



Remarks and Messages

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National Day of Remembrance

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Remarks by
Illinois Wesleyan President Minor Myers jr.
National Day of Remembrance, September 14, 2001

We remember this day,
those we cannot yet name,
in a number we cannot yet count,
who died a death we cannot yet explain.

Yet there is no doubt they are unexpected martyrs to the cause of a normal world,
a normal world of joy and productivity guided on every continent by reason.

The Renaissance recovered that classical theme of humanity guided by reason,
Reason apart from fanaticism and dogma,
a reason which knew no sect or national boundary,
a reason which encompassed all the species in its scope and in its hope.

The American government has been an early and evolving experiment shaped by these principles.

And the American model of public judgment by reason in the interest of all has spread over the globe,
always speaking a local language,
always dreaming of international peace and international prosperity,
always knowing prosperity was not yet universal,
but with people of good heart striving ever to make it so.

Whilst eastern families prepared for school and much of a nation slept still in security,
The lives of thousands ended with no notice,
And expectations and certainties of a nation and a world were set awry,
But dreams and commitment were not.

This has been a reflective week among us.

Opportunities to support the Red Cross in its relief efforts continue as you leave today at our Business Office all next week, and a candlelight vigil gathers at the John Wesley Powell Monument tonight at 8 p.m.

In all our gatherings, students, faculty and staff have shown an even greater vigor in imagining a peaceful, just world as it might be.

The lasting impact of September 11 and these martyr victims of irrationality we remember today will surely be a renewed focus in asking the most serious questions for

the most serious of purposes:

whence have we come, and wither are we going?

Perhaps the greatest gift of the Enlightenment was the perception that humanity and reason are not the victims of civilization, but its creators. That civilization itself is an artifact.

May the memory of these victims be the stimulus and the inspiration of creations ever more just, more prosperous, and more peaceful.