

(instrumental music)

- Let us pray. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight oh, Lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen. Those of us who are somewhat aware of European history, remember how the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, commuted between France and Germany during the last 100 years. Albert Schweitzer, was born in Alsace and John Gunther once asked him, which he thought himself to be most. French or German. Schweitzer replied in Latin, homo sum I am a man, yet not in the sense of I am a male, homo sum. I am a human being. Now this affirmation of an underlying common denominator, is so simple that it may be overlooked. So true that it may be ignored. So devastating that it may be avoided. It is so much more natural to say of a person, he's German, she's French. He's a Northerner, she's a Republican. He's a Baptist, she's a pagan. He's white, she's a college graduate. He's a Negro, she's Jewish. We have to struggle to get behind and below and over these valid but the limiting classifications to the primal and ultimate fact that he and she and we are human be (Latin language) Let's look at this thought together especially as this is Race Relations Sunday. The Old Testament struggles with the idea of the oneness of man in collision with the belief in the chosenness of the Jews. Both creation stories in Genesis, point to a common pair of ancestors for all the people of the earth. The very word Adam, is a generic noun for mankind as well as a proper name for the first man. So, God created man, mankind, in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. The Unitarian Universalist card for last Christmas which several of you sent me, re-echos this idea. "There is only one man in the world and his name is All Men." The words are Carl Sandberg's. The thought is as old as the creation stories and as new as this rainy Sunday. The Jew was never allowed to forget this though he had a hard time living up to it. He so believed that he was of a uniquely chosen race. Amos the prophet, wrapped him over the knuckles about this. Are you not like the Ethiopians to me oh, people of Israel? Says the Lord. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt? And you can hear his heroes giving three cheers. Sure he did. And then Amos adds, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir, granted that Yahweh led the Jews out of Egypt. He also led the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from the distant north east and thus provincialism is spanked and universalism is again enunciated. Homo sum is prior to I am a Jew or a Philistine or a Syrian. Now our classical heritage struggles with this thought. It was the Roman playwright, Terrence, who in the second century, BC, expressed the often quoted dictum. (Latin language) which may be paraphrased, I'm a human being. What concerns any human being must concern me and the use gentium, the law of the nations was an effort on the part of Rome to bring some order and justice into the relationship of the dependent peoples of the empire though all was recognizing the unique status of the Roman citizen. And the philosophers especially the Stoics, attempted to identify the law of nations. They used gentium with the law of nature. It was an understandable mistake to equate Roman might with divine Providence, but there was something noble in the effort. A man is a man is a man, is more basic than a man is a Roman or a Greek or a Jew. And the humanists echoed the slogan homo sum, was Alexander Pope who wrote, "An honest man's the noblest work of God." And it was Robert Burns who in an angry poem, looked forward to the day that man to man, the world o'er shall brothers be for all that. Maybe that's why the

Russians issued a commemorative stamp on his 200th birthday though the English wouldn't. And before we play South Carolina tomorrow night, (narrator clears his throat) let me add one more testimony to this homo sum witness. It is spoken by U Thant, the UN secretary general, regarding the influence of Buddhism on his behavior as a spectator at a boxing match. Suppose that a Burmese boxer and a foreign boxer were fighting for a title, I could watch the progress of the match without any emotional reaction. I would not feel one way or the other whatever the result of the match might be. I was trained to regard humanity as a whole and not in terms of segments or divisions constituting the whole. Local interests became subordinated to national interests and national interests were subordinated to human interests. Maybe that's why the Burmese, U Thant, is the UN secretary general. But I wonder how many of us will behave like him. When we gaze on Mr. McGuire and his Gamecocks on the morrow. There then is the what of homo sum, but we know how far short of it we fall by accident, by intention, by default. I shall not speak this morning of Birmingham and Selma of Jackson and Chapel Hill. I would instead call to your remembrance two passages which we all know. The first is from the Merchant of Venice. Shylock is speaking, "I am a Jew. Half not a Jew eyes, half not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is. Homo sum. I am Adam. I am a human being. The second passage is a short poem by Countee Cullen entitled "Incident". Once riding in Old Baltimore, heart filled, head filled with glee, I saw a Baltimore and keep looking straight at me. Now I was eight and very small and he was no quite bigger. And so I smiled, but he poked out his tongue and called me nigga. I saw the whole of Baltimore from May until December. Of all the things that happened there, that's all that I remember. Puer sum. I am a boy. I'm not just a nigga. I'm not even just a Negro. I too I'm of Adam. I am Adam. Homo sum. Now the question rises. Why should I accept the what of homo sum, even granted its long history its widespread geography its recurrent affirmation? Oh, there are all kinds of reasons. Self-interest, intelligence, the other regarding quality in our makeup. But there's just one answer we shall consider assembled as we are in the university service of worship. Christiano sum. I am to some extent a Christian. Naturally we turn to our Lord for the motivation of our lives and we find him stressing homo sum both in his teaching and in his behavior. He told a parable in which the hated Samaritan was the humane human being. He instructed his followers to love their enemies, domestic and foreign. He ate with despised, publicans and sinners. He forgave an adulteress. He paid his highest compliment to a Roman junior officer. He healed the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman. He behaved in word and indeed like a human being par excellence. And when Pontius Pilate presented Jesus to the Jewish hierarchy he said, "Behold the man." And in the Latin version of the New Testament, the Vulgate, these words are translated, ecce homo, Which we may with dramatic irony render look a human being. And this emphasis comes to light in the Ephesian passage which was our morning lesson. The writer is struggling with the problem, how to make Jewish Christians forget their tribal background and Gentile Christians ignore their racial tradition and together live just as Christians. Pure and simple. And he used as an analogy, an architectural fact. In the temple at Jerusalem, which was destroyed about 70AD, there was a barrier beyond which a Gentile could not pass on penalty of death. The inscription which carried that warning, is now in a museum in Istanbul formerly Constantinople. You can see it there. Now the letter writer pointed out that Jesus had smashed that partition. Listen to his words, "For he is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two. So making peace." Now this from one angle, is the creation of a new humanity. From another angle, it is the recreation of the original humanity. The recovery of the fact

that we are children of Adam the common ancestor of all men, because he was all men. This thought is echoed in another New Testament letter. There is neither Jew nor Greek for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Now this is why we should accept the what of homo sum because each of us is a Christian. Christiano sum with all racial qualifying adjectives, with all tribal restrictive labels omitted. Oh I know that we Christians have not have been a howling success in living up to the insights of our faith. We could cite example after example, dozens, scores, hundreds of failure upon failure to take seriously the example of our Lord or the teachings of the New Testament. But all is not lost. The very fact that our race relation Sunday is observed, is a sign both of sin and of repentance. The Vatican Council just ended, recognized this revived appreciation, not only in Roman Catholic Protestant relations, but in a new attitude to Jews and Arabs. Father Hans Kung, the great German scholar, in a recent issue of Commonweal, talks of a new period of Judeo Christian relations after 2000 years of church history. Imagine that. A new relationship after 2000 years of church history. And if that surprise you, listen to this one. He adds, "The church looks with great respect on Hinduism and Buddhism and especially on Islam, which together with her also worships the one God and honors Jesus as a prophet." Now there aren't many Protestants who'd say that. This is the official statement of the Vatican Council. Brethren this is a day for celebration as well as for confession but there's a third and last question to be answered. Granted that we should treat all men as fellow human beings and that the primary for us here this morning, is Christian love. How do we go about it? Well, Albert Schweitzer has answered that question for us. Here it is in three sentences. "Example, is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing. Hope is renewed each time that you see a person you know who is deeply involved in the struggle of life helping another person. Example is the only thing. Example is the way to implement the how we can do it in our speaking, in the choice of our words, in the tone of our voice, in the obvious attitude that one person is addressing another person with both recognized as human beings." Those of us who are skilled with the pen can do it in our writing. Arthur Daley, the sports editor of the New York Times. And I wish that another sports editor not a 100 miles from here would read him. Arthur Daley won the Pulitzer Prize for his sport writing. He once quoted a classic remark about Joe Louis, the heavyweight champion which I've never forgotten. Talking of Joe Louis he said, "He's a credit to his race, the human race." "He's a credit to his race, the human race." That's a sentence that lives and sparkles and glows. And those of us who are activists can do it through our deeds. I think of the successful battle recently waged by some divinity school students to force Dunham to allow Negroes, to play on the Edgemont Community Center basketball team in an official league. It was effected by righteous indignation, sheer stickability, and some humor. Ask yourself, where am I needed? And then move in. If we are really needed it doesn't matter if we are Baptists, Buddhist or blasphemers. Presbyterians, papist or pagans if we just care enough for people as persons and have some skill to go with a concern. Someone filling out a questionnaire form for a job set puzzled by this question. Person to notify in case of an accident. Person to notify in case of an accident. Do you know what he finally wrote? Anybody in sight. (audience laughing) That's what I felt two weeks ago. Anybody in sight. Are you in sight of a need? Move in. Yell for help. Example is the thing. Do you know what'll happen? We'll be scared to death, we shall fear for our inadequacy, and we shall be surprised with joy. Well, let's draw this sermon to a conclusion. We act as Christians by treating people as fellow human beings. We do not act to make them Christian. That is not our purpose though it may be a byproduct. And because we are Christian, we discover that we are human beings. (Latin language). I am Christian therefore, I am a human being. We are all children of the same creator and redeemer who is no respecter of color or of race and we are supposed to be like him. Amen. Let us pray. Our father God, whose blessed son

died to break down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, help us to destroy barriers and to build bridges between the races that we may continue his work in our day in generation to thy glory and for the relief of man's estate. And may the blessing of God come upon you abundantly. May it keep you strong and tranquil in the truth of his promises through Jesus Christ our Lord. (choral music)