

THE GLORY OF THE UNREQUIRED

The following is a speech given by Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter Sr. at Kansai Soka High School, Sept. 9.

Because your school motto is “wisdom, passion and glory,” I have decided to speak today from the topic “the glory of the unrequired.”

How many of you intend to be great? If it is not you, it will surely be somebody else. Greatness, like money, power and prestige, are not ends in themselves, but byproducts of our commitment to something beyond ourselves. Greatness, like success, is a moving target. Just because you are having an easy passage through high school does not mean that the wheels of success are permanently greased. No, they are not permanently greased for anyone, not now or ever. The only fate that the future has depends on the choices you and I make in this year 2000.

To choose or elect the unrequired is the first step toward greatness, and the top, where there is plenty of room. If you choose the unrequired, it is the first indication that you’ve got the COURAGE for glory.

Doing the unrequired is the only way to bring out the stars.

The glory of the unrequired involves not just a contribution but a commitment.

Vote for the best. Don’t vote for safe ideas, the least, the easiest or the cheapest in yourself. If you vote cheap, you’ll be cheap. But if I were you, I would vote for the road less traveled, and that will make all the difference in the world. Let yourself be used by great ideas, chase the rainbow, build air castles, grasp after the moon, and yes, you reach for the stars.

In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Genesis 1:16, you will find these words: “And the Creator made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night; He made the stars also.”

The stars, however, are the giant glories of creation. Nobody knows how many billions of stars exist. And the text says, the Creator created the stars also—“also.” Think of the immensity of the “also.” The Creator is always throwing in a little extra, going beyond the call of duty.

Are you in tune with greatness? The Creator is. Jesus is, the original Buddha is, Martin Luther King Jr. is, Leontyne Price is, Coretta King is and Dr. Ikeda is.

If you want to move mountains with faith and force, becoming dedicated deliverers in the tradition of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, then you must do the unrequired.

Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, Martin Luther King Jr.’s mentor said: “It must be borne in mind that the tragedy in life doesn’t lie in not reaching your goal, the tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn’t a calamity to die with unfulfilled dreams, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal, but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin.”

Do you have the nerve and courage to advocate the alternative to violence? I’m talking about a commitment, something extra, going beyond what is required, being a winner.

If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't;
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't
It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you've lost
For out in the world you find
Success begins with a fellow's will—
It's all in the state of mind

If you think you're out-classed, you are;
You've got to think high to rise;
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win the prize.

Think big and your deeds will grow;
Think small and you'll fall behind;
Think that you can and you will—
It's all in the state of mind.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster person;
But sooner or later he who wins
Is the one who thinks he can.

—“The Winner” (author unknown)