I've been asked to speak on moral leadership. I don't normally speak on moral leadership. I normally speak on separation of church and state or the relationship between God and government. And, as I'm thinking about my topic, I'm remembering a story that I read about George Washington.

Before I go into that, on July 4th 1776, as we all know, fifty-six men met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to declare independence from Great Britain. They truly showed moral leadership when they wrote, “With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

Not long after that, lives, fortunes and sacred honor would be tested. But the men tested would be the army of volunteers who had joined to fight with George Washington, not the men who were in that hall in Philadelphia.

The army one day found themselves surrounded on three sides in Brooklyn, New York. They had the East River to their back and on the other three sides was an overwhelming force of the British, some 22,000 strong. Washington had only 8,000 men. For two nights and two days, it had rained continuously. They were standing in trenches, knee deep in the mud. The men knew that the British had stalled, but, the next day, they would come and take their positions—if not their lives.

It was a time for moral leadership. So Washington gathered his council of war and made a decision. That's what moral leadership is about—making decisions. He decided that during the night of August 29, beginning about ten o'clock, he would order his troops to row back and forth across the river, which was nearly a mile wide. And, they would take all the equipment, the troops, and the horses across that river. They knew that if they made any sound, the British would cut off
their retreat. It seemed like a foolish plan to many, but Washington had confidence. They started during the night and, as they withdrew, they would close their lines so the British would not suspect where they were going.

When the morning came, there were still troops on the other side of the waters. Something strange happened, according to Colonel Ben Tallmadge, who was there during that battle. He related,

"After sustaining incessant fatigue in constant watchfulness for two days and two nights attended by heavy rain, exposed every moment to an attack from a vastly superior force in front, and to be cut off from the possibility of retreat to New York by the fleet, which might enter the East River, General Washington commenced re-crossing his troops from Brooklyn to New York."

It seemed to be a most formidable obstacle. "As the dawn of the next day approached, those of us who remained in the trenches became very anxious for our safety, and when the dawn appeared, there were still several regiments on duty. At this time, a very dense fog began to rise, and it seemed to settle in a peculiar manner over both encampments. I recollect this peculiar providential occurrence perfectly well; and so very dense was the fog atmosphere that I could scarcely discern a man at six yards distance…. the sun had risen but the fog remained as dense as ever. Yet, we safely returned."

I can talk about moral leadership without being a preacher, but I cannot talk about moral leadership without reference to God. Perhaps our greatest moral leader was Washington. No one was more respected than Washington. He led us through the Revolution. He led us through the Constitutional Convention as president of that convention. And then he led us as the first President of the United States for two terms of office. It was one of the most critical times in our country, and perhaps the most critical time was before the convention in 1787.

We had survived the Revolution. God’s hand had protected us through that Revolution, and now, suddenly, Britain had conceded—a defeated

"Every morning my faith is restored when I see the clean cut, mannerly, hard working, mountain students walk with purpose, with head held high, body erect and with pleasant smiles on their faces."

President Jim Taylor
great empire. And we, a mere conglomeration of states, torn by jealousies and rivalries, had no economy per say, no monetary system. We were bickering. No standing army or navy, no fixed foreign policy, and we were simply a weak confederation. Washington was selected to be the president of the Constitutional Convention. And someone asked him, “How are you going to guide this convention with so many problems?” What he said, perhaps, is indicative of moral leadership that we need today. He said, 

“IT is too probable that no plan we propose will be adopted. Perhaps another dreadful conflict is to be sustained. If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God.”

Moral leadership is always a combination of factors. You’re given a situation, like Washington was given in Brooklyn, or the founders at the Constitutional Convention, or like General Dwight Eisenhower at Normandy. No mortal man can tell the end of a matter. We could read in Ecclesiastes and learn that you don’t know what’s going to come. You can’t see the future. You’re a mere mortal, and you have a choice to make. And that choice must be guided on principle. It’s never easy, and it’s never quick. Perhaps another dreadful conflict is in store. It will be hard. It will require endurance. But people will look to you for the standard. You can be the standard. And most important is trusting God. Proverbs, the third chapter, says,

“My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments for length of days and long life, and peace shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck. Write them on the tables of thine heart. So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and of man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.”

You see, being a leader sometimes is having the fear of God and standing for what you know is right. I am very proud to be here tonight to see the Ten Commandments displayed on this campus. Very few Americans know what the Ten Commandments actually mean. They see them as some rules to live by. Good rules, no less, but that’s it. The first four commandments relate to duties that you owe to God and the remaining six relate to duties you owe to each other. Why is that important to everyone here? Why is it important to the American Civil Liberties Union lawyer if he were here? Because all of us have one thing in common, nobody here wants government telling them what to think. Does anyone want government to dictate what they can and what they can’t believe? But do you know whom we make the most fatal mistake in understanding? Who gives us that right? When

Jesus said “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s,” what did he mean? Was he talking about just eternal salvation? Was he saying that everything on earth belonged to Caesar? That’s what some in the church believe today. But that’s not what he meant. God had a jurisdiction for the state. It was to punish men’s actions when they violated laws under God’s law. But one thing the state could not do was interfere with what you believe, because that right comes from almighty God, from the God of the Holy Scriptures, the God of Mount Sinai and the father of Jesus Christ, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And our
forefathers knew this.

It's not the role of courts to tell you what to think. How have we drifted so far away? Washington knew this. You see, after George Washington delivered his 1789 inaugural address, he and some members of Congress resolved to go to Saint Paul's Chapel up the street. I had occasion to go to Saint Paul's Chapel. If you've been to Saint Paul's Chapel, you've been blessed because you can go into a building built in 1766, ten years before the Declaration of Independence, and it's still standing. It is just like it was, and it sits within a hundred yards of Ground Zero. When all the other buildings were destroyed and damaged, when the Twin Towers fell, guess which building didn't lose one stone or one glass: Saint Paul's Chapel. You can enter Saint Paul's Chapel and look at the scene called glory that stands in the front. That scene was put there in 1788. And there's a scene with the rays of sunlight coming down on the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments. The first tablet: the first four commandments. The second: the second six. The first tablet representing religion: the duties you owe to the creator and the manner of discharging those duties and the second tablet representing laws under which our laws are formed. Congress, which can make laws, can make no law respecting religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Those tablets stand for our freedom. Congress knew that, because they went to the chapel along with the president and vice president. They went back down to Federal Hall and began to debate the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The amendment reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” That's the amendment they say prohibits us from acknowledging God. On September 25th 1789, they finally reached the proper words they wanted to say: “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion.”

Today, at the mere mention of God, we run. In 1931, the United States Supreme Court had occasion to take up the case, United States v. Macintosh. This case involved a Canadian pastor who came to America and didn't want to take an oath to fight in foreign wars. The United States Supreme Court decided that he had to take the oath. Chief Justice Charles Hughes wrote the dissenting opinion. He didn't dissent on where religious freedom comes from, he wrote: “One cannot speak of religious liberty with proper appreciation of its essential and historic significance without assuming the existence of a belief in supreme allegiance to the will of God.” Fifteen years later, the Court had another case in which they changed the holding but not their opinion. Justice William O. Douglas wrote:

“Throughout the ages men have suffered death rather than to subordinate their allegiance to God to the authority of the state. Freedom of religion guaranteed in the First Amendment is a product of that struggle.” The First Amendment exists because of God.

You have most undoubtedly heard of leaders like George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Theodore Roosevelt. And I could tell you their stories; however, I want to tell you a story of an Alabama boy. His name was Mike Christian. He was a leader. He was a moral leader. He was from Selma, Alabama. Mike didn't even have a pair
of shoes until he was thirteen. At seventeen, he enlisted in the United States Navy. Mike earned a commission by going to officer training school and becoming a naval flight officer. He was shot down and captured in 1967. The Vietnamese at first were very hard on Mike but soon put him in a cell with some other prisoners. They began to let them receive packages from home. Mike began to receive packages of scarves, handkerchiefs, and cloth. Every afternoon Mike would sit with a bamboo needle until he had sewn an American flag on the inside of his shirt. “And every afternoon before we had a bowl of soup,” his fellow prisoners said, “we would hang Mike’s shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance.” One day the Vietnamese entered his cell. They found Mike’s shirt, and for the benefit of all the prisoners, they beat Mike for a couple of hours, until he couldn’t see out of his eyes. They opened the cell door and threw him back in where his fellow prisoners tried to clean him up. His buddy said, “The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs hung in each corner. We tried to clean Mike up, and after the excitement died down, I looked over in the corner of the room and Mike was sitting there beneath a dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt, and his bamboo needle. He was sewing, sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he received, making another American flag.”

So the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, don’t ever forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made for this country, and for this God. Remember your duty, your honor, and your country. Remember we are one nation under God. This attempt to take away our God is a spiritual battle.

People I have Met at University of the Cumberlands

At Homecoming 2009, Dr. Robert Michael Duncan (History and Political Science alumnus, 1971) gave a speech entitled “Five People I Met at Cumberland College.” Duncan, a recent chairman of the Republican National Committee and currently serving as Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, spoke of several lasting friendships he made at Cumberland. Future issues of Morning in America will feature some of these profiles.

Many of these friends taught Duncan something about life. One such individual was Tim Henderlight who Duncan viewed as a relationship builder. Duncan recalled:

Tim tried to teach me patience because he was always late. It took me years to understand the importance of being late because you needed to talk to a friend. Tim Henderlight is one of the most loyal individuals I’ve ever met. I’ll never forget asking Tim and another friend, Sherman Felterman, to climb the old bridge coming into Williamsburg, Kentucky to hang a banner welcoming our candidate for Governor. I was standing below directing the hanging and Tim was clinging for his life as the big trucks rattled the bridge.

Tim still influences my life. The day I called the 2008 Republican National Convention to order Tim was there leading the cheers. And when our granddaughter Taylor Ann was born, Tim was there.

College friendships often last a lifetime even though your paths may lead in different directions.
You may not have to go to Iraq, or Vietnam like I did, or World War II like some of you did, or Korea. You’re in the battle; I don’t care if you’re male, female, old, young, black, white, rich or poor. You’re in the battle.

Washington understood. In his Farewell Address, he said it very plainly. In talking about those same Ten Commandments he said,

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace their connection with public and private felicity. Let it simply be asked: where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation deserts the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in our courts of justice?” Then he said this, “And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined educational minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”
You can remember Cumberlands in your will or trust, or you might want to create a charitable gift annuity to provide you with a lifetime income as you assist deserving students.

With charitable gift annuities:
- The rates are significantly greater than bond rates and certificates of deposits.
- Annuity payments are fixed and based on the age(s) of the annuitant(s).
- Annuity payments are extremely favorably taxed.
- The donor is entitled to an income tax charitable contribution deduction.
- Appreciated securities given to Cumberlands for a charitable gift annuity are valued on the date of the gift; capital gains taxes are not immediately due as they are when securities are sold by the donor.
- A gift annuity is the simplest of all split-interest planned gifts.

A Charitable Gift Annuity will not only provide you a fixed income, guaranteed for life, but also will create a significant legacy here at University of the Cumberlands.

University of the Cumberlands offers numerous planned giving vehicles guaranteeing income for the remainder of life. Some have established trusts and deferred gift annuities naming a loved one as the income beneficiary. With the low payout rates currently on certificates of deposit (CDs) and the volatility of the stock market, deferred gift annuities are becoming extremely popular for young adults who will not be retiring any time soon but want to plan and secure a steady, fixed income that will begin when they retire. For instance, a 45-year-old can defer a gift annuity for 15 years and receive income at a rate of 10 percent for life. The charitable gift tax deduction would be immediate (during working years when your tax bracket is higher) and the income would not begin until you are 60. As with regular gift annuities, the entire amount of the annuity would be backed by all of the University’s assets.

If you are considering the establishment of a Charitable Gift Annuity to provide life-long income for yourself and vital support for University of the Cumberlands, please contact Jim Taylor at presoff@ucumberlands.edu.

Remember, as a financial supporter of Cumberlands, you are encouraging today’s students as you also demonstrate your continuing commitment to the University’s mission to educate individuals for lives of responsible service and leadership.

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*based on age shown; a gift annuity of $10,000; figures for annual payment and IRS discount rate of 2.4% as of January 2011.
Mike Huckabee

“Leadership in a Free and Strong America”

April 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.
O. Wayne Rollins Center
Williamsburg, Kentucky

Mike Huckabee was governor of Arkansas, 1996-2007, and declared his intention to run on the Republican ticket for the Presidency of the United States in 2007. While gaining much national attention and support, he did not obtain the nomination. He now has his own talk show on Fox News Channel.