

Outline of a Possible Abstract

I. Preliminaries

- A. Edward M. Kennedy addresses students and faculty of Liberty College, Lynchburg VA, 1983.
- B. Outlines the basis of the split between church and state in American political history.
Makes the case for engaging those who disagree with you and respecting their views.

Thesis: "At the heart of Kennedy's speech is his effort to bring a politically hostile audience to a shared belief in tolerating and engaging those with whom they disagree."

II. Kennedy's purpose: to urge audience to tolerate and value those who disagree

- A. Overtly declares "not political"
 - 1. Surely true in partisan political sense
 - 2. Although wants to change nature of political activity
- B. Says he has "come here to discuss" his beliefs, but too limited.
 - 1. Force of speech goes beyond "discussing"
 - 2. The speech is filled with praise and blame for actions of others.
- C. Wants to "formulate belief," and perhaps "initiate action"
 - 1. There is no virtual experience in control here.
 - references to John F. Kennedy not good at virtual experience and minor in detail
 - 2. Some altering of perception
 - a. Certainly seeks to give what he thinks is fresh angle
 - b. Speech rich with examples of commitments by the American pantheon to tolerance and examples of intolerance and tolerance
 - 3. Formulating belief is central
 - a. He has prepared a one-sided case (Campbell & Huxman definition of belief)
 - b. He defines his success in terms of "agreements" and "disagreements"
 - c. His examples and historical perspective refine understanding of church and state, place of tolerance in discourse (Campbell & Huxman's definition of belief)
 - 4. Extends to a limited extent to transforming convictions into deeds (CH definition of initiating action)
 - a. "But I also hope that . . . we will always respect the right of others to differ"
 - b. Declares a behavioral goal
 - 5. Clearly not maintaining action, since he believes they do not now do it.

III. Strategies ground his case in common experiences, or in intolerance toward Christians

- A. Confronts hostile audience of political adversaries
- B. Playfully disarms them
- C. Mixes in examples to condemn intolerance toward Falwell, their hero
- D. Quotes famous Americans on key issues
 - 1. Seeks to locate separation of church and state,
 - 2. and junction of morality and politics
- E. Recalls historical intolerance based in religion
- F. Acknowledges frustration to religious people of church/state separation

IV. Strategies seem well-chosen to at least open up the mind of a hostile audience toward listening to those with whom they disagree.