

and the deeds of these men—the philosophy which had so much to do with shaping the fortunes of this nation—was as Christian as the Sermon on the Mount. It was the philosophy of humanism—of the dignity of the individual. It was the philosophy of equality, brotherhood and freedom. It was the philosophy of the Man of Nazareth

It is abundantly clear to me that Christian philosophy and Christian ethics very strongly influenced the vital decisions reached by our forefathers when they erected the frame work of our government. It follows, in my way of thinking, that this same philosophy and these same ethics should guide us today as we go about the business of fashioning the policies and decisions of government and politics. If we turn away from them, we run a heavy risk of losing that freedom which is our most precious heritage.

William Penn, the great Quaker statesman and colonist, wrote these words: “Men must choose to be governed by God, or they condemn themselves to be ruled by tyrants.” We know that today a vast segment of the population of the world has condemned itself to be ruled by tyrants because it chose not to be governed by God.

In counting our blessings as free people, let us contrast the conditions under which we live in America with those of people condemned to live under the communist tyranny. For us, belief in God is the accepted basis for our personal and social life. On our coins and currency, on our public buildings, in courtrooms and legislatures, in our constitutions and laws—nearly everywhere we look we see evidence of the religious foundation of our country. In Soviet Russia, the building of the state toward the eventual triumph of communism is the publicly accepted basis for all personal and social life. Nearly everywhere the Russians look—on public buildings, in subways, in their newspapers—they find evidence of the absolute power of the state. In America, we go openly to the church of our choice. And while no one tells us we must or must not go, we are encouraged by national policy on freedom of religion, by public pronouncements and by social acceptance to participate more fully in the life of our church. In Russia, on the other hand, one can go to church only at the risk of being considered inferior and backward, and then only to a church that is compelled to acknowledge the right of the communist party to control Soviet life.

In America, we take it for granted that everyone has the right to worship God in his own way and to interpret his religion the best he can through his personal life. The government has no right to interfere in this process, nor can the church tell the state what to do. Let me quickly