

SPEECH BY:

ROBERT MORGAN  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MONTREAT-ANDERSON COLLEGE CHAPEL PROGRAM  
MONTREAT, NORTH CAROLINA

SEPTEMBER 20, 1973

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LET ME EXPRESS TO YOU MY SINCERE THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF THIS CHAPEL PROGRAM AT MONTREAT HERE THIS MORNING. JOHN MASEFIELD ONCE WROTE THAT "THERE ARE FEW EARTHLY THINGS MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A UNIVERSITY" IN HIS TRIBUTE TO THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES, AND HIS WORDS ARE EQUALLY TRUE HERE TODAY. HE DID NOT REFER TO SPIRES AND TOWERS, TO CAMPUS QUEENS AND IVIED WALLS. HE ADMIRERD THE SPLENDID BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSITY, HE SAID, BECAUSE IT WAS "A PLACE WHERE THOSE WHO HATE IGNORANCE MAY STRIVE TO KNOW, WHERE THOSE WHO PERCEIVE TRUTH MAY STRIVE TO MAKE OTHERS SEE."

I THEREFORE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU TODAY A SUBJECT ON WHICH THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION IN RECENT DAYS AND MONTHS IN THIS COUNTRY; THAT IS, THE QUESTION OF MORALITY IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS.

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MANY PEOPLE, IF YOU BELIVE THE RECENT POLLING SURVEYS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN, ARE INDICATING THAT THEIR TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR CURRENT GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED A NEW LOW NOT MATCHED IN MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS. SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE CONGRESS SEEM TO FEEL THAT THE PEOPLES' DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT IS NOT NECESSARILY DIRECTED AT JUST ONE POLITICAL PARTY, BUT RATHER AT THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO PRESENTLY HOLD POLITICAL POWER, NO MATTER OF WHAT PARTY AFFILIATION THEY MAY BE.

IN SHORT, WE HAVE WITNESSED, DURING THIS SPRING AND SUMMER, A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR GOVERNMENT THAT HAS SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED ONE OF THE LARGEST ELECTION MANDATES IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY AND HAS VERY NEARLY HALTED THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, IN A RECENTLY TELEVISED STATEMENT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, SAID THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD, FROM NOW ON, OBSERVE A NEW LEVEL OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND DECENCY. THAT IS A STATEMENT THAT I CERTAINLY WELCOME AS I AM SURE ALL OF YOU DO. BUT THAT ALONE WILL NOT BE ENOUGH FOR I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT ALL AMERICA, YOUNG AND OLD, REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRAT, MUST DEMAND AND BE WILLING TO ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW POLITICAL MORALITY, NOT JUST IN OUR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, BUT IN ALL GOVERNMENT, STATE AND LOCAL.

FOR IF WE DO NOT ACHIEVE THIS NEW MORALITY, IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, IF YOU HERE TODAY, ARE NOT UP TO THE DEMANDS AND NECESSARY SACRIFICES, THEN WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE "LAST, BEST HOPE OF MANKIND" MAY HAVE WELL RUN ITS COURSE.

WHAT THEN, YOU MAY BE ASKING, IS THERE FOR YOU TO DO THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE, THAT WILL SOMEHOW MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE HONEST OR RESPONSIVE TO THE DICTATES OF THE PEOPLE. "THERE IS", SAID AN ITALIAN PHILOSOPHER, "NOTHING MORE DIFFICULT TO TAKE IN HAND, MORE PERILOUS TO CONDUCT, OR MORE UNCERTAIN IN ITS SUCCESS THAN TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW ORDER OF THINGS." YET THIS IS THE MEASURE OF THE TASK FOR YOU, AND INDEED FOR ALL OF US. BUT THE ROAD IS STREWN WITH MANY DANGERS.

FIRST IS THE DANGER OF FUTILITY, THE BELIEF THAT THERE IS NOTHING THAT ONE PERSON CAN DO. BUT I WOULD POINT OUT TO YOU THAT MANY OF THE WORLD'S GREAT MOVEMENTS, OF THOUGHT AND ACTION, HAVE FLOWED FROM THE WORK OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL. A YOUNG MONK BEGAN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, A YOUNG GENERAL EXTENDED AN EMPIRE FROM MACEDONIA TO THE BORDERS OF THE EARTH, AND A YOUNG WOMAN RECLAIMED THE TERRITORY OF FRANCE. IT WAS A YOUNG ITALIAN EXPLORER WHO DISCOVERED THE NEW WORLD AND THE THIRTY-TWO YEAR OLD THOMAS JEFFERSON WHO PROCLAIMED THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

THESE PEOPLE MOVED THE WORLD AND SO CAN WE ALL. FEW MAY HAVE THE GREATNESS TO BEND HISTORY ITSELF, BUT EACH OF US CAN WORK TO CHANGE A SMALL PORTION OF EVENTS, AND IN THE TOTAL OF ALL THOSE ACTS WILL BE WRITTEN THE HISTORY OF THIS GENERATION OF AMERICANS.

YOU MUST LEARN TO BE CONCERNED AND TO CARE ABOUT WHAT GOES ON AROUND YOU. BY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, YOUNG PEOPLE, ONCE THEY REACH THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS, HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN ALL STATE AND FEDERAL ELECTIONS. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU GUARD THIS RIGHT JEALOUSLY AND EXERCISE IT AT EVERY AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY. TO DO LESS IS TO ABDICATE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND TO INSURE THAT YOUR OPINION WILL NOT BE HEARD.

WHEN YOU FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT A POLITICAL ISSUE, WHETHER IT BE THE PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY, OR A STATE EDUCATION QUESTION, OR EVEN A MORE LOCAL ISSUE, TRY TO BECOME INVOLVED BY SEEING TO IT THAT YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. THE TERMS "WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN" OR "SEE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE" ARE NOT TRITE EXPRESSIONS BUT THE VERY ESSENCE OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY.

LET THOSE IN GOVERNMENT KNOW THAT YOU CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO AND WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEY THINK. BE HONEST WITH THEM AND LET THEM BE AWARE THAT YOU WILL EXPECT HONESTY IN RETURN.

AND, FINALLY BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE ELECTION PROCESS OF THE CANDIDATES OF YOUR CHOICE. YOUNG PEOPLE, I THINK, HAVE LED THE COUNTRY IN THIS RESPECT IN RECENT YEARS, AND PERHAPS OLDER PEOPLE WILL SOON FOLLOW YOUR WISE EXAMPLE.

IN ESSENCE, WHAT I AM TRYING TO SAY, IS THAT PARTICIPATION CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR GOVERNMENTS FUNCTION CAN BE CHANGED, AND THE AMOUNT OF TRUTH WHICH WE ARE ULTIMATELY TOLD CAN BE INCREASED.

"IF ATHENS SHALL APPEAR GREAT TO YOU", SAID PERICLES, "CONSIDER THEN THAT HER GLORIES WERE PURCHASED BY VALIANT MEN, AND BY MEN WHO LEARNED THEIR DUTY." THAT IS THE SOURCE OF GREATNESS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND IT IS THE KEY TO PROGRESS IN OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM.

BUT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO LEAVE YOU WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION BY YOU, IN AND OF ITSELF, WILL REMOVE THE CORRUPTION AND MORAL DECAY WHICH WE HAVE SO RECENTLY FOUND EXISTING IN OUR POLITICS. FOR YOU DID NOT CREATE THIS PROBLEM, AND THEREFORE YOU ALONE SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO SOLVE IT.

I AM REMINDED OF THAT PASSAGE FROM SHAKESPEARE'S JULIUS CAESAR, WHEREIN IT IS SAID, "THE FAULT, DEAR BRUTUS, LIES NOT IN OUR STARS, BUT IN OURSELVES."

IT IS WE WHO HAVE FAILED YOU BY PERMITTING A LEVEL OF POLITICS TO EXIST WHICH IF LEFT UNCHALLENGED AND UNCHANGED, WOULD HAVE PASSED ON A HERITAGE SCARRED FOREVER BY THE MENTALITY OF WATERGATE. I WONDER, THEREFORE, THAT IN THIS TIME OF TRYING TO ATTAIN A NEW MORALITY, WOULD IT NOT BE WISE TO SEEK THE ADVICE AND COUNSEL OF THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP OF THIS NATION.

IT HAS BEEN TRUE, FOR OUR ALMOST TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY AS A COUNTRY, THAT CHURCH AND STATE, AS DECREED BY THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, HAVE BEEN SEPARATE AND APART. THAT IS TO SAY, THERE HAS BEEN NO ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE ORGANIZED CHURCH, OR <sup>no</sup> <sup>valid</sup> LAW PASSED PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE OF ANY PERSON'S RELIGION. IN OTHER WORDS, THE GOVERNMENT IS, AND HAS BEEN RELIGIOUSLY NEUTRAL.

THIS GUARANTEE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, LONG ADVOCATED BY THOSE WHO SETTLED THIS COUNTRY IS A PRECIOUS RIGHT GIVEN TO US BY THOSE WHO WROTE OUR CONSTITUTION. THEY HAD EITHER WITNESSED OR BEEN TOLD OF RELIGIOUS WARS IN THE PAST, AND THEY DID NOT WISH TO PASS ON THIS LEGACY

TO AMERICA. BUT THESE AUTHORS OF OUR EARLY POLITICAL HISTORY, IN LEGALLY SEPARATING CHURCH AND STATE, DID NOT DISALLOW US OF THE PRIVILEGE, AND INDEED THE RESPONSIBILITY, OF CARRYING FORWARD OUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND IDEALS INTO OUR EVERYDAY LIVES, AND MORE PARTICULARLY, INTO OUR GOVERNMENT.

A POLITICAL CANDIDATE IS OFTEN ASKED DURING A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO HIS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OR HIS VIEWS ABOUT PARTICULAR ISSUES. AND IT IS HOW HE ANSWERS THESE QUESTIONS THAT OFTEN DETERMINES WHETHER THE PURSUIT OF POLITICAL OFFICE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

BUT PERHAPS A MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION TO RAISE IS HOW DOES HE FEEL ABOUT OPENNESS IN GOVERNMENT AND HONESTY FROM LEADERSHIP. DOES HE HAVE A VIEWPOINT, SOUNDLY BASED, ABOUT WHAT IS FUNDAMENTALLY RIGHT AND WRONG IN THE PRACTICE OF POLITICS. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IS NOT SO MUCH WHAT A CANDIDATES' VIEWS ARE ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS TAXATION OR EDUCATION AS WHETHER OR NOT YOU CAN TRUST HIM. IF YOU CANNOT, ALL ELSE PALES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE.

ANY MAN OR WOMAN WHO SEEKS TO ENTER INTO POLITICAL LIFE BY RUNNING FOR OFFICE, MUST HAVE NOT SO MUCH A POLITICAL SET OF BELIEFS AS A SPIRITUAL CONSCIENCE THAT WILL BE OF ASSISTANCE IN MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS. I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS



NOT AN EASY REQUIREMENT. THERE ARE NO BOOKS OR PARTY PLATFORMS FROM WHICH SUCH A CONSCIENCE CAN BE GAINED. THAT IS WHY THIS NATION NEEDS, NOW MORE THAN EVER, THE VERY BEST SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP THAT IS POSSIBLE.

WHAT WE NEED TO BE TOLD, IS NOT NECESSARILY WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR, BUT WHAT IS TRUE. WE MUST REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT WE ARE A NATION NOT JUST OF LAWS BUT ALSO UNDER GOD. WE MUST BE CAPABLE OF CONDEMNING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRONG, WHEREVER THEY MAY EXIST AND BY WHOMEVER COMMITTED.

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT TODAY, AS IN THE BEGINNING, IT IS <sup>the</sup> TRUTH THAT MAKES US FREE.

THE FINAL, AND PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT DANGER IN ATTAINING THE NEW MORALITY, IS THE DANGER OF TIMIDITY. FEW OF US ARE WILLING TO BRAVE THE DISAPPROVAL OF OUR FRIENDS, THE CENSURE OF OUR COLLEAGUES, THE WRATH OF OUR SUPERIORS. MORAL COURAGE IS A RARER COMMODITY THAN BRAVERY IN BATTLE OR GREAT INTELLIGENCE. YET IT IS THE ONE ESSENTIAL, VITAL QUALITY FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO CHANGE A SYSTEM THAT YIELDS MOST PAINFULLY TO CHANGE.

IF YOU HAVE WATCHED OR LISTENED TO ANY OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE WATERGATE HEARINGS, YOU WILL NOTE THAT A FAMILIAR THEME RUNNING THROUGH MUCH OF THE TESTIMONY IS THE CONCEPT OF "I DID WHAT I WAS TOLD TO DO, AND I DID NOT ASK ANY QUESTIONS." SUCH REASONING MAY SERVE AS AN EXPLANATION OF CONDUCT, BUT IT CAN NEVER ATTAIN THE STATUS OF A JUSTIFIABLE EXCUSE. THE COURAGE TO SAY "NO THAT IS WRONG; I WILL NOT DO THAT" WAS A QUALITY APPARENTLY LACKING IN WATERGATE AND IN THE CURRENT AMINISTRATION.

BUT IT MUST NOT BE LACKING IN THE FUTURE. THEREFORE, I ASK EACH OF YOU TO EXAMINE NOT ONLY THE POLITICAL CANDIDATES OF THE PRESENT, BUT ALSO YOURSELVES, FOR YOU TOO MAY SOON BE IN GOVERNMENT, AND SEE WHETHER YOU FIND ANY EVIDENCE OF MORAL COURAGE.

I SAY THIS, BECAUSE I WOULD BE LESS THAN HONEST WITH YOU IF I DID NOT TELL YOU THAT I HOPE THAT SOME OF YOU WILL SOMEDAY SEEK TO ENTER POLITICAL OFFICE. I KNOW OF NO GREATER AREA OF LIFE THAN THAT OF PUBLIC SERVICE. IT IS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP THAT HELPS SO VERY MUCH TO KEEP THIS COUNTRY FREE AND THEREFORE MAKE ALL ELSE POSSIBLE.

BUT WHETHER YOU DECIDE TO ENTER POLITICS OR SOME OTHER WAY OF LIFE, TRY TO BECOME INVOLVED IN WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND YOU. AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE, IN THE LAST DECADE AND A HALF, HAVE LED THE WORLD IN SPREADING IDEALISM AND PEACE AND LOVE. THE PEACE CORPS, INITIATED BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY, HAS SENT THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS TO HUTS AND VILLAGES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TYRING TO MAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE A LITTLE BETTER.

BUT YOU DO NOT NEED TO TRAVEL VERY FAR TO SEE THAT NOT ALL OF THE INJUSTICES ARE AWAY FROM OUR SHORES, OR THAT ALL OF OUR PROBLEMS HERE HAVE BEEN SOLVED. THERE ARE ENOUGH CHALLENGES REMAINING FOR EACH OF YOU IF YOU ARE WILLING. THERE IS A CHINESE CURSE THAT SAYS, "MAY HE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES." LIKE IT OR NOT, WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES. THEY ARE TIMES OF DANGER AND UNCERTAINTY, BUT THEY ARE ALSO MORE OPEN TO OUR CREATIVE ENERGY THAN ANY OTHER TIME IN HISTORY. AND ALL OF US WILL ULTIMATELY BE JUDGED, AND AS THE YEARS PASS WE WILL SURELY JUDGE OURSELVES, ON THE EFFORT WE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BUILDING A NEW SOCIETY AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OUR IDEALS AND GOALS HAVE SHAPED THE EFFORT.

IT WAS NOT VERY LONG AGO THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON PROCLAIMED THE GREAT SOCIETY. IT IS NOW IMPERATIVE THAT WE BECOME AN OPEN SOCIETY FOR WE CAN ILL AFFORD TO BE A NATION OF STRANGERS.

POLITICAL COMMENTATORS AND HISTORIANS HAVE OFTEN REFERRED TO THIS TIME AS THE AMERICAN CENTURY. I WONDER IF THE WORLD WOULD NOT BE BETTER SERVED IF LATER GENERATIONS, ON LOOKING BACK, REFER TO THIS AS THE PEOPLES' CENTURY. THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION ULTIMATELY DEPENDS UPON YOU AND ON ME AND ON MILLIONS OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE US THROUGHOUT THIS LAND.

"FOR OF THOSE TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS REQUIRED. AND WHEN AT SOME FUTURE DATE THE HIGH COURT OF HISTORY SITS IN JUDGMENT ON EACH OF US, RECORDING WHETHER IN OUR BRIEF SPAN OF SERVICE WE FULFILLED OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STATE, OUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE, IN WHATEVER OFFICE OR PLACE WE HOLD, WILL BE MEASURED BY THE ANSWERS TO FOUR QUESTIONS: FIRST, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF COURAGE? SECOND, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF JUDGMENT? THIRD, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY? FINALLY, WERE WE TRULY PEOPLE OF DEDICATION?"