HUE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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AMERICAN CULTURE 1

(A Course for EFL Students)

Compiled by
Duong Lam Anh

LƯU HÀNH NỘI BỘ

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CONTENTS

UNIT 1

IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Reading: ETHNIC AND RACIAL ASSIMILATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Melting Pot or Salad Bowl

The population of the United States includes a large variety of ethnic groups coming from many races, nationalities, and religions. The process by which these many groups have been made a part of a common cultural life with commonly shared values is called assimilation. Scholars disagree as to the extent to which assimilation has occurred in the United States. Some have described the United States as a "melting pot" where various racial and ethnic groups have been combined into one culture. Others are inclined to see the United States as a "salad bowl" where the various groups have remained somewhat distinct and different from one another, creating a richly diverse country.

The truth probably lies somewhere between these two views. Since 1776, an enormous amount of racial and ethnic assimilation has taken place in the United States, yet some groups continue to feel a strong sense of separateness from the culture as a whole. Many of these groups are really bicultural. That is, they consider themselves Americans, but they also wish to retain the language and the cultural traditions of their original culture.

People of Hispanic origin were on the North American continent before settlers arrived from Europe in the early 1600s. In Florida and the Southwest, there were Spanish and Latin American settlements established centuries before the thirteen colonies joined together to form the United States in the late 1700s. Because of their long history and the continued influx of newcomers, into the established communities, many Hispanics, or Latinos; have taken a special pride in maintaining their cultural traditions and the use of the Spanish language.

Generally speaking, over the years whites from different national and religious backgrounds have been gradually assimilated into the larger American culture, with some exceptions. For example, American Jews are one group of whites who have traditionally retained a strong sense of separateness from the larger culture. This may be a result of the long history of persecution in the Christian countries in Europe, the weaker forms of discrimination and anti-Jewish feeling that exist in the United States, and their own strong feeling of ethnic pride.

Yet along with their sense of separateness, American Jews have a strong sense of being a part of the larger American culture in which they have achieved competitive success in almost every field.

The Establishment of the Dominant Culture

The first census of the new nation, conducted in 1790, counted about four million people, most of whom were white. Of the white citizens, more than 8 out of 10 traced their ancestry back to England. African-Americans made up a surprising 20 percent of the population, an all-time high. There were close to 700,000 slaves and about 60,000 "free Negroes." Only a few Native American Indians who paid taxes were included in the census count, but the total Native American population was probably about one million.

It was the while population that had the greater numbers, the money, and the political power in the new nation, and therefore this majority soon defined what the dominant culture would be. At the time of the American Revolution, the white population was largely English in origin, Protestant, and middle class. Such Americans are sometimes referred to as WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Their characteristics became the standard for judging other groups. Those having a different religion (such as the Irish Catholics), or those speaking a different language (such as the Germans, Dutch, and Swedes), were in the minority and would be disadvantaged unless they became assimilated. In the late 1700s, this assimilation occurred without great difficulty. According to historians Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager "English, Irish, German,... Dutch, Swedish_ mingled and intermarried with little thought of any difference."

The dominant American culture that grew out of the nation's early history, then, was English-speaking, Western European, Protestant, and middle class in character. It was this dominant culture that established what became the traditional values, described by de Tocqueville in the early 1830s. Immigrants with these characteristics were welcome, in part because Americans believed that these newcomers would probably give strong, support to the basic values of the dominant culture such as freedom, equality of opportunity, and the desire to work hard for a higher material standard of living.

The Assimilation of Non-Protestant and Non-Western Europeans

As is the case in many cultures, the degree to which a minority group was seen as different from the characteristics of the dominant majority determined the extent of that group's acceptance. Although immigrants who were like the earlier settlers were accepted, those with significantly different characteristics tended to be viewed as a threat to traditional American values and way of life.

This was particularly true of the immigrants who arrived by the millions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of them came from poverty-stricken nations of southern and eastern Europe. They spoke languages other than English, and large numbers of them were Catholics or Jews.

Americans at the time were very fearful of this new flood of immigrants. They were afraid that these people were so accustomed to lives of poverty and dependence that they would not understand such traditional American values as freedom, self-reliance, and competition. There were so many new immigrants that they might even change the basic values of the nation in undesirable ways.

Americans tried to meet what they saw as a threat to their values by offering English instruction for the new immigrants and citizenship classes to teach them basic American beliefs. The immigrants, however, often felt that their American teachers disapproved of the traditions of their homeland. Moreover, learning about American values gave them little help in meeting their most important needs such as employment, food, and a place to live.

Far more helpful to the new immigrants were the "political bosses" of the larger cities of the northeastern United States, where most of the immigrants first arrived. Those bosses saw to many of the practical needs of the immigrants and were more accepting of the different homeland traditions. In exchange for their help, the political bosses expected the immigrants to keep them in power by voting for them in elections.

Many Americans strongly disapproved of the political bosses. This was partly because the bosses were frequently corrupt; that is, they often stole money from the city governments they controlled and engaged in other illegal practices. Perhaps more important to disapproving Americans, however, was the fact that the bosses seemed to be destroying such basic American values as self-reliance and competition.

The bosses, it seemed, were teaching the immigrants to be dependent on them rather than to rely on themselves. Moreover, the bosses were "buying" the votes of the immigrants in order to give themselves a monopoly of political power in many larger cities. This practice destroyed competition for political office, which Americans viewed as an important tradition in politics just as it was in other facets of American life.

Despite these criticism, many scholars believe that the political bosses performed an important function in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They helped to assimilate large numbers of new immigrants into the larger American

culture by finding them jobs and housing, in return for their political support. Later the bosses also helped the sons and daughters of these immigrants to find employment, but the second generation usually had the advantage of growing up speaking English.

The fact that the United States had a rapidly expanding economy at the turn of the century made it possible for these new immigrants, often with the help of the bosses, to better their standard of living in the United States. As a result of these new opportunities and new rewards, immigrants came to accept most of the values of the larger American culture and were in turn accepted by the great majority of Americans. For white ethnic groups, therefore, it is generally true that their feeling of being a part of the larger culture_ that is, American_ is usually stronger than their feeling of belonging to a separate ethnic group _ Irish, Italian, and Polish, among many others.

The African-American Experience

The process of assimilation in the United States has been much more successful for white ethnic groups than for nonwhite ethnic groups. Of the nonwhite ethnic groups, Americans of African descent have had the greatest difficulty in becoming assimilated into the larger culture. African-Americans were brought to the United States against their will to be sold as slaves. Except for the Native American Indian tribes who inhabited the United States before the first white settlers arrived, other ethnic groups came to America voluntarily_ most as immigrants who wanted to better their living conditions.

The enslavement of African-Americans in the United States was a complete contradiction of such traditional basic American values as freedom and equality of opportunity. It divided the United States into two increasingly different sections: the southern states, in which black slavery became the basis of the economy, and the northern states, which chose to make slavery against the law.

A minority of whites in the North insisted that slavery and freedom could not exist together in a free country and demanded that slavery be abolished, even if this meant war with the South. A much larger number of northern whites believed that freedom and equality of opportunity needed to be protected for white people only, but they were afraid that black slavery would eventually take away their economic freedom. If, for example, the slave system of the South were allowed to spread into the frontier regions of the West, poor and middle-income whites could no longer look to the western frontier as a land of equality and opportunity where people could better their position in life. Rather, whites would have to compete with unpaid slave labor, a situation that they believed would degrade their work and lower their social status.

Abraham Lincoln was able to become president of the United States, by appealing to both the white idealists who saw slavery as an injustice to African-Americans and to the larger numbers of northern whites who saw slavery as a threat lo themselves. Lincoln's argument was that if black slavery continued to spread westward, white freedom and equality would be threatened. Lincoln also believed that basic ideals such as freedom and equality of opportunity had to apply to all people, black and white, or they would not last as basic American values.

When Lincoln won the presidency in 1860, the southern states left the Union and tried to form a new nation of their own based on slavery. A Civil War between the North and South resulted, which turned out to be the bloodiest and most destructive of all the nation's wars. When the North was finally victorious, black slavery ended in the United States.

However, African-Americans were not readily assimilated into the larger American culture. Most remained in the South, where they were not allowed to vote and were legally segregated from whites. Black children were not allowed to attend white public schools, for example, and many received an inferior education that did not give them an equal opportunity to compete in the white-dominated society. Many former slaves and their families became caught in a cycle of poverty that continued for generations. Although conditions were much worse in the segregated South, blacks continued to be the victims of strong racial prejudice in the North, as well as in the South.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s

This state of affairs remained unchanged until the United States Supreme Court declared in 1954 that racially segregated public schools did not provide equal educational opportunities for black Americans and were therefore illegal. Black leaders throughout the United States were greatly encouraged by this decision. They decided to try to end racial segregation in all areas of American life.

The most important of these leaders was Martin Luther King, Jr., a black Protestant minister with a great gift for inspiring his people. From the late 1950s until his assassination by a white gunman in 1968, King led thousands of African-Americans in nonviolent marches and demonstrations against segregation and other forms of racial discrimination.

King's goal was to bring about greater assimilation of black people into the larger American culture. His ideals were largely developed from basic American values. He wanted greater equality of opportunity and "Freedom now" for his

people. He did not wish to separate his people from American society but rather to gain for them a larger part in it.

Some black leaders, such as Malcolm X, urged a rejection of basic American values and complete separation of blacks from the white culture. Malcolm X believed that American values were nothing more than "white man's values" used to keep blacks in an inferior position. He believed that blacks must separate themselves from whites, by force if necessary, and build their own society based on values that they would create for themselves. Because he saw Christianity as a "white" religion, Malcolm turned to a faith based on Islam, and he became a leader of the "black Muslim" faith (founded in 1930). The great majority of American blacks, however, shared Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Protestant religious beliefs and his goal of assimilation rather than separation. Most African-Americans continued to look to King as their leader.

Largely as a result of King's activities, two major civil rights laws were passed during the 1960s that removed racial segregation from public facilities in the South and also removed the barriers that had prevented black people from voting in that region.

Race Relations after the Civil Rights Movement

The civil rights laws of the 1960s helped to bring about a significant degree of assimilation of blacks into the larger American culture. Most important, the laws eventually helped to reduce the amount of white prejudice toward black people in all parts of the country. The number of African-Americans attending the nation's colleges and universities, holding elective public office, and earning higher incomes increased dramatically in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1984 and 1988, Jesse Jackson, a black leader who had worked with King in the 1960s, became the first African-American to run for president of the United States. Although he did not win, he received significant national attention and greatly influenced the policies of the Democratic party.

African-Americans are now mayors of major cities and members of Congress; they hold offices in all levels of government local, state, and national. They are sports and entertainment heroes, university professors, medical doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and reporters. There is now a sizable black middle class, and there are a number of wealthy African-Americans. More than 80 percent of whites now say that they would vote for a black for President, someone like General Colin Powell for example. Powell was President Bush's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the senior military leader in the United States.

The bad news is that there is still a gulf between the races. Although African-Americans represent about 13 percent of the population, they are grossly underrepresented in Congress. The median income of a married black man working full time is 23 percent behind a married white man. Segregation and discrimination are against the law, but residential patterns create largely segregated neighborhood schools in many urban areas. Half the whites in the United States live in the suburbs, but only a fourth of the blacks. Many blacks are trapped in cycles of poverty, unemployment, violence, and despair in the inner city. They are the most frequent victims of violent crime, and as many as one in five young males now have a criminal record. Over 40 percent of all black children live in poverty and many have only one parent. Seventy percent of black children are born to unmarried women. Some point to the destruction of the family structure as the cause of many of the social problems that African-Americans now face.

Who is to blame? In a recent poll, 44 percent of blacks said the problems are due to white discrimination against them. Only 21 percent of whites agree. Some African-Americans have given up on ever having equal treatment within a society dominated by whites. There has been a renewed interest in Malcolm X, three decades after his death. In 1993, Spike Lee, a black film director, made a movie about the life of Malcolm X and his separatist ideas. In the '90s, Louis Farrakhan, a new black Muslim leader, advocated that blacks separate themselves from the hostile white culture instead of trying to become a part of it. In the fall of 1995, Farrakhan and others organized the "Million Man March" of African-American men and boys in Washington, D.C. The goal of the march was to gather together responsible fathers and sons who would demonstrate positive role models for African-Americans, and who would inspire people to take leadership roles and make a difference in their home communities.

Although some view Farrakhan as an extremist, his angry voice has a certain appeal to many African-Americans. Many young blacks, in particular, are searching for a separate African-American identity, one that will recognize the contributions that their black culture has made, and one that will validate the black culture as an equal alternative to the white. Since they did not live through the civil rights battles of the 1960s, the progress achieved and the status that African-Americans now have in the white society are not as real to them as the inequalities they believe they experience. They have no memory of the segregated buses, parks, restaurants, even restrooms and drinking fountains, of the pre-civil rights South.

Back in the 1830s, de Tocqueville predicted trouble between blacks and whites in the United States:

These two races are fastened to each other without intermingling; and they are unable to separate entirely or to combine. Although the law may abolish slavery, God alone can obliterate the traces of its existence.

Nathan Glazer, an expert on assimilation, believes that blacks in the United States have had more difficulty being accepted by the white majority than have other racial and ethnic groups such as Hispanics, Native American Indians, and Asians. Therefore, racial and cultural separatism is a stronger force with them than with other minority groups. There has been no separatist leader of other ethnic or racial minority groups with the broad emotional appeal that Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan have had with black Americans.

Although slavery was abolished in the 1860s, its legacy continues. Fortunately, however, people of good faith, both black and white, are working together to achieve harmony and equality between the races.

A Universal Nation

As we have noted, the dominant culture and its value system, established by the early settlers, had its roots in white, Protestant, western Europe. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, millions of immigrants came from eastern and southern Europe, bringing cultural traditions perceived by the dominant culture as quite different. By the 1920s, Americans had decided that it was time to close the borders to mass immigration, and the number of new immigrants slowed to a trickle. In spite of the worries of those in the dominant culture, the new immigrants did assimilate to life in the United States. They greatly enriched the cultural diversity of the nation, and they ultimately did not cause major changes to its system of government, its free enterprise system, or its traditional values.

In 1965, the United States made important changes in its immigration laws, allowing many more immigrants to come and entirely eliminating the older laws' bias in favor of white European immigrants. As a result, the United States is now confronted with a new challenge-taking in large numbers of new immigrants who are nonwhite and non-European. About 90 percent are from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In addition to the large numbers of legal immigrants, for the first time the United States has significant numbers of illegal immigrants.

Many worry about what the impact will be on the American society. Can the American economy expand enough to offer these new these new immigrants the same opportunities that others have had? What will be the effect on the traditional value system that has defined the United States for over 200 years?

Many Americans see wonderful benefits for their country. Ben Wattenberg, a respected expert on American culture, believes that the "new immigration" will be of great help to the nation. According to Wattenberg, something very important is happening to the United States: It is becoming the first universal nation in history. Wattenberg believes that the United States will be the first nation where large numbers of people from every region on earth live in freedom under one government. This diversity, he says, will give the nation great influence and appeal to the rest of the world during the 21st century.

Perhaps the United States will be described not as a "melting pot" or a "salad bowl" but as a "mosaic" _ a picture made up of many tiny pieces of different colors. If one looks closely at the nation, the individuals of different colors and ethnic groups are still distinct and recognizable, but together they create a picture that is uniquely American. "E Pluribus Unum" the motto of the United States from its beginning _ means one composed of many: "Out of many, one."

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction to American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

immigrant
immigration
ethnic group
ethnic pride
diversity country
persecution
Native American Indian
melting pot
salad bowl
mosaic
sense of separateness
assimilation
dominant culture
WASP
bicultural
universal nation
“Out of many, one”

FURTHER READING

1. Introduction _ Melting Pot or Patchwork Quilt: the Challenge of Multicuturalism (from Explorations in American Culture by Kathrine Jason and Holly Posner)

2. What is an American? By Michel Guillaume St. Jean de Crevecocur (from Crossing Cultures by Henry Knepler and Myrna Knepler)

3. From Immigration to Acculturation by Arthur Mann (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

UNIT 2

TRADITIONS AND ADAPTING CULTURES

Reading 1: BARBA NIKOS
Harry Mark Petrakis

Harry Mark Petrakis was born in St. Louis, in 1923 but has spent most of his life in and around Chicago. Petrakis is a novelist and short story writer whose books include *Pericles on 31st Street (1965), A Dream of Kings (1966), and Stelmark: A Family Recollection (1970), from which the following selection is an excerpt.*

There was one storekeeper I remember above all others in my youth. It was shortly before I became ill, spending a good portion of my time with a motley group of varied ethnic ancestry. We contended with one another to deride the customs of the old country. On our Saturday forays into neighborhoods beyond our own, to prove we were really Americans, we ate hot dogs and drank Cokes. If a boy didn't have ten cents for this repast he went hungry, for he dared not bring a sandwich from home made of the spiced meats our families ate.

One of our untamed games was to seek out the owner of a pushcart or a store, unmistakably an immigrant, and bedevil him with a chorus of insults and jeers. To prove allegiance to the gang it was necessary to reserve our fiercest malevolence for a storekeeper or peddler belonging to our own ethnic background.

For that reason I led a raid on the small, shabby grocery of old Barba Nikos, a short, sinewy Greek who walked with a slight limp and sported a flaring, handlebar mustache.

We stood outside his store and dared him to come out. When he emerged to do battle, we plucked a few plums and peaches from the baskets on the sidewalk and retreated across the street to eat them while he watched. He waved a fist and hurled epithets at us in ornamental Greek.

Aware that my mettle was being tested, I raised my arm and threw my half-eaten plum at the old man. My aim was accurate and the plum struck him on the check. He shuddered and put his hand to the stain. He stared at me across the street, and although I could not see his eyes, I felt them sear my flesh. He turned and walked silently back into the store. The boys slapped my shoulders in

admiration, but it was a hollow victory that rested like a stone in the pit of my stomach.

At twilight when we disbanded, I passed the grocery alone on my way home. There was a small light burning in the store and the shadow of the old man's body outlined against the glass. Goaded by remorse, I walked to the door and entered.

The old man moved from behind the narrow wooden counter and stared at me. I wanted to turn and flee, but by then it was too late. As he motioned for me to come closer, I braced myself for a curse or a blow.

"You were the one," he said, finally, in a harsh voice.

I nodded mutely.

"Why did you come back?"

I stood there unable to answer.

"What's your name?"

"Haralambos," I said, speaking to him in Greek.

He looked at me in shock. "You are Greek!" he cried. "A Greek boy attacking a Greek grocer!" He stood appalled at the immensity of my crime. "All right," he said coldly. "You are here because you wish to make amends." His great mustache bristled in concentration. "Four plums, two peaches," he said. "That makes a total of 78 cents. Call it 75. Do you have 75 cents, boy?"

I shook my head.

"Then you will work it off," he said. "Fifteen cents an hour into 75 cents makes _ he paused _ "five hours of work. Can you come here Saturday morning?"

"Yes," I said.

"Yes, Barba Nikos," I said.

"Saturday morning at eight o'clock," he said. "Now go home and say thanks in your prayers that I did not loosen your impudent head with a solid smack on the ear." I needed no further urging and fled.

Saturday morning, still apprehensive, I returned to the store. I began by sweeping, raising clouds of dust in dark and hidden corners. I washed the windows, whipping the squeegee swiftly up and down the glass in a fever of fear that some member of the gang would see me. When I finished I hurried back inside.

For the balance of the morning I stacked cans, washed the counter, and dusted bottles of yellow wine. A few customers entered, and Barba Nikos served them. A little after twelve o'clock he locked the door so he could eat lunch. He cut himself a few slices of sausage, tore a large chunk from a loaf of crisp-crusted bread, and filled a small cup with a dozen black shiny olives floating in brine. He offered me the cup. I could not help myself and grimaced.

"You are a stupid boy," the old man said. "You are not really Greek, arc you?"

"Yes, I am."

"You might be," he admitted grudgingly. "But you do not act Greek. Wrinkling your nose at these fine olives. Look around this store for a minute. What do you see?"

"Fruits and vegetables," I said. "Cheese and olives and things like that."

He stared at me with a massive scorn. "That's what I mean," he said. "You are a bonehead. You don't understand that a whole nation and a people are in this store."

I looked uneasily toward the storeroom in the rear, almost expecting someone to emerge.

"What about olives?" he cut the air with a sweep of his arm. "There are olives of many shapes and colors. Pointed black ones from Kalamata, oval ones from Amphissa, pickled green olives and sharp tangy yellow ones. Achilles carried black olives to Troy and after a day of savage battle leading his Myrmidons, he'd rest and eat cheese and ripe black olives such as these right here. You have heard of Achilles, boy, haven't you?"

"Yes," I said.

"Yes, Barba Nikos."

"Yes, Barba Nikos," I said.

He motioned at the row of jars filled with varied spices. “There is origanon there and basilikon and daphne and sesame and miantanos, all the marvelous flavorings that we have used in our food for thousands of years. The men of marathon carried small packets of these spices into battle, and the scents reminded them of their homes, their families, and their children.”

He rose and tugged his napkin free from around his throat. “Cheese, you said. Cheese! Come closer, boy, and I educate your abysmal ignorance.” He motioned toward a wooden container on the counter. “That glistening white delight is feta, made from goat’s milk packed in wooden buckets to retain the flavor. Alexander the Great demanded it on his table with his casks of wine when he planned his campaigns.”

He walked limping from his counter to the window where the piles of tomatoes, celery, and green peppers clustered. “I suppose all you see here are some random vegetables?” He did not wait for me to answer. “You are dumb again. These are some of the ingredients that go to make up a Greek salad. Do you know what a Greek salad really is? A meal in itself, an experience, an emotional involvement. It is created deftly and with grace. First, you place large lettuce leaves in a big, deep bowl.” He spread his fingers and moved them slowly, carefully, as if he were arranging the leaves. “The remainder of the lettuce is shredded and piled in a small mounds,” he said. “Then comes celery, cucumbers, tomatoes sliced lengthwise, green peppers, origanon, green olives, feta, avocado, and anchovies. At the end you dress it with lemon, vinegar, and pure olive oil, glinting golden in the light.”

He finished with a heartfelt sigh and for a moment closed his eyes. Then he opened one eye to mark me with a baleful intensity. “The story goes that Zeus himself created the recipe and assembled and mixed the ingredients on Mount Olympus one night when he had invited some of the other gods to dinner.”

He turned his back on me and walked slowly again across the store, dragging one foot slightly behind him. I looked uneasily, at the clock, which showed that it was a few minutes past one. He turned quickly and startled me. “And everything else in here,” he said loudly. “White beans, lentils, garlic, crisp bread, kokoretsi, meat balls, mussels and clams.” He paused and drew a deep, long breath. “And the wine,” he went on, “wine from Samos, Santorini, and Crete, retsina and mavrodaphne, a taste almost as old as water... and then the fragrant melons, the pastries, yellow diples and golden loukoumades, the honey custard galatobouriko. Everything a part of our history, as much a part as the exquisite sculpture in marble, the bearded warriors, Pan and the oracles at Delphi, and the

nymphs dancing in the shadowed groves under Homer's glittering moon. “He paused, out of breath again, and coughed harshly. “Do you understand now, boy?”

He watched my face for some response and then grunted. We stood silent for a moment until lie cocked his head and stared at the clock. "It is time for you to leave,” he motioned brusquely toward the door. “We are square now. Keep it that way."

I decided the old man was crazy and reached behind the counter for my jacket and cap and started for the door. He called me back. From a box he drew out several soft, yellow figs that he placed in a piece of paper. “A bonus because you worked well,” he said. “Take them. When you taste them, maybe you will understand what I have been talking about.”

I took the figs and he unlocked the door and I hurried from the store. I looked back once and saw him standing in the doorway, watching me, the swirling tendrils of food curling like mist about his head.

I ate the figs late that night. I forgot about them until I was in bed, and then I rose and took the package from my jacket. I nibbled at one, then ate them all. They broke apart between my teeth with a tangy nectar, a thick sweetness running like honey across my tongue and into the pockets of my cheeks. In the morning when I woke, I could still taste and inhale their fragrance.

I never again entered Barba Nikos’s store. My spell of illness, which began some months later, lasted two years. When I returned to the streets I had forgotten the old man and the grocery. Shortly afterwards my family moved from the neighborhood.

Some twelve years later, after the war, I drove through the old neighborhood and passed the grocery. I stopped the car and for a moment stood before the store. The windows were stained with dust and grime, the interior bare and desolate, a store in a decrepit group of stores marked for razing so new structures could be built.

I have been in many Greek groceries since then and have often bought the feta and Kalamata olives. I have eaten countless Greek salads and have indeed found them a meal for the gods. On the holidays in our house, my wife and sons and I sit down to a dinner of steaming, buttered pilaf like my mother used to make and lemon-egg avgolemono and roast lamb richly seasoned with cloves of garlic. I drink the red and yellow wines, and for dessert I have come to relish the delicate pastries coated with honey and powdered sugar. Old Barba Nikos would have been pleased.

But I have never been able to recapture the halcyon flavor of those figs he gave me on that day so long ago, although I have bought figs many times. I have found them pleasant to my tongue, but there is something missing. And to this day I am not sure whether it was the figs or the vision and passion of the old grocer that coated the fruit so sweetly I can still recall their savor and fragrance after almost thirty years.

Reading 2: Heritage

All of us inherit something: sometimes it may be money or property, but always it is something much less concrete and tangible, something we may not even be aware of fully. It may be a way of doing a daily task, or the way we solve a major problem or decide a moral issue for ourselves. It may be something important and central to our thinking, or something minor, casual; something we proudly think of as "our heritage," or something we would prefer to ignore or forget. Our heritage may be a source of pride, a happy discovery; it may also at times be a source of embarrassment, a burden.

We are most aware of a heritage when it expresses itself in traditions, observances, and rituals. But we encounter our heritage, or that of others, most often in ordinary ways: in a restaurant, for example, or a grocery store. America, with its different ethnic groups, is richer, perhaps more than any other country, in the variety of its foods; here is a starting place where many first encounter cultural diversity. In the selection Harry Mark Petrakis describes a boy who is embarrassed, by his heritage _ not an unusual thing for children of immigrants to America. The boy wants to demonstrate that he is a true American not only by eating American food but by insulting a Greek grocer who: represents his embarrassing heritage to him. In the end the old man teaches the boy about their common heritage, making olives and figs come alive, so to speak, as symbols of the three-thousand year history of the Greek people.

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

inherit
heritage
cultural diversity
personal identity
source of pride
source of embarrassment

UNIT 3

TRADITIONS OF VALUES AND BELIEFS

Reading: TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Context of Traditional American Values: Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Cultural Diversity

As the 21st century begins, the United States probably has a greater diversity of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups than any other nation on earth. From the beginning of the history of the United States, there has been diversity_ Native Americans throughout the North American continent, Spanish settlers in the Southwest and in Florida, French missionaries and fur traders along the Mississippi River, black slaves brought from African countries, Dutch settlers in New York, Germans in Pennsylvania, and, of course, the British colonists, whose culture eventually provided the language and the foundation for the political and economic systems that developed in the United States.

Most early Americans recognized this diversity, or pluralism, as a fact of life. The large variety of ethnic, cultural, and religious groups meant that accepting diversity was the only practical choice, even if some people were not enthusiastic about it. However, in time, many Americans came to see strength in their country's diversity. Today, there is more recognition of the value of cultural pluralism than at any other time in the history of the United States.

When we examine the system of basic values that emerged in the late 1700s and began to define the American character, we must remember this context of cultural pluralism. How could a nation of such enormous diversity produce a recognizable national identity?

Historically, the United States has been viewed as "the land of opportunity," attracting immigrants from all over the world. The opportunities they believed they would find in America and the experiences they actually had when they arrived nurtured this set of values. In this chapter, we will examine six basic values that have become "traditional" American values. Three represent traditional reasons why immigrants have been drawn to America: the chance for individual freedom, equality of opportunity, and material wealth. In order to achieve these benefits, however, there were prices to be paid: self-reliance, competition, and hard work. In time, these prices themselves became a part of the traditional value system.

Individual Freedom and Self-Reliance

The earliest settlers came to the North American continent to establish colonies that were free from the controls that existed in European societies. They wanted to escape the controls placed on their lives by kings and governments, priests and churches, noblemen and aristocrats. To a great extent, they succeeded. In 1776, the British colonial settlers declared their independence from England and established a new nation, the United States of America. In so doing, they overthrew the king of England and declared that the power to govern would lie in the hands of the people. They were now free from the power of the kings. In 1789, when they wrote the Constitution for their new nation, they separated church and state so that there would never be a government-supported church. This greatly limited the power of the church. Also, in writing the Constitution, they expressly forbade titles of nobility to ensure that an aristocratic society would not develop. There would be no ruling class of nobility in the new nation.

The historic decisions made by those first settlers have had a profound effect on the shaping of the American character. By limiting the power of the government and the churches and eliminating a formal aristocracy, they created a climate of freedom where the emphasis was on the individual. The United States came to be associated in their minds with the concept of *individual freedom.* This is probably the most basic of all the American values. Scholars and outside observers often call this value *individualism*, but many Americans use the word *freedom.* Perhaps the word *freedom* is one of the most respected popular words in the United States today.

By freedom, Americans mean the desire and the ability of all individuals to control their own destiny without outside interference from the government, a ruling noble class, the church, or any other organized authority. The desire to be free of controls was a basic value of the new nation in 1776, and it has continued to attract immigrants to this country.

There is, however, a price to be paid for this individual freedom: *self-reliance*. Individuals must learn to rely on themselves or risk losing freedom. This means achieving both financial and emotional independence from their parents as early as possible, usually by age 18 or 21. It means that Americans believe they should take care of themselves, solve their own problems, and "stand on their own two feet." De Tocqueville observed the Americans' belief in self-reliance nearly 200 years ago in the 1830s:

> *They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands.*

This strong belief is self-reliance continues today as a traditional basic American value. It is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of the American character to understand, but it is profoundly important. Most Americans believe that they must be self-reliant in order to keep their freedom. If they rely too much on the support of their families or the government or any organization, they may lose some of their freedom to do what they want.

If people are dependent, they risk losing freedom as well as the respect of their peers. Even if they are not truly self-reliant, most Americans believe they must at least appear to be so. In order to be in the mainstream of American life_ to have power and/or respect _ individuals must be seen as sell-reliant. Although receiving financial support from charity family, or the government is allowed, it is never admired. Many people believe that such individuals are setting a bad example; which may weaken the American character as a whole.

The sight of beggars on city streets and the plight of the homeless may inspire sympathy but also concern. Although Americans provide a lot of financial support to people in need through charities or government programs, they expect that help to be short-lived. Eventually, people should take care of themselves.

Equality of Opportunity and Competition

The second important reason why immigrants have traditionally been drawn to the United States is the belief that everyone has a chance to succeed here. Generations of immigrants, from the earliest settlers to the present day, have come to the United States will this expectation. They have felt that because individuals are free from excessive political, religious, and social controls, they have a better chance for personal success. Of particular importance is the lack of a hereditary aristocracy.

Because titles of nobility were forbidden in the Constitution, no formal class system developed in the United States. In the early years of American history, many immigrants chose to leave the older European societies because they believed that they had a better chance to succeed in America. In "the old country," their place in life was determined largely by the social class into which they were born. They knew that in America they would not have to live among noble families who possessed great power and wealth inherited and accumulated over hundreds of years.

The hopes and dreams of many of these early immigrants were fulfilled in their new country. The lower social class into which many were born did not prevent them from trying to rise to a higher social position. Many found that they did indeed have a better chance to succeed in the United States than in the old

country. Because millions of these immigrants succeeded, Americans came to believe in *equality of opportunity*. When de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830s, he was impressed by the great uniformity of conditions of life in the new nation. He wrote:

The more 1 advanced in the study of American society, the more 1 perceived that... equality of condition is the fundamental fact from which all others seem to be derived.

It is important to understand what most Americans mean when they say they believe in equality of opportunity. They do not mean that everyone is_ or should be_ equal. However, they do mean that each individual should have an equal chance for success. Americans see much of life as a race for success. For them, equality means that everyone should have an equal chance to enter the race and win. In other words, equality of opportunity may be thought of as an ethical rule. It helps ensure that the race for success is a fair one and that a person does not win just because he or she was born into a wealthy family, or lose because of race or religion. This American concept of "fair play" is an important aspect of the belief in equality of opportunity. President Abraham Lincoln expressed this belief in the 1860s when lie said:

We... wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else. When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition; he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor for his whole life.

There is, however, a price to be paid for this equality of *opportunity: competition.* If much of life is seen as a race, then a person must run the race in order to succeed; a person must compete with others. If every person has an equal chance to succeed in the United States, then it is every person's duty to try. Americans match their energy and intelligence against that of others in a competitive contest for success. People who like to compete and are more successful than others are honored by being called *winners.* On the other hand, those who do not like to compete and are not successful when they try are often dishonored by being called *losers*. This is especially true for American men, and it is becoming more and more true for women.

The pressures of competition in the life of an American begin in childhood and continue until retirement from work. Learning to compete successfully is part of growing up in the United States, and competition is encouraged by strong programs of competitive sports provided by the public schools and community groups.

The pressure to compete causes Americans to be energetic, but it also places a constant emotional strain on them. When they retire (traditionally at age 65), they are at last free from the pressures of competition. But then a new problem arises. They may feel useless and unwanted in a society that gives so much prestige to those who compete well. This is one reason why older people in the United States do not have as much honor and respect as they have in other, less competitive societies. In fact, any group of people who do not compete successfully _ for whatever reason _do not fit into the mainstream of American life as well as those who do compete.

Material Wealth and Hard Work

The third reason why immigrants have traditionally come to the United States is to have a better life_ that is, to raise their standard of living. For the vast majority of the immigrants who came here, it was probably the most compelling reason for leaving their homeland. Because of its incredibly abundant natural resources, the United States appeared to be a "land of plenty" where millions could come to seek their fortunes. Of course, most immigrants did not "get rich overnight," and many of them suffered terribly, but the majority of them were eventually able to improve upon their former standard of living. Even if they were not able to achieve the economic success they wanted, they could be fairly certain that their children would have the opportunity for a better life. The phrase "going from rags to riches" became a slogan for the great American Dream. Because of the vast riches of the North American continent, the dream came true for many of the immigrants. They achieved material success; they became very attached to material things. Material wealth became a value to the American people.

Placing a high value on material possessions is called *materialism,* but this is a word that most Americans find offensive. To say that a person is *materialistic* is an insult. To an American, this means that this person values material possessions above all else. Americans do not like to be called *materialistic* because they feel that this unfairly accuses them of loving only material things and of having no religious values. In fact, most Americans do have other values and ideals. Nevertheless, acquiring and maintaining a large number of material possessions is of great importance to most Americans. Why is this so?

Probably the main reason is that material wealth has traditionally been a widely accepted measure of social status in the United States. Because Americans rejected the European system of hereditary aristocracy and titles of nobility, they had to find a substitute for judging social status. The quality and quantity of an individual's material possessions became an accepted measure of success and social status. Moreover, as we shall see in later chapters, the Puritan work ethic associated material success with godliness.

Americans have paid a price, however, for their material wealth: hard work. The North American continent was rich in natural resources when the first settlers arrived, but all these resources were undeveloped. Only by hard work could these natural resources be converted into material possessions, allowing a more comfortable standard of living. Hard work has been both necessary and rewarding for most Americans throughout their history. Because of this, they came to see material possessions as the natural reward for their hard work. In some ways, material possessions were seen not only as tangible evidence of people's work but also of their abilities. In the late 1700s, James Madison, the father of the American Constitution, stated that the difference in material possessions reflected a difference in personal abilities.

As the United States has shifted from an industry-based economy to one that is service or information-based, there has been a decline in high-paying jobs for factory workers. It is now much more difficult for the average worker to go “from rags to riches” in the United States, and many wonder what has happened to the traditional "American Dream.” As the United States competes in a global economy, many workers are losing their own jobs and finding that they and their family members must now work longer hours for less money and fewer benefits. Faced with a decline in their standard of living, these people no longer believe that hard work necessarily brings great material rewards.

Most Americans, however, still believe in the value of hard work. They believe that people should hold jobs and not live off welfare payments from the government. In 1990s, the welfare system came under attack. In a time where many people were working harder then ever "to make ends meet,” there was enormous resentment against groups such as “welfare mothers,” young women who do not marry or hold a job but have children and are supported by payments from the government.

In understanding the relationship between what Americans believe and how they live, it is important to distinguish between idealism and reality. American values such as equality of opportunity and self-reliance are ideals that may not necessarily describe the reality of American life. Equality of opportunity, for example, is an ideal that is not always put into practice. In reality, some people have a better chance for success than others. Those who are born into rich families have more opportunities than those who are born into poorer families. Inheriting money does give a person a decided advantage. Many black Americans have fewer opportunities than the average white American, and many women have fewer opportunities than men, in spite of laws designed to promote equality of opportunity for all individuals. And many immigrants today have fewer opportunities than those who came before them, when there were more high-paying factory jobs, and the economy was growing more rapidly.

The fact that American ideals are partly carried out in real life does not diminish their importance. Many Americans still believe in them and are strongly affected by them in their everyday lives. It is easier to understand what Americans are thinking and feeling if we can understand what these basic traditional American values are and how they have influenced almost every facet of life in the United States.

The six basic values presented in this chapter _ *individual freedom, self-reliance, equality of opportunity, competition, material wealth*, and *hard work*_ do not tell the whole story of the American character. Rather, they should be thought as themes that will be developed in our discussions on religion, family life, education, business, and politics. These themes will appear throughout the book as we continue to explore more facets of the American character and how it affects life in the United States.

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction to American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

belief
basic value
Native Americans
diversity
cultural pluralism
national identity
individual freedom/individualism
self-reliance
equality of opportunity
competition
winner
loser
material wealth/ materialism
hard work
fair play
mainstream
land of opportunity
land of plenty
stand on their own two feet
going from rags to riches
work ethic

American Dream
Puritanism
personal success
lack of a hereditary aristocracy
uniformity of conditions
equal chance for success
race for success
ethical rule
emotional strain
standard of living
abundant natural resources
welfare system
to make ends meet
welfare mother

FURTHER READING

1. *Individualism and Equality in the United States* by Nathan Glazer (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

2. *The Benefits of American Life* by James Farrell (from Explorations in American Culture by Kathrine Jason and Holly Posner)

UNIT 4

GOVERNMENT

Reading: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

The way in which the national government is organized in the United States Constitution provides an excellent illustration of the American suspicion of governmental power. The provisions of the Constitution are more concerned with keeping the government from doing evil than with enabling it to do good. The national government, for example, is divided into three separate branches. This division of governmental power is based on the belief that if any one part or branch of government has all, or even most of the power, it will become a threat to the freedom of individual citizens.

The legislative or lawmaking branch of the government is called the Congress. Congress has two houses_ the Senate, with two Senators from each state regardless of its size, and the House of Representatives, consisting of a total of 435 Representatives divided among the 50 states by population. (In the House, states with large populations have more representatives than states with small populations, while in the Senate, each state has equal representation.) The president, or chief executive, heads the executive branch, which has responsibility to carry out the laws. The Supreme Court and lower national courts make up the judicial branch. The judicial branch settles disputes about the exact meaning of the law through court cases.

If any one of the three branches starts to abuse its power, the other two may join together to stop it, through a system of checks and balances. The Constitution is most careful in balancing the powers of the legislative and executive branches of the government because these two (Congress and the president) are the most powerful of the three branches. In almost every important area of governmental activity, such as the power to make laws, to declare war, or to conclude treaties with foreign countries, the Constitution gives each of these two branches enough power to prevent the other from acting on its own.

The president and both houses of Congress have almost complete political independence from each other because they are all chosen in separate elections. For example, the election of the Congress does not determine who will be elected president, and the presidential election does not determine who will be elected to either house of Congress. It is quite possible in the American system to have the leader of one political party win the presidency while the other major political party win most of the seats in Congress. In fact, during the 1970s and 1980s, four

of the five presidents were Republicans, while the Democrats typically controlled one or both houses of Congress. In the Congressional elections of 1994, however, the reverse situation occurred. While Clinton, a Democrat, was president, the Republicans won control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is important to note that the elections of the members of the two houses of Congress are separate from each other. Thus, the Republicans may control one house, while the Democrats may control the other. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate must agree on all legislation, however, before it becomes law.

Observers from other countries are often confused by the American system. The national government often seems to speak with two conflicting voices, that of the president and that of the Congress. It is necessary for the president to sign bills passed by Congress in order for them to become law. If the president vetoes a legislative bill passed by Congress _ that is, if he refuses to sign it_ the bill dies unless two-thirds of both the House and Senate vote to override the veto. This rarely happens. On the other hand, a treaty with a foreign government signed by the president dies if the Senate refuses to ratify it _ that is, votes to accept it.

Although the American system of divided governmental powers strikes many observers as inefficient and even disorganized, most Americans still strongly believe in it for two reasons. It has been able to meet the challenges of the past, and it gives strong protection to individual freedoms.

In addition to dividing government powers into three branches, the Constitution included a Bill of Rights, which is designed to protect specific individual rights and freedoms from government interference. Some of the guarantees in the Bill of Rights concern the freedom of expression. The government may not interfere with an individual's freedom of speech or freedom of religious worship. The Bill of Rights also guarantees the right of a fair criminal procedure for those accused of breaking laws. Thus, the Bill of Rights is another statement of the American belief in the importance of individual freedom.

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction to American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

suspicion of governmental power
division of governmental power
legislative branch/lawmaking branch
executive branch
judicial branch

Congress
the Senate
the House of Representatives
Supreme Court
Senator
Representative
checks and balances
Republicans
Democrats
veto
override the veto
ratify
Bill of Rights
chief executive
lower national court
presidential election

UNIT 5

EDUCATION

Reading: EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

The Establishment of Public Schools in America: de Tocqueville's Observations

As might be expected, educational institutions in the United States reflect the nation's basic values, especially the ideal of equality of opportunity. From elementary school through college, Americans believe that everyone deserves an equal opportunity to get a good education.

From the beginning, when Americans established their basic system of public schools in 1825, they reaffirmed the principle of equality by (1) making schools open to all classes of Americans, and (2) financing the schools with tax money collected from all citizens. Those who favored these public schools believed that these institutions would help reduce social class distinctions in the United States by educating children of all social classes in the same "common schools," as they were known at the time.

When Alexis de Tocqueville arrived in the United States in 1831, he found a great deal of enthusiasm about the new and growing public elementary schools. The mayor of New York City gave a special dinner for de Tocqueville, during which a toast was offered in honor of "Education_ the extension of our public schools _ a national blessing."

Because he was a French aristocrat, de Tocqueville at first shared the fears of some wealthy Americans who believed that universal education would be a danger rather than a national blessing. He eventually decided, however, that the tendency of public education to encourage people to seek a higher status in life was in harmony will, not in conflict with, the customs of American society. The ideal of equal opportunity for all regardless of family background was much stronger in the United States than in France.

De Tocqueville also noted that American public education had a strong practical content that included the teaching of vocational skills and the duties of citizenship. Thus, public education not only gave Americans the desire to better themselves, but it also gave them the practical tools to do so. Moreover, the material abundance of the United States provided material rewards for those who took full advantage of the opportunity for a public education.

During the next century and a half, public schools in the United States were expanded to include secondary or high schools (Grades 9-12) and colleges and universities, with both undergraduate and graduate studies.

The Educational Ladder

Americans view their public school system as an educational ladder, rising from elementary school to high school and finally college undergraduate and graduate programs. Most children start school al age five, by attending kindergarten, or even at age three or four by attending pre-school programs. Then there are six years of elementary school and usually two years of middle school (or junior high school), and four years of high school. Not all school systems have kindergartens, but all do have twelve years of elementary, middle school, and senior high school. School systems may divide the twelve years up differently_ grouping sixth, seventh, and eighth graders into middle school, for example. After high school, the majority of students go on to college. Undergraduate studies lead to a bachelor's degree, which is generally what Americans mean when they speak of a "college diploma." The bachelor's degree can be followed by professional studies, which lead to degrees in such professions as law and medicine, and graduate studies, which lead to master's and doctoral degrees. American public schools are free and open to all at the elementary and secondary level (high school), but public universities charge tuition and have competitive entrance requirements.

The educational ladder concept is an almost perfect reflection of the American idea of individual success based on equality of opportunity and on "working your way to the top." In the United States there are no separate educational systems with a higher level of education for the wealthy and a lower level of education for the masses. Rather, there is one system that is open to all. Individuals may climb as high on the ladder as they can. The abilities of the individuals, rather than their social class background, are expected to determine how high each person will go.

Although the great majority of children attend the free public elementary and high schools, some choose to attend private schools. There are a number of private religious schools, for example, that are associated with particular churches and receive financial support from them, though parents must also pay tuition. The primary purpose of these schools is usually to give religious instruction to children, which cannot be done in public schools. The most numerous of these, the Catholic schools, have students whose social class backgrounds are similar to the majority of students in public schools.

There are also some elite private schools, which serve mainly upper-class children. Students must pay such high tuition costs that only wealthier families can afford them. Parents often send their children to these schools so that they will associate with other upper-class children and maintain the upper-class position held by their parents, in addition to getting a good education.

Unlike private religious schools, elitist private schools do conflict with the American ideal of equality of opportunity. These schools often give an extra educational and social advantage to the young people whose families have the money to allow them to attend. However, because these schools are relatively few in number, they do not displace the public school as the central educational institution in the United States. Nor does the best private school education protect young people from competition with public school graduates for admission to the best universities in the nation.

There is another area of inequality in the American education system. Because of the way that schools are funded, the quality of education that American students receive in public schools varies greatly. More than 90 percent of the money for schools comes from the local level (cities and counties), primarily from property taxes. School districts that have middle class or wealthy families have more tax money to spend on education. Therefore, wealthier school districts have beautiful school buildings with computers and the latest science equipment, and poorer school districts have older buildings with less modern equipment. The amount of money spent on education may vary from $7,000 per child in a wealthy suburb to only $1,200 per child attending an inner-city school, or one in a poor rural area. Although the amount of money spent per child is not always the best indicator of the quality of education the child receives, it certainly is an important factor.

Attending an American University

Money is also increasingly a factor in a college education. All university students must pay tuition expenses in the United States. Because tuition is much lower at public universities than at private ones, wealthy students have more choices. There are a number of financial aid programs in the form of loans and scholarships available at both public and private schools. However, the expenses of buying books and living away from home make it increasingly difficult for many students to attend even the less expensive public universities.

Ironically, it may be the middle-class family that suffers the most from the rising tuition costs. The family income may be too high to qualify for financial aid, but not high enough to afford the $15,000 to $35,000 per year (or more) needed for a private college education. At present, 80 percent of all college students attend

public universities, where expenses are usually closer to $10,000 a year. Many students must work during their college years to help meet even these costs. A number of students who cannot afford to go away to college attend community college programs for two years in their hometowns. These two-year programs often feed into the state university systems and offer educational opportunities to large numbers of students who ordinarily would not be able to attend a university.

Despite its costs, the percentage of Americans seeking a college education continues to grow. In 1900, less than 10 percent of college-age Americans entered college. Today, over 60 percent of Americans ages 25 to 39 have taken some college courses, and over 20 percent of all Americans have attended four years or more. There are about 15 million students attending college now, about six times more than 50 years ago, and there are roughly 3,000 different colleges and universities to choose from. Today, many parents who were not able to attend college when they were young have the satisfaction of seeing their sons and daughters attend.

Even the formerly elitist private universities have yielded a great deal to public pressure for greater equality of opportunity in education. Harvard, a private university considered by many to be one of the nation's most prestigious, provides a good example. Before World War II, the majority of Harvard students came from elite private preparatory schools. Now, the majority of them come from public high schools. As equality of opportunity came to Harvard, the competition that accompanies it also increased dramatically. Before World War II, Harvard admitted about 90 percent of those who applied. Now, Harvard admits only 16 or 17 percent of its applicants.

The Money Value of Education

As we have seen in earlier chapters, the American definition of success is largely one of acquiring wealth and a high material standard of living. It is not surprising, therefore, that Americans value education for its monetary value. The belief is widespread in the United States that the more schooling people have, the more money they will earn when they leave school. The belief is strongest regarding the desirability of an undergraduate university degree, or a professional degree such as medicine or law, following the undergraduate degree. The money value of graduate degrees in "nonprofessional" fields such as art, history, or philosophy is not as great.

In recent years, there has been a change in the job market in the United States. In the past, it was possible to get a high-paying factory job without a college education. Workers with skills learned in vocational schools or on the job could do work that did not require a college education. These were among the jobs

that new immigrants were often able to obtain. Increasingly, however, the advert of new technologies has meant that more and more education is required to do the work. Many of the new jobs in the United States either require a college education, even a graduate degree, or they are low-paying jobs in the service sector of the economy, such as fast-food restaurants, small stores, and hotels.

Educating the Individual

American schools tend to put more emphasis on developing critical thinking skills than they do on acquiring quantities of facts. American students are encouraged to express their own opinions in class and think for themselves, a reflection of the American values of individual freedom and self-reliance. The goal of the American education system is to teach children how to learn and to help them reach their maximum potential.

The development of social and interpersonal skills may be considered as important as the development of intellectual skills. To help students develop these other important skills, schools have added a large number of extracurricular activities (activities outside classroom studies) to daily life at school. These activities are almost as important as the students class work. For example, in making their decisions about which students to admit, colleges look for students who are “well-rounded.” Grades on high school courses and scores on tests like the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) are very important, but so are the extracurricular activities. It is by participating in these activities that students demonstrate their special talents, their level of maturity and responsibility, their leadership quantities, and their ability to get along with others.

Some Americans consider athletics, frequently called competitive sports, the most important of all extracurricular activities. This is because many people believe it is important for young people, particularly young men, to learn how to compete successfully. Team sports such as football, basketball, and baseball are important because they teach students the "winning spirit.” At times, this athletic competition may be carried to such an extreme that some students and their parents may place more importance on the high school’s sports program than its academic offerings.

Student government is another extracurricular activity designed to develop competitive, political, and social skills in students. The students choose a number of government officers, who compete for the votes of their fellow students in school elections. Although these officers have little power over the central decisions of the school, the process of running for office and then taking responsibility for a number of students activities if elected is seen as good

experience in developing their leadership and competitive skills, and helping them to be responsible citizens.

Athletics and student government are only two of a variety of extracurricular activities found in American schools. There are clubs and activities for almost every student interest_ art, music, drama, debate, foreign languages, photography, volunteer work_ all aimed at helping the student to become more successful in later life. Many parents watch their children's extracurricular activities with as much interest and concern as they do their children's intellectual achievements in the classroom.

Racial Equality and Education

The most significant departure from the ideal of equality of opportunity in education has occurred in the education of African-Americans. After the Civil War in 1860s, the southern states developed a social and legal system that segregated the former black slaves from the white population in all public facilities, including schools. Black people in the southern states were prohibited by law from attending schools with whites. Blacks had separate schools, that were inferior to the white schools by almost any measure.

In a test case in 1896, the Supreme Court of the United States stated that racial segregation in public schools and other public facilities in the southern states did not violate the Constitution. Equality of opportunity was such an important American value that the Supreme Court had to pretend that the separate black schools and other facilities were equal to those of whites, when everyone know that they were not. The Supreme Court invented what is called the *separate but equal doctrine* to justify racial segregation in public schools and other public facilities in the southern states. One Supreme Court Justice strongly disagreed. Justice John Marshall Harlan believed that the decision violated the nation's highest law and its basic values. "Our Constitution is color-blind," he said, "and neither knows nor tolerates classes among its citizens."

Fifty-eight years later a more modern Supreme Court agreed with Justice Harlan. In a historic decision in 1954, it held that laws that forced black students to go to racially segregated schools violated the U.S. Constitution because such schools could never be equal. The opinion of the Court was that "to separate [black school children] from others... solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority... that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."

Although segregated schools were not legal after 1954, they continued to exist in the South until the passage of the Civil Rights bills of the mid-1960s. In

the late 1960s and 1970s, a series of court decisions forced the nation to take measures to integrate all of its schools, both North and South. In the North, there had been no legal segregation of schools. However, in both the South and the North, the neighborhood schools reflected the makeup of the races who lived in the neighborhood. Thus, the residential patterns were often the source of the problem, particularly in urban areas. The public schools in the inner city were composed predominantly of African-American students and often shared the neighborhood problems of high crime rates and other forms of social disorder. These schools were clearly unequal to those in the predominantly white, middle-class neighborhoods in the suburbs.

For the next 20 years, Americans tried various methods to achieve racial balance in the public schools. The most controversial method used to deal with unequal neighborhood schools was the busing of school children from their home neighborhoods to schools in more distant neighborhoods in order to achieve a greater mixture of black and white children in all schools. Black children from the inner city were bused to schools in predominantly white middle-class neighborhoods, and students living in the middle-class neighborhoods were bused into the poorer black neighborhood schools. As a result, some children had to ride the bus for an hour each way, going to and from school. Most students did not like it, and neither did their parents. Many school districts have now abandoned mandatory busing, and they allow children to attend the school in their own neighborhood, even if it is predominantly black or white. Some school districts have established “magnet” schools in black neighborhoods to attract white children who want to participate in special programs offered only at the magnet school.

Three out of five American schools are still 90 percent white. In schools where African-Americans and other minorities are the majority, more than half the students come from low-income homes, in contrast to one in 25 of the majority white schools. There is no clear agreement among Americans as to whether or not busing has succeeded in increasing equal opportunity in the field of public education, although most would agree that equality is certainly a goal that should be pursued. It is doubtful that American parents would have tolerated the amount of busing that has taken place if the ideal of equality of opportunity were not so strong in the American culture.

A new question dealing with racial and ethnic equality in education was brought to the Supreme Court in the late 1970s. The question dealt with the admissions policies of professional schools, such as medical and law schools, which are attached to many of the nation’s universities. Some of these schools have attempted to do more than treat all applicants equally. Many have tried in recent years to make up for past discrimination against blacks and other minorities

by setting aside a certain number of places specifically for applicants from these groups, taking *affirmative action*. Schools set quotas for minimum numbers of minority students that must be admitted to their programs, even if that meant lowering somewhat the academic standards for admission of these students.

This could be seen as special treatment rather than equal opportunity. However, many professional school administrators believed that because of discrimination against these groups in the past, equality now demanded that certain limited numbers of minority students be given some extra advantage in the selection of new professional students.

These minority quotas were challenged by a white student, Allen Bakke, who was denied admission to the medical school at the University of California at Davis, California. He claimed that the medical school had admitted some nonwhite minority students less qualified than he. The U.S. Supreme Court in the famous *Bakke Case* of 1978 agreed that he had been denied an equal opportunity for admission. In a rather complicated decision, the Court held that a professional school could not set aside a certain number of places to filled only by minority students. Such quotas were a denial of equal educational opportunity. Professional schools, however, could give some extra consideration to nonwhite minority applicants, but the Court was forbidding them to carry this practice too far.

The Increasing Responsibilities of Public Schools

Americans place the weight of many of their ideals, hopes, and problems on the nation's public school system. Some observers believe they have placed more responsibilities on the public schools than the schools can possibly handle. For example, public schools are often expected to solve student problems that result from the weakening of family ties in the United States. Rising divorce rates have resulted in an increasing number of children in the public schools who are raised by only one parent. Studies have shown that these students are more likely to have problems al school than are children raised in families with two parents.

The class graduating from high school in 2001 has many children that are "at risk" for having problems at school:

- Minority enrollment levels range from 70 percent to 96 percent in the nation's 15 largest school systems.
- One of four children live below the poverty level as childhood poverty has reached its highest level since the 1960s.
- Fifteen percent are physically or mentally handicapped.
- Fourteen percent are children of teenage mothers.
- Fourteen percent are children of unmarried parents.

- Ten percent have poorly educated, sometimes illiterate, parents.
- Between one-quarter and one-third have no one at home after school.
- Forty percent will live in broken homes [parents divorced] by the time they are 18 years old.
- Twenty-five percent or more will not finish school.

The education of new immigrant children provides the public school system with some of its greatest challenges. Many of the children come from countries where they have not had strong educational preparation, and their academic skills are below grade level. Others have come from school systems with standards similar to or more advanced than the American schools, and their academic adjustment is much easier. However, all these children must learn English. This means that they are trying to learn new concepts at the same time that they are struggling to learn a new language. Studies show that it takes five to seven years in order for them to be able to compete with English-speaking American children on an equal basis in classes where English is the language of instruction. There are some bilingual programs in areas where there is a large concentration of one language group, particularly Spanish speakers. However, in some school districts, there are children speaking anywhere from 50 to 115 different languages. It is not uncommon for a teacher to have children speaking five or six different native languages in one classroom.

At a time when enormous now burdens are being placed on the public schools, the nation finds itself faced with new limits on its material abundance. These limits have steadily reduced the amount of money available to the public schools as they try to deal will their rapidly growing problems.

The Standards Movement

Recently, international comparisons of education have revealed that, in general, American students do not perform as well in math, science, and other subjects as students from many other developed countries. Some believe this is because American standards for education may not be high enough. Traditionally, local community school districts have had responsibility for determining school curricular and selecting textbooks, with only limited state or national supervision. However; in the 1990s, both the states and the federal government have become more involved in determining school standards. The federal government has set national goals for education that include standard for early childhood, elementary, secondary, and adult education. Most major educational associations, such as national associations of teachers of science, or math, or language arts are also evaluating the current curricular and criteria for certification and developing new standards. To ensure that standards are met, many states now require students to pass a series of examinations in such subjects as reading, writing, mathematics,

and civics before they can graduate from high school. There is also some discussion of national examinations, though that could be difficult to achieve, since Americans still believe in local control (and funding) of schools.

Multicultural Education

The changing populations of students in American schools has brought some changes in what is taught in the school as well. Ethnic and racial minorities have criticized schools and textbooks for focusing too much on the literature and historical events of Anglo-Europeans or white males. They believe that schools have almost ignored the contributions of African-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. More seriously, some have charged that American history has been told from the perspective of Anglo-Europeans rather than exploring historical events from the various perspectives of those involved. For example, the frontier movement west has been presented more from the perspective of descendants of white settlers than from the perspectives of the descendants of the Native Americans who were moved in the process.

During the 1990s, schools began to examine seriously their curricular and to try to incorporate more varied cultural information and perspectives into education. These attempts to provide multicultural education have ranged from simply adding information and literature to the current textbooks and curricular to more sweeping attempts to transform the basic curriculum into one that is more reflective of the diversity of the students who will study it. At the most basic level, many schools celebrate African-American History Month or Hispanic singing, and foods from the nations from which the students have come. Many schools have adopted (1) history or social studies textbooks that include more information about African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and other minorities, and (2) American literature texts that include poetry and fiction written by Americans of all ethnic backgrounds. In some colleges, the traditional set of Western great books, sometimes called *the canon,* has been replaced by a much broader set of literary texts, reflecting the experiences and backgrounds of the students who will be reading them.

Not all Americans support multicultural education, however. Some fear that replacing the Western civilization and literary traditions, which have been the basis of American education, with a much broader historical and literary discussion will result in fragmentation of American society. Schools, have traditionally been the place where students of all ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds have learned "American" history, literature, and values. With so many competing views of history or sets of values in the school, some fear that it will be difficult for the country to remain "American." It is a serious question: Can

a country as diverse as the United States have schools that reflect that diversity and still retain a core national identity and culture?

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction to American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

public school
educational ladder
common school
national blessing
universal education
"working your way to the top"
the money value of education/ monetary value
standards movement
extracurricular activities
segregated school
mandatory busing
affirmative action
quota
multicultural education
pre-school program
kindergarten
elementary school
high school
middle school/ junior high school
senior high school
entrance requirements
elite private school
financial aid program
vocational school
teach children how to learn and to help them reach their maximum potential
interpersonal skills
intellectual skill
well-rounded
"magnet" school
bilingual program
adult education
the canon

FURTHER READING

1. The American System of Education by John B. Orr (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

UNIT 6

FAMILY

Reading: THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Family Structures

What is the typical American family like? If Americans are asked to name the members of their families, family structure becomes clear. Married American adults will name their husband or wife and their children, if they have any, as their "immediate family." If they mention their father, mother, sisters, or brothers, they will define them as separate units, usually living in separate households. Aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents are considered "extended family."

The structure of the American family has undergone enormous changes since 1950s. Traditionally, the American family has been a nuclear family, consisting of a husband, wife, and their children, living in a house or apartment. Grandparents rarely live in the same home with their married sons and daughters, and uncles and aunts almost never do.

In the 1950s, 70 percent of American households were the "classic" American family_ a husband, wife, and two children. The father was the "breadwinner" (the one who earned the money to support the family), the mother was a "homemaker" (the one who took care of the children and did not work outside the home), and they had two children under the age of 18. If you say the word "family" to Americans, this is probably the picture that comes to their minds.

Yet, in reality, in the 1990s, only 8 percent of American households consist of a working father, a stay-at-home mother, and two children under 18. An additional 18 percent of households consist of two parents who are both working and one or more children under the age of 18 living at home. That means that a total of only 26 percent of households in the United States consist of two parents and their children. The remaining households consist of the following: 30 percent are married couples without children; 8 percent are single parents and their children; 11 percent are unmarried couples and others living together. And perhaps most startling, in 25 percent of the households, there is someone living alone.

What has happened to the traditional American family, and why? Some of the explanation is demographic. In the 1950s, men who had fought in World War II had returned home, married, and were raising their families. There was a

substantial increase (or "boom") in the birth rate, producing the "baby boomers." A second demographic factor is that today young people are marrying and having children later in life. Some couples now choose not to have children at all. A third factor is that people are living longer after their children are grown, and they often end up alone. And, of course, there is a fourth factor _ the high rate of divorce. But numbers alone cannot account for the dramatic changes in the family. Understanding the values at work in the family will provide some important insights.

The Emphasis on Individual Freedom

Americans view the family as a group whose primary purpose is to advance the happiness of individual members. The result is that the needs of each individual take priority in the life of the family. In contrast to that of many other cultures, the primary responsibility of the American family member is not to advance the family as a group, either socially or economically, nor is it to bring honor to the family name. This is partly because the United States is not an aristocratic society.

Family name and honor are less important than in aristocratic societies, since equality of opportunity regardless of birth is considered a basic American value. Moreover, there is less emphasis on the family as an economic unit because the American family is rarely self-supporting. Relatively few families maintain self-supporting family farms or businesses for more than one generation. A farmer's son, for example, is very likely to go on to college, leave the family farm, and take an entirely different job in a different location.

The American desire for freedom from outside control clearly extends to the family. Americans do not like to have controls placed on them by other family members. They want to make independent decisions and not be told what to do by grandparents or uncles or aunts. For example, both American men and women expect to decide what job is best for them as individuals. Indeed, young Americans are encouraged by their families to make such independent career decisions. What would be best for the family is not considered to be as important as what would be best for the individual.

Marriage and Divorce

Marriages are not "arranged" in the United States. Young people are expected to find a husband or wife on their own; their parents do not usually help them. In fact, parents are frequently not told of marriage plans until the couple has decided to marry. This means that parents have little control, and generally not much influence, over whom their children marry. Americans believe that young

people should fall in love and then decide to marry someone they can live happily with, again evidence of the importance of an individual's happiness. Of course, in reality this does not always happen, but it remains the ideal, and it shapes the views of courtship and marriage among young Americans.

Over the years, the value placed on marriage itself is determined largely by how happy the husband and wife make each other: Happiness is based primarily on companionship. The majority of American women value companionship as the most important part of marriage. Other values, such as having economic support and the opportunity to have children, although important, are seen by many as less important.

If the couple is not happy, the individuals may choose to get a divorce. A divorce is relatively easy to obtain in most parts of the United States. Most states have "no-fault" divorce. To obtain a no-fault divorce, a couple states that they can no longer live happily together; that they have "irreconcilable differences," and that it is neither partner's fault.

The divorce rate rose rapidly in the United States after the 1950s, but it had leveled off by the 1990s. Approximately one out of every two marriages now ends in divorce. Often children are involved. The great majority of adult Americans believe that unhappy couples should not stay married just because they have children at home, a significant change in attitude since the 1950s. Most people do not believe in sacrificing individual happiness for the sake of the children. They say that children actually may be better off living with one parent than with two who are constantly arguing. Divorce is now so common that it is no longer socially unacceptable, and children are not embarrassed to say that their parents are divorced. However, sociologists are still studying the long-term psychological consequences of divorce.

Equality in the Family

Along with the American emphasis on individual freedom, the belief in equality has had a strong effect on the family. Alexis de Tocqueville saw the connection clearly in the 1830s. He said that in aristocratic societies inequality extends into the family, particularly to the father's relationship to his children. The father is accepted as ruler and master. The children's relations with him are very formal, and love for him is always combined with fear. In the United States, however, the democratic idea of equality destroys much of the father's status as ruler of the family and lessens the emotional distance between father and children. There is less formal respect for, and fear of, the father. But there is more affection expressed toward him. "The master and constituted [legal] ruler have vanished," said de Tocqueville; "the father remains."

What de Tocqueville said of American fathers and children almost two centuries ago applies to relations between parents and children in the United States today. There is much more social equality between parents and children than in most aristocratic societies or societies ruled by centuries of tradition. This can be witnessed in arguments between parents and their children, and in the considerable independence granted to teenagers. In fact some Americans are worried that there is too much democracy in the home. Since the early 1960s, there has been a significant decline in parental authority and children's respect for their parents. This is particularly true of teenagers. Some parents seem to have little or no control over the behavior of their teenage children, particularly after they turn 16 and get their drivers' licenses.

On the other hand, Americans give their young people a lot of freedom because they want to teach their children to be independent and self-reliant. American children are expected to "leave the nest" at about age 18, after they graduate from high school. At that time they are expected to go on to college (many go to another city) or to get a job and support themselves. By their mid-20s, if children are still living with their parents people will suspect that something is "wrong" Children are given a lot of freedom and equality in the family so that they will grow up to be independent, self-reliant adults. Today, however, many young people are unable to find jobs that support the lifestyle they have grown up with, and they choose to move back in with their parents for a time. These young people are sometimes called "boomerang kids," because they have left the nest once but are now back again.

The Role of the Family in Society

The American ideal of equality has effected not only marriage but all forms of relationships between men and women. Americans gain a number of benefits by placing so much importance on achieving individual freedom and equality within the context of the family. The needs and desires of each member are given a great deal of attention and importance. However, a price is paid for these benefits. American families are less stable and lasting than those of most cultures. The high rate of divorce in American families is perhaps the most important indicator of this instability.

The American attitude toward the family contains many contradictions. For example, Americans will tolerate a good deal of instability in their families, including divorce, in order to protect such values as freedom and equality. On the other hand, they are strongly attached to the idea of the family as the best of all. lifestyles. In fact, the great majority of persons who get divorces find a new partner and remarry. Studies show consistently that more than 90 percent of Americans believe that family life is an important value.

What is family life? We have seen that only 26 percent of the households are the "typical" American family_ a father, mother, and children. Many of these are really “step families,” or “blended families.” Since most divorced people remarry, many children are living with a stepmother or stepfather. In a “blended” family, the parents may each have children from a previous marriage, and then have one or more children together _ producing “yours," “mine,” and “ours.” Such families often result in very complicated and often stressful relationships. A child may have four sets of grandparents instead of two, for example. Blending families is not easy, and, sadly, many second marriages fail.

In addition to traditional families and blended families, there are a number of single parents, both mothers and fathers (more mothers), raising their children alone. Many of the single mothers are divorced, but some have never married. Indeed, by the mid-1990s, a startling one-third of all now babies were born to single mothers. Sometimes single parents and their children live with the grandparents for economic and emotional support.

Sociologists and psychologists tell us that the family is the best place for children to learn moral values and a sense of responsibility. Beginning in the early 1990s, experts began to voice concern over what was happening to many children in America. Today, the state of American family is frequently discussed, not only by experts but by the press, elected officials, and the general public. The majority of Americans believe that the institution of the family and “family values" are both in deep trouble, and they are asking the schools to provide more moral education than in the past. But if you ask Americans how their own families are, most will tell you they generally happy with their family life.

Family Values

In *Values and Public Policy,* Daniel Yankelovich reports on surveys done on family values. There are 11 points that a majority of Americans agree are “family values." Yankelovich classifies six of them as “clearly traditional”:

- Respecting one’s parents
- Being responsible for one’s actions
- Having faith in God
- Respecting authority
- Married to the same person for life
- Leaving the world in better shape

The other five are “a blend of traditional and newer, more expressive values”:

- Giving emotional support to other members of the family
- Respecting people for themselves
- Developing greater skill in communicating one's feeling
- Respecting one's children
- Living up to one's potential as an individual

The ideal of the American family is group cooperation to help achieve the fulfillment of each individual member, and shared affection to renew each member's emotional strength. Families can be viewed as similar to churches in this regard. Both are seen by Americans as places where the human spirit can find refuge from the highly competitive world outside and renewed resources to continue the effort. Although in many cases churches and families do not succeed in the task of spiritual renewal, this remains the ideal of church and family in America.

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction to American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

family structure
immediate family/nuclear family
extended family
breadwinner
homemaker
baby boom
no-fault divorce
irreconcilable difference
"leave the nest"
boomerang kid
step family/blended family
family values
stay-at-home mother

FURTHER READING

1. *Introduction _ Defining Gender: Different but Equal* (from Explorations in American Culture by Kathrine Jason and Holly Posner)

2. *Continuity and Change in the American Family* by Tamara K. Hareven (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

3. *Women and American Society* by William II. Chafe (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

UNIT 7

LEISURE TIME

Reading: LEISURE TIME: ORGANIZED SPORTS, RECREATION, AND TELEVISION

Sports and American Values

Most social scientists believe that the sports that are organized by a society generally reflect the basic values of that society and attempt to strengthen them in the minds and emotions of its people. Therefore, organized sports have a more serious social purpose than spontaneous, unorganized play by individuals. This is certainly true in the United States, where the three most popular organized sports are football, basketball, and baseball. Nowhere arc the ways and words of democracy better illustrated than in sports.

Organized sports are seen by Americans as an inspiring example of equality of opportunity in action. In sports, people of different races and economic backgrounds get an equal chance to excel. For this reason, notes sociologist Harry Edwards, Americans view organized sports as "a laboratory in which young men, regardless of social class, can learn the advantages and rewards of a competitive system." Although Edwards specifically mentions young men, young women also compete in organized sports without regard to their race or economic background. Women's sports are growing in popularity in the United States, and they now have more funding and support at the college level than in the past. The 1996 Olympics provided evidence of the increased interest in women's organized sports. American women won gold medals for several team sports _ softball, basketball, soccer, and gymnastics.

The idea of competition is at the very heart of organized sports in the United States. Many Americans believe that learning how to win in sports helps (develop the habits necessary to compete successfully in later life. This training, in turn, strengthens American society as a whole. "It is commonly held," says one sports writer, "that the competitive ethic taught in sports must be learned and ingrained in youth for the future success of American business and military efforts."

The competitive ethic in organized sports contains some elements of hard work_ often called "hustle," "persistence," or "never quitting" _ and of physical courage_ being "tough" or having "guts." Slogans are sometimes used to drive

home the competitive virtues for the young participants: “Hustle_ you can’t survive without it.” “A quitter never wins; a winner never quits.” “It’s easy to be ordinary, but it takes guts to excel.”

Amateur athletics, associated with schools and colleges, are valued for teaching young people traditional American values. Professional sports, in addition to their profit and entertainment purposes, are seen as providing an example to inspire the young to take part in organized sports. In the process of serving as an inspiration for traditional basic values, organized sports have become part of what was referred to as “the national religion,” a mixture of patriotism and national pride on the one hand with religious ideas and symbols on the other. Billy Graham, a famous American Protestant religious leader, once observed: “The Bible says leisure and lying around are morally dangerous... sports keep us busy... There are probably more really committed Christians in sports, both collegiate and professional, than in any other occupation in America.”

Competition Carried to an Extreme?

Although sports in the United States are glorified by many, there are others who are especially critical of the power of sports to corrupt when certain things are carried to excess. An excessive desire to win in sports, for example, can weaken rather than strengthen traditional American values.

Critics have pointed out that there is a long tradition of coaches and players who have done just this. Vince Lombardi, a famous professional football coach of the 1960s, was often criticized for stating that winning is the “only thing” that matters in sports. Woody Hayes, another famous football coach, once said: “Anyone who tells me, “Don't worry that you lost; you played a good game anyway,” I just hate." Critics believe that such statements by coaches weaken the idea that other things, such as fair play, following the rules of the game, and behaving with dignity when one is defeated, are also important. Unfortunately, many coaches still share the “winning is the only thing” philosophy.

There is, however, also a tradition of honorable defeat in American sports. Sociologist Harry Edwards, for example, has pointed out that “The all-important significance of winning is known, but likewise, there is the consoling “reward” of the "honorable defeat” Indeed, the “sweetness” of winning is derived... from the knowledge of having defeated a courageous opponent who performed honorably.”

When the idea of winning in sports is carried to excess, however, honorable competition can turn into disorder and violence. In one game; the players of two professional baseball teams became so angry at each other that the game turned into a large-scale fight between the two teams. The coach of one of the teams was

happy about the fight because, in the games that follow, his team consistently won. He thought that the fight had helped to bring the men on his team closer together. Similarly, a professional football coach stated: “If we didn't go out there and fight, I'd be worried. You go out there and protect your teammates. The guys who sit on the bench, they’re the losers:” Both coaches seemed to share the view that if occasional fights with opposing teams helped to increase the winning spirit of their players, so much the better. Hockey coaches would probably agree. Professional hockey teams are notorious for the fights among players during games. Some hockey fans seem to expect this fighting as part of the entertainment.

There are some who criticize this violence in American sports, particularly football, perhaps America’s favorite sport. From time to time, articles appear in newspapers or magazines such as *Sports Illustrated*, one of the nation’s leading sports magazines, criticizing the number of injuries that have resulted from the extreme roughness of the game, increased by a burning desire to defeat one’s opponent. Some people are particularly concerned about the injuries that high school players get in football games. The pressure to “hit hard” and win high school games is intense. In some parts of the country, especially in the South, boys start playing tackle football in elementary school, bringing the risks of competitive pressure to 9- and 10-year-olds.

Most Americans would probably say that competition in organized sports does more to strengthen the national character than to corrupt it. They believe that climinating competition in sports and in society as a whole would lead to laziness and vice rather than hard work and accomplishment. One high school principal, for example, described the criticism of competitive sports as “the revolutionaries’ attempt to break down the basic foundation upon which society is founded” Comments of this sort illustrate how strong the idea of competition is in the United States and how important organized sports are as a means of maintaining this value in the larger society.

Another criticism of professional sports is that the players and the team owners get too much money, while fans have to pay more and more for tickets to the games. Basketball, baseball, and football stars get multi-million-dollar contracts similar to rock singers and movie stars. Some have asked whether these players are athletes or: entertainers. In 1994, which the baseball players went on strike during the season, history was made: for the first time in 90 years, there was no World Series. The players wanted no “cap,” or limit, on the salaries they could earn; the owners refused to agree, but they also refused to reveal how much profit they make. The fans were the losers, and most people were disgusted by both the players and the owners. Sportscasters talked about how greed as spoiling the sport that is “as American as apple pie.”

Recreation: A Time for Self-Improvement

Unlike organized sports, what is generally called recreation in the United States is not expected to encourage competition. For this reason, it is much more spontaneous and serves the individual's needs beyond the competitive world of work. Nevertheless, much can be learned about the values of Americans from an examination of the kinds of recreation in which they engage.

Many Americans prefer recreation that requires a high level of physical activity. This is true of the three fastest growing adult recreational sports: jogging or running, tennis, and snow skiing. It would seem that Americans carry over their belief in hard work into their world of play and recreation. The well-known expression "we like to work hard and play hard" is an example of this philosophy.

What began in the 1970s as the "physical fitness craze" has become a way of life for many. A number of people regularly work out at sports clubs _ lifting weights, swimming, playing squash or racquetball, participating in aerobic exercise classes, or using exercise bikes, treadmills, rowing machines, or stair-steppers. Long-distance marathon races are so popular that the organizers often have to limit the number of people who can participate. In addition to the famous Boston and new York marathons, there are races in many other cities and even in small towns, drawing from several hundred to as many as 80,000 participants. Few of the people expect to win_ most just want to finish the race. The races are usually open to all, young and old alike, even those in wheelchairs.

The high level of physical activity enjoyed by many Americans at play has led to the observation that Americans have difficulty relaxing, even in their leisure time. Yet the people who enjoy these physical activities often say that they find them very relaxing mentally because the activity is so different from the kind of activity they must do in the world of work, often indoor office work involving mind rather than body.

The interest that Americans have in self-improvement, traceable in large measure to the nation's Protestant heritage, is also carried over into their recreation habits. It is evident in the joggers who are determined to improve the distance they can run, and in the people who spend their vacation time learning a new sport such as sailing or deep-sea diving. The self-improvement motive, however, can also be seen in many other popular forms of recreation that involve little or no physical activity.

Interest and participation in cultural activities, which improve people's minds or skills, are also popular. Millions of Americans go to symphony concerts, attend live theater performances, visit museums, hear lectures, and participate in

artistic activities such as painting, performing music, and dancing. Many Americans also enjoy hobbies such as weaving, needlework, candle making, wood carving, and other handicrafts. Community education programs offer a wide range of classes for those interested in anything from "surfing the net" (using the computer Internet) to gourmet cooking, learning a foreign language, writing, art, self-defense, and birdwatching.

The recreational interests of Americans also show a continuing respect for the self-reliance, and sometimes the adventure and danger, of frontier life. While some choose safe pastimes such as handcrafts, gardening, or "do-it-yourself" projects like building bookcases in their den, others are ready to leave home and take some risks. By the mid-1990s, *Newsweek* magazine noted that adventure travel had grown to "an $8 billion business, perhaps as much as a fifth of the U.S. leisure travel market." Millions of Americans have bought mountain bikes to explore the wilderness on their own. Many others are choosing to go white-water rafting, mountain climbing, rock climbing, sky diving, helicopter skiing, and bungee jumping. U.S. park officials complain about the number of people who take life-threatening risks in national parks and have to be rescued. "It is as if they are looking for hardship," one park official stated. "They seem to enjoy the danger and the physical challenge."

Not all Americans want to "rough it" while they are on their adventure holidays, however. *Newsweek* reports that there are a number of travelers in their 40s who want "soft adventure." Judi Wineland, who operates Overseas Adventure Travel says, "Frankly, it's amazing to us to see baby boomers seeking creature comforts." On her safari trips to Africa, she has to provide hot showers, real beds, and night tables. The American love of comfort seems to be competing with their desire to feel self-reliant and adventurous.

Health and Fitness

Not all Americans are physically fit, or even try to be. The overall population is becoming heavier, due to poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle. Some studies estimate that less than half of Americans exercise in their leisure time. Experts say that it is not because Americans "don't know what's good for them" _ they just don't do it. Compared to the beginning of the 1980s, three-quarters of Americans in the 1990s say that physical fitness is more important to them now than it was then. But the National Center for Health Statistics reports that the number of people who are at least 20 percent over their desirable weight has risen from one in four to one in three Americans.

Newspapers and magazines are full of information on nutrition and proper diet. Television news programs urge people to eat more vegetables and warn of the

dangers of high-fat diets and high cholesterol levels_ particularly heart disease and certain types of cancer. Since 1994 the government has require uniform labeling so that consumers can compare the fat and calories in the food they buy. Grocery stores are full of low-fat or fat-free cookies, crackers, bread, milk, margarine, mayonnaise, and even potato chips. Many Americans have switched to skim milk, but they still buy fancy, fat-rich ice cream. More than half of Americans say that they pay attention to the nutritional content of the food they eat, but they also say they eat what they really want whenever they feel like it.
As one American put it, "Let's face it _ if you're having chips and dip as a snack, fat-free potato chips and fat-free sour cream just don't taste as good as the real thing."

Experts say that it is a combination of social, cultural, and psychological factors that determine how people eat. A *Newsweek* article on American's weight problems refers to "the culture of over-indulgence seemingly ingrained in American life. The land of plenty seems destined to include plenty of pounds as well," they conclude. Part of the problem is that Americans eat larger portions and often go back for second helping, in contrast to how much people eat in many other countries. Another factor is Americans' love of fast food. Some estimates are that 50 percent of Americans eat pizza once every two weeks, a percentage that is no doubt quite a bit higher among high school and college students. Americans are consuming more and more hamburgers, french fries, and soft drinks at restaurants, not only because they like them but also because these foods are often the cheapest items on the menu. Another significant factor is Americans' busy lifestyle. Since so many women are working, families are eating a lot of fast food, frozen dinners, and restaurants "takeout." Some experts believe that Americans have really lost control of their eating; it is not possible to limit fat and calories when they eat too much restaurant and packaged food. It takes time to prepare fresh vegetables and fish; stopping at KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) on the way home from work is a much faster alternative. Often American families eat "on the run" instead of sitting down at the table together.

The Impact of Television

Ironically, as Americans have gotten heavier as a population, the image of a beautiful woman has gotten much slimmer. Marilyn Monroe would be overweight by today's media standards. Television shows and commercials feature actresses who are very slender. Beer and soft drink commercials, for example, often feature very thin girls in bikinis. As a result, many teenage girls have become insecure about their bodies and obsessed with losing weight. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are now common among young women.

Another irony is that although television seems to promote images of slender, physically fit people, the more people watch TV, the less likely they are to exercise. Television has a strong effect on the activity level of many Americans. Some people spend much of their free time lying on the couch watching TV and eating junk food. They are called “couch potatoes,” because they are nothing but “eyes.” (The small marks on potatoes are called “eyes.”) Couch potatoes would rather watch a baseball game on TV than go play softball in the parks with friends or even go to a movie. Cable and satellite TV bring hundreds of stations into American homes. By the mid-1990s, 60 percent of all homes had cable TV, offering an average of 50 to 100 channels 24 hours a day, and satellite dishes were becoming popular. (Satellite TV can bring in as many as 500 channels.) Many of the American TV channels are specialized_ the weather channel, home shopping, CNN and other news networks, ESPN (sports), MTV (Music TV), HBO (Home Box Office), and various other movie channels, to name a few.

With so many programs to choose from, it is not surprising that the average family TV set is on six hours a day, and estimates are that children are watching TV programs and videotapes an average of four or five hours a day. Many adults are worried about the impact of so much television on the nation’s children. They are not getting as much exercise as they should, but the effect on their bodies may not be as serious as the effect on their minds. Many children do not spend enough time reading, educators say. And some studies have shown that excessive watching of television by millions of American children has lowered their ability to achieve in school.

One effect of watching so much TV seems to be a shortening of children’s attention span. Since the advent of the remote control device and the proliferation of channels, many watchers like to "graze” from one program to the next, or “channel surf”_ constantly clicking the remote control to change from channel to channel, stopping for only a few seconds to see if something catches their attention.

And what do children see? Too much sex and violence, most Americans would say. In a recent study, 72 percent said that they believed there was too much violence on television. The American Psychological Association estimates that the average child will witness 8,000 made-for-TV murders before finishing elementary school. Children are also exposed lo sexual situations on TV that are much more explicit than they were a generation ago. Some of the most popular TV shows feature their characters in stories about sex outside of marriage, or even unmarried characters choosing to have a baby. Many Americans worry about the effect of explicit sex (and violence) on the moral values of the young.

As an alternative, public television provides many educational shows, but most people, including children, spend the majority of their viewing time watching commercial television. In 1990, Congress passed a law requiring the entertainment industry to improve the quality of programs directed at children on commercial television. Unfortunately, most experts would probably say that the ’90s brought few positive changes in children’s programming. Indeed, some studies have discovered that there are even more violent acts committed on children’s shows, many of them by cartoon characters, than there are on adult shows.

Some argue that parents are responsible for supervising their children’s TV viewing. But how? Children are often watching television when their parents are either not in the room or even at home. In 1996, Congress, President Clinton, and entertainment executives began to explore the possibility of rating TV programs for their violent content. They planned for new TV sets to be equipped with a “V chip” that will be programmed to block the reception of programs unsuitable for children. Many parents think they can use the help in monitoring what their children see. The reality is that one in four families is headed by a single parent, and in two-thirds of two-parent families, both parents are working. Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 17 have their own TV sets in their bedrooms. The possession of their own TV is an indication of both the material wealth and the individual freedom that many children have in the United States.

The popularity of home computers and “surfing the net"_ seeing what is on the Internet and the World Wide Web_ has brought the whole new world of leisure-time activities to Americans. Some value the enormous educational opportunities it brings, while others prefer spending their time in "chat room” (having discussion with others “on-line”), communicating with friends or family vie “E-mail,” or playing the latest computer games. Computers are also extremely popular with children and teenagers, and this of course raises questions of where they are traveling on the net or the web and what they are seeing. Now parents have to worry about monitoring the computer in addition to monitoring the TV.

Leisure time in the United States offers something for everyone; the only complaint that most Americans have is that they do not have enough of it. Americans, like people everywhere, sometimes choose recreation that just provides rest and relaxation. Watching television, going out for dinner, and visiting friends are simply enjoyable ways to pass the time. As we have seen, however, millions of Americans seek new challenges involving new forms of effort even in their leisure time. “Their reward,” states U.S. News and World Report, “is a renewed sense of vitality,” a sense of a goal conquered and confidence regained in dealing with life’s ups and downs.

(Source: The American Ways. An Introduction American Culture by Maryanne Kearny Datesman, JoAnn Crandall and Edward N. Kearny)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

organized sports
team sports
"We like to work hard and play hard."
physical fitness craze
coach potatoes
fair play
"Hustle - you can't survive without it."
"A quitter never wins, a winner never quits."
"It's easy to be ordinary, but it takes guts to excel."
"The national religion"
self-improvement
surfing the net
channel surf

FURTHER READING

1. *Sports and American Culture* by Richard G. Powers (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

2. *Entertainment and the Mass Media* by Norman Corwin (from Making America, edited by Luther S. Luedtke)

UNIT 8

JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND DISCRIMINATION

Reading 1: I HAVE A DREAM

By Lisa Evans

Today in the South, blacks and whites work at the same jobs, live in the same neighborhoods, and attend the same schools. Interracial marriages, illegal in most southern states until 1967, are gradually increasing in number, although they are still rare. "White Only" signs have been removed from restaurants and other public places, and blacks are no longer barred from swimming pools because of fears that their black skin might contaminate the water.

It has taken a long time to achieve these steps toward racial equality. Blacks had been slaves in the South from 1619, when they were first brought to the New World by Dutch traders, until 1865 which the Civil War finally freed them_ a period of almost 250 years. While attitudes, however, were slow to respond to this change in the status of blacks, who continued to be treated as inferiors despite their emancipation. It was not until almost a century later that blacks began to demand their rights as American citizens.

Many people feel the evil rights movement started with a small incident in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. On an unusually hot day in December, six whites boarded a Montgomery city bus. It was customary in the South for blacks to sit in the back of the bus, but on that particular day, seeing that the white section was full, the bus driver asked four black passengers in the rear to give their scats to the whites. Three of the blacks obeyed immediately, but the fourth, Rosa parks, refused. She was subsequently arrested. Why didn't she move? As she later explained, she was seemly tired from shopping and her feet hurt; she just didn't feel like standing. To protest her arrest, 50,000 Montgomery blacks boycotted the city bus system. They refused to ride on the buses until the company changed its policy of segregated seating. Since about 75 percent of the company's passengers had been blacks, the company lost a lot of money. The boycott continued for one year until the Supreme Court finally ruled that segregation on buses was illegal. The peaceful protest had succeeded.

The leader of the Montgomery bus boycott was a young black minister named Martin Luther King, Jr. During the decade he was destined to become the most famous civil rights leader in the history of the United States. Dr. King believed that the struggle for equal rights should be peaceful, and he preached a

philosophy of nonviolent resistance. In 1963 he led a march of more than 250,000 people, both white and black, in Washington, D.C., to demonstrate for equal rights. In his speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, he spoke of his dream that someday people would "not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." In 1964, Martin Luther King, Jr., by then known throughout the world, received the Nobel prize for peace. Four years later, during a period of heightened racial tension, the peace-loving King was assassinated while attending a conference for civil rights in Memphis, Tennessee.

Under King's leadership, the early 1960s were characterized by peaceful protests, such as "sit-ins." At that time many restaurants and lunch counters in the South refused to serve blacks. In protest, blacks and sympathetic whites sat on stools at the counters of these restaurants and refused to move until they were served. These sit-ins were successful. Gradually, restaurants across the South were forced to abandon their policy of segregation.

During this period many of the more obvious signs of segregation disappeared as a result of nonviolent protests and federal legislation; however, the basic inequalities still existed. There were, for example, no longer separate drinking fountains and restrooms for blacks and whites, but racial discrimination remained widespread in jobs, schools, and elections. Employers refused to hire blacks for better positions, with the result that blacks were often forced to accept the most undesirable jobs. In many schools across the country, segregation continued despite the Supreme Court ruling that segregated schools were illegal because they did not provide children with equal educational opportunities. In addition, many blacks in the South were ineligible to vote because they could not meet the overly strict voting requirements established by whiles in the southern states. Finally, in 1964, Congress passed the Civil Right Act, probably the most important piece of legislation for minority groups in the United States. The law said that all Americans must be treated equally in regard to employment, education, the right to vote, and the use of public facilities. Equal rights for blacks were now at least a legal reality.

Nevertheless, tension in black communities continued to mount. Many blacks were frustrated by the slow progress which resulted from nonviolent protests and federal civil rights legislation. A new era, marked by nationwide racial violence, began in the mid-1960s. Between 1964 and 1968 there were 239 racially motivated riots across the country. Cities became battlefields with militant demonstrators shouting "Burn Baby Burn!" and police brandishing guns.

During this period blacks also developed a new pride in their race and history. They dropped the old term "Negro" in favor of "Afro-American" or

"Black." Popular slogans such as "Black is beautiful" and "Black power" reflected their growing sense of unity and strength.

Racial tension decreased in the 1970s thanks to the gradual enforcement and acceptance of civil rights legislation. Today in the 1980s, despite the fact that blacks live in freedom and equality unparalleled in their American history, economic and social problems persist and incidents of racial discrimination and violence are not uncommon. A discrepancy still exists between legal rights and social realities. The true hope of the United States remains that someday Martin Luther King's dream will come true, "... that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.""

(Source: Meet the U.S. People and Places in the United States by Leslie Kagan and Kay Westerfield)

KEY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Civil War
Civil Right Act
racial discrimination
sit-in
nonviolent resistance

Reading 2: I HAVE A DREAM

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Fivescore years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been scared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination; one hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity; one

hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land.

So we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our public wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny, and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one.

We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for whites only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of excessive trials and tribulation. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi; go back to Alabama; go back to South Carolina; go back to Georgia; go back to Louisiana; go back to the slums and ghettos of the northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can, and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

So I say to you, my friends, that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the

American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed_ we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day, even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, will its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, that one day, right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning _ “my country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my father dies, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountain side, let freedom ring” _ and if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California,

But not only that.

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children_ black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants_ will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, “Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last.”