

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN

FALCON FOUNDATION'S CHILDREN'S HOME BANQUET

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE CHARITY

I appreciate your inviting me here today to speak in support of the Falcon Foundation's Children's Home.

I cannot tell you how much the work you are doing means to me.

I do not need to tell you how important your work for the children's home is to the children involved. You know how much your efforts help children better

than I do; you see the results every day. I hope you take pride in and satisfaction from your efforts, for through them, you make the State of North Carolina and our country a better place to live. I have often heard people say that Americans are the most charitable people in the world. I agree, and it is one of the reasons I am so proud to be an American.

Today, I am going to speak to another benefit that flows from your efforts, a sort of side effect that we generally do not think about when we think of charitable and volunteer work, and that is the role your work

plays in holding down the size and powers of government.

Nearly twenty years ago, John Kennedy said

"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country".

That statement is as valid and more in need of being said and respected today than it was twenty years ago. Too many people in this country and this certainly does not apply to any of you here today, expect and even demand that government solve all of the problems we have. It is frequently forgotten that our problems get solved more quickly, more effectively, at lower cost, and

in a manner that is more acceptable to the people in the community if they do it themselves. All that is required is the investment of a little time.

If the federal government had established this children's home, instead of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the following process would have taken place. First, a law granting the government the authority to do this would have to be passed, as well as a bill appropriating the necessary money. People would have to lobby their Congressmen to get them to vote for this, Congressional staff would have had to write speeches

and committee reports, Members of Congress would have had to debate the issues, and pages of the Congressional record would have been printed. All of this costs money, none of which goes directly to help the children. And the process is slow and time consuming.

Some federal agency would then have to act to establish the home. Regulations would have had to be proposed, and agreed to, many different bureaucrats would have to evaluate the grant applications and approve one, many different and complicated regulations relating to buying goods and hiring people to build and run the

home would have to be followed, and so forth. Again, all of this costs money.

In the process, nobody would have bothered to ask the residents of the community what they wanted or how they best thought this could be carried out.

So, the residents, who are also taxpayers, would be unhappy. They would not be disgruntled about the idea of the children's home, but they would have been irritated because local sensitivities and concerns would have been ignored.

I might say, at this point, that this series of events happens time and time again, and is probably responsible for much of the feeling, throughout North Carolina and the rest of the country, that federal spending, federal regulations, and the involvement of government in our lives should be reduced.

Another problem with over-reliance on the federal government is that, as taxes go up to pay for the federally provided services, private efforts go down. One of my colleagues in the Senate gave an interesting speech on this subject in the Senate the other day. He

pointed out that we pay more in taxes than we spend on food or housing. As you know, that is a lot of money, and it does not leave much room for charitable work or charitable contributions.

I found some statistics in preparation for this speech which highlight this point. In 1960, total charitable giving amounted to \$10.5 billion. In 1970, the amount was \$19.7 billion, and in 1979 is expected to be about \$40 billion. That sounds like a great increase, but it is not. After one adjusts these figures for inflation and for the growth in the economy, one finds that people

gave more money in 1960 than in 1970, and more in 1970 than in 1979. One thing that has been going up through all that time, as you well know, is taxes.

The decline, after adjusting for inflation, is even more noticeable in those areas where federal involvement has increased in recent years. Large donations are rarely made in health care these days as the federal government has moved to providing more and more health services to disadvantaged people. One finds fewer and fewer private scholarship funds to help poor young people to go to school, and groups which provide services to

the poor, such as the Salvation Army, are having increasing trouble raising money. In fact, the one area where charitable giving is still rising rapidly is religion, an area where federal involvement is prohibited by the United States Constitution.

These trends, which I am sure are not pleasing to anyone of us here today, have to be changed. I do not know all the answers on how to go about changing them. But, I think they will change because the public is beginning to demand a change. But, for a reduction in the role of government in our lives to be made

permanent, private efforts to deal with problems have to be continued and increased.

Your work in operating the children's home is commendable and valuable for two reasons. The help you are providing to the children is invaluable, and certainly justifies your work in and of itself. But, through your efforts you are also making a contribution towards keeping the government from interfering in the lives of all Americans. Helping the children is more important, but you should not lose sight of the second factor, I know you are going to continue your work in the future,

and by setting an example, you are surely going to encourage others to do the same.

Still, I must admit that I believe it is the help you provide so many children that is the most important and enduring benefit from your children's home. As adults, I believe we have a duty, an obligation, to help the young. We have an obligation to insure that the world and civilization we leave our children is humane and prosperous. For that matter, I strongly believe we should leave our children a world that is a better place than the one we inherited. Our parents and grandparents

did this for us and we must, and I believe we are also making progress towards doing the same. This is something I try to keep in mind everytime I have to make a decision as a United States Senator.

On an individual basis, we must work to insure that each child has a decent, moral upbringing, a good education, good health, a place he can call home, and the opportunity to lead an active, productive, and fulfilling life. For children who have been unlucky or are disadvantaged in some way, we have to make special provisions.

It is in this area that you have played such an important role. For the help you have provided these children you can be proud, and I am sure they will be forever grateful.

It is difficult for me to clearly express how strongly I believe in our duty to help young. So I am going to close by reciting a poem that was told to me about thirty years ago by a man who was then about the age I am now. I do not know who wrote this poem, but it expresses my views perfectly, much better than I

could do in words of my own:

"An old man going along the highway
came, at the evening cold and gray,
to a stream that was vast and deep and wide
through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
the sullen stream had no fears for him,
but he stopped when safe on the other side
and built a bridge to span the tide.

'Old man' said a pilgrim near

'why build you this b̄ridge at eventide?

Your journey will end with the ending day,
and you never again must pass this way.'

'Good friend', he said, 'there follows after me
today a youth whose feet must pass this way.

He too must cross in twilight dim.

Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.'"