

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE

Excerpts from Address by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, in honor of Mrs. Betty Ford, Hotel Pierre, New York, New York, October 26, 1982.

A preacher met one of his congregants and asked him whether he would attend services this weekend. The congregant, apologetically pleaded a prior commitment but wanted to know the theme of the sermon. The preacher replied, "I will be speaking about Noah and the flood." "I am sorry," the congregant said, "that I will miss the sermon, but you can count on me for \$1,000 contribution for the victims of the flood."

I will not make an appeal for the victims of Noah's flood, but I am appealing for the potential victims of our civilization. Noah's generation was destroyed; the Bible tells us, because of violence. We are facing the most serious strain in international relations that can lead to the destruction of our civilization. The accelerated state of technology to which we have arrived threatens to abort human history, precisely at a time when instant communication has potentially improved understanding between people.

At a time when lines of communications between governments have been frozen, when there is a great deal of shouting and not listening, the moral and spiritual forces of non-governmental organizations can play a vital role. This energy must be harnessed to defuse the tensions and to restore coexistence and interdependence as the only sure way of survival. We can no longer depend on politicians alone to entrust the fate of mankind. This is why religious groups in the United States and the world-over have taken a more assertive position in the issues of war and peace, hunger, human rights and

APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE
FOUNDATION

119 West 57th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019
212-582-7878

religious freedom.

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation, from its very inception 17 years ago, has tried to build bridges --- where there were none or where they were in need of repair, to assume human dignity, people-to-people contact and man's most precious freedom --- the freedom to believe.

We are gathered to honor Betty Ford, a woman of strength and dignity, who has been tried and tested but never crushed by adversity, but, if anything, because of her faith, has a keener appreciation and zest for life.

She has been an inspiration to her family and as First Lady of the land, an inspiration to men and women everywhere for her commitment to human rights, international understanding, medicine and the arts.

#

#

#

BETTY FORD'S SPEECH (EXCERPTS)

My years as the wife of a permanent politician have given me the opportunity to visit many of the countries whose representatives belong to the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

My travels have introduced me to many strange and wonderful places, given me the chance to meet many fascinating people and learn at first hand the differences in religion and lifestyle that make up the community of man.

It is important for our politicians to interact. It is also imperative that personal knowledge be achieved at every level. We have so much to share, just people to people. This sharing grows more important as the world continues to shrink.

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation is to be commended for the active role it is taking toward the advancement of religious understanding here and abroad.

I once told someone that I thought "Peace" was surely the most beautiful word in any language. But without freedom, peace is an impractical concept. I toast for your efforts to bring about freedom and understanding of religious differences. I congratulate you on your success and wish you all the best as your work continues.

I am very proud to be here with you and very proud to have my name associated with the wonderful work all of you are doing.