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Governor Christie: This Is About Shared Responsibility

Thursday, April 17, 2014

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Governor Christie: This Is About Shared Responsibility


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7114q50x75k&feature=youtu.be>

Transcript:

Governor McGreevey: How do we morally and ethically as a country, as what I believe to be a good people and you know, the mayor talked about driving past prisons and our indifference, how to we ignite, I mean this is pretty special today, but how do we ignite a fervor, a moral fervor, to say that we need to do better as a matter of conscience as a people, as a nation?

Governor Christie: Well I mean I think to do it, it can't just be our political leaders who are involved in doing it. You know it's got to be everybody, if you want to ignite a moral blaze then the morality of our society is determined by all of us. Not just by the people you elect and put into office, not just by the people who stand in the pulpit or in the temple or in the mosque and preach to you on your days of observation. It is all of us who give forth an attitude. Again I go back to what Gene said about the friends on the way in and the friends on the way out, why is that? It is in part, I think, because we think that's what's socially expected of us. That we're expected to kind of give the stiff arm to the person who's been in trouble, and gone to jail, and why are you associating with that person? Don't you understand that they've been to jail? Well, you know, that's why I think the kind of broader movement that you're referring to in your question has to be done by a broader swath of society. I can say as much as I want to say and hope that I move people, that's part of my job is to use the pulpit that I have to be able to try to speak about the things that I believe are important and to move people. But I'm not under the illusion for a moment that I can move everybody. There are some people who their ears are closed to me, maybe because they're very busy with other parts of their life, maybe because they're focused on other things regarding their family and they don't focus on what's going on in the public. Maybe because they just don't like me. It's possible. I know you find it hard to believe, but it is possible. So you can't just count on one person or one group of people to do it, because you don't know, you don't know, who you are uniquely

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positioned to reach. You don't know until you try and until you take the chance to put yourself out there to folks. And so what I try to say to people all the time who come to me, and I'm sure the Governor understands this, too, because he had this job, too. I can't tell you how many people come up to me and say to me, 'Governor, why don't you do something about 'fill-in-the-blank'?' And they're emotional, they're heated up about it. The first year or so I was Governor I didn't know how to quite react to this, so I would try to be really earnest and say, 'Oh okay, I will try to do something about that.' Then after about a year of it, I said I got to qualitatively listen to this, right? And I can't tell you now, in the last four years, how many times I look at people and say, 'Why don't you do something about it?' And they look at me and go, 'Well, you're the Governor.' Yeah, okay. I'm the Governor, but that doesn't mean I'm in charge of everything. Why don't you do something about it? Why don't you tell me what you think I should do about it, instead of just coming to me and saying, 'Hey do something about it.' I can't tell you the looks on people's faces when I do that. They're like, 'Wait a second, this isn't the way it's supposed to work. We have this role-playing down. See, I'm the constituent. I come up to you and yell at you. You look chastened and upset and then say you'll do something about it, then you never will and I'll never see you again.' I'm trying to change that part of the dialogue, too, because people need to understand they all have a responsibility for this. It's not just mine, it's yours, too.

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