

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Minneapolis Ministerial Association Breakfast

Minneapolis, Minnesota

May 13, 1974

I would like to talk seriously with you for a few minutes this morning about the mood of the country. I have a few observations I would like to share with you.

I'm not one who goes around preaching doom and gloom. By nature I'm an optimistic, rather cheerful fellow.

But when I travel around and talk to people these days, I detect a feeling -- an uneasiness -- that makes me believe we need to do some rethinking about the way we approach our national problems and challenges.

We are at a time in our nation when very little seems to be going right. The economic, social, political atmosphere is overcast with uncertainty and insecurity.

It isn't difficult to detect why our people are discouraged. We are just emerging from a long and trying winter. In the last few months, our nation has been bombarded with massive exposure to new and perplexing problems.

-- Some of our citizens, for example, were not sure there would be enough fuel to heat their homes through this hard Minnesota winter.

If they finally were able to obtain fuel, they found that the bill had doubled or even tripled.

-- We have been gripped by a burning, red hot inflation that defies all efforts at correction.

The wages of working people have been in check while an Administration with a distaste for controls winked as corporate profits reached an all-time high. Our people can't understand this kind of dichotomy, and they shouldn't have to.

The costs of health care, education, transportation, clothing -- the basic goods and services our people must have, consumed a disproportionate amount of a shrinking paycheck.

These things hit people where they live. And they are hard to take.

On the national scene, we have witnessed a series of events unparalleled in our history.

-- The Vice President of the United States resigned in a cloud of scandal and corruption.

-- There was evidence of a tax system that is shot through with loopholes, tax shelters and write-offs for the rich, while the lower and middle-income population bear the brunt of the cost of government.

-- A new brand of violence has victimized unknowing and innocent people -- a violence which strikes without any apparent reason. Kidnappings and senseless murders have put a shroud of fear into the hearts of many of our people.

One cloud after another has gathered over the last months. Just as it seemed that some sunlight would shine through to give us relief, another news item broke to add another crushing blow to the spirit.

Now, more than ever, our countrymen cry out for sound, progressive moral leadership for the nation. Instead, they have witnessed all that has come to be associated with a new "day of infamy" in American history, and expressed in a single word: "Watergate."

And many have become frustrated with a Congress they believe to be ineffective. No wonder our people are disheartened.

But I do not believe that Americans are going to bend under the weight of all these burdensome developments and crises.

They are a people of strength and courage and tenacity, and I know they will live up to the challenges that now face us. But this is a time when some soul-searching is in order.

As I look on the present situation, I see one major stumbling block to the solution of the crises and potential crises we face. I see in our nation a breakdown of the sense of community that brought us through 200 years from our infancy as a republic. I want to explore this idea of community.

Based on the concept of the great English philosophers, notably John Locke, the early settlers founded our nation by covenant.

Recognizing the autonomy and sovereignty of the individual and the common purpose of human aspirations, they covenanted together to create a political society. They created, through social contract, a government which exists of, by, and for the people and serves as a vehicle for individual and collective achievement.

It follows -- and this is the basis of our constitutional government -- that power flows from the people -- that the strength of our government is derived from the consent of the governed.

We do not have a benevolent government. We have a benevolent electorate.

We were nurtured in the spirit of community -- a community where every person is aware of those qualities which sets him apart and makes him unique. But, at the same time, each of us recognizes that he is a member of a community of shared needs and aspirations toward which he must contribute his skills, abilities, and effort.

The genius of American democratic society is the belief that individual fulfillment and the attainment of individual goals can best be achieved in a community environment which provides for meeting common needs, and which establishes a security which allows for true freedom of action.

I feel somehow that this idea of community has been lost -- or, more accurately, misplaced.

If we are going to have any hope of solving the problems which face this country, I believe we are going to have to reestablish that sense of community.

A primary factor in this concept is accountability. Citizens in a community -- whether it be a religious, social, cultural, or political community -- must realize that they are accountable to each other.

One of the things that strikes me most about this entire Watergate situation is that most of those who were closely involved in the scandals were Presidential appointees. They were accountable to one person -- the President. They had never been subject to election by the public. The isolation that grew from this lack of accountability -- as we can see now -- created an attitude among such people that they were above the law -- indeed, they acted as if they were the law.

As a Senator, I must run for election every six years. I am accountable to the people of Minnesota for the actions I take. Hubert Humphrey cannot live in isolation. By virtue of my role in the community, I am completely aware of my responsibilities to that community. I have a duty to help maintain a spirit of community. And, I gain from that community a sense of meaning, of purpose, and of the jobs that can and must be done.

We need to reestablish in our towns and cities -- in the nation as a whole -- and among the nations a genuine sense of community.

To recapture that spirit, we must reaffirm that old trueism, that no man is an island.

We must work to combat the economic forces, including the unique twin levers of inflation and recession that frustrate the efforts of people to earn and retain an income, robbing both the retired school teacher in St. Augustine, Florida, and the child in the hard-core inner city of Chicago, of their human dignity, and isolating them from the community.

-- We must repeatedly insist that as long as the civil rights and equal opportunity of some of our people are denied in fact, if no longer in law, the basic freedoms and hopes of all our people are diminished.

-- We must see to it that health care is a guaranteed right of all our citizens and not just a privilege for the rich or near-rich.

-- We must demand that our system of justice assures that all our citizens are protected equally and without regard to arbitrary distinctions.

-- We must no longer accept a system where the educational opportunity of children is made dependent on the comparative wealth or poverty of local school districts, recognizing that this undermines the value of human resource skills so vital to the future of our Nation.

-- And we must recognize that the interests of the people of the United States are bound up with those of millions of people in the developing nations, threatened with hunger and starvation.

And this is where the church community can have a vital impact. You are involved daily in the lives of our people. You can provide the bridge to bring our people together -- in the church community and in the community as a whole.

As you minister to individual spiritual needs in your congregations, you can teach your people to communicate once again with each other, with their neighbors -- and with their government.

The religious community can be a great, driving force for social change. We saw in the 1960's what a dynamic and vital role men and women of the church could play in establishing equal treatment under the law for our neglected minorities.

You are in the most advantageous position to make us aware of the relationship between individual spiritual and emotional well-being and its bearing on national political health -- the integrity and effectiveness of our political system.

Those of us in public office can continue to hammer away to enact legislative programs we believe to be necessary to address these problems. But it will be no more than whistling in the wind unless the community from which our authority is derived is harmonious and supportive of our efforts.

You can help us to define the needs of our national community. And once they are defined, you can spark the community spirit that will be necessary if we are to make real progress in attacking the massive agenda of unfinished business.

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REMARKS BY

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

MINNEAPOLIS MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION BREAKFAST

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

MAY 13, 1974

Rev Donald Meisel

Father Coniaris
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~~Rev~~ Wm Berg

Rev Conover

~~Rev~~ Meisel

^{Wm Berg}
⊗ Congregational
(Zorari)

⊗ Hoover Grimsby
V.P.

Dean Postal Waste
President

Tale of 2 cities - Dickens
Best of Times - Wout of
Times

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK SERIOUSLY WITH YOU FOR
A FEW MINUTES THIS MORNING ABOUT THE MOOD OF THE
COUNTRY. I HAVE A FEW OBSERVATIONS I WOULD LIKE TO
SHARE WITH YOU.

I'M NOT ONE WHO GOES AROUND PREACHING DOOM
AND GLOOM. BY NATURE I'M AN OPTIMISTIC, RATHER
CHEERFUL FELLOW.

BUT WHEN I TRAVEL AROUND AND TALK TO PEOPLE
THESE DAYS, I DETECT A FEELING -- AN UNEASINESS --
THAT MAKES ME BELIEVE WE NEED TO DO SOME RETHINKING
ABOUT THE WAY WE APPROACH OUR NATIONAL PROBLEMS
AND CHALLENGES.

(X) - Educ - Prevent inequities

- Health care

- Race - Human Rts
- Housing

Poor Disabled - Back
Elderly -

Change - Instability

Governments weak, or Dictators

Abroad - Britain France
Germany Sweden
Italy Canada
Portugal Greece

Economy - Inflation abroad
Inflation at Home

Price Rise - Food

Energy
Fertilizer
Transportation

At Home - Energy crisis - Costs
Inflation Prices
corruption

Vice President =

Watergate -

Tax system - unfair

Congress - needs modernization

Planning - Food crisis

WE ARE AT A TIME IN OUR NATION WHEN VERY LITTLE
SEEMS TO BE GOING RIGHT. THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL,
POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IS OVERCAST WITH UNCERTAINTY
AND INSECURITY.

IT ISN'T DIFFICULT TO DETECT WHY OUR PEOPLE
ARE DISCOURAGED. WE ARE JUST EMERGING FROM A LONG
AND TRYING WINTER. IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, OUR NATION
HAS BEEN BOMBARDED WITH MASSIVE EXPOSURE TO NEW
AND PERPLEXING PROBLEMS.

-- SOME OF OUR CITIZENS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE
NOT SURE THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH FUEL TO HEAT
THEIR HOMES THROUGH THIS HARD MINNESOTA WINTER.

IF THEY FINALLY WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN FUEL, THEY
FOUND THAT THE BILL HAD DOUBLED OR EVEN TRIPLED.

-- WE HAVE BEEN GRIPPED BY A BURNING, RED HOT
INFLATION THAT DEFIES ALL EFFORTS AT CORRECTION.

Inflation

L THE WAGES OF WORKING PEOPLE HAVE BEEN IN CHECK
WHILE AN ADMINISTRATION WITH A DISTASTE FOR
CONTROLS WINKED AS CORPORATE PROFITS REACHED
AN ALL-TIME HIGH. L OUR PEOPLE CAN'T UNDERSTAND
THIS KIND OF DICHOTOMY, AND THEY SHOULDN'T
HAVE TO.

L THE COSTS OF ^{food,} HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION,
CLOTHING -- THE BASIC GOODS AND SERVICES OUR PEOPLE
MUST HAVE, CONSUMED A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF A
SHRINKING PAYCHECK.

THESE THINGS HIT PEOPLE WHERE THEY LIVE. AND
THEY ARE HARD TO TAKE,

ON THE NATIONAL SCENE, WE HAVE WITNESSED A SERIES
OF EVENTS UNPARALLELED IN OUR HISTORY.

-- THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES RESIGNED
IN A CLOUD OF SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION.

-- THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF A TAX SYSTEM THAT IS
SHOT THROUGH WITH LOOPHOLES, TAX SHELTERS AND
WRITE-OFFS FOR THE RICH, WHILE THE LOWER AND
MIDDLE-INCOME POPULATION BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE
COST OF GOVERNMENT.

-- A NEW BRAND OF VIOLENCE HAS VICTIMIZED

UNKNOWING AND INNOCENT PEOPLE ⁻⁻⁻ A VIOLENCE WHICH

STRIKES WITHOUT ANY APPARENT REASON KIDNAPPINGS

AND SENSELESS MURDERS HAVE PUT A SHROUD OF FEAR

INTO THE HEARTS OF MANY OF OUR PEOPLE.

↳ ONE CLOUD AFTER ANOTHER HAS GATHERED OVER THE
LAST MONTHS. JUST AS IT SEEMED THAT SOME SUNLIGHT
WOULD SHINE THROUGH TO GIVE US RELIEF, ANOTHER NEWS
ITEM BROKE TO ADD ANOTHER CRUSHING BLOW TO THE SPIRIT.

Now, MORE THAN EVER, OUR COUNTRYMEN CRY OUT FOR
SOUND, PROGRESSIVE MORAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE NATION.

INSTEAD, THEY HAVE WITNESSED ALL THAT HAS COME TO BE
ASSOCIATED WITH A NEW "DAY OF INFAMY" IN AMERICAN

HISTORY, AND EXPRESSED IN A SINGLE WORD: "WATERGATE."

↳ AND MANY HAVE BECOME FRUSTRATED WITH A CONGRESS
THEY BELIEVE TO BE INEFFECTIVE. NO WONDER OUR PEOPLE
ARE DISHEARTENED.

BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT AMERICANS ARE GOING
TO ^{or break} BEND UNDER THE WEIGHT OF ALL THESE BURDENSOME
DEVELOPMENTS AND CRISES.

THEY ARE A PEOPLE OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE AND
TENACITY, AND I KNOW THEY WILL LIVE UP TO THE
CHALLENGES THAT NOW FACE US. BUT THIS IS A TIME
WHEN SOME SOUL-SEARCHING IS IN ORDER.

As I look on the present situation, I see one
MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO THE SOLUTION OF THE CRISES
AND POTENTIAL CRISES WE FACE I see in our nation
a breakdown of the SENSE OF COMMUNITY that brought
us through 200 years from our infancy as a republic.

I want to explore this idea of community.

Based on the concept of the great English
philosophers, notably JOHN LOCKE, THE EARLY SETTLERS
FOUNDED OUR NATION BY COVENANT.

Recognizing the AUTONOMY AND SOVEREIGNTY of the
INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMON PURPOSE OF HUMAN ASPIRATIONS,
THEY COVENANTED TOGETHER TO CREATE A POLITICAL SOCIETY.

THEY CREATED, THROUGH SOCIAL CONTRACT, A GOVERNMENT

WHICH EXISTS OF, BY, AND FOR THE PEOPLE AND SERVES

AS A VEHICLE FOR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT.

↳ IT FOLLOWS -- AND THIS IS THE BASIS OF OUR

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT -- THAT POWER FLOWS FROM

We the People

THE PEOPLE -- THAT THE STRENGTH OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS

DERIVED FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

↳ WE DO NOT HAVE A BENEVOLENT GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE

A BENEVOLENT ELECTORATE.

↳ WE WERE NURTURED IN THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY --

A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERY PERSON IS AWARE OF THOSE

QUALITIES WHICH SETS HIM APART AND MAKES HIM UNIQUE.

BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, EACH OF US RECOGNIZES THAT HE
IS A MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY OF SHARED NEEDS AND
ASPIRATIONS TOWARD WHICH HE MUST CONTRIBUTE HIS SKILLS,
ABILITIES, AND EFFORT.

↳ THE GENIUS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IS THE
BELIEF THAT INDIVIDUAL FULFILLMENT AND THE ATTAINMENT
OF INDIVIDUAL GOALS CAN BEST BE ACHIEVED IN A
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT WHICH PROVIDES FOR MEETING
COMMON NEEDS, AND WHICH ESTABLISHES A SECURITY WHICH
ALLOWS FOR TRUE FREEDOM OF ACTION.

↳ I FEEL SOMEHOW THAT THIS IDEA OF COMMUNITY HAS
BEEN LOST -- OR, MORE ACCURATELY, MISPLACED.

2 IF WE ARE GOING TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF SOLVING THE PROBLEMS WHICH FACE THIS COUNTRY, ~~WE~~ WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO REESTABLISH THAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

A PRIMARY FACTOR IN THIS CONCEPT IS ACCOUNTABILITY.

4 CITIZENS IN A COMMUNITY -- WHETHER IT BE A RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, OR POLITICAL COMMUNITY -- MUST REALIZE THAT THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER.

4 ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STRIKES ME MOST ABOUT THIS ENTIRE WATERGATE SITUATION IS THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO WERE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN THE SCANDALS WERE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES. THEY WERE ACCOUNTABLE TO ONE PERSON -- THE PRESIDENT.

THEY HAD NEVER BEEN SUBJECT TO ELECTION BY THE PUBLIC,
THE ISOLATION THAT GREW FROM THIS LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY
AS WE CAN SEE NOW -- CREATED AN ATTITUDE AMONG SUCH PEOPLE
THAT THEY WERE ABOVE THE LAW -- INDEED, THEY ACTED AS
IF THEY WERE THE LAW.

L AS A SENATOR, I MUST RUN FOR ELECTION EVERY
SIX YEARS. I AM ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA
FOR THE ACTIONS I TAKE. HUBERT HUMPHREY CANNOT LIVE
IN ISOLATION. L BY VIRTUE OF MY ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY,
I ~~AM COMPLETELY~~ must be AWARE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO THAT
COMMUNITY. I HAVE A DUTY TO HELP MAINTAIN A SPIRIT
OF COMMUNITY. AND, I GAIN FROM THAT COMMUNITY A SENSE
OF MEANING, OF PURPOSE, AND OF THE JOBS THAT CAN
AND MUST BE DONE.

WE NEED TO REESTABLISH IN OUR TOWNS AND CITIES -- IN
THE NATION AS A WHOLE -- AND AMONG THE NATIONS A
GENUINE SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

TO RECAPTURE THAT SPIRIT, WE MUST REAFFIRM THAT OLD
TRUEISM, THAT NO MAN IS AN ISLAND.

WE MUST WORK TO COMBAT THE ECONOMIC FORCES,
INCLUDING THE UNIQUE TWIN LEVERS OF INFLATION AND
RECESSION THAT FRUSTRATE THE EFFORTS OF PEOPLE TO EARN
AND RETAIN AN INCOME, ROBBING BOTH THE RETIRED SCHOOL
TEACHER IN ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA, AND THE CHILD IN THE
HARD-CORE INNER CITY OF CHICAGO, OF THEIR HUMAN DIGNITY,
AND ISOLATING THEM FROM THE COMMUNITY.

-- WE MUST REPEATEDLY INSIST THAT AS LONG AS THE CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OF SOME OF OUR PEOPLE ARE DENIED IN FACT, IF NO LONGER IN LAW, THE BASIC FREEDOMS AND HOPES OF ALL OUR PEOPLE ARE DIMINISHED.

-- WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT HEALTH CARE IS A GUARANTEED RIGHT OF ALL OUR CITIZENS AND NOT JUST A PRIVILEGE FOR THE RICH OR NEAR-RICH.

-- WE MUST DEMAND THAT OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE ASSURES THAT ALL OUR CITIZENS ARE PROTECTED EQUALLY AND WITHOUT REGARD TO ARBITRARY DISTINCTIONS.

-- WE MUST NO LONGER ACCEPT A SYSTEM WHERE THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY OF CHILDREN IS MADE DEPENDENT ON THE COMPARATIVE WEALTH OR POVERTY OF LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, RECOGNIZING THAT THIS UNDERMINES THE VALUE OF HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS SO VITAL TO THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION.

-- AND WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES ARE BOUND UP WITH THOSE OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPING NATIONS, THREATENED WITH HUNGER AND STARVATION.

AND THIS IS WHERE THE CHURCH COMMUNITY CAN HAVE A VITAL IMPACT. YOU ARE INVOLVED DAILY IN THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE.

YOU CAN PROVIDE THE BRIDGE TO BRING OUR PEOPLE TOGETHER --

IN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY AND IN THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE,

AS YOU MINISTER TO INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL NEEDS IN

YOUR CONGREGATIONS, YOU CAN TEACH YOUR PEOPLE TO

COMMUNICATE ONCE AGAIN WITH EACH OTHER, WITH THEIR

NEIGHBORS -- AND WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT.

THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY CAN BE A GREAT, DRIVING
FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. WE SAW IN THE 1960'S WHAT
A DYNAMIC AND VITAL ROLE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE CHURCH
COULD PLAY IN ESTABLISHING EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER THE
LAW FOR OUR NEGLECTED MINORITIES.

YOU ARE IN THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION TO MAKE US AWARE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND ITS BEARING ON NATIONAL POLITICAL HEALTH -- THE INTEGRITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM.

THOSE OF US IN PUBLIC OFFICE CAN CONTINUE TO HAMMER AWAY TO ENACT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS WE BELIEVE TO BE NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS. BUT IT WILL BE NO MORE THAN WHISTLING IN THE WIND UNLESS THE COMMUNITY FROM WHICH OUR AUTHORITY IS DERIVED IS HARMONIOUS AND SUPPORTIVE OF OUR EFFORTS.

YOU CAN HELP US TO DEFINE THE NEEDS OF OUR NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

AND ONCE THEY ARE DEFINED, YOU CAN SPARK THE COMMUNITY
SPIRIT THAT WILL BE NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO MAKE REAL
PROGRESS IN ATTACKING THE MASSIVE AGENDA OF UNFINISHED
BUSINESS.

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