

ADDRESS TO THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON  
POLICE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, BALTIMORE

May 11, 1968

While I am pleased to be here, I am even more pleased to see so many of Maryland's young leaders here today. In a spring when headlines have been dominated by disruptive youth, it is reassuring to see constructive youth. With so much attention focused on a minority of law-breaking youth, it is gratifying to realize that law-abiding youth remain the majority.

You are to be commended and congratulated for your concern; for the time you have taken to be here today; and for your willingness to make the law a positive, vital force for good within your community.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Maryland Association of Student Councils, and the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association are to be commended and congratulated for providing this forum for discussion. While we recognize that we cannot save our civilization in a single day — as the old saying goes, “even the journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step” — today's conference can be that first step forward.

It is most appropriate that the National Conference of Christians and Jews has taken the initiative in sponsoring programs to promote citizen support of the law. For our most basic reverence for the law stems from our Judaic-Christian tradition. Man first knew universal law through God and for centuries the Ten Commandments stood as the ultimate civilizing force. The Ten Commandments were truly revolutionary at a time when murder, theft and brute force had for centuries been accepted as the norm. One need only review the thousands and thousands of years, the strife and the immeasurable human suffering, required to guarantee and expand upon the very basic human rights established in the Ten Commandments to appreciate the importance of the law and its relationship to social progress.

Today — with Judaic-Christian culture as our base — some and *only* some of our nations have progressed to the point where we commonly accept the rule of laws rather than the rule of men; where we have representative government, free speech, press and worship. This evolution took more than 3000 years and we have seen in our lifetime — in countries such as Cuba and China — that a thousand years of progress may be overthrown in less than a thousand days.