

Robert H. Wright

I want to talk to you this morning for a little while about America's responsibility. I do not know whether you ever thought about it or not, but there have been originated in this country a number of international organizations that are working to bring about a better understanding among the peoples of the world. The Federation of Educational Associations originated in this country; the Kiwanis and Rotary and several other business men's clubs originated in this country; and there is some significance, at least to my way of thinking, in the fact that organizations of this kind that are striving to bring about a better understanding among the peoples of the world should have originated in the Republic of the United States of America. I am not sure that it does not come out of the fact that the citizenship of this country is composed of people who have come here from almost all of the other nations of the world.

I love to think back and see if I cannot find some reason for things that take place in this world. Here we have a republic, a government in which all the citizens, after they reach a certain age, have a voice in the government. We select the people who are to make the laws, and if we do not like these laws we select others to make different laws. We ourselves have made our Constitution, the fundamental law of the land. We have been gathered together from the four corners of the earth, and we are living in that part of the earth that has the largest amount of natural resources, either that or we have discovered these resources. I am not sure whether there are not other nations of the world that have, perhaps, as much of those things that are useful to human beings as America has, but in things like copper and iron and steel, America, with about one-sixth of the population of the world, is in possession of about fifty percent of the world's available natural resources. That throws upon us a tremendous responsibility, but our people have a genius for taking these natural resources and converting them into human utilities.

The president of the United States recently said this:

We cannot suppose that we are to benefit by great production unless the men and women who furnish it themselves benefit by it. We cannot neglect the human element in our affairs. All the cattle and grain, all the cotton and wool, all the cloth and steel, all the shoes and automobiles will be of small advantage to us unless they contribute a more abundant life to those who produce them. Prosperity cannot be divorced from humanity.

That from the chief executive of this republic: "Prosperity cannot be divorced from humanity", and I believe that President Coolidge in this short quotation has voiced the sentiment of the great mass of the American people. I believe that the spirit of America has been made up of the best there is in the spirit of all the nations of the world; I believe the people in this republic honestly want the world to live in harmony and in peace. We are related in a sense to all the nations of the world, and we are not afraid of being taken over by any other nation, even though Mayor Thompson, of Chicago, is insisting that England is trying to bring us back by the most subtle type of propaganda the world has ever known. I do not believe a word of it. Why should not the American people love the people of England? Why should we not love the people of Ireland, of France, of Italy, of Germany? Yes, our recent enemy. Why should we not love these people, and those who live in Russia, and go on across the continent and include Asia, and go into the back continent and take Africa and to the south of us and take South America? Why should we not love them? We are, some of us, related to them. I believe it is the spirit of this republic of ours that the world should live in peace and harmony. The genius of America enables us to take material things and convert them into human utilities to make human beings happier, to make human beings live better, to enable human beings to enjoy more their temporal existence on earth, to make the world a better place in which to live.

The Federation of Educational Associations is working to carry to all of the people of the world that kind of education that will bring the entire citizenship of the world to a higher plane of living and give them a clearer knowledge of their individual responsibilities and a willingness to live with their fellowman in peace. These organizations made up of business and professional men are striving to carry on

business with nation after nation and to carry it on in a friendly way. Educate the people of the world and have commercial relations with the citizenship of the world,- and I believe in that way we will have a much clearer understanding of the world and will eventually live in peace.

One of the great troubles in this world is ignorance. It was Charles Lamb, I believe, who on one occasion pointed his finger at a man who was walking along the street and said that he hated that man. Someone asked him if he knew the man, and he answered that he did not and that that was the reason he hated him. There is something very significant in that. When we get to know people and know them with open minds so that we may see the way that they see things and help them to see the way that we see things, in almost every case there will come up a friendship between us. If that is true with human beings living in the same town, it is just as true with the nations of the earth. When the nations of the earth get to know each other and to realize how each nation looks at government and at international relations, I believe then, and not until then, will the world lay down the implements of war and take up the implements of peace. I believe that spirit is being given to the world today by the American people, and I believe it is being given to them because we are a nation made up of the nations of the world.

It is our responsibility, as I see it, to take these natural resources of ours and carry them with the gospel of peace and good will to the other nations of the world.

I wanted to leave that thought with you because it seems to me it does us good occasionally to get away from the routine that holds us to the task of the hour and get a vision of the bigger things of the world, then try to grow to the vision.