

000980

ADDRESS

BY

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DOLAND, SOUTH DAKOTA

FEBRUARY 4, 1973

Rev Crandall
-1- Homer Krentz

IT IS WITH A VERY WARM FEELING THAT I JOIN
YOU THIS MORNING IN CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE FIRST SERVICE HELD IN THIS CHURCH. I FEEL YOU HAVE
DONE ME GREAT HONOR BY THIS INVITATION TO THE HOME OF
MY YOUTH AND THE CHURCH WHICH HAD SUCH A DECISIVE
INFLUENCE UPON THE COURSE OF MY LIFE. MY PARENTS
TREASURED THE MEMORIES OF A DEEPLY ENRICHING AND ACTIVE
LIFE IN THIS CONGREGATION, AND THEY CERTAINLY SAW TO
IT THAT I LEARNED MY LESSONS AND CONTRIBUTED MY PART.
AS I STAND HERE NOW, I AM SURROUNDED BY SO MANY PROFOUND
AND PERSONAL REMEMBRANCES -- THE REVEREND ALBERT HART,
Rev Wilkinson
BY WHOSE WARM EMBRACE OF MAN AND GOD I AM STILL TOUCHED;
THE CHOIR AND YOUTH GROUPS; AND WARM FRIENDSHIPS THAT
HAVE NEVER BEEN FORGOTTEN.

I WAS BROUGHT UP TO BELIEVE THAT RELIGION IS
 MORE THAN A SUNDAY EXPERIENCE -- THAT THE TRULY CHRISTIAN
 MAN IS ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE MEANING OF LOVE, COMPASSION,
 AND JUSTICE, AND MAKES THESE STANDARDS THE HEART OF HIS
 LIFE.

↳ IF THERE IS ONE BIBLE VERSE THAT I WOULD FIND
MOST SUITABLE FOR THIS OCCASION -- INDEED, FOR THIS TIME
 IN OUR NATION AND ITS COMMUNITIES -- IT IS THAT GREAT
 MESSAGE IN THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF MICAH, WHICH

READS:

6th chapter - Book of MICAH

↳ "HE HAS SHOWED YOU WHAT IS GOOD!" AND WHAT
 DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU BUT TO DO JUSTICE
 AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH
 YOUR GOD."

*Religion
was 76.4*

THE PROPHET MICAH WAS HERE EXPRESSING THE WILL
OF GOD THAT A MAN'S RELIGION SHOULD BE HIS VERY LIFE; ITS
EXISTENCE PROVEN BY HIS ACTIONS.

IT TOOK A STRAIGHT-FORWARD, PLAIN-SPOKEN FARMER

POSSESSING GREAT INNER STRENGTH TO PREACH THIS SERMON TO

AN ANGRY CONGREGATION THAT BELIEVED THEY HAD BEEN VERY

DILIGENT IN PRACTICING THEIR RELIGION. THEIR RESPONSE

WAS EQUALLY BLUNT. "DO NOT PREACH," THEY SAID, "NO EVIL
SHALL COME UPON US."

MICAH CONFRONTED AN ENTIRE NATION OF PEOPLE IN

CONFUSION ABOUT THEIR PURPOSE IN LIFE AND THEIR FUTURE.

THEY HAD FOOLED THEMSELVES INTO BELIEVING THAT GOD WAS

RIGHT AT HAND, TO BE CALLED UPON AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE TO
DO THEIR BIDDING.

ALL THEY HAD TO DO, THEY FELT, WAS
FOLLOW A REGULAR PROGRAM OF RELIGIOUS RITUALS, AND ALL
WOULD COME OUT WELL. "DISGRACE WILL NOT OVERTAKE US,"
THEY SAID. "IS NOT THE LORD IN THE MIDST OF US?"

4 BUT THEY KNEW IN THEIR HEARTS THAT GOD WAS NOT
THERE, THAT HE HAD TURNED HIS FACE FROM THEM, AND YET
THEY REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE REASON FOR THIS: THAT AT
THE SAME TIME THEY WERE PERFORMING THEIR RELIGIOUS DUTIES
IN A ROUTINE MANNER, THEY WERE ALSO PERVERTING JUSTICE
TO STEAL PROPERTY, BEATING AND VIOLATING MEN AND
WOMEN FOR THEIR OWN GAIN, PROSTITUTING RELIGION TO HAVE
IT SERVE THEIR OWN ENDS, AND WORSHIPPING THEMSELVES AND
THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS RATHER THAN GOD FROM WHOM ALL
THE GIFTS OF LIFE COME.

well,

HAVE WE TODAY REALLY ADVANCED SO FAR BEYOND

THIS DESCRIPTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE CENTURIES AGO? FOR

in ancient bible times,

THAT PEOPLE A PROPHECY OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WOULD

LITERALLY COME TRUE. BUT IS IT NOT ALSO TRUE THAT IN

A VERY REAL SENSE WE SEE TOO OFTEN A "LIVING DEATH"

IN SOCIETY TODAY?

IS THERE NOT A LESSON IN THIS DEATH OF THE

LIVING?

-- IN EXTENSIVE DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM;

-- IN THE HIGH RATE OF CRIMES OF POINTLESS

VIOLENCE;

-- IN 25 MILLION AMERICANS CONDEMNED BY POVERTY

TO LIVES OF FRUSTRATION AND DESPAIR;

L IN MORE THAN ONE-TENTH OF OUR POPULATION
 STILL DENIED A FULL SENSE OF HUMAN DIGNITY
BY THE DISEASE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION;

L AND IN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE CROWDED IN OUR
 CITIES OR ISOLATED IN OUR RURAL AREAS, AND
RESIGNED TO A BELIEF THAT THEY NO LONGER
HAVE ANY REAL CHOICES OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR
 A BETTER LIFE.

L ~~I BELIEVE~~ ^{yes,} THERE IS A LIVING DEATH IN MILLIONS

OF CHILDREN AND OLD PEOPLE WHO ARE WITHOUT HOPE OR SECURITY
 OR LOVE. L THERE IS A DESTRUCTION OF LIFE WHERE INCREAS-

ING NUMBERS OF POOR PEOPLE END UP IN SLUMS THAT ARE ^{characterized}
by crime, disease, filth, and
hopelessness.
 SURROUNDING SUBURBS.

L AND OUR CONSCIENCES MUST REMAIN DEEPLY

TROUBLED BY THE waste OF LIFE IN THE DESTRUCTION

OF WAR, AND IN THE TREMENDOUS OUTPOURING OF ~~THE~~

MATERIAL, AND ~~MONIES FOR PERSONAL INTEREST~~ AT THE money for weapons

EXPENSE OF PROGRAMS TO MEET THE CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF the very

THE PEOPLE BEING DEFENDED

L NOW, WHENEVER WE ~~ARE SATISFIED~~ IGNORE

THESE FACTS OF THE WORLD AROUND US, OR SAY WE ARE NOT

RESPONSIBLE, IT IS PRECISELY THEN THAT FOR EACH OF US,

ALL THAT HAS GOOD MEANING OR HOPE IN LIFE BEGINS TO

CRACK, GETS KNOCKED APART, AND CRUMBLES IN RUINS.

L WHERE IS THE ANSWER? I SUGGEST TO YOU THAT
 ONE DECISIVE REPLY IS THAT RELIGION IS THE BINDING
CEMENT OF LIFE, PREVENTING THIS DESTRUCTION OF PURPOSE
AND OF HOPE.

L LISTEN AGAIN TO THE LORD'S RESPONSE UTTERED
 BY MICAH: "...DO JUSTICE, LOVE KINDNESS, AND WALK HUMBLY
WITH YOUR GOD."

L GOD CALLS UPON US TO MAKE OUR RELIGION A DEEPLY
COMMITTED LIFE OF ACTION -- TO DO JUSTICE TO OTHERS,
NOT JUST DECREE THE CRIME RATE; TO EXPRESS A GENUINE,
SELF-GIVING LOVE OF KINDNESS; NOT JUST WRITE A CHECK
TO CHARITY;

Reinhold Niebuhr:

"Man's capacity for justice makes
 democracy possible; but man's
 inclination to injustice makes
 democracy necessary."

AND TO HAVE A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, WHERE SELF-KNOWLEDGE BEGINS ONLY
AS WE COME TO KNOW THE FATHER, IN THE RESPECT AND LOVE
OF SONS.

↳ THE HEART OF GOD'S CASE PROSECUTED BEFORE A
CONGREGATION WHO HAD BROKEN CONTACT WITH HIM, WAS A
CALL FOR A RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ACTION, BECAUSE HE HAD
ALREADY ACTED IN HISTORY IN DELIVERING THEM FROM THE
BONDAGE OF SLAVERY IN EGYPT.

↳ FOR US TODAY HE HAS ALSO ACTED DECISIVELY
IN HISTORY, IN GIVING US HIS OWN SON, OUR SAVIOUR,

↳ WE DARE NOT, THEN, SIT BACK, PLAYING THE ROLE
OF BYSTANDERS, CONTENT ONLY TO GIVE AN HOUR TO GOD ON
SUNDAYS.

^{Heavenly}
 L OUR FATHER WANTS US TO LIVE LIFE TO THE

FULLEST, BUT IN THE VISION OF GOD, NOT IN DARKNESS,

L HE WANTS US TO LIVE OUR FAITH, TO HAVE HEART ENOUGH TO

SHARE THE PAIN OF OUR NEIGHBOR, AND TO HELP.

L I BELIEVE GOD IS PROSECUTING HIS CASE AGAIN

BEFORE US TODAY -- INDEED, BEFORE AN ENTIRE NATION THAT

PROCLAIMS FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY,

L WHAT WILL BE OUR ANSWER? CONSIDER IT VERY

CAREFULLY, FOR, TO USE THE WORDS OF A GREAT HYMN, "WE

ARE LIVING ... IN A GRAND AND AWFUL TIME ... IN AN AGE
ON AGES TELLING."



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org