The Rhetorical Rise and Fall of Tennessee Governor Frank G. Clement, 1952-1967

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THE RHETORICAL RISE AND FALL OF
TENNESSEE GOVERNOR FRANK G. CLEMENT,
1952-1967

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Respect for the word--to employ it with scrupulous care and incorruptible heartfelt love of truth--is essential if there is to be any growth in a society or in the human race.

Dag Hammarskjold

Markings

Dedicated to those who love, respect, and protect The Word
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It is with deep respect that I thank the members of my thesis committee for their guidance and patient urgings during the creation of this study. Over a two year period, I received invaluable help from committee chairman Dr. Carl Kell and committee members Dr. Judith Hoover, Dr. Larry Winn, and Dr. Randall Capps.

Their enthusiasm and dedication not only to this product but to all their students speaks highly of themselves and Western Kentucky University. To the extent that this study is utilized in the future for research, a large measure of its quality and effectiveness rests with the four excellent teachers mentioned above.
PREFACE

If, as pundits claim, Americans seem bored, uninterested, or otherwise repulsed by politics, part of the reason rests with the demise of good political speech. Today, the delivery of speech content, how something is said, does not receive the attention it deserves. Instead, the emphasis is on non-alienating, all-pleasing content.

This trend seems to be a natural by-product of the microscopic scrutiny under which today's public officials find themselves. The increased power and presence of political interest groups, the so-called "political correctness" which has permeated society, and the ubiquitous nature of electronic media have changed the focus of speech making. Today, attention centers on what is said, not how it is said.

The lack of emphasis on the quality of speech delivery comes in an age of instant communication. With more chances for air time, politicians should burnish effective speech styles, not banish them. Instead, they have modified their speech making to the demands of the media, primarily television. The "dumbing" of America is in full stride and with it goes a new generation of boring speakers. Politicians have prostituted the principles of effective political speech and abandoned the personal contact with voters that was once the linchpin of the public-servant--voter relationship.

"Talking heads" set today's public agenda. The massive change wrought by television has created a new rapture with the camera and its shallow sound-bite strategy. This process serves the camera but not the public. Franklin
Roosevelt, the champion of the common person, mastered radio and film without losing touch with the people. John Kennedy effectively used his personality and wit in front of live audiences and television cameras. Despite what the reader thinks of their politics, both were instinctively strong communicators, gifted with their tongues, but acutely aware of how to convey their messages.

The brilliant style of Abraham Lincoln and the passionate, blunt style of Harry Truman have given way to after-dinner speakers whose best lines include "don't blame me" and "read my lips." In this age of the stereotypical, mass-produced politician, very few choose the bold combination of content and delivery, to differentiate themselves from their contemporaries.

Gone are the days when audiences viewed words as magic. The spellbinding oratory of William Jennings Bryan, for all its haughty beauty, has been replaced by the "calculated political two-step," a form of disjointed rhetoric which leaves today's audiences wondering what the speaker actually said. Such a technique has the strategic result of merely appearing substantive. Houdini performed no better escape act.

In the history of southern statehouses, there have been numerous incandescent governors whose rhetorical skills and platform theatrics mesmerized voters from the banks of the Mississippi to the tidewater of Virginia. None was more skillfully trained nor spectacular at the public platform than Governor Frank Clement, 1952-1967. In Tennessee political history, Clement was the last of the evangelical style of political orators prior to the television age of mass political communication. The story of Clement's rhetorical exodus from the stump to the staged rally and finally to the television studio is an important
part of southern political oratory, now a cable and network melange of sound bites and bunting.

Usually, when Frank Clement said something it contained a message designed for maximum audience impact. Rarely did everyone agree with what he said, but people did not come away from his speeches feeling cheated. In most cases, what he said and how he said it mattered to him equally.

Initially, Clement used television effectively. Ultimately, though, television hastened Clement's downfall. A nationally recognized speaker and rising political star from 1952 to 1956, Clement's career failed to reach the level he set for himself following his Democratic convention appearance in 1956. Rather than accepting the setback as a learning experience, Clement never fully recovered the robust public confidence he had exhibited earlier. Later, stubbornly clinging to the remnants of his speaking talent, he became an anachronism in a world that had moved away from the evangelical style of speaking to the more sophisticated and subtle presentations of Kennedy and others.

Today, a diminishing few remember Frank Clement and his speaking talents. This man who seemed destined for national greatness, perhaps even the White House; who enthralled audiences in Tennessee and around the country with his speaking; who initiated major humanitarian changes; the enigmatic, controversial, loved, and hated Clement rarely receives public mention in his home state.

Increasingly, he seemed to me a fascinating individual--sensitive, but arrogant, publicly confident, but privately unsure, religious, yet profane, and above all, tragically flawed. He lived for politics at the expense of his family
and, like all politicians true to their profession, at the expense of his friends. Yet, he had a heart, one so big that at times it overshadowed his best judgement.

Frank Clement staked his political career on the Bible. He preached it, and as he would have us to believe he lived it. Clement entertained audiences with his restless mind and his limitless energy. His ability to "read" a crowd and respond to it while in mid-speech stemmed from a lifetime of learning and a God-given talent of discernment. One of the best of the evangelical style of political speakers, Tennessee and America have seen few like him.

I owe much gratitude to those friends who provided encouragement and a place to work during the eighteen months it took to do this study. Ed Wyrick and Dave Nichols are two who come to mind. I am indebted to my family who exhibited the highest degree of patience on those days when I worked rather than played, understanding always that they are the most important parts of my life. To the people, supporters and critics of Clement, who opened their private collections to me and who, most of all, gave me their time and attention I am very grateful. Those wonderfully dedicated people who work at libraries I frequented made my research more enjoyable. Nashville is blessed with an abundance of very fine school libraries including those at Belmont University and David Lipscomb University.

While Frank Clement will always have a sufficient amount of both praise and criticism, researchers will be impressed by his collection of papers. He had the foresight to file and keep a great volume of the paper that crossed his desk, from personal notes to major speeches and just about everything in between. We are the beneficiaries of his prudence. From those papers, an image of Clement emerges for students of history to examine for generations to come.
I am grateful to the wise and patient librarians at the Tennessee State Library and Archives for their constant support and encouragement.

The reader will find in this study much about Clement the person as well as Clement the speaker. The two are inseparable. Clement's personality, including individual characteristics that created the whole person, is tied to this success as a politician and orator.

The purpose of this study, then, is to explore how and why Clement became perhaps the foremost public speaker of his time. His rhetorical rise to notoriety was just as dramatic as his fall during his years in public office, 1952-1959 and 1963-1967. During this effort, I will spotlight five questions which will explore Clement's rhetorical style and its effects during periods of dramatic change. Each can easily stand on its own as a thesis subject. This project, while providing pertinent and enlightening information in each area, represents only a portion of what should be done fully to explore a man who left his indelible mark on the state of Tennessee and its people through words and actions.

There is one more important note. The use of the term "negro" in this study should, in no way, be interpreted as anything other than the use of the prevailing term for African-Americans during Clement's years in public office. While today the term is outdated and objectionable, to substitute the description "African-American" or any other modern term would not be historically accurate.
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The practice of entertaining and informing people with political speech has disappeared, replaced by sound bite posturing and ineffective delivery of questionable content. Technology has forced a wedge between politicians and the public by eliminating the excitement and challenge of compelling, issue-oriented rhetoric in favor of language reduced to the lowest common denominator.

Perhaps the last of the evangelical political speakers, Tennessee governor Frank Clement bonded with his audiences by using a blend of religious fervor, crowd analysis, disciplined technique, and one-on-one empathy. From 1952 until 1956, Clement established himself as the nation's foremost political speaker, an ambitious and talented officeholder whose political path led to greater heights.

Both the best and worst time of Clement's political life occurred at the 1956 Democratic National Convention. Failing to adapt to television and delivering a speech replete with insensitive content and oratory, Clement's
career floundered. Tennesseans elected him to a third term as governor in 1963 only to see his final years in office beset by personal problems, two failed United States Senate bids and an anachronistic speaking style.

Clement's sudden death in 1969 ended a life of tremendous promise and unfulfilled destiny. He had guided Tennessee through unprecedented social change, created an expanded economic base, and provided free textbooks to public school students primarily through the strength of his speaking, yet, he failed to attain self-set goals and died while trying to resurrect his public career.

Today, a void remains in the realm of substantive and entertaining political speaking. With the importance of an informed public now greater than ever, political rhetoric fails to set the standard it once did. Today, the speaking effectiveness of Bryan, Long, Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Clement is studied by historians but not, unfortunately, by their modern-day peers.
INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER 1
RISE TO GREET THE SUN

The stillness of a sticky Fentress county summer evening in 1962 gives way to the sudden and rude roar of a state trooper's car. Cresting a hill on yet another empty stretch of highway, it carries its now-famous occupant to his fourth speech of the day (Boyd, 1972). Inside, he sinks deeper into the seat and deeper into thoughts of the past. It helps to have gospel music playing loudly on the radio, compliments of a local radio station. The Blackwood Brothers, his favorite group, remind him of his younger years in church (Beasley, 1994). The God-centered musical melody seems to energize him, to lift him to a new level after a full day of speeches and appearances in small towns barely the size of his own birthplace.

He had started at 10:30 a.m. in Gainesboro, then moved on to Celina. After that, he spoke to a mid-afternoon crowd in Byrdstown, the home of Cordell Hull. Now he finds himself approaching Jamestown after traveling 160 miles, visiting three cities, and speaking before hundreds of people. Despite the tiring pace, he has loved seeing his people and his state. After all, he has drawn power from them for close to fifteen years. Given the chance, though, he would rather find himself somewhere away from the Appalachian foothills of east Tennessee, to a place where the seat of the world's power lies.

Frank Clement has played the scenario over and over in his mind. It is a game of what-might-have-been. If he had only loosened up on that stage in Chicago back in 1956. If he had known the real impact television would have on
all those people watching at home (Fisher, 1994). If party officials had not given him so many rules or forced him to put on that God-awful makeup (O'Brien, 1995). If Tennessee had not had two other favorite sons in the running for national office at that time (Gardner, 1978). He found it tough enough to get people's attention without having to contend with Estes Kefauver and Albert Gore. If only Adlai Stevenson had done anything besides opening the floor for vice-presidential nominations. That move had caught him, like it had everyone, by surprise.

He had set as a viable goal reaching the White House by this time. The presidency represented such a goal. His move up the political career ladder had gone according to plan and had dazzled even those who did not like him (Martin, 1955). Instead of Jack Kennedy leading the nation from a rocking chair, Frank Clement, young and dynamic, would place himself out front with an unparalleled drive to succeed and a rhetoric to match it.

As he thinks about all that, he works the same circles in his mind that he has worked many times before. Slowly reclining his head on the seat, he experiences a feeling only those who crave the public spotlight can feel. Exhaustion sets in and he does not know if he can make it. His body aches for rest, but his mind says, "Just one more time."

Time moves more slowly away from the city. It affords more opportunity to think, but never enough to rest. Clement has changed his shirt in the car for the fourth time and now he looks out the window. He mentally reviews the names of friends and supporters as the farmers' fields pass before him (O'Brien, 1955). He remembers names very easily, a trait that never fails to help him.

Already the car approaches Jamestown, where people had begun gathering early, anticipating one of Clement's famous stemwinders. Talk has
circulated about the event for days, ever since some of his folks came into town to announce the "speaking" on the courthouse square.

Now, the trooper slows his car upon entering the city limits. Clement suddenly shakes himself from the deep thought and dull, aching feeling that have dogged him. No more slumbering now. The crowd awaits his speech. Seeing cute children and hardworking men and women waiting for him in the twilight of another hot Tennessee day, he once again starts the process that has by now made him a legend in his state (O'Brien, 1995).

Looking back on those days, it seems easy to understand how charisma and drama contributed to Clement's reputation as a showman. People accused Clement of many things and they even called him terrible names, but rarely did they consider him boring. Combining unmatched rhetorical skills, a drive for public adulation, and the kind of critical thinking on which politicians thrive, Clement held the reins of power in the Volunteer state for an unprecedented fifteen years. During that time, he met presidents and kings, traveled the world, positioned himself at the forefront of the Democratic party's attempts to regain the White House, and initiated changes which, after decades, still benefit Tennesseans (Jones, 1994).

At the center of his power stood the people. Like politicians before him, Clement never forgot his people. Louisiana's Huey Long built roads and provided textbooks for all school children. Eugene Talmadge of Georgia, the bane of big business, admitted stealing beef from prison farms and inviting his fellow citizens to help him eat it (Sherrill, 1968). Talmadge made people feel special, proud as Georgians and Americans.

Clement, while no Huey Long or Eugene Talmadge, shared some major similarities in his accomplishments, but as a person and politician, smoothed
the edges of his style. Late in his political life, he suffered the effects of alcohol abuse and extramarital affairs (Winston, 1994). He had his flaws, but he had a rhetorical style unmatched by anyone during his time, a magical way of speaking, and he knew it (Branstetter, 1995). More than a matter of pride, such a style represented the key to his success.

Clement's compelling power as a public speaker stemmed from the William Jennings Bryan style of oratory (Dykeman, 1955). The "boy orator of the Platte," the Westerner who defied those who sought to "crucify mankind upon a Cross of Gold," inspired Clement throughout his life (Dykeman, 1955, p. 49). Encouraged by his aunt to speak publicly and by his grandfather to enter politics, Clement set a course for himself at an early age to serve the public, but to do so in a Godly way (Maum, 1954). In this light, public service meant making God proud. If it also meant falling to his knees and praying with an interviewer, he did it. The same thinking served for invoking God's name and asking for His help in speech after speech.

In Fentress county, close to one hundred miles from Nashville, the workdays revolved around tilling the rich farm land. A farmer had much to worry about during the spring and summer including harvesting a crop that would feed his family and pay his bills. School children went straight home to work after school. Everybody helped, thus little time remained for anything else. Television offered a new-found diversion, but few people could afford it. Hard work occurred often under a relentlessly cruel sun. About the only real entertainment besides the local grease pit eatery took place on Sundays when the community gathered by denomination for church singing. A small sideshow or carnival might come to town every now and then, but everyone knew the real show began when Frank Clement made an appearance.
Clement's helpers arrived on the courthouse square on Wednesday to let everyone know about the governor's upcoming speech (Arnold, 1994). A couple of fellows distributed flyers, placed signs in the hardware store, the barber shop, and other businesses, and spent a little time with the folks at the radio station. Interviewed on the air, they talked about Clement's visit and the planned musical entertainment which included some of the governor's famous country music friends (Clement, 1994).

Everyone looked forward to the speaking, but the singing and picking from a flatbed truck added to the festivities. Roy Acuff appeared at times, as did Eddy Arnold. Other members of the Grand Ole Opry helped out as well. Sometimes they stayed on stage for an hour playing, singing, and laughing while the crowd walked or rode to the courthouse square to have some fun (Arnold, 1994). Though bone-weary tired after a week of hard work, the citizens of Jamestown and Fentress county would not want to miss this event.

The Clement folks thought of everything. They even had a soundtruck next to the stage equipped with two big speakers on top so that those people way back in the crowd and those who lived near the center of town could hear. Most of those people had lived all their lives in Fentress county, never venturing far from home unless to Nashville or Knoxville. They wore their toughness as a matter of pride since they were reared in the days before electricity, and had survived the Depression and two world wars. As a God-fearing people, they read the Bible before daylight and at bedtime. Many lived off the land, got their water from backyard wells, dug their own toilets, and felt whatever they possessed belonged to them because of the Almighty Father. They raised their children to think that way and to believe in the virtue of a day's work for a day's living. Many times the children took over the farms from their parents and
worked just as hard, following that inescapable rural heritage of family pride in the land, a feeling that would soon disappear amid a changing culture. Now, they awaited their governor.

In Clement's rhetorical style, the sense of the moment and the timing always seem right. Just as the band and singers end their performance, his car makes its way slowly to the side of the stage and stops. Out lunges Frank Clement to begin a wondrous kind of personal connection with his people. He loves the adulation and attention (Arnold, 1994). Stretching out his arm, he approaches people with the simple but meaningful greeting, "Hi, I'm Frank Clement. You can call me Frank" (O'Brien, 1995). It does not matter who he meets—the wizened, stubble-bearded grandfather in his seventies, the housewife with three kids tugging at her skirt, the auto mechanic who had just poked his head out from under a car, or some Negroes on the fringes of the crowd supporting Clement with their presence. He begins to size up the gathering and its mood. With such a rare ability to read a crowd even before he reaches the stage, he can, as one of his speech writers, Joe Henry, once said, "play a crowd just as a skilled musician would play a musical instrument" (Gardner, 1978, p. 259).

To get the speech started close to time, Clement moves slowly to the stage and away from the handshaking and conversations. A local official, hand-picked by the Clement folks for his political importance, soon greets the crowd. Even then everyone remains unsettled because they anticipate not just another political speech, but a bit of history, and entertainment, at its finest. Sensing that, children are soon hoisted to sit on their father's rock-hard shoulders. Too young to remember now, one day they can at least say they saw and heard Frank Clement speak. Clement climbs onto the flatbed truck just before a local
minister offers a prayer, thanking the Lord for special leaders. It never hurts to ask for God's protection and guidance for Clement. Publicly, he often asks for people's prayers.

By now, Clement knows what he will say. The occasion does not require a new speech. He has given the same speech with a few different, relevant facts at three stops earlier in the day. His words have a few localized elements to help connect with his audience, but the substance of the speech remains the same as that spoken to hundreds of audiences elsewhere in the state (Clement, 1994). He craves the growing anticipation as the focus of attention moves to him now. It is time to speak, to entertain, and to enjoy himself. Off to the side, a young aide overhears one man say to another, "Frank Clement is about to get up here and speak and if you're not going to vote for that son of a bitch, you better not listen to him" (Jones, 1994).

A speech given by Frank Clement quickly becomes a physical exercise. Bounding enthusiastically to the microphone, he strips his coat off, rolls up the sleeves of his sweat-strained shirt and loosens his tie. What follows is an hour of hard-boiled, southern political evangelizing which will leave Clement hot, sweaty, and exhausted, and will leave his audience shouting for more while feeling better about their government than anytime lately. Today, and for the future, Clement will symbolize their idea of government (Greene, 1982).

"It's wonderful to be here in Jamestown and Fentress county on this lovely evening that God has made" he says. "I have many, many friends here." He plunges into extolling the virtues of morality and decency, aligning himself with such qualities through references to the Bible. He plays to their sense of patriotism, about the need to support the cause of democracy while criticizing its moral enemy, Communism. As their governor, citizens of Fentress county, as
elsewhere in Tennessee's rural areas, view him as a man with barefoot boy sincerity, a man who does not hesitate to spell out his duties to all Tennesseans or to remind them that his office belongs to them (Clement, 1954).

His language consists of robust words and sentence structures now long forgotten. Turning his head often to make eye contact with everyone, he invokes the wisdom of the Almighty, spreads his arms to the sky, and pleads for His guidance. Clement then launches into a lengthy discussion of particularly important issues mixed with venom for his opponents and praise for himself as he champions heaven and depicts his adversaries in a less flattering light.

Here, near the border with Kentucky, his oratorical reputation has brought people from out of state. Perhaps as many as 25 percent of the audience at many stops comes from outside Tennessee (Halberstam, 1971).

This day, like other days, his speaking includes a personal approach. As if speaking to one person and not a crowd of people, he makes each member of the audience feel connected. Hanging his head in his trademark semi-slouch, he pokes the air with the index finger of his left hand and raises his right arm with hand opened, ticking off specific reasons to elect him. Do they feel better about their standard of living than they have before? How has the state made life better for them? In Fentress county, under his administrations, many miles of road have been paved, meaning easier access for farmers to sell their products in the city. Who brought their teachers more money and their towns more employers? Frank Clement, that is who. His sentences, often long and fact-filled, make it seem like he talks for five minutes without slowing down or taking a breath. Some folks simply watch how he says things rather than listening to his words. He responds, using their reactions as a sign of what he
should continue to talk about (Jones, 1994). Those who barely knew him or did not know him at all now seem drawn to him.

With sweat pouring off his face, Clement talks about Moses leading his people out of the wilderness and of Job who suffered, but who did not lose faith. To emphasize his point, he adds, "I would sacrifice every vote in Fentress country before I would do anything I thought was wrong." Clement reaches a climax in his speech with an emotional appeal and an open prayer for his critics. Raising his arms and forming them in the shape of a cross, he addresses his critics shouting,

    The crowned Him with thorns and nailed Him
    to a cross and still He said, 'Father, forgive
    them for they know not what they do.' Whether
    they know what they're doing or not, Lord
    forgive them. Let's you and I, the people of
    Tennessee, stand together. (Clement, 1954)

With a roar from the crowd, Clement closes with a benediction and his now famous plea, "Lead me on, precious Lord, lead me on" (Greene, 1982, p. 101).

The genius of mesmerizing a crowd continues for Clement as he plunges into the audience once again to shake hands, remembering names from years gone by, greeting children with a big smile, and giving every person a pat on the back. To them, he represents the American dream, a young man from a small town who worked hard to meet his goal.

Amidst the men's cheers and the women's tears, the crowd parts and Frank Clement makes his way to his car (Childers, 1956). He climbs in, rolls down the window, and shakes a few more hands as the car slowly moves away. Supporters, friends, and those wanting favors await him at a nearby motel.
There, the liquor will flow as easily as the conversation. As with most evenings, rest will not come easily. Besides, a new day begins tomorrow with Sunday morning services, teaching Sunday School, and speaking in the pulpit at a nearby Methodist church.

Morality as a Virtue and a Strategy

Religion and its associated virtues of morality and decency formed the public centerpiece of Frank Clement’s political career (Greene, 1982). Friends say his sincerity withstood any questions. His detractors called Clement a hypocrite, describing him as nothing more than an ordinary, fast-talking salesman. No one argues that Clement worked hard to profess publicly his belief in God. Polished and controlled, he was not a typical fundamentalist speaker. Yet, to some, he spoke in a sanctimonious manner which alienated them while attracting others (Egerton, 1994).

At the age of eight, Clement traveled with his family to a revival across the state line at Kyrock, Kentucky, where he claimed to convert to Christ. Years later, he recounted the story of his conversion and how, from that day forward, his life changed (Clement, 1956). Soon after that he coupled his religious fervor with a desire to serve the public, telling his grandfather at an early age that he wanted to help make this a good country for good people (McDermott, 1954).

Throughout his political life, Clement (1954) ran on a platform of returning morality to state government. Most of the world’s modern social problems, he said, resulted directly or indirectly from violating our moral code. Clement seemed sincere in his beliefs, but as successful politicians do, he recognized them as valuable allies in the development of his public image. His
public life also benefited from several major occurrences, planned or serendipitous, which seemed to mark different stages of profound growth in his career.

His first encounter with Billy Graham began a lifelong friendship marked by the mutual, beneficial mixture of church and state for both men. Graham had quickly established himself as a compelling evangelist when, in 1952, Clement heard him speak in Chattanooga (Maum, 1954). Clement studied Graham's rhetorical delivery as well as his use of words. He and his wife, Lucille, often took Sunday afternoon car rides during which they listened to Graham on the radio (Wolfe, 1955). For his part, Graham studied his favorite Old Testament personality, Daniel, a prophet involved with politicians and politics. Even then, Graham saw himself as a spiritual advisor to powerful people (Barnhart, 1989). The friendship of Clement and Graham quickly grew.

For both men, the South in the 1950's lay at the center of religious conservatism, to an extent even fundamentalism. The region's people grew up guided by the Word and yearned to hear more, especially from their leaders. No social force had a greater impact on the rural southern way of life than religion (Baker, Steed, and Moreland, 1989). The church solidified as hard as the rock beneath the southern soil. Folks in the South cherished the role that conservative, mainline Protestant beliefs played in their lives. Even faced with the threat of urban growth and the shrinking of rural life, they maintained their long-held faith in the goodness of God. Churches reached out to people as centers of social events, where friends met friends and future wives and husbands came together. Churches remained racially segregated, yet most worshipers, white and black, were Protestant, usually Baptist and Methodist (Wilson, 1989).
Clement quite possibly saw in Graham a reflection of himself. Emerging as leaders, both possessed a sense of destiny, driving ambition, and burning passion for a cause. Both exuded youth, intelligence, and savvy, and struck profiles as "urbane, dynamic speakers, about the same age, and out and out for God in a day when so many in high places compromise [d]" (Maum, 1954, p. 1). Soon after their meeting in Chattanooga, Graham received an invitation from the Tennessee governor to address the state legislature (Folmsbee, Curlew, and Mitchell, 1969). Graham later held a crusade in Nashville at Vanderbilt University's football stadium. The friendship grew to such an extent that Clement routinely denied he would one day give up his public life to join the Graham crusade. Given the religious climate of the day, ample reason existed for Clement to encourage such talk. After all, national publications compared him to the well known evangelist. Newsweek, on Clement's speaking, offered, "It may sound for all the world as though Billy Graham himself were leading the unbelievers down a sawdust trail to the ballot box" ("The Keynoter," 1956, p. 26).

Religion in the South inevitably suffered through a period in the 1960's of significant skepticism as did most cultural institutions of the day. Such a difficult time of questioning played a major role in Frank Clement's political future. In addition, his friendship with Graham eventually led him to play a pivotal role in delivering the presidential election to John F. Kennedy (Beasley, 1994).

From the time he assumed office in 1952, Clement moved quickly to develop a reputation as an effective speaker, in demand from one end of the country to the other. His dynamic message of morals and patriotism struck an emotional chord with audiences, especially in the South.
Embracing the South

During his first term, Clement delivered a speech before Atlanta's "100 Leaders of Tomorrow." Titling the speech, "The South and Its Future," he included a look at the old South, the problems facing the current South, and the future outlook. Through both substance and emotion, he lauded the changes made by the region while urging further development in order to reach its full potential. The speech established Clement as a young, eager reformer, ready to make his influence known by characterizing his home as a poor region with regressive laws and meaningless orator

Before an audience of powerful, influential people in the South's largest city, Clement hoped that his words carried the sense of urgency needed to initiate major changes in their long-held, sleepy South mentality. Clement (1953) talked about how the region had increased its factory payrolls by five billion dollars and its farm produce by six billion. The number of sharecroppers lessened by half and on each working day the South added an average of one new multimillion dollar industrial plant.

Later in the speech, Clement addressed the need to return to higher moral values, recognizing such decency as a way of curbing Communism. He told his audience that believing in the spiritual power of God was the only insurance against the world's destructive forces.

By speaking such words Clement effectively combined the attractive qualities of religion, morality, and patriotism for the common good. This strategy became a recurring theme for him as his southern audiences responded positively to a God-guided call to moral arms.

Clement made good use of reaffirming rhetoric by using the South as a mother figure knocked to her knees by the Civil War and Reconstruction, still
down, but gaining strength. Her hope for the future rested on the success of a resurgence in positive thought and actions by her native sons and daughters that could only be brought about by releasing vestiges of the past. Clement preached for a rebirth of soul and mind, sensing and knowing (based on figures he provided) that the South, as he spoke, had embarked on such a journey.

As a topic, the move away from the Old South toward the promise of a new South insured a positive reception for Clement because, as happened so often in his political career, his timing proved impeccable. The speech helped establish him as an influential, virtuous, bright, young officeholder who called openly on his own Divine Plan to guide him through the pitfalls of politics. Such a speaking strategy created an invisible yet strong bond from one native of the South to others. They shared a kinship of tragedy and promise, demise, and hope.

The Atlanta Journal (1953) reflected such optimism in its coverage of the speech. The headline read, "Gov. Clement Hails Dixie Leadership," and noted how he described the "once-pitied area" as a land of opportunity (p. 22). The Journal article called Clement a "nationally known figure" and praised his speech for its upbeat tone. Hinting at Clement's political motives, the article quoted him as saying that "leadership is the South's contribution to a crumbling world--the South's destiny" (p. 22).

The utilization by Combs (1981) of Lasswell's "development analysis" applies to the kind of Old South-New South rhetoric used by Clement. Drawing upon a process view of politics, Combs claims the key to anticipating the future lies in understanding the unfolding of events in developmental terms. Society, Combs quotes Lasswell as saying, is a "continuum of social change" characterized by "patterns of succession of events" (p. 48). The politician who
could grasp the meaning of such words held the key to gaining the hearts and minds of those in the South who, for too long, had endured the harmful vestiges of scorn, pity, and humiliation. They were primed for forward-thinking leadership, someone who would create a “usable past” for his own purposes.

Perhaps more important to Clement, those who attended the Atlanta speech witnessed the origins of a plan designed eventually to bring their speaker to national prominence. This young Tennessee governor, unknown to them, already had an overpowering desire to move beyond the office he had occupied for only a short time. Clement had begun his journey toward a destiny that only he, his closest aides, and his God, perhaps, could see.

An Untimely End

Frank Clement never fulfilled his destiny. Through an amazing amount of hard work, no shortage of luck, and the timely usage of powerful rhetoric, he strived for his long-cherished goal of national office, only to fall short due to his own shortcomings. Sixteen years after the Atlanta speech, Clement was dead. The very breath that enabled him to speak before crowds large and small, to influence their thinking on issues, to gather their votes, to offer succor in times of need, to give a better life to the poor and disadvantaged, to change the very course of state and national history, ended on a stretch of highway south of Nashville.

Two cars approached each other in the early evening of a crisp autumn day. Near the intersection of Franklin Road and Tyne Boulevard all seemed normal until Clement’s car suddenly swerved into the opposite lane. The inevitable grinding, metal-twisting wreck changed Tennessee politics and left some of the state’s citizens with unanswered questions and others with lost
hopes. They felt the bewilderment that stunned many, causing a sorrow that did not disappear easily.

Forty-nine year old Frank Goad Clement breathed his last on the night of November 4, 1969, soon after rescue workers pulled him from the wreck. The leading figure of a family political dynasty, a three-term governor, a nationally-known orator, an exceptional humanitarian, and a survivor of many political battles fell victim to the mounting toll of the road wars. He had many enemies, but on this day, they remained silent. They and others mourned the fateful ending of a life so powerful in an equally powerful way. (Phillips, 1978).
CHAPTER 2
SEE HOW A GREAT FLAME ASPIRES

In a life of ironic twists and turns, perhaps the greatest irony reflected the way in which Frank Clement died so suddenly. He had traveled many thousands of miles across the state and nation rallying people with his oratory. His trips took him to every corner of his beloved Tennessee to meet his fellow citizens. He met with the distinguished and the common, speaking to crowds of every size across the United States. He never met a stranger. All of this openness came naturally to Clement, who emerged from humble country surroundings as the grandson of a wagon maker (Greene, 1982). Later, as a dynamic and powerful politician, he died before seeing his family continue its major influence in Tennessee a quarter of a century later.

To understand Clement is to look at the people who influenced him greatly as a youth. These influences include the timely confluence of certain socio-economic factors during his rise to prominence. Among the factors were a wave of fundamentalism in the church, a stronger feeling of patriotism, a concern over the Cold War, a need for Tennesseans to feel comforted by a decisive leader using bold words, and an increased presence in state matters by rural people (Boyd, 1972).

Although Clement brought social, political, and constitutional change to Tennessee, no substantial amount of written work is easily available to those interested. Comparatively speaking, few works exist that illustrate his accomplishments even though his deeds ultimately changed the structure of
state politics and directly affected the lives of all Tennesseans. Several academic studies reflect particular segments of his political career including his speaking, but none specifically addresses his unique rhetorical style as it relates to the major social changes taking place during his administrations (one biography encompasses the inner workings of Clement's political life while discussing his overall speaking strength).

This chapter begins with a brief overview of politics in the South, for from this region have come many brilliant political figures, demagogue or otherwise, who have exposed Americans elsewhere to a unique brand of political oratory. Grantham (1961) describes the changing landscape of southern politics and how southern politicians tried to adjust to it by noting that "as the forties ended and the fifties began the contours of southern politics were undergoing a significant alteration" (p. 76). Indeed, the new politics mirrored a national trend toward conservatism. Grantham argues that during this transition period, sectional politics could not control national politics. Economic and geographic divisions disintegrated. Therefore, southern politicians found themselves adjusting by expanding their appeal to voters through an emphasis on government as a public service. The industrialization and urbanization of the South, its increased economic diversity, and emigration played major roles in the changing southern political mind.

The heritage of Dixie politics includes carpetbaggers, all-white primaries, the poll tax, literary tests, filibusters, demagogues, and the so-called solid South. Southerners felt a unique pride and lingering sense of anger, resentment, and frustration stemming from the Civil War and Reconstruction. "Southern individualism," Williams (1961) writes, "was of a particular type" expressing itself "in matters of speech and conduct, in self-assertion...and in self
will" (p. 12). The 1950's reflected a full-blown surge in such expression which aided officeholders.

Much documentation exists about the solid South. For decades, conservative thoughts and actions filled the lives of most southerners. The Civil War brought a major upheaval by turning segregated society into one exhibiting the pains of great change. That change evolved over more than one hundred years, cost millions of dollars, and caused both heartache and hope. Social, economic, and political institutions meshed into one driving force which benefited a few, placated many, and victimized others. Later, southerners eager to get out from under the heavy heel of the Depression embraced the work benefits of Roosevelt’s New Deal, although liberal in nature (Bartley, 1989). The federal government became an active participant in the development, economic and otherwise, of the South. Thus, the grudging movement toward homogenization by southern politicians manifested itself publicly in an exuberant effort by some to take advantage of the New Deal, giving them ample opportunity to ride on Roosevelt’s coattails to victory at the polls.

What of the people of the South at this time? While powerful men such as E. H. "Boss" Crump of Memphis kept their political machines finely tuned, the era of the demagogue had seen better days. People looked to their leaders increasingly for inspiration. They sought leaders who provided spiritual, moral, and material comfort while simply, but ever so powerfully, acting as one of them. Bartley (1989) points out that most southern voters came from "that third of southern society that was both whiter and more economically prosperous than the population-oriented or county seat governing class, the uptown elites, and the white common folk".

Into this maelstrom of swirling temperaments, visceral feelings, and changing economic and social structures, politicians ventured very carefully.
Negroes felt alienated, but wise seekers of public office soon courted them actively for votes. Changes in the socio-political arena around the world increased. A strong civilian and professional defense helped stabilize the economy. Religion grew in importance as people felt threatened by the "Red menace." Eisenhower, the quintessential national hero, held, as commander-in-chief, the confidence of the people. An aspiring officeholder in the South who came close to meeting these standards and needs during the early 1950's stood a good chance of being elected.

A thorough understanding of the social and political changes in post World War II Tennessee served Frank Clement well. A young, highly ambitious lawyer from the small, piney woods town of Dickson, Tennessee, Clement arrived on the state political scene well prepared. The Clement family's political life began with his grandfather, James, a wagon maker, later a lawyer and state senator, and his father, Robert, the mayor of Dickson and later his son's chief political advisor (Boyd, 1972). The younger Clement did not make his entrance on the grand stage of state politics quietly. After all, he had set his goal of being governor at the age of ten, telling classmates he planned to run the state (Greene, 1982). After his youthful proclamation, he directed his actions and thoughts toward that goal, one he accomplished at thirty-two, an earlier age than any previous person save one in state history.

Throughout his career, Clement claimed oratory as the key to his success. With its value came the recognition of its fragility. He told a friend that all he had was his voice, well aware that his ability to speak could be taken from him on a moment's notice (Greene, 1982). His oratorical ability, in fact, provided Clement with one of his three main strengths. He also possessed political ambition, as noted earlier, and a commitment to religion. As we will see, each
of these strengths worked together to effect not only a strong personal presence for crowds across the state but also unequaled charismatic leadership.

Rather than his father and grandfather, Clement's mentor and guiding force in his developing youth became Aunt Dockie Weems, who ran the Shipp School of Expression in Dickson (Greene, 1982). Possessing a college degree in oratory and a single-mindedness to improve the speaking and pronunciation of all around her, she made a lifelong impact on her nephew.

At the age of ten, with developing political ambitions, Clement began the training that would lead him to his goal of high public office. The coaching and practicing occurred often at nights and on weekends in the backyard as well as during many organized competitions. Historians agree that the foundation for Clement's success in later years developed during the time he spent under Aunt Dockie's guidance (Boyd, 1972). Later, Clement (1956) remarked repeatedly that but for his training as a youth, the life of an ordinary lawyer would have been his career. He spent afternoons after school and weekends practicing contest speaking, humorous readings, dramatic readings, original oratory, and declamation (Greene, 1982).

Clement always gave credit to his aunt for his speaking skills and to his grandfather for his desire to seek public office. He enjoyed relating the story about the time he went to a Bible class as a youth with his father and grandfather. The college professor teaching the class made the statement that Christians should not participate in politics because of corruption. One can imagine seeing the young Clement burst with pride as his grandfather rose to object, saying that the American government had its beginnings based on politics and drawing an apology from the professor (Greene, 1982). From an early age, the church and the state had a profound effect on Clement.
Perhaps the most important skill taught by Aunt Dockie involved memorization. She made her students memorize speeches and taught them extemporaneous speaking by having them think important thoughts and training them not to refer to texts. Time and again Clement's ability to memorize texts and speak without notes aided him greatly. Eddie Jones (1994), a former press spokesman for Clement, described how these strengths fit the times. Referring to Clement, he said, "From the time he was elected first in 1952 up. . .through his last campaign in 1962. . .politics overall was kind of theater."

According to Boyd (1972), Clement's study of rhetoric was guided by several major rules. First, know the subject well. Then, have a natural delivery with good use of hands and feet. Know breath control, body postures, and how to use dramatic pauses. Be sincere. Look them in the eyes and tell them what you want to say which, ideally, includes what they want to hear. Feel strongly about the speech content. Have a command of the English language and use it to paint word pictures.

Clement's ability to combine political thought with the prevailing social desires of the day enabled him to move upward quickly. In 1947, as counsel to the state Railroad and Public Utilities Commission, he blocked a proposed rate hike by Southern Bell Telephone Company and then proclaimed that he had saved Tennesseans a large amount of money (Greene, 1982). Also that year, he led the American Legion of Tennessee, thereby appealing to a strong patriotic sentiment present in the years following World War II and before the Korean conflict. His Legion work also allowed him to shore up his base of support across the state by delivering speeches in many towns and hamlets (Martin, 1955).

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, Les Hart, a political reporter for the traditionally Republican Nashville Banner, openly supported Clement
through his writing and "inside" advice. Hart viewed Clement as a "white knight," someone capable of using his leadership skills effectively to reduce the influence on state politics of the Crump machine and to push the state and its people ahead during the decade of the fifties (Greene, 1982). Hart became Clement's most important friend and supporter, working to keep the aspiring officeholder's name out front in the paper. Most importantly, Hart's relationship gave Clement special access to the powerful, conservative publisher of the *Banner*, James Stahlman (Boyd, 1972).

For many years, Stahlman and the *Banner* carried Clement's cause to the people. News coverage of Clement had little to do with objectivity. In effect, the paper served as a mouthpiece for his issues and actions. Eventually, as many relationships built on the need for mutual power do, their friendship dissolved into bitterness. Prior to that, though, Stahlman greatly aided Clement in accomplishing his goals of reaching the statehouse, keeping a positive image before the public, and remaining in power for two decades.

In a few years, Frank Clement moved from a young boy burning with gubernatorial desires to a young man turning thirty seeing his dream on the verge of becoming reality. Many challenges, political and rhetorical, lay ahead. Clement's career became one of the most interesting and intriguing political stories in Tennessee history. Accordingly, in this study I explore the ways Clement's rhetorical skills allowed him to deal with the major societal changes he faced while maintaining and strengthening his political base.

A three-time governor of Tennessee, Frank Clement brought unprecedented change to the state and its people. Despite that, research data on his administration, his speaking style, and his political career remain scattered and sparse. Two dissertations provide valuable insight into Clement during specific times of his career. The first, by Stephen Boyd, studies
Clement's campaign speaking in the 1954 Democratic primary for governor.
The second, by James Gardner, explores Clement's political life from 1948 to
1956 in conjunction with the public lives of Albert Gore and Estes Kefauver. A
published biography includes more about Clement in one place than anything
else. Author Lee S. Greene, a former University of Tennessee professor, and a
self-described supporter of published biographies of Tennessee governors,
agreed to write about Clement at the behest of a group of influential Clement
friends from the political and private sectors. Calling Clement a lively and
attractive person, Greene (1982) deals primarily with Clement's political life
while touching somewhat on his personal and business sides.

Perhaps Green's major contribution lies in examining Clement's strong
competitive instinct, a critical component of his psychological and social
makeup. Of particular note are Greene's descriptions of Clement's primary
campaigns for governor in 1952 and 1954 when he faced the strong and popular
Democrat, Gordon Browning. Browning, an effective, yet crude, speaker,
conducted a heated, and ultimately, nasty campaign against Clement.
Browning's rhetoric was barbed, reflecting a sharper tongue than Clement,
whose own tough words were more subtle. Browning referred to Clement as a
"liar, a pip-squeak, a demagogue, a loud-mouthed character assassin, and a
pliable puppet of the Shelby machine" (Greene, 1982, p. 64). Clement
responded by noting "the vile names he has bitterly spewed in the direction. . .
merely because I have had the temerity to seek the office he considers his own"
(Greene, 1982, p. 64).

Browning, a formidable opponent steeped in the tradition of Tennessee
politics and thoroughly experienced as a congressional and state officeholder,
was strong-willed and held enormous power (Majors, 1982). Both campaigns
(1952 and 1954) proved difficult for Clement, while offering a contrast in campaigning and speaking styles for the voters.

Away from the public spotlight, Clement worked hard to organize a political machine of his own, one that eventually lasted for many years. His circle of political insiders included an eclectic group of writers, thinkers, and strategists whose work helped mold the public image of their man. Forerunners of the modern day "spin doctors," their accomplishments made Frank Clement look good primarily through his public speaking. As Browning biographer William Majors (1982) notes, Clement carefully picked some of the best political minds in Tennessee as advisors.

The Clement-Browning races produced some memorable campaign skirmishes. Clement developed certain retorts to criticism which he utilized throughout his many years in office. Criticized for being too young during his first campaign for governor, he responded, "If that's the only fault you can find, you better vote for me. I can outgrow that, but my opponents can't outgrow their faults" (Fisher, 1994). As described by Greene (1982), the races between Clement and Browning became intense games of verbal jousting with both trying hard to stay on the offensive. Fred Travis (1994), a newspaper reporter at the time, recalls covering Browning's criticism of Clement's religious proclamations. Browning told crowds around the state that Clement did not hold hands with God, as Clement often said, since "he (Clement) is holding Ed Crump's hand with one hand and a whiskey bottle in the other." Clement and Browning were extremely aware of their public images, finding anything questionable or sensational about each other no matter the magnitude, and courting the three major special interest groups at the time--cities, truckers, and teachers (Gardner, 1978). Each group played a crucial role in Clement's career.
While Greene's book takes a somewhat partisan approach to Clement, a more impartial view awaits the reader of Stephen Boyd's dissertation. Boyd (1972) conducted a field study with an accompanying rhetorical approach to his analysis, thereby examining Clement's training with Aunt Dockie and its impact on his political career. Applying Kenneth Burke's theory of identification to Clement's speaking style, Boyd argues that Clement tried to link his ideas and feelings with the ideas and feelings of his audiences through the strength of his speaking.

Boyd (1972) went on to cite Burke's three meanings of identification as a common ground, an end, and a means of dissolving division as central rhetorical themes for Clement's political speaking. According to Boyd, Clement found a common ground, something nice to say about a locality and its people, no matter where he spoke. Next, he demonstrated his knowledge of local problems by citing how his administration had helped solve them. He brought family members with him, used Biblical phrases and illustrations, and used the personal pronoun "we" to make each person feel important. Boyd claims that people saw in Clement what they wanted to see in themselves, a hard worker who set goals and achieved them. Finally, Boyd notes that Clement used identification as a means of dissolving division through a publicly moderate tone on segregation. Despite pressure from segregationists and the press, Clement refused to indulge in inflammatory rhetoric to support the division of whites and Negroes. In fact, he studiously avoided such language.

Clement worked hard to match his strengths with the circumstances existing in Tennessee as he began his first term. Thirty-six of the state's ninety-five counties had no city over 2,500 people. Four cities had populations over 100,000 (Phillips and Sanford, 1956). Conflict existed between the rural and urban populations with the rural folks often feeling neglected. "Boss" Crump of
Memphis, led the urban forces representing progressivism. These Bourbon Democrats built their power on controlling their people (Gardner, 1978). In his first campaign for governor, Clement's ties to Crump haunted him and continued to do so throughout his public career. The influential Nashville Tennessean became Clement's antagonist during his three terms primarily because of his early ties to the Crump political machine (Seigenthaler, 1994). Browning and his Agrarian and Populist "wool hats" opposed Crump and as such enjoyed the unusual support, as a conservation politician, of the progressive and liberal Tennessean.

During this time, the primary focus of political activity occurred on the county level (Gardner, 1978). Rural people, upset over years of perceived mistreatment and callousness, felt strongly that a candidate should give top priority to their problems. Through the county government, rural folks unified. Tennesseans felt they knew a candidate personally after that candidate came to town. Such a feeling withstood changes in the political landscape. Visiting every county became a top priority for Clement. He used rural idioms and became "one of us" through his speeches (Boyd, 1972). Shaking hands with everyone in sight, looking each person in the eye, and listening with apparent sincerity highlighted Clement's interpersonal communication skills. Most of the time, visits to outlying areas involved speeches on the courthouse squares and handshaking all around. Clement recognized each county as a strong force of unification for his candidacy and causes. Counties directly linked the governor and his people since the state handled its work on the local level through county offices (Greene, 1982).

Boyd (1972) cites five speech themes used by Clement in the 1954 campaign as central to his rhetorical powers--i.e., morality, religion humanitarianism, his first term record, and his family. Clement combined
morality with religion by stating repeatedly that people should love each other in the same way Christ exhibited love for all people. As Clement received criticism, so did Christ, who eventually paid the ultimate price for His beliefs. Clement returned to this theme many times in his speeches. From a humanitarian standpoint, he cited the newly-formed Mental Health Department and a new Youth Guidance Commission as accomplishments. In discussing his administration's efforts, Clement provided specific, localized information about how the state had helped communities and their residents. He seemed especially fond of listing specific amounts spent on highway construction. Finally, accompanied often by one or more family members, he emphasized family values.

In his dissertation, James Gardner (1978) provides a somewhat different view of Clement's power among the citizens of Tennessee. Gardner argues that Clement's political strength depended upon the people who worked for him, not his abundant rhetorical powers. Clement's foremost organizational strengths included the ability to attract, retain, and motivate highly qualified, brilliant, hard-working people dedicated to building and maintaining a strong image of him. The hirings did not take away from Clement's ability to speak; rather they simply strengthened it (Fisher, 1994). Clement's effectiveness as a speaker lay in his ability to communicate words and ideas through voice and action to his audiences. As Gardner (1978) writes, "Days of preparation were sometimes cast aside as the candidate expertly responded to crowds with an amazingly effective extemporaneous speech" (pp. 257-258).

Gardner (1978) explains that Clement had three goals for every speech: (1) to align himself with religion, morality, and virtue through the Bible and patriotism while stressing honesty and decency; (2) to convey sincerity by emphasizing his help to all Tennesseans; and (3) to identify with each
audience by localizing comments, showing his devotion to the state, and painting all issues as common to all people. These points are consistent with those mentioned in previous works on Clement.

Clement's keynote speech to the Democratic National Convention in 1956 climaxed his national political life. Gardner (1978) theorizes that Clement's strengths--ambition, oratory, and his overwhelming desire to receive adulation--ultimately led to his downfall as a future national officeholder. His continuous shouting, exaggerated mannerisms, and Biblical references might have impressed some of the convention audience but not the national audience watching on television. Gardner states that while Clement approached the speech with typical gusto, he "had not exhibited the kind of forceful, but controlled oratorical style which had let to his selection as keynoter" (p. 649).

Gardner's work provides a unique look at how Clement's fate tied itself to that of Albert Gore and Estes Kefauver. Comparing the three in terms of their political ambitions, circumstances, speaking styles, and personal lives illuminated how Clement utilized his considerable personal charisma publicly to meet his ultimate goal of attaining power and keeping it, albeit on a state, not national or international, level.

The body of literature dealing with Clement also includes magazine and newspaper articles primarily written during his time in office. Most reflect a type of gushing praise and respect for this young man who proclaimed Christ as the center of his life. Few provide a critical perspective on Clement's strengths and weaknesses unless, of course, accounts from the Tennessean are considered. Reporting in the 1950's tended to neglect personal peccadillos or more negative character traits while concentrating on the more apparent, and superficially positive aspects of its subjects. In Clement's case, the result causes a researcher today to gain only a partial view of the man. While he
touted the virtues of morality such as the evils of alcohol, he abused alcohol to the point that during his third term as governor his drinking adversely affected his relationships with others and, perhaps, limited his effectiveness as governor (Winston, 1994).

A review of some of the many original papers filed by Clement reveals not only more about his private personality, but the strong range of feelings held by Tennesseans during this time of great change. Vicious anger and sincere appreciation in their letters and notes reflect the citizens' attitudes toward integration, capital punishment, Clement's attention to national politics, and his speeches.

This researcher explores Clement's oratorical skills within the framework of the massive social change occurring during his time in power from 1952 to 1959 and again from 1963 to 1967. Though others positioned themselves through rhetoric, Clement's sheer power of words, gestures, and presence enabled his unparalleled success in handling explosive and divisive issues. His skills caused history to take a kind, yet superficial view of his record, something Clement would, perhaps, find satisfying because of his constant concern about his public image.

The main portion of this study includes a qualitative analysis of the rhetorical strategies and styles of Frank Clement as governor and as candidate with particular emphasis on their relation to major societal and political changes in the South. During his twenty years in power, most spent in public office, Clement participated in several important, far-reaching decisions. Tennesseans still live with the results of Clement's work as governor.
Major Research Questions

1. What role did religion play in positioning Clement as a speaker? Most weekends during the year found him in the pulpit preaching to audiences in churches large and small (Wolfe, 1955). Perhaps the last politician to utilize an evangelical style of speaking, Clement made religion the backbone of his public personality, and used public speaking as a political tool. We will see religion play a prominent role in each speech analyzed in this study.

2. What accounts for Clement’s strong public image? He became the first Tennessee governor to utilize television with its ability to reach the public as a new way of selling messages. He took great care to insure that television did not usurp his power as a speaker, but that it augmented his political stature within Tennessee. Outside the state, though, television damaged his image and credibility, primarily through the 1956 keynote address (Travis, 1994). A special, hand-picked group of men, perhaps the most powerful, talented, and dedicated group in recent Tennessee political history, strategically positioned Clement through his speeches.

3. What happened at the 1956 Democratic National Convention to cause Clement, its keynote speaker, to fail in his most important moment? After years of ambition and preparation to reach the pinnacle of his public career, his foremost talent proved the weakness that undid him.

4. How did Clement’s rhetorical stand affect racial attitudes in the state? Historian have noted his moderate stance on integration. Clement enhanced this position by walking a fine line between whites and Negroes. He favored a self-styled gradualism to ease the racial upheaval occurring in his state (Clement, 1953). He guided several major laws through the legislature designed to offset the oncoming power of segregationists while selling short the
full interests of Negroes. His words and actions defied any one label, as noted by historians who have called him a segregationist, (Black, 1976), a moderate (Egerton, 1995), and a liberal (Halberstam, 1995). This study will illustrate how Clement's speech to the Tennessee General Assembly on January 9, 1957, reflects his range of emotions about integration.

5. What effects did Clement's humanistic rhetoric have on state policy?

Unprecedented humanitarian efforts began in Tennessee urged on by his emotional pleadings. Perhaps ahead of his time, Clement moved strongly to abolish the death penalty, pouring out his emotions and the effects of some lengthy soul-searching in a speech to the Tennessee House of Representatives on March 17, 1965. In perhaps one of his most memorable face to face appearances, Clement commuted the death sentences of five Negro prisoners in the process of speaking to them on death row at the Tennessee state prison.

Information for the present research project came from books, scholarly works, newspaper and magazine articles, audio and video tapes, various other politically-related material such as flyers and information sheets, official papers, pictures and papers from private collections, and from personal and telephone interviews. These primary and secondary materials cover a variety of disciplines including history, political science, sociology, business, religion, and communication.

The written materials came from different sources. They include several from my private collection. Others await researchers at the libraries of Western Kentucky University, David Lipscomb University, Belmont University, the University of Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University. The Metropolitan Nashville Public Library provided some useful background information. The Tennessee State Library and Archives contributed indispensable help with its collection of Clement papers. I owe a special debt to Dr. Stephen Boyd for allowing me to
listen to the interview tapes from his dissertation research. Hearing the voices of those family members and former Clement aides, most of whom no longer live, proved especially moving and enlightening.

Beyond the studies of Frank Clement noted in this analysis, the author interviewed a wide variety of sources who were particularly insightful into Clement and his impact on Tennessee political and social history. Entertainer Eddy Arnold, former law partner Grant Smith, and Clement's son, Frank Clement, Jr., all spoke to the personal nature of the former governor. Offering advice and information about the political arena were Clement's sister, state Senator Anna Belle Clement O'Brien, former aide Tom Beasly, Eddie Jones, who was Clement's press spokesman during his last term in office, former speech writer Doug Fisher, and Nat Winston, who was, at one time, Clement's commissioner of Mental Health. Also offering his unique perspective was noted author-preacher and civil rights activist Will Campbell. Offering their versions of the South during the 1950's and 1960's were well-known authors John Egerton, Dewey Grantham, and David Halberstam. Finally, Clement's relations with the press were discussed with several past and present employees of the Nashville Tennessean including former chairman John Seigenthaler, reporter Frank Ritter, former editor Jimmy Carnahan, and former staff photographer Bob Holt.

These critical sources of information concerning the life and times of Frank Clement extend our understanding of one of the last great political orators in Tennessee, the private personality behind the public image, and the legacy he left to all Tennesseans.
A politician's public image represents the sum of his or her success. Other challenges and thoughts come and go, but the public's perception of an officeholder tends to retain its hold over that person from the first day of the campaign until leaving office. Our earliest politicians knew the importance of public image. George Washington entered office on the strength of his military experience. Abraham Lincoln constantly suffered from a lack of respect due to his public image as a strange-looking man from the Kentucky backwoods.

The concept of a supreme public image does not, of course, mean that campaigning has remained the same. In 1876, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, the ultimate compromise candidate, found himself the presidential nominee only after seven ballots (Troy, 1991). Hayes' subsequent aloofness and indifference heralded a refusal on his part to campaign. He did not answer opponents' charges and did not vote for himself on election day (Freidel, 1985). Forty-three years later, another compromise candidate, Warren Harding, campaigned from the front porch of his Ohio home and won by an overwhelming margin (The World Book, 1984).
Technology soon changed the very nature of the politician-public relationship. Radio allowed the voices of those seeking office to enter the homes of the voters far way. It brought about a more personal method of getting messages across to those listening. One midwestern columnist mentioned in 1944, at the height of radio’s popularity, that modern campaigning would not be improved until a candidate could not only reason with a mother but kiss her baby over the radio as well (Troy, 1991). Radio required politicians to communicate in neighborly tones even though it represented an early form of mass communication. Voice quality, pitch, and volume attained a new priority. Eye contact, once so important to political communication, was transformed to a lesser level of importance, primarily due to the nature of the medium. Radio, though, soon found itself replaced as the first love of politicians by newer technology.

Beginning with the 1950’s, television has dominated the politician-public line of communication. Bursting forth on the country with rapidly-growing popularity, it virtually forced those who needed to relay important messages to do so over their hometown television stations. Those in the public eye, of course, soon recognized the benefits. Public figures of all stripes showed a fascination with the new medium with its ready-made audience of thousands and the power inherent in its effective use. The biggest obstacle to politicians who could access television time, besides money, was the absence of charisma or stage presence to communicate effectively. Without great care, a television appearance could hurt rather than help. Politicians soon learned that the new, unforgiving medium represented either their best friend or their worst enemy.

The great care with which politicians viewed the new medium was understandable. Graber (1980) writes that the media, primarily television, served as behavior models for the public. Television created images and then
proceeded to indicate which attitudes and behaviors were acceptable and which were not. Such a new, radical way of thinking had a profound effect on those holding office and those seeking it. Similarly, Adatto (1993) criticizes the dramatic development of a 1950's culture obsessed with image in which the power of pictures reached new levels. Adding to this surge of new awe and attention was the increase in television households from 7,000 in 1946 to 45,000,000 in 1960. With its mass appeal, television intrinsically personalized the relationship between communicator and viewers (Abramson, Anterton, and Orren, 1988).

Throughout his career, Frank Clement had a keen interest in the rhetorical styles and mannerisms of others, especially those in high profile settings. He watched television, regardless of the program, in order to study the mannerisms and gestures of singers, actors, and other performers ("The Keynoter," 1956). What he liked he adapted to his own style, carefully managing to keep the uniqueness of his own rhetorical delivery.

Television, underutilized in its infancy, welcomed Clement when he became governor. The first station in Nashville, WSM-TV, signed on at the time Clement had started his first run for governor. His aides quickly developed a media plan calling for the full use of Clement's persuasive strengths. They exercised great care so that texts conveyed the effects of his style and rhythm while he used the camera to play up his sincerity (Gardener, 1978). As the camera moved in on his face near the end of a speech, Clement looked directly into it. A TelePrompTer, designed to allow a person to maintain eye contact with the camera, did not exist in those days so Clement spoke perhaps most effectively from the heart. He saw the use of television as an extension of his personal contact with the viewers. The strategy included presenting him as an
ordinary, religious, family man interested only in the welfare of Tennessee and all his fellow citizens.

An example of Clement's use of television to his advantage occurred in the 1952 race after opponent Gordon Browning had attacked his family. Clement delivered his answer during a June broadcast. On live television, he introduced his family and recalled the "abuse" they had received from Browning (Majors, 1982). Newspapers across the state published photos stemming from the broadcast. Clement successfully turned the tables on his opponent by smartly and correctly playing to the family-oriented attitudes of the public through the strength of television. Such as strategy evolved into a very successful form of communication for Clement during his years in public office.

In this first campaign, Clement's attractiveness on television was enhanced by the less polished style of Browning. Browning's extemporaneous speaking style was "more suited to an open-air platform on the court square" (Majors, 1982, p. 219). In contrast to Clement's smooth, assured delivery, Browning evoked a stiff and uncertain image before the camera.

Davis (1976), writing in the Tennessee Historical Quarterly, goes so far as to say that the advent of television and its effective use by Clement may have affected the outcome of the August, 1952, primary. Clement made extensive use of radio and television throughout his first campaign. Buying fifteen minute blocks of television time for statewide and local appearances, he used his time on camera for a variety of reasons. He introduced family members, refuted charges, explained his ten point indictment against the Browning administration, and continually stressed his platform of honesty, decency, and morality. Clement's effective use of television, making it timely and relevant, proved to be a critically important part of his overall 1952 campaign strategy. Clement won the primary with 302,491 votes to Browning's 245,166 and went
on to a lopsided general election victory against weak opposition (Majors, 1982).

During his re-election campaign in 1954, Clement used television as a defense and a platform for charges against the new media. In perhaps his most interesting televised appearance, he discussed his involvement in the operation of a business called the "400 Club" in Bradley county near Cleveland, Tennessee. The "400 Club" carried the earned reputation of a gambling hot spot which also illegally served liquor. In a much-publicized and personally-hyped crackdown on gambling and liquor, Clement ordered state troopers to padlock the club.

The "400 Club" episode began as the result of an impromptu remark by Clement. Shortly before he was to speak before a crowd of three thousand at Lee College in Cleveland, two local preachers approached Clement voicing their concerns about the club. Neither wanted his name associated with telling the governor out of fear of retribution. Clement (1956) described the preachers as being upset and afraid to speak out. Later, during his speech, Clement impulsively addressed the problem by saying he would clean up the "400 Club" if local police officers did not. Clement found himself taking a bold, uncalculated move through an ad-libbed remark. State troopers wielding axes supposedly destroyed the club's livelihood, its gaming tables, and bar.

Several months later, the Nashville Tennessean, by now a vehement critic of Clement, published several headline-grabbing stories showing the club back in business and graphically describing the gambling activities going on there. Photographs of lined-up liquor bottles neatly placed on the bar, "Clement For Governor" stickers behind the bar, and people appearing to gamble accompanied a sensationalistic, undercover investigation headlined,
"400 Club Runs Wide Open"
"Liquor Sold Across Bar"
"Governor's Ax Apparently Too Dull
to close Casino Near Cleveland"
(Nashville Tennessean, 1954, p.1)

Given the Tennessean's vitriolic attacks Clement dating back to his endorsement by "Boss" Crump, the story seemed to be an old-fashioned "hatchet job" on the governor timed to appear shortly before the primary election.

Clement later claimed the Tennessean printed front page tear sheets and distributed them in major cities across the state. Clement's suspicions were confirmed later by Bradley county criminal court judge Sue Hicks (a man) who said the "400 Club" matter bore the earmarks of a "political frame-up" (Ray, 1954, p. 11) Nonetheless, many people in Nashville and the surrounding area read the story, forcing Clement to respond publicly in a strong way. He chose to do so over the three television stations in Nashville. He went on the air waving a copy of the Tennessean and criticizing its coverage (Fisher, 1994).

Clement calculated that the public would find his explanation of the "400 Club" incident plausible if he could reach them quickly, utilizing a delivery with the full range of his emotions. In doing so, he fashioned his speech to reflect an attorney presenting arguments to the jury, in this case the public. This type of presentation soon became a hallmark of his speeches, one that rewarded him with its effectiveness in substance and style.

Repeatedly recognizing himself as the chief law enforcer of the state, Clement (1954) told the television audience of the shocking conspiracy hatched between the Tennessean and the proprietor of the "400 Club," a
gentleman with the colorful name of Paul "Cue" Hooper. Both, Clement said, "conspired, combined, and confederated with the underworld and joined hands . . . in order to defame and discredit" him ("Manuscript of television address," p. 2). Not only did the Tennessean and Hooper conspire against the governor, Clement claimed, but against law enforcement, law and order in Tennessee, the fundamental freedoms of the people and, most important, against all good, honest Tennesseans and their children.

By unfolding this broad umbrella of victims, Clement managed to include almost every God-fearing person in the state, thus creating a oneness with him in terms of victimization. Not only had the conspirators ensnared him in their web of deceit, so had they captured all freedom-loving people. Moreover, he did not stop with that, but carried the emotional impact he needed forward with another revelation.

In a later interview, Clement (1956) recounted the evening when, after the original announcement of padlocking the "400 Club," he received a call in his hotel room from a mysterious man who warned him that the lives of his three sons might be in danger if he continued to tamper with things in Bradley county. By introducing this highly personal element, Clement quickly shifted from the role of governor and law enforcer to that of father, one that immediately caused a bond with all sensitive people, but especially those with families. Not only did the "outlaws" threaten his children, but they threatened the children of all Tennesseans. Clement (1954) concluded his argument by charging that "the Tennessean has betrayed you and menaces your security as citizens in this state" (p. 17). In the very public courtroom of television, he placed the case in the people's hand, saying they could make a decision and administer the punishment.
Clement's live television appearance signified a bold move on his part designed not only to remove any stain from his political record but also to develop an emotional relationship with the public. Through the force of his words and appearance, the emotion of his appeal, and the relinquishing of the final decision to the state's citizens, he not only accomplished his immediate goal of vindicating himself and vilifying the Tennessean, but soon thereafter won nomination for a second term. To the newspaper, Clement became the "self-styled knight of the double-bitted ax, fearless Frank Clement" (Now It's Really Closed," 1954, p.10).

In an interview with this writer forty-one years after the "400 Club" story appeared, the Tennessean photographer who took the undercover gambling pictures, Bob Holt, called the coverage a "notorious attack" on Clement. Holt (1995) claimed the Tennessean story "was just a conspiracy any way you hack it. I aided and abetted it to my regret. I wouldn't touch that with a ten foot pole today." Holt confirmed that his paper was invited to the club and promised free access to the gambling and liquor. This, said Holt, "took the edge off what was going to be an expose'. We were going to tell the public that this was a big expose' when it wasn't."

A prime example of the vivid presentation created by Clement was the questioning of the state trooper who led the original raid on the "400 Club" accompanied by the ax used by the troopers to smash equipment. The questioning occurred in the first ten minutes of the governor's speech.

Clement: I present to you Captain. J. J. Jackson of the Tennessee Highway Patrol. Captain Jackson, upon whose orders did you raid the "Club 400?"

Captain Jackson: Yours, sir.
Clement: Did you find any gambling equipment there?
Captain Jackson: Yes, sir, dice tables and all sorts of gambling equipment. Also a large amount of whiskey.
Clement: What did you do with the equipment?
Captain Jackson: We destroyed every piece of it with a double-bitted ax and a sledge hammer.
Clement: Thank you, Captain Jackson. Throughout Tennessee, the double bitted-ax and the sledge hammer were used relentlessly and gambling houses were closed. A new tone was set in Tennessee.

(Clement, 1954, pp. 5-6)

Through this brief interview, Clement relied on the first-hand account of the raid's leader to convey images of an ax and a hammer being swung in the name of justice and righteousness. He bolstered his argument with the words of a high-ranking law enforcement official.

Frank Clement understood that the effectiveness as a speaker relied on his ability to fit the message to the situation and to the particular location in Tennessee. Rhetorical scholar Lloyd Bitzer (1981) writes that situation rhetoric (such as the efforts of Clement) provides an excellent means of effective communication as long as the response fits the situation. Bitzer goes on to state that political speakers find themselves in problematical situations which they try to change by addressing mediating audiences, those audiences which have the power to modify, or change, the problems. By and large, Clement avoided the problem of fitting messages to his audience by his full understanding of "did the speech fit this audience" wherever he spoke in Tennessee.
Clearly tied to stump orators of Tennessee's past, Clement developed a dramatistic, theatrical style in his public speaking. Bitzer (1981) argues that such a dramatic form of public speaking is designed to impress upon the audience the gravity of the situation at hand. Additionally, rhetorical critic Kenneth Burke (1989) views such a dramatistic perspective as distinguishing between motion and action. "Action," he says, "implies assessments of situations and the people with whom the person interacts." Burke believes that action, a trait of all humans, includes conflict, purpose, reflection, and choice so that the possibility of changing society is pervasive.

Clearly, Clement's "400 Club" television address was an action designed to be delivered dramatically for a similar public response. The action of attacking the Tennessean, while incorporating the public as fellow victims, set the stage for a dramatic close and subsequent effect of reversing the public spotlight. No longer centered on Clement, attention shifted to the newspaper and its two journalists who had become participants in a high-stakes game of power, subterfuge, character assassination, and partisan politics, all behind the facade of investigative journalism.

With his flair for the dramatic, Clement seemed especially strong when he used the medium to go on the offensive as evidenced by this performance. Apparently, Clement's version of the strange phone call threatening his sons was never confirmed. The Tennessean reporter, now its retired chairman, John Seigenthaler, later testified before a grand jury that "Cue" Hooper invited the newspaper to cover the story as a way of getting back at Clement (Ray, 1954). The newspaper, eager to see a Browning victory, jumped on the story. However, because of Clement's dramatic presentation, any political damage was neutralized.
Again in 1954, Clement used television to respond to serious charges leveled against him by his once close aide, Eddie Friar. Although Friar had given up a promising career in politics to devote his efforts to Clement, the two had a particularly troubling parting of the ways after Friar became Secretary of State. Friar broke with Clement over the governor's ramrod tactics in pushing through a bill increasing truck weight limits on Tennessee highways. The trucking industry had actively supported Clement, leading to public charges that payoffs were involved. Friar purchased television time to tell his story. Clement purchased time immediately after Friar and refuted each of his former advisor's charges.

Overall, Clement used television advantageously during his first two terms in office. In the 1960's as television settled in as a major focus of family life, Clement's style on television, similar to his style in public, lost some of its luster and effectiveness. As one reporter had noted earlier in describing Clement's public persona, "Perhaps there is a slip in casting here. Perhaps he'll always appear a bit unreal to too many people in the tough, rough world of politics" (Sperling, 1956, p. 11).

In carefully crafting his public image, Clement relied on an ongoing appeal to the public's sense of morality, adopting a predictable, rather easy stance of claiming that the world's, the nation's, and each individual's sense of morality, of right and wrong, seemed tragically caught in a downward spiral. This argument particularly applied to politics since, then and now, the public's view of politicians almost always includes images of the proverbial "hand in the cookie jar." What, then, of a politician who regularly placed himself above such salacious actions? Clement made numerous public pronouncements to create and maintain a distinct image of one who found such acts reprehensible.
By the end of his first term, Clement had established himself as a spokesman for higher morals, often incorporating specific Bible passages in his speeches. On October 7, 1954, he spoke to the Rotary International convention in New York. Rotary clubs across the world incorporate a strong sense of religious faith in their philosophy. That fact, coupled with the potentially large audience and the location of the meeting, held much promise for Clement as he strove for national recognition during this period.

His words reflect the complex nature of how he relayed his message. Due to its abstractness, morality requires a prominent amount of emotional appeal to facilitate audience understanding. Clement appealed to emotions but he also launched into explanations which would fail him today. Lengthy sentences and rich verbiage perhaps hindered his relationship with some audience members rather than enhancing it. "Man," he said, "unites the material with the spiritual, the natural with the supernatural. He walks on Earth but his mind gives passage to angels" (1954, pp. 17-18). To get the full impact of these abstract words, they require a second, third, and maybe even a fourth reading. His listening audience had no such luxury.

Clement's remarks, clearly, did not take the form of a stump speech, but, by virtue of the subject, they potentially held great interest for the audience. As with other major speeches, Clement (1954) drew on the sympathy of his listeners by detailing the difficulties he faced as governor, the "harassing unease of waking up in the night," and discovering "the misdeeds of some of my own intimate advisers" (p. 3) (a reference to the charges leveled against him by Eddie Friar). The issue of morality in government, he said, should not limit itself to "consideration of keeping the public till" or the effects of taxes. Instead, the morality of government "reflects our own collective morality," the society it represents (p. 9).
Clement gave considerable attention to a historical review of the treatment of morality through the following four periods: 1) the first settlers, 2) the drift into materialism in the 1920's, 3) the economy of the 1930's, and 4) the problem of Communism before and after World War II. "What will God say," he questioned, "after the next war?" (p. 22). Clement maintained that peace in the world appeared as a moral problem--specifically, each person's morals. Keeping individuals morally healthy depended upon that great, "supernatural X-ray" called faith in God (1954, p.26).

The final four pages of the speech reflect strong religious content as a discussion of faith, that gift of God's in which we receive His grace with the "divine virtues of hope and charity" following. "Only faith," he said, "will save us--faith in this world, as in the next" (Clement, 1954, p. 30). Major parts of the text toward the end, underlined as to add emphasis to their religious nature, graphically illustrated Jesus' torment during His last days and the struggle He endured to keep his message alive.

The speech incorporates a classic Clement style suited for this particular setting. Substantive, emotional, and virtuous, it appealed to his audience through the effective common denominator of religion. Clement succeeded in positioning himself as a singular political entity fighting for right and using the might of God when necessary. During this Cold War period of emotional and ideological extremes, he held the answer. That answer resided in an abiding faith in God. Such words provided comfort in the age of Democracy versus Communism, freedom versus Godlessness in Indochina and Latin America, the growing menace of East Berlin, and the development of the hydrogen bomb.

Clement individualized his subject by stating that morality in government depended on the standard of morality practiced by each of them everyday. Such an approach would tend to draw his audience members into an active,
participatory role in the outcome of this struggle over good and evil. At the same time, he maintained that people alone cannot sufficiently deal with the previously-mentioned problems. So, at once, people should get involved in determining their own destiny but should do so with the help of Someone mightier than themselves. This involvement would allow the typical individual the guidance of a moral compass set always to the correct direction.

The main divisions of Clement's speech included a regret for previous inaction and a concern for present challenges, an awareness of the current situation and a hope, a guiding light of faith, for the future. Clement always tended to take an absolutist's view of morality, leaving little room for situational thinking.

Graber (1980) writes that politicians often use words to take the place of action when the words convey symbolic satisfactions. While desiring to be known as a man of action, Clement relied on the supreme symbolic force of being allied with God to transmit the message of reassurance and reward. Moving beyond the mere promise that problems will be addressed and solved, he reassured his audience that the problems had received and would continue to receive proper attention. The symbolic reward of those words for his audience was the reassurance that Clement, with Divine help, was capable of solving the problems, and through his superior capabilities, producing positive results. Although not created by Clement, this communication strategy proved its political effectiveness primarily in its use by those who could communicate well with their audiences.

Clement's rhetorical style, the strength of his speaking ability, had much to do with his public image. His speech writers matched style and substance to Clement's delivery. They formed a public relations staff necessitated by the
sheer volume of speeches delivered each year, a number reaching as many as three hundred.

Doug Fisher, a young reporter for the Nashville Banner while attending law school, covered the 1953 Tennessee constitutional convention. He later worked for Clement's father in a law firm before joining the governor's re-election effort as a publicity director, the forerunner of today's press secretary. Fisher (1994) recalls developing a form to handle speech requests. Because the governor made a relatively small salary during those days, Fisher looked first at the size of the honorarium, rather than the location or the potential crowd size.

Clement's speech writers worked continuously, always kept alert by the challenge to write effectively while providing different messages for different audiences. Joe Henry, Hilton Butler, Brainard Cheney, Roque Fojardo, Howard Anderson, and Fisher, the primary writers, pooled their individual strengths of research, style, and preparation. For example, members of the team met weekly during Clement's first campaign for governor. They studied audience reaction to different speeches and proposed changes in issue emphasis and other matters (Majors, 1986). Clement aide and future governor Buford Ellington called them the "phrase makers" for their ability to take an important phrase and weave it into Clement's own words (Maum, 1957). Astute and experienced political professionals, and some of them rising young leaders, they perceived Clement's potential and joined his political organization (Boyd, 1972). Clement's opening campaign speech of 1953 in Lebanon, Tennessee, represents the kind of prose used for maximum results. The speech, ostensibly a report to the people covering Clement's first term as governor, served also as the foundation for the rest of his campaign speeches. The research and writing took three weeks and included interviews with cabinet members, written
summaries of specific tasks done well, early outlines, and a final review with Clement (Greene, 1982).

The first sentence reflects the florid style of writing that has since fallen out of favor. Today's public would find it burdensome with meaningless words, a sort of hyperbole with little substance. Most important, they would not have the patience for such a long-winded sentence. Many politicians today limit the entire length of their television sound bites to less time than it took to recite the first sentence of Clement’s speech. In 1953, however, people appreciated more the words and how they were said. Typical of Clement’s oratory, a single sentence seemed to last, along with its impact, forever.

From the historic rotunda of the Wilson county courthouse--far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife--in the heart of the paradise we proudly call Middle Tennessee--where true-blooded American citizens hold to the even tenor of their way--in the center of the tranquil and serene city of Lebanon, named for its Biblical counterpart, and surrounded by stately cedars as glorious as those from which Solomon of old built his temple; a city of culture and a seat of learning located in a county which has enriched the public life of Tennessee by a host of statesmen and warriors; and presently populated by a people steeped in the traditions in which you and I believe; I open my campaign for a second term with pride, confidence, and enthusiasm.

(Clement, 1953, p. 1)
The public's attention span in those days tolerated such language. While the length of this one sentence has no place in today's public rhetorical style, Clement withstood any frustration with it through: 1) the force of his voice and its audio range, 2) his strategic pauses, 3) his acute awareness of audience perceptions, and 4) his handsome appearance. He had a voice "which alternately boomed like a siege gun, sang like a mountain fiddle and died away . . . to a dramatic whisper" (McDermott, 1954, p. 19).

His speech writers fed on Clement's Shakespearean abilities to offer dramatic words, creating a type of rhetoric which the public embraced. Brainard Cheney, known for his strength as a researcher, utilized his many contacts across Tennessee to provide anecdotes for Clement's speeches. He visited towns soon to host Clement and talked with the local folks, brought that information back to the state capitol, and put it into speeches. While his writing seemed too erudite for Clement, he played a major role in developing the governor's public stands on issues, especially his strong defense of the Tennessee Valley Authority (Fisher, 1994). A southern writer and novelist, Cheney had established a respectable literary reputation before teaming with Clement. A friend of the acclaimed Vanderbilt "Fugitive" writers, Cheney counted among his closest friends Robert Penn Warren and the Georgia writer, Flannery O'Connor (Stephens, 1986).

Henry, the Pulaski, Tennessee, lawyer who ultimately served state government in a wide range of positions, marked his own rhetorical high point with a dramatic address opposing capital punishment to a local jury. Part of his presentation involved the use of a picture of the electric chair, enlarged to life-sized proportions, to show the full effect of what it meant to send someone to his death. Clement would later use the same picture in his own emotional speech against the death penalty (Galbreath, 1995),
Another plank in Clement's public image platform centered on his humanitarian efforts. His time in office during the 1950's brought about major changes in the way the state dealt with its people, especially those less fortunate. He held a strong belief and genuine sensitivity in helping others, stemming from his religious faith. State representative Forrest Ladd remarked, "Many a time I've seen him stop a dirty, ragged little urchin, encourage him, give him some money and send him on his way happier" (Maum, 1954, p.1). Clement proclaimed the need for people to love each other with the kind of love Jesus had for all people (Maum, 1954). He even used that kind of thinking to respond to criticism of his administration, saying that Christ, too, received criticism and persecution and that he, Clement, stood for the same principles for which Christ stood. Whatever motivated Clement, he took substantial action to improve the condition of Tennessee's needy and forgotten.

Such humanitarian thinking proved beneficial from political and social perspectives and appeared regularly in his rhetoric. For example, during his rise to national prominence, Clement addressed the Alabama Association for Mental Health at a banquet honoring the powerful and influential Senator Lister Hill. Addressing the South's mental health needs, Clement (1956) vowed to increase the number of psychiatrists, nurses, and social workers.

His biggest contribution was the creation of the state Mental Health Department, described by one publication as perhaps the greatest step forward of its kind Tennessee had taken in one hundred years (Maum, 1954). Overhauling the Department of Institutions, he made help for the mentally impaired a major focus of his public life. Mental health facilities no longer carried the stigma of "Homes for the Feebleminded." Clement aide Tom Beasley (1994) said Clement had a spiritual call "to do something about it." Clement felt an overpowering desire to help the less fortunate, in part because
of his religion, but also because of his plan to turn the office of governor into a servant for the people. Clement told one Christian publication that he wanted to get into politics in order to bring God to public life. One of his Mental Health Commissioners, Nat Winston (1994), told of how Clement appeared genuinely overcome with emotion at times while visiting state hospitals and, accordingly, that he had a passion for correcting wrongs.

Other important humanitarian changes brought about by Clement included the establishment of a new hospitalization program for the indigent which led to long-term care facilities for those unable to pay. His education program for severely mentally retarded children pioneered such care. He provided better care for indigent crippled children, and began a program of alcohol counseling. He created a state dental program and a tuberculosis control division. In a move designed primarily to help the children of the rural poor, he set up the first free textbook program for all public school grades in Tennessee. He made the retirement system for teachers actuarially sound. He created the first speech and hearing center in the state (Clement, 1962).

Clement's contributions to societal improvement increased the speed of modernization for Tennessee's rural areas. They also increased his profile among the public not only as a decisive leader but as a sensitive one. Most Tennesseans during this time lived in outlying areas near small towns with populations of no more than three thousand (Phillips and Sanford, 1956). Life remained difficult for many despite the high-speed technical innovations embraced by their urban kin. That led Clement to develop a long-range highway construction plan to connect the country folks with cities nearby. Those rural roads became the lifeblood of community business and the key, ultimately, to community improvement.
Constitutional changes also contributed to Clement's public image. Early in his first term, eight amendments received approval, including raising legislators' pay, increasing the governor's term from two to four years, implementing the line item veto, eliminating the poll tax (a particularly heinous law which blocked many Negroes from voting), authorizing home rule for cities, and consolidating city and county functions (Phillips, 1978). These, especially the change in the governor's term, represented a political windfall for Clement and meaningful changes for the state's citizens.

Clement's public image, carefully structured and nurtured, helped create only a partially accurate portrait. Like all politicians, he dedicated special attention to what the public thought of him. Unlike most politicians, he possessed extraordinary abilities which enabled him, at times, to exceed expectations.
CHAPTER 4

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Boy Orator of the Cumberland... gave the last radio speech at the first television convention

David Halberstam,
Harper's

History abounds with the names of men and women whose moments of fame doubled as the beginning of their descent from the stage of public acclaim. Having worked long and hard to reach their glory, sacrificing much while successfully navigating around obstacles along the way, their denouement proved tragically rapid. The universally unpredictable nature of fate which gave these people their special strength also made it their weakness. They became victims of their own making.

Frank Clement's handling of the Democratic convention keynote speech in 1956 proved at once the biggest success and biggest failure of his political life. The event still dominates his public career in such a way that a comparison with two other, more successful, yet no less crucial, keynote speakers adds important perspective.

Their keynote speeches, given during similarly trying times, reflect the importance of content, substance, and a strong delivery in effecting a positive response from delegates and the public. In this chapter I will explore Clement's keynote speech to the Democratic national convention in 1956 in the context of a rhetorical analysis. This chapter will also include a comparison of key
elements in Clement's keynote speech to those in the 1948 speech by Alben Barkley and the 1976 speech by Barbara Jordan.

Clement approached the 1956 national stage with the kind of determined attitude for which he had become famous. His life, till then, had followed his plan. The Junior Chamber of Commerce named him one of the top ten young men in America (Clement, 1960). He joined the ranks of those whose images would soon become well known, for good or bad, such as Carol Rowan and Billy Sol Estes. Active in the American Legion, a veteran, and an ex-FBI agent, elected as one of the youngest governors ever, he ran for re-election with the target of a national office squarely in his sights.

When he gathered key advisors around him for yet another strategy session prior to the convention, he told them he would not rule out the presidency one day, maybe as early as 1960. He would definitely try hard for either that or the vice presidential nomination at the upcoming 1956 Democratic national convention. As usual, he asked for opinions. Clement genuinely listened to the thoughts of others even if he had already made up his mind (Fisher, 1994).

Sentiment around the state, and around the table, ran strongly in Clement's favor. His sister, always a good barometer of public sentiment, urged him on. Those who liked him, she said, loved him. Those who did not held as strong a hate as possible (O'Brien, 1995).

Clement's strategic plan involved a speaking schedule even more energetic than usual. Speeches not only increased in quantity, but in quality as well. Research and speech writing became full time jobs to more people (Fisher, 1994). Just as important, speeches depended even more on their location, the potential for strong Democratic crowds, and attendance by top party officials. As in Tennessee, local supporters elsewhere started the publicity
rounds several days in advance (Arnold, 1994). Working closely with Clement officials in Tennessee, helpers spared no effort to attract sizable crowds.

The paths which led Alben Barkley and Barbara Jordan to their keynote speeches held no less significance. Barkley had served the Democratic party faithfully for many years. "Mr. Democrat," as party loyalists called him, served as Senate majority leader for ten years. He temporarily chaired the 1932 and 1936 conventions, nominated Franklin Roosevelt in 1944, and throughout it all positioned himself as a potential vice presidential candidate (Barkley, 1954).

Barkley, like Clement, had charisma although of a different kind. He possessed authority and credibility, two virtues which created a sense of awe among delegates. Perhaps most important, Barkley used anecdotal humor to great effect in his public speaking. On paper, his speeches looked dull, but taking advantage of a "lively delivery" and the audience mood at the precise "psychological moment," his messages carried powerful impact (Clevenger, 1956, p. 15).

Barbara Jordan commanded respect. Possessing a shorter political resume' than Clement or Barkley, her greatest attributes included a dignified presence, unimpeachable integrity, and an unabashed desire to see her country correct its wrongs. Her life reflected the American dream of a poor black girl from Houston who overcame social disadvantages to rise in prominence and power. She "imposed herself on the national consciousness" not always by what she said but by how she said it (Drew, 1976, p. 294).

Clement, Barkley, and Jordan could hardly have differed more in style and personality. Yet, over a period of thirty years, each shared similarities in circumstances which would catapult them into the nation's political spotlight. Two found enhanced prestige and power as the result of their speeches. One
went home considering himself a failure, his path to national prominence forever blocked.

The nation began hearing about Frank Clement in 1954, when his speaking tour criss-crossed the country. The tour included an important appearance at the Missouri State Democratic Convention. There, he delivered a strident attack on President Eisenhower and Republican policies. Clement (1954) quipped to a partisan crowd that Eisenhower's choice was to either serve his own party or serve the nation, but not both.

That stop preceded a major appearance at a two day meeting of the Democratic National Committee in Indianapolis. Originally scheduled to deliver brief remarks, Clement used his time to attack Republican leaders and was interrupted many times by applause. He entitled the speech "The Biggest Giveaway of All," and aimed it, once again, at the GOP.

The Indianapolis speech clinched the keynote speaker's invitation for Clement. The audience included important Midwest Democrats, the national Democratic party chairman, and a person Clement knew would have considerable say-so in the Tennessee governor's rise to national prominence, Adlai Stevenson. Stevenson, one of many who pumped Clement's hand after the speech, spoke in glowing terms of the message and the man (Gardner, 1978).

In all, Clement spoke to 165 groups during the year preceding his keynote appearance. He turned down nineteen appearances for every one he accepted (Clement, 1960). He openly courted Harry Truman, inviting the former president to attend the annual Ramp Festival, in Cosby, Tennessee, and to visit him at the governor's mansion in Nashville (Corlew, 1977). The hard-to-please Truman saw in Clement the work ethic and stubborn determination which helped the Missourian rise from business failure to the White House. Truman's
admiration for the Tennessee governor seemed confirmed by his trip to Cosby, a rural hamlet in upper east Tennessee which annually celebrates the unheralded qualities of a little-known, onion-like, indigenous plant called the ramp.

In 1955, Clement moved to strengthen his international reputation by becoming chairman of the Cordell Hull Foundation. He traveled through ten South American countries, espousing international feelings and emphasizing friendship (Greene, 1982). Domestically and internationally, Clement advanced himself from a "long shot" position in the keynote address sweepstakes to the logical choice.

Clement's speaking ability, the sincerity of his religious convictions, and his moderate stance among hard core segregationist southern governors all caught the eye of top party officials. They also saw in Clement the physical attributes described by one writer as "handsome dreamy-eyed, full lipped . . .with the mobile, fine-boned face of a Shakespearean actor" (Martin, 1955, p. 22). His fellow Tennessean, the author Wilma Dykeman (1956), called him "The Electrifier" (p. 49).

Here, to the Democrats, appeared a potentially formidable candidate. A young, dynamic, untainted man with a fine family, a strong sense of patriotism, charming good looks, a moderate track record on civil rights as the first southern governor to veto a segregation bill, and, most publicly identifiable, the God-given ability to arouse people with his words. This last quality received special importance since millions of people across America would watch the keynote address through the emerging technology of television. Clement's selection on July 9 from a field of eighteen candidates prompted favorable comments from Democrats across the country.
Party officials chose Clement as a way of inspiring the public to initiate change. Years earlier, they chose Barkley for his ability to infuse a spirit and ignite a rally among the Democrats. The choice of Jordan by party officials soon appealed to black voters but had the initial effect of exploding stereotypes, and, ultimately, helping to heal the hurt of a wounded country. Each speaker faced a formidable goal—to arouse delegates, party members, and Americans to action in support of the Democratic party.

Not all convention keynote speeches have involved complex issues and goals. In reality, the speeches exist for simple reasons. Edwin Miles (1960) writes that convention keynote speeches have two primary purposes, (1) "to raise the enthusiasm of the delegates to a high pitch," and (2) "to rally the voters of the nation to the party's standard" (p. 26). Miles specifies four traditional roles of a keynote speech. They include, (1) to remind the delegates of the solemn hour and the important decisions ahead, (2) to recount the party's principles and accomplishments, (3) to hold up opponents to ridicule and scorn, and (4) to plead for a united effort to reach victory in November.

Using Miles' roles as a guideline, Clement's keynote speech represented a conventional address delivered in an unconventional way. In particular, four important qualities did not appear in Clement's speech. They include, (1) substance, (2) sensitivity, (3) humility, and (4) humor. Using these four qualities as a baseline for rhetorical analysis, I further divide them into eight specific reasons for Clement's keynote failure. These eight reasons include the following:

1. Clement's choice of a speaking style. The speech became a curious amalgam of stump speech and gratuitous verbosity delivered in a threatening way.
2. The failure by Clement to adapt to his television audience. Having used the medium effectively in Tennessee, Clement seemingly ignored the power of national television.


4. Clement's desire for acclaim overruled the need for a substantive speech, thus reflecting an excessive faith in himself. A successful speaker for so long, he relied too much on a usually dependable intuition.

5. The forceful, attacking style of the speech and its accompanying negativity left little room for humility and sensitivity.

6. Clement's failure to learn from the past. Despite the extraordinary lengths of his early preparation, Clement did not grasp the lessons to be learned from his successful predecessors, notably Alben Barkley.

7. The division of Clement's attention and the time kept him busy in meetings, on the phone, and in hallways as he campaigned for vice president. Barkley and Jordan, on the other hand, devoted most of their thoughts and actions to their respective speeches.

8. The choice of a main speech writer appears to have hurt Clement's efforts from the beginning. Hilton Butler, noted for his use of florid language and creative alliteration,
firmly grasped details. On the other hand, he often allowed his erudition to overshadow the message. His writing was better suited to a smaller audience, not the television masses.

History, as a lesson-giver, favored Clement. Democrats have held their national political conventions since 1832 when Andrew Jackson resided in the White House (Valley, 1974). Since then, politicians' careers have risen and fallen overnight based on the quality of their speeches. A rousing convention speech by James Garfield helped his presidential plans. Franklin Roosevelt's "Happy Warrior" speech for Al Smith proved very important in the young politician's rise to the presidency (Bostrum, 1960).

In the same vein, Barkley's career rose in stature and importance following his keynote speech. Jordan created a ground swell of respect not only for herself, but for her party and her nation through her words. A student of rhetoric, Clement should have learned from history as well. Ample evidence existed to help him seize the good exemplified by previous speakers and modify it to his advantage.

Perhaps the failure to heed historical lessons illustrates Clement's tendency to favor appearance over substance. By sheer volume of time and effort, though, it seemed few matters escaped his attention. Clement began his preparations for the keynote speech with the same vigorous spirit which led to his selection. He sent two of his speech writers, Brainard Cheney and Joe Henry, to Washington to discuss the assignment with party leaders. While there, they gathered background information on policy issues as well as copies of keynote addresses going back to 1928 (Gardner, 1978).

Aides traveled to Chicago to review convention details such as location of the microphones and television cameras. They studied the design of the
platform as well as lighting plans for the stage (O'Brien, 1994). Other associates found film of previous keynote addresses for potential speaker-audience interaction. Clement traveled to Kansas City to confer with Truman, and he visited Hollywood to learn more about makeup. He also wanted to preview the Kennedy-moderated film (Gardner, 1978).

Clement's friend Billy Graham advised him not to attack Eisenhower and Nixon personally, but to stick to the issues (Corlew, 1977). Clement knew to spare no expense or effort to make this his best speech. The high stakes meant he would go into Chicago with the highest level of preparedness. Close to the convention, he read drafts of the speech to friends, soliciting their judgments about different versions. He even rented a banquet room in which to rehearse (Gardner, 1978).

Versions differ as to who wrote Clement's final draft. A strong question remains as to whether a final version existed. Afterward, Clement claimed sole responsibility for the speech, probably more in an attempt to deflect criticism away from his aides than to take credit for the contents (O'Brien, 1995). Gardner (1978) reports as many as twenty-five people worked on the speech. One of Clement's speech writers, Doug Fisher (1994), says Hilton Butler wrote the speech.

Most accounts agree that, as the keynote speech approached, its speaker did not have the benefit of a finished product. Clement's former press secretary, Eddie Jones (1994), claims rewriting occurred right up to the time Clement approached the podium. Fisher (1994) corroborates this, saying the keynote speech underwent massive change during the twenty-four hours preceding its presentation. Despite months of preparation by Clement and his aides, Jones and Fisher indicate that as Clement entered the convention hall on Monday, August 13, 1956, the speech remained a work in progress.
Today, Doug Fisher (1994) calls the original version of the keynote speech "excruciatingly long." Butler, Fisher says, outdid himself preparing an overly lengthy speech, thinking that Clement would simply pick the best parts. "We got to the convention," Fisher says, "and everybody knew it was too long, but we couldn't get him to look at it. He was doing everything he could to be vice president. Only near the speech time did he look at it."

Fisher (1994) recounts how he sat up most of the night cutting forty-five minutes from the speech. He describes the timing as "very scary," claiming that the speech reached the right length only after the cuts. This account indicates that Clement spent little time reviewing the speech, a presentation he knew would greatly influence his chances for national office. He had other things on his mind all day, mainly, courting Adlai Stevenson.

Clement also spent considerable time in a fight with fellow favorite son Estes Kefauver for control of the Tennessee delegation. Kefauver wanted control of the delegation in his effort to displace Stevenson as the presidential nominee. Clement needed the delegation for a potential vice presidential nomination (Greene, 1982). Yet another Tennessean, Albert Gore, posed a serious threat to Clement's chances as well. All of these factors created a time consuming and exhausting process. Clement, judging by this political priorities, seemed to rely on his innate speaking ability to get him through the keynote address without substantial pre-speech review and consultation.

Other major, unexpected complications existed prior to the speech. Clement felt awkward when told he had to rehearse. He sister, Anna Belle, remembers Clement's disbelief. He had never rehearsed a speech (O'Brien, 1995). When he got to the rehearsal, he discovered his white shirt did not suit the television cameras. Additionally, Clement did not like the idea of wearing makeup. Finally, party officials tore out several pages of his script and imposed
strict time limits on his appearance (Corlew, 1977). All of these factors posed a major problem for someone accustomed to speaking for an unlimited amount of time, much of it in an extemporaneous fashion, as he responded to his audiences.

The time for the speech approached. Clement courted the delegates, but he felt increasingly apprehensive. He began to feel the pressure of high expectations and he remembered all the publicity he generated leading up to this night (O'Brien, 1995).

The final few hours before his speech proved to be an unprecedented challenge for Clement. In his hotel room, tense and emotional, he met with twenty friends, asking them to join him in prayer. After that, Clement "wiped is eyes with a handkerchief, said 'God Bless You' and dismissed them" (Corlew, 1977, p. 105). All he had worked so hard to accomplish, his political future, now found itself on the line.

Convention delegates anticipated high entertainment by the man many believed the era's premiere speaker. They wanted a partisan speech arousing them to action (Corlew, 1977). The people at home might have viewed the event with a sense of curiosity, wondering about this southern governor whose oratorical reputation had preceded him.

Frank Clement strode to the podium amid the typical clamor of a political convention. Smiling, waving to the crowd and exchanging pleasantries to several around him, he allowed the applause to continue through two bangs of the speaker's gavel. Basking in the glow of the crowning moment in his life, Clement managed one of the few smiles he exhibited during his speech.

As he began, Clement (1956) extolled the virtues of his party, invoking, not surprisingly, "the greater glory of God" (p. 3). With his second sentence, he
incorporated for the first time exaggerated mannerisms effective in Tennessee, but unknown to a national television audience. Both arms rose as he shouted,

From these halls in Chicago shall go forth sometime this week the candidates of competence and conscience who shall become the next president and vice president of the United States of America (Clement, 1956, p. 3)

In the first paragraph of the keynote speech, Clement used three techniques found in all his speeches—the issue of religion, the energetic use of arm and hand movements, and repetition of key words.

Clement's first words set the tone for what the audience soon heard. For this study, further exploration of the keynote speech’s content will center on the previously-mentioned areas of substance, sensitivity, humility, and humor, contrasted to those elements found in the speeches of Barkley and Jordan.

Substance

Clement designed the keynote speech, and his accompanying delivery, for maximum emotional effect. Substance did not play a role in his speech, perhaps by design. Knowing he needed to appeal to delegates’ emotions in order to leave a lasting impression, Clement quite possibly encouraged his speech writers to avoid boring content, to steer away from burdensome facts and figures, potentially leading to disagreement among the speech writers as to the tone of the speech. Hilton Butler, who worked well with detail, found himself out of his element.
The speech does include specific numerical information, especially when alluding to the plight of farmers and small business owners. For example, Clement compared the amount of farm income between Democratic and Republican administrations, and the number of bankruptcies as well. However, as Bradley (1960) notes, only three points of Clement's ten point indictment, clearly a main portion of the speech, included specific evidence. The others had no factual background.

Other key areas received little or no substantive support. The problem of civil rights, a subject demanding immediate national attention, covered six short paragraphs of emotional, non-compelling pleas. Clement (1956) called on Negroes to keep their fidelity with the party. "Look to your memory," he said, "to decide under what national leadership. . .you received the greatest total benefits" (p. 12). Women and their role in society received little more than a lukewarm call to Democratic action.

Emotional claims riddled the speech and undermined the comparatively small amount of substance. Early in the speech, Clement (1956) initiated his attack on Richard Nixon, the "vice hatchet man," by claiming that Nixon through his criticism of the Democrats ("20 years of treason") also accused every American of "treacherous conduct" (p. 4). Such a wild claim met with predictable, immediate acceptance by the delegates.

Clement (1956) continued his assault on the GOP by proclaiming count number four of the indictment. "The Republican party," he said, "is guilty of corruption in high places involving an unprecedented spree of giveaways, grab, and greed" (p. 10). He did not elaborate. The generalized charge of corruption, not uncommon in politics, was embellished by Clement with the word "unprecedented," making the previously substantiated corruption charge less believable.
While the delegates did not seem to mind the lack of substance, the New York Times (1956) noticed it. In an editorial two days after the speech, the Times commented, "If the Democratic party had nothing more to offer voters . . .than the contents of the keynote speech. . .then the party dignitaries. . .would have done well to fold their tents and silently steal away" (p. 28).

In stating his case for substance, Alben Barkley resurrected the glowing memories of Roosevelt. He rejected the Republican criticism of the former president by stating, "neither their jaundiced minds nor their forked tongues can rob him of the eminence which he will occupy forever" (Clausen, 1979, p. 87). Barkley's speech included an impassioned defense of the New Deal with its lowering of unemployment and heightened prosperity for many. Steering clear of the Truman era, the speech consisted of a point by point criticism of the GOP. Barkley portrayed the substance of an FDR presidency through proper and powerful emotion.

As with Barkley, Barbara Jordan's very presence projected substance. As a black Congresswoman from Houston, she proved that "the American dream need not be deferred" (Thompson, 1979, p. 225). In her keynote speech, Jordan (1976) spoke of "our national purpose" while urging Americans to "uphold the principles of this nation" (p. 645). Her dominant theme, in fact, affirmed America's historical traditions and institutions, the importance of national unity, and the responsibilities of its leaders as responsive servants.

Jordan's style, decidedly more conciliatory than that of Clement, lacked shrill rhetoric. Instead, she chose the effective use of political candor. "I could easily spend this time praising the accomplishments of this party and attacking the Republicans," she said, "but I do not choose to do that" (1976, p. 646).
Sensitivity

Clement's failure to foresee the negative response to his speech centers on his lack of sensitivity. I have isolated four main areas in which this major flaw resides. They include (1) the general attack theme, (2) the attacks on President Dwight Eisenhower, (3) the divisive nature of some comments, and 4) the feeling of fear which accompanied such strategy. Each of these elicit an emotional response, which, unfortunately for Clement, alienated rather than unified people.

The speech's attack nature, I theorize, left people feeling defensive, with pessimistic thoughts about the United States. Did they find this so revolting that they rejected Clement's words? Possibly. They had good reason to feel that way, since Clement (1956) referred to a "ruthless inside group. . .daily seizing more power in Washington" (p. 13). He inferred that a mysterious cabal of shadowy figures maneuvered to control the country.

The ten point indictment represents the heart of Clement's attack strategy. Legally, an indictment does not mean guilt. It simply means evidence exists to indicate a crime had occurred. From the layman's perspective, though, the word "indictment" usually equates to guilt, that something wrong has definitely happened. Playing on such thinking, Clement (1956) smeared the Republicans with charges ranging from "a veil of secrecy" in handling their duties to the exploitation of natural resources (p. 10).

In succession, Americans heard that Republicans 1) forgot farmers, 2) made workers "secondary citizens," 3) represented the evils of big business, 4) allowed unbridled corruption, 5) conducted business secretly, 6) ceded power to unknown figures, 7) abused natural resources, 8) created mass poverty, 9)
made the United States a second rate country, and 10) did not deserve the trust of the American people. "There is a . . . country to be saved," said Clement (1956, pp. 10-11).

Of all his attacks, those on Eisenhower eventually caused Clement the most trouble. The president, still revered as a war hero, fit the role of every one's uncle or grandfather. His avuncular nature endeared him to the electorate even if his administration exhibited a "status quo" action mode. Clement's backhanded attempts at softening his criticism of Eisenhower did little to blur his message. Instead, people remembered Clement for referring to the president as indecisive, bogged down in patronage, the originator of "broken promises and unredeemed pledges," and on the "treadmill of acquiescence" (1956, p. 16). One reporter described the speech as a "no-holds-barred attack on the Republicans" (Lawrence, 1956, p.1).

Although calling for unity, Clement's attacks created divisiveness. Farmers became the outcasts of society, small business owners the pawns of big business, and citizens the skeptics of their leaders. Clement (1956) did not extend a warm welcome to Republicans, nor did he offer much in the way of conciliatory words or gestures. Instead, speaking in war-like terms, he called on others to join the "fight. . .the fight for what you believe to be right" (p. 17).

Finally, Clement's words, intentional or not, contained an element of fear. He accused the Republicans of inaction while millions found themselves entranced, "beguiled by the smiles from Moscow, and embraced by the godlessness of Communism" (p. 13). He raised the fear of sending "American boys" to fight in Indochina and he noted the fragile peace by mentioning how close America stood to "the fallout ashes of nations" once free (1956, p. 17).

By attacking Richard Nixon as the Republican's "vice hatchet man," Clement himself became the Democrats' hatchet man. His verbal barrage of
threats, charges of character defects, and appeals to fear and distrust produced an attack theme which repulsed people, limited his effectiveness, and damaged his credibility. He became the master of abusive language. The New York Times (1956) called his speech a "tub-thumping, breast-beating, roof-shaking example of campaign oratory at its worst" (p. 28).

Only eight years before, Alben Barkley chose to couch his criticism of Republicans in more gilded language. He painted the GOP as the common enemy. Predictably, rapport with his audience grew as Barkley challenged delegates by asking which important social programs would be trimmed by the Republicans.

Barkley issued a direct challenge to the Republicans to stop criticizing the New Deal and show the country something better. He retained his established statesman image even though one writer earlier called his audience "a melancholy mob of lugubrious defeatists" (Smith, 1949, p. 67).

Jordan designed her keynote speech in the most unique way. Consciously choosing to avoid the stereotypical criticism of any non-Democrat, she enjoyed widespread acceptability of her speech due in large part to its harmonious nature. The speech included no name calling and very little criticism. Jordan uttered the term "Republican" only once--in the last paragraph--and in a complimentary way (Jordan and Hearon, 1979).

Thompson (1979) writes that Jordan accomplished several major goals. She 1) earned the respect of both the delegates and television viewers, 2) fulfilled her role without being trite, and 3) avoided the unfavorable stereotypes of being a black and a woman. Instead of hurling "thunderbolts" (Reston, 1956, p. 12) as Clement did, Jordan preached the gospel of unity, speaking of a country not in terms of a divided, weak entity, but one with many blessings and the chance to grow in stature.
Jordan had many reasons to blame Republicans since Watergate's scar ran deep and resentment over the Nixon pardon remained strong. The Democrats themselves faced memories of Chicago's "nightsticks flailing in a fog of tear gas" from 1968, and Miami's "civil war" in the convention hall from just four years earlier ("Shall we gather," 1976, pp. 9-10). She avoided chiding the GOP, though, and adopted a strategy of reconciliation. Jordan "succeeded in retaining partisanship while transcending the partisan and... retaining a... humanitarian concern for the individual while transcending class consciousness" (Thompson, 1979, p. 231). The strategy endeared her to the party faithful and her fellow Americans.

Humility

Clement (1956) used humility primarily in religious terms, in one instance calling on each delegate to "get down on your knees... and pray to the One God for guidance" (p. 17). Of course, his famous refrain, "Precious Lord, take our hand and lead us on," reminded everyone that the job ahead needed Divine assistance (p. 18).

These sayings represented standard Clement strategy, integral parts of his Tennessee stump speeches, and proven effective before such a God-fearing populace. Humbling himself before the Almighty and urging others to do the same immeasurably helped Clement during his years in public office. Such talk set him above most other politicians yet might have isolated him too much from the national populace, a group that did not easily accept the idea of a Bible-thumping politician, especially one from the South.

Clement's keynote speech lacked the humility vital to connecting him with the masses. Instead, it contained extensive hyperbole. To complicate matters, his exaggerated statements had little factual basis, leaving most of
them open to question. They sounded more like the empty bombast expected of most snake oil-selling politicians.

Clement's attack on Richard Nixon included his description of the vice president as "the most politically intemperate individual in the history of modern American politics (1956, pp. 4-5). Time proved Clement's words true, but in 1956, Nixon, the "Checkers" speech notwithstanding, did not fit the description.

Patriotism has served well as a favorite theme of keynote speeches. This speech lacked enough of the patriotic fervor to make people proud of their country, especially when Clement (1956) described America's position with all other nations as having "reached an all-time low." Clement seized the opportunity again to conduct some "Red-baiting," claiming the United States had become too lax in its competition for world supremacy with the Soviet Union (p. 8).

Alluding to the Democratic party, Clement (1956) projected, in one instance, a curious mix of quasi-humility and outright braggadocio. He claimed, "our record is not a perfect one," but shortly thereafter stated, "It is the best record ever compiled by any political organization in the history of the world" (p. 9). Nowhere in my research have I found Clement described as an expert on political parties around the world.

Bert Bradley (1960) concludes that Clement spent more than three-fourths of his time attacking Republicans rather than "setting forth a constructive program for the Democratic party to present to the American people" (p. 200). Reporter Murray Kempton (1956), criticizing Clement's statements, called him a liar.

Clement impressed the delegates, as the New York Times (1956) notes, with "the first real enthusiasm of the Democratic convention" (p. 12). This conclusion became a popular, if shallow, one since it evolved from Clement's
"shaking of the rafters" delivery (Baker, 1956, p. 28). In an editorial two days later, after studying his words, the Times (1956) said the hallmark of Clement's keynote speech was "absurd exaggeration" (p. 28).

Clement's success, primarily limited to convention delegates, stemmed more from the emotional response to bluster than the admiration earned by sincerity and humility. In short, he fed the delegates what they wanted to hear rather than what they and the nation needed to know.

Alben Barkley's rhetorical strength centered on his natural ability to identify with his audience. Clevenger (1956) notes that Barkley was not endowed with the tools needed for successful oratory but that he utilized his humility to make people around him feel comfortable.

A dignified man, Barkley transformed the hostility of his audience into an enthusiasm for the Democratic cause. He did so by telling the delegates that their adversary resided outside the convention hall, not inside (Clevenger, 1956). Barkley saved his main effort, though, for urging Democrats to swallow their pride, humble themselves enough to form a common bond, and close ranks.

In 1948, southern Democrats, led by Strom Thurmond, threatened to form their own party. Liberal Democrats had formed the Progressive party of former vice president Henry Wallace. Barkley, to combat these efforts, issued a non-partisan appeal for unity and a call for aid to people around the world (Clausen, 1979). He did so with an evangelistic fervor, using religion effectively. Instead of Jesus standing at the door and knocking, the poor of the world knocked on America's door awaiting an answer to their appeals.

Barkley successfully coupled the world's need with a well-known quotation from the most recognizable humble servant of all, Jesus Christ. He described the United States as the nation with the ability to save the world, in
contrast to Clement's characterization of America as a second-rate country, illustrating Clement's failure to learn rhetorical lessons from his predecessors.

During her keynote speech in 1976, Barbara Jordan appealed to traditional morality in everyone, not just Democrats, in part to emphasize individual value. She called for a return to morality and specific values such as self sacrifice, fair-mindedness, and moderation. The government, she said, could not solve all problems.

What we have to do is strike a balance between the idea that government should do everything and the idea, the belief, that government ought to do nothing.
We believe in equality for all and privilege for none.
As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master.
(Jordan, 1976, p. 646)

Jordan encouraged a common humility in Americans, pointing to society's blessings as ones not to take for granted. Her method proved objective and high-minded, above pettiness and partisan ramblings (Jordan and Hearon, 1979). Finally, Jordan remembered the humbleness of her upbringing, withstanding and overcoming major social status obstacles to realize her dream.

Jordan (1976) called on all public servants to make themselves "strictly accountable" for their actions. "It is hypocritical," she said, "for the public official to admonish. . .the people to uphold the common good if we are derelict in upholding the common good" (p. 646). This kind of call for unabashed self examination, indeed rare, illustrates the greatest show of humbleness a public
officeholder can exhibit, short of those rarest of words, "I made a mistake and I apologize."

In fact, Jordan (1976) did apologize, telling her audience that Democrats "have made mistakes," and that they "did not foresee full consequences of (their) actions" (p. 645). In this vein, Jordan clearly set herself apart from many other political speakers by her dignity, her candidness, and her humility.

Humor

Former presidential contender Champ Clark (1928) knew the importance of keeping an audience laughing, especially when a speech seemed ponderous. "Wit and humor help float a heavy speech," he said, "and give wings to a solid argument" (p. xvi). Clark needed a good sense of humor since, in 1912, Williams Jennings Bryan "unexpectedly blocked the seemingly inevitable" nomination of Clark for president. He did so in favor of the little known, first term governor from New Jersey, Thomas Woodrow Wilson (Fromkin, 1995). Clark became a footnote in history books instead of president.

The use of humor perhaps offers the most contrast among the styles of Clement, Barkley, and Jordan. Jordan's written remarks reflect practically no humor. She did not need it, given the eloquence of her presentation. Barkley's use of humor reflected the natural manifestation of his everyday character as a master of words and their use. Clement used sarcasm as a form of humor. He mocked all opponents and broad-brushed them as purveyors of ineptitude and evil.

The Republicans, as the "party of privilege and pillage," would soon pass over the Potomac river in what Clement (1956) described as "the greatest water crossing since the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea" (p. 3). Biblical in
nature, the words played off alliteration and gave delegates a vision of the GOP retreating in mass. The children of Israel, in fact, eventually conducted a victorious, joyous crossing of the Red Sea.

President Eisenhower, or the "Top Man" as described by Clement, (1956) peered "down the green fairways of indifference," a play on the president's love of golf and a not too subtle poke at what some viewed as his lack of initiative. Clement accused the Republicans of playing a "double-faced campaign" with Nixon as the slinger of mud and Eisenhower as the genteel general staying above the fray.

Number nine of Clement's ten count indictment against the Republicans dealt with what he called "a general drifting and lack of vision" in foreign policy. He ascribed the loss of American prestige around the world to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the "greatest unguided missile in the history of American diplomacy" (1956, p. 11). As with most sarcasm, this description held an element of fear, since American and Soviet propagandists painted vivid scenes of nuclear holocaust daily. The mythical missile gap, discovered later, provided all politicians with an opportunity to exploit the "Red Scare."

Such highly creative style burns a vivid image in the minds of those hearing it. To this day, some people remember the "fairways of indifference" and Republicans crossing the Potomac (Beasley, 1994). Colored with sarcasm, such sayings typically hold a prominent position in the mainstream of political humor. Subjecting opponents to ridicule continues, after all, as a timeworn way of presenting them at their worst.

In his keynote speech, Clement fought with the gloves off. His characterizations of opponents, while colorful, did not excite enough people. Had he chosen to soften the tone, acknowledge the philosophical differences,
recognize the fallibility of the Democrats, and add self-deprecating humor he might have left a better impression.

Few people mastered the art of the anecdote better than Alben Barkley. Short stories became the most effective instrument of his humor and picturesque language its chief ingredient (Clevenger, 1956). For example, Barkley liked to tell the story of his first political campaign in 1905 when he ran for county attorney on a twelve year old, one-eyed bay horse named Dick" (Smith, 1949, p. 17).

In his keynote, Barkley used humor to relax the despondent delegates. With nerves frayed, tensions high, and partisan politics at its worst, the Kentucky senator had some fun at Thomas Dewey's expense.

The Republican nominee has. . .announced. . .that he proposes to clean the cobwebs from the government at Washington. I am not an expert on cobwebs, but if my memory does not betray me, when the Democratic party took over the government. . .even the spiders were so weak from starvation that they could not weave a cobweb in any department of the government at Washington.

(Barkley, 1948, p. 617)

Barkley stayed on the offensive throughout his speech, criticizing Congress as "do nothing," and portraying Republicans as the common opponent. Utilizing humor with a religious tone, he made use of an old hymn to point out the influence of Pennsylvania's power broker Joseph Grundy.
When Barkley (1954) arrived in Philadelphia for the convention, he found "the most discouraged and downcast group" of Democrats he had ever seen. "You could cut the gloom with a corn knife," he said (p. 200). Yet, it seemed Barkley's ability not to take life too seriously enabled him to play on the psychology of the moment and adapt his style to any situation. His listeners laughed with Barkley, not at him (McBurney and Wrage, 1953).

Jordan, as noted earlier, did not utilize humor in her speech. Beyond the unique circumstances of her life and political career, she benefited from the boring and ineffective co-keynote speech delivered earlier by John Glenn. Glenn left a terrible impression with the delegates. Said one, "What we saw and heard was unimaginative, unchallenging, trite, lacking in style and imagery, lackluster in delivery, and greatest of keynote sins, deadly dull" (Grissinger, 1976, p. 14).

The delegates, in fact, had continued to talk during Glenn's speech, drowning him out at times (Jordan and Hearon, 1979). Backstage, Jordan heard such restlessness described as the traditional way of political gatherings. Party officials told her to concentrate on the seventy-five million viewers watching on television at that moment. She did not need the advice. As Jordan began her speech, the audience reaction "startled" her. "At the first sounds of her rising inflections, her sonorous repetitions, the hall grew silent as a church," said one observer. "Everything had been dullsville at the convention up to then" (Jordan and Hearon, 1979, p. 230).
Conclusion

Situations change, audiences differ, and years go by, but good speakers remain mindful of their rhetorical strengths. They construct messages from the ground up with a solid foundation of facts supported by convincing persuasion.

Sometimes speakers must step out of their customary roles to adapt to special circumstances. Frank Clement did not adapt well to his estimated 120,000,000 television viewers (Gould, 1956). His keynote speech, delivered as a stump speech, contained little substance, lacked sensitivity due to its attack nature, needed a healthy amount of humility, and demanded a more innocent humor.

Clement (1956) knew the power of television, yet on August 13, 1956, he did not respect it. Shortly before his speech, he visited some CBS technicians, jokingly saying he would have to become friends with them since they could make him look good or bad, (Louisville Times 1956). He previewed his speech for television newsreels in order to distribute film to television stations not connected to the national networks ("Clement gives preview," 1956). For months, his preparation included learning about the placement of lights, cameras, and the speakers' platform. Finally, Clement had mastered the medium, but only within the borders of Tennessee.

The keynote speech did not unify. It separated listeners into one of two extremes, those who liked it and those who detested it. As with Clement's persona, no middle ground existed. He used his "bully pulpit" more to bully than to persuade. Christian Science Monitor reporter Godfrey Sperling (1996) remembers delegates yearning for a visionary speech, one which would unite, motivate, and carry the Democratic party forward. While expectations were
high, Sperling asserts, Clement's performance did not measure up to his reputation.

Contrasting Clement's speech to those of Alben Barkley and Barbara Jordan, one sees the crucial differences that contributed to the success of the latter two, notwithstanding unique circumstances such as audience mood, the country's mood, and the condition of the Democratic Party.

Keynote Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barkley/Jordan</th>
<th>Clement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inspiring</td>
<td>Intimidating</td>
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<td>Comforting</td>
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A clear signal of Clement's diminishing support came from *Nashville Banner* publisher James Stahlman (1956), who anguished over the speech. Until then a Clement ally, his support waned following the convention. Stahlman believed Clement had listened to too many people and not enough to himself.

While many about me in the press section tittered, guffawed and grimaced in derision, I literally and unashamedly wept for my friend who had followed the devices and desires of others, rather than the dictates of his own conscience.

(Stahlman, 1956)
In forty-three minutes, Clement managed to end his national political hopes. The glory he worked so hard to attain always eluded him. Sadly, the failure of his keynote speech marked him the rest of his life. He never recovered, personally or politically.
CHAPTER 5
ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING

There are two Frank Clements, the one he wants you to think he is, and the one he really is.

Eddie Friar
Saturday Evening Post

Frank Clement, as an openly religious person, balanced through his rhetoric the extremist views of ardent segregationists and the determined beliefs of Negroes to forge a plan not altogether pleasing to either. His words, filled with love for his fellow citizens and the need to remain politically popular, redirected emotions toward a path of peace (Boyd, 1972).

Like all southern states, Tennessee suffered the emotional extremes associated with integration in the 1950's. Unlike most southern states, though, Tennessee and its citizens largely escaped the bloodshed and property damage associated with the violence created by this major social upheaval during that decade.

By 1955, societal changes had transformed the South forever. The ramifications had not reached the level of most average citizens, but politicians like Clement knew that major changes and decisions lay ahead. On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Negro children could attend currently all-white schools. Brown v. Board of Education abolished racial segregation in all public schools. Equally important, Negroes began registering to vote. In 1947, only 600,000 Negroes, about twelve percent of the voting age
population, had registered. Through the 1950's, that number drastically increased (Roland, 1975).

During that time, the South experienced more social, economic, and political changes than the rest of the nation. Its orators repeatedly used old symbols and myths to explain the present reality for the region. As Smith (1985) notes, the South's "rhetorical vision had become increasingly unrelated to reality and careless as a means of organizing, interpreting and understanding contemporary events" (p. 45).

In the politically complex times of the late 1940's and early 1950's, on the subject of race, Clement strategically positioned himself in the middle. The preponderance of historical interpretation treats Clement as a moderate on integration. Upon further examination, though, his words perhaps justify no label with respect to race since most appear deliberately ambiguous.

The first southern governor to veto a segregation bill, Clement reversed his course and signed legislation in 1957 which, as we will see later, had the effect of appeasing segregationists (Gardner, 1978). His actions led one observer years later to call Clement a segregationist, primarily because his support for equal rights was guarded (Black, 1976). Others vented their feelings in less inflammatory tones, leaving little room for disbelieving the notion that Clement played to an audience of segregationists. In the 1990's, the labeling of his actions and rhetoric range from the segregationist extreme (Black, 1976), to the more popular moderate position (Egerton, 1995), to a "pragmatist" way of thinking (Campbell, 1995), and finally, to the liberal extreme on racial issues (Halberstam, 1995).

Clement's legacy reflects the effort he made to position himself as a supporter of all people no matter their skin color, yet not so much as to endorse and actively support a full-scale, wholehearted reversal of state segregation
laws. With regard to the issue of law and color, we should examine Clement's public exhortations of love and equality to understand his rhetoric from the viewpoint of its political necessity. He seemingly had a love for all people; yet, he placed above that, as politicians before and since, his own future. Indeed, Nashville civil rights activist Z. Alexander Looby cautioned Negroes not to expect much from Clement except when pertinent matters affected his ambitions for national political office (Wax, 1954).

Clement's rhetoric defined his image as an atypical politician in dealing with the race issue. Most of his peers easily embraced the bombastic public stance of denigrating integration. Orval Faubus, though considered a private moderate, adopted the public image of a segregationist, thus assuring the support of the public and his continued role as Arkansas governor. George Wallace, needing the backing of Alabama's citizens, used dramatic words and actions to fight integration. The ability of Faubus and Wallace to read the prevailing political winds solidified their bases of support, strengthened their hold on state politics, and increased their national stature among those of similar thought (Black, 1976).

Clement considered carefully how to respond to the issue of integration during the 1950's. As his political star ascended, he studied how to keep from alienating not only his state's citizens, but also a growing number of people around the country who considered him a potential candidate for national office (Boyd, 1972). His first opportunity came with Brown v. Board of Education.

Clement's reaction to the 1954 Supreme Court decision on integration followed a limited line of reasoning. It reflected feelings grounded in strict adherence to federal law with no sign of emotion for either side. Racist laws existed in Tennessee and it appeared that, as a result of Brown v. Board of Education, he needed to prepare for desegregation. However, Clement
committed to neither side. He believed the current school situation proved satisfactory to most Negroes. Despite editorial claims by the *Nashville Tennessean* of a lack of leadership because of his silence on the issue, Clement refused to take a strong stand, offering only carefully constructed comments. He called on each locality to solve its segregation problem by saying, "I shall not tell them what to do, or what not to do" (Sperling, 1956).

Later, at the apogee of his public life, Clement had the opportunity to embrace his Negro brothers and sisters, God's creations just like him, as he often said, by endorsing integration before a nationwide audience. Once again, his attempt at addressing the issue took the form of half-hearted lip service. The few comments he directed toward Negroes in the 1956 Democratic convention keynote address seemed weak and insufficient. Politically, however, his remarks assuaged the party powers. Through the comments, he sought to mollify Negro voters without alienating white citizens. Clement (1956) called on all Negroes to "look to your memory and search your conscience." He said, "The GOP has never given the South anything but a hard way to go." In a final, ironic plea, he urged Negroes to support the Democratic cause because, "we need each other to win" (p. 12).

A year later, Tennessee convulsed with the effects of violence associated with integration. Nashville, the home of the civil rights movement's peaceful sit-in training, saw mass arrests of demonstrators and, ultimately, the bombing of the integrated Hattie Cotton elementary school on September 10, 1957. Shortly after the incident, Clement appeared on the CBS news broadcast "Face The Nation." Questioned by one reporter as to his personal feelings, he responded with a rare showing of his innermost thoughts.
I cannot honestly deny that I like segregation. I was educated in segregated schools, so I know no other way of life. So I cannot sit here before you. . .and take any position other than the fact that as a southerner, I like what we've had.

(Clement, 1957)

Later in the program, he offered a more traditional southern defense of his feelings.

We in Tennessee and other sections of this country can't claim that everything we have done is right and proper. We have tried to be right and think we are the most maligned section of the country that ever existed, but if we are going to wash the dirty linen, then let's (set) aside hypocrisy and let everybody go to the laundry together instead of selecting one section of the country for the job.

(Clement, 1957)

Both answers reflected Clement's two-sided view of integration. Yes, he admitted, separation of the races seemed compatible with his thinking. No, he said, the South did not deserve the criticism and scrutiny it had received.

Clement's response to the Brown v. Board of Education decision, his keynote remarks, and his statements on national television reflect a political stance of ambiguity which, when applied to the overall racial scene at the time,
did little to encourage racial change but much to help himself. Robert Paine (1981) embraces such a scheme in putting forth his proposition that politicians must make assiduous use of ambiguity. The dependence of politicians on ambiguity, he states, has much to do with their needs to negotiate with the public, especially when the public holds different beliefs and values.

The public facing Clement in the 1950's could hardly have differed more on the issue of race. Paine (19981) argues that dealing with such diverse beliefs, which he describes as endemic to politics, involves the merger of two elements—what politicians want the audience to hear and what the audience will hear. He calls such strategy "argument of enthymeme" (p. 13). Leaving something unstated, Paine believes, does not reflect falsehood; rather the issue centers on the omitted or implied. In considering Paine's standard, Clement effectively used ethical rhetoric in following a strict interpretation of the Supreme Court's decision.

However, a contrary view describes such talk as immoral. Rhetorical ethicist Thomas Nilsen (1958) believes that any communication designed to influence the attitudes and actions of others should produce "informed and rational choice, significant choice" for the audience (p. 38). To do otherwise, Nilsen states, means to evade issues, present misleading information, oversimplify problems, and place the success of a political party above the opportunity for genuine choice by the public. According to Nilsen, Clement's limited use of his power and rhetoric to provide equal rights for Negroes denied them a choice in improving their lives. Clement's discussion of integration did not provide full truth, honesty, and candor, three qualities of ethical rhetoric essential, Nilsen states, for the public good. Using Nilsen's perspective on ethics, Clement's rhetoric resounded with an unethical tone in sharp contrast to the standards of Robert Paine.
Clement's use of religious rhetoric pervaded his public appearances, often playing well to the rural, conservative audiences across the state. He invoked God's name, prayed for His help, and pleaded with audiences to join him in a sort of holy crusade against his enemies (Gardner, 1978). Friends and most foes agree that Clement's strong religious faith carried a great deal of sincerity. Where they differ involves the extent to which Clement used his Christian proclamations as a means to reach a self-fulfilling, lifelong end--the governorship--and in so doing expose himself as a hypocrite, unable to match words with actions. Nilsen's thoughts about the end justifying the means seem relevant here.

The problem of ends and means, Nilsen (1966) writes, attains a fundamental position in the process of persuasion in a democratic society. Persuasive techniques, usually classed as means, receive less emphasis in a democratic society. They receive less emphasis compared to the ends from those in power. To public figures like Clement, the ends often translate into election victories. The particular steps to achieving those victories, or the means, find themselves relegated to secondary positions.

This emphasis on the ultimate outcome, far from unusual, represents the major component of a politician's strategy. Add to that the multiple challenges faced by Clement during this period and one can perhaps understand his desire to appease as many people as possible. This, then raises the issue of whether a proper defense for Clement's rhetoric could include the social utility approach put forth by Brembeck and Howell (1952).

The social utility approach consists of an ethical standard applied with a "long view" to estimate the effects of action on other people. Clearly, the question of whether to integrate schools, or, in its absence, how far to go to
appease the public, contained profound ramifications for Clement and his 
career. It represented even bigger change for the public, especially Negroes.

Brembeck and Howell (1952) propose a set of questions pertinent to the 
use of the social utility approach. Will the social group concerned, in this case 
the Negroes, benefit from rhetoric adapted to the cause at hand? The benefits 
include the avoidance of further serious violence. Does the strategy include a 
penalty, revealed or concealed? For Clement, the penalty in a strict political 
sense meant the loss of support and, ultimately, the election. For Negroes, it 
meant simply more of the same unjustified inequality. For the general public, it 
meant no resolution of the issue and the potential for increased violence. 
Similarly, Brembeck and Howell asked: could injury to one or a few individuals 
outweigh the group gains? Clement's repeated proclamations of love and 
respect for all people seemingly made this the most important question; yet, his 
use of rhetoric and subsequent actions made it largely irrelevant. The group 
gain manifested itself in continued public support. Injury, whatever its form, 
became an unfortunate, if not unexpected, by-product.

At variance with so-called traditional thinking, Brembeck and Howell 
(1952) urge questioning of the unquestioned, in this case, group traditions of 
long standing, often powerful influences. As an example, they raise the 
appropriate question, "Are all men created equal?" Both argue in favor of 
flexibility for what they call such a non experimental belief. The term "non 
experimental" in this case equates to an unquestioned or long-held basis of 
belief. In the South, separation of the races remained such an issue. Howell's 
non experimental belief concept, while less of a factor in the three previously 
mentioned incidents in Clement's career, assumes a more permanent role in 
the next two examples.
In January, 1956, over two hundred segregationists traveled to Nashville to urge Clement's endorsement of their cause. They came from Memphis and Chattanooga, two cities located near deep South states, but still politically important to the Tennessee governor. Their groups included the "Pro-Southerners," the "White Citizens' Council of Tennessee," and the "Tennessee Society to Maintain Segregation." At the state capitol, they distributed racist literature and paraded the halls with signs stating, "Beware, This Is Not A Pleasure Trip," and "Segregation Or War" (McMillen, 1971, p. 316).

Clement decided to meet face to face with members of the groups. To bolster his appearance, he recruited six well-known Nashville clergymen to stand with him in his office. The segregationists called upon him to lead the fight for state's rights. Clement refused this as he did their request for a special legislative session to strengthen Tennessee's segregated education system. He warned that any rash action on their part might end in "complete abolition" of segregated schools. He repeated his plan to move gradually for desegregation of the State's colleges and universities, carefully avoiding a similar promise for all other public schools.

Instead of using inflammatory rhetoric, Clement chose the situational perspective for his words. Meeting the segregationists' stern, blunt words with his own probably would have produced little meaningful results for him. His caution to the segregationists not to move too far, too fast, played to some of their desires. He assumed the role of a friendly advisor, offering some hope for their cause.

The use of the six clergymen provided Clement with access to thousands of influential and God-fearing Nashvillians without leaving his office. By turning away the segregationists, he solidified his humanistic position in the minds of the ministers, who soon returned to their congregations with eyewitness
accounts of Clement's words and deeds. Garry Wills (1994) describes this type of strategy as one in which a dual role of personality and rhetoric works to create what he terms the "whole persona" (p. 217). Particularly useful for high profile people, the "persona" develops in order to win an audience, thus becoming a branch of rhetoric.

As Wills explains, the "whole persona" reached its modern-day peak among officeholders during the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt. Built around his physical handicap, the technique allowed Roosevelt to refine the strength of his personality and his message. For example, to avoid the potential of falling at podiums, Roosevelt developed the "fireside chat" (p. 29). Seated in a chair supposedly near a fireplace, he drew the world closer to him while creating a feeling of one-on-one intimacy. People listening to the radio had never experienced such a feeling. Roosevelt's words carried much more impact as a result, generating through the airwaves "a marvelous self-assurance that proved politically contagious, his confidence becoming the nation's confidence" (Halberstam, 1972, p. 109).

Wills (1994) cites Martin Luther King, Jr., as another prominent person who worked to establish the full persona. From his childhood, King studied and worked to create an intellectual image of himself. He acquired academic credentials to help his preaching, including a doctorate. When speaking publicly, he often used the language of academicians, or "big words," to impress those listening. King's use of impressive words became a part of his "educated manner" that, as Cicero tells us, the orator uses to bolster his authority.

Clement's stage presence and his calculated use of words set in the drama of a face to face meeting in his own office contributed greatly to his "whole persona" as an effective speaker who loved everyone. Once again, he assumed the role of appeaser. Appeasement, as with Roosevelt and King,
became his great virtue. The ability to placate both sides played to Clement's personal and emotional feelings while strengthening his political position. Such strategy denied the segregationists the valuable support of their state's chief executive while not totally acceding to the Negroes' wishes. Given the swirling emotional sentiments at the time, the use of such rhetoric appears consistent with the ideals of the situational ethical-rhetorical perspective.

Ethical leadership does not condone coercive power. Faced with the greatest task of any president, that is, to preserve the union, Abraham Lincoln rejected the dictatorial role of most powerful people by becoming a persuader-delegator in substance, style, and philosophy. Lincoln's mastery of persuasion, his rhetoric, brought him much of his success (Phillips, 1992).

James McGregor Burns (1978) writes that a leader's main act is to make people more aware of what they feel and to define their values so that they will act in a purposeful way. In short, Burns calls for the truth. During times of crises, leadership calls for the most persuasive use of situational ethics and rhetoric. In order to accomplish immediate goals and satisfy long-range strategic plans, the leader-speaker must often fit the words not only to each particular occasion, but craft them in such a way as to satisfy each particular group.

Such a challenge faced Frank Clement at the beginning of 1957. His address before the Tennessee General Assembly on January 9, 1957, included his plans for dealing with the integration question. Clement's perspective on how to deal with the issue of integration was based on a strategy of utilizing the ageless morality of the Bible and invoking strict adherence to constitutional law. Politically, this manufactured response to Brown v. Board of Education openly professed support of the ideals of equality, but ultimately did much more than
satisfy segregationists temporarily. It handed them a partial victory which, in retrospect, had a calming effect. It probably prevented large-scale violence.

Clement (1957) opened with an effective effort to take responsibility for his words, accepting both "Divine and human judgment" for what he termed "the truth" (p. 1). This self-effacing, calculated introduction before a wary audience of legislators and private citizens removed the potential for later accusatory gestures.

In addressing his remarks to his fellow citizens, he noted the many prominent nations in history which fell from power because of their own destructive actions. Americans, he said, face the race relations crisis with a critical need to keep peace among themselves. No law and no judicial device could erase three hundred years of history, he said, so he urged his listeners to remember that whites and Negroes were always equal in the eyes of God.

Clement calculated the meaning and impact of his words before his speech, finally deciding to appeal to the basic moral instincts of human dignity and respect for the law. Once again, he kept his words within the framework of obeying Brown v. Board of Education, but with a twist. While the Supreme Court decision outlawed the compelling of segregation in public schools, it did not seem to require the states to desegregate, at least in the opinion of Clement and his advisors. To them, the ruling left local authorities the latitude to provide parents with voluntary choice and school boards with authority to move students and merge school systems.

In dealing with the court's decision, Tennessee's racial makeup helped Clement. The Negro population resided in only fifteen to twenty counties out of a total of ninety-five. Eight counties reported no Negro school age children. Negroes comprised only one-sixth the number of school age children in Tennessee in 1956 and most of them lived in very rural, western counties of the
state. Clement believed the best answer lay in local autonomy, as recommended in a lengthy report by his advisors (Phillips and Sanford, 1956).

Decrying the fomenters of violence, he reminded listeners of the real victims, the white and Negro children. He admitted, however, that his solution did not cure all the ills.

Clement's speech provided a temporary salve. While not demanding full-fledged integration, it alleviated the increasing pressure of segregationists. At that time and place, his words moved beyond those spoken by most of his fellow southern governors to embrace, however abstractly, equality of the races.

His success at the ballot box proved that Frank Clement possessed superior political instincts. He seemed able to read not only the sentiments of a crowd but the thoughts of voters as well. Unlike other politicians, he could sway feelings through the very force of his rhetoric. In point of fact, Clement's rhetoric rested on a calculated strategy of ambiguity when he spoke of integration.

Today, it seems difficult to understand why Clement did not push harder for total integration. However, such a perspective belies the true scenario of the 1950's when society, unlike today's more subtle undercurrent of differences, found itself ripped open by violent words and actions. He denied Negroes a full opportunity, or choice, in determining their destiny of racial equality while, paradoxically, proclaiming their equality as humans. He did so at their expense while striving mightily to keep his political career stable. Such strategy was affirmed by Robert Clement (1971), Clement's father, who, in a 1971 interview, said, "In some areas...why if he had been too one-sided--favored one particular race--why it would have hurt bad."

This brief examination of Clement's rhetoric concerning the race issue moves beyond his father's perspective to show that such talk, despite its ambiguity, represented the most effective use of words combined with strategy
at that time, given the circumstances. Such a situational perspective certainly had its harmful effects, but, taken in total, the good far outweighed the bad. A growing segregationist movement, charged with emotion, found itself deflated somewhat when rejected and then advised by Clement.

Clement's rhetorical handling of the race issue began the process which eventually moved Tennessee away from the deep South states, away from an unbending position of segregation to a more open approach. The result included less violence, fewer people hurt, and lower property damage. Publicly, Clement has received little credit for hindering the segregation movement in Tennessee. Perhaps because he tied it overtly to his political future, or because his southern heritage kept him from renouncing the separation of the races, or because over three terms he made too many enemies, history speaks more of his other rhetorical accomplishments.

Similarly, Clement's handling of capital punishment in Tennessee pushed him to the forefront of southern governors, but left little recognition for his efforts. The issue of allowing prisoners to die in the electric chair became much more of a religious question to Clement than to his fellow governors. Also, the capital punishment question involved family history, something Clement always took seriously. Years before, capital punishment in Tennessee had ended, thanks in large part to the efforts of state senator J. A. Clement, Frank Clement's grandfather (Gardner, 1978). His family's involvement played a major role in Clement's handling of his first capital punishment case, soon after Clement became governor.

The dilemma of whether to allow the punishment to proceed appears to have affected him from the very start. He was quoted as saying the first time he had to make a decision about whether a man should die in the electric chair, it was a major problem. Clement believed he was the youngest governor ever to
face such a dilemma. His grandfather supported the abolition of the death penalty, managing to have it wiped off the books only to see the law reinstated later.

Throughout his three terms, Clement always wrestled with the question of whether to allow a person to die. During his earlier years, he publicly stated that whether he believed in capital punishment did not matter. The real question involved whether the basis existed for him to interfere with the laws of the state—if he had the right to abolish the death penalty in one case or all cases by executive decree. "A law's a law," Clement (1956) said, "and I have no right--I may have the power to do so--but I have no right to step in and abolish it" (Transcript of interview, p. 6).

Clement visited the man scheduled as the first person to die in the electric chair during his governorship. He talked with him a long time, asking for any good reason why he should interfere with the scheduled execution. The man told Clement to practice the Golden Rule, that Clement should do unto him what he would do unto Clement in a reversed role. Not a good enough reason for Clement, he decided to go home and wrestle with it some more. That night, three friends—a newspaper reporter, a former secretary of state, and a businessman—visited him. Clement recounted that all knelt and prayed, using a Bible brought by the businessman. Clement finally decided to handle his first execution by going to bed. If he could not sleep, the prisoner would receive a temporary reprieve until Clement found out why he could not sleep. Clement (1956) went to sleep and did not wake up until one minute after five in the morning, thirty seconds after the man died.

The not-so-hidden message in this story for Clement, and all who heard it recounted across the state, involved God's message to the governor. God allowed Clement to sleep through a peaceful evening, thus asserting that the
executioner and the governor had received Divine approval for the punishment to proceed. Additionally, by adhering to a strict legal line, Clement had, at least for a time, found an acceptable response to those opposed to capital punishment and in dealing with his own conscience. Yes, he had the power to stop an execution, but he had no right to interfere with an existing law.

Clement also enjoyed recounting the story of Harry Kirkendall, a Negro man who sat on Tennessee's death row for the murder of a service station attendant. As Clement (1956) and his wife walked through the prison's front gate to visit Kirkendall, they walked past a Negro woman and six "of the neatest little children I've ever seen in my life," aged three to thirteen, "just as neat and clean as they could be" (transcript of interview," p. 7). Before he reached the prison gate, he had the sudden urge to return and talk with the woman, guessing correctly that she awaited her husband's execution.

Soon after that, Clement, his wife, Mrs. Kirkendall, and the prison chaplain moved to the warden's office where Clement explained why he could not interfere in the process. He told her, "Now, Mrs. Kirkendall, I've got the power to save your husband, but I haven't got the right to do it. I just haven't got the right to do it" ("transcript of interview," p. 6). She sat there placidly with big tears rolling down her cheeks, no outcry or protest coming forth. As Clement (1956) recalled later, he finally broke down completely, sobbing in such a way that Kirkendall's wife comforted him until he could regain his composure and then the chaplain prayed.

Clement (1956) asked if he could talk with Kirkendall's children. All filed in with the youngest one sitting on the governor's lap. He told them, "Now boys when you go in to see your daddy today I want you to be real nice to him because I want you to remember this. There are some things the state cannot forgive you for but God can forgive you because God can forgive you for
anything." He continued, "This is the last time you'll see your daddy until you reach heaven and I want you to be real nice" ("Transcript of interview," p. 8)

The older boys cried, and the younger ones did not know what to think. All had heard the day before on the radio about their daddy's impending death. Harry Kirkendall soon died in the electric chair, but not before Clement promised to provide for his children and wife at Christmas, which he apparently did. In re-telling the story, Clement (1956) underlined the fact that he had the power and the personal desire to save Kirkendall, but did not have the right to without abolishing by executive order Tennessee's capital punishment law.

All of that would change dramatically in the years ahead when it seemed that Clement finally resolved in his mind the dilemma he faced as governor, removing once and for all the anguish that had plagued him. Midway through his third term, in 1965, Clement decided to make a major push for the abolishment of capital punishment. "It always bothered him," an aide said, "to let someone die" (Beasley, 1994). A major lobbying effort began to gather enough voters in both the House and Senate to repeal the law. The effort began early in the legislative session and continued until mid-March when it looked like a vote would soon occur. By this time, the legislature viewed itself no longer as a "rubber stamp" for the governor as it had for many years. Exerting newly-found independence, lawmakers rebelled against Clement more in his third term than at any other time (Billington, 1975). Actually, Clement had challenged the legislators earlier when, during his "State of the State" address in 1959, he called on them to drop the death penalty.

The time neared for a vote. Despite his administration's best efforts, including much arm twisting, repeal prospects remained uncertain. The Senate had passed the repeal measure with a comfortable margin. House members, taking a rougher stand on the death penalty, seemed resolute in their
opposition to any repeal attempt. In a highly unusual move, Clement asked to speak to the House. "Capitol observers would recall no similar occasion when a governor has asked to speak on a bill only a short time before a vote is taken," said the Tennessean (Daughtrey, 1965, p. 10). Clement's long-time foe, in fact, supported the repeal editorially, saying, "The death penalty cannot be justified as a deterrent." The newspaper urged the state to "step out of the dark ages" ("Justice looks to," p. 22).

A "packed but hushed" chamber and gallery awaited Clement as he made his way to the podium. His appearance followed several days of extensive parliamentary maneuvering during which the bill almost died, only to be resuscitated at the last moment by supporters. As Clement began, lawmakers who had worked against the bill stared at the floor. They would continue to do so throughout the speech (Galbreath, 1995).

Life and death, Clement said, are God-given, thus invoking a connection with Christian philosophy. He had begun by introducing religion in the decision process, asking whether the sixth commandment was meant to be selective in its application by mortals. Clement had placed the eternal question of when, if ever, there seems an appropriate time to take another person's life in the laps of the legislators.

Motivated by what he believed to be an unfair law, Clement (1965) pictured the death penalty as discriminatory, inhuman, inconsistent, and irrevocable, in short, legal murder. He asked each House member to imagine having the final word. Would they have complete assurance that no mistake had been made during the legal process? This question particularly concerned Clement since it seemed most of the death penalty cases originated in rural west Tennessee and most, if not all, on death row had black skin. West
Tennessee justice toward Negroes differed from that elsewhere in the state (Galbreath, 1995).

Clement's rhetoric of reinforcement did not represent a method of surprising the lawmakers with any new information or startling revelations. Instead, it laid out in simple, tough, moralistic statements his concerns and is reasons for wanting the repeal. A heavy personal element included a recounting of the Harry Kirkendall story as well as quoting from a letter sent to him by Carol Huber, a high school freshman whose eloquent argument against the death penalty touched him. The House members found themselves in the position of judge and executioner, giving the final approval for killing someone with the supposed knowledge that the system was mistake-proof. A reporter wrote that "one could feel and almost hear the breath of fear itself in the chamber" (Thomas, 1965, p. 2).

This debate and discussion took place at a time when public sentiment, especially in the South, still favored the death penalty. The Supreme Court would, in the near future, rule the death penalty unconstitutional. In this very important regard, Clement found himself ahead of his time. That lends credence to my belief that his sincerity about the nature of human judgment and biases, his deep religious faith, and his love for all people led him to oppose capital punishment. The speech seemed from the heart.

The final vote shook him. The House voted down the repeal by a vote of fifty to forty-nine. The decision came during yet another extended debate involving motions, substitute motions, and tabling motions. One of the bill's co-sponsors, Representative Charles Galbreath of Nashville, worked furiously to hold on to his votes. The last head count showed a one vote margin in favor or the repeal. "Frank had the votes all lined up," Galbreath (1995) says today, "we had a one vote majority." Galbreath maintains the bill's fate came down to a
vote on an amendment to table the measure so that those voting "yes" voted to
table the bill, effectively killing it. Those voting "no" kept the bill alive. In the
confusion of the moment, Galbreath says, a young state representative voted
"yes" thinking he was supporting the bill only to discover that his vote meant the
bill's death. In tears after discovering his mistake, the lawmaker immediately
went to see a "very distressed" Clement and apologized. The repeal effort,
despite the emotional exhortations of Clement, died. The death penalty in
Tennessee survives to this day. Although Galbreath maintains that the
mistaken vote occurred, no mention of it was found in newspaper coverage of
the day or did some reporters who covered the legislature remember it. This is
not to say that the incident never happened. Such a mistake could have been
easily covered up and not reported at that time. However, I have not found a
second source to verify Galbreath's account.

To those unfamiliar with Clement, the vote might have signaled the end
of the story. Not wanting to suffer such a defeat in spite of summoning all his
rhetorical skills, he announced the next day the commutation of sentences for
all those on death row. They included five Negro men, all from west
Tennessee. In doing so, Clement staged an event that, in its dramatics, proved
even more compelling than his speech before the House.

On March 19, 1965, he journeyed with reporters and photographers to
the state prison where he walked the narrow, dark hallway of death row to face
the five men in prison. Three of the five faced execution the next morning. They
included Clayton Dawson, the "terrorist of south Memphis," in prison for the rape
of a mother and daughter; sixty-one year old Rube Sims, convicted of killing a
Memphis housewife; Richard Thomas, a sharecropper facing death for the
murder of another man in Jackson, Tennessee; twenty-seven year old Henry
Smith, Junior, and twenty-two-year old Freddie Green, imprisoned for perhaps
the most heinous crime of all, the abduction, rape, and multiple stabbing death of a teenage girl in the basement of a Memphis supermarket while her mother shopped one floor above (Bennett, 1965). Press reports reveal no indication on Clement's part that any of the men had received a wrongful conviction, just that Clement believed the death sentence, still constitutional, seemed morally wrong (Daughtrey; Travis; Topp; Morrell; all 1965). Each prisoner automatically received a ninety-nine year sentence.

Clement approached the men, Sims and Green in one cell and the others in an adjoining cell, and, with "his eyes glistening with tears that never quite brimmed over," (Bennett, 1965) he spoke.

I can commute your sentences. I can and have saved your life, but I can't pardon you for your crimes and sins. Now I say to you, devote yourselves to prayer behind these prison walls. Try to do something for the good of mankind so that when you meet your Lord you can have forgiveness for your sins.

(Bennett, 1965, p.1)

The shouting and hosannas from behind the cell bars came mostly from one man, the "tall muscular Sims," who "clasped is hands before him and wept as he thanked Clement.." "Thank you, governor, thank you sweet Jesus," he said, "and governor God bless you and bless all your family and your lovely wife" (Bennett, 1965, p. 1). The other four men stood silent and showed no emotion.

Reporter Frank Ritter (1995), covering the prison event for the Nashville Tennessean, remembers being surprised by Clement's sincerity. "I couldn't
square the Tennessean's vilification of this man with what I was witnessing."
Ritter adds, "I couldn't understand why he was doing this. It said something different about the man than what you would read in the Tennessean". In a brief, dramatic appearance, Clement accomplished through a few sentences what he tried to do with an entire speech the day before. One hundred twenty-six men had died in the electric chair up to that point. For thirty years, and in spite of a Supreme Court reversal, no one has been put to death in Tennessee.

Clement's handling of the integration and capital punishment issues reveals a split political and rhetorical strategy. With the integration question remaining an issue through his first and second terms, he deferred to a strict interpretation of constitutional law. His rhetoric, until the General Assembly speech, reflected a more subdued approach partly in deference to the extreme emotions of the time and partly due to his political instincts against alienating any bloc of voters.

Capital punishment, on the other hand, seemed to grow in importance as his public life extended into a third term as governor. Although initially treating the death penalty as a legal issue with set boundaries, the idea of allowing a man to go to his death grew in moral importance to the point that Clement publicly repudiated it. Motivated by what seemed as sincere caring for people, he reached an understanding in his own mind that capital punishment violated God's sacred commandment not to kill anyone, no matter the circumstances. In the face of strong legislative opposition and public sentiment still favoring the death penalty, he invoked his feelings through an emotional appeal before the state House of Representatives, failing only because of an apparent voting error. Clement's rhetoric on the death penalty seemed much more definite, forceful, and emotional than his stand on integration. Such talk represented a
more visceral, open approach to the issue indicating that the power of the word depends on the speaker's belief in the truth behind it.
CHAPTER 6
GO NOW IN PEACE

There'll never be another one like Frank. He was God's man and we don't have anymore politicians who are God's men.

unknown mourner,
New York Times

Beyond anything else, Frank Clement thrived on politics. The profession became his life, more than his family (despite his public pronouncements) and more than his religion. Fawning descriptions such as a picture of what a Christian family can truly be became useful tools to be carefully used on the way to success (McDermott, 1954). During those periods when he did not work in elected office, there seemed a restless spirit about him (Smith, 1994). During those times, he no longer existed at the center of attention. Perhaps that, more than anything, beckoned him to return to the political arena in 1963. When he died in 1969, he had begun the process of seeking a fourth term as governor (Beasley, 1994).

As with so many public figures, Clement did not have a simple personality. Despite his self descriptions as a hard-working, God-fearing man, his complex psyche ran much deeper. His flaws ultimately cost him votes, friends, credibility, and self esteem. They bedeviled him most openly during his last term, from 1963 to 1967, when his vices became more public (O'Brien, 1994). Temperance and discipline eroded to the point that he was less effective as governor (Winston, 1994).
This self-proclaimed icon of virtue proved ultimately to succumb to the same foibles that befell other publicly pious individuals. This fact caused me to take an even closer look at Frank Clement, the private person. I believe that the key to his drive, his naked ambition throughout his young adult life, lay in his feeling of insecurity, manifest in a need to receive attention and to be liked. He simply did not believe in himself nearly as much as his public persona portrayed.

The facts make this belief evident. He craved attention, but not just in normal amounts. While all of us appreciate kind words and feel we never hear them enough, Clement needed adulation. He felt great when he got attention and respect from the crowds, but such a reaction never reached the point of being enough. Then, during his third term, faced with different audience values, election setbacks, waning power, and a changing society, he turned increasingly to alcohol (Winston, 1994). I also think another form of his low self esteem manifested itself in several nagging thoughts. First, whatever he had done in his public career, it failed to measure up to his standards. Second, his inability to reach national office, to fulfill his much-beloved plan and timetable, made him feel like a failure (O'Brien, 1995). These became publicly evident when, with increasing frequency, he castigated the press and almost anticipated the second guessing of his decisions. Only in his mid-forties during his third term, the mental sharpness and physical stamina so prominent a decade earlier seemed sapped by the ravages of public and private challenges.

Far from an indictment of Frank Clement, these conclusions represent my thinking about the tragedy of his life. He had much to offer his people, his state, and his nation. He gave much, but as life often does, it knocked him to his knees a few times. His response, where the real strength of a person lies, failed to measure up to the high standards he publicly set for himself.
Nonetheless, Clement's rhetoric proved invaluable in two additional areas. Efforts to prevent integration nearly absorbed southern governors during his time. All of them encouraged and funded industrial development programs although not as enthusiastically as Clement and several others (Grantham, 1994). In the 1950's, agriculture saw the beginnings of massive change. Mechanization changed the way of life on the farm. State economies, so many of which in the South depended on farming, began to diversify. Labor, unshackled from the coercive practices of old, began strengthening itself. Along with this profound shift in its economic base, the South saw its political system gradually move its power from county seats to bigger cities, where corporations were welcomed.

In Tennessee, agriculture had for years tied itself to the common good of the state and its people. Yet, if the state wanted to expand, it needed to look beyond the cotton and corn fields for assistance. Once again, Clement was in the middle of tremendous social change. This time, he took a proactive position by attracting industry enthusiastically from other regions, using some of the native advantages Tennessee had to offer.

One of those advantages included nationally-recognized individuals such as Clement's friend, Eddy Arnold. Arnold (1994) remembers accompanying Clement on recruiting trips to major cities. "He would call CEO's out of the blue and invite them to visit him on the whole floor of a hotel he had reserved." Arnold calls such strategy "romancing industry." Until then, such a pro-business stance appeared as an open invitation for interlopers to invade the state and somehow sully its image. Clement (1960) recognized the inadequacy of such thinking. The world moved ahead and he wanted to keep Tennessee moving with it. He hired the state's first industrial development director and began what he termed Tennessee's first "industry attraction
program." Clement also led in instituting work training programs for the state's citizens. "He wanted people to have jobs," Arnold says.

During his first six years in office, from 1953 to 1959, Clement utilized his dynamic personality and powerful rhetoric to create what he called a harvest of industries. After meeting with fourteen thousand companies across the United States, he reported in his 1959 "State of the State" address the construction of 756 new plants and the expansion of an additional one thousand. One hundred thousand new jobs awaited Tennesseans during those years with 30 percent of all Tennessean's income derived from manufacturing.

With the impetus provided by its governor, Tennessee forever moved away from a livelihood based primarily on the unpredictable production of agriculture to a broad-based economy supported by a variety of new companies. The importance of this transition cannot be underestimated for future generations of Tennesseans. Industrial Tennessee had become a symbol of economic progress, Clement said.

One year later, in 1960, Clement found himself in an entirely different rhetorical situation, the results of which changed the flow of American history. At that time, Senator John F. Kennedy fought vice president Richard Nixon in a very tight race for the presidency. Billy Graham, still Clement's close friend, also counted Nixon as a friend and supported him in the race. His power and influence made Graham a major figure to Americans at the time. Because "he wanted to help Nixon very much," Graham contacted Life magazine publisher Henry Luce about his concerns over the upcoming election (Martin, 1996). He could not support Kennedy, but he knew the young senator had a good chance of winning.

Luce suggested to Graham a Life magazine article containing Graham's personal evaluation of Nixon. Graham has since told a biographer that he had
reservations about writing such an article, but agreed to do it out of a "sense of obligation" (Martin, 1991, p. 278) The convergence of these circumstances readily leads me to believe that, more than a coincidence, Graham felt the article might tip the balance of the public's favor once and for all toward Nixon. The vice president had seen public sentiment gradually move toward Kennedy. Graham, concerned about Kennedy's Catholicism, feared the Vatican's potential hold over the young presidential contender and its potential muddling of church-state relations (Martin, 1996). Besides, Nixon's personality and credibility needed the tremendous support provided by the leading American spiritual figure of the day, Billy Graham, and in the leading publication of the day, Life magazine.

In the article, Graham asserted the "right and responsibility" to speak out while calling the upcoming election the most important in United States history. The article included a defense of Nixon and a glowing report of his strengths, one of which became "a deep personal faith in God" (Martin, 1991, p. 279). Henry Luce liked Graham's words and scheduled the article to run one week before the election. Graham's advisors worried about the nature and timing of the article. On top of that, Kennedy found out about it and began an effort to block it.

Kennedy soon enlisted the help of Graham's good friend, Frank Clement. Shortly before the article's publishing date, Clement received a summons to the lavish Kennedy family apartment on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue. The invitation came from Joseph Kennedy, the senator's father. There, according to an aide who accompanied Clement, the two men warmly greeted each other and spoke socially for about ten minutes. Joseph Kennedy then escorted Clement to another room where the two talked for about thirty minutes (Beasley, 1994). According to Clement's account of the meeting, Kennedy told him that Life
magazine planned to run an article by Billy Graham which "would be very
damaging to John Kennedy and might cost him the election" (Beasley, 1994).
Other than that, Clement divulged little else about the meeting.

The next day, though, Clement spent considerable time on the phone at
the governor's residence. There, according to aide Tom Beasley (1994), "many
calls went back and forth between Billy Graham and Frank Clement." Clement
always took the calls by himself in another room. He did not discuss the calls
with anyone else. At least one Graham biographer, though, said they included
an emotional appeal from Clement. Author John Pollack (1966) writes that
Clement called Graham, professed unconditional love for the evangelist, but
noted the danger of allowing the article to be published. Clement and Graham
discussed the article more than once that fateful day. Graham discussed the
matter with several friends in politics, but his close, spiritual relationship with
Clement represented a factor that clearly added to Clement's persuasiveness
with the evangelist. According to Beasley, their feelings for each other
remained very strong and their words, based on their long standing and deep
friendship, carried much weight in each other's heart and mind.

Graham asked Luce to pull the article before publication. Luce agreed
and accepted an article from Graham on why Christians should vote. The
discussion between Graham and Clement represented a climatic, yet
unheralded moment in American history. Had the Graham article expounding
Nixon's virtues found itself in Life, it could have changed the direction of what
eventually became the closest presidential contest ever. Clement, in a way only
history can measure, played an instrumental role in saving the presidency for
fellow Democrat John F. Kennedy. This particular relationship did not aid
Clement in his public speaking, as he might have wanted, during his third term
in office.
With that in mind, Clement's public speaking suffered during his third term for several reasons. First, he felt increasingly frustrated and sensitive about criticism of himself and his style. This criticism steadily grew during his public life, reaching its highest level when he did not modify his speaking style to fit the changes in audience habits and desires. Second, he continued to use a strong religious tone in his words, and third, his personal problems, primarily his abuse of alcohol, manifested themselves publicly. People did not want to hear about God, David Halberstam (1976) states, because it reminded them of the past when thoughts and values were different.

Speaking before the state American Legion convention in Memphis, Clement's actions and words caused a commotion. The Memphis Commercial Appeal (1963) noted the speech "drew both praise and criticism." Using a patriotic theme, Clement spoke in slow, separated words, praising the Legion and attacking its critics. The newspaper reported that Clement arrived late for the speech, immediately moving to the rostrum. Afterward, he received an arm-in-arm escort out of the building given by the Legion sergeant-at-arms. The Commercial Appeal quoted a friend as saying Clement got too emotional. Further, he said, Clement's speech sounded slow because of a demanding trip. The friend said Clement's red and watery eyes throughout the speech were caused by his crying. The article ends with a quotation from one Legionnaire predicting much talk back at the hotel about the speech and Clement's actions. The article did not refer to the use of alcohol, but intimated that Clement's conduct was strange. Clement's actions seem inconsistent with his traditional trademark command of both his own presence and the English language.

I found no news coverage of Clement's alcohol problem. Several sources told me of his struggle with the problem. They also discussed how it had become well known despite the help of those around him. Such efforts
included using state troopers in order to hide the most potentially embarrassing situations (Winston, 1994). Unlike today's reporters, mainstream reporters avoided mentioning Clement's problems with alcohol. Journalistic standards were different. At times, Clement proved successful at hiding his problem. Nat Winston (1994), one of his mental health commissioners, remembers a speech before state employees shortly before Christmas, 1966. Winston says Clement needed support to reach the stage because of his drunken condition. Once he started speaking, though, he spoke effectively and eloquently, so much so that he had people crying as he talked about the meaning of Christmas.

Clement's battle with alcohol abuse reached a critical stage behind the scenes during his third term. His struggle came at a time when a race for the United States Senate captured most of his attention. Fearful of Clement's problem, a close aide sent him a personal note reflecting supporters' concerns.

...there was some discussion that all were alarmed about your problem. They agreed that if all was right with you there would be no doubt whatsoever about your winning. They are alarmed and worried about that one thing. It seems that when you don't show for an engagement the word travels fast that you were______. Gov. most people won't tell you what's being said. . .but there's much talk going around. . ."

(name withheld by request, 1994)

Clement's personal problems diminished his speaking effectiveness, alienated friends and family, weakened his political stature, and may have caused him to pay the supreme price, his life.
The words he wrote for a spiritual publication reflect the magnitude of the battle between Clement's personal problems and his public profile. On the subject of morality, Clement (1954) stated that, "Most of our modern social problems are the result, directly or indirectly, of violating our moral code." Then, with more precision, he said: "I believe that in the shying away from the question of morals involved--or the sinning--we have missed the boat in meeting the problem of alcoholism in our times" ("Do you think," p. 5). Fifteen years later, as he prepared to renew his career in public life, Frank Clement died in a traffic accident the circumstances of which did not receive full attention from reporters at the time.

The personal testimonials and editorials about his life ranged from the obvious to the eloquent. Former lieutenant governor James Bomar (1969) said Clement's life reflected a dedication "to the concern for the unfortunate, the illiterate, those who were ill, afflicted and outcasts from the normal society" ("Clement Rites," p. 12). A newspaper editorial praised Clement's knowledge, ability, and dedication (Nashville Banner, 1969).

Congressman Dan Kuykendall (1969) said: "Frank Clement's monuments are the children who attend Tennessee's public schools, and the mentally ill whose dark shadows have been brightened" ("Clement Rites," p. 12). Perhaps the most meaningful of all public responses from fellow politicians came from Congressman William Anderson (1969) who predicted that Tennesseans would talk about Clement until the turn of the century ("Clement Rites," p. 12).

In so many ways, Clement represented the last of the evangelical style of southern political speakers. A man before his time in his social concerns, his retention of the speaking style that made him famous ultimately hurt him, especially in his third term during the 1960's. His public religious beliefs and
accompanying rhetorical style seem mostly sincere. Yet, he fell victim to some of the immoral habits he railed against. How supremely ironic that seems when considering morality, decency, and honor to government got him elected and re-elected.

Stephen Boyd (1995) believes Clement simply could not handle the pressures of public life. Too young and immature when first elected governor, Clement, according to Boyd, arrived ten years too soon. Boyd believes Clement was an authentic man, sincere in what he said. While I feel Clement possessed a deep religious faith, and backed it up effectively with his pulpit preaching and Bible readings, his faith increasingly became a method, a design, to satisfy his need for higher office. Eventually, he proved that the God he loved made mortals in His likeness but provided all with "feet of clay." In this regard, Clement was like all of us, a human with weaknesses. Clement's neighbors from Dickson preferred to think more simply. "If there were flaws in Mr. Clement that could not be ignored. . .they were excused as the product of having to live in Nashville. . .and rubbing shoulders with those city folks" (Wooten, 1969, p. 32).

Clement truly seemed to love people and, to that end, went to extremes to surround himself with them at all hours of the day. Often he called his friends in the middle of the night and told them to come over to the governor's residence were they found him listening to gospel music or talking with a famous house guest such as Averell Harriman (Arnold, 1994). Conversely, Clement's overwhelming desire for attention took the form of a generational flaw and attribute. The progeny of politicians, his major influences came from his grandfather in public service, his mother and father in religion, and his aunt in speaking. A heritage like that blesses few people. Armed with such preparation, his ascendency to statewide office proved swift, sure, and unique.
Clement owed his success, the *New York Times* (1969) stated, to a combination of emotional fundamentalism and old-fashioned virtues from which Clement built a remarkable political life.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the rhetorical strategies of Governor Frank Clement in the context of his times. He entered public life at a time when major world social and political changes impacted his life and career. However, his rhetorical style to deal with the circumstances of his time originated in another age. The manner in which Frank Clement used his oratory and positioned himself strategically within this changing world signifies the spirit of this analysis. Previous research has illuminated Clement and his rhetoric in narrow time frames and, as such, contain significant information related to particular periods of his life. The present study spans a longer time frame, concentrating on known and heretofore unknown aspects of his rhetorical abilities.

In his time, Frank Clement laid claim to the historical succession of southern political orators with a style that rang true for every audience. By contrast, Anna Belle Clement O'Brien (1995), Clement's sister, offers this assessment about today's political campaigns: "The one ingredient missing nowadays is the thrill. No one is excited about their candidate." Using her comments, I urge readers to judge for themselves. Take a look around.

Political speech, no longer the object of widespread interest, seems simply endured rather than enjoyed. Presidential campaigns now start almost two years ahead of election day. Members of Congress, many with two year terms, never stop running for office. Even on the local level, the intent always
seems to get and keep votes rather than to make important points or take serious stands.

Where does the true rhetoric exist? As a society, we might have lost our command of the English language years ago, if we ever had it. Audiences, numbed by the sheer number of speeches, must listen to the universally banal rhetoric put forth by less than inspiring candidates and officeholders. Perhaps Frank Clement was "vaccinated with a phonograph needle" as one critic (Mazzeo, 1954) claimed about his speaking ability. While his speaking certainly had its flaws, it excited people, much more so than today's speakers.

When all is said and done, Frank Clement's motivation for statewide and even national recognition as a consummate politician was driven by a guiding principle. In an interview with a book editor, Clement expressed a life-long rationale.

Under no conditions do I want anyone to feel that I have any holier than thou attitude. I don't even claim to be a good man. I do claim that I want to be a good man, and that is my purpose and my one reason I occupy pulpits but never under any conditions have I laid down any claims to say I do this and I don't do this. . .but instead I have tried to emphasize the need for a return to the basic teachings of the Bible. And that is my whole philosophy and I think that is one reason that I have been as successful as I have.

(Clement, 1956)
Several significant areas exist for further exploration of Frank Clement. His handling of the race issue beginning with Brown v. Board of Education and continuing through his commutation of the death sentences leaves much room for research. His heritage cried segregation, and in his heart, he appeared to favor that practice. Publicly, however, he refused to take a harsh stance against integration. Instead, he tried to placate both sides. By today's standards, he did not do enough to help the Negroes. However, any researcher who fails to consider the contemporary beliefs of the 1950's errs. The huge challenges of the day, as he met pressures from both sides, demanded priority. I remain convinced that the five laws he introduced in 1957, cloaked in the garb of local autonomy, did more to prevent bloodshed than anything else. He had to know that the laws would not survive legal challenge, but he also had to know that those five laws would deal with the matters at hand in an effective manner. Clement's civil rights stance led historian Earl Black (1976) to call him an adept politician with an ability to foresee public opinion shifts.

Future generations badly need a fuller context of those times and how they profoundly affected all Americans. Even today, children do not feel the real impact of how perilously close the country came to extended neighborhood warfare. Because of the rhetorical vision and political motivation of Frank Clement, Tennessee was spared the blood spilled by its southern neighbors.

Clement's struggle with capital punishment provides an interesting look into the mind of a man who anguished over the prospect of continuing to allow men to die. In many ways, this conflict strikes at the heart of the secular-religious question of an "eye for an eye." Again, keeping in mind the sentiment of the day, Clement bucked the trend in the South by openly opposing the death penalty, and, except perhaps for a voting error, would have succeeded in abolishing it in Tennessee.
Clement always described his relations with the press as good. This description may have been true with most, but the Nashville Tennessean clearly and unabashedly participated in the kind of partisan political reporting that destroyed character rather than providing objectivity. Political reporting should reflect an aggressive, risk-taking, adversarial role. Newspapers have always had the leeway to go beyond such a standard to include the role of king maker. Both the Tennessean and Banner, run by powerful men, engaged in such coverage. The Banner contained just as much pro-Clement hype as the Tennessean reported anti-Clement material. Future research should study the kind and quality of political news coverage afforded Clement especially during his first two terms. As far as I can tell, little or no coverage involved Clement's personal problems. Today, such news would find itself on the front pages and as lead stories in new broadcasts.

Finally, Clement deserves more than the one book previously published about him. His personality, speaking style, personal problems, three terms in office with all their interesting stories and experiences, the constitutional changes be brought about, and his humanitarian efforts all support the need for a more critical look at the man and his legacy.
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