

"DESEGREGATE AND INTEGRATE TO WHAT END?"

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE



FOUNDER'S DAY ADDRESS

By

DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

FEBRUARY 11, 1964

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We spend millions upon millions, we demonstrate, we sit-in, picket, boycott, go to jail and some have died trying to desegregate and trying to integrate the United States. For what? To what end? The press, the radio and TV have devoted more time to this question in the last ten years than to any other single topic. Congress is wrangling over it. Desegregate and integrate for what?

Here we must distinguish clearly between desegregation and integration. It is strange to me how learned people and scholars have been using integration since 1954 when they really meant desegregation. I think I was first or among the first to cry out against this misuse of the word integration. Desegregation means the absence of segregation.

When the courts opened public schools and universities, golf courses and swimming pools, abolished segregation on dining cars, in inter-state travel, and on buses and abolished the white primary, they were not integrating the facilities. They were desegregating them: When sit-ins, boycotts, and picketing opened restaurants, hotels, and motels, this too was desegregation—not integration. This is also true when a church votes to drop the color bar. The church is desegregating, not integrating. Desegregation means the absence of segregation.

To integrate means to unite together to form "a more complete, harmonious or coordinate entity." It means to organically unify, to form a more perfect entity. In other words, integration means "unification and mutual adjustment of diverse groups or elements into a relatively coordinated and harmonious society and culture."

In an integrated society, fellowship, comradeship, and neighborliness have no limits or boundaries based on nationality, race or color. Associations will be formed mainly in the realm of spiritual, mental, and cultural values. There will be no laws against interracial marriages, and custom will recognize the validity of every man and every woman to marry whomever he or she pleases without any kind of penalty being imposed upon the couple by society. Integration is largely spiritual. It is even possible for a married couple to live in the same house bearing and rearing children, fussing and feuding without ever becoming thoroughly integrated, without ever being unified in their purposes and outlook on life.

Although there is a vast difference between desegregation and integration, desegregation is an indispensable step in the march toward integration. All barriers that keep integration from developing must be destroyed. Desegregation creates the atmosphere, plants the seed, tills

and fertilizes the soil so that integration can sprout and grow in a normal fashion.

Since 1935 when the Appellate Court of the State of Maryland ruled that the University of Maryland had to accept Murray, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee have spent millions upon millions of dollars to get America desegregated. Desegregate and integrate to what end? This is the question.

I hope to develop the thesis that desegregation and integration are not ends in themselves but mere means to ends.

Certainly, the end of desegregation in church and school, in train and plane, on land and sea, in hotel and motel, in employment and recreation, is not to be with white Americans. It is not to give one a false notion of his worth, to make him believe that he has arrived, that he has risen higher in the world, that he, automatically, is more important as a person because he can eat in the finest restaurant, sleep in the swankiest hotel and work side by side with any American and socialize freely. These are not the ends of a desegregated and eventually an integrated society. If these were the ends, they aren't worth the sacrifice. Americans, disguised as communists, intent on overthrowing the United States Government, Nazis, spreading the poison of hate, the members of the Klu Klux Klan, the wealthy who make their millions in the under-world of prostitution, alcoholism, and dope can and do enjoy these luxuries unsegregated and without embarrassment.

Desegregation is not and certainly should not be designed to perpetuate or create an inferiority complex in Negroes or a superiority complex in whites to the end that we feel that desegregation can come about only one way, only if we abolish all banks and insurance companies, all churches and educational institutions, all newspapers and magazines, all businesses and professions built and established with Negro brain and sweat. Rather the aim should be to incorporate everything that is good and everything that is needed into the main stream of American life.

To state the case more positively, the end of desegregation, and eventually integration, should be to unshackle the minds of Negro youth, loose the chain from the Negro's soul, free his heart from fear and intimidation so that he will be able to develop whatever gifts God has given him and share the fruits of his mind and soul with humanity around the globe in the arts and sciences, in the professions and sports, in business and industry, in medicine and law, in music and dance, and in painting and sculpture.

To be unshackled, to improve the mind, to mold the character, to dream dreams, to develop the body, to aspire for greatness or to strive for excellence is the birthright of every child born into the world. And

this birthright is given not by Christianity nor by democracy but by God and by virtue of the fact that the child is born. And no society has the right to smother ambition, to destroy incentive, to stifle growth, to curb motivation, and circumscribe the mind.

To do this to anyone, it seems to me, is an unpardonable sin. And yet we can never know how this nation has allowed potentially great minds, both Negro and white, to go uninspired and uncultivated by providing no schools at all during 246 years of slavery, and since emancipation, until fairly recently, very inadequate schools. How many Joseph Charles Prices, W. E. B. DuBoises, Booker T. Washingtons, George Washington Carvers, Mary McLeod Bethunes, Charles Clinton Spauldings have died without ever having had a chance to develop their minds for the good of the nation? But all this is beside the point. Nothing can be done now to undo the tragic events of history. "The moving finger writes and having writ moves on. Nor all your wit nor piety can lure it back to cancel a half line of it; nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

The individual was born to grow in body, mind and soul—just as the seed is planted to sprout and grow without artificial interference. So the end of desegregation is to free the mind and soul of Negro people so that Negro youth can reach for the stars and grasp after the moon. Some one has beautifully said: "Thank God a man can grow. He is not bound with earthward gaze to creep along the ground, though his beginnings be but poor and low. The fire upon his altar may grow dim, the torch he lighted may in darkness fail and nothing to kindle it avails. But high beyond his dull horizon's rim, Arcturus and the Pleiades beckon him—thank God a man can grow."

We seek to desegregate the south not only to free the Negro's mind but the mind of the white south as well. Prejudice and segregation have contributed their share toward keeping our southland below par both economically and educationally. The time we should have spent developing our economy and utilizing the man power of every Southerner, we have used much of it trying to keep one group down. Desegregation is not only good for the Negro but for the nation.

It is my considered judgment that eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, and prophets have not dreamed what the south has yet to contribute to the nation in mind, heart and spirit once it is freed of its prejudice and fears.

We 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 light house 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; where the poorest will have a job and bread enough and to spare, and where the richest will under-

stand the meaning of empathy. For if democracy cannot function interracially as well as intra-racially in the United States, I fear for its survival in the world. The battle for democracy is being fought out at this very moment in the streets of America and in the Congress of the United States.

We strive to desegregate and integrate America to the end that the Christian Gospel which we preach may become a reality in our time. It is sheer hypocrisy to expound brotherhood and foster caste, to preach Christian fellowship and deny it to certain racial groups because they are Africans or Negroes, to declare a universal church and deny membership to certain groups as if the Church of God were nothing but a private or social club, to expound the sacredness of the human person and give segregated differential treatment in hospitals and clinics, and sheer hypocrisy to worship a God with our lips in whom we do not believe and in whom we do not trust. These are the ends which we seek in our effort to desegregate our country and pave the way for an integrated society.

But along with desegregation and integration go a heavy responsibility. The more we clamor for a desegregated society, and clamor we must, the more obligated we become to carry our full weight in the community, state and nation. All sane men know that coercion of some kind must be applied to uproot entrenched wrongs supported by law, custom and religion. It is clear as day that most of the social changes that have come about recently came through court action or some kind of demonstrations.

But you, my dear young friends, must remember that there is no substitute for academic excellence. There is no dichotomy in the Civil Rights struggle. Although Hamilton Holmes did not sit-in and demonstrate in Atlanta, and did not go to jail, yet it was just as essential for the Civil Rights struggle that Holmes sat-in in the laboratories and libraries at the University of Georgia, the first Negro to enter, graduating with membership in the Phi Beta Kappa. That too is a part of the Civil Rights struggle. It was necessary to get many of the hotels and restaurants in Atlanta opened to Negroes through demonstrations. But it was also important to get Leroy Johnson elected Senator in Georgia and Rufus E. Clement elected to the Atlanta School Board. This too is a part of the Civil Rights struggle. We must continue to struggle for Civil Rights until America is what she claims to be. But it is also important to have Carl Rowan, Ambassador to Finland, now Director of U.S. Information Service. This too is a part of the Civil Rights struggle.

The color bar at the University of Mississippi had to be broken and federal marshals had to be used to keep Meredith there, but it is equally important for the Civil Rights cause that Bob Weaver is the Head of the Housing and Home Finance Agency and that a South Carolina Negro is a member of the Supreme Court of the State of New York and that a Negro is Attorney General of the State of Massachu-

setts. It isn't either or, it is both and Civil Rights and Academic Excellence.

Desegregation and eventually integration present a special challenge to Negroes and especially to Negro youth. No allowance will be made for our shortcomings because for 246 years our ancestors were slaves and for another 100 years we were enslaved again through segregation by law and by custom. No allowance will be made for our poverty in that the average income of the Negro family is only about 55% of that of the average white family. When competence is needed in science, whether in Government, industry or education, no allowance will be made for the inferior schools Negroes have had to attend for decades upon decades. The only comment you will hear: "Negroes are not qualified. They failed the test." When a man of experience is needed to fill a certain post, no allowance will be made for the fact that the Negro has never been given a chance to get the kind of experience needed for that job. He will be passed by and the only comment—"No Negro could be found with the proper qualifications."

What am I trying to say? I am trying to tell you with every ounce of my 177 pounds that you, with low income, poor academic backgrounds before college, unfortunate home conditions, handicapped ancestors for 3½ centuries—you are now required to compete in the open market with those who have been more favorably circumstanced than you for several centuries. Our inadequacies will be printed in the press, flashed over the radio and screened on TV. Nobody will explain the reason for our shortcomings.

What can you do? You can blame it on the past, but it will do no good. You can accuse the environment, but this will not change your conditions. You can curse and rave only to develop ulcers. You can wring your hands and cry only to find that nobody is moved by your tears.

What can you do? There is only one thing you can do as new opportunities open up to you. You can accept as valid the Chinese proverb: "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." The only thing left for a poor man to do to overcome his poverty is to find a good job, work hard and save. The only thing a sick man can do to gain health is to follow the doctor's advice and be sensible. The illiterate man who would overcome his ignorance must burn the midnight oil and study long and hard.

Such is your plight and mine. For he who starts behind in the great race of life must forever remain behind or run faster than the man in front. The man who is handicapped by circumstances over which he had no control must work harder than the man who had no such handicaps to overcome. Deprived of the best schools, reared in homes economically below standard, denied the opportunity to read good books in elementary and high schools, robbed of the opportuni-

ties to qualify for the best jobs, you are, almost overnight, challenged to meet the toughest competition of the modern world.

Whether we like it or not, we must read more and socialize less, study more and frolic less, do more research and play less, write books and articles and become recognized in our respective fields. It is better by far to be known by the articles we write than by the bridge we play; by the books we publish than by the house we live in. It is better to have our students rave about our great teaching than about our beautiful cars. It is better to have our colleagues envious of our scholarship and research than of our houses and land.

I am sure Marian Anderson is economically secure but Marion Anderson will be known not by her wealth but by her songs. John Fitzgerald Kennedy was a millionaire. But he got into history not by his millions but because he taught America that if things need to be changed we don't have to wait a hundred years to change them, we can change them now. Nobody cares how Socrates dressed.—whether he wore shoes or walked barefooted. But the name of Socrates is immortalized. Nobody cares how Mahatma Gandhi dressed or rode—half-naked or third class. History will claim him as one of the great men of all times.

Jesus was a despised Jew and a carpenter but he is known as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Nobody thinks of George Washington's wealth. He is the father of his country. Nobody worries about Lincoln's poverty, he is the great emancipator. Shakespeare is known by Hamlet and Macbeth, Milton by Paradise Lost. Darwin by the origin of the species, W. E. B. DuBois by the Souls of Black Folk, James Weldon Johnson by God's Trombones, Booker T. Washington by Tuskegee and Joseph Charles Price by Livingstone. Let me ask you with what will your name be associated in the years ahead?

Alumni, faculty and friends, we have assembled here today to celebrate the 85th Anniversary of the founding of Livingstone College and to pay homage to that good and great man, Joseph Charles Price. We have every right to rejoice and be glad. The A.M.E. Zion Church has a right to rejoice and be happy. The alumni, faculty and students can walk these grounds with dignity and pride. The accomplishments of your graduates are outstanding. Your history is noteworthy.

But I must tell you that Livingstone in order to be true to its past, to the sacrifices the church has made and in order to be true to its founder, Joseph Charles Price, greater things than these, Livingstone must do. Livingstone cannot live on the reputation of its deceased and contemporary alumni, as great as that reputation is. Each graduating class must produce its share of distinguished men and women. The truth of the matter is, that in order to be as great as former Livingstone graduates, you must be greater and in order to accomplish as much as they, you must accomplish more.

I must also tell you that Livingstone's future, as all private colleges similarly circumstanced, is not guaranteed in the stars. The future of the private college is no easy road. Every private college must fight for its life and in the battle for survival, the competition is ruthless and at times unethical. Though adorned in polite English, fluent speech, college degrees, and a veneer of Christian piety, mankind is still a rather selfish animal.

The Livingstone of tomorrow will not be the Livingstone of yesterday. Livingstone more and more will be competing with every college and university in the United States for the best students. Livingstone more and more will be competing with every college and university in the United States for the best teachers. Livingstone more and more will be competing with every college and university in the United States for money from the same millionaires, the same foundations and the same corporations. Only the Livingstone alumni and the A.M.E. Zion Church will be your exclusive domain. I predict that your future health will depend largely upon the increasing support you will get from these two sources—alumni and Church.

As desegregation gives us larger and larger opportunities, let us not forget that these bring with them larger responsibilities. Negroes, under crippling conditions, have done exceedingly well, but not well enough to pass. We have not been accepted into the main stream of American life. We have not yet made our case in politics, business and education. The confidence we need in all these areas is not yet there. And yet the Negro's future in America is brighter than ever before. I look to the future with the courage and hope of Tennyson in Ulysses " 'Tis not too late to build a newer world—push off, and sitting, well in order, smite the sounding furrows; for my purpose holds to sail beyond the sunset and the paths of all the western stars until I die." It may be that the gulfs will wash us down. It may be that we shall touch the Happy Isles and see the Great Achilles whom we knew. Though much is taken, much abides; and though we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are.

"One equal temper of heroic hearts, make weak by time and fate, but strong in will.

"To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."