

Getting Along With People

By REAR ADMIRAL ARTHUR F. SPRING

Remarks by Rear Admiral Arthur F. Spring, USN, at the Second Annual Convention of the eight Masonic district at Lincoln Lodge number 34, F.&A.M., Olongapo on 20 February 1960.

Most Worshipful Grand Master Ofilada, District Deputy Grand Master Ramos, Worshipful Master Cruz, members of Masonic Lodges of Bataan and Zambales, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

First, I would like to tell you why I am here today. I am here because of two paragraphs contained in the letter of invitation sent to me by Mr. Niguidula, your executive secretary for this convention. I would like to read these two paragraphs to you.

"Our fraternity is dedicated to the tenet that all men are brothers because they are the children of one God. From this tenet emanated the beautiful ideals on which your country has been founded, grown, and prospered. With the guidance and assistance of your people and on these same ideals we hope to build our country.

"At present there seem to be a cleavage between our respective peoples. This cleavage, we believe, is due to the lack of understanding of the motives and aspirations, the customs and traditions of your people and ours. It is our earnest desire to heal this cleavage."

He further stated in his letter that I would be permitted to speak to you on any subject of my choosing. This makes all of you my captive audience. The programs are printed and you are stuck with me. There isn't much you can do about it now.

May I say at this point that in my 34 years in the United States Navy, no officer or man has ever had any influence on my career because of my race — I'm Irish — because of my religion — I'm a Catholic — or because of my beverage preferences — I like scotch.

I am not a philosopher, a sociologist, nor am I a psychiatrist. I have been trying hard to be a good sailor in the U.S. Navy and I have not stopped trying yet. This has been my one and only ambition and still is. During these 34 years, I have had, at various times, more than a quarter of a million officers and men either under my command or under my direct charge. In that length of time, anyone is bound to learn a little bit about human nature. It is on some of the more practical aspects of human nature that I wish to talk with you today.

A few years ago, tragedy exploded at sea aboard one of our aircraft carriers, the USS Bennington. Many men were killed and hundreds were critically burned and injured. The people who wear the uniform that I wear take heroism for granted. In that incident, shipmates turned to and

worked for hours in smoke-filled compartments carrying bodies of dead and wounded into the open spaces. Self-sacrifice became the order of the day. No orders, no requests, no requisitions; and, above all, no thanks were sought. Every man on that ship was interested in one thing only and that was his fellow man — every other man aboard that ship.

As news of the disaster sped through radio and television into the homes of the nation, men and women of all ages, races, and creed wept and prayed and offered whatever they could in the way of help and cooperation. When the ship docked, thousands of people filled the dock area where the victims were being taken to hospitals in the nearby areas. These people were not thrill seekers or curiosity driven idlers. Only a few of the crowd were families and close friends of the men on board the ship. The rest were just simply people — all kinds of people whose hearts were thrown wide open toward their fellowmen in suffering. Blood donors were turned away by the thousands. They couldn't use all the blood that was offered. Doctors, clergymen, nurses aides, and volunteer workers of every sort worked around the clock for the wounded and the dying and to console the families of the young men who had already died. Over at the naval hospital, a sailor was observed throughout the entire day and far into the night working without a break carrying out little tasks and menial jobs in the wards. Someone asked him about midnight how long he had been a hospital corpsman there at the hospital. "Oh, I am not a corpsman. I am a patient. I was here to have

half my lung removed; but, if I can free some corpsman who is trained to help these boys who are burned, then I am happy to do anything I can."

Now, this is not a unique incident that happens only in America. Familiar situations have brought similar responses time after time throughout my country and here in the Philippines as well.

What is there about human beings that makes them so important to others? What good are they? We are human beings. What good are we? Let's take anyone here at this convention. I know you are as good, if not better, than I am.

The chemist tells me that I am worth about \$1.76 at current price. My body can boil down to enough fat for seven bars of soap, enough iron for a single nail, enough zinc to whitewash a church door, enough sulphur to deflea a dog, and enough phosphorous to make 24 matches. So, let's face it. From the viewpoint of a chemist, neither you nor I am worth much in today's market.

Now, let's forget the chemist and take the efficiency expert. How much are we worth in terms of work produced per day or in work potential? He could measure us statistically in terms of horsepower. No matter how we figured it, he would end up in measuring you and me in terms of our usefulness to others. This sounds pretty good, but is that really the way we want to be measured? Will this give us the answer to the question, "what good are you and I?" I do not think you want to buy those words "usefulness to others" as a measuring rod of the worth of a human being.

If I wanted to prepare a rice field, I would rather have a carabao than any six of you. The carabao would be more useful to me. If I wanted to get to Iba, I would rather have an automobile or a scooter than any twenty of you. If I wanted to make a road, I would rather have a bulldozer than any fifty of you.

At this point, I may sound confused; but I am not ready to buy the theory that you can measure a human being in terms of his usefulness to others, or by how much he or she can produce.

If usefulness to others is the criteria for existence, then here would be the efficiency expert's program. First, we kill off all the babies because they cannot work; and they only eat food that could feed those who can work. Then, of course, we kill off all the feeble-minded, all the cancer-ridden, all the hopeless invalids. Then we kill everybody over 80 years of age. Then we look around, and we kill off everybody who is apparently filling no useful purpose — everybody who is producing nothing.

This program sounds ridiculous, but this program also sounds a little familiar to your generation and mine. It was only a few years ago that the Nazis set out to destroy the Jews in their gas chambers. Do you remember what Hitler's right-hand man, Goebbels, said about people like you and me? He said: "I have learned to despise the human being from the bottom of my soul. He makes me sick in the stomach."

Let's get back on the track. Obviously, you and I won't buy the chemist's evaluation of us, and we will agree that the efficiency expert's yardstick of usefulness doesn't fit. We certainly don't



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buy the totalitarian or the communist view on human beings. Then, perhaps we should be measured not by what we can do, but by what we are.

Abraham Lincoln had a birthday last week. He once said, "nothing stamped with the divine image and likeness of God was sent into the world to be trodden on and degraded and imbruted by its fellows."

Honest Abe didn't have to say all that. He could have said it in one word — equality. If we were to be measured by our usefulness to others or by how much we produce, then how could democracy talk in terms of equality or human rights?

Some men and women work harder and produce more than others. Some have greater talents. Some are more useful.

We talk a great deal in America about equal rights. We broadcast to the world that our nation is rooted in the principles of liberty and justice for all. We say that all men are created equal,

and there is nothing in our constitution or bill of rights about usefulness.

I mentioned Goebbels a minute ago; now, let's hear what Nietzsche, who was the prophet of all forms of totalitarianism, had to say about equality. He said, "the equality of souls before God, this is a lie — this is Christian dynamite." Certainly it is dynamite. It completely explodes all the false theories that man is a servant of the state, that man is worth only what he produces or that man can be measured in terms of his usefulness to others. The story of the philosophies of men such as Goebbels and Nietzsche in our own lifetime has been a story of tragedy written in blood, in suffering in the choking out of freedom behind gray prison bars, in the grim caverns of concentration camps, and in the vapor of gas chambers. Here in these surrounding hills, these philosophies took their toll in the death march; and Filipinos and Americans want no more of these philosophies. An iron curtain today covers half of the world, shutting out all hope of real freedom, of liberty, of justice, and equality for all.

We should remind ourselves that equality, justice, and freedom are the real issues at stake in the world today. We must understand the fact that either a man is a man, a person of dignity, of nobility, a creature of God, a being of priceless value whether he be a babe in the crib or a crippled old man, whether he be a musician or a ditch digger, a private or an admiral, a philosopher or an imbecile. On the other side of the iron curtain, he is a baboon, a machine, a faceless, heartless, soulless, meaningless number in somebody's book. Filipinos and Ame-

ricans are not yet ready to admit that bread and rice are political weapons and that only those who think our way can eat.

You may say those things can happen in Europe or those things can happen in China, but they can never happen here. They certainly can happen here. They can happen here if we ever forget that the group, the community, or the country exists for the individual and not vice versa. They can happen here if we ever discard the idea of the greatest good for the greatest number. In order to attain the greatest good for the greatest number, it is obvious that we have to get along with other people. We all know that getting along with others under all circumstances is not the easiest thing in the world for most of us. Many of us do get along with at least a majority of the people we meet.

I have found that the key to getting along with others includes the concept of respect for others—treating others as we would like to be treated in return.

I think most of us in this room have said a pledge many times that includes the words, "liberty and justice for all." What do we mean by liberty? What do we mean by justice? Let us say that liberty is freedom under law and that justice is the giving to every man what is due him. We can well say that these twin columns are the foundation of our entire system of democracy. The words "liberty and justice for all" are not intended to have a hollow ring. They mean a lot. Anyone who considers them simply a party line, or a few words we teach our school children, or a handy phrase for fourth of July picnic

does not know much about the history of the United States and the history of the Philippines. The people of both our countries have poured out a lot of blood to prove that we mean these words. If we don't mean them, we are the world's prize fools; because no two nations on this earth have spent more in money, in sacrifice, and in lives than both our peoples have to prove this point.

These are the words that keep us in business in America. These are the words that liberated the Philippines. These are the words that you and I should consider in our daily business of getting along with other people and in the broader areas of national and international affairs. These are the words that are the very life blood of our two countries in war and peace, and it is the presentation of these two words that may determine whether we both will continue to live as free countries.

Both our countries had organization at one time known as "k-k-k." The Philippine k-k-k had somewhat different motives and objectives. In my country, the birthplace of democracy, some of you older people in the audience may recognize the k-k-k slogan. "Down with the Jews and the Catholics. Down with the protestants and Negroes. Down with those who do not believe as you believe, have your color of skin, go to your church, play at your country club, belong to your union."

Does this sound much like America, the nation that proclaims liberty and justice for all? It is things like this that discredit us very seriously before the world. Someone put it this way.

"Communism, the great threat to liberty and justice today, is the festering sore on our body from the poisons of injustices in the bloodstream of our own country." The very essence of democracy demands liberty and justice for all with no exceptions and no reservations. Liberty and justice for all is the exact opposite of prejudice. Does that line in Chesterton's poem have a familiar ring? "Oh, how I love humanity and hate my next-door neighbor."

Prejudice is a sickening word. All of us have felt it directed at us at one time or another, and there are few of us who can truthfully say, "not guilty" as we look back on our own lives.

Let's talk a little friendship. We hear a lot about Filipino-American, American-Filipino irritants. Whether you call it American-Filipino, Fil-Am, or Am-Fil, friendship, it is still an intangible thing. The Filipino man in the street doesn't really understand what it is all about, and I think you and are somewhat confused. One of the real secrets of friendship is that friendship comes to us in direct proportion to the way in which we give friendship away. If you want friends, you have to be friendly yourself. It is impossible to do anything worthwhile for anyone that does not pay dividends in return somehow, somewhere.

I have found these principles to be certainly true in the Subic Bay area. President Eisenhower's people-to-people program, which I have pushed religiously since my arrival a year ago, has now boomeranged. The municipal officials, the provincial officials, the Jaycees, the Rotarians, and most of the

good people in Olongapo have united together in a Filipino people-to-people program directed at us Americans. We are not *developing* friendship — We are merely *reaffirming* the friendship that has solidly obtained between Americans and Filipinos for over sixty years. Neither of our governments need have any concern over the Filipino-American relations in the Zambales and Bataan areas.

Once we start thinking in terms of others, it is remarkable how so many of our own troubles begin to fade away. Once we see how much more serious the problems of others are, we thank God for our own good fortune. In the country where everybody is blind, the one-eyed man is King.

When I read and hear all this trash about Filipino-American irritants and hear some people say that our friendship has gone to the dogs, I feel that people who live, think, and talk prejudice get these things started just about the same way a dog behaves in the middle of the night. Did you ever wake up around three o'clock in the morning and hear a neighbor's dog barking and then pretty soon your own dog starts to bark and the next thing you know all the dogs in the neighborhood are in the act. You hear about a dozen dogs barking, and the only one who knows what he is barking about is the one who started it; and then he discovers it was a false alarm that got him excited in the first place.

You Filipinos and we Americans have some homework to do on our books of friendship, and we had better

do a good job of it. The communists are beginning to think that we really are pulling apart. It is important that we be concerned. It is important that we remind ourselves that friendship between nations of the free world is one of the real issues at stake in our defense against the attack that communists have launched against us.

History has a way of repeating itself. The free world today is in much the same position our revolutionary patrons were in. Patrick Henry's immortal words hold true today. The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides. . . . It is too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and in slavery."

Most of my people and your people can understand our needs when we are in the thick of actual combat. Most of us are willing to die, if need be, for our country; but winning a peace, preserving our friendship and liberty and freedom in peace are just as important as dying on a battlefield or a battleship in war. My country can contribute guns, planes, and ships to the military defense of the Philippines; but defense of your people against communist subversion and infiltration and the attack on the minds of your people and your institutions is a job of defense which you Filipinos and you alone can do. This you must do if your freedom is to survive. This is what I mean by homework you have to do.

A reaffirmation of friendship is the need of the hour throughout the free world. Your people and my people are fraught with anxiety over the state

of the world; but we must constantly remind ourselves that the cure for any collective anxiety, the answer is collective courage and the ground of that courage is God.

Let us not reaffirm that, according to the chemist, we are worth so much in today's market. Let us not reaffirm that we are useful to each other or how much your country or my country can produce. Let us reaffirm that the Philippines is not one of the trouble spots in the free world today, but one of the spots of great hope. Today, one of the deepest needs of mankind is a need to feel a sense of kinship and friendship, one with another. This is the way of life we should affirm. It is by these affirmations that we can unite what is separated, overcoming darkness and death,

and bringing new light and life to all who sit in the darkness of fear. We will then be guiding the feet of mankind into the way of peace. It's what we are that counts. And what are we? We are creatures of God made in God's own image. We need to act the part.

Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to close with one of my favorite quotations. I am sure it is one of yours also. It was taken from the masthead of the January 1960 issue of your masonic publication, "THE CABLE TOW." It goes like this: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing that I can do or any kindness that I can show any human being, let me do it now and defer it not; for I shall not pass this way again."



1960 Officers of Dagahay Lodge No. 84