
ANDREW GOODMAN - 1943-1964

[Eulogies Delivered at the Funeral Services of Andrew Goodman,
August 9, 1964
At the Meetinghouse of the Society For Ethical Culture]



ANDREW GOODMAN • 1943-1964

He travelled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with his honour.

August 5, 1964

The passage of many weeks of uncertainty has ended in the knowledge of the murder of our son Andrew Goodman and his companions, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner. Hope, slim though it was, has passed away and a painful certainty has come.

Our grief, though personal, belongs to our nation. This tragedy is not private. It is part of the public conscience of our country.

It is necessary, especially in such a time of agony, to confront ourselves with our own history and the social sickness that still remains long after "the binding together of our nation's wounds" that was our Civil War.

The values our son expressed in his simple action of going to Mississippi are still the bonds that bind this nation together—its Constitution, its law, its Bill of Rights.

Whenever and wherever part of a people mock our heritage, as has now again been done, we must respond with the full power and strength of our heritage.

The solution of this crime and punishment of those who have committed it is necessary as part of the process that will enable this nation to endure.

Throughout our history, countless Americans have died in the continuing struggle for equality. We shall continue to work for this goal and we fervently hope that Americans so engaged will be aided and protected in this noble mission.

For ourselves, we wish to express our pride in our son's commitment and that of his companions now dead; and that of his companions now alive, now in Mississippi, acting each hour to express those truths that are self-evident.

In Washington four weeks ago, my wife and I in a sense made a pilgrimage to the Lincoln Memorial in the evening, and stood in that great shrine looking down past the Washington Monument toward the soft glow of the light around the White House. Full of the awe of a great nation that surrounded us, we turned to read, emblazoned in black letters on the white marble: "It is for us the living to dedicate ourselves that these dead shall not have died in vain."

Robert Goodman

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON

August 7, 1964

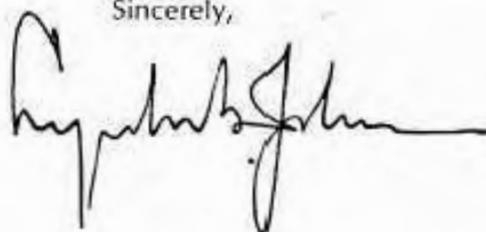
Dear Mr. and Mrs. Goodman:

Although no one can truly appreciate the utter desolation of parents who have lost a child—and particularly one just barely beginning adulthood—we are at least able to share some of the sorrow and grief. I am certain, however, that there must be some measure of comfort in the knowledge that your son, Andrew, lost his life in a cause that he believed in and which is truly significant in the affairs of mankind.

I can assure you that the Federal Government's efforts to apprehend those who are responsible for this terrible crime will be intensified, and I am confident they will be found.

Mrs. Johnson joins me in extending our deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Lyndon B. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goodman
161 West 86th Street
New York, New York

We are gathered here in a funeral service for Andrew Goodman.

We are people of all faiths: Christian and Jew and other faiths, and people of all colors. We are all of one life, of a common origin, of a common destiny on this planet. Whatever there is of good and evil in life, we share it together. We owe it to one another to make life sweet, not bitter.

This is a funeral which is joined with two other funerals of two other young Americans. These three funerals are part of a number of funerals that were never held, of those who have died in the cause of freedom—race equality, freedom and equality for all men, regardless of color and regardless of creed.

In one sense this service is very personal. No one can know the agony of parents who raise a child, who bring a son into the world, who rear him, who see him as a beautiful person—gifted, with great promise, with a warm heart—and then see him cut down. No one can know this agony except those who have experienced it. But we all join in trying in some way to share this grief because it is also our grief. The blow that was struck at the body of this young man was a blow struck at the body of all of us—the heart of all of us—and the wounds cry out and ask, "Where is the conscience of this nation? Where is the decency? Where is the kindness? Where is the courage? Where is the integrity of the American people?"

We meet with a sense of shame, a sense of horror, that there should be such prejudice, bigotry, hatred, cruelty, brutality, ruthless violence, against unarmed, young Americans—not in some other country, but here, under the protection of the Constitution, the courts, the federal system of this democracy—the tragedy of a young life cut down. We are not just speaking of death here, we are speaking of life, because a life is not measured just in years, in length of time; the life of a man is measured by his acts, his feelings, his thoughts, his consecration, the quality of his life; and this is a proud death. This is a very proud death. It is based on unweary love of man for man; and we all desperately need the message of his life, the contagion of his faith, and the courage that he had to go and do, in that situation of danger, the things that needed to be done because he believed in the rights of his fellow men as well as of his own.

Four friends will speak at this funeral service. The first is Martin Popper, attorney and friend of the family; and then Ralph Engelman and Barbara Jones, friends of Andrew; and then Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld, of Cleveland, a close friend of the family. They will speak after one another, without interruption, and then I will close the meeting.

For those of us whose involvement in Andy's martyrdom is deeply personal, the pain has been all but overwhelming. But Bobby and Carolyn and Jonny and David have given us so much of their love and strength that we have been helped to escape the futility of despair.

Through this period of unalleviated strain, and despite the growing shadows of hopelessness, they have retained a perspective and dignity which has sustained us all.

In subordinating personal anguish to the compelling urgency of arousing the nation's conscience, Bobby and Carolyn have made a lasting impression upon the millions who have seen and heard them and upon the leaders of our government.

By their example, we who are their friends are able now, as we *must*, to transmute our private grief into some larger focus more worthy of Andy's legacy to America.

It seems like an eternity since Andy disappeared. In truth it is an eternity. For if time is measured by change, we have witnessed in these few weeks one of those rare and searing events in history which so affects the relations among men that succeeding generations will honor it as a milestone in the tortuous, yet wonderful and never-ending, quest for human brotherhood.

The reverence in which Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner are held will never cease to grow. Their deeds and their sacrifice will become an integral part of the culture of our nation: its literature, its songs, its monuments—and even part of its legend. People who do not yet know their names call them the "civil-rights workers." The phrase is already part of the American language, like "abolitionist" and "underground railroad."

Our children's children's children will identify with Andy and will hold up his life as proof to the world that "even in days gone by" we Americans were a people who believed in equality. Whether that assertion will be legend or fact depends upon whether we dedicate ourselves to Andy's cause.

What moved Andy to such greatness? Perhaps it was the knowledge that a hundred years after the Emancipation, white America is still living a terrible lie; that the injustice, deprivation and degradation it continues to impose upon Negro citizens is unforgivable; and that unless we hold out our hands and offer our hearts and minds now, our Negro fellow Americans will so lose faith in us that all of us, Negro and white, will find ourselves living too long in a divided and mutilated country, despising each other and ourselves and being despised by the rest of the world.

But these truths which so disturbed Andy are also evident to many others. Therefore it had to be more than just his knowledge.

It must have come from a deeper source: an instinct for justice beyond that of most men, a greater sensitivity for the hurts of others, a stronger passion to set things right—or a blending of all these and other qualities which, when they were combined with a living curiosity and a knowledge of the world he lived in, added up to the making of a hero—the kind of hero who, because he responded to the call of the most oppressed of his fellows, gathered strength from them and, in so doing, moved the world.

Because of Andy there are the beginnings of hope among the Negro people that we may yet fulfill our moral, economic and social obligations to them.

Because of Andy's commitment, thousands of white Americans are searching themselves at long last, and many have even begun the process which, when it is repeated and repeated again by many more, will finally make us a better and wiser country.

I know of nothing that has happened in our country for over a century that has the quality, and therefore the particular significance, of the deaths we mourn here and the men we honor here. Not since the Abolitionists cried out against slavery have Negro and white Americans been so bound together in life and death as Andy and his two companions. Because of them, Mississippi will never be the same again, and therefore America will never be the same again.

From all over this country, the flower of Andy's generation is following in his path—in Mississippi, in New York, everywhere—the light is beginning to shine in this blessed land.

It is sad that a cause needs dying for to make people understand its worth. But it is so. And if there were no one like Andy, life would not be worth living.

Andy has given us all a chance we did not have before—to build the kind of world he saw in the stars.

Nothing we do or fail to do can change his immortality. Now we have only ourselves to count upon to justify his faith in us.

Although I was perhaps Andy's closest friend, I do not speak for Andy. He always spoke for himself. It was one of his finest qualities. I can only speak about Andy, and try to state a just tribute and farewell not only to a martyr but also to a best friend.

We are a generation which does not know of the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, the concentration camps and World War II. And we live in an age which often uses euphemisms to obscure rather than describe human suffering, and which sometimes appears to know how to use the word idealism only in a sarcastic sense.

Andy was one of those individuals—rare in any generation—who are not satisfied with the wisdom and success they more or less inherit but do not have to struggle to achieve themselves.

Andy's decision to go to Mississippi was the result of a simple ability to perceive and feel the reality of the social evil which pervades our society. And for Andy the step from conviction to action, made quietly but firmly, came naturally.

On the eve of his departure for Oxford, Ohio, Andy not only was conscious of the danger which awaited him, but also spoke with equal concern about the special risk being taken by Mississippi Negroes who would remain when the summer project was over. This was characteristic of Andy.

In going to Mississippi, Andy risked not only death but dying in vain. Whether the most important and publicized domestic crisis since President Kennedy's assassination will quickly disappear from the public consciousness or whether it will become a small watershed in American history remains to be seen. But the significance Andy's sacrifice will assume in the years to come will be a sure barometer of the fate of the cause for which he gave his life.

Andy has retaught us an old truth: that although we live and die alone, our personal happiness and destinies are inextricably linked; that none of us is free unless all are free; that we must demand not only comfort but also justice; and that there will always exist those superior souls such as Andy to remind us of these truths.

When, far from home, I first learned of Andy's disappearance, my first reaction was to tell everyone around me that I knew Andy and to describe him, as if by doing so I could translate into human reality a name in *The New York Times*, because, I thought at that moment, Andy does not belong to the news media and certainly not to history, but to me as a friend.

The friendship, the love, of two young men is a nonsentimental, elusive kind of thing, but it can cut very deep. There were a thousand

little but important things that were ours alone, and a part of me died with Andy.

One of the things I liked best about Andy was that when he was angry or ill at ease or happy, it was always beautifully obvious. I will miss forever that unique combination of good-naturedness, of an ability to laugh with abandon and that intense seriousness and introspection that was Andy. I will especially miss his laugh.

Then there was an Andy I think none of us knew—or, rather, an Andy we were just beginning to get to know.

Why should a future exist for me and not for Andy? Am I turning away from Andy when I look to the future? No, I cannot experience only rage and despair, if only because I would thereby repudiate the very hope Andy embodied. Andy's life is above all the victory of a human being, and of two parents and a family, a school, and also a society.

It was the most painful moment of my life when I left Andy's home and his parents after my first visit since his disappearance, yet we did not feel as if we had lost Andy completely.

"And then I heard the door," William Faulkner wrote, "and it was as if he had not been. No, not that; not *not been*, but rather *no more is*, since what remains always and forever, inexplicable and immune, which is its grief. That's what I mean; a dimension less, then a substance less, then the sound of a door and then, not *never been* but simply *no more is* since always and forever that what remains...."

If I do not speak for Andy, I would like to address my final words to Andy.

Andy—the world will never seem exactly the same without you; I will cherish the moments we spent together, and you will always remain important to me. I will draw upon you in the future. Because you once existed, I will never be quite the same. Perhaps our nation will never be quite the same. For although, like a pebble thrown into a lake, you are no longer with us, we can never be sure where the ripples spreading over the water will end.

I've never been to Mississippi, but I know the horror that is there. I know it because I'm a Negro and I've been told all my life that Mississippi is the worst place for Negroes to live. I know it because I work for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and my friends and coworkers are working there, and have been beaten there, have been jailed there, and now even died there. I like to talk about Mississippi because Andy was killed there, because Andy responded to the call for summer volunteers to go to Mississippi to participate in a program which we hoped would open the closed society that is Mississippi, hoped that it would provide a breakthrough in this society.

It seems strange to me that Andy went to Mississippi, because when I first met him, he was engrossed in his theatrical career, and I didn't know him too well. I knew him the way I knew a lot of kids at school—someone you sit in the cafeteria with, you talk with, have coffee with. The last term, Andy was in my class, and he expressed interest in the summer project. I gave him his application and some more information, and from then on we became closer.

I remember two things more vividly than anything else. One was his back, because I sat behind Andy in class; and I would secretly read those accounts of harassment and the laws that Mississippi was passing during the spring, and I would look and I would wonder would he and the other summer volunteers survive. Second I remember the preorientation session that was held for the project volunteers from Queens College, and I told them that they could die and they'd probably be beaten and jailed, and the strange thing is that they went anyway, and they were told this over and over and over again. Because all of us knew that someone was going to die or something dreadful was going to happen, and we pleaded with the government and we pleaded with everyone we could to send protection there, and we still are pleading, but there was no response, or not in time.

It's hard to articulate why these kids went anyway, even knowing that these things were going to happen, but I think they went because they felt the overriding sense of wrongness of segregation and hate and oppression, and I think they felt that they could end this in some small way this summer. And I think also that they went because they knew of the sufferings of thousands of Negroes in the Deep South which could be alleviated if all of us were just a little bit more concerned and if some more of us had gone down this summer, and continue to go down.

I also speak of Mississippi because to me only in this context, in the place where Andy died, can we find meaning for the death that they

suffered; they were part of the movement in Mississippi, the movement to make democracy a reality. But their deaths have another meaning for us: that we go on, that we continue in the movement, that we don't stop, and we don't really cry and feel sorry for ourselves; but that we, the friends and relatives of Andy and Chaney and Mickey, continue to fight and hold on.

Lately, whenever I think of these dead men, I remember a song we sing in the movement which gives me strength and direction. "The only chain that a man can stand is the chain of hand in hand. Keep your eyes on the prize and hold on, hold on, hold on. Keep your eyes on the prize and hold on. Just hold on and keep on."

My dear Carolyn, dear Bob, Jonathan, David, dear friends of Andrew Goodman and of human freedom:

There are two levels to our grief today; paradoxically, the two are one. First and foremost, inevitably we grieve for a precious individual, for potentialities unfulfilled, for a beloved son, a youth filled with gallant concern for man, for human rights. You have told me, my dear friends, about the rare blend of tenderness and of manliness that marked his unfolding years, of his intellectual curiosity, of his search for meaning, for significance; and nothing we can say here this morning can eradicate your pain or restore your loss.

But the tragedy of Andrew Goodman cannot be separated from the tragedy of mankind. The word which Jewish tradition speaks at moments such as this is the word

—"May his soul be bound up in the bond of all the living."

And this is how, from now on, we shall see Andrew Goodman—bound up in the bond of all the living—for he, with James Chaney and with Michael Schwerner, has become an eternal evocation of all the host of rare and beautiful young men and women who are carrying forward that struggle to which Andy and his companions gave their lives, who patiently instruct the old and the young in their citizenship rights, who offer fellowship to those who have been dispossessed and who, as they go from door to door and porch to porch, or sit and teach in freedom schools, or follow the labyrinth of Mississippi voter-registration traps, offering kindness and in self-identification the assurance most needed by any one of us, the assurance to that ennobled and wonderful Negro community of Mississippi, that they are not alone.

Not one of these young people who are walking the streets of Hattiesburg or Camden or Laurel or Gulfport or Greenville, not one of them, and certainly neither Andy nor James nor Michael, would have us in resentment or vindictiveness add to the store of hatred in the world. They pledged themselves in the way of nonviolence. They learned how to receive blows, not how to inflict them. They were trained to bear hurts, not to retaliate. Theirs is the way of love and constructive service.

I've heard many, speaking deeply out of the metaphors of Christianity, describe that way of love as the way of the cross; I've heard William Stringfellow speak of the destruction, of the inevitable doom that awaits us in this struggle, and expound the view that service inevitably brings sacrifice. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Andy, like his parents, like his brothers, was a proud and self-ac-

cepting Jew. The tradition out of which he came uses different words, but knows as surely and as intimately the fact that martyrdom is an ever-possible crown for genuine conviction.

We speak of those who give their lives that the Divine Presence may be made manifest among men. Our tradition assures us that it is far better to be among the persecuted and the pursued than to be the persecutor or the pursuer. Your response, dear Carolyn and Bob, has been a response in that spirit, a response that the work of redemption must go forward. The workers of the Council of Federated Organizations in Mississippi echo this determination. They provide, in their continuing endeavor, a living and dynamic memorial as they struggle to help a whole people win its way from bondage to freedom.

There are those, the rabbis assure us, who earn the kingdom in an hour, for a life is not judged by its length. Andy, who will be part of all that is swift and loving and brave and beautiful forever, won his kingdom in an hour. To die in a cause so pure is to transcend all life experience. To assume the risks so knowingly and so willingly is to rise above all that is craven, sordid, limiting.

Andrew Goodman assumed the risk of his service in full knowledge of what he was doing, for he wrote, "People must have dignity and identity," and he added, "The road to freedom is uphill and arduous," and so it is; and in continuing devotion and in fellowship with Andrew Goodman we say, "We shall overcome."

—May his soul be bound up in the bond of all the living.

Amen.

I think everyone who has experienced the thought and the feeling expressed here must have a sense of responsibility. It's very easy for us to blame other people for the ills of the world. It's very nice to talk about the other man's conscience or his lack of citizenship, or how people have been silent and indifferent and apathetic. It's very easy to criticize others for the ills of the world and for the evil that made this death. But if we're honest, and if we really have got the inner message of those who have spoken here this morning with such sincerity and depth of feeling, then each of us walks out of here with a responsibility.

The young people who are working in the South to help people learn to read and write, to help people pass the test for voting, to help people have the courage to go and register, despite the danger—those young people know about this funeral this morning. They know that we are gathered here in tribute to Andrew Goodman; they know about the funeral that was held at Meridian, where people who call themselves Christians threw refuse at those who came to express their love and their respect for the dead—for young Chaney.

The young people today in Mississippi and Alabama and other places in the South, they know about the service to be held tonight; they know that they depend for their very life on us. They went down there trusting in America's promises; they trusted in the conscience of people; they weren't asking whether you were Jew, Catholic or Protestant, Negro or White, Republican or Democrat, rich or poor; they were trusting the people of America to stand back of them as they went, unarmed, for the values they think made the world worth living in and without which they don't want to live and without which men have no respect; so there's a responsibility on every one of us and you can't walk out of it. It means keeping the light of publicity on this.

There are men who think they can kill and hide it, that the truth will never come out; but we live in a time when the truth comes out and people face it. But if it doesn't come out and it isn't faced, then their life and their sacrifice is in vain. The news services have responsibilities. The government has responsibilities. But these and other agencies will not do their job unless we, the people, demand it of them; and it means, also, money; and it means educating ourselves out of our own prejudices, that America may survive in freedom.

So the question is not whether Andrew Goodman is dead; the question is whether we are dead or whether through his life and death we come alive. Wherever Negro and white stand up together, there will be the spirit of these three young men and all those who work for

the fulfillment of their dream of democracy for all men. Wherever Negro and white fight for one another's rights, as for their own; wherever they break bread together, heal one another, teach one another, open doors for one another, enjoy life as neighbors, love one another; wherever this thing happens between us, there his spirit will live; and it's got to happen for every one of us personally—somehow or other to break down the wall, to let in the light that will make this world a fair place to live in and mean that this sacrifice is not in vain.

As we go from this place, may we remember that we would like it said of us, as we say of this dear son and brother and dear, dear friend, He is loved in his life and he has left undying love behind him at his death. He has made a great gift of his own precious lifeblood to the cause of freedom. May his kindness, his integrity, his courage and his love be a blessing in the life of every one of us to the end of our days.

ANDREW GOODMAN

COROLLARY TO A POEM BY A. E. HOUSMAN

How dismally the day
Screams out and blasts the night.
What disaster you will say,
To start another fight.

See how heaven shows dismay
As her stars are scared away;
As the sun ascends with might
With his hot and awful light.

He shows us babies crying
We see the black boy dying
We close our eyes and choke our sighs
And look into the dreadful skies.

Then peacefully the night
Puts out the reddened day
And the jaws that used to bite
Are sterile where we lay.

Spring 1964

BEFORE GOING TO MISSISSIPPI, ANDREW GOODMAN WAS A STUDENT IN A WRITING COURSE AT QUEENS COLLEGE, NEW YORK, WITH MARY DOYLE CURRAN; HE WROTE AND HANDED IN THIS POEM AFTER A CLASS DISCUSSION OF HOUSMAN'S "TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG."