We cannot eliminate them. I disagree. But even if you are right, we have no choice but to try. I hold that, win or lose, I must give my allegiance to the highest and the best that I know. For I believe that peace is better than war; so I must give my allegiance to peace. I believe that an adequate standard of living is due every living creature; so I must do my bit to eliminate poverty. White folks and black folks may never get rid of race prejudice; but, win or lose, God knows I must try to help build a society where black and white can live in the same community in peace and with justice, for I believe that brotherhood is better than racism. There may always be dishonesty, but I must believe that "honesty is the best policy." No man can maintain the integrity of his soul by giving allegiance to a lesser good. I agree with Henry Van Dyke that "it is better to follow even the shadow of the best than to remain content with the best than to remain content with the worst."

I predict that most of you will be very successful in your chosen fields. Some of you will become famous. Some of you will accumulate great wealth. Some of you will occupy positions of prestige and power. My best wishes go with you. Whatever you do, however, I implore you to become involved in worthy programs designed to make a better world. I hope
you will never turn your back on the millions who are poor, but rather do your part to enable them to rise to positions of respectability and honor. I hope you will never accept the dogma that wars are inevitable. I hope you will never be satisfied until America is committed to the proposition that equality, freedom, and justice are the God-given rights of every American.

Again, I hear your misgivings. I hear you say, "I am only one man. What can I do to make things better? I am only one person." May I remind you that great ideas are born for the most part in the mind of one man? The call to leave his country and go to a strange land to become the father of a great people did not go to a number of men; the call went to Abraham. The call to lead the Hebrew people out of bondage did not go to a multitude but to Moses. The call to establish the Kingdom of God on earth went to Jesus, not to a thousand Jews. The call to make Christianity a universal religion went to Paul. The idea to build a great clinic at Rochester, Minnesota, was born in the mind of one of the Mayos. The idea of building Tuskegee Institute, in an effort to help black people and solve the race problem, was born in the mind of Booker T. Washington. George Carver was one man. Harriet Tubman, leading black people to freedom, was one woman. Martin Luther King, Jr.
one man. I believe every man is called of God if he believes it strong enough; called to do something worth while, something unique, something so distinctive that if he does not do it it will never be done.

I challenge you, members of the classes of 1970, to join in a crusade to eliminate war, abolish poverty, and exterminate racism. God bless you and good-bye.
In the words of Thomas Paine, "These are the times that try men's souls." There are wars and threats of wars. We spend billions annually in Vietnam. The President has spread the war into Cambodia. The purpose for which we fight is unclear. And only an omniscient God knows what the end will be and when. We are spending two billion dollars a month in Vietnam, and some forty-five billion dollars annually on past, present and future wars. With this amount of money we could endow every college and university in the United States with $22,500,000 each and at five percent each of the two thousand colleges and universities would have an additional income of $1,125,000 a year.

Our youths are confused and frustrated all over the world. Across this nation our college students are protesting the war and saying to the President: Get out of Southeast Asia NOW! The uprisings of our students on our campuses is due in part to our involvement in Southeast Asia. The students are in earnest and their clamor against the war
will not soon subside. The killings of black and white by the National Guard and police in Ohio, Georgia and Mississippi will bring peace neither at home nor abroad. The arabs and the Israelis may plunge us into a third World War any day.

Our values are thoroughly twisted. Our national political leaders appropriate money far more freely for expeditions to the moon than for the physical well-being of the nation. The United States would rather outdo Russia in space than in providing adequate food for millions of poor Americans. There are in this affluent United States some 30 million persons who live below the poverty line. In 1967, the federal government admitted that there were 8,876,700 families - or 29,900,000 persons - in the United States living in poverty. It was estimated that there were then fifty million children of school age in the United States and six million of them came from poor families, families with annual incomes below $3,300. Only two million received free lunches, leaving four million hungry children without lunch every day or they had to buy it. Millions of these kids were hungry at home and had no money with which to buy food at school. The situation has not improved in the past three years.
In 1968, in a report with which I was involved entitled HUNGER: USA, we substantiated the fact that there are many newborn babies who survive the hazards of birth and live through the first month, die between the second month and their second birthdays from causes which can be traced directly and primarily to malnutrition. Our report pointed out further that protein deprivation between the ages of six months and a year and a half causes permanent and irreversible brain damage to some infants. Nutritional anemia, stemming primarily from protein deficiency and iron deficiency was found in degrees ranging from 30 to 70 percent among children from poverty backgrounds. But I wager that Congress will appropriate more freely and we will very soon spend as much or more money annually for expeditions to land on Mars than we will spend to eliminate poverty.

I am not a prophet of doom, and I disagree with those who say that we have made no progress in black-white relations in the last quarter of a century. I must admit, however, that progress has not been uniform. It is a fact that many doors are open to Negroes - or black people, if you prefer - that were closed to them in 1950, twenty years ago. Most hotels, restaurants, theatres and recreational
facilities are now available to black people, which was not the case two decades ago. Black people can be seen working in industries, banks, department stores, in communications; holding high political posts in city, state and federal government undreamed of in 1950, and the color line has been all but eliminated in professional sports. Colleges and universities which denied black professors and students in the 1950's are open to them in 1970.

It is easy for one who sees only one side of the picture to say that inerracially things are fine. We are making great strides toward improving black-white relations; but we must admit that the problem of race is the most explosive problem confronting the United States today. A few blacks are much better off in 1970 than they were in 1950. This is not good enough. Economically the masses of black people are hardly any better off than they were twenty-five years ago. Relatively speaking, the gulf of economic inequality between black and white has widened. Poor housing, unemployment, low-paying jobs, poor schools, slums and ghettos plague the black man incessantly. Fresh in our minds are the riots in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, Washington, and other cities, telling us that our race problem is far from being solved, 105 years after the
Civil War. The uprisings and rising demands of black students on white campuses indicate that there is enduring tension between black and white. The killing of six blacks, shot in the back by the National Guard in Augusta, Georgia, and the killing of two blacks at Jackson State College reveal a frightening situation.

The May 17, 1954, decision of the United States Supreme Court outlawing segregation in the public schools led many to believe that segregated schools would soon be a thing of the past. But sixteen years after, segregated schools still exist all over this country. De facto segregation has taken the place of de jure segregation and we find all-black and all-white schools throughout the nation. Segregated housing patterns make de facto segregation inevitable. Whites and blacks do not seem to be able to live in the same neighborhood. Whites move out when blacks move in.

It is clear that you, the young generation will be wrestling with the black-white problem in this country just as those of us of my generation and before tried to solve it for many decades. Racism is a cat with nine lives. In addition to war, poverty and racism, you will also have to deal with the population explosion, water and air pollution,
and the increase in the use of drugs by the young. What will you do about them as you assume leadership in your respective communities?

There is no doubt in my mind that a leadership role will be thrust upon you by virtue of the fact that you now have better training than the vast majority of the young people in the world. I wager that a very high percentage of those who entered first grade with you have long since fallen by the wayside. You are among the favored few.

I predict that most of you will do well in life. Barring a long economic depression and wars that will destroy our economy, you will succeed in life. Poverty will never knock at your door. Most of you, being white, will never know what it is to be black and robbed of opportunities, opportunities which you will have for the sole reason that you were born white. I must remind you, however, that "to whom much is given, much is required."

So, I ask again, what attitude will you take toward the mammoth problems inadequately described above - problems which my generation is leaving with you - war, poverty, racism, population explosion, pollution, drug addiction?

You make take a laissez-faire attitude toward these problems and say, "Such problems are inherent in
existence, so there is no need for me to worry too much about them. The poor have always been with us - even Jesus recognized that. Men have always fought wars and always will. Racism is as old as the human race. We will let the next generation worry about the population explosion. Science will conquer pollution. So I will take care of myself and my family. Let well enough alone. Enjoy life. Each person is largely responsible for himself."

I hope you will never take the laissez-faire attitude. For whether we like it or not, the destiny of each and every person is the destiny of all men. We all travel the same road - from our mothers' wombs to the grave. Eugene Debs was eminently correct when he said something like this: As long as there is a lower class, I am in it. As long as there is a criminal element, I am of it. As long as there is a man in jail, I am not free. John Donne expresses it well:

No man is an iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.
By virtue of the fact that we are born, we are obligated to do our bit to improve life and make our communities better. We cannot afford a laissez-faire attitude. I believe that every person is sent into the world to do something worthwhile, something unique, something distinctive, and if he does not do it, it will never be done. If Columbus had not discovered America, somebody else would have discovered it. But if Shakespeare had not written Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, Julius Ceasar, Othello, Macbeth, they would have never been written. If the Wright brothers had not done their work with the airplane, others would have done it. But if James Weldon Johnson had not written "Lift Every Voice and Sing," this song would have never been composed. Somebody else might have built Tuskegee, but only Booker T. Washington could have given the world "Up From Slavery." I hope that you will do two things: Do something worthwhile which others can do; but by all means do that unique, distinctive thing which if you do not do it, it will never be done.

We might try to avoid involvement again by arguing that the plight of the poor is their fault; they are lazy, trifling and good-for-nothing. Too lazy to work and too lazy to use their minds. If they are lacking in mental ability, blame their parents and God, not me. Anyone who
wants to work can find a job. Dole, food stamps and
surplus foods make the poor more helpless. If a man is
well and has a strong body he can earn enough to live on.

This is one way to look at it, but another way to
look at it is to consider the fact that we are largely what
we are by luck or the grace of God. If one man is better
off than another, it is largely accidental. No man has the
right to thank God that he is better than another man. Two
things a man cannot choose: his parents and his place of
birth. Nor can he determine which member of his family
will be a brilliant mind and which a dull one. I have seen
families where only one child out of six or seven had an
extraordinary mind. I have seen a genius and a moron born
into the same family - same mother and same father. Cer-
tainly the genius can take no credit for his brilliant
mentality nor look down on his less fortunate brother, for
he might well have been the moron and his brother the
genius. Neither did anything to get himself born; neither
chose his parents.

For example: Two babies are born on the same day,
one of parents who are wealthy and the other of parents who
are poverty-stricken and live in the slums. By virtue of
the origin of their births, the son of wealthy parents will
experience cultural surroundings almost from birth and his educational advantages will be unlimited. The poor boy may never go beyond the fifth grade. Why should the wealthy boy think he is better and look down on his brother in poverty? Neither chose his parents and they did not choose their places of birth. The Brahman in India did not choose his Brahmanhood and the Untouchable did not choose his untouchability. The black boy who has been beaten down by his more fortunate white neighbor did not choose his blackness. In one sense, therefore, we are what we are not by any goodness of ours. This knowledge should give every man an attitude of humility which should permeate his struggle to improve life and make men better.

Not only are these the times that try men's souls but these are the times when sensitive souls hear the call to respond to the needs of our time. Every generation has felt no doubt that it was living in the most crucial era in history. There has never been a time in the history of man when everything was sweetness and light. Every time is a time that tries men's souls; and out of tragedy, turmoil and crisis men are called to lead the people forward.

The times were not serene when God called Abraham to seek a strange land and become the father of his people.
It wasn't a good time for the Jews when God called Moses to lead them out of bondage, spending 40 years in the wilderness in pursuit of freedom. The Jews were in bondage to Rome when Jesus was called to establish the Kingdom of God; and Paul to universalize Christianity. The great Roman Empire had fallen and the future of Christianity and the world was at stake when Augustine was motivated to write "The City of God."

The Crisis in Roman Catholicism brought forth Martin Luther. Taxation without representation led to the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War which brought forth the United States of America. Slavery instigated the Civil War and a leadership which saved the Union and emancipated the slaves. Slavery and oppression are responsible for the leadership of such great Americans as Fred Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The 1929 depression created the opportunity for Franklin Delano Roosevelt to institute programs that saved the country from economic ruin.

Truly, these are the times that try our souls, but they are also the times that will call forth strong men and women in the decades ahead to strive to abolish war, eliminate poverty, eradicate racism, blot out drug addiction,
control the increase in population, and save us from air and water pollution.

These are some of the problems which present a challenge to the class of 1970. I hope you will accept the challenge.
And Terah took Abraham, his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abraham's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came into Haran, and dwelt there.

And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

It is clear that Terah, the father of Abraham, left Ur of the Chaldees for Canaan. For some unknown reason, Terah reached Haran, settled down and died there. Scholars have speculated on the reasons why Terah didn't complete his journey to Canaan. The truth of the matter is nobody knows precisely why he didn't get to Canaan. There is no evidence that his health failed him for he lived there a long time after he arrived. There is no evidence that the journey was too rough to continue. There is no proof that he was too old to travel on to Canaan. It may be that God called Abraham to leave Haran to seek Canaan, but God did not call Terah to leave Ur of the Chaldees to go to Canaan. It may
have been Terah's own desire to seek Canaan. On the other hand, God called Abraham and told him to "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." Herein the difference may be found.

One brilliant American preacher has contended that Terah was a complacent person, who sat down short of achievement and held everybody else back. This minister argued that "Only when Terah died, and Abraham had him off his hands, could Abraham move on to the promise land." It often happens that some time we have to wait for somebody to die before progress can be made. Everyone of us know of situations like that. The man gets established and satisfied and no progress can be made as long as he is around. This is not fair to Terah. He did take his son from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran. Terah was not a failure. The original idea to leave Ur of the Chaldees came from Terah and not Abraham.

But for the emphasis of this talk, I shall assume that Terah didn't continue because he became satisfied with what he found in Haran and gave up the idea of continuing
his journey to Canaan. Why do I say this? Haran was an important North Mesopotamian commercial city at the head of the west horn of the fertile crescent on the Belikh River, 60 miles above its confluence with the Euphrates. Haran in ancient times flourished as a junction of the rich caravan trade between Nineveh and Carchemish, Mesopotamia, the central Hittite Empire, and the Mediterranean shores. Haran must have been a prosperous city. In Genesis, 12:5, we are told that, acquiring "substance" and offspring in the rich city Abraham, under the call of God, moved on into Canaan. Abraham was doing well in Canaan. He had acquired substance and offspring. So perhaps the fundamental difference between Abraham and Terah is the evidence that Abraham was called of God to go to Canaan.

It is not the purpose of this emphasis to condemn Terah and praise Abraham. The purpose here is to point out to you that if Terah stayed in Haran because he became satisfied, ceased to explore further, lost the spirit of adventure stopped reaching for the stars and grasping after the moon, then that is a condition to be deplored. If he did this, it is a normal human tendency and you and I are part of this affliction. In the course of our careers our aims and goals may be so low that we will cease to explore unknown fields.
Only a few men in history lived up to their greatest potentials. It will take all you got to cope with the problems of our time. Let me illustrate.

It may not have dawned upon you that beyond Haran lies Canaan with all the toils and hardships involved in getting there and the happiness that will be yours once you get to Canaan. At this point in time, it may not have dawned upon you that 25 years from today you will be somewhere between 43 and 50, and that all the leaders in government, business, politics, religion, education, social reform and other professions will either be retired, dead, or too old to function. The torch of leadership must fall to young people like you. The same problems that your elders are wrestling with now will be yours: peace and war, labor and management, poverty and prosperity, racial and ethnic strife. It will be a great tragedy if you in any way became satisfied with where you are and not strive further to prepare yourselves to meet the challenges that will surely be yours.

You have every right to be happy with your accomplishments up to now, here in Haran, a part of your journey. But certainly Canaan lies beyond and satisfaction must never be
your lot. All of you will not go to graduate school and it is not necessary that you do. But it is necessary that you continue your education and become skilled in some trade, vocation or craft — a skill helpful to you and beneficial to mankind. The person who has no skills will not be respected by himself nor by his fellows. Others of you I hope will go to a university and prepare yourselves for work in the arts and sciences, engineering, and law, medicine and politics, and ministry and teaching to the end that your services will be used not only to enable you to make a living for yourselves and families, but to enable you to do your bit to erase poverty and crime, war and disease, discrimination and segregation, injustice and man's inhumanity to man. You can ill afford to be satisfied with your present academic achievement, nor be content to move on to Canaan for mere selfish reasons.

Abraham obeyed God, continued his journey to Canaan, known earlier as Abram, "Exalted Father," called Father of many nations (Gensis 17:5) founder of the Hebrew people and friend of God. From Abraham's unselfish spirit came many more: Moses, the great Hebrew statesman, law giver and leader who led the "Israelites from slavery in Egypt to independent, orderly, religious nationhood in Canaan."
Without Moses it would be difficult to account for the yahwistic monotheism that culminated in the law and the unification of a wandering, discouraged group of nomads into a great people. Abraham paved the way for the great prophets: Michah, Amos and Hosea, Isiah and Jeremiah. Abraham or Terah, which do you choose to be?

The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency; not in our doing too much, but rather in our doing too little; not in our living above our ability, but rather in our living below our capacities. I fear most of us are under-achievers not for lack of ability, but because we are too lazy to live up to our capabilities. To state it another way, we are too easily satisfied. We should not be satisfied with good if better is achievable and never with better if the best can be attained.

The consequences of the satisfied life has been well dramatized in literature. Browning tells us of the faultless painter, Andrea Del Sarto. He had reached perfection in his own mind. He was so excellent that he bragged and boasted of his perfection. Speaking of himself, he said, "I have arrived at perfection in my profession." He exclaimed, "I do not have to make sketches any more -- all I have to do
is to pick up my brush and paint -- to imagine is to achieve." This did not set well with Browning. He made Andrea say: "Ah but a man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's the heavens for." Satisfaction means stagnation and decay. It comes from the Latin words meaning "Enough done." The scientist who is satisfied with his discoveries will never discover more. The poet who is satisfied with poetry will hardly write better poetry. The surgeon who is satisfied with his skill in surgery will hardly improve. Complete satisfaction means no more growth.

The fate of the satisfied man is beautifully told in the story of Thorswaldsen, the Danish sculptor. After carving a statue of Christ he thought it good to place it on exhibition. The people came from far and near to see the statue of Christ. The comments of praise was more than Thorswaldsen could stand. Suddenly Thorswaldsen began to cry. The more people praised him, the more the tears rolled down his face. Finally, someone asked Thorswaldsen why the tears? Why do you cry? In the midst of his tears he was heard to exclaim, "My genius is decaying, my genius is decaying. I can never produce a great piece of art again -- my genius is decaying." And Thorswaldsen was right. His genius was decaying. May this never happen to you.
In both Browning's Andrea and in Thorswaldsen, the object is personal. In another poem, the ideal is social. I recommend both types to you. Lanier, in the song of the Chattahooche, personalities and socializes the waters of the Chattahooche. He pictures the waters hurrying down from the hills of Habersham, down the valleys of Hall to serve the plain. Social service is the motive. The rushes, the laurel, the ferns, the chestnut, the oak, the walnut and the pine -- all invited the water to remain with them. But Lanier makes the waters speak:

"But, oh, not the hills of Habersham, and, oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the Plain. Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main, the dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn, and the lordly main from behind the plain calls o'er the hills of Habersham, calls through the valleys of Hall."

I am convinced that in the parable of the rich farmer, Jesus condemns the farmer and calls him a fool not because he tore down his barns and built greater barns; but mainly because as he tore down his barns,
diseased bodies cried out for health, starving stomachs cried out for bread, a class-divided society yearned for brotherhood and illiterate minds prayed for literacy. All of these things were in evidence as this man failed to share and tore down his barns and built greater barns.

We have here two kinds of ideals -- personal development and service to the people.

Let me remind you that you are not too young to think lofty thoughts and to accomplish great things while you are young. At both ends of life -- age and youth do great things. Abraham and Moses were not young. Chief Justice Holmes was writing great decisions at ninety. Verdi produced Othello at 74; at 80 he composed Falstaff; at 85, Ave Maria.

But in your age group great things are also done. Coleridge wrote his "Ancient Mariner" at 25. Goethe and Victor Hugo had produced works of enduring value at 20. Lord Bacon began to philosophize at 16. Julius Ceasar began his career at 17, William Conqueror before 20. Among artists and sculptors three out of four had shown decided promise before 15. Michelangelo had produced great works by 19. Raphael and Van Dyck painted famous pictures before reaching their majority. Rembrandt was famous at 24.
Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelsohn, Schubert and Schumann were real producers at 20, having produced something original by 13.

Jesus was confounding the wise at 12, dead at 33. Booker T. Washington was known around the world at 30. Du Bois wrote souls of black folks, his greatest work, when young. Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes were famous in their twenties. Dunbar and Martin Luther King, Jr. had done their work and were dead in their thirties. Howard Thurman was a minister of national distinction at 30.

Let me make it clear that in contrasting Abraham and Terah as the basis for this address, I do not pronounce Terah as a failure. He took his family to Haran and did well. I do criticize him for apparently becoming complacent and satisfied in Haran, living there many years after he left Ur of the Chaldees when his goal was Canaan. It was left to Abraham to become the founder of a great nation, the father of the Hebrew people, a friend of God. It is the he who is immortalized in history and eternity, not Terah. It is for this reason that I ask the question, Abraham or Terah, Which?

Let me say to you what that though we have made great progress in some areas within the last two or three decades,
this is no time for complacency. Your elders have brought you from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran but we are a long way from Canaan. Those of us who are older have challenged the doctrine of separate but equal in the highest courts of land in Maryland, Texas, Oklahoma and other states, and in the public schools. For 39 years from 1896 to 1935 we lived with a fragrant violation of the 1896 Decision of the United States Supreme Courts Plessy versus Ferguson. We spent millions proving that the gulf of inequality grew wider and wider during these 39 years. We made the 15th Amendment more real by spending huge sums of money knocking out the white primary culminating in the Voting Rights Acts in 1965. We put flesh on the 14th Amendment paving the way for the complete annihilation of segregation culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Courts, the Montgomery bus boycotts, demonstrations, picketing and the like brought us to Haran but Canaan lies ahead.

Here we are in Haran. Black people and White people do more things together than they ever did. They work together in high and ordinary places, places where negroes have not worked before since the post Reconstruction era. They eat in restaurants and are housed together in the same hotels and motels. Blacks run against Whites in political elections and when elected they serve in the same house and senate.
They patronize the same night clubs. They sit side by side on air planes. There are perhaps more intermarriages, Black and White, than ever before. Although still highly segregated, there are more Black members in White churches now than was the case a short time back. Although a thoroughly integrated school system is a "Rara Avis," more blacks and Whites go to school together than formerly, and more teacher integration in the public school than formerly. It is wonderful that we have 1,588 political offices in the South held by Blacks; but, this is negligible when there are 79,000 elected officials in the South. These things are lovely and steps in the right direction. But let us look beneath the surface. With these things a fait accompli here in Haran, it is easy to become satisfied and complacent without looking beneath the surface.

There are the people who flee to the suburbs when Negroes move into a residential White section. These are the same people, many of them, who will put their children in private schools to avoid having their sons and daughters go to school with too many Black kids. They are the people who will move their businesses from the central city when central city becomes too Black and will invite new industry to build in the suburbs thus making it difficult for Blacks to get to jobs that might be available there. What does all this mean? It means that we have not only a racial situation
but a class problem added to race. It means that the job confronting us is what can we do to build a viable business community in central city when the White man has all the economic clout, even if Negroes are in control of the government in places like Atlanta, Newark, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Detroit and Gary.

Moreover, there are other programs confronting us as we move toward Canaan. The destiny of Blacks is the destiny of the nation. We are Americans. Let us be aware of war and military expenditures. We fought a war in Viet Nam for a decade or more with nothing to show for it except 50,000 dead, 150,000 wounded and $150,000,000 spent and no victory and Viet Nam not yet saved from communism. Let us be aware of a $90,000,000,000 annual military budget which is destined to go higher as we attempt to police the world. Let us be aware of poverty and unemployment where 8.7 millions are unemployed and our nation has no program designed to eliminate poverty and unemployment say in the next ten years. It seems to me that President Ford is more interested in solving the problems of the Viet Nam refugees than he is in solving the problems of the poor here at home. The higher percentage of the poor and unemployed are Blacks.

Let us be aware that crime in the United States continues on its upward way with the increase in 1973 over 1972 ranged from 1% to 9%. In 1974 one person was shot to
death every minute with a hand gun somewhere in the United States. Only 20% of the killings done in the United States are done by criminals. Let us be aware of crime inflicted by Blacks upon Blacks. Last year 99.6 percent of all Blacks murdered in Chicago were killed by Blacks. Of the 682 Blacks murdered in Chicago in 1974, 675 had Blacks as their executioners. We may hate Whitey but we certainly do kill Blackey. Chicago can be duplicated in every city in the United States. You must not insulate yourself from these problems.

I wish I could paint you a rosy picture for the decades ahead. I wish I could tell you that the American communities are waiting for you with good paying jobs, and a democracy and a christianity that functions with liberty and justice for all. But as I look into the crystal ball I cannot honestly do that. I do close, however, with words of encouragement, with faith in you and hope for the future. If our enslaved ancestors survived and multiplied for 246 years of cruel bondage; and if those in my age group knew the mob and lynching which were condoned by the state and church and winked at by Congress; if we suffered political disfranchisement, legalized by the State and concurred in by the National Government; experienced a century of segre-gation supported by State Law and finally solidified by the
United States Supreme Court; and we have lived to see these iniquities virtually abolished. I know you are not going to let nobody turn you around and that you will continue our struggle to the end; that you will build a society where no one is favored because his eyes are blue and none denied because his skin is Black; so I can only wish you success in all of your endeavors however steep the climb and however rugged the path in your journey toward Canaan. Good luck and may God bless you!
Eulogy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Morehouse College Campus
Atlanta, Georgia
April 9, 1968

Published in Born To Rebel by Benjamin E. Mays, pp. 357-360.
Eulogy of Whitney Young

Riverside Church
New York City
March 16, 1971

Every man who has sympathy for the man farthest down, who believes that every stomach be adequately fed, every body well clothed, each family decently housed and every mind amply trained; whose philosophy is that no man should be denied because his skin is black and none favored because his eyes are blue; and who believes that it is possible for peoples of different races and cultures to live together in harmony and mutual respect must choose the profession in which he will work, the battle ground on which he will fight and the method he will use.

Whitney Young had the mind, the integrity and the will to succeed in many professions: law, medicine, engineering and religion. But he chose social work, believing that there he could serve his country and black people best. His arena of battle was among the people whose needs are greatest.

Supplied by the National Urban League, Inc., New York, New York

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His method of attack was direct community involvement of educators, industrialists, the middle class, government and the poor in an effort to abolish poverty, provide better housing for the poor, jobs for the unemployed, decent wages for the underpaid and better education for the illiterate.

There was no generation gap between Whitney Young and myself. We shared a common philosophy and spoke a common language on what the United States needs to do to make it possible for every American to achieve a life of dignity and respect. I came to know Whitney Young well in 1954 when he became Dean of the Atlanta University School of Social Work. His office was only a few hundred yards from mine. Though both of us were extremely busy, we frequently exchanged views on what should be done to improve the lot of the black man in this country and what we could do to bring whites and blacks together in an effort to heal the wound resulting from three and one-half centuries of slavery, segregation and alienation. Though not obvious on the surface, it soon dawned upon me that Whitney Young was a committed man. And this commitment was to the people but primarily to the black man who was and is among the most poorly housed and who for the most part sits at the bottom
of the economic world. When we talked about the offer to Head the National Urban League I sensed that it was not the higher salary which the Urban League offered that attracted him most but he saw in the Urban League position an opportunity to do something in a big way to provide jobs for thousands upon thousands of people who had no work and to help other thousands to advance on the job and to get business and government more deeply involved in programs designed to lift America's poor to a place of decency and respectability.

In his speeches and writings, there was no pleading and beggings. He told people the truth. He told business and government what the facts were and challenged them in a big way to live up to their responsibilities in improving the life of all people. Whitney Young believed that blacks and whites cannot elude each other and that we must live together and work together. This philosophy was most beautifully phrased by Whitney Young himself when he said not long ago: "If we must polarize in this country, let us not polarize in this country, let us not polarize on the basis of race or religion or economic status, but let us polarize on the basis of decent people versus indecent people - between those who are good and those who are bad."
I would call his method "effective non-violence." If
one's life is to be judged more by results than by rhetoric,
Whitney Young's life was most rewarding. Not as rewarding
as Whitney would have it for a man possessed with a dream
and driven on by a sense of mission cannot be satisfied with
the results, however commendable they may be.

If it is true that among the truly great men of
history are to be found those who had great compassion for
"the least of these" and if it is true that immortality is
guaranteed to those who respond helpfully, sympathetically
and understandingly to human need, then Whitney Young
qualifies. He did so much in so few years.

Several decades ago, I picked up a dirty page from a
newspaper and found these anonymous words which are applicable
to Whitney Young. This man allowed no sand to burn under his
feet. He did his work as if called into the world to
champion the cause of the man farthest down. The title of
the poem is "God's Minute," and with it I close.

I have only just a minute
Only sixty seconds in it
Forced upon me,
Can't refuse it,
Didn't seek it,
Didn't choose it
But it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it
Give account if I abuse it
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it.

That was Whitney Young.
Eulogy of Emory O. Jackson

"Each In His Time"

Sixth Avenue Baptist Church
Birmingham, Alabama
September 16, 1975

Every man is called of God, if he believes it strong enough. Emory Jackson believed that he was sent into the World with a legacy from our enslaved ancestors to fight for freedom, with a purpose, with a dream that some day Black people would be free.

Emory O. Jackson was born free. Some men and some women are born slaves. They walk like slaves, work like slaves, talk like slaves, look like slaves, grin like slaves, cringe and kowtowelike slaves when in the presence of White people. But Emory O. Jackson was not one of these. He was born free - free as the wind that blows, free as the birds that fly.

He was free, fighting against segregation and discrimination in the Birmingham that I knew decades ago. He was free in the Birmingham I knew when Black people had to go to the train thru a segregated gate, had to enter the

Supplied by Dr. Ruby Jackson Gainer, Pensacola, Florida

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go to the train thru a segregated gate, had to enter the waiting room from the train thru a segregated gate. Jackson was free in the Birmingham I knew when every restaurant, hotel, motel, and every White church was closed to Negroes with locks of steel. Jackson was free in that Birmingham and said it loud and clear that this is ungodly, unchristian and undemocratic. He was free in Bull Connor's Birmingham when innocent Black girls were bombed and killed in church, when dogs, water hoses and policement were turned loose on the marchers and when the march from Selma to Montgomery produced the Civil Right Act of 1965, and when a governor stood in the door of the University of Alabama to keep Blacks out; in all these situations, Emory Jackson was free and can now tell his God, "I was there fighting for what I believed was right. I hope, God, I have earned the right to wear a crown of righteousness in your kingdom."

I make bold to assent that only a few Birmingham citizens stood as tall as Emory Jackson in the struggle for Civil Rights. He preceded shuttleworth in his program to desegrate Birmingham, preceded the coming of Martin Luther King, and was fighting for teachers before Thurgood Marshall won the May 17, 1954 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In life we find three classes of people: those who
walk the low road, slaves to the worst that's in man; those who walk the middle road, and those who walk the high road. The truly free people are those who walk the high road. No man is really free who is afraid to speak the truth as he knows it, or who is fearful to take a stand for that which he knows is right. No man is really free who must debate the question "What will happen to my job and social status if I take the right but unpopular side?" The free man, walking the high road moves on faith in the rightness of his position, takes the next step, trusting where he cannot prove, leaving the consequences to God. In this sense, Emory Jackson was free as the wind that blows, free as the birds that fly.

He was often criticized and some people wanted to clip his wings. They said he was stirring up trouble. He was trying to move things too fast. The rationale behind this argument is that a leader cannot be effective and cannot lead the people if thinks too far ahead of them. So they would say that my third class, those who walk on the high road, are ahead to their time. They would probably place in this group the pioneers in science who expounded unpopular theories, the prophets of religion who cried out for social justice, the political statesmen who advocated
the establishment of a government that would give the
people freedom, and those who called for social reform to
abolish child labor, racial and sex discrimination, and
reform to enact programs to rid our nation of unemployment
and slums. But it is clear that each man must do his thing
in his time and not in somebody else's time. Man has but
one life to live and he must do his thing in his time; for
there is a time element in life when certain things must be
done, must be said. We do them then, say them then, or they
will never be done and said.

Prophesying against the leaders in high places Amos
tells why he had to speak in his time. When the lion roars,
who does not fear? When the Lord God speaks, who will not
prophecy? The North told Amos to go South to Judah and
prophecy there but not in Israel and not in Bethel. But
Amos had to do his thing in his time. He tells government
officials and the people: "I hate, I spurn your feasts, and
I take no pleasure in your festal gatherings. Even though
you offer me burnt offerings, and your cereal-offerings, I
will not accept them: and the thanks offerings of your
fatted beasts, I will not look upon." "Take away from me
the noise of your songs, and the melody of your lyrics I
will not listen, but let justice roll down like waters
and righteousness like a prennial stream." Amos was doing
his thing in his time - not in somebody else's time. Each
in his own time.

The prophets were not loved but they did their thing
in their time. Micah tells the people, "You have been told,
O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you:
Only to do justice, and to love kindness and walk humbly
with your God."

Jeremiah had to do his job in his time. Explaining
the reason he had to act then, he explains by saying: "It
is in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my Bones."
So did Isaiah. Speaking in his time, Isaiah tells the
people what to do to save themselves from desolation: "Your
hands are full of bloodshed - wash yourselves clean; put
away the evil of your doing before my eyes; "Cease to do
evile, learn to do good, seek justice, restrain the oppressor;
uphold the right of the orphan, defend the cause of the wid-
ow."

The future of science was not with the people who
made Galileo recant, who jailed Roger Bacon, who anathema-
tized Darwin, but rather with the victims for scientists
have built on their findings and from them man has benefited.
Paul's views about woman, and man's effort to keep her in a subordinate position in society, were not the controlling factors in woman's development. The fact that it is right that women should vote and right that they should be educated on a parity with men gave the movement toward their emancipation a moral thrust which conservative people who walk the middle road could not resist forever. Woman's future was with Susan B. Anthony and not with those who fined her $100 because she voted in the presidential election of 1872.

The future is always with those who walk the high road doing their thing in their time. The future of slavery was not in the hands of the slave owners, but it was with Harriett Tubman, Fred Douglass, Garrison, Harriett Beacher Stowe, others and God.

The future of Birmingham was not with Bull Connor, those who bombed churches and segregated schools but in the hands of people like you, Reverend Shuttleworth, Emory O. Jackson and God. Birmingham is a better place because Emory O. Jackson lived, worked and died here.

I close with the words of John Oxenham:

To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way
And the low soul groupes the low,
And in between on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way and a low.
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall do.

Thank God Emory O. Jackson decided to walk the high road!
VITA

Doris Levy Gavins was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on December 12, 1930. She graduated from John McDonogh High School and received a B.A. degree from Dillard University in New Orleans. The writer entered the Graduate School of Louisiana State University in the summer of 1956 and later received her M.A. degree in Speech in May, 1959. She taught Speech and English in the New Orleans high schools before resigning to become assistant professor at Southern University New Orleans. In August, 1975, she entered the Graduate School of Louisiana State University where she served as teaching assistant in the Speech Department for two years; later, she received her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Speech in December, 1978.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Doris Levy Gavins

Major Field: Speech


Approved:

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Major Professor and Chairman

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Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: July 27, 1978