

**Excerpts from the First Inaugural Address
of
George Corley Wallace
Governor of the State of Alabama
Montgomery, January 14, 1963**

This is the day of my Inauguration as governor of the State of Alabama. And on this day I feel a deep obligation to renew my pledges, my covenants with you. . .the people of this great state.

General Robert E. Lee said that "duty" is the sublime word in the English language and I have come, increasingly, to realize what he meant. I SHALL do my duty to you, God helping. . . to every man, to every woman. . .yes, and to every child in this State. I shall fulfill my duty toward honesty and economy in our State government so that no man shall have a part of his livelihood cheated and no child shall have a bit of his future stolen away. . .

I want to assure every child that this State government is not afraid to invest in their future through education, so that they will not be handicapped on the very threshold of their lives.

Today I have stood, where once Jefferson Davis stood, and took an oath to my people. It is very appropriate then that from this Cradle of the confederacy, this very Heart of the Great Anglo-Saxon Southland, that today we sound the drum for freedom as have our generations of forebears before us done, time and again down through history. Let us rise to the call of freedom-loving blood that is in us and send our answer to the tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South. In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny. . .and I say. . .segregation now. . .segregation tomorrow. . .segregation forever. . .

What I have said about segregation goes double this day. . .and what I have said to or about some federal judges goes TRIPLE this day. . .

We intend, quite simply, to practice the free heritage as bequeathed to us as sons of free fathers. We intend to re-vitalize the truly new and progressive form of government that is less than two hundred years old. . . a government first founded in this nation simply and purely on faith. . .that there is a personal God who rewards good and punishes evil. . .that hard work will receive its just desserts. . .that ambition and ingenuity and inventiveness. . .and profit of such. . .are admirable traits and goals. . .that the individual is encouraged in his spiritual growth and from that growth arrives at a character that enhances his charity toward others and from that character and that charity so is influenced business, and labor and farmer and government. We intend to renew our faith as God-fearing men. . .not government-fearing men nor any other kind of fearing-men. We intend to roll up our sleeves and pitch in to develop this full bounty God has given us. . .to live full and useful lives and in absolute freedom from all fear. Then can we enjoy the full richness of the Great American Dream. . .

In united effort we were meant to live under this government. . .whether Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ, or whatever one's denomination or religious belief. . .each respecting the others right to a separate denomination. . .each, by working to develop his own, enriching the total of all our lives through united effort. And so it was meant in our political lives. . .whether Republican, Democrat, Prohibition, or whatever political party. . .each striving from his separate political station. . .respecting the rights of others to be separate and work from within their political framework. . .and each separate political station making its contribution to our lives. . .

And so it was meant in our racial lives. . .each race, within its own framework has the freedom to teach. . .to instruct. . .to develop. . .to ask for and receive deserved help from others of separate racial stations. This is the great freedom of our American founding fathers. . .but if we amalgamate into the one unit as advocated by the communist philosophers. . .then the enrichment of our lives. . .the freedom for our development. . .is gone forever. We become, therefore, a mongrel unit of one under a single all powerful government. . .and we stand for everything. . .and for nothing.

The true brotherhood of America, of respecting the separateness of others. . .and uniting in effort. . .has been so twisted and distorted from its original concept that there is small wonder that communism is winning the world.

We invite the Negro citizens of Alabama to work with us from his separate racial station. . .as we will work with him. . .to develop, to grow in individual freedom and enrichment. We want jobs and a good future for BOTH our races. We want to help the physically and mentally sick of BOTH races. . .the tubercular and the infirm. This is the basic heritage of my religion, of which I make full practice. . .for we are all the handiwork of God.

But we warn those, of any group, who would follow the false doctrine of communistic amalgamation that we will not surrender our system of government. . .our freedom of race and religion. . .that freedom was won at a hard price and if it requires a hard price to retain it. . .we are able. . . and quite will to pay it.

The liberals' theory that poverty, discrimination and lack of opportunity is the cause of communism is a false theory. . .if it were true the South would have been the biggest single communist bloc in the western hemisphere long ago. . .for after great War Between the States, our people faced a desolate land of burned universities, destroyed crops and homes, with manpower depleted and crippled, and even the mule, which was required to work the land, was so scarce that whole communities shared one animal to make the spring plowing. There were no government hand-outs, no Marshall Plan aid, no coddling to make sure that our people would not suffer; instead the South was set upon by the vulturous carpetbagger and federal troops, all loyal Southerners were denied the vote at the point of bayonet, so that the infamous, illegal 14th Amendment might be passed. There was no money, no food and no hope of either. But our grandfathers bent their knee only in church and bowed their head only to God. . .

We remind all within hearing of this Southland that a Southerner, Peyton Randolph, presided over the Continental Congress in our nation's beginning. . .that a Southerner, Thomas Jefferson, wrote the Declaration of Independence, that a Southerner, George Washington, is the Father of our Country. . .that a Southerner, James Madison, authored our Constitution, that a Southerner, George Mason, authored the Bill of Rights and it was a Southerner who said, "Give me Liberty. or give me death," Patrick Henry.

Southerners play a most magnificent part in erecting this great divinely inspired system of freedom. . .and as God is our witness, Southerners will save it. Let us, as Alabamians, grasp the hand of destiny and walk out of the shadow of fear. . .and fill our divine destination. Let us not simply defend. . .but let us assume the leadership of the fight and carry our leadership across this nation. God has placed us here in this crisis. . .let us not fail in this. . .our most historical moment. . .

And my prayer is that the Father who reigns above us will bless all the people of this great sovereign State and nation, both white and black.

I thank you.