

Barack Obama: Eulogy at the Funeral of Clementa Pinckney, Charleston, June 2015

Following the killing of 9 people at a Bible study group in [Charleston, South Carolina](#) President Barack Obama attended the funeral of the pastor of the church and South Carolina state senator, [the Reverend Clementa C. Pinckney](#).

The video is from [the C-SPAN Youtube channel](#), and the transcript from [the Washington Post](#).

President Barack Obama:

Giving all praise and honor to God.

(APPLAUSE) The Bible calls us to hope, to persevere and have faith in things not seen. They were still living by faith when they died, the scripture tells us.

(APPLAUSE)

They did not receive the things promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

We are here today to remember a man of God who lived by faith, a man who believed in things not seen, a man who believed there were better days ahead off in the distance, a man of service, who persevered knowing full-well he would not receive all those things he was promised, because he believed his efforts would deliver a better life for those who followed, to Jennifer, his beloved wife, Eliana and Malana, his beautiful, wonderful daughters, to the Mother Emanuel family and the people of Charleston, the people of South Carolina.

I cannot claim to have had the good fortune to know Reverend Pinckney well, but I did have the pleasure of knowing him and meeting him here in South Carolina back when we were both a little bit younger...

(LAUGHTER)

... back when I didn't have visible gray hair.

(LAUGHTER)

The first thing I noticed was his graciousness, his smile, his reassuring baritone, his deceptive sense of humor, all qualities that helped him wear so effortlessly a heavy burden of expectation.

Friends of his remarked this week that when Clementa Pinckney entered a room, it was like the future arrived, that even from a young age, folks knew he was special, anointed. He was the progeny of a long line of the faithful, a family of preachers who spread God's words, a family of protesters who so changed to expand voting rights and desegregate the South.

Clem heard their instruction, and he did not forsake their teaching. He was in the pulpit by 13, pastor by 18, public servant by 23. He did not exhibit any of the cockiness of youth nor youth's insecurities. Instead, he set an example worthy of his position, wise beyond his years in his speech, in his conduct, in his love, faith and purity.

As a senator, he represented a sprawling swathe of low country, a place that has long been one of the most neglected in America, a place still racked by poverty and inadequate schools, a place where children can still go hungry and the sick can go without treatment – a place that needed somebody like Clem.

(APPLAUSE) His position in the minority party meant the odds of winning more resources for his constituents were often

long. His calls for greater equity were too-often unheeded. The votes he cast were sometimes lonely.

But he never gave up. He stayed true to his convictions. He would not grow discouraged. After a full day at the Capitol, he'd climb into his car and head to the church to draw sustenance from his family, from his ministry, from the community that loved and needed him. There, he would fortify his faith and imagine what might be.

Reverend Pinckney embodied a politics that was neither mean nor small. He conducted himself quietly and kindly and diligently. He encouraged progress not by pushing his ideas alone but by seeking out your ideas, partnering with you to make things happen. He was full of empathy and fellow feeling, able to walk in somebody else's shoes and see through their eyes.

No wonder one of his Senate colleagues remembered Senator Pinckney as "the most gentle of the 46 of us, the best of the 46 of us."

Clem was often asked why he chose to be a pastor and a public servant. But the person who asked probably didn't know the history of AME Church.

(APPLAUSE)

As our brothers and sisters in the AME Church, we don't make those distinctions. "Our calling," Clem once said, "is not just within the walls of the congregation but the life and community in which our congregation resides."

(APPLAUSE)

He embodied the idea that our Christian faith demands deeds and not just words, that the sweet hour of prayer actually lasts the whole week long, that to put our faith in action is more than just individual salvation, it's about our collective

salvation, that to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless is not just a call for isolated charity but the imperative of a just society.

What a good man. Sometimes I think that's the best thing to hope for when you're eulogized, after all the words and recitations and resumes are read, to just say somebody was a good man.

(APPLAUSE)

You don't have to be of high distinction to be a good man.

Preacher by 13, pastor by 18, public servant by 23. What a life Clementa Pinckney lived. What an example he set. What a model for his faith.

And then to lose him at 41, slain in his sanctuary with eight wonderful members of his flock, each at different stages in life but bound together by a common commitment to God – Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lance, DePayne Middleton Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Myra Thompson.

Good people. Decent people. God-fearing people.

(APPLAUSE)

People so full of life and so full of kindness, people who ran the race, who persevered, people of great faith.

To the families of the fallen, the nation shares in your grief. Our pain cuts that much deeper because it happened in a church.

The church is and always has been the center of African American life...

(APPLAUSE)

... a place to call our own in a too-often hostile world, a

sanctuary from so many hardships.

Over the course of centuries, black churches served as hush harbors, where slaves could worship in safety, praise houses, where their free descendants could gather and shout "Hallelujah..."

(APPLAUSE)

... rest stops for the weary along the Underground Railroad, bunkers for the foot soldiers of the civil-rights movement.

They have been and continue to community centers, where we organize for jobs and justice, places of scholarship and network, places where children are loved and fed and kept out of harms way and told that they are beautiful and smart and taught that they matter.

(APPLAUSE)

That's what happens in church. That's what the black church means – our beating heart, the place where our dignity as a people in inviolate.

There's no better example of this tradition than Mother Emanuel, a church...

(APPLAUSE)

... a church built by blacks seeking liberty, burned to the ground because its founders sought to end slavery only to rise up again, a phoenix from these ashes. (APPLAUSE)

When there were laws banning all-black church gatherers, services happened here anyway in defiance of unjust laws. When there was a righteous movement to dismantle Jim Crow, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached from its pulpit, and marches began from its steps.

A sacred place, this church, not just for blacks, not just for

Christians but for every American who cares about the steady expansion...

(APPLAUSE)

... of human rights and human dignity in this country, a foundation stone for liberty and justice for all.

That's what the church meant.

(APPLAUSE)

We do not know whether the killer of Reverend Pinckney and eight others knew all of this history, but he surely sensed the meaning of his violent act. It was an act that drew on a long history of bombs and arson and shots fired at churches, not random but as a means of control, a way to terrorize and oppress...

(APPLAUSE)

... an act that he imagined would incite fear and recrimination, violence and suspicion, an act that he presumed would deepen divisions that trace back to our nation's original sin.

Oh, but God works in mysterious ways.

(APPLAUSE)

God has different ideas.

(APPLAUSE)

He didn't know he was being used by God.

(APPLAUSE)

Blinded by hatred, the alleged killer would not see the grace surrounding Reverend Pinckney and that Bible study group, the light of love that shown as they opened the church doors and invited a stranger to join in their prayer circle.

The alleged killer could have never anticipated the way the families of the fallen would respond when they saw him in court in the midst of unspeakable grief, with words of forgiveness. He couldn't imagine that.

(APPLAUSE)

The alleged killer could not imagine how the city of Charleston under the good and wise leadership of Mayor Riley, how the state of South Carolina, how the United States of America would respond not merely with revulsion at his evil acts, but with (inaudible) generosity. And more importantly, with a thoughtful introspection and self-examination that we so rarely see in public life. Blinded by hatred, he failed to comprehend what Reverend Pinckney so well understood – the power of God's grace.

(APPLAUSE)

This whole week, I've been reflecting on this idea of grace.

(APPLAUSE)

The grace of the families who lost loved ones; the grace that Reverend Pinckney would preach about in his sermons; the grace described in one of my favorite hymnals, the one we all know – Amazing Grace.

(APPLAUSE)

How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

(APPLAUSE)

I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

(APPLAUSE)

According to the Christian tradition, grace is not earned. Grace is not merited. It's not something we deserve. Rather, grace is the free and benevolent favor of God.

(APPLAUSE)

As manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. Grace – as a nation out of this terrible tragedy, God has visited grace upon us for he has allowed us to see where we've been blind.

(APPLAUSE)

He's given us the chance where we've been lost to find out best selves. We may not have earned this grace with our rancor and complacency and short-sightedness and fear of each other, but we got it all the same. He gave it to us anyway. He's once more given us grace.

But it is up to us now to make the most of it, to receive it with gratitude and to prove ourselves worthy of this gift.

For too long, we were blind to the pain that the Confederate Flag stirred into many of our citizens.

(APPLAUSE)

It's true a flag did not cause these murders. But as people from all walks of life, Republicans and Democrats, now acknowledge, including Governor Haley, whose recent eloquence on the subject is worthy of praise...

(APPLAUSE)

... as we all have to acknowledge, the flag has always represented more than just ancestral pride.

(APPLAUSE)

For many, black and white, that flag was a reminder of systemic oppression...

(APPLAUSE)

... and racial subjugation.

(APPLAUSE)

We see that now.

Removing the flag from this state's capital would not be an act of political correctness. It would not an insult to the valor of Confederate soldiers. It would simply be acknowledgement that the cause for which they fought, the cause of slavery, was wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

The imposition of Jim Crow after the Civil War, the resistance to civil rights for all people was wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

It would be one step in an honest accounting of America's history, a modest but meaningful balm for so many unhealed wounds.

It would be an expression of the amazing changes that have transformed this state and this country for the better because of the work of so many people of goodwill, people of all races, striving to form a more perfect union.

By taking down that flag, we express adds grace God's grace.

(APPLAUSE)

But I don't think God wants us to stop there.

(APPLAUSE)

For too long, we've been blind to be way past injustices continue to shape the present.

(APPLAUSE)

Perhaps we see that now. Perhaps this tragedy causes us to ask some tough questions about how we can permit so many of our

children to languish in poverty...

(APPLAUSE)

... or attend dilapidated schools or grow up without prospects for a job or for a career.

Perhaps it causes us to examine what we're doing to cause some of our children to hate.

(APPLAUSE)

Perhaps it softens hearts towards those lost young men, tens and tens of thousands caught up in the criminal-justice system and lead us to make sure that that system's not infected with bias.

(APPLAUSE)

... that we embrace changes in how we train and equip our police so that the bonds of trust between law enforcement...

(APPLAUSE)

... and the communities they serve make us all safer and more secure.

(APPLAUSE)

Maybe we now realize the way a racial bias can infect us even when we don't realize it so that we're guarding against not just racial slurs but we're also guarding against the subtle impulse to call Johnny back for a job interview but not Jamal...

(APPLAUSE)

... so that we search our hearts when we consider laws to make it harder for some of our fellow citizens to vote...

(APPLAUSE)

... by recognizing our common humanity, by treating every child

as important, regardless of the color of their skin...

(APPLAUSE)

... or the station into which they were born and to do what's necessary to make opportunity real for every American. By doing that, we express God's grace.

(APPLAUSE)

For too long...

(APPLAUSE)

For too long, we've been blind to the unique mayhem that gun violence inflicts upon this nation.

(APPLAUSE)

Sporadically, our eyes are open when eight of our brothers and sisters are cut down in a church basement, 12 in a movie theater, 26 in an elementary school. But I hope we also see the 30 precious lives cut short by gun violence in this country every single day...

(APPLAUSE)

... the countless more whose lives are forever changed, the survivors crippled, the children traumatized and fearful every day as they walk to school, the husband who will never feel his wife's warm touch, the entire communities whose grief overflows every time they have to watch what happened to them happening to some other place.

The vast majority of Americans, the majority of gun owners want to do something about this. We see that now.

(APPLAUSE)

And I'm convinced that by acknowledging the pain and loss of others, even as we respect the traditions, ways of life that

make up this beloved country, by making the moral choice to change, we express God's grace.

(APPLAUSE)

We don't earn grace. We're all sinners. We don't deserve it.

(APPLAUSE)

But God gives it to us anyway.

(APPLAUSE)

And we choose how to receive it. It's our decision how to honor it.

None of us can or should expect a transformation in race relations overnight. Every time something like this happens, somebody says, "We have to have a conversation about race." We talk a lot about race.

(APPLAUSE)

There's no shortcut. We don't need more talk.

(APPLAUSE)

None of us should believe that a handful of gun safety measures will prevent every tragedy.

It will not. People of good will will continue to debate the merits of various policies as our democracy requires – the big, raucous place, America is. And there are good people on both sides of these debates.

Whatever solutions we find will necessarily be incomplete. But it would be a betrayal of everything Reverend Pinckney stood for, I believe, if we allow ourselves to slip into a comfortable silence again.

(APPLAUSE)

Once the eulogies have been delivered, once the TV cameras move on, to go back to business as usual. That's what we so often do to avoid uncomfortable truths about the prejudice that still infects our society.

(APPLAUSE)

To settle for symbolic gestures without following up with the hard work of more lasting change, that's how we lose our way again. It would be a refutation of the forgiveness expressed by those families if we merely slipped into old habits whereby those who disagree with us are not merely wrong, but bad; where we shout instead of listen; where we barricade ourselves behind preconceived notions or well-practiced cynicism.

Reverend Pinckney once said, "Across the south, we have a deep appreciation of history. We haven't always had a deep appreciation of each other's history."

(APPLAUSE)

What is true in the south is true for America. Clem understood that justice grows out of recognition of ourselves in each other; that my liberty depends on you being free, too.

(APPLAUSE)

That – that history can't be a sword to justify injustice or a shield against progress. It must be a manual for how to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, how to break the cycle, a roadway toward a better world. He knew that the path of grace involves an open mind. But more importantly, an open heart.

That's what I felt this week – an open heart. That more than any particular policy or analysis is what's called upon right now, I think. It's what a friend of mine, the writer Marilyn Robinson, calls "that reservoir of goodness beyond and of another kind, that we are able to do each other in the ordinary cause of things."

That reservoir of goodness. If we can find that grace,
anything is possible.

(APPLAUSE)

If we can tap that grace, everything can change. Amazing
grace, amazing grace.

Amazing grace...

(SINGING)

(APPLAUSE)

... how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was
lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now, I see.

(APPLAUSE)

Clementa Pinckney found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Cynthia Hurd found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Susie Jackson found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Ethel Lance found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... DePayne Middleton Doctor found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Tywanza Sanders found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Daniel L. Simmons, Sr. found that grace...

(APPLAUSE) ... Sharonda Coleman-Singleton found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... Myra Thompson found that grace...

(APPLAUSE)

... through the example of their lives. They've now passed it onto us. May we find ourselves worthy of that precious and extraordinary gift as long as our lives endure.

May grace now lead them home. May God continue to shed His Grace on the United States of America.

US President Lyndon B. Johnson: War on Poverty, 1964

The [War on Poverty](#) was the unofficial name for legislation introduced by U.S. President [Lyndon B. Johnson](#) (1908 – 1973) during his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964 to address high levels of poverty in the US.

The transcript of which this video is a small extract can be downloaded from [the Miller Center website of the University of Virginia](#). The video is also from [the Miller Center, from its Youtube channel](#).

President Lyndon B. Johnson:

This administration today, here and now, declares

unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort.

It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won. The richest nation on earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it. One thousand dollars invested in salvaging an unemployable youth today can return \$40,000 or more in his lifetime.

Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the state and the local level and must be supported and directed by state and local efforts.

For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House.

The program I shall propose will emphasize this cooperative approach to help that one-fifth of all American families with incomes too small to even meet their basic needs.

Our chief weapons in a more pinpointed attack will be better schools, and better health, and better homes, and better training, and better job opportunities to help more Americans, especially young Americans, escape from squalor and misery and unemployment rolls where other citizens help to carry them.

U.S. President Richard Nixon:

Resignation Speech, 1974

In 1974, following his involvement in the the major political [Watergate scandal](#) and the administration's attempted cover-up, [President Richard Nixon](#) became the only president to resign the office. The address from the Oval Office in the White House was broadcast live on radio and television.

The transcript can be downloaded from [the PBS website](#). The video is [on the Richard Nixon Foundation Youtube channel](#).

President Nixon:

Good evening.

This is the 37th time I have spoken to you from this office, where so many decisions have been made that shaped the history of this Nation. Each time I have done so to discuss with you some matter that I believe affected the national interest.

In all the decisions I have made in my public life, I have always tried to do what was best for the Nation. Throughout the long and difficult period of Watergate, I have felt it was my duty to persevere, to make every possible effort to complete the term of office to which you elected me.

In the past few days, however, it has become evident to me that I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing that effort. As long as there was such a base, I felt strongly that it was necessary to see the constitutional process through to its conclusion, that to do otherwise would be unfaithful to the spirit of that deliberately difficult process and a dangerously destabilizing precedent for the future.

But with the disappearance of that base, I now believe that the constitutional purpose has been served, and there is no longer a need for the process to be prolonged.

I would have preferred to carry through to the finish whatever the personal agony it would have involved, and my family unanimously urged me to do so. But the interest of the Nation must always come before any personal considerations.

From the discussions I have had with Congressional and other leaders, I have concluded that because of the Watergate matter I might not have the support of the Congress that I would consider necessary to back the very difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office in the way the interests of the Nation would require.

I have never been a quitter. To leave office before my term is completed is abhorrent to every instinct in my body. But as President, I must put the interest of America first. America needs a full-time President and a full-time Congress, particularly at this time with problems we face at home and abroad.

To continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the President and the Congress in a period when our entire focus should be on the great issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation at home.

Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at noon tomorrow. Vice President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour in this office.

As I recall the high hopes for America with which we began this second term, I feel a great sadness that I will not be here in this office working on your behalf to achieve those hopes in the next 2 1/2 years. But in turning over direction of the Government to Vice President Ford, I know, as I told the Nation when I nominated him for that office 10 months ago,

that the leadership of America will be in good hands.

In passing this office to the Vice President, I also do so with the profound sense of the weight of responsibility that will fall on his shoulders tomorrow and, therefore, of the understanding, the patience, the cooperation he will need from all Americans.

As he assumes that responsibility, he will deserve the help and the support of all of us. As we look to the future, the first essential is to begin healing the wounds of this Nation, to put the bitterness and divisions of the recent past behind us, and to rediscover those shared ideals that lie at the heart of our strength and unity as a great and as a free people.

By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.

I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in the course of the events that led to this decision. I would say only that if some of my Judgments were wrong, and some were wrong, they were made in what I believed at the time to be the best interest of the Nation.

To those who have stood with me during these past difficult months, to my family, my friends, to many others who joined in supporting my cause because they believed it was right, I will be eternally grateful for your support.

And to those who have not felt able to give me your support, let me say I leave with no bitterness toward those who have opposed me, because all of us, in the final analysis, have been concerned with the good of the country, however our judgments might differ.

So, let us all now join together in affirming that common commitment and in helping our new President succeed for the

benefit of all Americans.

I shall leave this office with regret at not completing my term, but with gratitude for the privilege of serving as your President for the past 5 1/2 years. These years have been a momentous time in the history of our Nation and the world. They have been a time of achievement in which we can all be proud, achievements that represent the shared efforts of the Administration, the Congress, and the people.

But the challenges ahead are equally great, and they, too, will require the support and the efforts of the Congress and the people working in cooperation with the new Administration.

We have ended America's longest war, but in the work of securing a lasting peace in the world, the goals ahead are even more far-reaching and more difficult. We must complete a structure of peace so that it will be said of this generation, our generation of Americans, by the people of all nations, not only that we ended one war but that we prevented future wars.

We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

We must now ensure that the one quarter of the world's people who live in the People's Republic of China will be and remain not our enemies but our friends.

In the Middle East, 100 million people in the Arab countries, many of whom have considered us their enemy for nearly 20 years, now look on us as their friends. We must continue to build on that friendship so that peace can settle at last over the Middle East and so that the cradle of civilization will not become its grave.

Together with the Soviet Union we have made the crucial breakthroughs that have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms. But we must set as our goal not just limiting but

reducing and finally destroying these terrible weapons so that they cannot destroy civilization and so that the threat of nuclear war will no longer hang over the world and the people.

We have opened the new relation with the Soviet Union. We must continue to develop and expand that new relationship so that the two strongest nations of the world will live together in cooperation rather than confrontation.

Around the world, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, there are millions of people who live in terrible poverty, even starvation. We must keep as our goal turning away from production for war and expanding production for peace so that people everywhere on this earth can at last look forward in their children's time, if not in our own time, to having the necessities for a decent life.

Here in America, we are fortunate that most of our people have not only the blessings of liberty but also the means to live full and good and, by the world's standards, even abundant lives. We must press on, however, toward a goal of not only more and better jobs but of full opportunity for every American and of what we are striving so hard right now to achieve, prosperity without inflation.

For more than a quarter of a century in public life I have shared in the turbulent history of this era. I have fought for what I believed in. I have tried to the best of my ability to discharge those duties and meet those responsibilities that were entrusted to me.

Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have failed, but always I have taken heart from what Theodore Roosevelt once said about the man in the arena, "whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is not effort without error and shortcoming, but who does actually strive to do the deed, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions,

who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievements and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.”

I pledge to you tonight that as long as I have a breath of life in my body, I shall continue in that spirit. I shall continue to work for the great causes to which I have been dedicated throughout my years as a Congressman, a Senator, a Vice President, and President, the cause of peace not just for America but among all nations, prosperity, justice, and opportunity for all of our people.

There is one cause above all to which I have been devoted and to which I shall always be devoted for as long as I live.

When I first took the oath of office as President 51/2 years ago, I made this sacred commitment, to “consecrate my office, my energies, and all the wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among nations.”

I have done my very best in all the days since to be true to that pledge. As a result of these efforts, I am confident that the world is a safer place today, not only for the people of America but for the people of all nations, and that all of our children have a better chance than before of living in peace rather than dying in war.

This, more than anything, is what I hoped to achieve when I sought the Presidency. This, more than anything, is what I hope will be my legacy to you, to our country, as I leave the Presidency.

To have served in this office is to have felt a very personal sense of kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do so with this prayer: May God’s grace be with you in all the days ahead.

Barack Obama: 2nd Inauguration Ceremony, January 2013

US President [Barack Obama](#) speaks after his inauguration as president for his second term on January 21, 2013.

The transcript can be downloaded from [Washington Post](#). The video is from [the New York Times](#) Youtube channel.

President Barack Obama:

Vice President Biden, Mr. Chief Justice, Members of the United States Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

Each time we gather to inaugurate a president, we bear witness to the enduring strength of our Constitution. We affirm the promise of our democracy. We recall that what binds this nation together is not the colors of our skin or the tenets of our faith or the origins of our names. What makes us exceptional – what makes us American – is our allegiance to an idea, articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Today we continue a never-ending journey, to bridge the meaning of those words with the realities of our time. For history tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they have never been self-executing; that while freedom is a

gift from God, it must be secured by His people here on Earth. The patriots of 1776 did not fight to replace the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob. They gave to us a Republic, a government of, and by, and for the people, entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed.

For more than two hundred years, we have.

Through blood drawn by lash and blood drawn by sword, we learned that no union founded on the principles of liberty and equality could survive half-slave and half-free. We made ourselves anew, and vowed to move forward together.

Together, we determined that a modern economy requires railroads and highways to speed travel and commerce; schools and colleges to train our workers.

Together, we discovered that a free market only thrives when there are rules to ensure competition and fair play.

Together, we resolved that a great nation must care for the vulnerable, and protect its people from life's worst hazards and misfortune.

Through it all, we have never relinquished our skepticism of central authority, nor have we succumbed to the fiction that all society's ills can be cured through government alone. Our celebration of initiative and enterprise; our insistence on hard work and personal responsibility, are constants in our character.

But we have always understood that when times change, so must we; that fidelity to our founding principles requires new responses to new challenges; that preserving our individual freedoms ultimately requires collective action. For the American people can no more meet the demands of today's world by acting alone than American soldiers could have met the forces of fascism or communism with muskets and militias. No

single person can train all the math and science teachers we'll need to equip our children for the future, or build the roads and networks and research labs that will bring new jobs and businesses to our shores. Now, more than ever, we must do these things together, as one nation, and one people. This generation of Americans has been tested by crises that steeled our resolve and proved our resilience. A decade of war is now ending. An economic recovery has begun. America's possibilities are limitless, for we possess all the qualities that this world without boundaries demands: youth and drive; diversity and openness; an endless capacity for risk and a gift for reinvention. My fellow Americans, we are made for this moment, and we will seize it – so long as we seize it together.

For we, the people, understand that our country cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it. We believe that America's prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class. We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work; when the wages of honest labor liberate families from the brink of hardship. We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else, because she is an American, she is free, and she is equal, not just in the eyes of God but also in our own.

We understand that outworn programs are inadequate to the needs of our time. We must harness new ideas and technology to remake our government, revamp our tax code, reform our schools, and empower our citizens with the skills they need to work harder, learn more, and reach higher. But while the means will change, our purpose endures: a nation that rewards the effort and determination of every single American. That is what this moment requires. That is what will give real meaning to our creed.

We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a

basic measure of security and dignity. We must make the hard choices to reduce the cost of health care and the size of our deficit. But we reject the belief that America must choose between caring for the generation that built this country and investing in the generation that will build its future. For we remember the lessons of our past, when twilight years were spent in poverty, and parents of a child with a disability had nowhere to turn. We do not believe that in this country, freedom is reserved for the lucky, or happiness for the few. We recognize that no matter how responsibly we live our lives, any one of us, at any time, may face a job loss, or a sudden illness, or a home swept away in a terrible storm. The commitments we make to each other – through Medicare, and Medicaid, and Social Security – these things do not sap our initiative; they strengthen us. They do not make us a nation of takers; they free us to take the risks that make this country great.

We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves, but to all posterity. We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires, and crippling drought, and more powerful storms. The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But America cannot resist this transition; we must lead it. We cannot cede to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries – we must claim its promise. That is how we will maintain our economic vitality and our national treasure – our forests and waterways; our croplands and snowcapped peaks. That is how we will preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God. That's what will lend meaning to the creed our fathers once declared.

We, the people, still believe that enduring security and lasting peace do not require perpetual war. Our brave men and

women in uniform, tempered by the flames of battle, are unmatched in skill and courage. Our citizens, seared by the memory of those we have lost, know too well the price that is paid for liberty. The knowledge of their sacrifice will keep us forever vigilant against those who would do us harm. But we are also heirs to those who won the peace and not just the war, who turned sworn enemies into the surest of friends, and we must carry those lessons into this time as well.

We will defend our people and uphold our values through strength of arms and rule of law. We will show the courage to try and resolve our differences with other nations peacefully – not because we are naive about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift suspicion and fear. America will remain the anchor of strong alliances in every corner of the globe; and we will renew those institutions that extend our capacity to manage crisis abroad, for no one has a greater stake in a peaceful world than its most powerful nation. We will support democracy from Asia to Africa; from the Americas to the Middle East, because our interests and our conscience compel us to act on behalf of those who long for freedom. And we must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of prejudice – not out of mere charity, but because peace in our time requires the constant advance of those principles that our common creed describes: tolerance and opportunity; human dignity and justice.

We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths – that all of us are created equal – is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall; just as it guided all those men and women, sung and unsung, who left footprints along this great Mall, to hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone; to hear a King proclaim that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth.

It is now our generation's task to carry on what those

pioneers began. For our journey is not complete until our wives, our mothers, and daughters can earn a living equal to their efforts. Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law – for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. Our journey is not complete until no citizen is forced to wait for hours to exercise the right to vote. Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity; until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country. Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for, and cherished, and always safe from harm. That is our generation's task – to make these words, these rights, these values – of Life, and Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness – real for every American. Being true to our founding documents does not require us to agree on every contour of life; it does not mean we will all define liberty in exactly the same way, or follow the same precise path to happiness. Progress does not compel us to settle centuries-long debates about the role of government for all time – but it does require us to act in our time.

For now decisions are upon us, and we cannot afford delay. We cannot mistake absolutism for principle, or substitute spectacle for politics, or treat name-calling as reasoned debate. We must act, knowing that our work will be imperfect. We must act, knowing that today's victories will be only partial, and that it will be up to those who stand here in four years, and forty years, and four hundred years hence to advance the timeless spirit once conferred to us in a spare Philadelphia hall.

My fellow Americans, the oath I have sworn before you today,

like the one recited by others who serve in this Capitol, was an oath to God and country, not party or faction – and we must faithfully execute that pledge during the duration of our service. But the words I spoke today are not so different from the oath that is taken each time a soldier signs up for duty, or an immigrant realizes her dream. My oath is not so different from the pledge we all make to the flag that waves above and that fills our hearts with pride.

They are the words of citizens, and they represent our greatest hope.

You and I, as citizens, have the power to set this country's course.

You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time – not only with the votes we cast, but with the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideals.

Let each of us now embrace, with solemn duty and awesome joy, what is our lasting birthright. With common effort and common purpose, with passion and dedication, let us answer the call of history, and carry into an uncertain future that precious light of freedom.

Thank you, God Bless you, and may He forever bless these United States of America.

Barack Obama: Victory Speech, November 2012

US President [Barack Obama](#) addresses his supporters after

defeating [Mitt Romney](#) and winning a second term as president.

The transcript can be downloaded from [Chicago Sun Times](#) and is copyright the Federal News Service. The video is from [Al Jazeera](#).

President Barack Obama:

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Chanting.) Four more years! Four more years!

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny, the task of perfecting our union moves forward.

It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and depression, the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope, the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family, and we rise or fall together as one nation and as one people.

Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America, the best is yet to come.

I want to thank every American who participated in this election. Whether you voted for the very first time or waited in line for a very long time by the way, we have to fix that. Whether you pounded the pavement or picked up the phone whether you held an Obama sign or a Romney sign, you made your voice heard and you made a difference.

I just spoke with Governor Romney and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service. And that is a legacy that we honor and applaud tonight. In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward.

I want to thank my friend and partner of the last four years, America's happy warrior, the best vice president anybody could ever hope for, Joe Biden.

And I wouldn't be the man I am today without the woman who agreed to marry me 20 years ago. Let me say this publicly. Michelle, I have never loved you more. I have never been prouder to watch the rest of America fall in love with you too as our nation's first lady.

Sasha and Malia before our very eyes, you're growing up to become two strong, smart, beautiful young women, just like your mom. And I am so proud of you guys. But I will say that for now, one dog's probably enough. (Laughter.)

To the best campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics the best – the best ever some of you were new this time around, and some of you have been at my side since the very beginning.

But all of you are family. No matter what you do or where you go from here, you will carry the memory of the history we made together. And you will have the lifelong appreciation of a grateful president. Thank you for believing all the way to every hill, to every valley. You lifted me up the whole day, and I will always be grateful for everything that you've done and all the incredible work that you've put in.

I know that political campaigns can sometimes seem small, even

silly. And that provides plenty of fodder for the cynics who tell us that politics is nothing more than a contest of egos or the domain of special interests. But if you ever get the chance to talk to folks who turned out at our rallies and crowded along a rope line in a high school gym or – or saw folks working late at a campaign office in some tiny county far away from home, you'll discover something else.

You'll hear the determination in the voice of a young field organizer who's working his way through college and wants to make sure every child has that same opportunity. You'll hear the pride in the voice of a volunteer who's going door to door because her brother was finally hired when the local auto plant added another shift.

You'll hear the deep patriotism in the voice of a military spouse who's working the phones late at night to make sure that no one who fights for this country ever has to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home.

That's why we do this. That's what politics can be. That's why elections matter. It's not small, it's big. It's important. Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy. That won't change after tonight. And it shouldn't. These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty, and we can never forget that as we speak, people in distant nations are risking their lives right now just for a chance to argue about the issues that matter the chance to cast their ballots like we did today.

But despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for America's future.

We want our kids to grow up in a country where they have access to the best schools and the best teachers a country

that lives up to its legacy as the global leader in technology and discovery and innovation with all of the good jobs and new businesses that follow.

We want our children to live in an America that isn't burdened by debt, that isn't weakened up by inequality, that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet.

We want to pass on a country that's safe and respected and admired around the world, a nation that is defended by the strongest military on earth and the best troops this – this world has ever known but also a country that moves with confidence beyond this time of war to shape a peace that is built on the promise of freedom and dignity for every human being.

We believe in a generous America, in a compassionate America, in a tolerant America open to the dreams of an immigrant's daughter who studies in our schools and pledges to our flag to the young boy on the south side of Chicago who sees a life beyond the nearest street corner to the furniture worker's child in North Carolina who wants to become a doctor or a scientist, an engineer or an entrepreneur, a diplomat or even a president.

That's the that's the future we hope for.

That's the vision we share. That's where we need to go – forward. That's where we need to go.

Now, we will disagree, sometimes fiercely, about how to get there. As it has for more than two centuries, progress will come in fits and starts. It's not always a straight line. It's not always a smooth path. By itself, the recognition that we have common hopes and dreams won't end all the gridlock, resolve all our problems or substitute for the painstaking work of building consensus and making the difficult compromises needed to move this country forward.

But that common bond is where we must begin. Our economy is recovering. A decade of war is ending. A long campaign is now over. And whether I earned your vote or not, I have listened to you. I have learned from you. And you've made me a better president. And with your stories and your struggles, I return to the White House more determined and more inspired than ever about the work there is to do and the future that lies ahead.

Tonight you voted for action, not politics as usual. You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours.

And in the coming weeks and months, I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together – reducing our deficit, reforming our tax code, fixing our immigration system, freeing ourselves from foreign oil. We've got more work to do.

But that doesn't mean your work is done. The role of citizens in our democracy does not end with your vote. America's never been about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us together, through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self-government. That's the principle we were founded on.

This country has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military in history, but that's not what makes us strong. Our university, our culture are all the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores. What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse nation on Earth, the belief that our destiny is shared that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations, so that the freedom which so many Americans have fought for and died for come with responsibilities as well as rights, and among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. That's what makes America great.

I am hopeful tonight because I have seen this spirit at work in America. I've seen it in the family business whose owners would rather cut their own pay than lay off their neighbors and in the workers who would rather cut back their hours than see a friend lose a job. I've seen it in the soldiers who re-enlist after losing a limb and in those SEALs who charged up the stairs into darkness and danger because they knew there was a buddy behind them watching their back. I've seen it on the shores of New Jersey and New York, where leaders from every party and level of government have swept aside their differences to help a community rebuild from the wreckage of a terrible storm.

And I saw it just the other day in Mentor, Ohio, where a father told the story of his 8-year-old daughter whose long battle with leukemia nearly cost their family everything had it not been for health care reform passing just a few months before the insurance company was about to stop paying for her care. I had an opportunity to not just talk to the father but meet this incredible daughter of his. And when he spoke to the crowd, listening to that father's story, every parent in that room had tears in their eyes because we knew that little girl could be our own.

And I know that every American wants her future to be just as bright. That's who we are. That's the country I'm so proud to lead as your president.

And tonight, despite all the hardship we've been through, despite all the frustrations of Washington, I've never been more hopeful about our future. I have never been more hopeful about America. And I ask you to sustain that hope.

I'm not talking about blind optimism, the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the road blocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that allows us to just sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight. I have always believed that hope is

that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting.

America, I believe we can build on the progress we've made and continue to fight for new jobs and new opportunities and new security for the middle class. I believe we can keep the promise of our founding, the idea that if you're willing to work hard, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or where you love (ph). It doesn't matter whether you're black or white or Hispanic or Asian or Native American or young or old or rich or poor, abled, disabled, gay or straight. You can make it here in America if you're willing to try.

I believe we can seize this future together because we are not as divided as our politics suggests. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions and we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are, and forever will be, the United States of America.

And together, with your help and God's grace, we will continue our journey forward and remind the world just why it is that we live in the greatest nation on earth. Thank you, America. God bless you. God bless these United States.