

March 22, 1956

PERSONAL



Dear Billy:

I have been urgently thinking about the matters we discussed in our conversation the day before yesterday. I refer particularly to that part of our talk that dealt with the opportunity open to ministers of promoting both tolerance and progress in our race relations problems. I think we agreed, for example, that they could discuss the mounting evidence of steady progress toward elimination of racial difficulties, even though all reasonable men appreciate that eventual and complete success will not be attained for some years. Ministers know that peacemakers are blessed; they should also know that the most effective peacemaker is one who prevents a quarrel from developing, rather than one who has to pick up the pieces remaining after an unfortunate fight.

As I told you, my mind constantly turns to the ease with which effective steps might be taken in the adult as compared to the juvenile field. Of course the kind of evidence that we should like to see pile up is the kind that would convince Federal District judges in the several localities that progress is real. All of us realize, I think, that success through conciliation will be more lasting and stronger than could be attained through force and conflict.

Certain questions occur to me that might be worth your consideration:

- a. Could we not begin to elect a few qualified Negroes to school boards?
- b. The same to City Commissioners?
- c. The same to County Commissioners?

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- d. Could not universities begin to make entrance into their graduate schools strictly on the basis of merit -- the examinations to be conducted by some Board which might even be unaware of the race or color of the applicant?

- e. Could there be introduced flexible plans for filling up public conveyances so that we do not have the spectacle of Negroes in considerable numbers waiting for a ride on a public conveyance, while numerous seats are held vacant for possible white customers?

It would appear to me that things like this could properly be mentioned in a pulpit. Another thought that occurs to me is that you might express some admiration for the Catholic Archbishop, Joseph Francis Rummel, in Louisiana, who had the courage to desegregate his parochial schools. Such approval on your part would not necessarily imply that the same thing could be done in all schools and without delay. You would merely be pointing out that in a special case, and under the strict supervision possible in privately supported schools, one man had the courage to give this kind of integration a good trial to determine the results.

Likewise there could be approval expressed concerning the progress made in certain areas in the border States, and in all other areas in the South where any type of advance at all has been effected. Thus these things would be called to the attention of Federal judges, who themselves would be inclined to operate moderately and with complete regard for the sensibilities of the population.

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This letter does not require an answer; it is merely some thoughts that have occurred to me on the subject. It constitutes gratuitous advice -- and is probably worth exactly what all that kind of advice usually is.

With warm personal regard,

Sincerely,

The Reverend Billy Graham
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Washington, D. C.