“The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — Visit to Philadelphia”


Sound intermittent, begins at 00:45

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: Want me to outline them for you?
CROWD: Yes!

MLK: Number one: Negroes in Philadelphia live in segregated housing conditions, just like Negroes in the South! [Applause, shouts] And whenever you segregate a minority, you can discriminate against that minority. The minute you segregate a man, you have the key in your hand that would open the door to discrimination. And so when you get people off in ghettos, what happens? You give them the worst houses, and they pay higher rent for those houses than other people! [Applause, shouts] Now you know that—that housing problem brings about another problem. It messes up out schools. You know it’s a strange thing about life—God made it that way, though, and I’m glad he did. He put an interrelated structure to reality. You can’t hold a man down in the valley without staying down there with him to keep him there! [Applause, shouts]

[Long pause in audio]

TOM SNYDER: Dr. King, when you came here you said that you were coming to take a look at the problems in Philadelphia. What do you see as the problems, sir?
MLK: Well I see these problems as problems that exist in all of the major big cities of our nation. They are problems of housing, segregation, ghettoized housing, and slums that we face in these areas. And there is the problem of de facto segregation in the public schools, which is a very serious problem. And then problem of employment discrimination, and the fact that the Negro is still at the bottom of the economic ladder. I think this economic problem may be the greatest problem that the Negro faces at this hour, because without the economic under-girding, it is almost impossible to function as a citizen in the mainstream of American life.

TS: In your talks with local leaders here in Philadelphia, Dr. King, have you made any recommendations about Girard College and settling our controversy there?

MLK: Well, I have said over and over again that there’s nothing to do but to continue the struggle, and to continue to keep the issue before the forefront of the conscience of the community. Certainly this problem is symbolic of the same problem that we face in the South. Segregation is not only unconstitutional, but it is ungodly and sinful. And I have urged the committee to continue their activities around the wall, in order to keep the issue out in the open, and before the conscience of the community. To the community, I go in with a unifying philosophy, and a unifying approach, and I certainly feel that in Philadelphia we have that unity now, and I think all of the forces will be working together.

TS: Dr. King, thank you very, very much, sir. Good-bye.

CECIL B. MOORE: There’s one thing from the mountains of West Virginia: we never quit, and we never surrender. But I think it’s only
a jackass that never recognizes the very, very principles that he’s
fighting for, the man from down home’s fighting for, too. [Applause,
shouts] Because whenever things were said, we said it about some
people that were against us, because we also want you to say that you
might be against us, and we hope that you won’t sabotage. But we are
going to repeat the same things we said yesterday, because when you
left down home, you never escaped from these white folks. When you
left those little shotgun houses and those little pea patches—

[Long pause in audio]

[Crowd shouting and cheering]

MLK: My good friend Cecil Moore, to all of my friends and coworkers
seated here on the rostrum, my brothers and sisters of the city of
Philadelphia: I stand at this spot today with mixed emotions. On the
one hand, I’m thrilled to stand here. I’m enthralled to stand here, and
notice you assembled in our presence by the thousands and the
thousands, and see your glad outpouring, the deep longings and
aspirations for freedom palpitating in your hearts. But on the other
hand—[skip]—just as I see it on the international level, I see it in our
own struggle! We don’t need to hate anybody. I’ve seen too much
hate! As I look in the faces of my white brothers all over this nation,
whether they be the Jim Clarks or the Bull Connors of the South, I
look in their eyes and say in substance, “I love you. I would rather die
than hate you.” Hate is too great a burden to bear. The psychiatrists
are telling us now that many of the inner conflicts, many of the
strange things that happen in the subconscious, are rooted in hate, and
they now say, “Love or perish.” Well, Jesus told us about that a long
time ago! Now I can still hear his words echoing across the centuries:
Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that
despitefully use you. And he wasn’t talking about a weak love. He
wasn’t talking about an affection emotion. It’s nonsense to urge
oppressed people to love their violent oppressors on an affectionate
sense. There are a lot of people I don’t like. I don’t like Senator
Eastland of Mississippi. I don’t like Senator Spennis [?] of
Mississippi. I don’t even like my Senator from Georgia—

[End of audio]