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REMARKS FOR THE YOUTH FOR CHRIST CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1988

-- THANK YOU, I'M VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS EVENING. MY HUSBAND SENDS HIS WARMEST REGARDS AND AFFECTION TO EACH OF YOU, AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING WITH YOU TOMORROW.

-- THE OTHER DAY, WHEN I TOLD HIM I WOULD BE SPEAKING HERE, HE SAID HE HAD A QUOTE YOU MIGHT APPRECIATE; HE THEN SHUFFLED THROUGH HIS DESK AND PULLED OUT A SLIP OF PAPER. THIS IS WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON IT:

"A WICK DARE NOT TAKE CREDIT FOR A FLAME, ANY MORE THAN A CELLO CAN ACCEPT PRAISE FOR A SONATA. BUT IT IS A JOY TO REALIZE THAT A LIGHT -- NOT OF OUR MAKING -- CAN SHINE THROUGH US, AND THAT A MELODY -- NOT OF OUR REALM -- CAN ARISE FROM WITHIN US."

-- THE JOY OF CHRIST'S LIGHT AND CHRIST'S MELODY IS WHAT THIS GATHERING IS ALL ABOUT.

-- I KNOW THERE WILL BE MUCH PERSONAL WITNESSING IN THE

COURSE OF THE WEEK. I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT SOMETHING I'VE NEVER SPOKEN OF PUBLICLY, SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN MY OWN FAMILY.

-- MY FATHER, WHO DIED 6 YEARS AGO, WAS A BRILLIANT MAN, AN INTERNATIONALLY-KNOWN BRAIN SURGEON. HE WAS A PERSON OF TREMENDOUS SELF-CONFIDENCE AND INTELLECT. SO IT IS IRONIC THAT HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE WAS INFLUENCED BY A SMALL, PETTY EVENT THAT HAPPENED IN HIS CHILDHOOD. WHEN HE WAS A BOY, THERE WAS A CONTEST IN HIS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS. THE WINNER WAS TO RECEIVE A BIBLE. MY FATHER KNEW

HE'D WON THE CONTEST, FOR EVEN THEN HE WAS TOTALLY CONFIDENT IN HIMSELF AND HIS ABILITIES. HE SIMPLY COULDN'T ACCEPT IT WHEN THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN TO THE CHILD OF THE MINISTER. AND IN REACTION, MY FATHER -- FEELING WRONGED AND DISILLUSIONED -- ALLOWED NO PLACE FOR FAITH IN HIS LIFE FOR THE NEXT 80 YEARS.

-- HE WOULD TAKE MY MOTHER AND ME TO CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL, BUT HE'D LEAVE AND COME BACK ONLY WHEN IT WAS TIME TO PICK US UP. MY MOTHER HAD A VERY DEEP RELIGIOUS FAITH, SHE READ

HER BIBLE EVERY NIGHT. AND IT WAS THAT DEEP AND ABIDING FAITH THAT HELPED HER TREMENDOUSLY AT THE END OF HER LIFE.

-- BUT MY FATHER DIDN'T HAVE THAT AND AT THE END OF HIS LIFE, HE WAS TERRIBLY FRIGHTENED. HE WAS EVEN AFRAID TO GO TO SLEEP FOR FEAR HE WOULDN'T WAKE UP. HE'D MOVE FROM CHAIR TO CHAIR TRYING TO KEEP AWAKE AND I GUESS ALIVE. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH IT HURT TO SEE HIM THIS WAY -- THIS MAN WHO HAD ALWAYS BEEN SO SUPREMELY CONFIDENT AND STRONG IN MY EYES. MY HUSBAND

WROTE HIM TWO LONG LETTERS EXPLAINING THE ENCOMPASSING COMFORT HE'D RECEIVE IF HE'D JUST PUT HIMSELF IN THE LORD'S HANDS.

-- I WAS AT THE HOSPITAL WITH HIM, BUT MY FATHER NEVER MENTIONED TO ME WHAT HAPPENED NEXT; THE DOCTORS TOLD ME. TWO DAYS BEFORE HE DIED, HE ASKED TO SEE THE HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE CHAPLAIN DID OR WHAT HE SAID, BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, IT WAS THE RIGHT THING AND IT GAVE MY FATHER COMFORT. I NOTICED HE WAS CALMER AND NOT AS FRIGHTENED. WHEN HE DIED THE

NEXT DAY, HE WAS AT PEACE, FINALLY. AND I WAS SO HAPPY FOR HIM.

-- MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.

-- THE REASON I TELL YOU THIS STORY IS BECAUSE YOU HERE THIS EVENING ARE SO FORTUNATE THAT YOU'VE FOUND A STRONG FAITH AT AN EARLY AGE. I AM PROUD OF YOU AND HAPPY FOR YOU.

-- YOU'VE COME TO THIS CONGRESS ON EVANGELISM TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN SPREAD THE WORD. I'VE COME TONIGHT TO ASK YOUR HELP IN SPREADING AN ADDITIONAL MESSAGE, A MESSAGE ABOUT DRUGS.

-- A MEMBER OF MY STAFF THE OTHER DAY SAW A BUMPER STICKER THAT SAID, "PEOPLE WHO DO DRUGS GO TO HELL BEFORE THEY DIE." AND IT'S TRUE. THOSE HOOKED ON DRUGS LIVE IN A PERSONAL HELL. EXCEPT FOR THEIR TEMPORARY, FLEETING ESCAPES, THEY LIVE IN CONSTANT TORMENT AND EMOTIONAL PAIN. THEIR LIVES BECOME SO TWISTED THAT A CHEMICAL HIGH BECOMES THEIR HEAVEN, THE NEXT FIX BECOMES THEIR SALVATION. IT IS A PITIFUL, HEART-WRENCHING SIGHT TO SEE. AND I'VE SEEN IT ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY AND AMONG ALL RACES AND

CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

-- IN DANTE'S INFERNO, THE ENTRANCE TO HELL IS MARKED WITH THESE WORDS, "ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE." THAT DESCRIBES THE FATE OF SO MANY WHO BECOME INVOLVED WITH DRUGS. AND IT IS ESPECIALLY TRAGIC TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE WITHOUT HOPE.

-- FOR MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, DRUGS TAKE THE PLACE OF FAITH. THEY FEEL AN EMPTINESS, A LONGING, A NEED INSIDE THAT THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO FILL, SO THEY TURN TO DRUGS, AND WE KNOW THE RESULTS.

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-- DRUGS UNDERMINE EVERYTHING THAT WE CHERISH. DRUGS NOT ONLY DESTROY THE BODY AND THE MIND, BUT THEY POSSESS THE SOUL. THEY SNUFF OUT ANY LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT. TRUTH HAS NO MEANING. LOVE AND KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY HAVE NO PLACE. FAMILY HAS NO PURPOSE. WHEN DRUGS MOVE INTO AN INDIVIDUAL, LOVE, TRUST, SELF-RESPECT, AND FAITH ARE FORCED OUT. AND ALL THAT'S EVENTUALLY LEFT IS AN EMPTY, HOLLOW SHELL.

-- YOU KNOW, WHEN I PRAY ABOUT THE DRUG CRISIS, SOMETIMES I

ASK FOR HELP IN RESCUING THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM DRUGS. SOMETIMES I PRAY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THOSE WHO ARE IN DANGER OF GIVING IN TO THE TEMPTATION. OTHER TIMES I GIVE THANKS FOR ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES WHO ARE RESISTING DRUGS. YOU ARE THE HOPE. YOU ARE THE ROLE MODELS FOR OTHERS. THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE, THROUGH LETTING OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW YOU THINK DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS AND STUPID, YOU CAN CHANGE ATTITUDES.

-- YOU MIGHT NOT REALIZE IT, BUT YOU'RE A THREAT TO THE

DEALERS AND TRAFFICKERS. YOU'RE A DANGER TO THE CASUAL USER, BECAUSE YOU CAN DEFEAT THE NOTION THAT DRUGS ARE ACCEPTABLE. YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE MORE POWER TO STOP DRUGS THAN ALL OUR DRUG AGENTS AND OUR POLICE AND OUR MILITARY COMBINED.

-- AND BECAUSE YOU ARE SUCH A THREAT TO THE DRUG CULTURE, YOU HAVE TO EXPECT TO BE CRITICIZED, EVEN RIDICULED WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR ANTI-DRUG VIEWS KNOWN. I UNDERSTAND IT'S SOMETIMES NOT EASY, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL. YOU MAY BE TOLD TO MIND

YOUR OWN BUSINESS. YOU MAY BE CALLED A DO-GOODER. YOU MAY BE CALLED UP-TIGHT. IN FACT, YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN CALLED SUCH THINGS BECAUSE YOU'VE STOOD UP FOR CHRIST. WHEN IT COMES TO DRUGS, THE REASON FOR SUCH PUT DOWNS IS THAT YOU'RE A DANGER; YOU'RE A DANGER TO THE DRUG ATTITUDES THAT HAVE RULED THIS COUNTRY FOR THE PAST TWO DECADES.

-- YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. AND IN CLOSING, LET ME RELATE A TRUE STORY THAT MY HUSBAND TELLS WHICH HAPPENED WHEN WE WERE

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LIVING BACK IN CALIFORNIA. THERE WERE SOME BEACHFRONT HOMES THAT WERE IN DANGER OF BEING DESTROYED BY AN ABNORMALLY HIGH TIDE AND HEAVY SURF. THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND THE COLD NIGHT, VOLUNTEERS HAD WORKED AWAY, FILLING AND PILING SANDBAGS IN AN EFFORT TO SAVE THE HOMES.

-- AND, OF COURSE, BECAUSE OF THE DRAMA OF THE SITUATION, LOCAL TV STATIONS WERE ON THE SCENE. AND IT WAS ABOUT TWO IN THE MORNING WHEN ONE NEWSCASTER INTERVIEWED A FELLOW IN HIS TEENS WHO

WAS DRESSED IN ONLY WET SWIM TRUNKS. HE AND HIS BUDDIES WERE OBVIOUSLY COLD AND TIRED, SO THE REPORTER ASKED HIM IF HE LIVED IN ONE OF THE HOMES THEY WERE TRYING TO SAVE. HE SAID NO. SO THE REPORTER ASKED IF ONE OF THE HOMES BELONGED TO ANY OF HIS FRIENDS. AGAIN, THE ANSWER WAS NO. SO FINALLY THE MAN ASKED, "WELL, WHY ARE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS DOING THIS?" AND THE YOUNG MAN STOPPED A MINUTE AND THEN SAID, "WELL, I GUESS IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE EVER FELT LIKE WE WERE NEEDED."

-- YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NEEDED. YOU ARE NEEDED TO DO IMPORTANT THINGS. YOU HAVE TREMENDOUS POWER. I KNOW THAT BY YOUR NUMBERS AND BY THE COMMITMENT THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE. I ASK YOU, PLEASE, USE THIS POWER TO HELP US CHANGE YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARD DRUGS. HELP US SAVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT AS STRONG AND CONFIDENT AS YOU ARE. YOU GENUINELY CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE, BECAUSE AS ONE CHRISTIAN SAID, "WHAT GOD EXPECTS US TO ATTEMPT, HE ALSO ENABLES US TO ACHIEVE."

-- THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME, GOODNIGHT, AND GOD BLESS YOU.

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