

Hello, this is Blase Bonpane. So today, friends, we must share the last words of a dear family friend of over 30 years that were spoken to my wife Theresa just a week ago when he had to decline attending a dinner date because of health. "I just love you and Blase." We must share the last words of our dear family friend of over thirty years spoken to Theresa just a week ago when he had to decline attending a dinner date because of "health." "I just love you and Blase."

A statement we will always remember because it was so mutual.

Haskell was a Michelangelo of the movie industry. That is what his peers thought of him. He was named one of the 10 most influential cinematographers in movie history in a survey of the International Cinematographers Guild and also as first cinematographer to win a lifetime achievement award from the American Society of Cinematographers. He won the Academy Award twice! His writing and directing of MEDIUM COOL is a subject for film schools internationally. We suggest that you go to WIKIPEDIA to see the endless accomplishments of this great artist.

We remember Haskell as a peacemaker and truth teller. He is probably the only filmmaker in the world to create a film denouncing a crime of his country while that disaster was in process. He did this by writing and directing the 1985 film, LATINO, which he shot in Nicaragua. Movie critic Michael Wilmington described this as, "An indictment of U.S. involvement in Nicaragua that pulls no philosophical punches and was made under conditions of real danger, near actual battle zones."

Haskell met Theresa in Nicaragua where she brought a delegation during that filthy slaughter which was directed primarily toward civilians in that war torn country. 40,000 Nicaraguans were murdered. Haskell has been a friend and partner in the struggle for justice ever since.

We join in saying Amen to the words of Haskell's son Jeff who said, "His real passion was much larger than making movies, his real passion was for human beings, and justice and peace."

Haskell served as a most active member of the Board of Directors of the OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS for over thirty years. He received our Justice and Peace Award in 2000.

Haskell's friendship is one of the highlights of our lives. HASKELL WEXLER .....PRESENTE... PRESENTE...PRESENTE....

Now Haskell gave on of the shortest and most meaningful acceptance speeches in the history of the Academy Awards. As he received the Oscar for Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf in 1966, this is his speech: "I hope we can use our art for peace and love." That's it. That was his speech. These short speeches at the Academy Awards are some of the very best. It reminds us of someone who has some similar views to Haskell's - Michael Moore. Do you remember his speech at the Academy Awards? It was equally interesting. And this is it, less than minute, when he got the award for his documentary, Bowling for Columbine.

"Thank you very much. On behalf of our producers Kathleen Glynn and Michael Donovan from Canada, I'd like to thank the Academy for this. I've invited my fellow documentary nominees on the stage with us, and we would like to - they are here in solidarity with me because we like nonfiction. We like nonfiction and we live in fictitious times. We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elects a fictitious president. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons, whether it's the fiction of duct tape or the fictitious of

orange alerts. We are against this war, Mr. Bush! Shame on you, Mr. Bush! Shame on you! And any time you've got the Pope and the Dixie Chicks against you, your time is up! Thank you very much."

Well, Michael Moore is carrying on the tradition of truth-telling. I've had the pleasure and privilege of seeing *Where to Invade Next*, which is likely to receive another Academy Award. Viewing the film can help you to see that we are probably the most isolated people on the planet. We have no idea what's going on. We don't know what's going on in Germany, so he takes us into a class at a German school where Germany has been repenting for the Third Reich for all these years. They study repentance. They act out repentance. The teacher said, "Bring a suitcase, pack a bag to go to the concentration camp. The students get the idea of what happened, and they are horrified and repentant on behalf of their country.

Now we have to do the same. There's absolutely no defense for the behavior of the United States since the end of WWII. We have to repent. We have to study how 30 million have died as a result of our policies since that time. Yes, the film *Where to Invade Next*, helps us to see some of the social democracies of Europe. Weeks and months off - many months for child birth. Well friend, of course many people don't know it but there's a huge population implosion going on in Europe and many other countries at this time. Italy is not reproducing itself, Germany's not, the trend affects all of Europe, Russia has an incredibly low birth rate. So people are really worried. It's a wonderful time for them to be taking in refugees, just as it's a wonderful time for us to be taking in refugees. Of course, to do that, we have to fight some of our cultural phenomena, so I highly recommend this film. It helps you to understand the extreme harm being done by our military industrial gun congressional lobbyist complex - people who have been trying to keep Guantanamo open knowing that the inmates have not had a trial, had not had a hearing, I guess that's their view of justice. And they've been fighting all this time to keep it open, and of course the president could close it. You even see some things about drugs in Michael Moore's new film. There's a huge upsurge in heroin in the United States. Guess where it comes from? You got it. It comes from Afghanistan.

Friends, Haskell Wexler and Michael Moore are both disciples of Martin Luther King. Throughout the Bible, you see conflict constantly between prophet and priest. If you haven't seen that, maybe you haven't really studied the Bible. The priest is telling you how to kill the lamb for sacrifice, how to do the ritual. The prophet is saying "God doesn't care about your ritual. Let justice rain down." We have had prophets, and of course Dr. King was one of them. He certainly wasn't sectarian in his approach at all. I never heard him tell anyone to become a Baptist. And it's true even in the more recent testaments, and you might say especially true in the churches today - the conflict between priest and prophet. The priest says, go to church. The prophet says, make peace and justice. So that conflict goes on and it's very very clear in Dr. King's life.

Now the thing about a prophet is that he speaks about the present. When you read Isaiah and others, you can see that they're speaking of their present. And that present applies to today. And the same is true with Dr. King. He was speaking then, his words apply now more than ever - and we'll be celebrating his birthday this month. Now he wasn't simply a dreamer, he was a moral revolutionary, extremely concerned about the economy, about the warfare state that we have become and which is destroying our country and much of the world. So I'd like to give you some words today in honor of Haskell Wexler, in honor of Michael Moore, in honor of Dr. King. Some words taken from his speech which was a kiss of death for him. April 4, 1967, Riverside Church.

He was murdered a year to the day after this speech, and after so much of the media had attacked him. J Edgar Hoover hated him with an incredible passion. The commercial media was writing him off. I think it was the great Reader's Digest that said, "the fatal mistake of Dr. King was to give that speech." This critically important speech lives on, and here are some words from it.

I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I'm in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization which has brought us together: Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam.

Now, every time he says Vietnam, you can also hear Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and on and on, because it's all the same - there's not been a new idea come from the military industrial complex in 70 years of continuous mayhem.

The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." And that time has come for us in relation to Vietnam. [And I add - the Middle East.]

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought...

Friends, think of that in the context of the work of Haskell Wexler and Michael Moore. Both oppose conventional wisdom. Most of "conventional wisdom" is nonsense, the blatherings of the rich and the famous. It's the unconventional wisdom that needs to break through. Hollywood says, "If you want a message, go to Western Union." Well, that's fine. They can have that opinion. In other words, don't say anything, don't take on power, play it safe, just entertain. Well, just "entertaining" is saying something. The Haskell Wexlers of the world would put it differently. If you don't have something to say, why waste your time? Why waste a year of your life? Conventional wisdom says: "Don't be didactic." The wisdom of the ages is, why not be didactic? Why don't you teach something if you have something to say? Let's teach something pedagogically with great art. So these thoughts merge with King's words.

And some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movements and pray that our own inner being may be sensitive to its guidance, for we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Friends, do you see the difference between the prophet and the priest? The prophet is not sectarian. The prophet does not give us dogmas. The prophet speaks a truth that can be seen and evaluated. He or she is a moral revolutionary.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the

heart of their concerns this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King?" "Why are you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people," they ask? And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.

In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to try to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church -- the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate -- leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides...

A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor -- both black and white -- through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated, as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So, I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Friends, that's what war is, an assault on the poor abroad, the imposition of poverty on Americans at home. We can spend trillions on nuclear suicide, but "we don't have any money for the poor, we don't have any money for the homeless." Well, friends, in the spirit of Dr. King, I suggest you ask you mosque, your temple, your church to open up their buildings to the homeless now. It's been done - we saw the mother church of Los Angeles open its doors under pastor Luis Bolivares. That's what a church is for. So King is feeling this pain.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. And so we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. And so we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years -- especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they ask -- and rightly so -- what about Vietnam? They ask if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today -- my own government.

Friend, these are prophetic words, more true today than when he spoke them. The arms merchants, 300 million weapons in the United States, which people will be using to kill each other...

For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957 when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard of Harlem, who had written earlier:

O, yes,

I say it plain,

America never was America to me,

And yet I swear this oath --

America will be!

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that America will be -- are -- are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me; and I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for "the brotherhood of man." This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I'm speaking against the war. Could it be that they

do not know that the good news was meant for all men -- for Communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation and for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954 -- in 1945 rather -- after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China -- for whom the Vietnamese have no great love -- but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization.

After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed as Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extortionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all this was presided over by United States' influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of

military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

I want to take a break here to mention where religion comes in. Now, Diem lived with us at the Maryknoll seminary. He was Roman Catholic. He hated Buddhists. It seems to me that this is similar to trying to de-Bathify Iraq. It's the dumbest thing anybody could do. The last time I saw Diem personally, he was seated in the sanctuary as head of state at the Maryknoll Seminary in New York. Yes, Diem was a Roman Catholic. Cardinal Spellman was a Roman Catholic. He was Chief of Chaplains during the days of the Korean War. He seemed to offer every bit of support for this diabolical war. So, that was Diem.

The only change came from America, as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So, what's happening today, dear friends. The same refugees moving on so that they won't be destroyed by our bombs. Incredible, the words of the prophet remain and have just as much fire as on the day they were spoken.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing -- in the crushing of the nation's only non-Communist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.

Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon, the only solid -- solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets..."

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation Front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America

when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there were nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western words, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led the nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second struggle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954 they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a united Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be remembered.

Also, it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops. They remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for

an invasion of the North. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred -- rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried in these last few minutes to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Friends, this is Dr. King speaking about today. He's speaking about the destruction of Yemen. He's talking about the rich Saudi Arabians buying as many weapons as they can from us, weapons that are illegal in much of the world, cluster bombs, the rich against the poor. He continues:

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak of the -- for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote:

Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the heart of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism.

Friends, we've been reading a speech given by Dr. Martin Luther King in 1967. We feel that it well represents the situation today. That's the way prophets are. They speak the truth at their time, and that truth carries on - into the present, and the future. We'll have to continue with that speech next time around. Thank you so much for being with us today.