

The first speech is
the first inaugural
address of ronald
reagan



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American politics were marked by resurgent conservatism during the 1980s and 1990s. From Ronald Reagan to George H. W. Bush, there has been a conservative return to traditional American values. This short discourse will seek to highlight this by examining three (3) speeches made during this period.

The first speech is the First Inaugural Address of Ronald Reagan. In this speech, Reagan tackles the issue of economic recession. He proposes that the solution to the problem is not in relying on the government but on the individual (231). Government, as Reagan stresses, is mistakenly portrayed as “ an elite group that (is) superior to government for, by, and of the people (231). There is no government that is fit to govern others when it is unable to govern itself (231).

This view of Reagan is different to the prevalent views of society during that era. It presented a shift from more radical methods to more basic ones; emphasizing that the government should not be seen as the “ solution to the problem” (231) but rather that everyone, in and out of the government, should work together to solve this decades long problem that is affecting the economy (231).

The second speech Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals by Ronald Reagan. This speech is about “ America as the embodiment of morality” (236).

Reagan, in stressing this point, used the common notions of American morality. “ So I tell you there are a great many God-fearing, dedicated, noble men and women in public life, present company included. And yes, we

need your help to keep us ever-mindful of the ideas and the principles that brought us into the public arena in the first place.

The basis of those ideals and principles is a commitment to freedom and personal liberty that, itself is grounded in the much deeper realization that freedom prospers only where the blessings of God are avidly sought and humbly accepted (237)."

This particular line show the emphasis on American morality as connected to Christianity. Reagan, in moving towards conservatism, chose to capitalize on the Christian morals as the key factor which makes the United States the pillar of morality in this modern world as opposed to the other countries that do not have such Christian beliefs.

America, as the pillar of morality, is different from other countries. The foundations of America such as the tried and tested values that have created this civilization are what set it apart from other nations (238). This foundation is however threatened by " attempts to water down traditional values and even abrogate the original terms of American democracy (240)".

" Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged," According to Reagan, " When our Founding Fathers passed the First Amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself (240)".