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Autumn Quarter Commencement Address by Charles Sawyer, Cincinnati
Attorney, in St. John Arena, Ohio State University, Friday, Dec. 18, 1964:

Members of the Graduating Class: -

When President Fawcett asked me to make this talk, I told him that I could say nothing of benefit to you. Out of college so long that I have forgotten what I learned, what can I say to a group of young men and women, who by their graduation have proved their superior intelligence? In fairness to myself, it might be said that this would perhaps apply to almost any speaker whom your persuasive President might bring before you. But every commencement must have a commencement speaker - so here we go!

Graduates are usually told that they are the hope of the future. Perhaps this has been said to you. Do not take it seriously. The hope of the future, or the despair and the agony of the future, are in the hands of Lyndon Johnson (or perhaps Hubert Humphrey), a talkative and brash young Englishman named Harold Wilson, a less talkative but equally brash old man named Charles De Gaulle, some tribal chieftains in Africa, perhaps including some cannibals - a few

dictators in South America, an undisclosed group in the Kremlin, and an aged man or group of men in China. Throughout the centuries which lie behind you it has been the character and the actions of a few men, beneficent or malign, which have molded the history of mankind.

To use only modern instances, would the world be the same if there had been no Hitler, no Churchill, no Einstein, no Lenin, no Edison, and, perhaps as men may say in time to come, no Pope John?

Over the years college graduates have faced somewhat the same prospects as their predecessors, who were told with some truth that there is nothing new under the sun - but today there is something new under the sun. There is an appalling prospect which previous graduates have not faced. Man, out of his curiosity and his arrogance, has opened and peered into the mysterious realm of the Creator. He has discovered and made effective the means of his own destruction.

As the nuclear club adds to its membership and possessors of the bomb secret, some of them evil and irresponsible, proliferate throughout

the world, this invention of man may, and probably will, eventually destroy us.

Of what stuff are you made? If you give up easily you may ask - why, then, should we think of the future? We cannot influence it and massive death is our prospect. If you are strong you will say - we live with the knowledge that each of us will die. The questions are only when? and how? The form of death may be different but we will live as we have before.

I am a lawyer, a Democrat, and a businessman. As a lawyer I have been taught not to give free advice, and it would be unseemly for me to pass the hat.

As a Democrat there is probably nothing to be said - the people have spoken - loudly.

As a businessman I might voice some views.

What will be your future? Some of you will be farmers, more will enter professional life, but most of you will in some way be

connected with business. I would like to say a few words in favor of business.

The word "business" is applied to the most distinctive phenomenon of American life. Other nations, of course, have successful and productive businesses - England, Germany, France, Italy and Japan might be mentioned. Many, including those I have listed, have produced great inventors, philosophers, artists, musicians, religious leaders, poets and writers. No nation, however, has approached the United States in its ability to produce the comforts of life in great quantities and at low prices.

What is American business? It is the complex of shareholders, employees, and managers which produces most of the material things which make our lives enjoyable. It gives to millions of employees and shareholders the income with which they can purchase these things.

American business also has made great contributions in time of war. The thing which won our last two wars, and played an important

part in the wars of our earlier years, was the genius of American business - to organize, to produce and to transport - not only the weapons of war but the accessories to the waging of war.

Business is not management alone; but a continued return upon the shareholder's investment and the continued employment of millions of men and women are dependent upon good management.

There are those inside and outside of academic life who believe that the success of our top-flight businessmen is mostly a matter of luck or favor. There are perhaps a few places where this is true - but the articles and books you may have read disparaging the management of American business are, for the most part, written by men who have never been in business, as the cliché has it "never had to meet a payroll", or by those who have occupied third-level positions with big corporations and have been fired for incompetence. They have a gift for writing but not a gift for business. Their books and articles do not give a true picture of American business management.

Businessmen, like others, are anxious to be first, to get ahead, to make a profit. They should try to make a profit. Failing businesses are not good for anyone. From whence come the vast sums spent by our great foundations for research and education - your education? They come from the profits of successful business.

Successful American businessmen are anything but stupid; their success is no accident. In small as in big business we find an indefinable something which distinguishes successful businessmen. They are hard workers, as are the top men in any field, but in addition they have a quality of judgment or instinct not easy to describe, which is not disclosed by any charts or graphs which economists produce. It is the quality which enables one man to succeed where another fails.

By the way, what would you be planning to do if there were no American business?

I have listed some things you may be doing. Perhaps I have

overlooked responsibility. We will need more inspectors to check our tax returns; more people to discuss and try to solve our manifold domestic problems; more people to hand out money while they direct the destinies of other nations throughout the world. Some of you already may be planning to join the Peace Corps. Perhaps all of you may finally be in Government and belong to one great peace corps - everybody taking care of everybody else.

Thus you may find yourselves in politics. Even if this does not happen you may find yourselves in politics.

Politics is carried on by politicians. Politicians run the Government - but who runs the politicians? - You! You possess the essence of Democratic Government - the right to vote. Use it on all occasions.

If you wish to become more than a voter - in other words, a politician, work at it - hard. If you run for office and lose - run again. If your party loses - do not be discouraged. No party stays

in power forever. As for principles and ideals, you should aim to keep this a good country in which to live - and if possible - make it better. Do not, however, expect to create a heaven on earth. It cannot be done.

I don't know enough about politics to give you any further advice but - if you go into politics, you will enjoy it.

And now I might indulge in one or two comments unrelated to business or politics.

William James is supposed to have said:

"The whole purpose of education is to enable a person to know a good man when he sees one." A good man is a good citizen!

I hope that your education has taught you to know a good citizen when you see one; and to be one.

Perhaps you will acquire, or you may possess it now, one attribute of a good citizen - a certain humility about your opinions and beliefs. Humility is, incidentally, a very attractive quality.

At this time you are, perhaps, quite sure of yourselves. That can be a valuable attribute. It may be well, however, not to force your views unrestrainedly on others.

Reading recently the diary of President Rutherford B. Hayes, I found this slight switch of an old Biblical saying: "He that mindeth his own business is better than he that taketh a city". Do not yield to the urge to attend to other people's business. Work hard at taking care of your own. Reflect, if you will, upon the people whom you know who make themselves miserable, and make others miserable, by not minding their own business.

This comment applies also to nations - what a wonderful and changed world this would be if each country would tend to its own business. If the Russians would demonstrate the value of Communism within Russia; if the Chinese would do the same thing within China; if the members of the United Nations, especially those with little experience and no money, would not undertake to tell the United States

what it should do; if the United States itself should achieve a certain humility and restraint and stop meddling in the problems of every so-called underprivileged nation of the world; if we could moderate our zeal to curb the so-called "colonial nations"; if we could be as restrained about Portugal in Angola as we were about India's unconscionable attack upon Goa; if the United States had saved the \$100,000,000 spent in an effort to crush the only solvent and anti-Communist leader in the Congo, whom we, at long last, by a fantastic but refreshing, timely and worthy reversal of policy are now supporting, so that his "white mercenaries" may rescue white missionaries from rape, torture and slaughter.

Am I suggesting that you should never interest yourselves in the welfare of others? Certainly not! I do suggest that your prime objective should be to make better citizens of yourselves.

"First cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see

clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye". And when your beam is gone and your sight is clear devote yourselves not only to good causes but to sensible causes.

I have a suggestion.

You will recall that "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth". This was probably good advice to Noah; it might be well, however, to go slow in following it today - add perhaps, but not multiply.

We are fighting traffic, we fight unemployment; we fight poverty; we fight for more schools at all levels. The source of each of these problems and many others is the same - too many people. In the not too distant future, if present trends continue, traffic will not be difficult - it will be stopped. There will scarcely be room enough to stand, let alone to move around. We may even have problems in our cemeteries. Perhaps we will be burying people in layers or standing them on end.

We add to the problem at the beginning and the end of life.

The discoveries of science and Government programs have made the terminal of life happier and longer; and dedicated doctors prolong life in many cases far beyond the point where the life in question is of any value to the individual or society. And now a group of doctors has extended application of the Hippocratic oath to the health problems of the fetus. At the moment perhaps we can assume that they will not feel called upon to delve any further back into the biological routine.

Furthermore, we contribute to the problem outside our own boundaries. In all parts of the world we furnish food, medicine and help of various kinds. It is, of course, more pleasing to talk about feeding the hungry than to talk about fewer babies; but whatever benefits we confer increase the population and aggravate the problem. Instead of giving the better life we should first give contraceptives and advice as to birth control.

In a recent discourse Sargent Shriver, head of the Peace

Corps, outlined a plan to recruit hundreds of doctors who will move out over the world with the laudable aim of promoting good health.

In the published quotes of this talk regretably I found not one word with reference to birth control.

Many years ago Thomas Malthus warned of what we now call "the population explosion". He stated that man's ability to propagate was greater than his ability to get the means of subsistence. Only war, pestilence, famine and misery were preventing overpopulation. He claimed that the English Poor Laws with their system of dole and bounties for large families aggravated the evils they were supposed to remedy.

Today, having largely reduced famine, pestilence and misery, his warning becomes impressive. It is no solace to reflect that the Atom Bomb may have replaced famine, pestilence and misery.

Except for the awesome threat of this same Atom Bomb, mankind has no problem which equals this one. Some, although not enough,

people now recognize this to be true. It is encouraging that the Ecumenical Council is willing at least and at last to discuss the matter. I note with interest and pleasure that Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz in discussing the war on poverty has joined the cause. While he does not use the words "birth control" he points out clearly the devastating results of large families in the poverty areas.

I believe this matter merits your serious consideration.

You have accumulated knowledge. Now you will accumulate experience. As the years unfold you will have the experience of adjusting to environment; the experience of work - to the point of exhaustion; the experience of creation when your children come into being; the exalting experience of success - in any field; the shattering experience of the death of someone dear and close to you; the experience of changing your views. You may have the experience of misfortune. Do not let anyone tell you that luck is unimportant. It can and will play a part in your future. It is well, however, to

remember, as they say in golf, that "the good golfers have all the luck".

Now has your education ended; in the words of Herodotus, you should continue to "learn as though you will live forever - and live as though you will die tomorrow".

I said earlier that a few individuals make history; it is surely possible that one of you - or more than one of you - will be a great leader.

Some one of you may point the way to save mankind from the holocaust which threatens. The goodness and the joy of life and its beauty and its glory and its awe and its mystery may not end. God in his wisdom may touch the hearts of the leaders of men - who knows? who knows? Perhaps in God's good time you or your children, or their children, will see the glorious dawn of a new day when hate will no longer rule men's minds, when the age-long hope of men for the good life will become a reality.

"When man will stand upon this earth as on a footstool, and laugh, and reach out his hands among the stars."

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