



# Appendix 1

## KING SPEAKS

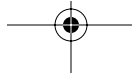
### AT OAKWOOD COLLEGE

*Huntsville, Alabama, March 2, 1962*

*This address represents King's typical speech delivered before civil rights mass meetings and is to be distinguished from his sermons preached to worshiping congregations. Even his speeches, however, almost inevitably included biblical allusions supportive of his call for human equality. Bracketed words represent audible responses of the audience.*

Mr. Chairman, President Millet, and to the other distinguished platform guests, ladies and gentlemen. I don't think I can begin to tell you in words this evening how very delighted I am to be in this community and to see the warmth and the enthusiasm of your movement and the power and dynamic qualities of your leadership and the depth of your dedication and commitment to the goal of freedom and human dignity. And I can only say to you that I bid you Godspeed as you continue in this magnificent work, and I know that as a result of your labors and as a result of your struggles you will be able to make Huntsville a better community and a better city in which to live.

I certainly want to express my personal appreciation to the officers and members of the Community Service committee for inviting me to be here. And may I say as my colleagues, Wyatt Walker and Ralph Abernathy, have already said that the full resources of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference are with you in your struggle here. You have our absolute backing. You have our absolute support. And we want you to know that, and we want you to feel free to call on us. There is something about a movement that can never be outlawed. You can outlaw organizations, but you cannot outlaw a movement. And we want it clearly stated, and we want it clearly known that Alabama can outlaw the NAACP, it can outlaw CORE, and maybe they will try to outlaw the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, but there is a movement in the Negro community; and as Victor Hugo said some years ago that "there is nothing more powerful in all the world





than an idea whose time has come.” And the idea whose time has come today is the idea of freedom and human dignity. And as Ralph Abernathy has said, we do not plan to stop until we have our freedom. And we want you to know that you have our absolute support in all that you’re doing.

Now I can never come back to the state of Alabama without feeling a great sense of at-home-ness. I am not a stranger in this state, for it was in this state that I struggled for 381 days with the 50,000 Negro citizens of Montgomery, Alabama. Montgomery, Alabama, is still a difficult community hardened in its attitudes, but one thing that we can say about Montgomery is the buses are thoroughly integrated; and Negroes can sit anywhere they want to. *[Applause]*

A few months ago, Prime Minister Macmillan of England was taking a trip through the great continent of Africa, and at one point he stopped along the way to make this significant statement: “The wind of change is blowing in Africa.” In a real sense, the wind of change is blowing all over the world. It is blowing in our own nation. It is a mighty wind sweeping away an old order and ushering in a new order. Now we are all familiar with the old order that is passing away, because we have lived with it; and we’ve seen it in all of its dimensions. We’ve seen it in the form of colonialism and imperialism. And as you know there are approximately 2,700,000,000 people in the world. The vast majority of these people live in Asia and Africa, about 700,000,000 in China, about 500,000,000 in India and Pakistan, 100,000,000 in Indonesia, 220,000,000 in Africa, about 96,000,000 in Japan. For years these people have been dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated by some foreign power. But there comes a time when people get tired, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. And these people became tired, and they decided to protest, and as a result of that most of these people live in independent countries, and we see that the old order of colonialism is passing away and the new order of freedom and human dignity is coming into being.

But the thing I want you to see tonight more than anything else is that we’ve had an old order in our own nation in the form of slavery and then in the form of racial segregation. And we all know of the long history of this old order in the United States. It had its beginning in 1619 when the first slaves landed on the shores of this nation. They were brought here from Africa. And unlike the Pilgrim Fathers who landed at Plymouth a year later, they were brought here against their will. Two hundred and forty years the Negro was treated as a thing to be used not

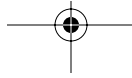




a person to be respected. The famous *Dred Scott* decision rendered by the Supreme Court in 1857 well illustrated the state of the Negro during slavery. This decision rendered by the Supreme Court said that the Negro has no right that the white man is bound to respect, that he is merely property subject to the dictates of his owner. Then after the Emancipation Proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln in September of 1862, which took effect on the first of January, 1863—even after this, the Negro still confronted a system known as segregation. Living with these conditions, many Negroes lost faith in themselves. Many came to feel that perhaps they were inferior. Perhaps they were less than human. But thank God, something began to happen. Something happened to the Negro. Circumstances made it possible and necessary for him to travel more—the coming of the automobile, the upheavals of two world wars, the Great Depression. And so his rural plantation background gradually gave way to urban industrial life. His economic life was gradually rising through the growth of industry, the influence of organized labor, expanded educational opportunities, and even his cultural life was gradually rising through the steady decline of crippling illiteracy. And all of these forces conjoined to cause the Negro to take a new look at himself. Negro masses all over began to reevaluate themselves, and the Negro came to feel that he was somebody. His religion revealed to him that God loves all of his children and that all men are made in his image and that God somehow loves every man from a bass black to a treble white and all are significant on his keyboard. So the Negro could unconsciously cry out with the eloquent poet:

Fleecy locks and black complexion  
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;  
Skin may differ but affection  
Dwells in black and white the same.  
And were I so tall as to reach the pole  
Or to grasp the ocean at a span,  
I must be measured by my soul;  
The mind is the standard of the man.

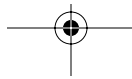
And with this new sense of dignity and this new sense of destiny, a new Negro came into being with a new determination to suffer, sacrifice and even die if necessary in order to be free. [Applause] Then something else happened. The Supreme Court of the nation rendered a new decision. In 1896, the Supreme Court had rendered what was known as the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which established the doctrine of separate but equal as the law of the land, and we all

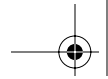




know what happened as a result of this old *Plessy* doctrine. There was always a strict enforcement of the “separate” without the slightest intention to abide by the “equal.” The Negro ended up being plunged into the abyss of exploitation, where he experienced the bleakness of nagging injustice. Then in 1954, the Supreme Court rendered a new decision. This decision said in substance that the old *Plessy* doctrine must go, that separate facilities are inherently unequal, that to segregate a child on the basis of his race is to deny that child equal protection of the law. When this decision was rendered, seventeen states and the District of Columbia practiced absolute segregation in the public schools. But today, fourteen of these states and the District of Columbia have made some moves (now most of them have been only token moves), but they have made some moves toward integrating the schools, and there are only three states now trying desperately to hold out: the state of South Carolina, Mississippi, and the great sovereign state of Alabama. [*Mixture of mild laughter and applause*] But in a real sense, the old order is passing away. The wind of change is blowing it away. To put it figuratively in biblical language, we’ve broken loose from the Egypt of slavery; and we have moved through the wilderness of segregation, and now we stand on the border of the promised land of integration. And I know [*brief applause*] and I am convinced now as I stand before you tonight that old man segregation is on his deathbed, and the only thing uncertain about it is how expensive the South will make the funeral—the old order. [*Applause*] The wind of change is blowing.

Whenever anything new comes into history, it brings with it new challenges and new responsibilities. And it would be tragic indeed for us to stand idly by and notice this emerging new age in our nation and all over the world without meeting the concomitant responsibilities that come to us as a result of this emerging new age. And I would like to mention for the moments left the responsibilities that we have as a people, that we face as a nation, and that we face all over the world as a result of this new age that is coming into being. I want to suggest first that we are challenged to rise above the narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. In other words, we must develop a world perspective. We will not achieve brotherhood in America until enough people in America develop a world perspective. You see, this new age in which we live now is geographically one. This challenge is to make it spiritually one. Now the geographical oneness of this new age is come into being to a large extent through man’s scientific ingenuity. Man through his scientific genius has

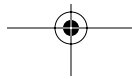




been able to dwarf distance and place time in chains and even carve highways through the stratosphere, and our jet planes have compressed into minutes distances that once took days. I think that Bob Hope has adequately described this new jet age in which we live. He said it is an age in which it is possible to take a nonstop flight from Los Angeles, California, to New York City; and if on taking off in Los Angeles you develop hiccups, you will “hic” in Los Angeles and “cup” in New York City. *[Laughter]*

That’s moving pretty fast. You know it is possible because of the time difference to take a nonstop flight from Tokyo, Japan, on Sunday morning and arrive in Seattle, Washington, on the preceding Saturday night; and when your friends meet you at the airport and ask you when you left Tokyo, you will have to say I left tomorrow. *[Mild laughter]* Now this is a bit humorous, but I’m trying to laugh a basic fact into all of us. It is simply this: man through his scientific genius has made of this world a neighborhood, and now through our moral and ethical commitment we must make of it a brotherhood. We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all die together as fools. *[Applause]* This is what we will . . . [final word in this short sentence is indistinct due to both audience applause and King’s slightly dropping his voice]. Every individual and every nation must see this interdependency that we face. All I’m saying is simply this, that all life is interrelated, and all men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny, and whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. John Donne was right: “No man is a island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” And he goes on toward the end to say, “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. Therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.” And until we come to see this all over the world, and until our white brothers come to see this, we will be miserable and we will end up with a cosmic elegy.

The second challenge that we face (and this is particularly true of those of us who have been on the oppressed end of the old order): we must achieve excellence in our various fields of endeavor. And may I say to every young man and every young woman here tonight (I see many students from the colleges, the high schools) let me say to you that doors are opening now that were not opened to our mothers and our fathers. Opportunities are coming now that did not come to our parents. The challenge we face is to be ready to enter these doors when they open. Ralph Waldo Emerson said in a lecture back in 1871 that “if a man could write a better book or preach a better sermon or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor,





even if he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to this door.” This will become increasingly true. And so we must set out to do a job and to do it well. Discover your life’s work and put your whole self there.

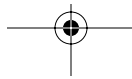
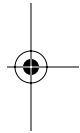
I know it so easy to use our oppression as an excuse for laziness, but we must make full and constructive use of the freedom we already possess. And we must rise up amid dark and desolate nights of oppression and plunge against these cloud-filled skies new and blazon stars of inspiration. This is our challenge, and this is our inspiration. And don’t set out to do merely a good Negro job. I’ve seen people so often say that I want to be a good Negro this or a good Negro that. Now if you are setting out merely to be a good Negro schoolteacher or a good Negro doctor or a good Negro lawyer or a good Negro skilled laborer, you have already flunked your matriculation exam for entrance into the university of integration. *[Applause]* We must set out to do a good job. We must set out to do a good job and to do it so well that the living, the dead or the unborn couldn’t do it any better. *[Applause]* And to carry it to one extreme, if it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, just go on out and sweep streets like Beethoven composed music. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets like Michelangelo carved marble and like Raphael painted pictures. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say, here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well. *[Applause]*

This is what Douglas Mallock meant when he said:

If you can’t be a pine on the top of the hill,  
 Be a shrub in the valley—but be  
 The best little scrub on the side of the rill,  
 Be a bush, if you can’t be a tree.

If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail,  
 If you can’t be the sun, be a star;  
 For it isn’t by size that you win or you fail—  
 Be the best of whatever you are. *[Applause]*

Now the third and final challenge is this. We’re challenged to continue to engage in creative protest in order to bring the new age into being in its full sense. I want to underscore this. We are challenged to engage in creative protest, and I want to underscore this because there are still too many people who believe that . . . that things will work themselves out. You’ve heard this idea—just be patient, and just keep praying, and everything will be all right. Well, I believe firmly in prayer, and

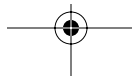


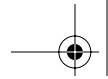


I believe in patience, and at the same time I pray to God to save me from that patience which makes me patient with anything less than the best. And I say that we must engage in creative protest and realize that human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals. And without this hard work, time itself becomes the ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social stagnation. We must help time, and always realize that the time is always right to do right. *[Applause]* We must see this.

And so we must continue to seek to get the right legislation. We need civil rights legislation right now all over the United States. I know the argument here. They say that you can't legislate certain things. You can't change it through the law. You hear this endlessly. They say it must be done another way. Well, it may be true that morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the *[delayed applause]* . . . It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me, and I think that's pretty important also. *[Applause]* So let us not overlook the significance of legislation, for it is true that we must depend on religion and education to . . . change bad internal attitudes. But we need legislation and court orders to control the external affects of bad internal attitudes. And so through legislation, we regulate behavior. It may be true that legislation cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless; and this must always be done in society. And it is important that we get legislation, and we must continue to work through the courts to get meaningful court orders so we can clarify the law and make it clear that we're moving on.

Right here in the state of Alabama, one thing that I am concerned about now (and I have been talking in the last few days with some of the leaders of this state), it would be tragic indeed if Governor Patterson goes out of office without having to confront the challenge of a court order with Negroes going to integrated schools. *[Applause]* If he goes out of office without facing this *[extended applause]* . . . If he goes out of office not facing this, it will only intensify his arrogance. He will use it for his political aggrandizement and argue for years and years to come that he held off integration his four years in office, and hardly any politician in the state will have the courage to stand up. And I think it is the responsibility of the citizens of this state to get together and get some Negroes who have the courage to go to the University of Alabama and Auburn and some Negroes who will go to the public schools in the state of Alabama so that this will happen. *[Applause]* So we must work through the courts to get these decisions,

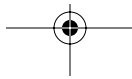


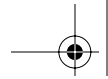


but even after this we must realize that a court order can only declare rights—it can never deliver them. Rights are only delivered when the people themselves begin to act. Rights are only given life-blood, and the people en masse begin to move and to act; and if they don't act, the laws fade into oblivion. And I say that it is necessary for each of you here tonight to be something of individual creative obstetricians presiding at the birth of a new age, acting here and there, sitting-in, standing-in, riding-in or any kind of other "in" that's necessary to make integration a reality in this city and in this nation. *[Applause]* This is the challenge.

In other words, we must supplement what can be done through the courts with nonviolent direct action. I am still convinced that the most powerful weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom and human dignity is the weapon of nonviolence. This is a powerful method. It has a way of disarming the opponent. It exposes his moral defenses. It weakens his morale, and at the same time it works on his conscience. He doesn't know how to handle it. It leaves him frustrated. If he tries to beat you, you develop the power to accept it without retaliating. If he doesn't beat you, fine. If he throws you in jail, you go on in jail and transform the jail from dungeons of shame to havens of freedom and human dignity. *[Applause]* Even if he tries to kill you *[applause continues]* . . . Even if he tries to kill you, you develop the quiet courage of dying if necessary without killing. He doesn't know how to handle it. It leaves him frustrated. This is the power of this method. They know how to handle violence. They are experts in that. The minute we rise up with violence, they can call out the state militia, the National Guard and everything (you don't have a single Negro in the National Guard all over the South). They are experts in violence. *[Applause and mild laughter]*

When you stand up nonviolently, you become something of a creative powerful nonviolent anvil that will wear out many a spiritual hammer, and somehow they do not know how to deal with it. And another thing about it is that it makes it possible for you to struggle to secure moral ends through moral means. You don't have to worry about using immorality to achieve morality, but ends and means begin to cohere. One of the great discussions through philosophical and theological history has been over the whole question of means and ends, and there have been those from Machiavelli on down who argued that the end justifies the means. I think this is the ultimate weakness of communism. This is its ultimate tragedy—it believes that the end justifies the mean [sic], as Lenin used to say, any method (violence, deceit, lying) can be used as justifiable means to achieve the

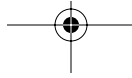


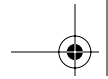


end of the classless society, but this is where nonviolence breaks with communism and any other movement that would argue that the end justified the means; because the end is preexistent in the means. And in the long run of history, destructive means cannot bring about constructive ends. The ends and the means must cohere. And so we can struggle with moral means in order to achieve moral ends. And the other thing about this method is that it says that it is possible for you to resist, stand up against an unjust system with all of your might and all of your strength, and yet you don't have to hate the perpetrators of that unjust system. This is powerful. We don't have to be bitter. We don't have to hate.

There is still a voice crying through the vista of time saying, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." And this is what we can say in our movement: our aim is not to defeat or humiliate the white man but to win his friendship and understanding. We know that the struggle in the South in the final analysis is not between black men and white men, but it is a tension between justice and injustice. It is a struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. And let us say to our white brothers who are so worried about our advance that if there is a victory it will not be a victory merely for twenty million Negroes; but if there is a victory, it will be a victory for justice, a victory for freedom, a victory for democracy, and it will make a better nation for everybody because the pestering sore of segregation debilitates the white man as well as the Negro, and we are struggling to free him. *[Applause]* This is what our movement says. It is a powerful movement. It is a powerful expression, and somehow we come to the point in this nonviolent movement that we can look into the eyes of those who would seek to block our advance for freedom and say something like this: We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, we will still love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. And so throw us in jail, and we will still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children, and we will still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our communities at the midnight hours, and drag us out on some wayside road and beat us and leave us half dead; and as difficult as it is, we will still love you. But be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer.

One day we will win our freedom. We will not only win freedom for ourselves. We will so appeal to your heart and conscience that we will win you in the





process, and our victory will be a double victory. This is our message.

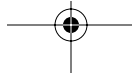
And I say to you as I move toward my conclusion that this method, this approach to the problem is not at all without successful precedent. It was used in a magnificent sense by Mohandas K. Gandhi to free his people from the political domination inflicted upon them by the British Empire, and it has been used in a marvelous way right here in the United States of America by hundreds and thousands of students right here in Huntsville and all over. And they have taken our deep groans and passionate yearnings for freedom and filtered them in their own souls and fashioned them into a creative protest which is an ethic known all over our nation. Whether you realize it or not, as a result of the nonviolent struggles of these students more than 150 cities of the South have integrated their lunch counters. And I say to you that this is nothing less than revolutionary.

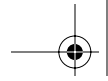
We've also seen this powerful method in the Freedom Rides. Something has come from this Freedom Ride movement that we can all be proud of. We can look around now and see bus terminals integrated all over the South, and with a few scattered examples [sic: King probably meant "exceptions"] in Mississippi and here and there, most of the bus terminals have integrated, and we see a new day developing all over the United States of America all because of this method. And I say with this creative protest we will be able to bring into being this new age.

With all of these working together, we will be able to do something for God's kingdom. And I can only say to you tonight, go out with new, grim and bold determination to make of this community a better community to end the reign of segregation. God needs you. I am not able, and I will never be able, to convince everybody here tonight. Most of you will go back home not convinced that you must struggle for freedom, but if I can just convince a few people here tonight that God needs you. God needs you to work for him to help him make the kingdom a reality.

God needs you now, he needs you at this minute, he needs you at this hour. Who this evening will be a coworker of the Almighty God and set out to get your freedom realizing that freedom is the greatest thing in all the world? It's worth losing a job for. Freedom is worth getting killed for. Maybe before this struggle is over, some will have to get killed. If physical death is the price that some must pay to free their children from a permanent life of psychological death, then nothing can be more redemptive.

Yes, we must come to see once more and sing with our forefathers of old:





O, freedom! O, freedom! Before I'd be a slave,  
 I'll be buried in my grave;  
 And go home to my Father, and be saved.

This is what we need at this hour. It will not be easy. It will be difficult. Before the victory is won, some may have to get scarred up a bit. Before the victory is won, some more will have to go to jail. Before the victory is won, some will be called bad names and misunderstood and dismissed as dangerous rabble-rousers and agitators. Before the victory is won, some will be called communists and Reds simply because they believe in the brotherhood of man. But we must go on with the faith that we will overcome. And we will overcome, because God is on our side. We shall overcome. The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlyle is right: "No lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right: "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right:

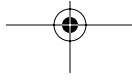
Truth forever on the scaffold,  
 Wrong forever on the throne;  
 Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
 And behind the dim unknown  
 Standeth God within the shadows,  
 Keeping watch above His own.

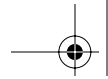
We shall overcome, because the Bible is right: "You shall reap what you sow."

And with this faith, we will be able to go out and bring this new age into being. And this will be the day that we will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty,  
 Of thee, I sing;  
 Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride,  
 From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And this must become literally true all over America. Freedom must ring from every mountainside. And so I say this evening, let it ring from the mighty mountains of New Hampshire. Let it ring from the heightening hills of New York. Let it ring from the prodigious Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let it ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let it ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, from every mountainside let freedom ring. And so let it ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let it ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennes-





see. Let it ring from every hill and molehill of Alabama. From every mountain-side, let freedom ring. And when this happens, all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics—will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

God bless you.

