

The original documents are located in Box 24, “2/22/76 - Remarks at a Meeting with Members and Guests of the National Religious Broadcasters Association and the National Association of Evangelicals” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS CONVENTION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU, DR ZIMMERMAN

DR VANDER PUY (President NRB)

DR TOMS (President NAE)

MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS
AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGICALS

IT IS A SPECIAL HONOR FOR ME TO ADDRESS,
FOR THE THIRD TIME IN AS MANY YEARS, THIS GREAT CONVENTION
OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS.

I WELCOME THE PARTICIPATION THIS YEAR
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS,
AND I SALUTE BOTH OF YOUR OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS
AS YOU FOLLOW THE GREAT COMMISSION OF JESUS:
TO GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL.

MY GOOD FRIEND BILLY ZEOLI MAKES THE POINT

THAT WHILE WE MAY KNOW THE NUMBER OF CHURCHES

AND RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS INVOLVED IN RELIGIOUS

BROADCASTING AND MISSION WORK, ONLY GOD CAN COUNT

THE NUMBER OF LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY THE

GOSPEL YOU PREACH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

I LIKE THE THEME YOU'VE SELECTED FOR YOUR

BICENTENNIAL CONVENTION:

"LET FREEDOM RING."

NOWHERE ON EARTH HAS FREEDOM RUNG SO LOUD

AND SO LONG AS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AMERICANS HAVE HEARD IT RINGING FOR 200 YEARS,
AND I HOPE AND PRAY IT WILL RING FOREVER IN OUR LAND. //

THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE LAWS OF GOD
WERE OF VERY SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO OUR FOUNDING FATHERS
AND TO THE NATION THEY CREATED.

I BELIEVE IT IS NO ACCIDENT OF HISTORY,
NO COINCIDENCE / THAT THIS NATION, WHICH DECLARED
ITS DEPENDENCE ON GOD EVEN WHILE DECLARING ITS
INDEPENDENCE FROM FOREIGN DOMINATION, / HAS BECOME
THE GREATEST NATION IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

WE ARE TAUGHT IN THE PSALMS THAT

"BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD."

I BELIEVE THAT VERY DEEPLY, AND I KNOW YOU BELIEVE IT, TOO.

LOOKING BACK OVER 200 YEARS, WE CAN SEE

THAT AMERICA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A UNIQUELY BLESSED NATION,

THAT WE HAVE HAD A SPECIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE AFFAIRS

OF MANKIND.

IN OUR NATION'S YOUTH, WE BECAME LIVING PROOF
OF THE FACT THAT MEN COULD GOVERN THEMSELVES SUCCESSFULLY,
THAT THE "DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS" WAS A FALSE DOCTRINE
FOR AMERICANS, AND THAT, IN TRUTH, ALL MEN ARE CREATED
EQUAL IN THE SIGHT OF THEIR CREATOR.

WE PROVED THAT HARD WORK AND SELF-SACRIFICE
AND A FREELY EXTENDED HELPING HAND / COULD BUILD A NATION
AND A PEOPLE TO GREATNESS ~~IN~~ IN THE SPACE OF A FEW
GENERATIONS -- / A TIMETABLE UNHEARD OF BEFORE THE
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE BEGAN.

WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED TIME AND TIME AGAIN THAT
THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM IN THE WORLD HAS NO BETTER FRIEND, /
NO STRONGER ALLY THAN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA●

WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT WE ARE AMONG THE
MOST COMPASSIONATE AND GENEROUS PEOPLE ON EARTH●

WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE WORLD-FAMOUS
AMERICAN INGENUITY IS STILL VERY MUCH AT WORK, /
STILL ABLE TO KEEP US ON THE FRONTIERS OF PROGRESS
IN EVERY FIELD.

OUR LEADERSHIP IN ALL OF THESE ENDEAVORS

HAS ENRICHED MANKIND EVERYWHERE. WHILE SEEKING

OUT THE PATH OF PEACE WITH OTHER NATIONS, WE HAVE DECLARED

OUR ENEMIES TO BE DISEASE AND IGNORANCE AND POVERTY

AND INJUSTICE AND WAR ITSELF.

I REMEMBER PRESIDENT EISENHOWER OBSERVING

THAT AMERICA IS NOT GOOD BECAUSE IT IS GREAT --

AMERICA IS GREAT BECAUSE AMERICA IS GOOD•

THE EARLY HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY WAS WRITTEN

BY MEN WHO VALUED THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND WHO

HAD IN COMMON A DEEP FAITH IN GOD•

WE READ OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, ON HIS KNEES

IN PRAYER AT VALLEY FORGE, SEEKING DIVINE GUIDANCE

FOR HIMSELF, HIS MEN AND HIS FLEDGLING COUNTRY

IN THE TERRIBLE WINTER OF 1777.

WE READ OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, CALLING
THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS TO PRAYER WHEN THAT
BODY OF STRONG-WILLED INDEPENDENT MEN WAS IN DISARRAY
AND DISCORD•

WE READ OF JOHN ADAMS, PROCLAIMING A

"LOVE OF GOD AND HIS CREATION," / STATING THAT

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

WERE THE SUM OF HIS RELIGION, / AND PRAYING THAT HEAVEN

WOULD BESTOW "THE BEST OF BLESSINGS" ON THE WHITE HOUSE

AND ALL ITS FUTURE INHABITANTS.●

THIS FAITH OF OUR FATHERS SUSTAINED A

YOUNG AMERICA WHEN IT WAS WEAK AND POOR•

THAT SAME FAITH CAN SUSTAIN US TODAY IN THE ADDED

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WORLD'S MOST PROSPEROUS AND

POWERFUL NATION•

WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT, THIS COUNTRY WAS FACED
WITH SOME OF THE MOST PRESSING AND SERIOUS PROBLEMS
IN ITS HISTORY●

UNDERLYING THESE PROBLEMS WAS A CRISIS
OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR GOVERNMENT, / A CRISIS OF THE SPIRIT
AMONG OUR OWN PEOPLE●

AMERICA HAD BEEN BUFFETED ABOUT FOR MORE

THAN A DECADE, WITH SHOCKS TO ITS SYSTEM THAT WOULD HAVE

CRIPPLED A LESSER COUNTRY: / POLITICAL ASSASSINATION, \

A LONG AND FRUSTRATING WAR, \ RIOTS IN OUR STREETS

AND ON OUR CAMPUSES, \ ECONOMIC DISTRESS, \ SCANDALS

AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

IN THE FEW HOURS BEFORE THIS RESPONSIBILITY

WAS SUDDENLY THRUST UPON ME, / I WAS ASKED BY ONE

OF MY AIDES WHAT VERSE I WANTED THE BIBLE OPENED TO /

WHEN I TOOK THE OATH OF OFFICE.

I TURNED TO THE BIBLE WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN ME,

WHEN I BECAME VICE PRESIDENT, BY MY SON MIKE,

WHO IS A DIVINITY STUDENT IN MASSACHUSETTS, /

~~[AND HIS WIFE GAYLE.]~~

EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY, I HAVE USED

A SPECIAL VERSE IN THE BIBLE AS A KIND OF PRAYER•

I'M SURE YOU'RE ALL FAMILIAR WITH IT• IT COMES

FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, AND IT SAYS:

"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART;

AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING.

IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, / AND HE SHALL DIRECT
THY PATHS."

THAT WAS THE VERSE I PLACED MY HAND UPON

WHEN I TOOK THE OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO EVERY

PRESIDENT SINCE GEORGE WASHINGTON.

THESE WORDS HAVE MEANT MUCH TO ME

AS I HAVE DEALT WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THIS NATION

AND THE WORLD.

WE HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT THE CORRUPTION OF

GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS AND LABOR. WE SENSE SO

MUCH DISTRUST IN OUR BASIC INSTITUTIONS OF SOCIETY.

TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE COMPLAINING:

"WE DON'T KNOW WHO OR WHAT WE CAN BELIEVE."

MY ANSWER IS: WE CAN BELIEVE IN GOD. WE CAN BELIEVE

IN THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS.

WE ARE HEIRS OF OUR FATHERS' FAITH,
AND IT CAN BE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND COMFORT
AND UNDERSTANDING FOR US, AS IT WAS FOR THEM•

IT REMAINS OUR DUTY TO REMEMBER OUR RELIGIOUS
HERITAGE, TO TEACH IT TO OUR CHILDREN, AND TO ORDER
OUR OWN LIVES WITH COURAGE, WITH JUSTICE, WITH KINDNESS
AND IN THE LOVE OF GOD•

EACH GENERATION HAS ITS DIFFICULTIES AND
CHALLENGES TO MEET, / AND SURELY WE HAVE NO LESS NEED
OF AN ABIDING FAITH / THAN DID THE PILGRIMS WHO ESTABLISHED
A NEW LIFE IN THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS•

WE HAVE NO LESS NEED OF FAITH THAN THE AMERICAN
COLONISTS / WHEN THEY FLUNG THEIR CHALLENGE OF INDEPENDENCE
IN THE FACE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL EMPIRE•

WE HAVE NO LESS NEED OF FAITH THAN THE PIONEERS
WHO CONQUERED A VAST AND DANGEROUS CONTINENT•

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS IS LIVING STILL

IN AMERICA TODAY. IT WILL LIVE AS LONG AS FREEDOM RINGS

IN THIS SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY.

TONIGHT, LET US SAY IN THE STIRRING WORDS

OF "AMERICA":

"LONG MAY OUR LAND BE BRIGHT/WITH FREEDOM'S
HOLY LIGHT;/ PROTECT US BY THY MIGHT, / GREAT GOD,
OUR KING."

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT