

An Address by
Monroe Kimbrel, President
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
at the
Joint Civic Clubs Annual Kick-off Luncheon
of the
United Fund of Augusta-North Augusta, Inc.
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Augusta Town House

Thank you for inviting me to come here for the Augusta-North Augusta United Fund Campaign. Any person would be honored and challenged by an invitation to speak to this group. For the honor, I am grateful; by the challenge, I am humbled.

The Augusta-North Augusta metropolitan area has made enormous strides in recent years. Its educational, cultural and social gains have been the subject of repeated compliments. These achievements are the products of your leadership.

Look around you, ladies and gentlemen. You are the people who have brought this area to its present place; you are the key to the success of present programs; and you are the foundation of future development here.

Indeed, just as you have had it in your power to make or break the business life of this area, you now have it in your power to make or break this United Fund Campaign.

It is thus in every American community. Early in American history, local communities recognized the plight of their fellow citizens--those who were the victims of the accidents of birth and

the accidents of life--and took pains to help them.

Through the years, the community leaders have handed down this responsibility to each succeeding generation, a responsibility that now comes to you. The task this year especially is not an easy one, but no worthwhile task is ever easy.

Now, in 1970, there seems to be no easy path we can follow to avoid the baffling problems on every hand, created by swiftly changing conditions.

In part, as a result of more and more sophisticated systems being designed and more and more exotic machinery being built in this spectacular century, we often find ourselves insulated from personal involvement in these problems. And when we attempt to solve the difficulties without personal commitment, insulation leads to isolation.

But we cannot and do not live in isolation; we live in an interdependent world. A commonplace fact is that leaping progress in communications systems and travel modes is shrinking our world--and rapidly. At times, scientific discoveries and innovations almost overwhelm us.

Instant communication with any part of the world now is a matter of technique, and even extra-terrestrial travel has become merely an extension of our mastery of the physical world.

The human condition remains, and man, in his awesome mastery, still is a mystery to himself. Unique, not susceptible to his systems, not amenable to synthesis, he is as vulnerable to pain as ever, as receptive to joy as always.

Man prevails. And yet, the small voice of a child pleading for help; the painful longing in feeble old eyes; the quiet desperation in the hearts of the humbled proud--these prevail also.

We look around and see how much we don't know. We really don't know what goes on in the minds of others--our wives, our sons, daughters, or brothers. Who can say he knows his neighbor?

One day, our young people take up mock arms and march in the streets, or, worse, they take synthetic refuge in drugs or promiscuity, or in some fabricated nonsense system. What for? Wise men and concerned parents are sitting up nights pondering the answer to that question.

We are disheartened by the demonstrations and violence. We are disturbed about the increase in crime, and deplore the breakdown in family and personal stability. We are apprehensive over the development in our society of bitterness and divisiveness between the races, between the rich and the poor, between the suburbanite and the inner-city dweller.

Some of our young, and some not so young, are taking us to task. They find fault with us. Their protests and accusations seem to fill the air; accusing fingers point in all directions. We live in a time of revolution, our streets swarming with hostile forces, disrupting our cities and colleges.

Is the responsibility ours? Are we indeed culpable? How much direct action have we avoided? How much hypocrisy have we exhibited? Indeed, how much shuttling up and down back stairs does show?

Thank God, there is something we can do. We have a cause from which no man need shrink. Here is an opportunity for everyone to become involved personally.

Now, negation is easy; affirmation is difficult. But no amount of negation will help one small child. No acrimonious debate will comfort one helpless older person. No sophisticated cynicism will ever replace simple human compassion. Negation is not the answer.

That Man of Gallilee left us many messages in his Sermon on the Mount. One of them is particularly applicable to the purpose of this gathering:

For I was hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

Naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick and ye visited me.

I was in prison and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord,
when saw we thee? . . . And the King shall answer. . .

Verily, I say unto you: Inasmuch as ye have done it
unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done
it unto me.

You and I know that, for all our sleek twentieth century
facades, we remain old-fashioned people. We feel pain, require
warmth, need friends, and we know, too, that the old problems
remain. We know that compassion, fairness, honesty and justice
are basic to human happiness and fulfillment.

We know we must involve ourselves with others because we
live in a world of others; we owe our very existence to interdependence.

Thank God, we can still volunteer for a cause such as this.
Volunteer--what a good sound that word has. A volunteer does not
"have to," is not "made to," is not "supposed to," is not even told
he "ought to." He wants to.

Isn't this, after all, how dreams come true?

Of course, things get done in this world by men of conviction.
In an effort like this, the faint of heart, the undecided, won't do--

won't make the real push that it takes. This Campaign has to have men of conviction to succeed, because it is a volunteer effort. And as such, it could fail. Without the leadership of men and women such as you, it could fail.

What price failure? And who pays? Maybe we ought to look for a moment at the rules of the game. Obviously, one campaign is better than 29 campaigns, or one for each agency. Of course, it is better.

But visualize the plight of the agencies. They have agreed, among other things, that they will not solicit this community for operating funds separately. If the goal is not met, it is not academic: it is not merely the first time in 13 years; it is not merely the failure of individual volunteers to meet established goals; it is not just a regrettable situation.

The agencies are left out in the cold. They must cut off services, there is no alternative.

The agencies lose. People lose. The helpless become public charges, the hopeless wither away, the sick agonize. This must not happen. We have this much and more at stake.

All of this depends upon the spirit and determination of the American volunteer, the backbone of your Campaign and a phenomenon

unmatched in the rest of the world. Nowhere else is an undertaking such as this Campaign done in this way, on this scale.

The role of a participant is infinitely more rewarding than the role of the spectator, for it is in the doing that we become involved. It is the doing that requires a personal commitment. It is in the doing that lies the example.

Say what we will. Preach what we will. Print all manner of homily. What we do remains; what we do is evidence--example is manifest.

You and I know that problems usually contain the solutions within themselves. You and I know that historically problems are solved by men and women who work on solutions. We know we live in an imperfect world. We know that truth lives in the hearts of men.

We seek prevention, not punishment. We know that answers are found not in talking about problems, but by working on the problems themselves.

So, thank you again for making time in your busy schedules for the Augusta-North Augusta United Fund. Your help, especially your leadership, is vital. With your leadership, we can predict confidently the success of your Campaign.