

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11.22.04 WASHINGTON

11/10

hamey - HRC
wanted Poros to
have copy of
this. Mentions
criticism of him by
evangelicals

Pam

Lader → look at
last few pages. might
be worth sharing with
christian journalists

SPEECH

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11-22-94

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL AND DENTAL SOCIETY

DALLAS, TX

APRIL 30, 1994

C. EVERETT KOOP, M.D.

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

GREETINGS, ETC.

AT LAST.

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK I'D NEVER GET HERE.

I HAVE BEEN ASKED FREQUENTLY TO BE A SPEAKER AT THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL AND

DENTAL SOCIETY, BUT UNTIL THIS YEAR, I HAVE ^{NOT} ~~BEEN~~

BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE OPENING IN MY SCHEDULE AT THE

TIME OF YOUR MEETING. ~~SINCE I WAS A YOUNG~~

~~SURGEON AND A RELUCTANT NEW CHRISTIAN~~

I'VE TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR THAT BY SPEAKING ON MANY
OCCASIONS TO LOCAL C.M.D.S. CHAPTERS, BUT THIS IS MY
FIRST TIME AT THE PODIUM BEFORE THE NATIONAL
CONVENTION, SINCE I WAS BOTH A YOUNG SURGEON AND A
YOUNG CHRISTIAN. AND I'M JUST DELIGHTED TO BE HERE.
I'M SO DELIGHTED THAT I'M GOING TO CELEBRATE BY
CHANGING THE TOPIC OF MY SPEECH. I TRUST YOU WON'T
MIND.

AND I KNOW THAT YOU'RE HERE PRIMARILY FOR THE
DINNER, AND TO GET THE DINNER YOU'LL LISTEN TO
^{WHOEVER}
WHOMEVER SPEAKS, AND YOU'LL AT LEAST HEAR WHAT I
HAVE TO SAY, AND MAYBE YOU'LL EVEN LISTEN TO ME!

WHEN, SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, I TOLD THE ORGANIZERS OF THIS CONVENTION THAT I WOULD SPEAK ON HEALTH CARE REFORM THIS EVENING, I AND THEY ASSUMED THAT BY THIS TIME WE MIGHT HAVE EVEN SEEN SOME HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION WIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, OR AT LEAST WE'D HAVE A CLEAR IDEA ABOUT WHAT LAY ON THE HORIZON.

INSTEAD, THE PROCESS OF HEALTH CARE REFORM HAS
BOGGED DOWN, AND THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE AND A
NUMBER OF COMPETING BILLS ARE STILL PRETTY MUCH
JOCKEYING FOR POSITION IN THE STARTING GATE.

I GUESS THAT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE US BECAUSE
LEGISLATIVE REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES OFTEN TAKES
PLACE AT THE SPEED OF A LAZY GLACIER.

BUT, WE ARE NO LONGER DECIDING IF WE WILL HAVE
HEALTH CARE REFORM, BECAUSE PRESIDENT CLINTON HAS
ALREADY DONE MORE THAN ANY OF HIS LIVING
PREDECESSORS TO ENGENDER CHANGE SIMPLY BY PROMISING
--OR THREATENING-- TO REFORM THE SYSTEM.

IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS THE VARIOUS PLAYERS IN
THE HEALTH CARE GAME --PHYSICIANS AND NURSES,
HOSPITALS, INSURANCE COMPANIES, PHARMACEUTICAL
COMPANIES, STATE GOVERNMENTS-- HAVE BEGUN TO REFORM
THEMSELVES.

THAT'S GOOD, AND WE CAN BENEFIT FROM THE VARIETY AND
THE IMAGINATION OF THESE INITIATIVES.

BUT REAL REFORM IN OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM REQUIRES
ALL THE PLAYERS TO ACT IN COORDINATION AS IN A
FOOTBALL PLAY. IF ONE PLAYER FAILS TO MOVE WHEN THE
BALL IS SNAPPED, THE PLAY FAILS.

RIGHT NOW THE VARIOUS HEALTH CARE FACTIONS ARE
YELLING AT EACH OTHER LIKE FOOTBALL PLAYERS IN THE
HUDDLE DURING THE FOURTH QUARTER OF A LOSING GAME.
ONLY THE COACH CAN CALL THE PLAY, ONLY THE WHITE
HOUSE CAN PROVIDE THAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP.
BUT THAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP REQUIRES STATESMANSHIP,
NOT POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING.

IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE GROWING CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE CONFLICTING PLANS WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF NARROWING THE SCOPE OF ANY PLAN THAT MANAGES TO WIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, SO IN THE SHORT RUN WE MAY END UP, ONCE AGAIN, WITH A MINIMALIST, INCREMENTAL APPROACH TO DEALING WITH OUR HEALTH CARE PROBLEMS.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OVER HCN
HAVE CHANGED MY DIRECTION THIS
EVENING:

I THOUGHT I WOULD

NOW I WILL ABANDON THE $R-OFC$

I'M SURE YOU ARE GROWING WEARY.

BUT I SHOULD REMIND YOU $\longrightarrow$

DELAY IN ACHIEVING HEALTH CARE REFORM IS NOTHING
NEW, AND I FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM WITH
THAT FINE OLD GENTLEMAN, CLAUDE PEPPER, WHO FOR SO
MANY YEARS, FOR SO MANY DECADES, CHAMPIONED HEALTH
CARE REFORM IN THE CONGRESS.

A VERY ELDERLY MAN, CLOSE TO 100 THAN MOST OF US WILL EVER GET, CLAUDE PEPPER USED TO REASSURE PEOPLE WHEN HE SAID, "I AM SURE WE WILL GET HEALTH CARE REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT NOT IN MY LIFETIME."

MR. PEPPER HAS SINCE DIED, AND --WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE RELEVANT THEOLOGY IN THIS STORY-- I'LL JUST SAY THAT SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT MR. PEPPER ASKED GOD THE QUESTION THAT WAS SO OFTEN ASKED OF HIM. "WILL WE EVER GET HEALTH CARE REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES?"

I'M TOLD THAT GOD ANSWERED, "YES, BUT NOT IN MY LIFETIME."

THAT MEANS THAT THE ISSUE OF HEALTH CARE REFORM WILL
REMAIN WITH US, REMAIN ON THE HORIZON.

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE
DEFINITION OF "HORIZON", IT IS AN IMAGINARY LINE IN
THE DISTANCE, WHICH RECEDES AS ONE APPROACHES IT.

AND SO, FOR MY REMARKS TONIGHT, I'D LIKE TO SAY A
FEW WORDS ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP TO THE MAIN SUBJECT
IN THAT LITTLE STORY I JUST TOLD YOU, NOT MY
RELATIONSHIP TO HEALTH CARE REFORM, BUT MY
RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

I DON'T GET THE OPPORTUNITY AS OFTEN AS I'D LIKE, TO
SHARE WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE, THE STORY OF THE MY
INTERWOVEN SPIRITUAL AND PROFESSIONAL PILGRIMAGE, SO
I'D LIKE TO DO THAT TONIGHT, IN THE HOPE THAT YOUR
HEARING HOW IT HAS GONE WITH ME MIGHT HELP YOU SORT
OUT THE ISSUES IN YOUR INTERWOVEN PROFESSIONAL AND
CHRISTIAN LIVES.

EVER SINCE THE TIME I WAS A YOUNG BOY IN BROOKLYN,
CHURCH PLAYED A BIG ROLE IN MY LIFE. I HAD ALWAYS
THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A CHRISTIAN, AND I HAD BEEN
RAISED IN A HOME WHERE GOING TO CHURCH WAS PART OF
THE ROUTINE OF LIVING.

MY PARENTS HAD MET AT CHURCH, AND MUCH OF THE FAMILY
SOCIAL LIFE HAD CENTERED ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

I HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL FROM THE CRADLE ROLL, I BELONGED TO THE MISSION BAND, I MARCHED IN THE ANNUAL BROOKLYN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION'S ANNIVERSARY PARADE EACH MAY.

BUT, I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE ABOUT WHO I WAS SPIRITUALLY, WHERE I HAD BEEN, OR WHERE I WAS GOING. AFTER MY FAMILY JOINED THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A REDEEMER WAS AND IT NEVER CROSSED MY MIND TO FIND OUT.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL I WAS IN MY EARLY THIRTIES THAT I BECAME AWARE OF MY SALVATION. IT BEGAN ON A SUNNY SUNDAY IN LATE 1948. I HAD RECENTLY BEGUN MY CAREER AS SURGEON-IN-CHIEF AT THE OLD CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA, JUST 4 BLOCKS DOWN THE STREET FROM HISTORIC TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

ONE OF OUR NURSES, A MEMBER OF TENTH CHURCH, TOLD ME
THAT SHE THOUGHT I MIGHT LIKE TO LISTEN TO ITS
MINISTER, DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE. SO, THAT SUNDAY
MORNING, I FINISHED ROUNDS EARLY, SLIPPED UP TO THE
BALCONY LATE, SETTLED SKEPTICALLY INTO MY SEAT, AND
LISTENED

I WAS SPELLBOUND BY HIS DYNAMIC FAITH, HIS
INTELLECTUAL SOPHISTICATION, AND HIS CRYSTALLIZING
ILLUSTRATIONS.

I CHANGED MY SUNDAY SCHEDULE. FOR THE NEXT TWO
YEARS, AFTER MAKING MY MORNING ROUNDS AT THE
HOSPITAL, I RETURNED WEEK AFTER WEEK, SUNDAY AFTER
SUNDAY, SLOWLY OPENING MY HEART AND MY LIFE TO
CHRIST.

I CONSIDER IT A MINOR MIRACLE THAT EVEN THOUGH I WAS THE ONLY PEDIATRIC SURGEON ON THE ATLANTIC COAST SOUTH OF BOSTON, NOT ONCE IN THOSE TWO YEARS DID A SURGICAL EMERGENCY KEEP ME FROM THE SUNDAY SERVICE, MORNING OR EVENING. TWO YEARS UNDER BARNHOUSE'S PREACHING WAS LIKE A YEAR OF BIBLE SCHOOL.

AFTER ABOUT SEVEN MONTHS, I REALIZED THAT I WAS A
PARTICIPANT AND NOT JUST AN OBSERVER; WHAT MADE
SENSE TO THAT CONGREGATION MADE SENSE TO ME AS WELL.

AND IT WAS NEW TO ME. I WASN'T JUST SHIFTING GEARS
FROM THE FAITH OF MY PARENTS TO ONE OF MY OWN.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL I SAT IN THAT PHILADELPHIA CHURCH
BALCONY THAT I REALLY UNDERSTOOD THE BASICS OF THE
CHRISTIAN GOSPEL: THAT WE ALL ARE SINNERS, UNABLE TO
SATISFY GOD'S STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE,
NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY. I LEARNED THAT "SIN" DID
NOT MEAN JUST THE BIG BAD THINGS WE DO, OR EVEN THE
LITTLE BAD THINGS WE DO, BUT ANYTHING WE DO THAT
FALLS SHORT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

I LEARNED THAT THE WORD THE BIBLE OFTEN USES FOR "SIN" WAS ALSO APPLIED TO ARCHERY, AND IT MEANT TO MISS THE MARK. WE ALL MISS THE MARK OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY. LIKE MANY OTHER NOMINAL CHRISTIANS, I SUPPOSE I HAD BEEN TRYING TO LIVE AS BEST I COULD, BUT LIKE THEM, I KNEW IN THE DEPTHS OF MY HEART THAT MY NATURE, LIKE EVERYONE'S, WAS SINFUL, AND MY EFFORTS TO REFORM MYSELF WERE OF NO AVAIL.

I KNEW THAT, LIKE IT OR NOT, WE ARE ALL IMMORTAL,
AND WE MUST SPEND ETERNAL LIFE SOMEPLACE WHEN THIS
LIFE IS OVER. OVER THOSE SEVERAL MONTHS, SITTING IN
THE BALCONY AT TENTH CHURCH, THE PREACHING FROM THE
PULPIT MADE IT ALL CLEAR: THAT THE ESSENCE OF
CHRISTIANITY WAS NOT WHAT WE DID, BUT WHAT CHRIST
HAD DONE FOR US.

I UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF THE CRUCIFIXION, I
UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF THE CHRIST'S SACRIFICE, I
UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF DIVINE FORGIVENESS. I
REALIZED THAT MY SINS WERE EITHER ON MY SHOULDERS
(AND GOD WOULD HAVE TO PUNISH ME FOR THEM) OR THEY
WERE ON JESUS CHRIST'S ^{OF} ^{THE} SHOULDERS (AND GOD HAD
ALREADY PUNISHED HIM FOR THEM ON THE CROSS). I SAW
HOW THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST WAS NECESSARY TO
RECONCILE MAN TO GOD.
I WAS A BELIEVER.

MY WIFE, BETTY, SHARED WITH ME IN OUR NEW-FOUND
FAITH, AS I WOULD COME HOME FROM CHURCH --SHE HAD
HER HANDS FULL WITH THREE SMALL BOYS-- AND SHARE
ENTHUSIASTICALLY ALL I HAD LEARNED. WE GREW AS
CHRISTIANS TOGETHER, AND WE GREW TOGETHER AS
CHRISTIANS. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST HEADY TIMES OF
OUR LIVES, WITH A THOUSAND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS.
MOST ARE ANSWERED BY NOW, BUT IT IS STILL HEADY AND
STILL EXCITING.

IT WAS OUT OF THOSE BEGINNINGS THAT I ACKNOWLEDGED
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN MY LIFE AND MY ABIDING
FAITH IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. I CAME TO REALIZE
THAT MY LIFE WASN'T JUST A SERIES OF DILEMMAS
FOLLOWED BY HAPPY COINCIDENCES. THERE WAS A PLAN
FOR MY LIFE AND THIS BROUGHT AN ASSURANCE I HAD
NEVER KNOWN.

NO MATTER WHAT ELSE I DID IN LIFE, I WOULD BE A CHRISTIAN. THIS SPIRITUAL AWAKENING HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON MY LIFE AND INFLUENCED EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED THEREAFTER. AS AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN, I ATTEMPTED TO EVALUATE EVERYTHING IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE, AND IN THE BIBLE I FOUND MY GUIDE FOR FAITH AND CONDUCT, ALWAYS TEMPERED BY GOD'S GRACE AND FORGIVENESS.

AS SOON AS I KNEW I WAS A CHRISTIAN, I REALIZED THAT
IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY HE HAD CALLED ME TO HIMSELF
AFTER I HAD COMPLETED MY MEDICAL TRAINING. IT WAS
CLEAR TO ME THAT GOD INTENDED ME TO USE MEDICINE TO
SERVE HIM.

I WANTED TO SHARE MY NEW FAITH WITH EVERYONE I KNEW,
COLLEAGUES AND PATIENTS ALIKE.

AT FIRST I'M SURE I WAS LABELED BY SOME AS TOO
ZEALOUS, BUT OTHERS, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, SOUGHT TO
SHARE MY EXPERIENCE AND FAITH. ALTHOUGH MY PARTNERS
AND STAFF TOGETHER WOULD REPRESENT MANY --OR IN SOME
CASES, NO--RELIGIONS, THOSE AROUND ME WHO SHARED MY
CHRISTIAN FAITH KNIT WITH ME A CLOSE AND TREASURED
SPIRITUAL BOND.

OF COURSE, NOT ALL MY PATIENTS SAW EYE TO EYE WITH ME IN RELIGION, ALTHOUGH JUST AS IT WAS SO OFTEN SAID DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR THAT THERE WERE FEW ATHEISTS IN FOX-HOLES, I FOUND THAT THERE WERE FEW ATHEISTS AMONG PARENTS OF CRITICALLY ILL CHILDREN. THERE WERE TIMES WHEN SHARING WITH THEM MY FAITH IN CHRIST AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD PROVIDED GREAT COMFORT AND STRENGTH FOR ALL OF US.

IN EVERY WAY, MY FAITH AND MY SURGICAL PRACTICE
WOULD BE WOVEN TOGETHER.

I FELT JUST AS COMFORTABLE SHARING MY FAITH WITH MY
COLLEAGUES OR PATIENTS AT THE HOSPITAL AS I DID IN
HOLDING AN INFORMAL CLINIC AFTER CHURCH WHICH I SO
OFTEN DID, IN THE AMEN PEWS WHERE OUR FAMILY SAT .

[ADD A FEW ANECDOTES ABOUT CHRISTIANITY AND SURGERY??]

I KNEW MANY OF YOU IN THOSE DAYS.

FOR SEVEN YEARS I DEVOTED SUNDAY
AFTERNOON AND EVENING TO THE MED
STUDENTS OF ALL THE MEDICAL
SCHOOLS IN PHILADELPHIA AS WE
MINISTERED TO PATIENTS AT
THE 8th ST WAYSIDE MISSION
IN THE AFTERNOON - ATTENDED THE
EVENING SERVICE AT 10th -
THEN WORKED AT THE 12th ST
GOSPEL HALL UNTIL THE LATE
HOURS WITH MEN ON THE SKIDS.

ONE MONDAY IN 1980, A MONDAY AFTER I WAS SITTING IN ONE OF THOSE PEWS AT A SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE, AN UNEXPECTED PHONE CALL CAME FROM THE PEOPLE SUPPORTING THEN-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RONALD REAGAN. THEY ASKED ME, "DON'T YOU THINK IT IS TIME THAT THE SURGEON GENERAL WAS A SURGEON?"

I THOUGHT I WAS ABOUT TO RETIRE FROM MY CAREER OF 35 YEARS AS A PEDIATRIC SURGEON. INSTEAD I BEGAN MY SECOND CAREER AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL.

THROUGHOUT MY SERVICE AS SURGEON GENERAL, I
MAINTAINED MY MANY CONNECTIONS WITH THE EVANGELICAL
COMMUNITY. YOU AND OTHERS RESPONDED WITH YOUR
PRAYERS AND SUPPORT.
WE WENT THROUGH A LOT TOGETHER.

WHILE I SERVED AS SURGEON GENERAL I HAD SEVERAL
MAJOR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL
COMMUNITY.

THE FIRST CAME DURING MY CONFIRMATION PROCESS.
YOU MAY RECALL THAT THE USUALLY BRIEF PROCESS
BECAME, FOR ME, A BITTER STRUGGLE, WHEN A HOST OF
FORCES JOINED HANDS TO TRY TO DENY ME THE POSITION
TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD CALLED ME.

WHAT JUDGE BORK ENDURED FOR A FEW WEEKS, I FOUGHT
FOR 10 MONTHS.

FIRST, THE LAW SAID I WAS 100 DAYS TO OLD TO BE APPOINTED SURGEON GENERAL. IT WAS CRAZY, BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT WHO APPOINTED ME AND A NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN WHO OPPOSED ME WERE SEVERAL YEARS MY SENIOR.

I WAS ALSO ACCUSED OF BEING INCOMPETENT. THAT WAS A SMOKE SCREEN TO COVER THE REAL ISSUE, MY WELL-KNOWN OPPOSITION TO ABORTION. MY NATIONAL LECTURE TOUR ON WH TTH R ~~PRO-LIFE ISSUES~~ WITH FRANCIS SCHAEFFER DIDN'T HELP AT ALL.

THE PRESS, LED BY PAPERS LIKE THE WASHINGTON POST
AND THE NEW YORK TIMES, MOUNTED A CAMPAIGN CALLING
FOR THE DEFEAT OF MY NOMINATION IN THE SENATE.

EVEN IN HOMETOWN PHILADELPHIA, THE LOCAL PAPERS--IN
YEARS PAST MY FRIENDS-- LINED UP AGAINST ME.

ONE CARTOON PORTRAYED ME AS A TWO-HEADED MONSTER.

IN LOS ANGELES THEY CALLED FOR RONALD REAGAN TO
"DUMP KOOP."

THE NEW YORK TIMES CALLED ME "DR. UNQUALIFIED."

I BECAME "DR. KOOK."

THOSE WERE DIFFICULT DAYS FOR BETTY AND ME, IN OUR ONE ROOM APARTMENT IN GEORGETOWN.

BUT WE ENDURED THEM, AND WE PREVAILED, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT WE RECEIVED FROM CHRISTIAN PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

IN THOSE TOUGH DAYS THE EVANGELICALS RALLIED AROUND ME, PRAYED FOR ME, AND BEGAN AN AMAZING GRASS-ROOTS EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THEIR SENATORS TO SUPPORT ME. I WAS CHEERED BY THE BREADTH OF SUPPORT I RECEIVED, AND I REMAIN DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ORDINARY CHRISTIAN PEOPLE ALL ACROSS AMERICA WHO ACTED ON MY BEHALF.

I NEVER FORGOT THEM.

THEY WERE ON MY MIND IN EVERY DECISION I WAS CALLED
UPON TO MAKE. FROM THE MOMENT I WAS CONFIRMED, I
FELT THEY WERE MARCHING WITH ME, PREPARED TO
CONFRONT TOGETHER THE HEALTH PROBLEMS OF OUR NATION
WITH CLEAR THINKING AND CHRISTIAN COMPASSION IN
PUBLIC SERVICE.

MAINTAINING A PUBLIC WITNESS IS MADE EASIER BY THE
PRAYERFUL SUPPORT OF CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

THIS SUPPORT DID NOT COME THROUGH THE PROCLAMATIONS

OF CHURCH LEADERS . THEY CHOSE NOT TO BECOME

— IN FACT MY OWN DENOMINATION TESTIFIED AGAIN
INVOLVED. IT CAME FROM CHRISTIAN PEOPLE ACTING

WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY, APPEALING TO STANDARDS OF

FAIRNESS AND DECENCY.

THE 1980'S SAW THE EVANGELICALS FOR THE FIRST TIME
FLEX THEIR POLITICAL MUSCLES. THEY CAME IN THROUGH
THE SIDE DOOR OF SOCIAL ACTION AGAINST ABORTION.

WHEN FRANCIS SCHAEFFER AND I FIRST CALLED THEM TO
ACTION ON THIS ISSUE THROUGH THE BOOK AND THE FILMS
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE HUMAN RACE?, MANY
CHRISTIANS SAID ABORTION WAS NOT THEIR PROBLEM. IT
WAS A SOCIAL ISSUE, AND AT THAT TIME MANY CHRISTIANS
STEERED CLEAR OF SOCIAL ISSUES.

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER WOULD BE PLEASED, IF HE WERE HERE
TODAY, TO SEE HOW WE TURNED THE CHURCHES AROUND.

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE WAS CHANGED
DRAMATICALLY WHEN THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT ARRIVED IN
NATIONAL POLITICS.

THOSE WERE HEADY DAYS, WITH REAL ENTHUSIASM AND
OPTIMISM THAT THE EVANGELICALS COULD ENACT THEIR
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AGENDA. . .

TO MAKE AMERICA A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY. WITHOUT
COMPROMISE.

BUT, AMERICA IS NOT A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

AND OUR PLURALIST POLITICAL PROCESS WORKS ONLY BY
POLITICAL COMPROMISE. A CHRISTIAN IN PUBLIC LIFE
MUST KNOW WHEN TO COMPROMISE, WHEN NOT.

A POLITICAL COMPROMISE TO ACCOMPLISH AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE IS NOT THE SAME AS ABANDONING YOUR BELIEFS.

WHEN THE BABY DOE CRISIS CAME ALONG, FOR EXAMPLE, POLITICAL COMPROMISE SAVED THE DAY. I WAS ABLE TO WRITE REGULATIONS THAT PROTECTED 97% OF HANDICAPPED NEWBORNS. IF I HAD INSISTED ON GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF EVERY HANDICAPPED NEWBORN, NO MATTER WHAT THE MEDICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WE NEVER WOULD HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT.

NO REGULATIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN APPROVED,
NO LAWS PASSED,
NO HANDICAPPED NEWBORNS PROTECTED.

BY INSISTING ON EVERYTHING, WE WOULD HAVE ENDED UP
WITH NOTHING. YET I WAS ROUNDLY CRITICIZED BY THOSE
CALLING THEMSELVES EVANGELICAL AND PRO-LIFE.

ALTHOUGH WE MAY STRIVE FOR PERFECTION, WE LIVE IN AN
IMPERFECT WORLD. WE HUNGER AND THIRST FOR
RIGHTEOUSNESS IN AN UNRIGHTEOUS WORLD.

TO LIVE AS SALT AND LIGHT REMAINS A GREAT CHALLENGE
FOR A CHRISTIAN IN OUR SOCIETY. WE DO THIS IN
DIFFERENT WAYS.

THERE IS A ROLE FOR OUR PROPHETS WHO SPEAK OUT
FORCEFULLY FOR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES IN A SOCIETY
THAT WORSHIPS AT THE ALTAR OF CONVENIENCE AND SELF-
GRATIFICATION.

THESE PROPHETS CALL US TO ACTION AGAINST POWERFUL
AND NEGATIVE FORCES IN OUR CULTURE:

TELEVISION SHOWS THAT GLAMORIZE VIOLENCE...

MOTION PICTURES THAT BRUTALIZE THE ACT OF

LOVE...

NEWSPAPERS THAT SENSATIONALIZE HUMAN PAIN AND

SORROW...

AND BOOKS THAT SCANDALIZE THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

I HAVE DONE THIS, BUT WHEN I BECAME SURGEON GENERAL

I ASSUMED A DIFFERENT ROLE, THE ROLE OF A PUBLIC

SERVANT CHARGED WITH A SPECIFIC TASK.

THERE IS A TIME FOR RHETORIC, AND THERE IS A TIME
FOR RESULTS. AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL, I WAS
COMMITTED BY CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE THE
BEST POSSIBLE RESULT IN EACH SITUATION I FACED.

THE PROPHET SHOULD BE UNCOMPROMISING.

THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC OFFICIAL MUST REALIZE THAT
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A LESSER VICTORY IS BETTER THAN
NONE AT ALL.

THEN THERE WAS AIDS, AND MY NEXT ENCOUNTER WITH
EVANGELICALS.

I WILL NOT REPEAT NOW WHAT I HAVE SAID EARLIER ABOUT
OUR FIGHT AGAINST THIS TERRIBLE DISEASE.

AFTER ALL, SEVERAL YEARS AGO I SENT EACH OF YOU A
LETTER ABOUT IT.

YOU AND 107 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS.

I UPSET SOME PEOPLE. I HOPE NONE OF YOU.

FIRST, I DISCUSSED A SUBJECT SOME PEOPLE PREFERRED
LEFT UNMENTIONED.

SINCE MOST AIDS VICTIMS WERE HOMOSEXUALS AND DRUG
ADDICTS, A NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN FOLK SEEMED TO THINK
THEY GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED,
AND THEY DID NOT LIKE MY SAYING THAT WE MUST
DEMONSTRATE COMPASSION FOR ALL AIDS VICTIMS,
THAT WE WERE FIGHTING A DISEASE, NOT PEOPLE.

SECOND, IN THE ABSENCE OF A VACCINE OR ANY CURE FOR
AIDS,

WITH EDUCATION OUR ONLY WEAPON AGAINST THE SPREAD OF
AIDS,

I TOOK THE ONLY SENSIBLE COURSE. IF WE WERE TO
TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO AVOID AIDS, WE HAD TO
TEACH THEM ABOUT THEIR OWN SEXUALITY -- I PREFER TO
CALL IT "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT", BECAUSE "SEX EDUCATION"
IS SUCH A BUZZ WORD.

IN MY 35 YEARS EXPERIENCE AS A PEDIATRICIAN, I NEVER
MET A PARENT WHO DID NOT AGREE THAT THE SEX
EDUCATION OF HER OR HIS CHILD WAS NOT ONLY A
PRIVILEGE, BUT ALSO AN OBLIGATION. THE SAD FACT IS
THAT SO FEW OF THEM EVER DID IT.

THEY ALLOW TELEVISION AND THE STREETS TO PROVIDE THE
SEX EDUCATION OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN.

IN MY STATEMENTS ON SEX EDUCATION, I ALWAYS STRESSED

THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS,

THE CENTRALITY OF MORAL PRINCIPLES,

AND THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY THIS PROVIDED EVANGELICALS

TO SHAPE THE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR OF THE NEXT GENERATION

OF YOUNGSTERS.

WE SHOULD INFLUENCE THE SCHOOLS, NOT FIGHT THEM.

STILL, I WAS TAKEN TO TASK.

FINALLY, MANY OPPOSED ME SIMPLY BECAUSE I USE THE
WORD "CONDOM".

AT THAT TIME

I WILL CONFESS THAT IT WAS NOT EASY FOR THIS ⁷²-YEAR
OLDTIMER, CELEBRATING HIS 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY,
TO TALK FRANKLY ABOUT THE THINGS I HAD TO TALK
ABOUT.

I HAVE MADE IT A PRINCIPLE, WHENEVER DISCUSSING THE
PREVENTION OF AIDS, NEVER TO MENTION CONDOMS UNTIL I
HAD FIRST GONE THROUGH AN EXPOSITION OF MY FIRMLY
HELD BELIEFS OF ABSTINENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND
MUTUALLY FAITHFUL MONOGAMY FOR ADULTS.

MY POSITION ON AIDS LED TO A REALIGNMENT OF THOSE
WHO HAD SUPPORTED ME AND THOSE WHO HAD OPPOSED ME.

ONCE PRAISED BY CONSERVATIVES AND CONDEMNED BY
LIBERALS, I SUDDENLY FOUND MYSELF ATTACKED BY FORMER
FRIENDS,
EMBRACED BY FORMER FOES.

MANY OF THE CONSERVATIVES WHO NOW OPPOSED ME WERE
AGAINST ME MERELY BECAUSE LIBERALS SPOKE IN MY
FAVOR.

YOU ALL HAVE HEARD ABOUT KNEE-JERK LIBERALS.

LET ME TELL YOU, CONSERVATIVE KNEES JERK JUST AS
READILY.

SOME EVANGELICAL CONSERVATIVES WHO JOINED IN FORGOT
WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

EVANGELICAL CONSERVATIVES MUST NOT BE SWEEPED ALONG BY
POLITICAL CONSERVATISM.

THERE IS A RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND A POLITICAL RIGHT.

OFTEN THEIR POSITIONS COINCIDE, ESPECIALLY ON SOCIAL ISSUES.

THEIR POSITIONS COINCIDE,

BUT THEY DO NOT FLOW FROM THE SAME SOURCE. THEY

MIGHT BE CALLED CO-BELLIGERENTS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY

ALLIES.

EVANGELICAL POSITIONS ON SOCIAL ISSUES SHOULD

REFLECT

THE TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE, THE CHARACTER OF OUR

LORD.... NOT CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, NOT

SOCIAL TRADITION, NOR CAPITALIST ECONOMIC THEORY.

GOD, MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF SOME PEOPLE, IS NOT A
REPUBLICAN. HE IS NOT EVEN A CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRAT.

THERE WILL BE TIMES WHEN THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT SHOULD
PART WAYS WITH THE SECULAR RIGHT. AIDS IS ONE OF
THOSE ISSUES WHERE CHRISTIAN COMPASSION, NOT PARTY
POLITICS SHOULD CHART OUR COURSE.

IT IS TRUE THAT MOST PEOPLE WHO HAVE AIDS GET IT
BY DOING THINGS MOST PEOPLE DO NOT DO, AND DO NOT
APPROVE OF OTHER PEOPLE DOING.

BUT AMERICAN MEDICINE HAS NEVER DISCRIMINATED
AGAINST PATIENTS ON THE BASIS OF THE CAUSE OF THEIR
INJURY OR ILLNESS. A DOCTOR IN A CITY HOSPITAL
EMERGENCY ROOM TREATS THE GUNSHOT WOUND OF THE THIEF
THE SAME AS HE DOES THAT OF THE POLICEMAN.

I'M SURE THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THIS AUDIENCE WHO WILL EXPECT MEDICAL CARE FOR HEALTH PROBLEMS THEY HAVE BROUGHT ON THEMSELVES BY THEIR POOR CHOICES IN DIET, EXERCISE, AND LIFE STYLE.

BUT, AS HEALTH COSTS SOAR, THERE MAY BE A LIMIT TO OUR NATIONAL TOLERANCE IN HEALTH CARE.

^{THAT}
AIDS MAY REVEAL ~~THE~~ LIMIT.

HERE IS WHERE THE CHURCH MUST MAKE A STAND,
SEPARATING, AS JESUS DID, THE SINNER FROM THE SIN. .

SHOWING COMPASSION TO THOSE WHO ARE ILL... AND
CERTAINLY DYING. AND SHARING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST
WITH ONE GROUP OF PEOPLE IN THIS SOCIETY WHO KNOW
THEY MUST SOON CONFRONT THEIR MAKER.

AIDS PATIENTS, LIKE LEPROSY PATIENTS OF YESTERYEAR,
ARE A SPECIAL MISSION FIELD, ABANDONED BY FAMILIES,
SHUNNED BY SOCIETY, AND ARE MANY TIMES THE VICTIMS
OF UNWARRANTED ABUSE.

WHAT BETTER EVANGELISTIC TARGET THAN THE SICK, THE
DYING, THE HOMELESS, THE ABANDONED, AND THE
DESPISED.

I NEVER GAVE UP ON THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT --CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT, OR JEW. I DID SOMETHING I DON'T THINK ANY OTHER PUBLIC OFFICIAL EVER DID. I SPENT THE FIRST SEVEN WEEKS OF 1987 SPEAKING ONLY TO RELIGIOUS AUDIENCES. IT WORKED. THEY LISTENED. THEY LEARNED.

THAT'S A LOT MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR THE POLITICAL RIGHT.

MY HAT IS OFF TO EVANGELICAL CHURCHES AND COLLEGES WHERE COMMITTED, COMPASSIONATE CHRISTIANS HAVE FORMED A SPECIAL AIDS MINISTRY. I AM PROUD TO REFER TO THEM AS I TRAVEL AROUND THE COUNTRY.

I AM PARTICULARLY PROUD OF MY HOME CHURCH, TENTH
PRESBYTERIAN OF PHILADELPHIA, WHERE THERE IS NOT
ONLY A MINISTRY TO HOMOSEXUALS, BUT ALSO TO THE
PARENTS AND SIBLINGS OF HOMOSEXUALS WHO SHOCKED
THEIR FAMILIES WITH THE DOUBLE ANNOUNCEMENT: "I HAVE
AIDS; I'M GAY".

PG. 62A

IN MY FINAL YEAR AS SURGEON GENERAL I HAD MY MOST
DIFFICULT ENCOUNTER WITH THE EVANGELICALS WHEN SO
MANY MISUNDERSTOOD MY RESPONSE WHEN PRESIDENT REAGAN
ASKED ME TO WRITE AN A REPORT ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS
OF ABORTION ON WOMEN.

IDEALOGUE STAFFERS IN THE WHITE HOUSE SIMPLY ASSUMED
THAT BECAUSE SOME WOMEN SUFFERED A TRAUMATIC POST-
ABORTION SYNDROME,
MY REPORT COULD MOVE THE SUPREME COURT AGAINST
ABORTION.

WHEN I DELIVERED A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, STATING
THAT I FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH A SCIENTIFIC AND
STATISTICAL CONCLUSION

--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER -- ABOUT THE HEALTH
EFFECTS OF ABORTION ON WOMEN, I WAS IN DEEP
TROUBLE.

ONCE AGAIN EVANGELICAL EDITORS AND COLUMNISTS
DENOUNCED ME AS A MAN WHO HAD ABANDONED HIS
PRINCIPLES, EVEN THE ANTI-ABORTION STANCE THAT HAD
ORIGINALLY BROUGHT ME TO WASHINGTON.

THIS TIME IT WAS NOT A GRASS ROOTS REACTION.

THIS TIME IT CAME FROM CHURCH LEADERS.

FROM 1972 ON I WAS PROBABLY THE MOST OUTSPOKEN
AMERICAN PHYSICIAN AGAINST ABORTION.

TODAY I AM AS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO ABORTION AS EVER.

FROM THE BEGINNING I THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT'S REQUEST
WAS THE WRONG WAY TO GO.

OPPOSITION TO ABORTION SHOULD BE BASED UPON WHAT IT
DOES TO THE FETUS, NOT ON ITS EFFECTS ON THE MOTHER.

THAT'S LIKE OPPOSING STRANGLING BECAUSE IT MIGHT
HURT THE STRANGLER'S HANDS.

ABORTION IS A MORAL ISSUE. IT REALLY IS NOT A
HEALTH ISSUE.

I FOUND CONSIDERABLE ANECDOTAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE
NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ABORTION ON WOMAN; INDEED I
HAVE COUNSELED WOMEN IN DEEP DEPRESSION BECAUSE OF
GUILT. BUT, I ALSO ENCOUNTERED WOMEN WHO SAID THAT
THEIR ABORTION SAVED THEIR MARRIAGE OR JOB, AND
THEREFORE, FROM A MENTAL HEALTH POINT OF VIEW, WAS
POSITIVE.

THE WORST THING I COULD HAVE DONE FOR THE PRO-LIFE
MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO WRITE A REPORT THAT
COULD HAVE BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY TORN APART.

THE HARSHNESS OF THE ATTACKS MADE UPON ME FOLLOWING
THE RELEASE OF MY ABORTION LETTER PROMPTS MY
ADMONITION TO EVANGELICALS ANXIOUS TO SHAPE NATIONAL
POLICY:

THE EVANGELICAL PRESS AND TELEVISION MUST
DEMONSTRATE

GREATER INTEGRITY. . . BETTER SCHOLARSHIP. . .

AND A LITTLE MORE FAITH AND TRUST IN PROVEN
CHAMPIONS WHO HAVE CARRIED WATER FOR THEM FOR
DECADES.

EVANGELICAL LEADERS IN THE WORLD OF MEDIA, BOTH
PRINT AND ELECTRONIC, MUST EXERCISE BETTER
STEWARDSHIP OF THEIR GIFTS AND OPPORTUNITIES, SUCH
AS THE COLUMNIST WITH WHOM I WORKED EARLY IN THE
PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT.

HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF WITH AN ATHEIST AS SURGEON GENERAL. HE REALLY MEANT HE'D RATHER HAVE ME LIE THAN TELL THE TRUTH HE DIDN'T LIKE.

THE PUBLICATION OF A WESTERN CHRISTIAN LEADER WITH A WIDESPREAD MINISTRY CONCERNED WITH FAMILY ISSUES FALSELY ACCUSED ME OF FURTHERING HOMOSEXUALITY. WHEN I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE ARTICLE, HE LAMELY SAID HE HAD NOT READ IT, NOR HAD HE KNOWN ABOUT IT. THAT'S SLOPPY TO THE POINT OF NEGLIGENCE. AN APOLOGY OF SORTS WAS PUBLISHED IN ANOTHER JOURNAL. THE HEADLINES READ: "WE LOVE YOU, BROTHER KOOP, BUT FIND IT HARD TO FORGIVE YOU".

READERS OF EVANGELICAL JOURNALS AND VIEWERS OF
EVANGELICAL TELEVISION ARE UNUSUALLY TRUSTING,. . .
PERHAPS EVEN GULLIBLE. THEY ACCEPT THE POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL OPINIONS OF THEIR LEADERS AS FACT, OFTEN
ASCRIBING TO THEM THE SAME AUTHORITY AS THEOLOGICAL
DOGMA OR DEVOTIONAL COMMENTS.

THAT AUDIENCE DESERVES BETTER, NOT MERELY PERSONAL
OPINION OR WISHFUL THINKING, BUT INSTEAD, RESPECT
FOR SCIENCE AND SCHOLARSHIP.

I ADMIT I WAS STUNG BY SOME OF THESE PERSONAL
ATTACKS.

I WAS OUTRAGED TO SEE MY WORDS DISTORTED,
MY BELIEFS DOUBTED,
MY INTEGRITY QUESTIONED IN PUBLIC BY THOSE CLAIMING
TO BE FELLOW CHRISTIANS.

JESUS COMMANDED OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER,
AND THEN HE CHALLENGED US BY SAYING THAT THE WORLD
COULD CALL US TO TASK ON THIS, THAT THE WORLD WOULD
KNOW WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES ONLY IF WE LOVED ONE
ANOTHER.

BUT I'M ALWAYS PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO
EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO THOSE OF YOU WHO UNDERSTOOD
WHAT I TRIED TO DO, AND GAVE ME YOUR SUPPORT.

MAKE NO MISTAKE. EVANGELICAL CLOUT HAS BEEN
SEVERELY WEAKENED BY THE SERIES OF SCANDALS THAT
ROCKED THE CHRISTIAN WORLD IN RECENT YEARS. MORE
THAN EVER EVANGELICAL LEADERS MUST EXERCISE ETHICAL
DILIGENCE.

AS A CHRISTIAN AND YOUR FORMER SURGEON GENERAL, I
HAVE COME TO SHARE WITH YOU A FEW REFLECTIONS ON HOW
EVANGELICALS CAN WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THOSE
CALLED TO THE SPECIAL TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC
SERVANT.

CHRISTIAN PUBLIC OFFICIALS ARE NOT CALLED TO BE
PUBLIC PREACHERS.

OF COURSE, I DID NOT LEAVE MY FAITH IN A TRUNK IN MY
PENNSYLVANIA ATTIC WHEN I MOVED TO WASHINGTON.

AS SURGEON GENERAL MY CHRISTIAN FAITH STILL SHAPED
MY CHARACTER AND CONTROLLED THE WAY I MADE
DECISIONS--MY PROCESS--IF YOU LIKE. I'D LIKE TO
THINK THAT WHAT THE PUBLIC SAW IN ME AND APPROVED,
WAS NOT MY BELIEFS, BUT THE WAY I ARRIVED AT PUBLIC
DECISIONS. MY FAITH CALLS ME TO DO MY JOB AS WELL
AS I CAN, AS UNTO THE LORD.

YOU CAN NEVER MAINTAIN A CHRISTIAN, A PROPHETIC WITNESS IN SOCIETY AS A PUBLIC FIGURE UNLESS YOU FIRST DISCHARGE YOUR BASIC DUTIES FAITHFULLY. AS PART OF THAT COMMITMENT TO A JOB WELL-DONE, THE PUBLIC CHRISTIAN, MUST SPEAK DIRECTLY AND WITH INTEGRITY. IT STILL AMAZES ME AND EMBARRASSES ME WHEN PEOPLE COMPLIMENT ME FOR MY "COURAGE". ALL I DID WAS FULFILL MY JOB DESCRIPTION AND TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH.

I MAY HAVE GOTTEN A FEW HEADLINES, BUT I THANK GOD FOR THE THOUSANDS OF DILIGENT CHRISTIANS HE HAS PLACED IN PUBLIC LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, WHO DO THEIR WORK DAY IN AND DAY OUT AS UNTO THE LORD, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE. WE NEED EVERY ONE OF THEM. AND OTHERS TOO, BECAUSE THERE IS A LOT OF WORK TO DO.

SINCE I RESIGNED AS SURGEON GENERAL --MY SECOND
CAREER-- I HAVE SPENT THE LAST ^{FIVE} ~~SEVEN~~ YEARS IN MY
THIRD CAREER AS NATIONAL LECTURER, CRISS-CROSSING
THIS COUNTRY, DOING WHAT I CAN TO BRING ABOUT REFORM
IN AMERICA'S CRUMBLING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

REFORM MUST COME, REFORM WILL COME, BUT WE MUST
REFORM CAREFULLY, OR ELSE WE WILL GET EITHER
GOVERNMENT MEDICINE, EXORBITANTLY EXPENSIVE AND
INSENSITIVE TO PATIENT NEEDS, OR PRIVATE MEDICINE
RUN AMOK, SIMILARLY EXPENSIVE AND INSENSITIVE TO
SOCIETY'S NEEDS.

A QUARTER OF MY TIME IS ALLOTTED TO MY NEW ROLE AS A
PROFESSOR AT THE DARTMOUTH MEDICAL SCHOOL^{WHERE} THE
RECENTLY ESTABLISHED KOOP INSTITUTE WILL DEVISE WAYS
TO TURN OUT A NEW KIND OF PHYSICIAN.

THIS NEW PHYSICIAN WILL BE MORE PEOPLE-ORIENTED,
MORE COMPASSIONATE, AS MUCH LOW-TECH AS HIGH-TECH, A
FAMILY PHYSICIAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

I'M EXCITED AND CHALLENGED BY THESE TWO NEW QUARTER-TIME CAREERS,

HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM IS, I HAVEN'T REDUCED MY OTHER FULL-TIME COMMITMENTS AS AUTHOR AND LECTURER BY THE NECESSARY ONE-HALF.

BUT THEN, I WAS NEVER VERY GOOD AT FRACTIONS.

AS I ATTEMPT TO SPEAK WHENEVER I CAN ON HEALTH
ISSUES AS THEY AFFECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, I WOULD
LIKE THE RECORD TO REFLECT, SAY 5 YEARS FROM NOW,
THAT I WAS REGARDED AS THE HEALTH CONSCIENCE OF THE
NATION.

I ATTEMPT THIS AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN, WITHOUT THE
POWER OF A PUBLIC OFFICE. . . BUT ALSO WITHOUT ITS
CONSTRAINTS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE THE RECORD TO REFLECT THAT I HAVE REMAINED TRUE, NOT ONLY TO MY MEDICAL CALLING, BUT ALSO TO MY CHRISTIAN CALLING TO MAINTAIN A PROPHETIC WITNESS IN OUR SOCIETY.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, I WOULD LIKE TO CHALLENGE AND MOBILIZE AMERICAN EVANGELICALS TO WORK, IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, TO MEET THE HEALTH ISSUES OF THE 1990'S. . . AND THE 21ST CENTURY.

AS A CHRISTIAN AND AS AN ADVOCATE OF HEALTH CARE REFORM, I'M OFTEN ASKED TO SPEAK ON THE HOW THOSE TWO FACETS OF MY LIFE GO TOGETHER.

ANY DISCUSSION OF THAT GETS ME INTO TINY TOPICS SUCH AS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY, THE OBLIGATION OF THE SOCIETY TO PROVIDE FOR THE GENERAL WELFARE, THE OBLIGATION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE GENERAL WELFARE, AND THE SPECIFIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PROVISION OF THE GENERAL WELFARE, AS WELL AS THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

IN FIVE MINUTES OR LESS.

OBVIOUSLY, ON ISSUES LIKE THESE YOU'LL GET AS MANY
ANSWERS AS THERE ARE ^{COLORS IN} ~~THE~~ THE SPECTRUM.

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOSE WHO MAINTAIN THAT THE
ROLE OF THE CHURCH IS PRIMARILY SPIRITUAL, AND THAT
CHRISTIAN ETHICS ARE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL, NOT FOR THE
SOCIETY, THAT THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND THE
TEACHINGS OF JESUS DEAL WITH OUR RELATIONSHIP AS
INDIVIDUALS, FIRST TO GOD AND THEN TO EACH OTHER, AS
INDIVIDUALS.

TRUE, THE CHURCH HAS AN OBLIGATION TO MEET THE GENUINE NEEDS OF ITS OWN WIDOWS AND POOR, BUT SHOULD NOT PLAY A SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE IN THE DELIVERY OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN A SOCIETY.

ACCORDING TO THIS RATHER MINIMALIST VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH, EACH CHRISTIAN HAS AN OBLIGATION IN SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF INDIVIDUAL NEED, AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE THOSE WHO STRESS THAT THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE AS THEIR MANDATE THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM ON THIS EARTH, AND THAT ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE SHOULD BE EMPLOYED TO MEET THIS ETHICAL COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY. FOR THESE PEOPLE THE BIBLICAL MODEL IS THE STORY OF JOSEPH, WHO USED ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE TO FEED NOT ONLY THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT, BUT THE SURROUNDING PEOPLES AS WELL.

WHILE I WON'T EXPOUND UPON MY OWN THEOLOGY ON THIS
ISSUE --IT LIES SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE-- I WILL SAY
THAT I BELIEVE THE CHURCH DOES HAVE A ROLE IN HEALTH
CARE, AS AN INSTITUTION, AND THAT INDIVIDUAL
CHRISTIANS HAVE A MAGNIFICENT OPPORTUNITY, OR REALLY
A MAGNIFICENT OBLIGATION.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS, I BELIEVE, ARE ESSENTIALLY OUR RESPONSE TO JESUS.

FIRST OF ALL THAT MEANS THAT FAITH MUST PRECEDE WORKS, THAT WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE, UNTO GOOD WORKS ALREADY ORDAINED FOR US TO DO.

SECOND, IT MEANS THAT MORE SPECIFICALLY WE ARE GUIDED BY THE TEACHINGS AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS.

AND IN MY BROADEST VIEW OF BIBLICAL ETHICS, UNDER THE DICTATES OF WHAT I'VE SAID SO FAR, WE ARE TO ALLEVIATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE EFFECTS OF THE CURSE.

THAT MEANS, ABOVE ALL, PREACHING THE GOSPEL. BUT IT
ALSO MEANS ALLEVIATING THE EFFECTS OF DECAY AND
DISEASE.

WE ARE TO BE OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER.

I REALIZE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A LONG DEBATE IN THE
CHURCH ABOUT JUST WHAT THAT MEANS, BUT IN GENERAL
CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH MITIGATING
HUMANITY'S SUFFERING.

THROUGHOUT MUCH OF MODERN HISTORY, REALLY UNTIL THE EMERGENCE OF THE WELFARE STATE IN THE 20TH CENTURY, THE CHURCH WAS THE PRIMARY INSTITUTION OF HEALTH CARE, AS CHURCH HOSPITALS, ORPHANAGES, HOSPICES, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF CARE LED THE WAY INTO THE MODERN WORLD OF OUR INSTITUTIONALIZED HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM.

THEN, FOR A WHILE, THE GREATER RESOURCES OF THE STATE AND THE PROFIT INCENTIVE IN THE PRIVATE HEALTH CARE SECTOR ECLIPSED THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE CHURCH. BUT NOW, AS TAXPAYERS ARE CALLING FOR A HALT IN THE GROWTH OF STATE EXPENDITURES, AS REGULATION RESTRICTS PRIVATE VENTURES, AS THE PUBLIC FEELS UNDER-SERVED BY BOTH THE STATE AND PRIVATE MEDICINE, THERE IS A NEW READINESS TO WELCOME THE CHURCH BACK AS A MAJOR PLAYER.

IN THIS AGE WHERE CHRONIC PROBLEMS OUTNUMBER ACUTE
HEALTH CARE CRISES, WHERE THE SUCCESS OF MEDICINE
HAS LED TO A LARGE ELDERLY POPULATION, WHEN PEOPLE
DESIRE, NOT JUST AN M.R.I. BUT ALSO SOME T.L.C.,
THERE IS A GROWING ROLE FOR CHURCH-RELATED
INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING CARE FOR THE SICK, THE
RECUPERATING, THOSE JUST HOLDING THEIR OWN, AND FOR
THE DYING.

I KNOW THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DETERMINE THE
ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY. THE
MINIMALIST ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE HEALTH CARE
SYSTEM OF THE FIRST CENTURY IS NOT A MANDATE FOR ALL
TIMES, BUT, I BELIEVE, WAS A FUNCTION OF ITS SMALL
SIZE, ITS LACK OF RESOURCES, ITS PERSECUTION BY THE
SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT.

THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
EXAMPLE A SEVERELY LIMITED ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN
CURING HUMANITY'S ILLS WOULD ALSO BE FORCED TO
ACCEPT IN OUR DAY THE SAME LIMITED PENETRATION OF
THE GOSPEL INTO SOCIETY THAT CHARACTERIZED THE NEW
TESTAMENT AGE.

AMERICAN CHRISTIANS AND AMERICAN SOCIETY HAVE NOT COME TO AN AGREEMENT ABOUT THE DEGREE TO WHICH CHRISTIAN ETHICS SHOULD BE PART OF THE NATIONAL ETHIC. CHRISTIANS ARE DIVIDED BETWEEN THOSE WHO WOULD DO ALL THEY COULD TO IMPOSE A CHRISTIAN ETHIC UPON A SECULAR SOCIETY AND THOSE WHO STRESS THE PLURALIST APPROACH, TRYING TO MAXIMIZE THE FREEDOM THAT CHRISTIANS --AND OTHER GROUPS-- HAVE TO PRACTICE THEIR OWN ETHIC AND EXPAND THEIR NUMBERS, BUT NOT ATTEMPTING TO USE THE POLITICAL PROCESS TO IMPOSE THAT ETHIC.

OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, AMERICAN CHRISTIANS ARE DIVIDED BETWEEN THOSE WHO BELIEVE SOCIETY IS BEST SERVED BY A CHRISTIAN ETHIC EVEN DIVORCED FROM TRUE BELIEF, AND THOSE WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT CHRISTIAN ETHICS CAN BE EXPECTED ONLY FROM THOSE WHO FIRST BELIEVE.

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT CHRISTIAN ETHICS,
APPLIED TO THE CURRENT HEALTH CARE DEBATE, WOULD
COMPEL US TO SEVERAL BROAD OBJECTIVES, AMONG WHICH
ARE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, AN APPROPRIATE
MEASURE OF INDIVIDUAL CHOICE, AND A FAIR SYSTEM OF
FINANCING. I KNOW THE DEVIL CAN BE IN THE DETAILS
ON ALL THESE ISSUES, BUT THAT'S HOW I WOULD PAINT
THE PICTURE IN BROAD STROKES.

AS FAR AS FINANCING IS CONCERNED, I THINK IT'S HARD
TO IMPROVE ON THE IDEA OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THAT WHAT
PEOPLE WANT, AND CAN AFFORD, THEY SHOULD PAY FOR,
BUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT --AND HERE THAT MEANS WE THE
PEOPLE, WE THE TAXPAYERS-- HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO
THE REST.

THESE ISSUES WILL BE DECIDED IN THE POLITICAL ARENA,
AND I'M NOT SURE THAT CHRISTIANS ALWAYS KNOW HOW TO
AS I SAID, EARLIER,
BEHAVE THERE. MY MAJOR CONCERN IN THIS AREA IS THE
EASE WITH WHICH EVANGELICALS, USUALLY ASSOCIATED
WITH "CONSERVATIVE" THEOLOGY, AUTOMATICALLY --AND
UNCRITICALLY-- EMBRACE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY. THE TWO DON'T NECESSARILY GO
TOGETHER.

AND THE RESULT WAS, INSTEAD OF THE EVANGELICAL RIGHT
USING THE POLITICAL RIGHT FOR OUR PURPOSES, THE
POLITICAL RIGHT USED THE EVANGELICALS FOR ITS
THOROUGHLY SECULAR, PARTISAN, SELF-SERVING
OBJECTIVES.

THIS BRINGS ME TO A RELATED DIMENSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE
THAT I AM ALMOST ASHAMED TO DISCUSS, BECAUSE IT
REVEALS A PERVASIVE ATTITUDE AMONG CHRISTIANS, WHICH
IS NOT ONLY SHORT-SIGHTED BUT ALSO MEAN-SPIRITED, IF
NOT DOWNRIGHT UNCHRISTIAN.

MANY PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN TO ME TO MAKE CLEAR THE
OPPOSITION TO ANY HEALTH CARE REFORM SIMPLY BECA
HEALTH CARE REFORM IS A MAJOR INITIATIVE OF THE
CLINTON ADMINISTRATION. THESE CHRISTIANS HAVE A
KNEE-JERK ANTIPATHY TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO MRS.
CLINTON, AND THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE NO HEALTH CARE
REFORM AT ALL THAN SEE ANY SUCCESS COME TO THE
CLINTONS.

THIS IS SHORT SIGHTED BECAUSE THE ISSUE OF HEALTH CARE REFORM WAS AROUND A LONG TIME BEFORE THE CLINTONS DISCOVERED IT, AND IT WILL BE AROUND A LONG TIME AFTER THEY LEAVE OFFICE. TO ASSOCIATE SUCH A SWEEPING ISSUE WITH ONE PERSON IS AS HISTORICALLY INACCURATE AS IT IS POLITICALLY FOOLISH.

THE ISSUES OF HEALTH CARE REFORM ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LUMPED INTO UNTHINKING AD HOMINEM BROADSIDES.

I AM NO CHAMPION OF THE CLINTON POLICIES, AND
ALTHOUGH THE CLINTONS HAVE ASKED MY ADVICE ON THEIR
HEALTH CARE PLAN, AND ALTHOUGH I HAVE APPEARED AS A
MODERATOR AT A NUMBER OF FORUMS THAT BROUGHT
TOGETHER MRS. CLINTON AND GROUPS OF PHYSICIANS IN
VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, I HAVE NEVER ENDORSED
THE CLINTON PLAN, AND THE CLINTONS VERY GRACIOUSLY
HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO NOT EXPECT ME TO
ENDORSE THEIR PLAN, MUCH LESS BE A SALESPERSON FOR
IT.

I HAVE BEEN DISTURBED, BUT UNFORTUNATELY NOT
SURPRISED, BY THE WIDESPREAD EVANGELICAL ATTACKS
ME BECAUSE OF "GUILT BY ASSOCIATION." AND I HAVE
BEEN ASHAMED OF THE VITRIOLIC OPPOSITION MANY
EVANGELICALS EXPRESS TOWARD A PRESIDENT WHO AT LEAST
HAS STATED A HIGH REGARD FOR THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN
AMERICAN SOCIETY, AND HAS SPOKEN CLEARLY ON NATIONAL
TELEVISION ABOUT HIS SOUTHERN BAPTIST ROOTS, ABOUT
SIN AND FORGIVENESS, ABOUT JESUS. I CANNOT TELL IF
HE MEANS EXACTLY THE SAME AS I MEAN BY THIS, BUT I
DO KNOW THAT EVANGELICALS SHOULD BE PRAYING FOR HIM
RATHER THAN PILLORYING HIM AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY. AT
WORST THE PRESIDENT --LIKE ANY OF US-- IS A SINNER
IN NEED OF THE GOSPEL. AT BEST HE --LIKE ANY OF US--
- IS A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE.

THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANS CAN
INFLUENCE THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE AND THE PROVISION
OF HEALTH CARE IS THROUGH THE WORDS AND ACTIONS OF
CHRISTIAN HEALTH CARE WORKERS --AND THERE ARE A LOT
OF THEM IN THAT ONE-SEVENTH OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

CHRISTIAN HEALTH CARE WORKERS SHOULD MARCH TO A
ETHICAL DRUMMER BEATING OUT A HIGHER STANDARD.

CHRISTIAN HEALTH CARE WORKERS SHOULD STAND OUT AS
THOSE WITH A SPECIAL DEVOTION TO TRULY CARING FOR
THOSE SICK PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO THEM, WHETHER FOR A
CORONARY BY-PASS OPERATION, OR CHANGING AN I.V.
BOTTLE, OR TAKING A MEDICAL HISTORY.

AND, CHRISTIAN PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE WORKERS SHOULD RESURRECT THE TRADITIONAL POLICY OF DONATED CARE.

WHEN I FIRST ENTERED MEDICINE, AND FOR MANY YEARS THEREAFTER, I AND MOST PHYSICIANS DID NOT EXPECT TO BE PAID FOR EVERYTHING WE DID. DONATING CARE TO SOME PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T AFFORD IT WAS SOMETHING EXPECTED OF THE PROFESSION.

ALL THAT VANISHED WITH THE COMING OF ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS LIKE MEDICARE.

IT SHOULD RETURN, AT LEAST IN PART,
AND THOSE IN THE CHURCH SHOULD LEAD THE WAY.

I CAN SAY, ON THE BASIS OF PERSONAL OBSERVATION AS WELL AS FROM A LONG PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, THAT NOTHING IS AS EFFECTIVE IN GETTING PEOPLE TO DO THE RIGHT THING AS THE TEACHINGS AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS.

AND NOW MY TIME IS OVER. IT WAS OVER SEVERAL YEARS
AGO AS YOUR SURGEON GENERAL, AND IT'S OVER NOW AS
YOUR SPEAKER, BUT NOT IN THESE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.
AND MY TIME IS NOT OVER AS A CHRISTIAN, AS A
CHRISTIAN WHO WILL SPEAK PUBLICLY, BOUND BY THE WORD
OF GOD, SPEAKING THE TRUTH AS I SEE IT, SPEAKING THE
TRUTH AS IT NEEDS TO BE SPOKEN.

THANK YOU

##

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