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REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

At a Seminar Sponsored by:

The Christian Life Commission
of the
Southern Baptist Convention

I welcome this opportunity to address the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention on the subject of "A Challenge to Responsible Citizenship" -- a very appropriate subject during our nation's Bicentennial observance.

The religious communities of this nation have a special responsibility for leading us in a proper Bicentennial observance.

It is from the religious communities that we got those great affirmations about God, human nature and human society, on which the nation's political covenant was founded.

It is from the religious communities that we have received those great impulses based upon faith, love and hope which have led to renewal in our political life.

It is from the religious communities that we shall receive those resources which will help us address the problems we face in our own time.

Therefore, the religious communities have a special responsibility to lead us in thanksgiving for the blessings God has bestowed upon this land; and to help us take stock of our real strengths and confess our failings as a people.

The challenge to our churches and synagogues is to call our people to a renewed dedication to the many unfinished tasks which are before us -- to demand that we press on toward the goal of assuring "liberty and justice for all," precisely because we are "one nation, under God."

Some people are worried that our Bicentennial will be "rockets' red glare", signifying little or nothing.

Some people, to whom America has been slow about keeping promises, will only note that the Bicentennial is taking place, as they continue to struggle for existence in the midst of our affluence.

Peoples throughout the world will be watching us during this Bicentennial era to see if we shall take to heart Arnold J. Toynbee's advice to "rejoin our American Revolution."

I believe we can and I believe we shall. I believe, furthermore, that religious communities such as the Southern Baptist Convention should take the leadership in making this Bicentennial era a creative and constructive period in our nation's history.

Let us call to heart and mind some of those great religious convictions on which our institutions are based; those great debates about the public good which have taken place in our past; and those achievements and failures that are the hand of history placed on our shoulders to guide through the present and toward the future.

I

John Adams once said that the American Revolution took place in the hearts and minds of Americans long before the first shot was fired in that Eighteenth Century conflict. And he was right.

The apostle Paul had told the Christians in Galatia, "you have been called to freedom." So now, seventeen centuries later, men and women accustomed to freedom in their personal approach to God insisted upon freedom in the public expression of their

ideas and in the ordering of their lives.

The Declaration of Independence, in fact, put in words a tremendous political revolution springing from a spiritual emancipation. Men's minds and souls were to be free -- free to build a new world. They were to be regarded as equal in the eyes of their Maker. The political literature of our early republic is permeated with a firm conviction of human dignity -- dignity not achieved by man himself, but dignity because each human soul is part of the spirit of God.

Drawing insights from their Hebrew, Christian, and Classical heritages, and assessing their own colonial experiences, our forefathers began to develop their own ideas of what it takes to make a free government.

Some of them came to the conclusion that because of the deep corruption of the Old World and because of a conspiracy they felt existed against American liberties, they were justified in severing ties with England. On the basis of their religious convictions they wrote those great and abiding testaments of our revolutionary period -- the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights.

The time is now at hand to reaffirm those convictions.

Our forefathers believed, in the first place, that God is sovereign, "King of kings, Lord of lords," the source of all power.

By God's own rule of law, by God's own demands of justice and mercy, God sets the purpose of government to be to serve the public good and to be limited in its powers precisely to carry out this fundamental purpose.

The Mayflower Compact, the first written constitution to govern Americans, began with the words, "In the name of God, Amen." It asserted that the whole purpose of these determined Pilgrims, in their struggle to found a new "kingdom" of free men and women, was "for the glory of God."

To understand the tremendous impact in the world of the Eighteenth Century of those great words in the founding documents of the United States, imagine you are hearing them for the first time:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness -- that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...."

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Those words hit the established world order of the Eighteenth Century like a thunder-clap!

The exclusive "divine right" of kings, by which God's purposes were to be mediated, was rejected outright!

No more would there be an automatic caste-system among the people -- where a child born to a peasant family would automatically be a peasant the rest of his life.

No longer would there be a separate existence given to the "State" as such -- instead, the people would be the final arbiters of government -- only by their voluntary social contract and consent would government be instituted. And that government would exist only to carry out specific purposes clearly set forth in a piece of paper which would now be the final law of the land.

These documents, for the first time, applied to the sphere of government the possibilities God had granted throughout history to people who would live in his true freedom. But they also applied to the operations of government the judgment of God in His righteousness upon the limitations and failings of men and women created and living in the bond of His love, but choosing so often to wander in the wilderness.

Reinhold Niebuhr, that great theologian who was also one of America's major political philosophers, borrowed a passage from the apostle Paul to speak of all of us as being both "the children of light and the children of darkness." Applying this fundamental truth to the possibilities and limitations of government, Niebuhr said:

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

Our forefathers tried to devise a system of government which would provide for the participation and consent of the people, and at the same time prevent the abuse of power or the corruption of power to serve special interests.

They diffused power so that interest might check interest. They separated the various functions of government to keep government from becoming arbitrary. But they also tried to relate all these parts effectively so that government might not be inert, but would actively help provide for the general welfare.

Our forefathers also believed that God fulfills His purposes in many different ways, and that it is presumptuous of any person or groups of people to claim to know God's ways with complete certainty. Indeed, they believed the best way to ascertain God's will is through civil and religious liberty and through the openness which this liberty would provide citizens to debate and discuss public policy.

Some of our forefathers believed that the worst engine of tyranny was a combination of political power sanctioned by ecclesiastical establishment.

Early in our colonial history Roger Williams, William Penn, and Cecil Calvert argued for a greater degree of toleration. Gradually, thanks particularly to the persistent efforts of Baptists, our Founders enlarged guarantees of religious liberty.

They drew a new line of separation, to use James Madison's image, between civil and religious institutions to diffuse civil and religious power, and yet to provide for a proper interaction between them.

We know -- and novelists like Gore Vidal have reminded us -- that our first citizens had warts and that our American Revolution had its seamy side. For example, our Founders fought a revolution in the name of liberty, but denied freedom to slaves. They sought to diffuse power and check it, yet they denied it altogether to women, Indians, Blacks, and others.

I do not minimize their failures for one moment. But it is on the basis of their great affirmations that we have been prodded to live up to their early promises about equality, and liberty and justice for all.

John F. Kennedy reminded us in his Inaugural Address that the revolutionary ideas of our forefathers are still at issue, and he echoed their belief "that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

II

Here is the time and place we should recall some of the great movements through which religious communities have helped to shape the consciousness and conscience of the nation. Our history as a people has been one of remarkable openness, of constant debate about public policy, and of achievements and failure. We should recall at this time that it has often been a case of Christian struggling against Christian to determine what might and what might not be in the public interest.

Early in our national history, many Americans wanted to show God's love in the conduct of their own lives, to express that love in what they called "benevolence," and engage in the reform of American society. Prodded in causes often stimulated by the gentle Quakers, they organized many reforming societies.

They formed societies to educate the public about moral concern, to persuade people to change their attitudes and life-styles, and to change public policies.

They organized societies:

- to train children for citizenship and to champion public education;
- to alleviate the conditions of the poor and the destitute;
- to ease the entry problems of the thousands of immigrants coming to these shores;
- to alleviate the condition of the sick, the orphan, the prisoner, the emotionally disturbed;
- to address the sufferings of displaced Indian tribes;
- to stop the senseless practice of duelling, and to change the drinking habits of Americans;
- and, to do away with the slave trade and to outlaw slavery itself.

It was, in fact, a moral logjam of national conscience that erupted in our Civil War and our Indian Wars, from which we still bear the scars.

After the Civil War, we faced the problem of a rapid industrialization and a rapidly changing society. Religiously motivated people -- Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbush, Frances Willard, John Augustine Ryan -- saw people living in the misery caused by the new revolution in our economic life and the fearful cost in human life and natural resources.

Affirming the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," as they often put it, they fought for the rights of the people.

They preached, they lectured, they wrote, they organized in order to gain a living wage for workers, to stop the exploitation of women and child labor, to restrict working hours, to improve working conditions and make them safer, and to establish compensation for disability and illness.

We have not resolved all of our industrial problems, and they have been complicated further by the technological developments in more recent years. But these complex demands were foreseen in the 1930's by a movement called "Christian realism", and led by my good friend and teacher of us all, Reinhold Niebuhr.

Niebuhr saw that we were not facing up to hard realities. He warned us of a growing and dangerous gap between enormous wealth and pervasive poverty in this country and throughout the world.

Niebuhr called us to reconsider some of the basic insights of persons like James Madison who knew the necessity of checking power with power. Liberty must be the condition of order. Justice must be the criterion of law. Both liberty and justice, according to Niebuhr, are essential to domestic tranquility, the general welfare, and in the short and long run, to the defense of the nation's vital interests.

Niebuhr taught us by his Christian commitment and compassion, by his cogent social criticism and decisiveness, and by his belief that our quest for the public good must be salted and leavened by forgiveness and the willingness always to begin again in our quest. He led us in a new quest for equality, liberty and justice for all.

In the past few years we have been confronted with many other problems: the continued denial of civil rights to minority groups; the pollution of our environment; the need to develop and conserve energy resources; and a crisis of confidence in governmental leadership.

Our people confront constantly rising costs of health care.

Young families cannot find homes or afford mortgages.

Millions of American workers desperately hunt for jobs; while millions of our older citizens struggle to make ends meet on fixed incomes in a time of continuing inflation.

Too often, our cities are unable to afford the cost of maintaining public services and are left with an inevitability of decline and decay.

The level of violent crimes and crimes against property is a matter of serious concern to all our people.

Too many family farms are going under due to high costs; while consumers confront rising food prices.

The list could go on.

But the point of all this is that today, perhaps as never before, there are issues that challenge our Christian citizenship, that demand the best that is in us in hard thinking and decisive action.

But we have not been left alone in this task. We are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses" who call upon us to continue the pursuit of the public good in faith and love and hope, and with determination.

III

One of those witnesses was that great Baptist preacher, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Back in 1963, he stood at the Lincoln Memorial and expressed a dream he had for America -- a dream of a better life for all of God's children.

It is a dream we all share. It is a dream that still beckons.

But now we also have to consider that dream in global terms, as Dr. King did. We truly are living in an interdependent world.

I tell the young people in my home state of Minnesota that what happens in the Middle East may be more important than anything that happens in the Middle West -- in terms of their day-to-day lives. And correspondingly, what happens in the Middle West, in the production of food and fiber, will have worldwide repercussions because America is a major food producer for the world.

Today, the world envelops us like a tidal wave.

We are exposed, through newscasts and television, to a rapid bombardment of change.

For example, the advent of nuclear weaponry has drastically changed the world and the way we look at the world.

Moreover, the state of the economy has brought forth unprecedented problems. Never before have we had recession and inflation simultaneously, never in the history of mankind. Yet now it is a worldwide phenomenon.

In the midst of this change, the old solutions no longer apply. Domestic remedies no longer are suitable for an interdependent world economy, and the old formulas no longer fit the facts.

Our own prosperity in America has brought change. We are forced to decide whether or not people living in democratic freedom can maintain self-discipline and high moral standards in the midst of affluence and abundance -- whether self-restraint, prudence, and a reasonable degree of moral integrity, are only dependent upon times of trouble, depression, or war.

The responsibilities of the United States have grown enormously since the two World Wars, and we are still assessing our role in world affairs after our tragic involvement in Southeast Asia.

But in working out the new demands of leadership in the free world -- in doing rightly the things that make for a better peace -- we again are guided by the principles and history of our religious tradition.

Very early in our history there were people, motivated by God's love and their desire to show His "benevolence" in their lives, who had a deep concern about peace throughout the world.

The American Peace Society was organized in the early part of the Nineteenth Century. It promoted the establishment of a world court and a world assembly to deal with the affairs of nations around the world -- it was far ahead of its time.

In the Twentieth Century, the religious communities were primary supporters of the League of Nations and the United Nations. In the midst of World War II, the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches, and led by a dedicated layman, John Foster Dulles, began the vital task of alerting the public to the complex demands of building a better world out of the ashes of a devastating world conflagration.

Some two decades later, challenged by the dramatic encyclical of Pope John XXIII, the historic Pacem in Terris world conference was held.

But today, as well, Christian citizens must give leadership in dealing with our worldwide problems.

One of the things religious communities may do is to warn us all of our pretensions and to prick our inflated self-righteousness.

Again referring to Reinhold Niebuhr, in his remarkable little book, the Irony of American History, he showed how we have tended to take credit for our greatness, when in fact much of it is due to our fortunate physical circumstance. He showed how, in pursuit of "safety and happiness," we have achieved the opposite. Despite an abundance of creaturely comforts, we have become increasingly unhappy; despite our great military and economic power, we have become increasingly unsafe.

Were he alive today, he would probably point out another irony in our situation. Precisely in response to the ideals proclaimed by the United States -- ideals of an equal partnership in the community of nations, and of the rights of free people in independence -- the newly formed nations of the third world, representing a major part of the earth's people, have claimed their place along side us in international councils and in world trade.

Their intense spirit of nationalism, equal to our own revolutionary fervor of 200 years ago, has often placed them in disagreement with America's view of appropriate courses of action in international relations.

Having learned well the lessons of resource exploitation by the industrialized nations, they now employ our critical need of natural resources -- whether oil, scarce minerals, or agricultural commodities unique to their climate -- as leverage to bargain for an equal place in the sun of world trade, which is crucial to their economic development.

These profoundly significant developments challenge us to avoid the reflex action of self-righteous indignation. They counsel us to learn that our great military and economic power, unparalleled in history, does have its limits. They should teach us that this power now must be exercised with restraint and wisdom, as well as with clear-sighted firmness.

And, they remind us that too often we have been a world power with a half-world knowledge -- a lesson that the agonizing experience of our military involvement in the conflicts in Vietnam and Cambodia ought to have seared into our minds and consciences.

But the fundamental lesson we must learn again -- the lesson which our religious communities never must let us forget -- is that we cannot, in the face of all these complex challenges and seeming frustrations, retreat from our global responsibilities.

We have "soul-size" problems on our hands which call for a re-evaluation of the way in which we live as Americans, which call for us to reexamine and reorder our priorities, and which call upon us to make sacrifices for the good of the whole human race.

Of course, we cannot do all that needs to be done in the world, alone. We must in good faith make progress with other nations in controlling and reducing world armaments and the world arms race. We must in good faith make progress in dealing with our real enemies throughout the world: illiteracy, disease, poverty, hunger, the fear of war, the violation of civil and religious rights.

We must explore and experiment with better ways by which we can use our vast human and natural resources, including our food, to help people, to reduce the tensions that make for conflict, and, hopefully, to produce a new era of mutual respect and cooperative effort among the peoples of the world.

But we cannot begin to take up the challenges before us unless there is a rebirth of Christian citizenship -- a citizenship owing its allegiance to the final authority of faith and love; and a citizenship that unites us with all peoples of the earth.

"God so loved the world" -- can we do anything less?

IV

There is one last thing which I consider an essential responsibility of citizenship. That is: Hope.

I sense there is much cynicism, some desperation and some despair, abroad in the land today.

It is only natural that during our Bicentennial we should look backward, hopefully to learn from the past. But I believe that our greatest challenge is to look forward.

We live by faith and love. We also live by hope. We cannot presume that we have the knowledge and will to reach the Promised Land -- to resolve all of our national and international problems -- overnight.

But I am an optimist, and I refuse to be intimidated by the size of our problems or by the possibility of making mistakes, or to give up because I do not have the final answer to our problems. I refuse to be a cynic and despair.

I believe we are on a great pilgrimage toward molding a better nation and world.

Our religious communities well understand the meaning of this pilgrimage.

The parish priest, the circuit rider, the lay preacher were to be found wherever the wagons had halted to form a community on the American frontier in the last century. Our religious communities were an integral part of the pioneer spirit of America, strengthening its moral fiber, searching for the ways of God with men in a new land and a totally new situation.

And it is that same pioneer spirit to which we are called today -- not to cross a geographical boundary, but to press forward to meet new challenges, to grasp hold of new opportunities, with the same determination.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said:

"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with a strong and active faith . . . I do not believe that the era of the pioneer is at an end. I only believe that the area for pioneering has changed. The country needs bold, persistent experimentation. . ."

We are now two hundred years old as a people. In celebrating our birthday in this Bicentennial year we shall probably be engaged in some local and national birthday ceremonies and parties. But we would do well to remember the words of Adlai Stevenson in the conclusion of his book, Call to Greatness:

"Now at Maturity we shoulder the heaviest burdens of greatness, for in the last analysis the epic struggle for our civilization, for government by consent of the governed, will be determined by what Americans are capable of. In bearing burdens, in ennobling new duties of citizenship, is the greatness of men and nations measured, not in pomp and circumstances."

Long before Stevenson spoke these words, the prophet Micah warned about pomp and circumstance and ceremony, signifying nothing. His words are engraved on the walls of the Library of Congress for all of us to read this Bicentennial year, and as a reminder of the responsibilities of citizenship:

"What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."
(Micah 6:8)

An old Welsh hymn, full of the thunder and determination of soldiers marching into combat, puts the case well in a verse that reads:

"We are living, we are dwelling
in a grand and awful time.
In an age on ages telling,
to be living is sublime."

This is an age that will determine the course of the future, for better or worse.

We must make the most of the time, for the hour is late. God willing, the promise of America will become a reality for all our people, and the hope for a better quality of life in a world of peace.

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1976 CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
SEMINAR
PROCEEDINGS

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.

(Prayers of Steel)

A CHALLENGE TO RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Hubert H. Humphrey

I welcome this opportunity today to address this seminar of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. You have given me a big topic: "A Challenge to Responsible Citizenship." That is a very appropriate topic for our nation's Bicentennial. I imagine you are almost getting tired of the idea that everything has to be related to the Bicentennial, but it is a good jumping-off place—a place for us to really evaluate where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

The religious communities of this nation have a special responsibility for leading us in a proper Bicentennial observance. It is from the religious communities that we got those great affirmations about God, human nature, and human society, on which this nation's political covenant was truly founded. It is from the religious communities that we have received those great impulses based upon faith, love, and hope which have led to renewal in our political life. It is from the religious communities, as I see it, that we shall receive those resources which will help us address the problems we face in our own time.

Therefore, the religious communities, this community as well as others, have a special responsibility to lead us first in thanksgiving for the blessings that Almighty God has bestowed upon this land—and we have been richly blessed—and to help us take stock of our real strengths and indeed to even confess our failings as a people. To me, the Bicentennial offers us this opportunity.

The challenge to our churches and to our synagogues is to call our people to a renewed dedication to the many unfinished tasks which you and I know lie ahead of us—to demand that we press on toward the goal of assuring "liberty and justice for all," precisely because we are, as our Pledge of Allegiance puts it, "one nation, under God." I should mention that the Pledge of Allegiance which we repeat so often does not recognize fulfillment; it recognizes promise. We are a long way away from its total fulfillment, but it is a goal, it is a hope, it is a standard by which we shall judge our performance.

Now some people are worried that this Bicentennial will just be a merchandising episode; that it will be "rockets' red glare," signifying little or nothing. Some people, to whom America has been slow about keeping its promises, will only note that the Bicentennial is taking place, as they continue to struggle for existence in the midst of what most of us enjoy as a pretty good standard of living.

Peoples throughout the world will be watching us during this Bicentennial period to see if we shall take to heart Arnold J. Toynbee's advice to "rejoin our American Revolution." I believe that we can, if we

understand what that Revolution was all about, and I believe we shall. I believe, furthermore, that religious communities such as the Southern Baptist Convention can and should take the leadership in making this Bicentennial era a creative and constructive period in our nation's history.

Let us call to heart and mind some of those great religious convictions upon which our institutions are based; those great debates about the public good which have taken place in our past, and those achievements and failures that the hand of history has placed on our shoulders to guide us through the present and toward the future.

John Adams, our first Vice President, once said that the American Revolution took place in the hearts and minds of Americans long before the first shot was fired in the eighteenth century conflict. He was right.

The apostle Paul had told the Christians in Galatia, "You have been called to freedom." So now, seventeen centuries later, men and women accustomed to freedom in their personal approach to God insisted upon freedom in their public expression of their ideas and in the ordering of their lives. In those early days of our Republic, religious thoughts and conviction were a powerful force and had a tremendous role. The Declaration of Independence, in fact, put in words a tremendous political revolution, springing from a spiritual emancipation. Men's minds and souls were to be free, free to build a new world. They were to be regarded as equal in the eyes of their Maker. The political literature of our early republic is permeated with a firm conviction of human dignity, dignity not achieved by man himself, but dignity because every human soul is part of the spirit of God.

I have been a teacher of American Government in colleges and universities, and I have had to tell my students that you cannot properly relate American history without considering its spiritual base. Nor can you really define or in a real sense justify democracy without understanding its spiritual content: the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, which is, of course, the spiritual base upon which human equality is based. It is only because each person is equal in the eyes of his Maker that we can really justify morally or politically government by the consent of the governed, that each vote, each person is important. No one has the right to rule another without his or her consent. This is all spiritual. If you look at it only politically, it will fall apart. The binding that holds it together is the spiritual content.

Drawing insights from their Hebrew, Christian, and classical heritages, and assessing their own colonial experiences, our forefathers began to develop their own ideas of what it takes to make a free government.

Some of them came to the conclusion that because of the deep corruption of the Old World and because of the conspiracy they felt existed against American liberties, they were justified in severing their ties with England. On the basis of their religious convictions, they wrote those great and abiding testaments of our revolutionary period—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights.

Just think of that kind of literature coming out of this country in a period of twenty years! Incredible! The most powerful political literature ever penned by the

hand of man—and those documents had an effect throughout the entire world. Whole empires were shaken, not by the force of our military, not by some magic secret weapon, but by the projection of a powerful idea based upon human dignity, and human dignity only being justified and verified by a spiritual belief or faith. Now I think it is time in this year of 1976 that we reaffirm those convictions that we have recited in these great documents of history.

Our forefathers believed, in the first place, that God is sovereign. All of the literature of this country emphasizes that: "King of kings, and Lord of lords," God was the source of all power. By God's own rule of law, by God's own demands of justice and mercy, God sets the purpose of government to be to serve the public good and to be limited in its powers precisely to carry out this fundamental purpose of serving the public good.

The Mayflower Compact, the first written constitution to govern Americans, began with these words, "In the name of God, Amen." It asserted that the whole purpose of those determined Pilgrims, in their struggle to found a new kingdom of free men and women, was "for the glory of God."

I wonder sometimes if we haven't lost sight of the tremendous religious input in the earliest days of this great, vast country of ours. To understand the tremendous impact of the world of the eighteenth century of those great words in the founding documents of the United States, just imagine you were hearing them for the first time; that you have never read them, never seen their facsimiles, but all at once somebody got up here and said, "Here is what I believe." Now put yourself back to 1776—with Louis XVI in France, George III in England, and the Czar in Russia—the whole world being governed by despots or emperors or kings. And then all at once you hear these words as if they could have been projected on a television screen, or on a radio or at a town meeting, and someone said, "Here is what we Americans believe:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

Ladies and gentlemen, that was revolutionary language at that time. Imagine announcing that to the world that was governed by the precepts of the divine right of kings, with all power unto the ruler and the state. Then listen to these words that I recite many times as I travel around this country, because it is the whole basis of our government.

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

What powerful words! If you will note, there is the philosophical base for our government: "We the People." Keep that in mind, that "We the People" followed

the Declaration of Independence which recognized the people's relationship to Divine Providence and people's rights that were God-given rights—not given by some political party but God-given rights.

The preamble to the Constitution, states an *action* philosophy. Government was there to *do* something: to form a more perfect Union, to establish justice, to assure domestic tranquility, to provide—even at the point of sacrifice—for the common defense, to promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty. This tells you that government is not neutral. It is supposed to be a people's government directed toward their justice, their safety, their tranquility, their defense, for their welfare, and for the blessings of liberty.

What a tremendous charge this was to the people of this land and what an unbelievable thrust it was in the politics of the eighteenth century. For these words hit the established world order like a thunderclap! No one from there on out, who was occupying any position of power without the consent of the governed, was safe. The exclusive divine right of kings, by which God's purposes were to be acted out, was rejected outright!

No more would there be an automatic caste system among the people, where a child born to a peasant family was to be a peasant for the rest of his or her days. No longer would there be a separate existence given to the State as such. Instead, people would be the final judges of government.

Reinhold Niebuhr, one of the great Christian theologians and one of our major political philosophers of American democracy, borrowed a passage from the apostle Paul to speak of all of us as being both the "children of light" and the "children of darkness." Applying this fundamental truth to the possibilities and limitations of government, Niebuhr said: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Those are words to ponder.

Our forefathers, therefore, tried to devise a system of government which would provide for participation and consent of the people, and at the same time prevent the abuse of power or the corruption of power to serve special interests. They diffused or separated power so that interest might check interest. They separated the various functions of government (we call it the separation of powers) to keep government from becoming arbitrary. But they also tried to relate all these parts effectively so government might not be inert, but would actively help provide for the general welfare.

Our forefathers also believed that God fulfills his purposes in many different ways, and that it is presumptuous of any person or group of people to claim to know God's ways with complete certainty. Indeed, they believed the best way to ascertain God's will is through civil and religious liberty and through the openness which this liberty would provide citizens to debate and discuss public policy.

Some of our forefathers believed that the worst engine of tyranny was a combination of political power sanctioned by ecclesiastical establishment, the combination of church and state. Early in our colonial history Roger Williams, William Penn, and Cecil Calvert argued for a greater degree of toleration. Gradually, thanks particularly to the persistent efforts of Baptists, our founders enlarged guarantees of religious liberty, which

again is a hallmark of American democracy. They drew a new line of separation, to use James Madison's image, between civil and religious institutions in order to diffuse civil and religious power, and yet to provide for a proper interaction between them.

We know, and some of our more contemporary novelists have reminded us, that our first citizens had warts and that our American Revolution had its seamy side. For example, our founders fought a revolution in the name of liberty, but denied freedom to the slaves. They sought to diffuse power and check it, yet they denied it altogether to women, Indians, blacks, and others. I do not minimize their failures for one moment. But it is on the basis of their great affirmations that we have been prodded to live up to their early promises about equality, and liberty and justice for all.

Remember, democracy is never a final product. The wonder about democracy is its beginning, the start. You have to start somewhere, and what these forefathers did for us was to give us some good beginnings, and even today we are still in the beginning. People are always looking for the finalization. They are looking for the ultimate. But those are standards that are out there for us to search for, to reach for.

That's why I believe that it is right and proper for political leaders to make promises. Some say the promises aren't kept, but how do you know if they are kept unless they are made? You have to have some way to judge, and I worry when some people today that are regarded as leaders in our political, economic, and social life say to us, "Now don't promise too much. Don't raise people's hopes. Don't arouse people too much." If we do that, then mediocrity becomes the standard. I think we have to do better than that.

As a matter of fact, you and I know that the Bible itself is a great promise. It isn't as if everybody has lived up to it, but it is a promise, the promise of heaven, the promise of heaven on earth in the Lord's Prayer. And everything that is worthwhile that has ever been achieved has been because somebody set some goals. Not that we always achieve those goals immediately, but we have a way to measure our performance.

I think back on that revolutionary period. If you remember, the American colonists then were one-third Tory, one-third neutral, and one-third for the Revolution. Great decisions are never made by majorities. They are made by determined minorities. Majorities merely confirm accomplishments that others made who dare to try.

We can point to the dark side of the Revolutionary War—George Washington's army struggling to survive at Valley Forge, while the Continental Congress squabbled over financing the supplies he needed; and those supplies sometimes ended up on the black market or even in the hands of the enemy.

But the important point of that period of history is that the Revolution succeeded. The important point is that Washington succeeded. The important point is that we gained our independence. All the other trivia is lost in the details of history because the great objectives were achieved.

John F. Kennedy reminded us in his Inaugural Address that the revolutionary ideas of our forefathers are still at issue, and he echoed their belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God.

We need to remember that. I have always thought that politics and religion, while they ought to be separated in terms of their institutionalization, must be coordinated in terms of their purpose. If love, compassion, charity, and justice mean something, and all of those beautiful words found in the religious texts mean something, then they have to mean something in terms of the political life of the people. They have to be governing standards.

Some of the groups that I have associated with from time to time are always deploring the lack of efficiency in government and they have good reason to deplore it. I think efficiency is something we should strive for. But the prime purpose of government is to do justice, and if you look back over all the great documents of human history, the Old and the New Testaments, the Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation Proclamation, just to list a few, you will never find the word "efficiency." It is not there. But you will find justice, love, compassion, charity, and service. You will find all of those great forceful words that tell us about sharing and working together and cooperating. Efficiency is but a tool to be used to achieve the greater ends of justice, equality, fair play, compassion, and love.

Early in our national history, many Americans wanted to show God's love in the conduct of their own lives. They expressed that love in what they called "benevolence" and so we had great organizations like the Quakers.

They organized many reforming societies. They formed societies to educate the public about moral concern, to persuade people to change their attitudes and life-styles, and to change public policies.

They organized societies: (1) to train children for citizenship and to champion public education in the earliest days of our country; (2) to alleviate the conditions of the poor and the destitute; (3) to ease the entry problems of the thousands of immigrants coming to these shores; (4) to alleviate the conditions of the sick, the orphan, the prisoner, the emotionally disturbed; (5) to address the sufferings of displaced Indian tribes; (6) to stop the senseless practice of dueling, and to change the drinking habits of Americans; and (7) to do away with the slave trade and to outlaw slavery itself.

Religious groups did all of this. I want to remind this audience that practically every movement in this country that has been of any help to the well-being of the ordinary citizen had either the blessing or the initiation of a religious group. These things didn't come out of political parties. Political parties were compelled to accept some of these things because of great religious movements in America, and religious groups and religious people who said, "These abominations of slavery and injustice and the failure to care for the orphans and the sick and the disabled are a violation of God's covenant with man. We are going to do something about it."

I mention this to you because today we put so much emphasis upon the political party, upon the government when, in fact, you and I know that most of our problems today are not just at the governmental level, because government is but a reflection of the body politic. Government is like a mirror, or as Adlai Stevenson said so well, "Government is like a well. What is

in it is what you draw out of the well." The people are the well. What we see today is the breakdown of the family. What we see today is the breakdown in the moral standards in individuals and groups. It reflects itself all the way up through the political structure. We are constantly trying to reform ourselves by government when, in fact, what needs to be done is to reform the government by ourselves.

After the Civil War, we found the problem of a rapid industrialization and a rapidly changing society. Religiously motivated people—Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbush, Frances Willard, John Augustine Ryan—saw people living in the misery caused by this new revolution. Affirming the "fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," as they put it, they fought for the rights of the people. They preached, they lectured, they wrote, they organized in order to gain a living wage for workers, to stop the exploitation of women and child labor, to restrict working hours, to improve working conditions and make them safer, and to establish compensation for disability and illness. This was before any labor group ever got around to this.

This was taking place in churches. The labor movement alone didn't initiate better working conditions; it came around to this after Christian leaders made their own profession of the desire to get rid of these practices.

We have not resolved all of our industrial problems, and they have been complicated further by the technological developments in more recent years. But these complex demands were foreseen in the 1930s by a movement called "Christian realism" and led by my good friend and teacher of us all, Reinhold Niebuhr.

Dr. Niebuhr said that we were not facing up to the hard realities. He warned us of a growing and dangerous gap between enormous wealth and pervasive poverty in this country and throughout the world. He called us to reconsider some of the basic insights of persons like James Madison who knew the necessity of checking power with power. Liberty must be the condition of order. Justice must be the criterion of law. Both liberty and justice, according to Niebuhr, are essential to domestic tranquility, to the general welfare, and in the short and long run, to the defense of the nation's vital interests.

Niebuhr taught us by his Christian commitment and compassion, by his cogent social criticism and decisiveness, and by his belief that our quest for the public good must be salted and leavened by forgiveness and the willingness always to begin again in our quest. He led us in a new quest for equality, liberty, and justice for all.

In the past few years, we have been confronted with many other problems: the continued denial of civil rights to minority groups; the pollution of our environment; the need to develop and conserve our natural resources; a crisis of confidence in governmental leadership; and a dangerous arms race in the world.

There are continuing problems. Our people confront constantly rising costs of health care. Young families cannot find homes or afford mortgages. Millions of American workers desperately hunt for jobs. Millions of our older people struggle to make ends meet on a limited income.

Too often, our cities are unable to afford the cost of

maintaining public services and are left with the inevitability of decline and decay. It is within our cities today where the poorest of the poor live, where the elderly live in ever-growing numbers, where the minorities live in ever larger numbers, and those are the areas which are being neglected.

America today faces an urban crisis, the proportions of which are hardly understood by any of us. When you have vast numbers of youth without work, never having experienced work, never knowing what it is to be gainfully employed, living in a "shadow economy," that is dangerous. The rise of youth unemployment in our cities is parallel to the rise in youth crime. Eighty-five percent of all the crime committed in the United States is committed by youngsters between the ages of fourteen and twenty.

I am a politician, but I am a father, a husband, a grandfather, and a son. I don't think the government alone can build a better society. When we address fundamental social illnesses we must begin at the level of people's lives. We are constantly looking at how we can improve the government, which is indeed a proper and a very useful commitment. But the way to improve the government is to have better standards amongst ourselves.

The great movements in this country that have been helpful to us come from people, and from their churches. It came from the religious leaders, Christian and Jew. Today, I wonder if we have not lost some of that enthusiasm for doing God's will as citizens and as families.

We have had many examples of what needs to be done in our country. Today, perhaps as never before, there are issues that challenge our Christian citizenship, that demand the best that is in us in hard thinking and decisive action. But we have not been left alone in this task. We are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses" who call upon us to continue the pursuit of the public good in faith and love and hope, and with determination.

One of those witnesses was that great Baptist preacher, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Back in 1963, he stood at the Lincoln Memorial and expressed a dream of a better life for all of God's children. It is a dream we all share—and I know some of you remember those powerful, moving words. It is a dream that still beckons us. But now we also have to consider that dream in global terms, as Dr. King did.

We are truly living in an interdependent world, and as we celebrate our independence, we had better remember that the new factor in human relationships is the *interdependence*.

I tell the young people in my home state of Minnesota that what happens in the Middle East may be far more important to them than anything that happens in the Middle West in terms of their day-to-day lives. And correspondingly, what happens in the Middle West, in the production of food and fiber, will have worldwide repercussions because America is a major food producer for the world. We're all tied together. We are citizens of the world.

Today the world envelops us like a tidal wave. We are exposed through newscasts and television to a constant bombardment of change and turmoil. The advent of nuclear weaponry has drastically changed the world and the way we look at the world.

Moreover, the state of the economy has brought forth unprecedented problems. Never before have we had recession and inflation at the same time, never in the history of mankind. There are no economic doctors or political economists who have ever come in contact with such complex matters! In the midst of this change, the old solutions no longer apply. Domestic remedies no longer are suitable for an interdependent world economy, and the old formulas no longer fit the new facts.

Our own prosperity in America has brought drastic change. We are forced to decide whether or not people living in democratic freedom can maintain self-discipline and high moral standards in the midst of affluence and abundance. I think that is the greatest question before us.

As St. Augustine once said, "The most miraculous thing of all is man himself," and a study of man is more important than the study of what man does. Most of us spend our time studying what we *do*. But I think we need to understand what mankind *is*, and what it is that makes us what we are, and why we act the way we do. Maybe then we will have a better understanding of some of the difficulties that we face.

The responsibilities of the United States have grown enormously since World War II, and we are still assessing our role in world affairs after our tragic involvement in Southeast Asia. We don't quite know what to do. We have been hurt. We've seen the extension of power and we have found out that didn't work. Today we are really feeling our way. But in working out the new demands of leadership in the free world—in doing rightly the things that make for a better peace—we again are guided by the principles and history of our religious tradition.

Very early in our history there were people, motivated by God's love and their desire to show his benevolence in their lives, who had a deep concern about peace throughout the world. The American Peace Society was organized in the early part of the nineteenth century. It promoted the establishment of a world court and a world assembly to deal with the affairs of nations around the world. It was far ahead of its time. We think of Churchill and Roosevelt and others as having promoted the United Nations, or Woodrow Wilson, Clemenceau, or Lloyd George as having promoted the League of Nations. On the contrary, these great movements found their genesis among religious people, among people who were motivated by Christian principles, the principles of peace and love and ministry, and then they became politically acceptable.

In the twentieth century, the religious communities were the primary supporters of the League of Nations and the United Nations. In the midst of World War II, the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches, and led by a dedicated layman, John Foster Dulles, began the vital task of alerting the public to the complex demands of building a better world out of the ashes of a devastating world conflagration. Some two decades later, challenged by the dramatic encyclical of Pope John XXIII, the historic *Pacem in Terris* world conference was held.

But today, as well, Christian citizens must give leadership in dealing with our worldwide problems. One of the things religious communities may do is to warn

us all of our pretensions and to prick our inflated self-righteousness. Again referring to Reinhold Niebuhr, in his preamble to the little book *The Irony of American History*, he showed how we have tended to take credit for our greatness, when, in fact, much of it is due to our fortunate physical circumstance. He showed how, in the pursuit of safety and happiness, we have achieved the opposite. Despite an abundance of creaturely comforts, we have become increasingly unhappy; despite our great military and economic power, we have become increasingly unsafe.

Were he alive today, he would probably point out another irony in our situation. Precisely in response to the ideals proclaimed by our great country—ideals of an equal partnership in the community of nations, and of the rights of free people in independence—the newly formed nations of the third world, representing a major part of the earth's people, have claimed their place alongside us in international councils and in world trade.

The peoples of Africa and Asia and many of the poor of Latin America have all at once said, "Here we are—two-thirds of the world's population. Here we are with our resources. No longer can you ignore us. No longer can you treat us as subordinates or inferiors."

Even though America has never been a colonial power, by the fact of our affluence and our economy we sometimes are looked upon as one of those who was their oppressor. We have been generous at times to a fault, but we are identified regrettably all too often with those who were not that generous.

The intense spirit of nationalism in this third world, equal to our own revolutionary fervor of 200 years ago, has often placed these countries in disagreement with America's view of appropriate courses of action in international relations.

Having learned well the lessons of resource exploitation by the industrialized nations, they now employ our critical need of natural resources—whether oil, scarce minerals, or agricultural commodities unique to their climate—as leverage to bargain for an equal place in the sun of world trade, which is crucial to their economic development.

But the fundamental lesson we must learn again, the lesson which our religious communities must never let us forget, is that we cannot, in the face of all these complex challenges and seeming frustrations, retreat from our global responsibilities.

We have "soul-size" problems on our hands which call for a reevaluation of the way in which we live as Americans, which call for us to reexamine and reorder our own priorities, and which call upon us to make sacrifices for the good of the whole human race.

Now I know that is not an easy assignment. I handle here in your Congress all of the legislation that relates to foreign aid and all of the Food for Peace legislation. I am the co-author of the Food for Peace program, and I can tell you that every day it gets more difficult. Understandably, many Americans say, "Why should we help others? We have plenty to do here at home." And indeed we have plenty to do here at home. And then they say, "When we help people, they don't appreciate it anyway." Dear friends, if you're waiting for appreciation, it will be a long time coming. Most of us as parents have known a few experiences like that ourselves. But sometimes it does come. But what is

more important is to do what we think is right.

We are going to have to learn that our safety, from a very selfish point of view, is not in just protecting ourselves here at home, but in trying to build the conditions around us that are conducive to peace. Peace is not something you reach out and grab hold of. Peace is something like a cathedral that has to be built block by block. It is in the design of the Master Architect, but each generation has to add its own blocks for the building.

As for many of the needs, there is no immediate solution, but persevering patience with a plan of action and great courage and steadfastness is what is going to be required. I get discouraged at times at the United Nations, but it is an institution that we need to work within, hopefully to improve, but above all to be there to speak our piece and hopefully to find better ways of communicating between the nations of the world. It does us no good to say that those who are there are from governments that are nondemocratic, because if we are only going to talk to people in the world today who have democratic institutions, we are going to be a lonely group of people.

I believe we must extend these great principles of democracy. But our principles will be judged by our deeds.

With respect to the fundamental conflict in principles in which we must continue to engage—the conflict between Communism and democracy—we must make a realistic effort to negotiate agreements with, for example, the Soviet Union, for the further control of nuclear weapons. But we must never back away from the ideological conflict. We have got something to believe in. I don't happen to believe people really want to live under a totalitarian regime, if there are ways of making democratic principles operative. I have seen what happens in countries where the so-called democratic political parties have been abysmally inept and corrupt. Finally people in disgust turn away.

Part of the frustration in America today, part of the disenchantment, is that they have seen institutions and individuals in government that have failed them, failed them in every sense of the word, and they turn off. And when they turn off, sometimes they listen to the voices of those who promise easy solutions. This has happened in every country of the world. When people lose faith in those who profess democracy, they can't escape, they are still there. They live in the countryside, they live in the towns, they know there has to be some kind of government, and they give themselves all too quickly to those who offer simple solutions. It is a very complex problem, but the solution often is the end of democracy.

There is one last thing that I want to leave with you, which I consider an essential responsibility of citizenship. That is hope. I sense there is much cynicism, some desperation, and some despair, abroad in the land today.

It is only natural that during our Bicentennial we should look backward, hopefully to learn from the past. But I believe that our greatest challenge is to look forward.

We live by faith. We live by hope. We live by love. We cannot presume that we have the knowledge and will to reach the Promised Land and to resolve all of our national and international problems overnight. I

think it is imperative that we understand that there are some problems that are beyond our immediate solution and beyond any solution. One of the reasons that religion has prevailed and one of the reasons that we believe in God Almighty is that we know there are some problems that we humans cannot solve alone. And that is fundamental to our whole national history, and fundamental to the history of millions of people throughout the ages.

But I am an optimist and I've always been one, and I refuse to be intimidated by the size of our problems or by the possibility of making mistakes or to give up because I do not have the final answer to our problems. I refuse to be a cynic and I refuse to despair. I believe we are on a great pilgrimage toward molding a better nation and world.

I believe that our religious communities have an opportunity now as in the early days of our republic to give us some sense of perspective, to help us understand the meaning of this new pilgrimage on which we enter. The parish priest, the circuit rider, the lay preacher were to be found wherever the wagons had halted to form a community on the American frontier in the last century. Our religious communities were an integral part of the pioneer spirit of America, strengthening its moral fiber, searching for the ways of God with men in a new land and a totally new situation.

Today we have too few people who are willing to dare, to try. Today people want to play it safe. People who play it safe are going no place.

We face incredible difficulties in this country, but when I look back over the beginning of this republic, the problems that we have today in proportion to those earlier days were not that much, because we have so much more to deal with.

We are the greatest country on the face of the earth that gives more opportunities to more people, and continues to extend opportunities.

Democracy is not perfect. Winston Churchill put it well. He said, "Democracy is the worst possible form of government except all others that have been tried from time to time." Keep that in mind and if we do not lose our faith, I think then we will be doing quite well.

Franklin Roosevelt said:

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with a strong and active faith. . . . I do not believe that the era of the pioneer is at an end. I only believe that the area for pioneering has changed. The country needs bold, persistent experimentation. . . .

We are going to have to experiment with how to get seven to eight million people who are unemployed back to earning a living for themselves. We are going to have to experiment with how to get rid of a welfare program that is an indignity to the people who receive it and a terrible burden upon the taxpayers who have to provide it. We are going to have to experiment with how to find new sources of energy so that we are no longer captive to the OPEC countries.

There are 1,001 things that need doing and we are not going to get them done unless we dare to try. And if we make a mistake, so what? We learn from our mistakes. What they represent are building blocks of a better tomorrow.

We are now 200 years old as a people and yet we are a young people. In celebrating our birthday in this Bicentennial year we shall probably be engaged in some local and national birthday ceremonies and parties. But we would do well to remember the words of Adlai Stevenson in the conclusion of his book *Call to Greatness*:

Now at maturity we should shoulder the heaviest burdens of greatness, for in the last analysis the epic struggle for our civilization, for government by the consent of the governed, will be determined by what Americans are capable of. In bearing burdens, in ennobling new duties of citizenship, is the greatness of men and nations measured, not in pomp and circumstances.

The truth is we must judge ourselves on the basis of our own strength. We have our own standards and we need to set our goals and set them high. We need to stretch every day of our lives to see that those standards are reached. You and I can believe that we can do better than we are doing today.

Long before Stevenson spoke his words, the prophet Micah warned about pomp and circumstance and ceremony. He said that they signify nothing. His words are engraved on the walls of the Library of Congress for all of us to read this Bicentennial year, and as a reminder of our responsibilities of citizenship: ". . . What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). Now if that isn't about as good a charge as you can get as to what you ought to be doing and what I ought to be doing, I don't know where you're going to find one. An old Welsh hymn, full of thunder and determination of soldiers marching into combat, puts the case well in a verse that reads:

We are living, we are dwelling
in a grand and awful time.
In an age on ages telling,
to be living is sublime.

This is an age that will determine the course of the future, for better or for worse. We must make the most of our time, because time is neutral. It is how you use it.

The hour is right, and God willing, the promise of America will become a reality for all of the world. That promise is clear; life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

So I come before you as an exponent of living. I believe in it! And I believe it ought to be lived to the utmost. I think the purpose of life is action for the good of ourselves and for the good of what the Lord Almighty gave us to work with.

ON GIVING A CERTAIN SOUND

L. D. Johnson

There may never have been a time in our history when so many have said so much that was heard by so few. The nation suffers from a crisis of confidence in leadership, with preachers and politicians close to the top of the list of those not taken seriously.

What is the matter, that the more we talk the more skeptical the people become? We are not deficient in verbal skills. We build admirable paragraphs filled with high-sounding words, but our eloquence falls on deaf ears. The citizenry's chronic boredom and/or despair reflects not only its lack of self-discipline but also the belief that our character does not match our rhetoric. What a pity that with the availability of the electronic miracle of instantaneous global communication nobody has anything to say that people will believe.

A line from our brother, Paul, is appropriate to the occasion. He wrote it in a letter to a small, argumentative, feuding congregation struggling to free itself from domination by its culture in Corinth, Greece, mid-first century A.D. Religious and philosophical voices clamoring to be heard filled the city with a bewildering babble. Popular philosophical and ethical maxims could be read on placards along the street. Cults and mysteries flourished. In the church itself the people divided up into schisms to declare unswerving loyalty to Peter, or Apollos, or Paul, or even Christ. Not the least among them were those who claimed a kind of spiritual superiority because they spoke in tongues. On the hill above this religious and ethical carnival stood the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion. In that cacophony of moral confusion Paul, their spiritual mentor, wrote this admonition: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (I Corinthians 14:8).

Having come to Washington in this historic year to talk about Christian citizenship in 1976, with some of the country's most influential figures on the platform, dare we hope for something more substantial than banalities and more challenging than platitudes? In short, is it possible to send forth from this meeting a clear and certain sound so that people across the land may pick up again the beat and rhythm of the music of "one nation under God"? If anybody knows the right note, let him give it out plainly. Maybe it will be heard above the babble of hollow rhetoric and empty promise.

No doubt we shall talk a lot about morality in government, industry, and private life. Morality is once more an "in" subject in this country, provided it be carefully phrased so as not to inhibit anyone's personal behavior or lower his living standard or adversely affect the advocate's rating at the polls. In strange places podiums have been converted into pulpits, and some of the most unlikely for the role are taking texts. Almost any day you can see them descending some Mt. Sinai, waving the Ten Commandments in one hand and the American Constitution in the other.

But a lot of people sense that they have read that script before, more than once, and suspect that the reforms it calls for are more apparent than real. Whenever justice and righteousness come dressed in the latest fashion and surrounded by a host of self-serving admirers, there is good reason to suspect that it is a case of mistaken identity. Popular morality, like popular religion, is nearly always a shallow imitation of the real thing.

If we are not to succumb to those twin maladies of a dying culture, apathy and cynicism, where do we find a remedy? In the midst of bewildering ambiguity, who can say the unambiguous word? Who can give

the certain sound? That, I take, is the primary responsibility of every person who aspires to leadership. It is the task of the preacher and the President, the Congressman and the chaplain. It is the task of the Christian Life Commission. And it is the task of this convocation, indeed of all trusted and privileged persons in the civilizing process. Those who have the ability to initiate change for the common good have also the responsibility.

Archibald Cox, addressing the American Bar Association a couple of years ago, issued such a call to the legal profession. He said it is no longer acceptable that the profession go along emulating the Three Monkeys: "Hear no evil, See no evil, Speak no evil." He therefore summoned the law schools and bar "to the long, arduous and detailed work of developing the moral order and sense of long-range purposes that prevent abuse of power and build confidence in the legal and political system. . . . Looking back over the descending spiral that led to Watergate, we should have learned that in our enormously complex society . . . the moral precepts and sense of ultimate purposes necessary to preserve and renew . . . a civilized society require more steadfast attention."

What Cox said to the legal profession must certainly be no less applicable to the Christian citizen. Moral and spiritual confusion or neutrality simply will not do. The times require a "certain sound." Where, if not here, can it be heard?

The Myth of "Bigger and Better"

I hope that somebody here is going to give a certain sound about the absolute necessity that we re-examine the American myth of "bigger and better forever." Someone with a chance to be heard must raise the right questions about the moral and ethical validity of our economy of overconsumption in the midst of a hungry world. For generations it has been assumed that natural resources are boundless. Now it is no secret that they are sharply limited. Indeed, now we know that the outer limits of some of the crucial ones are measured in terms of a few decades at best. From the moral standpoint, if not the pragmatic, one must ask how long the United States, with 6 percent of the world's population, can go on consuming 35 percent of the world's resources. Sooner or later, we shall have to sit down to a table of consequences.

This extravagant standard of living, making most of us fabulously rich by comparison with the vast majority of the rest of the people of the earth, and cited by many as the surest evidence of divine approval of "the American Way," has rested on assumptions not only ethically questionable but which now seem to be also economically untenable. Besides erroneously assuming an endless supply of energy to run our machines we assumed that man's basic acquisitiveness would assure his perpetual appetite for more material goods, that such acquisition would make him more content, and that a system of built-in obsolescence and waste would keep the whole beautiful wheel of production turning. And if it slows down too much you can always get it going again by stirring anger and fear in people so that they consent to the building of war machines that cost billions in the earth's precious and irreplaceable resources. If necessary, you can have a war, or help somebody with theirs, so that what you

have in stock can be replaced with newer, costlier and deadlier weapons.

This is called good business, under the illusion that the more you manufacture, sell and discard—cluttering the earth (and now outer space as well) with junk and garbage—the better off everybody is. To assist this mass self-deception is an advertising business costing billions and at its crassest, subverting nearly every ethical principle known to man to dupe people into buying what they neither need nor can afford. We have so trained ourselves to expect instant gratification that we salivate like Pavlov's dogs upon the signal of Madison Avenue. This may be our most significant and most disastrous bequest to our children. Nobody wants to say or hear, "No."

Somebody has to raise the question about the morality of such a life-style. What do we do, just go on, hell-bent-for-election, spend-spend-spend and consume-consume-consume, until the well goes dry and one fine winter morning we awaken with the power cut off and the store closed and the factory shut down? Who will say, "Hey, wait! We have to take a look down the road"? Who will call attention to our hungry brothers and sisters? Who will question the sanity, let alone the morality, of a nation which spends on past, present, and future wars thirteen times as much as it spends on the education of its children, and many times what it spends on housing and community development?

The Worship of Winning

A second area in which there is great moral confusion is our preoccupation with and worship of success as primary in our system of values. In a society where winning is not just the best thing but the only thing and failure the only unpardonable offense, we need not be surprised that the line between truth and falsehood, opportunism and genuine service, straightforwardness and duplicity, becomes obscured.

People who have no higher principle than pragmatism, who believe in their heart of hearts that the bottom line must always carry a guarantee of finishing first, may be expected to adopt moral ambiguity, persuading themselves that the end justifies the means. People obsessed with success, who have no concern for what happens to their neighbors so long as it does not cramp their own style, may not be expected voluntarily to accept less of the luxuries of life so that others may have some of the necessities.

The success syndrome is not confined to the counter or the counting house, to the White House or the church house. Creeping cynicism about moral principle pervades this culture. It makes allowance for fixing prices, bribing government officials to obtain favorable treatment or to sell airplanes, or to ship short-weighted, weevil-infested, trashy wheat to other nations who purchase our surplus. In the name of national security it excuses breaking the law and engaging in assassination. It lets us say, "You can't be too finicky about the niceties when the stakes are high."

And it is alarming that so many of us are neither chagrined nor dismayed. "Watergate," like "Waterloo," may become the word-symbol for the end of a way of life that began in hopefulness and idealism, but which is in danger of ending with a whimper of self-preoccupation. In testimony before a House Appropriations subcommittee a couple of years ago, Admiral Rickover

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

"A CHALLENGE TO RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP"

SEMINAR SPONSORED BY:

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

STATLER HILTON HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 22, 1976

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION ON THE SUBJECT OF "A CHALLENGE TO RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP" -- A VERY APPROPRIATE SUBJECT DURING OUR NATION'S BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE.

↳ THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES OF THIS NATION HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING US IN A PROPER BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE.

↳ IT IS FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES THAT WE GOT THOSE GREAT AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT GOD, HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN SOCIETY, ON WHICH THE NATION'S POLITICAL COVENANT WAS FOUNDED.

↳ IT IS FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED THOSE GREAT IMPULSES BASED UPON FAITH, LOVE AND HOPE WHICH HAVE LED TO RENEWAL IN OUR POLITICAL LIFE.

IT IS FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES THAT WE SHALL RECEIVE THOSE RESOURCES WHICH WILL HELP US ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS WE FACE IN OUR OWN TIME.

THEREFORE, THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD US IN THANKSGIVING FOR THE BLESSINGS GOD HAS BESTOWED UPON THIS LAND; AND TO HELP US TAKE STOCK OF OUR REAL STRENGTHS AND CONFESS OUR FAILINGS AS A PEOPLE.

↳ THE CHALLENGE TO OUR CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES IS TO CALL OUR PEOPLE TO A RENEWED DEDICATION TO THE MANY UNFINISHED TASKS WHICH ARE BEFORE US --TO DEMAND THAT WE PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL OF ASSURING "LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL," PRECISELY BECAUSE WE ARE "ONE NATION, UNDER GOD."

↳ SOME PEOPLE ARE WORRIED THAT OUR BICENTENNIAL WILL BE "ROCKETS' RED GLARE", SIGNIFYING LITTLE OR NOTHING.

SOME PEOPLE, TO WHOM AMERICA HAS BEEN SLOW ABOUT KEEPING PROMISES, WILL ONLY NOTE THAT THE BICENTENNIAL IS TAKING PLACE, AS THEY CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE IN THE MIDST OF OUR AFFLUENCE.

PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WILL BE WATCHING US DURING THIS BICENTENNIAL ERA TO SEE IF WE SHALL TAKE TO HEART ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE'S ADVICE TO "REJOIN OUR AMERICAN REVOLUTION."

I BELIEVE WE CAN AND I BELIEVE WE SHALL. I BELIEVE, FURTHERMORE, THAT RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES SUCH AS THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SHOULD TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN MAKING THIS BICENTENNIAL ERA A CREATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY.

LET US CALL TO HEART AND MIND SOME OF THOSE GREAT RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS ON WHICH OUR INSTITUTIONS ARE BASED; THOSE GREAT DEBATES ABOUT THE PUBLIC GOOD WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN OUR PAST; AND THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES THAT ARE THE HAND OF HISTORY PLACED ON OUR SHOULDERS TO GUIDE ^{us} THROUGH THE PRESENT AND TOWARD THE FUTURE.

I

JOHN ADAMS ONCE SAID THAT THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF AMERICANS LONG BEFORE THE FIRST SHOT WAS FIRED IN THAT EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CONFLICT, AND HE WAS RIGHT.

THE APOSTLE PAUL HAD TOLD THE CHRISTIANS IN GALATIA, "YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED TO FREEDOM." SO NOW, SEVENTEEN CENTURIES LATER, MEN AND WOMEN ACCUSTOMED TO FREEDOM IN THEIR PERSONAL APPROACH TO GOD INSISTED UPON FREEDOM IN THE PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF THEIR IDEAS AND IN ^{THE} ORDERING OF THEIR LIVES.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, IN FACT, PUT IN WORDS A TREMENDOUS POLITICAL REVOLUTION SPRINGING FROM A SPIRITUAL EMANCIPATION. MEN'S MINDS AND SOULS WERE TO BE FREE -- FREE TO BUILD A NEW WORLD. THEY WERE TO BE REGARDED AS EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THEIR MAKER. THE POLITICAL LITERATURE OF OUR EARLY REPUBLIC IS PERMEATED WITH A FIRM CONVICTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY -- DIGNITY NOT ACHIEVED BY MAN HIMSELF, BUT DIGNITY BECAUSE EACH HUMAN SOUL IS PART OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

↳ DRAWING INSIGHTS FROM THEIR HEBREW, CHRISTIAN, AND CLASSICAL HERITAGES, AND ASSESSING THEIR OWN COLONIAL EXPERIENCES, OUR FOREFATHERS BEGAN TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN IDEAS OF WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE A FREE GOVERNMENT.

↳ SOME OF THEM CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT BECAUSE OF THE DEEP CORRUPTION OF THE OLD WORLD AND BECAUSE OF A CONSPIRACY THEY FELT EXISTED AGAINST AMERICAN LIBERTIES, THEY WERE JUSTIFIED IN SEVERING TIES WITH ENGLAND. ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS THEY WROTE THOSE GREAT AND ABIDING TESTAMENTS OF OUR REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD -- THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

↳ THE TIME IS NOW AT HAND TO REAFFIRM THOSE CONVICTIONS.

OUR FOREFATHERS BELIEVED, IN THE FIRST PLACE, THAT GOD IS SOVERIGN, "KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS," THE SOURCE OF ALL POWER.

↳ BY GOD'S OWN RULE OF LAW, BY GOD'S OWN DEMANDS OF JUSTICE AND MERCY, GOD SETS THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT TO BE TO SERVE THE PUBLIC GOOD AND TO BE LIMITED IN ITS POWERS PRECISELY TO CARRY OUT THIS FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE.

↳ THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT, THE FIRST WRITTEN CONSTITUTION TO GOVERN AMERICANS, BEGAN WITH THE WORDS, "IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.") IT ASSERTED THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THESE DETERMINED PILGRIMS, IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO FOUND A NEW "KINGDOM" OF FREE MEN AND WOMEN, WAS "FOR THE GLORY OF GOD."

TO UNDERSTAND THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT IN THE WORLD OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY OF THOSE GREAT WORDS IN THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES, IMAGINE YOU ARE HEARING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME:

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS -- THAT TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED...."

"WE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION, ESTABLISH JUSTICE, INSURE DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY, PROVIDE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE, PROMOTE THE GENERAL WELFARE, AND SECURE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY TO OURSELVES AND OUR POSTERITY, DO ORDAIN AND ESTABLISH THIS CONSTITUTION FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

THOSE WORDS HIT THE ESTABLISHED WORLD ORDER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LIKE A THUNDER-CLAP!

↳ THE EXCLUSIVE "DIVINE RIGHT" OF KINGS, BY WHICH GOD'S PURPOSES WERE TO BE MEDIATED, WAS REJECTED OUTRIGHT!

↳ NO MORE WOULD THERE BE AN AUTOMATIC CASTE-SYSTEM AMONG THE PEOPLE -- WHERE A CHILD BORN TO A PEASANT FAMILY WOULD AUTOMATICALLY BE A PEASANT THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

↳ NO LONGER WOULD THERE BE A SEPARATE EXISTENCE GIVEN TO THE "STATE" AS SUCH -- INSTEAD, THE PEOPLE WOULD BE THE FINAL ARBITERS OF GOVERNMENT -- ONLY BY THEIR VOLUNTARY SOCIAL CONTRACT AND CONSENT WOULD GOVERNMENT BE INSTITUTED. AND THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD EXIST ONLY TO CARRY OUT SPECIFIC PURPOSES CLEARLY SET FORTH IN A PIECE OF PAPER WHICH WOULD NOW BE THE FINAL LAW OF THE LAND.

next ↪ THESE DOCUMENTS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, APPLIED TO THE SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT THE POSSIBILITIES GOD HAD GRANTED THROUGHOUT HISTORY TO PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIVE IN HIS TRUE FREEDOM. BUT THEY ALSO APPLIED TO THE OPERATIONS OF GOVERNMENT, THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON THE LIMITATIONS AND FAILINGS OF MEN AND WOMEN CREATED AND LIVING IN THE BOND OF HIS LOVE, BUT CHOOSING SO OFTEN TO WANDER IN THE WILDERNESS.

↪ REINHOLD NIEBUHR, THAT GREAT THEOLOGIAN WHO WAS ALSO ONE OF AMERICA'S MAJOR POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS, BORROWED A PASSAGE FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL TO SPEAK OF ALL OF US AS BEING BOTH "THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT AND THE CHILDREN OF DARKNESS." APPLYING THIS FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH TO THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF GOVERNMENT, NIEBUHR SAID:

"MAN'S CAPACITY FOR JUSTICE MAKES DEMOCRACY POSSIBLE; BUT MAN'S INCLINATION TO INJUSTICE MAKES DEMOCRACY NECESSARY."

OUR FOREFATHERS TRIED TO DEVISE A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE, AND AT THE SAME TIME PREVENT THE ABUSE OF POWER OR THE CORRUPTION OF POWER TO SERVE SPECIAL INTERESTS.

THEY DIFFUSED POWER SO THAT INTEREST MIGHT CHECK INTEREST,
↳ THEY SEPARATED THE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT TO KEEP
GOVERNMENT FROM BECOMING ARBITRARY ↳ BUT THEY ALSO TRIED TO
RELATE ALL THESE PARTS EFFECTIVELY SO THAT GOVERNMENT MIGHT
NOT BE INERT, BUT WOULD ACTIVELY HELP PROVIDE FOR THE GENERAL
WELFARE. (Action)

↳ OUR FOREFATHERS ALSO BELIEVED THAT GOD FULFILLS HIS PURPOSES
IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS, AND THAT IT IS PRESUMPTUOUS OF ANY
PERSON OR GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO CLAIM TO KNOW GOD'S WAYS WITH
COMPLETE CERTAINTY. INDEED, THEY BELIEVED THE BEST WAY TO
ASCERTAIN GOD'S WILL IS THROUGH CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
AND THROUGH THE OPENNESS WHICH THIS LIBERTY WOULD PROVIDE
CITIZENS TO DEBATE AND DISCUSS PUBLIC POLICY.

↳ SOME OF OUR FOREFATHERS BELIEVED THAT THE WORST ENGINE
OF TYRANNY WAS A COMBINATION OF POLITICAL POWER SANCTIONED
BY ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

↳ EARLY IN OUR COLONIAL HISTORY ROGER WILLIAMS, WILLIAM
PENN, AND CECIL CALVERT ARGUED FOR A GREATER DEGREE OF TOLERATION.
↳ GRADUALLY, THANKS PARTICULARLY TO THE PERSISTENT EFFORTS OF
BAPTISTS, OUR FOUNDERS ENLARGED GUARANTEES OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

↳ THEY DREW A NEW LINE OF SEPARATION, TO USE JAMES MADISON'S IMAGE, BETWEEN CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS TO DIFFUSE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS POWER, AND YET TO PROVIDE FOR A PROPER INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM.

↳ WE KNOW -- AND NOVELISTS LIKE GORE VIDAL HAVE REMINDED US -- THAT OUR FIRST CITIZENS HAD WARTS AND THAT OUR AMERICAN REVOLUTION HAD ITS SEAMY SIDE. ↳ FOR EXAMPLE, OUR FOUNDERS FOUGHT A REVOLUTION IN THE NAME OF LIBERTY, BUT DENIED FREEDOM TO SLAVES. ↳ THEY SOUGHT TO DIFFUSE POWER AND CHECK IT, YET THEY DENIED IT ALTOGETHER TO WOMEN, INDIANS, BLACKS, AND OTHERS.

↳ I DO NOT MINIMIZE THEIR FAILURES FOR ONE MOMENT, BUT IT IS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR GREAT AFFIRMATIONS THAT WE HAVE BEEN PRODDED TO LIVE UP TO THEIR EARLY PROMISES ABOUT EQUALITY, AND LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

↳ JOHN F. KENNEDY REMINDED US IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS OF OUR FOREFATHERS ARE STILL AT ISSUE, AND HE ECHOED THEIR BELIEF "THAT THE RIGHTS OF MAN COME NOT FROM THE GENEROSITY OF THE STATE, BUT FROM THE HAND OF GOD."

II

↳ HERE IS THE TIME AND PLACE WE SHOULD RECALL SOME OF THE GREAT MOVEMENTS THROUGH WHICH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES HAVE HELPED TO SHAPE THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION. ↳ OUR HISTORY AS A PEOPLE HAS BEEN ONE OF REMARKABLE OPENNESS, OF CONSTANT DEBATE ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY, AND OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURE. ↳ WE SHOULD RECALL AT THIS TIME THAT IT HAS OFTEN BEEN A CASE OF CHRISTIAN STRUGGLING AGAINST CHRISTIAN TO DETERMINE WHAT MIGHT AND WHAT MIGHT NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

↳ EARLY IN OUR NATIONAL HISTORY, MANY AMERICANS WANTED TO SHOW GOD'S LOVE IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR OWN LIVES, TO EXPRESS THAT LOVE IN WHAT THEY CALLED "BENEVOLENCE," AND ENGAGE IN THE REFORM OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. PRODDED IN CAUSES OFTEN STIMULATED BY THE GENTLE QUAKERS, THEY ORGANIZED MANY REFORMING SOCIETIES.

THEY FORMED SOCIETIES TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT MORAL CONCERN, TO PERSUADE PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR ATTITUDES AND LIFE-STYLES, AND TO CHANGE PUBLIC POLICIES.

THEY ORGANIZED SOCIETIES:

-- TO TRAIN CHILDREN FOR CITIZENSHIP AND TO CHAMPION PUBLIC EDUCATION;

-- TO ALLEVIATE THE CONDITIONS OF THE POOR AND THE DESTITUTE;

-- TO EASE THE ENTRY PROBLEMS OF THE THOUSANDS OF IMMIGRANTS COMING TO THESE SHORES;

-- TO ALLEVIATE THE CONDITION OF THE SICK, THE ORPHAN, THE PRISONER, THE EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED;

-- TO ADDRESS THE SUFFERINGS OF DISPLACED INDIAN TRIBES;

-- TO STOP THE SENSELESS PRACTICE OF DUELLING, AND TO CHANGE THE DRINKING HABITS OF AMERICANS;

-- AND, TO DO AWAY WITH THE SLAVE TRADE AND TO OUTLAW SLAVERY ITSELF.

IT WAS, IN FACT, A MORAL LOGJAM OF NATIONAL CONSCIENCE THAT ERUPTED IN OUR CIVIL WAR AND OUR INDIAN WARS, FROM WHICH WE STILL BEAR THE SCARS.

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, WE FACED THE PROBLEM OF A RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION AND A RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIETY. RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED PEOPLE -- WASHINGTON GLADDEN, WALTER RAUSCHENBUSH, FRANCES WILLARD, JOHN AUGUSTINE RYAN -- SAW PEOPLE LIVING IN THE MISERY CAUSED BY THE NEW REVOLUTION IN OUR ECONOMIC LIFE AND THE FEARFUL COST IN HUMAN LIFE AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

↳ AFFIRMING THE "FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN,"
AS THEY OFTEN PUT IT, THEY FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE.

THEY PREACHED, THEY LECTURED, THEY WROTE, THEY ORGANIZED IN ORDER TO GAIN A LIVING WAGE FOR WORKERS, TO STOP THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN AND CHILD LABOR, TO RESTRICT WORKING HOURS, TO IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS AND MAKE THEM SAFER, AND TO ESTABLISH COMPENSATION FOR DISABILITY AND ILLNESS.

WE HAVE NOT RESOLVED ALL OF OUR INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS, AND THEY HAVE BEEN COMPLICATED FURTHER BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MORE RECENT YEARS. BUT THESE COMPLEX DEMANDS WERE FORESEEN IN THE 1930'S BY A MOVEMENT CALLED "CHRISTIAN REALISM", AND LED BY MY GOOD FRIEND AND TEACHER OF US ALL, REINHOLD NIEBUHR.

↳ NIEBUHR SAW THAT WE WERE NOT FACING UP TO HARD REALITIES,
↳ HE WARNED US OF A GROWING AND DANGEROUS GAP BETWEEN ENORMOUS WEALTH AND PERVASIVE POVERTY IN THIS COUNTRY AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

↳ NIEBUHR CALLED US TO RECONSIDER SOME OF THE BASIC INSIGHTS OF PERSONS LIKE JAMES MADISON WHO KNEW THE NECESSITY OF CHECKING POWER WITH POWER. ↳ LIBERTY MUST BE THE CONDITION OF ORDER. JUSTICE MUST BE THE CRITERION OF LAW. ↳ BOTH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE, ACCORDING TO NIEBUHR, ARE ESSENTIAL TO DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY, THE GENERAL WELFARE, AND IN THE SHORT AND LONG RUN, TO THE DEFENSE OF THE NATION'S VITAL INTERESTS.

NIEBUHR TAUGHT US BY HIS CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION, BY HIS COGENT SOCIAL CRITICISM AND DECISIVENESS, AND BY HIS BELIEF THAT OUR QUEST FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD MUST BE SALTED AND LEAVENED BY FORGIVENESS AND THE WILLINGNESS ALWAYS TO BEGIN AGAIN IN OUR QUEST. HE LED US IN A NEW QUEST FOR EQUALITY, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS WE HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH MANY OTHER PROBLEMS: THE CONTINUED DENIAL OF CIVIL RIGHTS TO MINORITY GROUPS; THE POLLUTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT; THE NEED TO DEVELOP AND CONSERVE ENERGY RESOURCES; AND A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP.

~~+~~
OUR PEOPLE CONFRONT CONSTANTLY RISING COSTS OF HEALTH CARE.

YOUNG FAMILIES CANNOT FIND HOMES OR AFFORD MORTGAGES.
MILLIONS OF AMERICAN WORKERS DESPERATELY HUNT FOR JOBS; WHILE MILLIONS OF OUR OLDER CITIZENS STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET ON FIXED INCOMES IN A TIME OF CONTINUING INFLATION.

TOO OFTEN, OUR CITIES ARE UNABLE TO AFFORD THE COST OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC SERVICES AND ARE LEFT WITH AN INEVITABILITY OF DECLINE AND DECAY.

THE LEVEL OF VIOLENT CRIMES AND CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY IS A MATTER OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO ALL OUR PEOPLE,

TOO MANY FAMILY FARMS ARE GOING UNDER DUE TO HIGH COSTS; WHILE CONSUMERS CONFRONT RISING FOOD PRICES,

THE LIST COULD GO ON,

BUT THE POINT OF ALL THIS IS THAT TODAY, PERHAPS AS NEVER BEFORE, THERE ARE ISSUES THAT CHALLENGE OUR CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP, THAT DEMAND THE BEST THAT IS IN US IN HARD THINKING AND DECISIVE ACTION,

BUT WE HAVE NOT BEEN LEFT ALONE IN THIS TASK. WE ARE SURROUNDED BY A "GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES" WHO CALL UPON US TO CONTINUE THE PURSUIT OF THE PUBLIC GOOD IN FAITH AND LOVE AND HOPE, AND WITH DETERMINATION,

III

ONE OF THOSE WITNESSES WAS THAT GREAT BAPTIST PREACHER, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BACK IN 1963, HE STOOD AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AND EXPRESSED A DREAM HE HAD FOR AMERICA -- A DREAM OF A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN,

IT IS A DREAM WE ALL SHARE. IT IS A DREAM THAT STILL BECKONS,

BUT NOW WE ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER THAT DREAM IN GLOBAL TERMS, AS DR. KING DID. WE TRULY ARE LIVING IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD,

I TELL THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN MY HOME STATE OF MINNESOTA THAT WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MIDDLE EAST MAY BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS IN THE MIDDLE WEST -- IN TERMS OF THEIR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES. AND CORRESPONDINGLY, WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MIDDLE WEST, IN THE PRODUCTION OF FOOD AND FIBER, WILL HAVE WORLDWIDE REPERCUSSIONS BECAUSE AMERICA IS A MAJOR FOOD PRODUCER FOR THE WORLD.

↳ TODAY, THE WORLD ENVELOPS US LIKE A TIDAL WAVE,

WE ARE EXPOSED, THROUGH NEWSCASTS AND TELEVISION, TO A RAPID BOMBARDMENT OF CHANGE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE ADVENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONRY HAS DRASTICALLY CHANGED THE WORLD AND THE WAY WE LOOK AT THE WORLD.

MOREOVER, THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY HAS BROUGHT FORTH UNPRECEDENTED PROBLEMS. NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE HAD RECESSION AND INFLATION SIMULTANEOUSLY, NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. YET NOW IT IS A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON.

IN THE MIDST OF THIS CHANGE, THE OLD SOLUTIONS NO LONGER APPLY. DOMESTIC REMEDIES NO LONGER ARE SUITABLE FOR AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD ECONOMY, AND THE OLD FORMULAS NO LONGER FIT THE FACTS.

OUR OWN PROSPERITY IN AMERICA HAS BROUGHT CHANGE. WE ARE FORCED TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT PEOPLE LIVING IN DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM CAN MAINTAIN SELF-DISCIPLINE AND HIGH MORAL STANDARDS IN THE MIDST OF AFFLUENCE AND ABUNDANCE -- WHETHER SELF-RESTRAINT, PRUDENCE, AND A REASONABLE DEGREE OF MORAL INTEGRITY, ARE ONLY DEPENDENT UPON TIMES OF TROUBLE, DEPRESSION, OR WAR.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE GROWN ENORMOUSLY SINCE THE TWO WORLD WARS, AND WE ARE STILL ASSESSING OUR ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS AFTER OUR TRAGIC INVOLVEMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

BUT IN WORKING OUT THE NEW DEMANDS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FREE WORLD -- IN DOING RIGHTLY THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR A BETTER PEACE -- WE AGAIN ARE GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES AND HISTORY OF OUR RELIGIOUS TRADITION.

VERY EARLY IN OUR HISTORY THERE WERE PEOPLE, MOTIVATED BY GOD'S LOVE AND THEIR DESIRE TO SHOW HIS "BENEVOLENCE" IN THEIR LIVES, WHO HAD A DEEP CONCERN ABOUT PEACE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY WAS ORGANIZED IN THE EARLY PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. IT PROMOTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORLD COURT AND A WORLD ASSEMBLY TO DEAL WITH THE AFFAIRS OF NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD -- IT WAS FAR AHEAD OF ITS TIME.

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WERE PRIMARY SUPPORTERS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS. IN THE MIDST OF WORLD WAR II, THE COMMISSION ON A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE, SPONSORED BY THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, AND LED BY A DEDICATED LAYMAN, JOHN FOSTER DULLES, BEGAN THE VITAL TASK OF ALERTING THE PUBLIC TO THE COMPLEX DEMANDS OF BUILDING A BETTER WORLD OUT OF THE ASHES OF A DEVASTATING WORLD CONFLAGRATION.

SOME TWO DECADES LATER, CHALLENGED BY THE DRAMATIC ENCYCLICAL OF POPE JOHN XXIII, THE HISTORIC PACEM IN TERRIS WORLD CONFERENCE WAS HELD.

BUT TODAY, AS WELL, CHRISTIAN CITIZENS MUST GIVE LEADERSHIP IN DEALING WITH OUR WORLDWIDE PROBLEMS.

ONE OF THE THINGS RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES MAY DO IS TO WARN US ALL OF OUR PRETENSIONS AND TO PRICK OUR INFLATED SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

AGAIN REFERRING TO REINHOLD NIEBUHR, IN HIS REMARKABLE LITTLE BOOK, THE IRONY OF AMERICAN HISTORY, HE SHOWED HOW WE HAVE TENDED TO TAKE CREDIT FOR OUR GREATNESS, WHEN IN FACT MUCH OF IT IS DUE TO OUR FORTUNATE PHYSICAL CIRCUMSTANCE. HE SHOWED HOW, IN PURSUIT OF "SAFETY AND HAPPINESS," WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE OPPOSITE. DESPITE AN ABUNDANCE OF CREATURELY COMFORTS, WE HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY UNHAPPY; DESPITE OUR GREAT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POWER, WE HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY UNSAFE.

UNSAFE.

WERE HE ALIVE TODAY, HE WOULD PROBABLY POINT OUT ANOTHER IRONY IN OUR SITUATION. PRECISELY IN RESPONSE TO THE IDEALS PROCLAIMED BY THE UNITED STATES -- IDEALS OF AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS, AND OF THE RIGHTS OF FREE PEOPLE IN INDEPENDENCE -- THE NEWLY FORMED NATIONS OF THE THIRD WORLD, REPRESENTING A MAJOR PART OF THE EARTH'S PEOPLE, HAVE CLAIMED THEIR PLACE ALONG SIDE US IN INTERNATIONAL COUNCILS AND IN WORLD TRADE.

THEIR INTENSE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM, EQUAL TO OUR OWN REVOLUTIONARY FERVOR OF 200 YEARS AGO, HAS OFTEN PLACED THEM IN DISAGREEMENT WITH AMERICA'S VIEW OF APPROPRIATE COURSES OF ACTION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

HAVING LEARNED WELL THE LESSONS OF RESOURCE EXPLOITATION BY THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS, THEY NOW EMPLOY OUR CRITICAL NEED OF NATURAL RESOURCES -- WHETHER OIL, SCARCE MINERALS, OR AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES UNIQUE TO THEIR CLIMATE -- AS LEVERAGE TO BARGAIN FOR AN EQUAL PLACE IN THE SUN OF WORLD TRADE, WHICH IS CRUCIAL TO THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THESE PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS CHALLENGE US TO AVOID THE REFLEX ACTION OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION. THEY COUNSEL US TO LEARN THAT OUR GREAT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POWER, UNPARALLELED IN HISTORY, DOES HAVE ITS LIMITS. THEY SHOULD TEACH US THAT THIS POWER NOW MUST BE EXERCISED WITH RESTRAINT AND WISDOM, AS WELL AS WITH CLEAR-SIGHTED FIRMNESS.

AND, THEY REMIND US THAT TOO OFTEN WE HAVE BEEN A WORLD POWER WITH A HALF-WORLD KNOWLEDGE -- A LESSON THAT THE AGONIZING EXPERIENCE OF OUR MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICTS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA OUGHT TO HAVE SEARED INTO OUR MINDS AND CONSCIENCES.

BUT THE FUNDAMENTAL LESSON WE MUST LEARN AGAIN -- THE LESSON WHICH OUR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES NEVER MUST LET US FORGET -- IS THAT WE CANNOT, IN THE FACE OF ALL THESE COMPLEX CHALLENGES AND SEEMING FRUSTRATIONS, RETREAT FROM OUR GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

WE HAVE "SOUL-SIZE" PROBLEMS ON OUR HANDS WHICH CALL FOR A RE-EVALUATION OF THE WAY IN WHICH WE LIVE AS AMERICANS, WHICH CALL FOR US TO REEXAMINE AND REORDER OUR PRIORITIES, AND WHICH CALL UPON US TO MAKE SACRIFICES FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE.

OF COURSE, WE CANNOT DO ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE WORLD, ALONE. WE MUST IN GOOD FAITH MAKE PROGRESS WITH OTHER NATIONS IN CONTROLLING AND REDUCING WORLD ARMAMENTS AND THE WORLD ARMS RACE. WE MUST IN GOOD FAITH MAKE PROGRESS IN DEALING WITH OUR REAL ENEMIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD: ILLITERACY, DISEASE, POVERTY, HUNGER, THE FEAR OF WAR, THE VIOLATION OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS.

WE MUST EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT WITH BETTER WAYS BY WHICH WE CAN USE OUR VAST HUMAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING OUR FOOD, TO HELP PEOPLE, TO REDUCE THE TENSIONS THAT MAKE FOR CONFLICT, AND, HOPEFULLY, TO PRODUCE A NEW ERA OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND COOPERATIVE EFFORT AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

BUT WE CANNOT BEGIN TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US UNLESS THERE IS A REBIRTH OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP -- A CITIZENSHIP OWING ITS ALLEGIANCE TO THE FINAL AUTHORITY OF FAITH AND LOVE; AND A CITIZENSHIP THAT UNITES US WITH ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH.

"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD" -- CAN WE DO ANYTHING LESS?

IV

THERE IS ONE LAST THING WHICH I CONSIDER AN ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF CITIZENSHIP, THAT IS: HOPE.

I SENSE THERE IS MUCH CYNICISM, SOME DESPERATION AND SOME DESPAIR, ABROAD IN THE LAND TODAY.

IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT DURING OUR BICENTENNIAL WE SHOULD LOOK BACKWARD, HOPEFULLY TO LEARN FROM THE PAST, BUT I BELIEVE THAT OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE IS TO LOOK FORWARD.

WE LIVE BY FAITH AND LOVE, WE ALSO LIVE BY HOPE, WE CANNOT PRESUME THAT WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND WILL TO REACH THE PROMISED LAND -- TO RESOLVE ALL OF OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS -- OVERNIGHT.

BUT I AM AN OPTIMIST, AND I REFUSE TO BE INTIMIDATED BY THE SIZE OF OUR PROBLEMS OR BY THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING MISTAKES, OR TO GIVE UP BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE THE FINAL ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEMS, I REFUSE TO BE A CYNIC AND DESPAIR.

I BELIEVE WE ARE ON A GREAT PILGRIMAGE TOWARD MOLDING A BETTER NATION AND WORLD.

OUR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WELL UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THIS PILGRIMAGE.

THE PARISH PRIEST, THE CIRCUIT RIDER, THE LAY PREACHER WERE TO BE FOUND WHEREVER THE WAGONS HAD HALTED TO FORM A COMMUNITY ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER IN THE LAST CENTURY. OUR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WERE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT OF AMERICA, STRENGTHENING ITS MORAL FIBER, SEARCHING FOR THE WAYS OF GOD WITH MEN IN A NEW LAND AND A TOTALLY NEW SITUATION.

AND IT IS THAT SAME PIONEER SPIRIT TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED TODAY --NOT TO CROSS A GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARY, BUT TO PRESS FORWARD TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES, TO GRASP HOLD OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES, WITH THE SAME DETERMINATION.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT SAID:

"THE ONLY LIMIT TO OUR REALIZATION OF TOMORROW WILL BE OUR DOUBTS OF TODAY. LET US MOVE FORWARD WITH A STRONG AND ACTIVE FAITH . . . I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ERA OF THE PIONEER IS AT AN END. I ONLY BELIEVE THAT THE AREA FOR PIONEERING HAS CHANGED. THE COUNTRY NEEDS BOLD, PERSISTENT EXPERIMENTATION. . ."

WE ARE NOW TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD AS A PEOPLE. IN CELEBRATING OUR BIRTHDAY IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR WE SHALL PROBABLY BE ENGAGED IN SOME LOCAL AND NATIONAL BIRTHDAY CEREMONIES AND PARTIES, BUT WE WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER THE WORDS OF ADLAI STEVENSON IN THE CONCLUSION OF HIS BOOK, CALL TO GREATNESS:

"NOW AT MATURITY WE SHOULDER THE HEAVIEST BURDENS OF GREATNESS, FOR IN THE LAST ANALYSIS THE EPIC STRUGGLE FOR OUR CIVILIZATION, FOR GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED, WILL BE DETERMINED BY WHAT AMERICANS ARE CAPABLE OF. IN BEARING BURDENS, IN ENNOBLING NEW DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP, IS THE GREATNESS OF MEN AND NATIONS MEASURED, NOT IN POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCES."

LONG BEFORE STEVENSON SPOKE THESE WORDS, THE PROPHET MICAH WARNED ABOUT POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE AND CEREMONY, SIGNIFYING NOTHING. HIS WORDS ARE ENGRAVED ON THE WALLS OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS FOR ALL OF US TO READ THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, AND AS A REMINDER OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP:

"WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU, BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD."

(MICAH 6:8)

AN OLD WELSH HYMN, FULL OF THE THUNDER AND DETERMINATION OF SOLDIERS MARCHING INTO COMBAT, PUTS THE CASE WELL IN A VERSE THAT READS:

"WE ARE LIVING, WE ARE DWELLING
IN A GRAND AND AWFUL TIME,
IN AN AGE ON AGES TELLING,
TO BE LIVING IS SUBLIME."

THIS IS AN AGE THAT WILL DETERMINE THE COURSE OF THE FUTURE, FOR BETTER OR WORSE,

WE MUST MAKE THE MOST OF THE TIME, FOR THE HOUR IS LATE. GOD WILLING, THE PROMISE OF AMERICA WILL BECOME A REALITY FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE, AND THE HOPE FOR A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE IN A WORLD OF PEACE.

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