

**Call number: 00-00-95 SIDE B**

**Baccalaureate and Commencement, 5/17-18/1970.**

**Summary created by: Summer Dougherty**

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**Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master and circulation copies on CD.**

**Series: University of Alaska Fairbanks commencement addresses and exercises**

Organ music for the first 5 minutes.

A prayer is said. He speaks of a rising counterculture. He prays for meaning and understanding. The choir sings.

A man speaks. He states he will dispense with the usual congratulatory remarks to the Board of Regents. He does, however, wish to thank Dr. Wood and the Board of Regents for permitting him to be present at the event today. He says that is going to be the nicest thing he will say today. He certainly will not compliment the young ladies or the matron in their midst for it would be impolite, tactless and presumptuous for someone to throw a bouquet of flowers into such a lovely garden of roses.

This, the speaker says, is a day of memories, action and hope. He speaks of good and bad memories students have from their university experience. He says this is the era of the intelligent student and the wise individual. He speaks of how the students will respond to issues that demand action. He says the three Rs are not reading, writing, arithmetic but invention, reconstruction, and reaffirmation of the essential ingredients of personal decency, integrity and honesty. He hopes the students know the difference between revolt, rebellion and revolution

The speaker tells the students not to think of his speech as a sermon. He says there has been too many preachers and too much of preachment and not enough of action. There has been too much mouthing of epic prayers to a great nothingness instead of a private confrontation and conversation with a great everything.

As a clergyman, he feels, he would like to discuss some dangers confronting the church. He says a Gallup poll last year posed the question, "Has religion proved effective or ineffective?" Seventy percent of respondents said they felt the religion was ineffective, compared with fourteen percent who gave that answer ten years ago. He believes they were wrong to use the word "religion", but should have used the word "church". The speaker says everyone is religious, whether they go to church or not, whether they are associated with a crumbling institution or not.

The speaker encourages the graduates to go out into the world with an open mind, to belong to the great wrecking crew called "doubt" and to use every battering ram that they can man. The superstructures will be knocked down but the bedrock remains. The speaker says doubt is healthy in all fields of thinking. Never lose it! (With one exception: never doubt your husband or wife.)

The speaker doesn't think we should have any veneration for old mistakes and or any admiration for ancient lies within the church. A lot of wrecking is going on today. It is good to destroy these buildings,

to destroy many of these temples and many of these superstructures. It is not good, though, to leave the shards, the debris, the ruins where they fall. The debris must be cleared and a new edifice must be built upon the foundation of solid bedrock.

There is a Latin inscription on the obelisk erected to the memory of the first governor of Plymouth Colony, Governor Bradford. What our forefathers with so much difficulty secured, let us not basely relinquish (*qua patres difficillime adepti sunt nolite turpiter relinquere*). The speaker says if this was all he were to say today, it would be enough.

Love, he says, and the use of force are not necessarily contradictory terms and elements. He urges the graduates to find the truly wise man's balance between renunciation and self-indulgence. Learn to know what is irrelevant and what is essential. Know the meaning and purpose of obedience and discipline. Discipline comes from within one's self and obedience comes from without.

He speaks of the philosophy and crucifixion of Jesus. He rails against indifference and the attempt to use reason alone. He recites a poem to the graduating class. It is a slightly altered version of "To my former co-workers, employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Milwaukee, Wis." written by D.E.Sullivan, though he does not give the author credit.):

As I roam here and there, ere my journey's end,  
May I always find friends just as true,  
May Dame Fortune in Kindness my daily path bend  
To a group of young men and women like you.

I find in this life that we get what we give,  
We are done to, forsooth, as we do,  
And my prayer is that I may live while I live  
With a group of young men and women like you.

There's a glint in your eye, there's a clasp in your hand,  
There's a tone in your voice ever new,  
I think Paradise must be some sort of land  
With a group of young people like you.

Here's a toast to your health, to your joy, your success,  
For I sometimes wonder if the folk of your kind are too few;  
But yet there is something to hearten, to gladden, and bless,  
In a bunch of people like you.

So I pledge you again, and can only say this-  
And it springs from a sentiment true;  
I shall always regret the hours, the days and the months I must miss,  
From a group of fine young people like you.

He finishes his speech saying "Go you with God" in Spanish, "Vaya usted con Dios" and "Amen". Another speaker says a prayer. The choir sings "Amen". The organ plays.