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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS. ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE,
WINOOSKI, VERMONT, 3 P.M. SUNDAY,
JUNE 8, 1969.

*from Fatherhood Bishop
Reverend Pres*

MOST REVEREND CLERGY, FACULTY MEMBERS,
HONORED GUESTS, PARENTS AND GRADUATING
SENIORS OF THIS OUTSTANDING INSTITUTION OF
LEARNING:

*while at job
SKIING*

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE WITH YOU HERE
IN THE EXHILARATING ATMOSPHERE OF THE GREEN
MOUNTAIN STATE AND ONE OF VERMONT'S FINEST
COLLEGES.

I AM MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE HONOR
YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON ME. I HOPE I AM
DESERVING OF IT. AND I PRAY I MAY LIVE THE
REST OF MY DAYS IN KEEPING WITH YOUR
CONFIDENCE.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE SPOKEN
TO AN ALL-MALE GRADUATING CLASS, ~~AND I FIND~~



~~THE EXPERIENCE MOST INTERESTING.~~ I WOULD
GUESS THAT THE LACK OF FEMININE DISTRACTION
ON CAMPUS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH
ST. MICHAEL'S REPUTATION FOR SCHOLASTIC
EXCELLENCE.

I HAVE A SON IN COLLEGE, AND I FIND
THAT WHEN HE SOMETIMES LOOKS TIRED AND
PEAKED HE IS JUST SUFFERING FROM A CO-ED IN
THE HEAD.


I SENSE AN INDEPENDENCE OF SPIRIT
AT ST. MICHAEL'S. THIS REMINDS ME THAT
ALTHOUGH MASSACHUSETTS ANNEXED MAINE IN
1652/AND IT TOOK A BRITISH ROYAL COMMISSION
TO SEPARATE NEW HAMPSHIRE FROM MASSACHUSETTS
IN 1680, VERMONTERS MANAGED TO FIGHT OFF
TERRITORIAL CLAIMS BY BOTH NEW YORK AND
NEW HAMPSHIRE IN THE MIDDLE 1700's. A LOT OF
PEOPLE THINK THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS GOT
TOGETHER TO FIGHT THE BRITISH BUT THE TRUTH
IS THEY FIRST COMBINED FORCES TO PROTECT

VERMONT FROM THE COLONY OF NEW YORK.

BUT I DID NOT COME TO VERMONT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS PROUD STATE. THE POINT I MAKE IS THAT AMERICA TODAY DESPERATELY NEEDS THE KIND OF PIONEER VERMONT SPIRIT AND THE RUGGED COURAGE THAT TRIUMPHED OVER THE BRITISH AND LAND-GRABBING COLONIAL NEIGHBORS AS WELL.

AMERICA NEEDS, TOO, THE KIND OF MORAL COURAGE AND DEVOTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS THAT PROMPTED VERMONT TO BECOME THE FIRST STATE TO END SLAVERY AND TO ENACT UNIVERSAL MALE SUFFRAGE WITHOUT PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS.

I AM FOND OF READING EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT TELLS US MUCH THAT IS INSTRUCTIVE TODAY. WE CAN LEARN MUCH FROM IT -- FROM THE SUFFERING THE EARLY AMERICAN SETTLERS ENDURED, FROM THEIR INCREDIBLE STRUGGLES SIMPLY TO SURVIVE AND TO WORSHIP GOD AS FREE MEN.



THOSE WERE INCREDIBLE TIMES. BUT
SO TOO IS THE ERA IN WHICH WE ARE LIVING.

AMERICANS ARE LIVING IN AN AGE WHICH
IS IN ITSELF A FANTASTIC PARADOX. IT IS THE
MOST ADVANCED OF ERAS, BOTH TECHNOLOGICALLY
AND IN TERMS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS, AND YET IT
IS STAINED BY UNRESTRAINED SAVAGERY,/
WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE,/OFFICIAL CORRUPTION
AND REVOLTING LICENTIOUSNESS. IT IS AN
AGE WHICH HAS PRODUCED MARVELS IN MEDICINE
AND IN SPACE EXPLORATION -- AND ALSO
FIENDISH WAR MACHINES CAPABLE OF DESTROYING
ALL OF MANKIND.

IF I MAY DEPART FROM THE SERIOUS
FOR JUST A MOMENT, PERHAPS IT IS SMALL
WONDER THAT MANY AMERICANS ARE UNHAPPY WITH
OUR SYSTEM TODAY. AFTER ALL, WHEN THE
FIRST SETTLERS CAME TO THIS COUNTRY THERE
WAS NO NATIONAL DEBT AND THERE WERE NO
TAXES. THE INDIANS WERE RUNNING THE COUNTRY,

AND THEY MADE THE WOMEN DO ALL THE WORK.
HOW COULD ANYONE IMPROVE ON A SYSTEM LIKE
THAT?

Howlers,
FEW OF US WOULD WANT TO GO BACK TO
LIVING AS THE PIONEERS DID, CLEARING THE
LAND TO GROW A FEW CROPS AND SHOOTING GAME
TO PUT SOME MEAT ON THE TABLE.

YET THE TRUTH IS EVIDENT THAT MAN
IS TOUGHENED BY SEVERE HARDSHIP AND HIS
CHARACTER ANNEALED TO THE STRENGTH OF STEEL
IN THE FIRES OF ADVERSITY. TODAY MANY OF US
FIND LIFE TOO EASY.

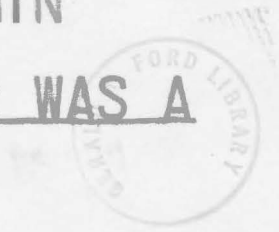
THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF TODAY
HAVE BEEN SPARED MUCH OF THE HARDSHIP AND
ADVERSITY OF THE PAST. *You may disagree AND, I respect your views. Disagree without being disagreeable*
FOR INSTANCE, THEY
KNOW NOTHING OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION BUT
WHAT THEY HAVE READ IN HISTORY BOOKS. IT IS
INCONCEIVABLE TO THEM THAT A WHOLE
GENERATION OF AMERICANS COULD HAVE GRUBBED
AROUND FOR SCRAPS OF FOOD / OR WAITED IN LINE

AT SOUP KITCHENS AND RELIEF WAREHOUSES.

I WORKED PART-TIME IN HIGH SCHOOL,
AND I WORKED MY WAY THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN AND YALE LAW SCHOOL. I AM NOT
COMPLAINING, AND I AM ^{laughing or} NOT PREACHING. I AM
SIMPLY TRYING TO UNDERSTAND TODAY'S YOUNG
PEOPLE. AND TO DO THAT I HAVE TO LOOK AT
THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN AND ASK MYSELF HOW
IT IS DIFFERENT FROM MINE.

THIS IS THE AGE OF AFFLUENCE. OUR
^{UNDERSTANDABLY} PEOPLE ARE APPALLED AT POVERTY IN THE MIDST
OF PLENTY. IN MY YOUTH EVEN MEN WITH
GREAT TALENT AND ABILITY WERE OUT OF WORK,
AND ONE OF THE POPULAR SONGS OF THE TIME
WAS "BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME."
*this family
really
suffered*

UNTIL VIETNAM, THE YOUNG MAN AND
WOMAN OF TODAY KNEW NOTHING OF WAR. MANY
OF THEM OBVIOUSLY AGREE WITH BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN WHEN HE SAID, "THERE NEVER WAS A
GOOD WAR OR A BAD PEACE."



MY GENERATION FOR FOUR YEARS FOUGHT
THE FIRST TRULY GLOBAL WAR IN HISTORY TO
CLEANSE THE WORLD OF NAZIISM AND FASCISM
AND SAW AMERICA PREVENT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER
IN SOUTH KOREA.

TODAY'S PACIFISTS WRAP THEMSELVES
IN ROBES OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. DO THEY
THINK THEY ARE ALONE IN HATING WAR? ANYONE
WHO LOVES WAR IS INSANE.

IT WAS A GREAT MILITARY MAN, GEN.
WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN, WHO SAID: "YOU
CANNOT QUALIFY WAR IN HARsher TERMS THAN
I WILL. WAR IS CRUELTY, AND YOU CANNOT
REFINE IT. WAR IS HELL." BUT GEN. SHERMAN
ALSO SAID -- AND THIS IS IMPORTANT -- "THE
LEGITIMATE OBJECT OF WAR IS A MORE PERFECT
PEACE."

IS NOTHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR??

SOME YOUNG PEOPLE SNEER AT
PATRIOTISM AND WHAT MEN LIKE ME CALL



AMERICANISM. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE ALL OF OUR CITIZENS REDEDICATE THEMSELVES TO THE AMERICANISM DESCRIBED BY PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT WHEN HE SAID: "AMERICANISM MEANS THE VIRTUES OF COURAGE, HONOR, JUSTICE, TRUTH, SINCERITY AND HARDIHOOD -- THE VIRTUES THAT MADE AMERICA."

AMERICANS OF MY GENERATION LOOK AT YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO WAVE THE VIET CONG FLAG, THROW FIRE BOMBS, ASSAULT DEANS AND FACULTY MEMBERS IN OUR SCHOOLS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, COMMIT PUBLIC FORNICATION, AND SHOUT AND WRITE OBSCENITIES AND WE ASK OURSELVES: WHAT DO THEY WANT? WHO ARE THEY? WHAT HAS AMERICA SPAWNED? AND WHY??

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE SCREAM THAT AMERICA IS RACIST, CAPITALISTIC AND IMPERIALISTIC AND THE SYSTEM MUST BE TORN DOWN.

THERE ARE ANSWERS FOR THESE CHARGES,

BUT HOW DO YOU REPLY WHEN RADICAL LEADERS SHOUT YOU DOWN OR ROUGH YOU UP AND MOUTH MEANINGLESS PHRASES BORROWED FROM MARXIST-LENINIST AND MAOIST WRITINGS?

WE HAVE GREAT NEED FOR A DIALOGUE IN THIS COUNTRY -- A QUIET REASONED DIALOGUE DEALING WITH THE VIETNAM WAR, INJUSTICE TO NEGROES, CORRUPTION, MATERIALISM AND THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF LIFE.

THIS KIND OF DIALOGUE GOES TO THE BASIC PURPOSES OF A UNIVERSITY -- A PLACE WHERE FACULTY AND STUDENTS ENGAGE IN AN UNFETTERED SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND NEW ANSWERS TO DEPRESSING PROBLEMS.

BUT HOW CAN YOU HAVE A DIALOGUE WHEN RADICAL LEADERS LAUNCH VIOLENT ATTACKS UPON THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF WITH THE AVOWED OBJECTIVE OF DESTROYING WHAT THEY CALL "THE ESTABLISHMENT?"

WHAT IS "THE ESTABLISHMENT?" THE



ESTABLISHMENT IS YOU AND ME AND EVERYTHING
THAT HAS GONE INTO THE BUILDING OF AMERICA.
IT IS OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.
IMPERFECT AS IT IS, I BELIEVE IT IS THE BEST
FORM OF GOVERNMENT EVER DEvised. Churchill

I AM FULLY AWARE THAT THERE IS A
LACK OF ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUNG
PEOPLE AND THE OVER-30 GENERATION TODAY -- A
LACK OF SUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
STUDENTS AND FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION EVEN
AT PEACEFUL COLLEGES SUCH AS ST. MICHAEL'S.
COMMUNICATION WE NEED -- AND NEED DESPERATELY.

BUT VIOLENCE IS NOT THE ANSWER.
SHUTTING DOWN OUR GREAT UNIVERSITIES IS NOT
THE ANSWER. BLACK SEPARATISM IS NOT THE
ANSWER. DESTROYING COLLEGE ADMISSION
REQUIREMENTS SO THAT OUR COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES BECOME REMEDIAL INSTITUTIONS
IS NOT THE ANSWER.

WE DON'T SOLVE PROBLEMS BY RUNNING

AWAY FROM THEM OR ABANDONING OUR VALUES OR
DEGRADING OURSELVES WITH COMPLETELY
UNINHIBITED LIFE STYLES.

THE PROBLEMS TODAY ARE ESSENTIALLY
THE SAME FOR ALL AMERICANS. THEY ARE NOT
EASY PROBLEMS AND THERE ARE NO EASY
SOLUTIONS.

VIETNAM. A TRAGIC WAR. I DON'T
BELIEVE IT PROVED THAT AMERICA WAS WRONG IN
SEEKING TO THWART COMMUNIST AGGRESSION. I
BELIEVE IT DID PROVE THAT OUR FOREIGN POLICY
IN RELATION TO COMMUNIST EXPANSIONIST PROBES
SHOULD BE ONE OF SELECTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND
OF CAREFULLY REASONED JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER
POSSIBLY MINIMAL RESULTS WOULD JUSTIFY THE
INVESTMENT *in casualties + dollars.*

I ALSO BELIEVE THAT FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN FOUR YEARS THERE IS REAL HOPE FOR
PEACE IN VIETNAM.

RACISM. IT IS NOW A TWO-EDGED



SWORD. GUILT FEELINGS SERVE NO USEFUL
PURPOSE. WE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS.
THE ONLY ULTIMATE ANSWER IS TO MAKE A LIVING
TRUTH OF THE WORDS THAT MAKE THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE A GLOWING
TESTIMONIAL TO MAN'S ASPIRATIONS: "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."

THE FRAMERS OF THE DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE WERE NOT TALKING ABOUT BLACK
MEN. SLAVERY WAS PRACTICED IN THE UNITED
STATES AT THE TIME. BUT WE MUST APPLY THEIR
WORDS IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY'S WORLD AND
CLOTHE THEM WITH THE TRUTH THAT ALL MEN
ARE EQUAL IN THE EYES OF GOD.

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED HOW OFTEN
THE DRAFTERS OF THE DECLARATION OF



INDEPENDENCE REFERRED TO THE DEITY?

THEY BEGAN BY STATING: "WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS, IT BECOMES NECESSARY FOR ONE PEOPLE TO DISSOLVE THE POLITICAL BONDS WHICH HAVE CONNECTED THEM WITH ANOTHER, AND TO ASSUME AMONG THE POWERS OF THE EARTH THE SEPARATE AND EQUAL STATION TO WHICH THE LAWS OF NATURE AND OF NATURE'S GOD ENTITLE THEM, A DECENT RESPECT TO THE OPINIONS OF MANKIND REQUIRES THAT THEY SHOULD DECLARE THE CAUSES WHICH IMPEL THEM TO THE SEPARATION."

AND AFTER ASCRIBING TO THE CREATOR THE ENDOWING OF MEN WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THE DRAFTERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE CONCLUDED THEIR STATEMENT OF THE CAUSES OF SEPARATION FROM ENGLAND BY PROCLAIMING "A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE."

IN EVERY AGE, IN EVERY TIME AND IN EVERY CLIME THERE ARE DOOMSDAY SAYERS WHO

RUN ABOUT PREDICTING THE END OF THE WORLD.

MOST PEOPLE JUST SMILE TOLERANTLY, SHAKE THEIR HEADS A BIT AND SAY TO THEMSELVES, "POOR FELLOW."

ONE OF THE RECENT POPULAR SONG HITS IS A CALYPSO TUNE ABOUT CALIFORNIA SLIDING INTO THE SEA. I THINK IT HAS A DEEPER MEANING.

MANY MEMBERS OF THE OLDER GENERATION TODAY ARE COMPARING THE ABANDONMENT OF INHIBITIONS, THE EXCESSIVE EMPHASIS ON SEX / AND THE GENERAL DECLINE IN MORALS IN THE UNITED STATES TO THE BIBLICAL STORIES ABOUT SODOM AND GOMORRAH AND TO THE FALL OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME.

I CAN UNDERSTAND SUCH FEELINGS. VALUES CHANGE, YES, BUT CERTAIN TRUTHS ARE IMMUTABLE. AND WE LIVE TODAY IN AN AGE WHEN THE NEW BARBARIANS SEEK TO DESTROY TRUTH, AND THE PORNOGRAPHY PEDDLERS ARE

EVERLASTINGLY ENGAGED IN PURSUIT OF THE
FAST BUCK.

THERE ARE TRUTHS THAT ARE NOT
DEBATABLE -- THE TRUTHS THAT ARE LAID DOWN
IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS -- THE TRUTHS THAT
GIVE RISE TO CODES OF ETHICS AMONG CIVILIZED
PEOPLES -- THE TRUTHS THAT CAUSE MEN TO
SPEAK OF INTEGRITY, HONOR, AND VIRTUE.

WHEN MEN ABANDON THESE TRUTHS, THEY
LOSE ALL SENSE OF VALUE. THEY LIVE A LIFE
IN DEATH. THEIR LIVES ARE A WASTE, AND THEY
CARRY HELL AROUND WITH THEM IN THEIR HEARTS.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SAID: "THREE
THINGS ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SALVATION OF
MAN. TO KNOW WHAT HE OUGHT TO BELIEVE; TO
KNOW WHAT HE OUGHT TO DESIRE; AND TO KNOW
WHAT HE OUGHT TO DO."

TODAY AMERICA IS SHAKEN BY DOUBTS
ABOUT THE MEANING OF EDUCATION, ABOUT THE
IDEALS OF THE COLLEGE GENERATION, AND INDEED

ABOUT THE STABILITY OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

COLLEGE STUDENTS, ADULTS OVER 30,
ALL OF US WHO STILL ENGAGE IN THE USE OF
REASON SHOULD LOOK AT OUR LIVES AND AT
AMERICA AS A NATION AND ASK: WHAT ARE WE?
WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?
AND WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET THERE?

WE ARE LIVING IN THE MIDST OF
REVOLUTION IN AMERICA TODAY -- NOT ONE
REVOLUTION BUT MANY. AT THE CENTER OF ONE
OF OUR POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS IS THE STUDENTS
FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, THE CORE OF THE NEW
LEFT MOVEMENT.

LEADERS OF STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC
SOCIETY HAVE CONCLUDED -- IN THE WORDS OF ONE
OF THEM -- THAT THE "SEEMINGLY SEPARATE
PROBLEMS OF RACISM, URBAN POVERTY,
AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE ACADEMIES AND THE
VIETNAM WAR ARE ALL THE OFFSPRING OF A SINGLE
PARENT...CAPITALISM."
SIMPLE, ISN'T IT?

DESTROY CAPITALISM AND YOU WILL SOLVE ALL OF AMERICA'S PROBLEMS, SDS LEADERS SEEM TO BE SAYING. THEY MIGHT MORE APTLY CALL THEMSELVES STUDENTS FOR A DEMOLISHED SOCIETY.

THIS NATION DOESN'T NEED A NEW REVOLUTION. IT NEEDS TO BUILD ON THE OLD ONE, THE REVOLUTION IN WHICH THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS FOUGHT SO VALIANTLY.

WE NEED A RETURN TO MORAL VALUES. THIS SHOULD BE OUR REVOLUTION. THIS SHOULD BE OUR ANSWER TO THE CRUSHING MATERIALISM THAT IS ROBBING OUR LIVES OF MEANING.

CONSIDER WHAT GOOD THE RADICAL STUDENT LEADERS COULD ACCOMPLISH IF THEY WOULD MOBILIZE MODERATE STUDENTS INTO AN ARMY TO CLEAN UP AND REPAIR SLUM DWELLINGS INSTEAD OF EXHORTING THEM TO AN ASSAULT UPON THE CITADEL OF REASON ITSELF: THE UNIVERSITY.

AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS TODAY ARE AMONG THE MOST PRIVILEGED AND FORTUNATE




INDIVIDUALS IN THE WORLD, WHATEVER THEIR COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE RELEVANCE OF CURRENT CURRICULA.

AND HERE AT ST. MICHAEL'S YOU ARE DOUBLY BLESSED BECAUSE YOU HAVE RECEIVED A COLLEGE EDUCATION ROOTED IN MORAL VALUES AND THE STEADFAST BELIEF THAT MAN IS ONLY A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS.

I CONGRATULATE YOU, FOR YOU ARE NOW PREPARED TO LIVE A LIFE WHICH RECOGNIZES THAT LOVE OF FAMILY IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE, THAT MARITAL FIDELITY IS A NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR HAPPINESS, AND THAT NOTHING IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN THE INTEGRITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE TRUTHS THAT AMERICA HAS LOST IN THE WHIRL OF THIS ATOMIC AGE, THE FEAR OF IMMINENT NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION, THE PURSUIT OF HEDONISTIC PLEASURE / AND THE THROWING OFF OF REASON AND RESTRAINT.



I DO NOT BELIEVE AMERICA IS DOOMED.
AS I LOOK AT THIS GRADUATING CLASS, I SEE
THE BIRTH OF A NEW MORALITY IN THIS COUNTRY --
NOT IN THE NARROW SENSE BUT IN TERMS OF NEW
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER BOTH IN AMERICANS AS
INDIVIDUALS AND IN THE UNITED STATES AS A
NATION.

THERE IS SUCH AN ENTITY AS NATIONAL
CHARACTER. IT IS A COMPOSITE OF ALL THE
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE INDIVIDUALS
WHO MAKE UP A NATION. *Beauty of Joseph's coat was its many colors.*

I FEEL YOU ARE STRONG MEN, AND THERE
ARE MANY MORE AMERICANS LIKE YOU THROUGHOUT
THIS GREAT LAND OF OURS. AND SO I DO NOT
DESPAIR.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU AND OTHERS LIKE
YOU WILL GO OUT INTO THE COMMUNITIES AND
BUILD ON THE OLD REVOLUTION -- MAKE ~~OF~~ AMERICA
A NATION WHICH UNMISTAKABLY STANDS FOR
JUSTICE AND DECENCY AND REASON, FOR EQUALITY

AND OPPORTUNITY AND HOPE.

I BELIEVE YOU AGREE, AS I DO, WITH PLUTARCH WHEN HE COUNSELED THAT "PERSEVERANCE IS MORE PREVAILING THAN VIOLENCE; AND MANY THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE OVERCOME WHEN THEY ARE TOGETHER, YIELD THEMSELVES UP WHEN TAKEN LITTLE BY LITTLE."

SO LET US, EACH ONE OF US, LIGHT A CANDLE INSTEAD OF CURSING THE DARKNESS -- SO THAT TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A GREAT LIGHT WHICH SHALL ILLUMINE THE WORLD FOR OURSELVES AND FOR ALL MEN.

-- END --



AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AT ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, WINOOSKI, VERMONT
AT 3 P.M. SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 1969

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

Most reverend clergy, faculty members, honored guests, parents and graduating seniors of this outstanding institution of learning:

I am delighted to be with you here in the exhilarating atmosphere of the Green Mountain state and one of Vermont's finest colleges.

I am most grateful for the honor you have bestowed on me. I hope I am deserving of it. And I pray I may live the rest of my days in keeping with your confidence.

This is the first time I have spoken to an all-male graduating class and I find the experience most interesting. I would guess that the lack of feminine distraction on campus has something to do with St. Michael's reputation for scholastic excellence.

I have a son in college, and I find that when he sometimes looks tired and peaked he is just suffering from a co-ed in the head.

I sense an independence of spirit at St. Michael's. This reminds me that although Massachusetts annexed Maine in 1652 and it took a British Royal Commission to separate New Hampshire from Massachusetts in 1680, Vermonters managed to fight off territorial claims by both New York and New Hampshire in the middle 1700s. A lot of people think the Green Mountain Boys got together to fight the British but the truth is they first combined forces to protect Vermont from the colony of New York.

But I did not come to Vermont to tell you about the history of this proud state. The point I make is that America today desperately needs the kind of pioneer Vermont spirit and the rugged courage that triumphed over the British and land-grabbing colonial neighbors as well.

America needs, too, the kind of moral courage and devotion to human rights that prompted Vermont to become the first state to end slavery and to enact universal male suffrage without property qualifications.

I am fond of reading early American history because I believe it tells us much that is instructive today. We can learn much from it -- from the suffering the early American settlers endured, from their incredible struggles simply to survive and to worship God as free men.

(more)



Those were incredible times. But so too is the era in which we are living.

Americans are living in an age which is in itself a fantastic paradox. It is the most advanced of eras, both technologically and in terms of social progress, and yet it is stained by unrestrained savagery, widespread violence, official corruption and revolting licentiousness. It is an age which has produced marvels in medicine and in space exploration -- and also fiendish war machines capable of destroying all of mankind.

If I may depart from the serious for just a moment, perhaps it is small wonder that many Americans are unhappy with our system today. After all, when the first settlers came to this country there was no national debt and there were no taxes. The Indians were running the country, and they made the women do all the work. How could anyone improve on a system like that?

Few of us would want to go back to living as the pioneers did, clearing the land to grow a few crops and shooting game to put some meat on the table.

Yet the truth is evident that man is toughened by severe hardship and his character annealed to the strength of steel in the fires of adversity. Today many of us find life too easy.

The young men and women of today have been spared much of the hardship and adversity of the past. For instance, they know nothing of the Great Depression but what they have read in history books. It is inconceivable to them that a whole generation of Americans could have grubbed around for scraps of food or waited in line at soup kitchens and relief warehouses.

I worked part-time in high school, and I worked my way through the University of Michigan and Yale Law School. I am not complaining, and I am not preaching. I am simply trying to understand today's young people. And to do that I have to look at the world they live in and ask myself how it is different from mine.

This is the age of affluence. People are appalled at poverty in the midst of plenty. In my youth even men with great talent and ability were out of work, and one of the popular songs of the time was "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime."

Until Vietnam, the young man and woman of today knew nothing of war. Many of them obviously agree with Benjamin Franklin when he said, "There never was a good war or a bad peace."

My generation for four years fought the first truly global war in history to cleanse the world of Naziism and fascism and saw America prevent a Communist takeover in South Korea.

(more)

Today's pacifists wrap themselves in robes of self-righteousness. Do they think they are alone in hating war? Anyone who loves war is insane.

It was a great military man, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who said: "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it. War is hell." But Gen. Sherman also said -- and this is important -- "The legitimate object of war is a more perfect peace."

Is nothing worth fighting for?

Some young people sneer at patriotism and what men like me call Americanism. I would like to see all of our citizens rededicate themselves to the Americanism described by President Theodore Roosevelt when he said: "Americanism means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity and hardihood -- the virtues that made America."

Americans of my generation look at young men and women who wave the Viet Cong flag, throw fire bombs, assault deans and faculty members in our schools of higher education, commit public fornication, and shout and write obscenities and we ask ourselves: What do they want? Who are they? What has America spawned? And why?

These young people scream that America is racist, capitalistic and imperialistic and the system must be torn down.

There are answers for these charges, but how do you reply when radical leaders shout you down or rough you up and mouth meaningless phrases borrowed from Marxist-Leninist and Maoist writings?

We have great need for a dialogue in this country -- a quiet reasoned dialogue dealing with the Vietnam War, injustice to Negroes, corruption, materialism and the ultimate purpose of life.

This kind of dialogue goes to the basic purposes of a university -- a place where faculty and students engage in an unfettered search for truth and new answers to depressing problems.

But how can you have a dialogue when radical leaders launch violent attacks upon the university itself with the avowed objective of destroying what they call "The Establishment?"

What is "The Establishment?" The Establishment is you and me and everything that has gone into the building of America. It is our democratic system of government. Imperfect as it is, I believe it is the best form of government ever devised.

(more)

I am fully aware that there is a lack of adequate communication between young people and the over-30 generation today -- a lack of sufficient communication between students and faculty and administration even at peaceful colleges such as St. Michael's. Communication we need -- and need desperately.

But violence is not the answer. Shutting down our great universities is not the answer. Black separatism is not the answer. Destroying college admission requirements so that our colleges and universities become remedial institutions is not the answer.

We don't solve problems by running away from them or abandoning our values or degrading ourselves with completely uninhibited life styles.

The problems today are essentially the same for all Americans. They are not easy problems and there are no easy solutions.

Vietnam. A tragic war. I don't believe it proved that America was wrong in seeking to thwart Communist aggression. I believe it did prove that our foreign policy in relation to Communist expansionist probes should be one of selective involvement and of carefully reasoned judgment as to whether possibly minimal results would justify the investment.

I also believe that for the first time in four years there is real hope for peace in Vietnam.

Racism. It is now a two-edged sword. Guilt feelings serve no useful purpose. We have made substantial progress. The only ultimate answer is to make a living truth of the words that make the Declaration of Independence a glowing testimonial to man's aspirations: "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."

The framers of the Declaration of Independence were not talking about black men. Slavery was practiced in the United States at the time. But we must apply their words in the context of today's world and clothe them with the truth that all men are equal in the eyes of God.

Have you ever considered how often the drafters of the Declaration of Independence referred to the Deity?

They began by stating: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and

(more)

equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

And after ascribing to the Creator the endowing of men with certain unalienable Rights, the drafters of the Declaration of Independence concluded their statement of the causes of separation from England by proclaiming "a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."

In every age, in every time and in every clime there are doomsday sayers who run about predicting the end of the world. Most people just smile tolerantly, shake their heads a bit and say to themselves, "Poor fellow."

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Leaders of Students for a Democratic Society have concluded -- in the words of one of them -- that the "seemingly separate problems of racism, urban poverty, authoritarianism in the academies and the Vietnam War are all the offspring of a single parent...capitalism." Simple, isn't it? Destroy capitalism and you will solve all of America's problems, SDS leaders seem to be saying. They might more aptly call themselves Students for a Demolished Society.

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I do not believe America is doomed. As I look at this graduating class, I see the birth of a New Morality in this country -- not in the narrow sense but in terms of new strength of character both in Americans as individuals and in

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the United States as a Nation.

There is such an entity as National Character. It is a composite of all the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals who make up a Nation.

I feel you are strong men, and there are many more Americans like you throughout this great land of ours. And so I do not despair.

I believe that you and others like you will go out into the communities and build on the old revolution -- make of America a nation which unmistakably stands for justice and decency and reason, for equality and opportunity and hope.

I believe you agree, as I do, with Plutarch when he counseled that "perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which cannot be overcome when they are together, yield themselves up when taken little by little."

So let us, each one of us, light a candle instead of cursing the darkness -- so that together we will make a great light which shall illumine the world for ourselves and for all men.

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Office Copy

AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AT ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, WINOOSKI, VERMONT
AT 3 P.M. SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 1969

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

Most reverend clergy, faculty members, honored guests, parents and graduating seniors of this outstanding institution of learning:

I am delighted to be with you here in the exhilarating atmosphere of the Green Mountain state and one of Vermont's finest colleges.

I am most grateful for the honor you have bestowed on me. I hope I am deserving of it. And I pray I may live the rest of my days in keeping with your confidence.

This is the first time I have spoken to an all-male graduating class and I find the experience most interesting. I would guess that the lack of feminine distraction on campus has something to do with St. Michael's reputation for scholastic excellence.

I have a son in college, and I find that when he sometimes looks tired and peaked he is just suffering from a co-ed in the head.

I sense an independence of spirit at St. Michael's. This reminds me that although Massachusetts annexed Maine in 1652 and it took a British Royal Commission to separate New Hampshire from Massachusetts in 1680, Vermonters managed to fight off territorial claims by both New York and New Hampshire in the middle 1700s. A lot of people think the Green Mountain Boys got together to fight the British but the truth is they first combined forces to protect Vermont from the colony of New York.

But I did not come to Vermont to tell you about the history of this proud state. The point I make is that America today desperately needs the kind of pioneer Vermont spirit and the rugged courage that triumphed over the British and land-grabbing colonial neighbors as well.

America needs, too, the kind of moral courage and devotion to human rights that prompted Vermont to become the first state to end slavery and to enact universal male suffrage without property qualifications.

I am fond of reading early American history because I believe it tells us much that is instructive today. We can learn much from it -- from the suffering the early American settlers endured, from their incredible struggles simply to survive and to worship God as free men.

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Those were incredible times. But so too is the era in which we are living.

Americans are living in an age which is in itself a fantastic paradox. It is the most advanced of eras, both technologically and in terms of social progress, and yet it is stained by unrestrained savagery, widespread violence, official corruption and revolting licentiousness. It is an age which has produced marvels in medicine and in space exploration -- and also fiendish war machines capable of destroying all of mankind.

If I may depart from the serious for just a moment, perhaps it is small wonder that many Americans are unhappy with our system today. After all, when the first settlers came to this country there was no national debt and there were no taxes. The Indians were running the country, and they made the women do all the work. How could anyone improve on a system like that?

Few of us would want to go back to living as the pioneers did, clearing the land to grow a few crops and shooting game to put some meat on the table.

Yet the truth is evident that man is toughened by severe hardship and his character annealed to the strength of steel in the fires of adversity. Today many of us find life too easy.

The young men and women of today have been spared much of the hardship and adversity of the past. For instance, they know nothing of the Great Depression but what they have read in history books. It is inconceivable to them that a whole generation of Americans could have grubbed around for scraps of food or waited in line at soup kitchens and relief warehouses.

I worked part-time in high school, and I worked my way through the University of Michigan and Yale Law School. I am not complaining, and I am not preaching. I am simply trying to understand today's young people. And to do that I have to look at the world they live in and ask myself how it is different from mine.

This is the age of affluence. People are appalled at poverty in the midst of plenty. In my youth even men with great talent and ability were out of work, and one of the popular songs of the time was "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime."

Until Vietnam, the young man and woman of today knew nothing of war. Many of them obviously agree with Benjamin Franklin when he said, "There never was a good war or a bad peace."

My generation for four years fought the first truly global war in history to cleanse the world of Naziism and fascism and saw America prevent a Communist takeover in South Korea.

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Today's pacifists wrap themselves in robes of self-righteousness. Do they think they are alone in hating war? Anyone who loves war is insane.

It was a great military man, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who said: "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it. War is hell." But Gen. Sherman also said -- and this is important -- "The legitimate object of war is a more perfect peace."

Is nothing worth fighting for?

Some young people sneer at patriotism and what men like me call Americanism. I would like to see all of our citizens rededicate themselves to the Americanism described by President Theodore Roosevelt when he said: "Americanism means the virtues of courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity and hardihood -- the virtues that made America."

Americans of my generation look at young men and women who wave the Viet Cong flag, throw fire bombs, assault deans and faculty members in our schools of higher education, commit public fornication, and shout and write obscenities and we ask ourselves: What do they want? Who are they? What has America spawned? And why?

These young people scream that America is racist, capitalistic and imperialistic and the system must be torn down.

There are answers for these charges, but how do you reply when radical leaders shout you down or rough you up and mouth meaningless phrases borrowed from Marxist-Leninist and Maoist writings?

We have great need for a dialogue in this country -- a quiet reasoned dialogue dealing with the Vietnam War, injustice to Negroes, corruption, materialism and the ultimate purpose of life.

This kind of dialogue goes to the basic purposes of a university -- a place where faculty and students engage in an unfettered search for truth and new answers to depressing problems.

But how can you have a dialogue when radical leaders launch violent attacks upon the university itself with the avowed objective of destroying what they call "The Establishment?"

What is "The Establishment?" The Establishment is you and me and everything that has gone into the building of America. It is our democratic system of government. Imperfect as it is, I believe it is the best form of government ever devised.

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I am fully aware that there is a lack of adequate communication between young people and the over-30 generation today -- a lack of sufficient communication between students and faculty and administration even at peaceful colleges such as St. Michael's. Communication we need -- and need desperately.

But violence is not the answer. Shutting down our great universities is not the answer. Black separatism is not the answer. Destroying college admission requirements so that our colleges and universities become remedial institutions is not the answer.

We don't solve problems by running away from them or abandoning our values or degrading ourselves with completely uninhibited life styles.

The problems today are essentially the same for all Americans. They are not easy problems and there are no easy solutions.

Vietnam. A tragic war. I don't believe it proved that America was wrong in seeking to thwart Communist aggression. I believe it did prove that our foreign policy in relation to Communist expansionist probes should be one of selective involvement and of carefully reasoned judgment as to whether possibly minimal results would justify the investment.

I also believe that for the first time in four years there is real hope for peace in Vietnam.

Racism. It is now a two-edged sword. Guilt feelings serve no useful purpose. We have made substantial progress. The only ultimate answer is to make a living truth of the words that make the Declaration of Independence a glowing testimonial to man's aspirations: "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."

The framers of the Declaration of Independence were not talking about black men. Slavery was practiced in the United States at the time. But we must apply their words in the context of today's world and clothe them with the truth that all men are equal in the eyes of God.

Have you ever considered how often the drafters of the Declaration of Independence referred to the Deity?

They began by stating: "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and

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equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

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