

carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice.”

Well, because these “quiet men” do not “raise their voices,” because they sometimes speak in soothing tones of brotherhood and peace, because, like other dictators before them, they’re always making “their final territorial demand,” some would have us accept them at their word and accommodate ourselves to their aggressive impulses. But if history teaches anything, it teaches that simpl-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly. It means the betrayal of our past, the squandering of our freedom.

So, I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority. You know, I’ve always believed that old Screwtape reserved his best efforts for those of you in the church. So, in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride—the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration’s efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real and verifiable reductions in the world’s nuclear arsenals and one day, with God’s help, their total elimination.

While America’s military strength is important, let me add here that I’ve always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we

face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

Whittaker Chambers, the man whose own religious conversation made him a witness to one of the terrible traumas of our time, the Hiss-Chambers case, wrote that the crisis of the Western world exists to the degree in which the West is indifferent to God, the degree to which it collaborates in communism’s attempt to make man stand alone without God. And then he said, for Marxism-Leninism is actually the second-oldest faith, first proclaimed in the Garden of Eden with the words of temptation, “Ye shall be as gods.”

The Western world can answer this challenge, he wrote, “but only provided that its faith in God and the freedom He enjoins is as great as communism’s faith in Man.”

I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose

last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man. For in the words of Isaiah: “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increased strength. . . . But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary. . . .”

Yes, change your world. One of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Paine, said, “We have it within our power to begin the world over again.” We can do it, doing together what no one church could do by itself.

God bless you, and thank you very much.

Source: National Center for Public Policy Research, <http://www.nationalcenter.org/ReaganEvilEmpire1983.html>.

Consider the source and the audience: President Reagan gave this speech to the National Association of Evangelicals. Would he have emphasized the same factors in a speech to a political group?

Lay out the argument and the underlying values and assumptions: What, for Reagan, is the relationship among freedom, democracy, peace, and a belief in God? What defines the differences between “good” and “evil”? Why is the Soviet Union the “evil empire”? What does Reagan think is the route to peace? What is the role of arms and national strength? What is the role of faith in God?

Uncover the evidence: What evidence or logic does Reagan offer for his claim that the best way to bring about world peace is by increasing America’s strength and refusing to take part in a nuclear freeze? Does he offer any evidence for the link between freedom and faith in God? Is it a link that can be verified? What kind of evidence would support it?

Evaluate the conclusion: Can you accept Reagan’s conclusions about the relationship of belief in God with freedom and democracy if you don’t share his faith? What conclusions can nonbelievers take from his speech?

Sort out the political implications: What are the advantages of framing one’s political struggles in terms of good and evil? What are the disadvantages?