

(Address delivered by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame, at the Washington Conference of Business, Education, and Government for Junior Achievement, Statler Hotel, Washington, D. C., February 1, 1956.)

THE PRICE AND PROMISE OF JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Youth is a time of fancy and dreams. I am not going to say that there is something wrong with this. Many older people go stale because they forget the dreams of their youth. In the world today, we say that such people lack vision, and the person without vision is unimaginative, stogy, dull, and often without personal achievement in life.

One of youth's greatest dreams is for a life of adventure. You can easily close your eyes and imagine yourself back in the stone age fighting giant bears and saber-toothed tigers with a flint-tipped spear. You can picture yourself crossing the Atlantic for the first time with Columbus, discovering the New World. And it doesn't take too much of a stretch of your imagination to see yourself crossing the great Western Plains, clad in buckskin astride a pinto pony, on the way to a promised land across the Rocky Mountains and the desert beyond.

The only trouble with this kind of dreaming is that you might

form the impression that all the thrill of adventure and accomplishment was in days gone by. The fact is that there have been few ages in the past, so full of opportunities and real adventure, as our own mid-twentieth century. Today we are on the verge of a new world: a world of newly-found nuclear energy, supersonic travel, earth satellites, and the sure promise of space travel to follow.

But high adventure in our day is not merely a matter of scientific and technological advances. There is an even more exciting opportunity for the full life in the realm of men and ideas, and the field for your vision today is the whole wide world, as well as our own country which today leads half a world. Take the world at large first. We are now enduring a special kind of peace called cold war. What is the cold war. Well, basically it is a war of two ideas that struggle in vital combat for the souls of men everywhere.

One idea is called totalitarianism, or Communism in its most poisonous actual form. Communists are visionary in a brutally materialistic sort of way. There is no secret about their basic ideas. They don't believe

in God, in any spiritual values like truth, or human rights, morality, or freedom. For the Communist, man is only of the earth, earthy. When he dies, he is dead like a dog and that is that. So they don't have much faith in man. He is manipulated like any animal for the good of the state, or the regime, or the party. No prayer, only force of arms. No God, but power. And no rest for the Communist until he has conquered the earth, with no holds barred in the ways and means of conquest.

The other idea is visionary, too. You might call it democracy, although you have to know what you mean by the word. The Founding Fathers of our country knew, when they said that man was created by God with certain rights life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness rights that no one can take from him because they come from God. The democratic ideal says that the state exists for man, not the other way around. It believes that man does have a future here and hereafter, that he does not live by bread alone, that great values like truth, and liberty, and honor, and virtue are not only worth living for, but worth dying for.

The cold war means that these conflicting ideas are so much at

odds today that they cannot live together in this world. It is going to be an uneasy world until one idea is real and vital for all the world. The world will be free or slave. We who live in the free half of the world will never sleep easily while the other half is oppressed, enslaved, unable to think or speak freely, unable to get together to protect their human rights, unable to worship their God.

You may be young, but you are old enough to understand and appreciate the fact that your very freedom in America today carries with it the obligation to help keep our country free, and to face the duty of doing whatever is demanded tomorrow to help others gain and enjoy their freedom which is as much God-given as ours. This great adventure is bound to touch your life in a thousand ways. And even in your dreams you have to know where you stand, and what you stand for.

Did you know that a young man, no older than yourselves, played a decisive role in establishing this freedom that we cherish in America today. During the terrible Winter that the Continental Army spent at Valley Forge, General Washington became so discouraged at the odds that he sat in his tent

and wrote a letter of resignation. Before posting it, he took a walk around the encampment. Seeing a young recruit from Boston writing a letter in a corner, and ever fearful of spies, Washington asked to see what the young man had written. The letter was to the boy's mother. In it, he wrote that these were trying days, but the cause was just, and they had a great and inspired leader in Washington, so in the Spring, they would march and they would win. Washington was so touched by the courage and vision of the young recruit that ashamed of his own discouragement, he returned to his tent and burned his letter of resignation.

The one great temptation today, as we live during the cold war, is for security. Security is the great enemy of adventure and of achievement, junior or otherwise. How secure were the stone age men, the crew aboard Columbus' Santa Maria, the trail scouts of the Western prairies. How secure were the Founding Fathers when they defied the greatest political power of their times to proclaim the freedom of the colonies. How secure the frozen, ill-clad, badly equipped, and hungry army at Valley Forge. How

secure is the pilot of the newest supersonic aircraft. How secure will the men be who take the first rocket to the moon.

No, heroes and pioneers never look for security, but only for the opportunity to take a forward move bravely, and to be right, not just foolhardy, with their courage. The day we put the highest value on security, instead of on right, and truth and opportunity to serve, that day we will be a stagnant and a dying nation. This is the great blessing of youth for a nation, that young people rise to inspiration, are generous and courageous, and have enthusiasm enough to give all they have in a good cause. They won't be sold out for a cheap and shoddy sense of security.

Young people are ready to go down fighting, as many of your older brothers did in World War, II, rather than to have peace at any price at the hands of Nazis and Fascists. That is why American young people like sports, because on the playing field everyone has an equal chance to win. The upset victory is the greatest, because someone won when he wasn't supposed to. Competition separates the men from the boys, and no game is won until the final gun.

Two young men went in to get a job the other day. One asked what the company would do for him, how high the pay, how automatic the advancement, how long the vacation, how great the fringe benefits. The other young man looked his prospective employer in the eye and said that he only wanted a chance to show what he could do for the company. You know which one was hired. One wanted security. The other wanted a chance to prove he had something to give.

It is you young people who will make the world we live in tomorrow. It may well not be a secure world, because evil will always have its play. But it will be a good world if you keep your vision of what can be achieved, and have the courage, the inspiration, and enthusiasm to give your all for your vision. For each of you it may be something different that you alone can bring to this world. Some of you may go into politics, and I hope you do, because we can never have good government without good people running it. Some cynic once said that the people with good ideas take care of themselves and the people with bad ideas take care of everyone else. Some of you should carry your good ideas into public service.

Some of you may go into the professions, and you are needed here, too. We will always need clergymen to bring God and spiritual values into the lives of people, and to bring people closer to God; teachers and researchers who bring a thirst for truth to their profession of educating and inspiring the young people of tomorrow; medical doctors to cure the ills of the body, to conquer disease, and to lift up the sick of mind and body; lawyers to stand up for justice and order when others would oppress and distort, to frame good laws for the good of the whole people, and to uphold the rights of men when they have been transgressed.

Many of you will go into business. Remember always that men and women are at the heart of all economic endeavor, and that money is a means to the good life, not an end in itself. Remember that human minds and hands are more important than machines in the course of economic progress. Remember that all the good ideas have not yet been thought, or all the good businesses yet founded. One may still be a pioneer in this world, but initiative, and vision, and courage, and hard work are still the price of being a pioneer, even in the world of business. And

when you have been successful, remember that you did not do it all by yourself. Help the country that gave you your golden opportunity by being civic minded, help the schools that educated you, that more young people may be educated and educated better, serve the good causes in your community.

All I have been saying is simply this: there are two kinds of people in this world -- those who serve themselves, and those who serve others. Those who serve themselves and where they begin, with themselves, and with their narrow, selfish, petty lives. Those who serve others, no matter where, when, or how, somehow lose their lives to gain them, and gain a richer, happier life, and leave behind them a richer, happier world. This is the great achievement. There is nothing junior about it, but you have to begin it some day, to see how it works, and to see it grow. What I like about all of you is that while young, you have already begun, and your present junior achievement gives great hope and promise to America and to the world: a preview of the great senior achievement that lies before you.