

GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE KOINONIA HOME

Address by Robert Morgan
United States Senator
Lenoir, North Carolina
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In a few days we will celebrate the birth of Jesus,
who spoke to his disciples at the Last Supper and gave them
a law to live by. Jesus was taking his leave of them, and
as he did, he said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That
ye love one another; As I have loved you, that ye also love
one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,
if ye have love one to another." (John 13, 34. 35.)

On these words the disciples of Christ founded the
principle which sustained the early Christians all through
the years of their persecution. That principle was Fellowship.

What it meant was mutual love, mutual respect, mutual support and protection.

That word "fellowship," in its Greek form, is the very name of the corporation you have formed to carry out this project. And what you are doing is to follow that commandment of Christian fellowship.

And what you are doing, as well, is to follow the spirit of another commandment of Christ, one he delivered from the Cross itself. In reality, this final commandment is just a special form of the law which commands us to love one another. Jesus looked down from the cross and saw his mother. And to see that Mary was cared for in her old age, he spoke to her, and to his disciple, John.

"Woman," He said, "Behold thy son!" And to John, He

said, "Behold thy mother!" I think we can understand what this means for us -- that the love, respect, and mutual protection of fellowship must bridge the generations, and that our duty is always to see that it does.

I am glad to see these three congregations committing themselves to this teaching. But we ought to remember that when we follow Christ's commandments, the benefits are always our own. The three churches which join in this undertaking are carrying out one of the most important duties of fellowship. But you will reap a reward from doing so. I think that reward will be a closer fellowship of your own. A congregation which shares a goal, which shares worthwhile work, will be a closer congregation. You share now a community of purpose, and that will inevitably

enrich your worship and communion together, every time you meet.

I think our society will benefit as well. We hear so much about interference from Washington, and about a government which denies us the right to make our own decisions. This project would not exist, perhaps, without federal help. But that is the key word -- it is help, not control. The vision, initiative and management required are not coming from Washington, but from Lenoir, North Carolina. And every time that happens, our self-governing society is strengthened.

Moreover, I believe we can see in your actions here a renewal of the spirit of duty and mutual responsibility between the generations. We will gain greatly from that renewal, and I think it has national importance.

We have too long been a nation fixated on youth. Our population, generally, has been young. Because of it we have enjoyed the energy and idealism of young minds. But we have also suffered the impatience and dogmatism of youth. We have not adequately had the benefit of patience and experience. We have lacked the wholesome sense of history which gives wisdom to public policy.

In the coming decades, that will change. Looking at it purely from the point of view of statistics, in a few years we will reach the point at which 40 percent of our population will be of retirement age. I cannot help but think we will have rewards from this, and will become a much steadier people. We have recently acted to raise the age of mandatory retirement, so we may expect our government and industry to remain longer

the worth of charity, tolerance, and fellowship. "Fellowhip"

itself is the name of the group which is sponsoring this home,

and I think we can understand this groundbreaking to be

nothing less than a sign of that emerging spirit.