

I also know that Rob's friendly demeanor and unparalleled professionalism will be dearly missed here in Washington, DC. Rob McClintic is irreplaceable.

Mr. President, I am sad because I am losing my trusted and valued staffer who has worked with me for nearly a decade, but I am happy to see a dear friend move on to new challenges, and I wish him the best of luck.

#### TRIBUTE TO FALLEN U.S. FOREST SERVICE FIREFIGHTERS FROM CALIFORNIA

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I have a very heavy heart as I pay tribute to five fallen U.S. Forest Service firefighters from California. It is an honor to talk about their heroic deeds, but it is heartbreaking.

These five heroes died in the line of duty while protecting families and homes in the Esperanza Fire west of Palm Springs. We deeply mourn the loss of Engine Captain Mark Loutzenhiser, Fire Engine Operator Jess McLean, Assistant Fire Engine Operator Jason McKay, Firefighter Daniel Hoover-Najera, and Firefighter Pablo Cerda.

Mark Loutzenhiser was 44 years old and had 21 years of firefighting service. He was a certified emergency management technician, EMT. He had previously worked as a hotshot crewman for the Vista Grande Hot Shots and also as a volunteer firefighter for Riverside County. He majored in fire science at Mount San Jacinto College. He was a longtime resident of Idyllwild, CA, and was a wonderful supporter and coach for the youth sports program. He is survived by his wife Maria Loutzenhiser.

Jess McLean was 27 years old and had 7 years of firefighting service. He had been a hotshot for 3 years with the Vista Grande Hot Shots. He graduated from Banning High School in 1997 and attended fire science classes at Crafton Hills College. He was a resident of Beaumont, CA. He is survived by his wife Karen McLean and his mother Cecelia McLean.

Jason McKay was 27 years old and had 5 years of Forest Service experience and 4 years as a volunteer firefighter in Adelanto. He also served on the Mojave Greens Type II crew. He was a certified EMT and earned an associate's degree in fire science. He was a resident of Phelan, CA. He is survived by his mother Bonnie J. McKay and his father Robert McKay.

Daniel Hoover-Najera was 20 years old and in his second season of firefighting. He worked on the Tahquitz Type II crew in 2005 and was a seasonal employee in 2006. He graduated from San Jacinto Mountain View High School in 2004. He was a resident of San Jacinto, CA. He is survived by his mother Gloria Ayala and his father Timothy Hoover.

Pablo Cerda was 23 years old and in his second season with the Forest Serv-

ice. He was previously of the Tahquitz Type II crew. He graduated from Los Amigos High School in Santa Ana in 2001 and attended Fire Academy of Riverside Community College. He was a resident of Fountain Valley, CA. He is survived by his father Pablo Cerda, Sr.

These five U.S. Forest Service firefighters on Engine Crew 57 on the San Jacinto Ranger District were dispatched early on the morning of Thursday, October 26 to fight the Esperanza fire. As the fire blazed out of control, they bravely fought it when they were overrun by flames.

Mark, Jess, Jason, Daniel, and Pablo are true examples of why we call firefighters heroes. They bravely and selflessly risked their lives time and time again trying to protect California. No more could be asked of anyone. Tragically, they have fallen in one of these battles. We know why their friends, family, and colleagues are so proud of them and so devastated by their loss. Their loss reverberates throughout California and our Nation.

I send my sincere condolences to their families, their communities, and all of the firefighters who had the honor of serving with Mark, Jess, Jason, Daniel, and Pablo over the years.

These firefighters are extraordinary heroes. And we will not rest until we have found those responsible for this horrific crime.

#### NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, as the session winds down I have been thinking back over the year. As always, there has been a lot more activity than action, but we are making progress on the people's business.

But not everything we do here is legislative in nature. Senator PRYOR and I had the opportunity to chair the National Prayer Breakfast in February, a nonofficial, nonpartisan, and non-denominational gathering of people from all over the world who are seeking better ways to connect with each other and find strength beyond ourselves. Many of our colleagues in the House and Senate participated. For their reference and for the benefit of other interested readers of this RECORD, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of a transcript of the event, including a very interesting talk by U2 lead singer and humanitarian Bono, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Senator Mark Pryor: Good morning. Thank you very much for being here. I am Senator Mark Pryor, from Arkansas, and I am one of the co-chairs of this event along with my very good friend Senator Norm Coleman of Minnesota. We are so grateful that you have come from every state in the Union, and from 160 nations around the world. To start us out on an uplifting and prayerful note, I am happy to introduce Karen Mason from Little Rock, Arkansas. She has a song to share today about grati-

tude, and it expresses how we all are feeling today.

Mrs. Karen Mason: Psalm 100 says that protocol for coming into the presence of our heavenly King is to enter into His gates with thanksgiving, to come into His presence with gratitude, with a heart of gratefulness, and this song is my song of gratitude to my heavenly King.

(Song.) (Applause.)

Senator Norm Coleman: Good morning, folks, I am Senator Norm Coleman, from the state of Minnesota, and before we enjoy our breakfast and more fellowship around the tables, I would like to introduce our head table's special guests and say a few words of grace. To my far left, Karen Mason, and the four women from Point of Grace, who will be introduced later in the program. Next to them is Senator David Vitter from Louisiana, then we have Senator Barack Obama, Illinois' new senator. Next to him is someone who we will introduce more fully later, for now one word will suffice—Bono. Next to him is my wife Laurie, whose love and support has brought me to this moment. On the other end, we have Congressman Lincoln Davis from Tennessee. Next to him we have Representative Tom Osborne of Nebraska, we will just call him Coach. Next to him is Senator Ken Salazar from Colorado. Then we have Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison from the great state of Texas. Next, a former main speaker at this event, Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, and next, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael Mullen. Finally, the spouse of my co-chair, Jill Pryor.

Let us pray to bless the food, which I will do in a moment. But first I would like to recite the most holy prayer in Judaism which is called the Shema, and I have prayed it since I was a little boy.

Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Elohaynu, Adonai Echad—Hear O Israel, Adonai is your God, Adonai is your God. Barukh Shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va-ed—Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever. V-ahavta et Adonai Elohecha—you shall love the Lord your God—b-chol l'vavcha u-v-chol naf'sh'cha u-v-chol m'odecha—with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

We gather under the shelter of encouragement of Your love today, to return thanks, to seek unity, to help the suffering, and to work for peace. Almighty God, we thank You for this food for our bodies and our hearts which we are receiving this morning. Bless all who prepared it. Lord, change us, and send us out of here different people than we were when we walked in. Amen.

Enjoy the food and the fellowship around the table.

(Breakfast.)

Senator Coleman: We are going to begin the program. I am happy to introduce my good friend Mark Pryor. He is a Democrat from a red state.

Senator Pryor: And my good friend Norm Coleman who is a Republican from a blue state and maybe that is why we get along so well. (Laughter.)

Senator Coleman: We came to Washington together, and one of the first things we heard from our senior colleagues was Harry Truman's advice: If you want a friend in Washington, buy a dog. The hardest thing in public life is not making decisions, it is finding people you can trust to guide you and encourage you to do the right thing.

Senator Pryor: And that is a real challenge, because with every senator, every congressman, and every other leader who is here, we got to where we are because of our friends. Someone described public service as being like cutting flowers from a garden and

putting them in a vase—they look great, but before too long they need some nourishment.

Senator Coleman: And for me that is what this breakfast and our weekly breakfast group in the Senate is all about—putting back in what the job takes out. You should already know by now that what you are experiencing is a very big public version of what we experience privately on a personal scale every week in the Senate and in the House. People from all kinds of backgrounds come together to share a meal, deepen our relations, pray to God for His guidance and blessings, and look for the inspiration to live our faith more completely. We would also like to provide a special welcome to four heads of state who have honored us with their presence. President Miro Jovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius, Prime Minister Said Musa of Belize, and King Abdullah bin al-Hussein II of Jordan. (Applause.)

Senator Pryor: We hope that this breakfast is an encouragement to you to do similar things where you live. I want to read a few verses from the gospel of John, chapter 21. It says:

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

And Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

That is the spirit in which we meet together today.

Senator Coleman: I am a tennis player, but not a very good one. I read somewhere that when you hit a tennis ball, it is only on the racket for a tenth of a second. The rest is all backswing and follow-through. The prayer breakfast is like that. We are here for just a moment, but the months and years of work that went into this event is the backswing, and hopefully there will be years of fruitful follow-through.

Listen to the words of Psalm 100. May this be your affirmation today as well.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations.

Senator Pryor: Amen to that. Norm, it has been a great pleasure and joy for me to work with you on this prayer breakfast, and seeing all these people it makes me feel like we can do anything. What about next week we go in the office and fix the federal budget deficit? (Laughter.)

Senator Coleman: You know, Mark, miracles do happen. One of my favorite quotes was from David Ben-Gurion, first Prime Minister of Israel, who said, “Anybody who doesn’t believe in miracles is not a realist.” (Laughter.)

Senator Pryor: Now to kick off the main part of the program, I am going to introduce our second musical selection. You’ve noticed we have music this morning. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt, he also led them in song. King David is recorded as writing and singing many, many songs. The apostles of the first century are recorded on many different occasions as singing songs. Music is an important way in which we can express our faith. Point of Grace is four young women with a passion for conveying the character of God through music. This is a song about prayer and friendship that expresses the heart of why we gather today. Ladies and gentlemen, Point of Grace.

[Point of Grace woman]: Thank you so much, Senator Pryor, for inviting us to be here today. It is a great honor, to be here with all of you to celebrate not only our faith but the great friendship that we all share. This is called “Circle of Friends.”

(Song.)

Senator Barack Obama: Good morning, Mr. President, Madam First Lady, our speaker today, Bono, for the outstanding work you are doing. Thank you all for being here. I offer a reading from the letters to the Romans, chapter 12, verses 3 through 12:

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Praise be to God.

Senator David Vitter: Good morning. I am David Vitter of Louisiana.

Senator Ken Salazar: Good morning. I am Ken Salazar from Colorado.

Senator Vitter: Ken and I both came to the U.S. Senate last year.

Senator Salazar: We came from different regions of the country, different parties, and different perspectives on some issues, but we were both drawn to the Senate prayer breakfast.

Senator Vitter: It is a truly wonderful refuge from the bitter partisanship and win-at-any-cost atmosphere that, unfortunately, we so often face outside that prayer circle.

Senator Salazar: As I said, Senator Vitter and I are members of the United States Senate breakfast. At that breakfast we pray together, Democrats and Republicans alike, and put aside what are sometimes very divi-

sive and bitter political and policy differences. There we focus on our common humanity and our faith in God. And like many of my Republican and Democratic colleagues in the U.S. Senate and those of you in this distinguished audience today, I grew up in a family and a community with a deep and abiding faith, and with a desire to translate our values into the service of our neighbors and into the betterment of our nation and our world. My own faith begins with my family. My family founded one of the first settlements in the New World, and named that city Santa Fe, the City of Holy Faith, in New Mexico. Over the more than four centuries since that time, my family has sacrificed and endured through war, poverty, death and discrimination. Yet during those four centuries, we have survived because of our faith that all of God’s children have within their minds and their hearts the ability to create a more perfect and better world with the freedom and intellect endowed upon us by our Creator.

As Jesus said in the book of John:

“If anyone says ‘I love God’ and hates his neighbor, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

Let us pledge today to redouble our efforts to mend the rifts that too often exist between religious traditions, nations and political parties. Let us remember the love of neighbor and love of God are linked by an unbreakable bond, and that our lives and our work should be motivated by love and compassion for our fellow man.

In closing I would like to share with you a prayer that is very close to my heart, one that was created and given by Cesar Chavez, the founder of the United Farm Workers of America. There he says, “Let the spirit flourish and grow, so that we will never tire of the struggle. Let us remember those who have died for justice, for they have given us life. Help us love even those who hate us, so that we can change the world.”

In conclusion, a part of a prayer that my family has handed down over the centuries goes as follows: *Infinitas gracias damos, por tus grandes beneficios que asi sin hacer servicio, nos das mas que merecemos.* This means, in general, “We thank you infinitely, oh God, for all the great blessings that you have given us.”

And today, God, we pray that you would continue to unite our nation and our world.

Senator Vitter: I guess my family are newcomers to this country compared to Ken’s. We came from France to Louisiana in the latter 1800s, but we share the same deep, rich Catholic faith. At the Senate prayer breakfast I have talked about the very Catholic concept of grace. It is God’s blessing given from above, unearned, undeserved. It is a very un-Washington concept that we are not in control. And prayer breakfasts have also deepened my sense of the power of prayer. Amazing things can happen when we truly acknowledge that we are not in control and ask for God’s grace, however unearned and undeserved.

These parts of my faith meant a lot to me this year, as we were hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in my home state of Louisiana and on the Gulf Coast. What better example of humans not being in control. And they sustain me today as we face the often overwhelming challenge of rebuilding, and the even more worrisome thought that the country has forgotten or moved on. So I call on that power of prayer this morning. I ask for your real prayer commitment to the people of the Gulf Coast. We all ask for God’s grace, that He touch us, bless us, awaken us to this and other great ongoing national challenges. And I pray that we meet and not forget this test of our national character here at home.

U.S. Representative Lincoln Davis: Mr. President, First Lady, speakers, and musicians, on behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives and my congressional co-chair of the prayer breakfast, we welcome you today. I want to give you a brief history. In 1942 the prayer breakfast groups were inaugurated in both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Later, in 1953, members of the Senate and House prayer groups gathered together with President Eisenhower for prayer and worship, to seek divine guidance for national leadership and to reaffirm faith and dependence on God. This gathering became known as the Presidential Prayer Breakfast until 1970, when the name was changed to the National Prayer Breakfast in order to put more emphasis on the gathering rather than the individuals involved. In my mind this was a fitting thing to do. And today, 64 years later, on the 54th anniversary of the National Day of Prayer, we gather again to celebrate the glory of faith. I am amazed at the amount of people who are here from outside of our country, at this wonderful event, highlighting the global nature of faith.

I would like to thank all the members of Congress and both the House and Senate who are here today. This last year has been a wonderful time for me every Thursday morning as we gather in the House restaurant, and I have served as co-chairman with the wonderful fellow, Coach, named Congressman Tom Osborne. It has been a delight, and as we gather each morning, as members of Congress share their lives, their story about their family and their faith journey, it is one of the best moments that we have.

When I first came to Congress in January of 2003, I quickly found that the weekly prayer breakfast, where I would join with my colleagues giving thanks to the Lord and ask for guidance in our work for the country, was my favorite hour of the week. For this reason I have always looked forward to the prayer breakfasts. However, I truly believe that any amount of time we spend in prayer are the best moments of our life, and it helps us to continue with our faith. Thank you for joining us this morning. My good friend, Tom Osborne.

U.S. Representative Tom Osborne: Thanks very much, Lincoln. Mr. President and First Lady, it is good to be with you this morning. I see a lot of politicians out there, and it reminds me of this event I went to not long ago. There were these three politicians, and one guy said to them: okay, let's get to the bottom of this thing—let's suppose you guys are laid out in your coffins and people are walking by and they're talking about you, what one thing would you want them to say about you? The first politician said, I'd want somebody to walk by and look down and say: this was an honest man. The second politician said, I'd want somebody to walk by and look down and say: this was a great family man. The third politician said, yeah, I'd want somebody to walk by and look down and say: I think he's still moving. (Laughter.)

Sometimes—at this time of the morning, that is about the way you feel.

Lincoln covered the House prayer breakfast very well. Each Thursday, 30 to 40 of us meet together, and the speakers are always members of Congress. The interesting thing is, people share their lives and talk about their families and their hopes and their aspirations and their struggles, it seems that the labels begin to come off—Republican, Democrat, liberal, conservative, and on and on. You begin to see the person behind the mask and you begin to see people as they really are. Every time I have come away from that breakfast, I have had a great appreciation and usually a genuine love for that person as I have heard them talk about their life.

It has been an unwavering tradition that the only speakers we have are members of Congress. But we were notified one day that King Abdullah was going to come from Jordan, and, we have had a senator or two come by but we have never had a king before, so we didn't know what to do. We said, we had better ask him to speak. And so he spoke, and it was really an interesting morning, because he talked about his country, he talked about things that were going on in the world, he talked about the Koran, and then he talked about Jesus. It was really a very meaningful time, because at that point I began to realize that this person that we often put in a box, and this person that often is so clearly identified with a particular ideology, cuts across so many areas. And I know that is why so many of you are here today from so many countries, because of an interest in this particular topic.

Lincoln and I wanted to thank you and welcome you this morning, and we certainly hope that you will experience God's presence here as we meet today, and that the world will be a better place for our having been here. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Senator Joseph Lieberman: Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, your majesty King Abdullah, ladies and gentlemen, honored guests, it is with great gratitude and joy that I greet you all, of different faiths but all brothers and sisters in a shared faith in God. In the language and spirit of the Hebrew Bible, "B'ruchim ha-baim b'Shem Adonai"—Blessed be those who have come in the name of the Lord.

I am greatly honored to have been asked this morning to offer prayer for our national leaders. I pray that God will open my lips so that my mouth may declare his praise.

In Genesis 2:7 it is written that God formed the man of dust from the ground, and he blew into his nostrils the soul of life, and man became a living being. In 1776, God moved the founding generation of Americans to breathe a soul into their new land and make it a living nation, when they acknowledged the self-evident truth that there is a Creator, and that he created us all equal, and that we are all endowed by our Creator with unalienable rights, including among them the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that governments are formed to secure those rights. That declaration gave America not only its independence but its purpose. And it was not just a national purpose but a global purpose, because God's endowment of those rights was truly not just to Americans but to all the men, women and children of His creation. So I pray this morning that God will bless America, and each American, as we work to advance our faith-based purposes; to unite all of God's children here at home and throughout the world; to support the causes of freedom, opportunity, unity and hope, and defeat the evils of oppression, poverty, illness, hatred and fear.

We pray, Lord, that you will hold our president and his family and all national leaders in your hands, and protect them and us as they lead us forward to achieve the humane and universal mission you have given us, so that together we may come to the day when the mountains will be made low and the valleys will be raised up, when the crooked places will be made straight and the rough places smooth. For on that day, which we all pray and work for, the earth will surely be full of the glory of God. Amen. (Applause.)

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison: I am Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison from Texas. Mr. President, First Lady Laura, King Abdullah, Heads of State, and all distinguished visitors from around the world and from our wonderful country. As religious, community and political leaders, we deal with the most dif-

ficult problems our people face. Complete success frequently proves illusive, and the victories we do achieve often come with setbacks and failures. A passage that renews my energy and restores my focus is Second Corinthians chapter 4, verses 16 to 18:

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (Applause.)

Admiral Michael G. Mullen: Good morning, Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, other distinguished Heads of State, and distinguished visitors. I am Admiral Mike Mullen, I am the Chief of Naval Operations and this morning I represent the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I am honored to be here and to have this opportunity. I have been asked to say a few words about myself which I don't do well but I will give it a shot. I like to describe myself as a husband and father, an American, a sailor in the United States Navy, and a naval officer, in that order. I have been married for 35 years to my partner for life, Deborah, and we are very proud of our two sons, Jack and Michael, currently serving on active duty in the Navy. I am originally from Los Angeles, son of hard-working parents who moved out west after the Depression in search of a better life. They found it there and gave it to me. I hold their memories dear. Born and raised a Catholic, I also hold my faith dear. I know its enormous power, have seen it with my own eyes during countless visits with soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen employed in harm's way. Just like the power of prayer, faith can move mountains. This morning I ask you to join me. I would like to offer a prayer for our world's leaders.

Father in heaven, we gather in prayer today to ask your blessing over the lives and decisions of those who lead nations around the world. It is a time of great challenge and great adversity. Theirs is an especially mighty task and a deeply noble calling. For upon the shoulders of our leaders rests the hopes and the dreams of billions of people. From the pen and from the podium, they direct the future not only of this generation but of generations yet unborn. May you guide them in that pursuit, oh Lord, and give them strength. Help them serve with integrity and with compassion. Help them choose love over hate, courage over fear, principle over expediency. Let them find new and even better ways to be providers and peace makers. Let them be guided from the wisdom found in Romans 12, which tells us, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God. Let love be genuine, hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all."

In the sight of all, oh Lord, let our leaders be noble and learn from your example. Let them realize that to be right with you is to be right. And finally, from this sailor to the One who made the seas, be pleased to guide the ships of state to safe harbor. In the face of storms and shoals and fainting hearts, we trust you with everything we have, everything we are, and everything we hope to be. You not only chart our course, you help us hold the tiller. You brave the waves and calm the waters. You really are Emmanuel, God with us. May that truth be known today to those who lead our nations. With grateful hearts we pray, Amen.

Senator Coleman: There are a lot of Catholics on this program. Mr. President, I

thought they were all on the Supreme Court. (Laughter.)

In my day, I have introduced the president, I once introduced Dr. Billy Graham, but as a former roadie for the 60s rock band Ten Years After, this ranks right up there as one of the high points of my introducing career. Mark and I were joking about this earlier, this kind of makes us the rhetorical warm-up act for U2. (Laughter.)

Our message today comes from a person who has gotten the attention of the world by walking with God, talking about things that matter, and letting his light shine. He is an extraordinary musician, charismatic leader, and is unabashedly, uniquely himself. We have an expression that a celebrity is a person who is famous for being famous. But our speaker this morning is known around the world as a person of conscience, a person of influence, but most of all, a person of faith. His organization is called DATA—Debt, AIDS, Trade in Africa. They are working to bring people, organizations, leaders and politicians together to make a unified effort to change the future of Africa.

He has come to challenge us, to reach across the boundaries, to care for the poor and to walk the talk of our faith. Ladies and gentlemen, Bono. (Applause.)

Bono: Thank you very much. Thank you Mr. President, First Lady, King Abdullah, other heads of state, distinguished guests. Please join me in praying that I don't say something we will all regret. That was for the FCC.

If you are wondering what I am doing here at a prayer breakfast, well so am I. I am certainly not here as a man of the cloth, unless that cloth is leather. And I am certainly not here because I am a rock star, which leaves only one possible explanation: I have got a messianic complex. It is true. And to anyone who knows me, it is hardly a revelation.

I am the first to admit that there is something unnatural, something even unseemly about rock stars mounting the pulpit and preaching at presidents, then disappearing to their villas in the south of France. Talk about a fish out of water. It was weird enough to have Jesse Helms come to a rock show. But, this is really weird, isn't it?

One of the things I love about this country is the separation of Church and State—although I have to say in inviting me here both Church and State have been separated from something else completely: their mind!

Mr. President, are you sure about this? It is very humbling, and I will try to keep my homily brief. But be warned: I am Irish.

I would like to talk about the laws of man, here in this city, where those laws are written. I would like to talk about higher laws. It would be great to assume that one serves the other, that the laws of man serve these higher laws, but of course they don't always. I presume, in a way, that that is why you are all here. I presume the reason for this gathering is that all of us here—Muslims, Jews, Christians—are searching our souls for how to better serve our family, our community, our nation, our God. And some of us are not very good examples, despite what Norm says.

I am certainly searching, and that, I suppose, is what led me here. Yes, it is odd, having a rock star at the breakfast. But maybe it is odder for me than for you, because, you see, I have avoided religious people most of my life. Maybe it has something to do with my having a father who was a Protestant and a mother who was a Catholic in a country where the line between the two was, quite literally, often a battle line; where the line between Church and State was, at the very least, a little blurry and hard to see.

I remember how my mother would bring us to chapel on Sundays and my father used to wait outside. One of the things that I picked

up from my father and my mother was the sense that religion often gets in the way of God. For me, at least, it got in the way, seeing what religious people, in the name of God, did to my native land. And even in this country, seeing God's second-hand car salesmen on the TV cable channels offering indulgences for cash. In fact, all over the world, seeing the self-righteous roll down like a mighty stream from certain corners of the religious establishment. I must confess, I changed the channel. I wanted my MTV.

So, even though I was a believer, and perhaps because I was a believer, I was cynical—not about God, but about God's politics.

In 1997, a couple of eccentric septuagenarian British Christians went and ruined my shtick, my reproachfulness. They did it by describing the Millennium, the year 2000, as a Jubilee year: as an opportunity to cancel the chronic debts of the world's poorest people. They had the audacity to renew the Lord's call and were joined by Pope John Paul II, who, from an Irish half-Catholic's point of view, may have had a little more of a direct line to the Almighty, to declare the Year of Jubilee.

So Jubilee. Why Jubilee? What was this Year of Jubilee, this year of our Lord's favor? I had always read the Scriptures, actually, even the obscure stuff. There it was in Leviticus 25:35:

"If your brother becomes poor, and cannot maintain himself, you shall maintain him. You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit."

Jubilee is such an important idea that Jesus begins his ministry with this. Jesus is a young man, he has met with the rabbis, he has impressed everybody, people are talking. The elders say, he is a clever guy, this Jesus, but, he has not done much, yet. He has not spoken in public before. When he does, his first words are from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor." And Jesus proclaims the year of the Lord's favor, the year of Jubilee in Luke 4:18. What he was really talking about was an era of grace, and we are still in it.

So fast-forward 2,000 years. That same thought—grace—is now incarnate in a movement of all kinds of people. It was not a bless-me club, it was not a holy huddle. These religious guys were willing to get out in the streets, get their boots dirty, wave the placards, follow their convictions with actions, making it really hard for people like me to keep our distance—ruining my shtick. I almost started to like these church people.

But then my cynicism got another helping hand. It was what Colin Powell, a five-star general, called the greatest W.M.D. of them all: a tiny little virus called A.I.D.S. And the religious community, in large part, missed it. The ones that did not miss it could only see it as divine retribution for bad behavior—even on children? Even if the fastest-growing group of HIV infections were married, faithful women?

Ah, there they go, I thought to myself. Judgmentalism is back. But in truth, I was wrong again. The Church was slow but the Church got busy on this the leprosy of our age. Love was on the move. Mercy was on the move. God was on the move. Moving people of all kinds to work with others they had never met, never would have cared to meet. We had conservative church groups hanging out with spokesmen from the gay community, all singing off the same hymn sheet on AIDS. See, miracles do happen. And we had hip-hop stars and country stars. This is what happens when God gets on the move. Crazy, crazy stuff happens. Popes were seen wearing sunglasses! Jesse Helms had a ghetto blaster now! Evidence of the Spirit moving—it was breathtaking. It literally stopped the world in its tracks.

When churches started demonstrating on debt, governments listened—and acted. When churches started organizing, petitioning, and even that most unholy of acts today, God forbid, lobbying on AIDS and global health, governments listened—and acted. I am here today in all humility to say: you changed minds, you changed policy, and you changed the world. So thank you. (Applause.)

Check Judaism. Check Islam. Check pretty much anyone. God may well be with us in our mansions on the hill. I hope so. He may well be with us in all manner of controversial stuff. Maybe, maybe not. But the one thing we can all agree on—all faiths, all ideologies—is that God is with the vulnerable and poor. God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house. God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives. God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war. God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives, and God is with us if we are with them. (Applause.)

"If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger and the speaking of wickedness, and if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday, and the Lord will continually guide you and satisfy your desire even in scorched places."

It is not a coincidence that in the Scriptures poverty is mentioned more than 2,100 times. It is not an accident. That is a lot of air time. The only time Jesus Christ is judgmental is on the subject of the poor, Matthew 25:40: "As you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

As I say, good news to the poor. Here is some good news for you, Mr. President. After 9-11, we were told America would have no time for the world's poor. We were told America would be taken up with its own problems of safety. And while it is true that these are dangerous times, America has not drawn the blinds and double-locked the doors. In fact, you have doubled aid to Africa. You have tripled funding for global health. And Mr. President, your emergency plan for AIDS relief and support of the Global Fund—yours' and Congress'—have put 700,000 people onto life-saving anti-retroviral drugs and provided eight million bed nets to protect children from malaria. (Applause.)

Outstanding human achievements. Counterintuitive, I think you will admit, but historic. You should be very, very proud. But here is the bad news: There is so much more to do. There is a gigantic chasm between the scale of the emergency and the scale of the response.

And finally—getting to higher levels, higher callings—this is not about charity in the end, is it? It is about justice, the good news yet to come. I just want to repeat that: This is not about charity, it is about justice. And that is too bad. Because we are good at charity. Americans as well as the Irish are good at charity. We like to give and we give a lot, even those who cannot afford it. But justice is a higher standard. Africa makes a fool of our idea of justice; it makes a farce of our idea of equality. It mocks our pieties, it doubts our concern, and it questions our commitment. 6,500 Africans are still dying every day of preventable, treatable disease, for lack of drugs we can buy at any drugstore. This is not about charity; this is about justice and equality. Because there is no way we can look at what is happening in Africa and, if we are honest, conclude that deep down, we would let it happen anywhere else, if we really accepted that Africans are equal to us. And I say that humbled in the company of a man with an African father.

Look at what happened in Southeast Asia with the Tsunami. 150,000 lives lost to the

greatest misnomer of all misnomers, Mother Nature. Well, in Africa, 150,000 lives are lost every month—a tsunami every month. And it is a completely avoidable catastrophe.

It is annoying, but justice and equality are mates, aren't they? Justice always wants to hang out with equality. And equality is a real pain.

You think of these Jewish sheep-herders going to meet with the Pharaoh, mud on their shoes, and the Pharaoh goes, "Equal? Equal?" And they say, "Yeah, that is what it says here in the Book—we are all made in the image of God, sir." Eventually the Pharaoh says, "Look, I can accept that. I can accept the Jews—but not the blacks. Not the women. Not the gays. Not the Irish. No way." So on we go with the journey of equality. On we go in the pursuit of justice.

We hear that call in the ONE Campaign, a growing movement of more than two million Americans—five million by the next election, I can promise you—united in the belief that where you live should no longer determine whether you live.

We hear that call even more powerfully today, when we mourn the loss of Coretta Scott King, mother of a movement for equality, one that changed the world but is only really getting started, because these issues are as alive as they ever were; they just change shape and they cross the seas.

Preventing the poorest of the poor from selling their products while we sing the virtues of the free market—that is not charity, that is a justice issue. Holding children to ransom for the debts of their grandparents—that is not charity, that is a justice issue. Withholding life-saving medicines out of deference to the Office of Patents—that is not charity, that is a justice issue. And while the law is what we say it is, God is not silent on the subject. That is why I say there are laws of the land and then there is a higher standard. And we can hire experts to write them so they benefit us, so that these laws say that it is okay to protect our agriculture but it is not okay for African farmers to protect their agriculture, to earn a living. As the laws of man are written, that is what they say. But God will not accept that. Mine will not. Will yours?

I close this morning on very thin ice, probably. This is a dangerous idea I have put on the table here: my God versus your God, their God versus our God, versus no God. It is very easy in these times to see religion as a force for division rather than unity. And Washington is a town that knows something of division. But the reason I am here, and the reason I keep coming back, is because Washington is a town that is proving it can come together on behalf of what the Scriptures call "the least of these." It is not a Republican idea, it is not a Democratic idea, it is not even, with all due respect, an American idea, nor is it unique to any one faith.

"Do to others as you would have them do to you." Jesus says that.

"Righteousness is this: that one should give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and to the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for the emancipation of the captives." The Koran says that.

"Thus sayeth the Lord: Bring the homeless poor into your house. When you see the naked, cover him. Then your light will break out like the dawn and your recovery will spring forth speedily; then the Lord will be your rear guard." The Jewish Scripture says that. Isaiah 58 again. It is a very powerful incentive: The Lord will watch your back. Sounds like a good deal to me, especially right now. (Applause.)

A number of years ago, I met a wise man who changed my life, in countless ways, big and small. I was always seeking the Lord's

blessing. I would be saying, look, I have got a new song, look after it. I have a family, and I am going away on tour, please look after them. I have this crazy idea, could I have a blessing on it. And this wise man asked me to stop. He said stop asking God to bless what you are doing. Get involved in what God is doing, because it is already blessed.

Let's get involved in what God is doing. God, as I say, is always with the poor. That is what God is doing, and that is what He is calling us to do.

I was amazed when I first got to this country and I learned how much some churchgoers tithe: up to ten percent of the family budget. How does that compare with the federal budget, the budget for the entire American family? How much of that goes to the poorest people in the world? It is less than one percent of the federal budget.

Mr. President, Congress, people of faith, people of America, I want to suggest to you today that you see the flow of effective foreign assistance as tithing, which to be truly meaningful will mean an additional one percent of the federal budget tithed to the poor. And what is that one percent that we are asking for in the ONE campaign? It is not merely a number on a balance reader pulled out of the air. One percent is the girl in Africa who gets to go to school, thanks to you. One percent is the AIDS patient who gets her medicine, thanks to you. One percent is the African entrepreneur who can start a small family business, thanks to you. One percent is not redecorating presidential palaces. One percent must not be—or do not give it—money down a rat hole. This one percent is digging waterholes to provide clean water, like I saw with Bill Frist in Uganda. That is what we are asking for. (Applause.)

One percent is a new partnership with Africa, not paternalism towards Africa, where increased assistance flows toward improved governance and initiatives with proven track records and away from the boondoggles and white elephants that we have seen before.

America gives less than one percent now. We are asking for an extra one percent to change the world, to transform millions of lives—and I say this to the military men now not just transform hundreds of thousands of communities, indeed millions, but transform the way they see us, which might be smart in these dangerous times. One percent is national security. One percent is enlightened economic self-interest, and a better, safer world rolled into one. Sounds to me that in this town of deals and compromises, one percent is the best bargain around.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Senator Pryor: Thank you.

You may know, friends, that the National Prayer Breakfast came into being as a way to support and encourage the president and his family. Back in the 1950s, newly elected Dwight Eisenhower declared to a close friend in the Senate, "I live in the loneliest house in the world." President Eisenhower was invited to be part of a small, private Senate breakfast group which is still meeting today. At some point one of the people in that group declared, "It sure would be an encouragement to the nation to know we are meeting like this." And so the first National Prayer Breakfast was held. The model of leaders meeting in private to share their lives, their testimony, and to pray has spread, and this is spreading to scores of nations around the world.

This morning we are honored to have our first couple with us. Mrs. Bush, we want to express the comfort and reassurance we have felt from your loving personality. Thank you. (Applause.)

And now, Mr. President, we want you to know that we all pray for you. The awesome

burdens you carry are beyond anything any of us can even imagine. We thank you for being a man of real faith and of prayer. It is evident that this is a deep, personal faith. And I want to thank you for encouraging people of faith to take a larger role in our society. I remember the story of the people coming around Moses, to hold up his arms as he led the people. We have come here today to do that for you.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to introduce the President of the United States.

President George W. Bush: Thank you all. (Applause.)

Thanks for the warm welcome. Laura and I are delighted to be here. This lovely personality said this morning: keep your remarks short. (Laughter.)

I appreciate this prayer breakfast a lot, and I appreciate the spirit in which it was formed. Ike said he was living in the loneliest house in America—but what he forgot to say is: the rent is pretty good. (Laughter.)

It is great to be here with distinguished guests from all around the world. Your Majesty and Prime Ministers and former Prime Ministers, friends with whom I have the honor to work, you are welcome here. I appreciate the fact that people from different walks of life, different faiths have joined us. Yet I believe we share one thing in common: We are united in our dedication to peace and tolerance and humility before the Almighty. (Applause.)

I want to thank Senators Pryor and Coleman for putting on this breakfast. I appreciate Senator Frist, Representative Blunt, Representative Pelosi, other members of the United States Congress who have joined us on the dais and who are here for this breakfast. I thank the members of my Cabinet who are here. Get back to work. (Laughter.)

I find it interesting that the music is from Arkansas. (Laughter.) I am glad it is, because they know how to sing down there. (Laughter.)

I was trying to figure out what to say about Bono, and a story jumped to mind about this really good Texas preacher. And he got going in a sermon and a fellow jumped up in the back and said, "Use me, Lord, use me." The preacher ignored him and finished his sermon. The next Sunday, the preacher gets up and is cranking on another sermon when the guy jumps up again and says, "Use me, Lord, use me." After the service, the preacher walked up to him and said, "If you're serious, I'd like for you to paint the pews." Next Sunday, he's preaching, the guy stands up and says, "Use me, Lord, use me, but only in an advisory capacity." (Laughter.)

So I have gotten to know Bono. (Laughter.) He is a doer. The thing about this good citizen of the world is that he has used his position to get things done. You are an amazing guy, Bono. God bless you. (Applause.)

It is fitting we have a National Prayer Breakfast, because our nation is a nation of prayer. In America, we do not prescribe any prayer. We welcome all prayer. We are a nation founded by men and women who came to these shores seeking to worship the Almighty freely. From these prayerful beginnings God has greatly blessed the American people, and through our prayers we give thanks to the true source of our blessings.

Americans remain a prayerful people today. I know this firsthand. I cannot tell you the number of times while traveling out there in our country, people walk up, total strangers, and say, Mr. President, I am praying for you and your family. It is one of the great blessings of the presidency, and one of the most wonderful gifts a person can give any of us who have the responsibility to govern justly. So I thank my fellow citizens for their gracious prayers and wonderful gifts.

Every day, millions of Americans pray for the safety of our troops, for the protection of innocent life, and for the peace we all hope for. Americans continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded, and to pray for the Almighty's comfort on those who have lost a loved one. We give thanks daily for the brave and decent men and women who wear our nation's uniform, and we thank their families as well.

In this country we recognize prayer is a gift from God to every human being. It is a gift that allows us to come before our Maker with heartfelt requests and our deepest hopes. Prayer reminds us of our place in God's creation. It reminds us that when we bow our heads or fall to our knees, we are all equal and precious in the eyes of the Almighty.

In prayer, we are reminded that we are never alone in our personal trials or individual suffering. In prayer, we offer our thanksgiving and praise, recognizing our lives, our talents and all that we own ultimately flow from the Creator. And in these moments of our deepest gratitude, the Almighty reminds us that for those to whom much has been given, much is required.

In prayer, we open ourselves to God's priority, especially His charge to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to the widow or the orphan. By surrendering our will to God's will, we learn to serve His eternal purposes. Through prayer, our faith is strengthened, our hearts are humbled and our lives are transformed. Prayer encourages us to go out into the world and serve.

In our country we recognize our fellow citizens are free to profess any faith they choose, or no faith at all. You are equally American if you are a Jew or a Christian or Muslim. You are equally American if you choose not to have faith. It is important America never forget the great freedom to worship as you so choose. (Applause.)

What I have found in our country, that whatever our faith, millions of Americans answer the universal call to love your neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself. Over the past five years we have been inspired by the ways that millions of Americans have answered that call. In the face of terrorist attacks and devastating natural disasters here and around the world, the American people have shown their faith in action again and again. After Katrina, volunteers from churches and mosques and synagogues and other faith-based and community groups opened up their hearts and their homes to the displaced. We saw an outpouring of compassion after the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami that devastated entire communities. We live up to God's calling when we provide help for HIV/AIDS victims on the continent of Africa and around the world. In millions of acts of kindness, we have seen the good heart of America.

The true strength of this country is not in our military might or in the size of our wallet, it is in the hearts and souls of the American people. (Applause.)

I was struck by the comment of a fellow who was rescued from the Gulf Coast and given shelter. He said, "I didn't think there was so much love in the world."

This morning we come together to recognize the source of that great love. We come together before the Almighty in prayer, to reflect on God's will, to seek His aid, and to respond to His grace.

I want to thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today. I pray that our nation will always have the humility to commend our cares to Providence and trust in the goodness of His plans.

May God bless you all. (Applause.)

Senator Coleman: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Pryor said that we all pray for

you and we want to reiterate that. We know that prayer changes people and prayer changes history, and we send you and the First Lady off with our love and gratitude for spending time with us this morning. We promise to pray like all depends on our prayers. God bless the President and his wife.

We are now going to have a concluding song.

(Song.) ["Waiting in the Wings."] (Applause.)

Senator Coleman: Ladies and gentlemen, Point of Grace.

Senator Pryor: It has been a great morning, hasn't it? (Applause.)

One of the highlights of the year of preparation for this prayer breakfast was for Norm and me to place a phone call to Dr. Billy Graham. And, as most of you know, he was deeply involved, and has been deeply involved, in many prayer breakfasts, especially the early ones. In years past he has been very involved in the National Prayer Breakfast and has helped us develop this model over the last 54 years.

Senator Coleman: We were asking if Dr. Graham could be with us this morning to say our closing prayer but he said that his health would not allow him to travel. But he wanted us all to greet you in the name of the Lord and he said that he would be right here with us praying. He is a national treasure, and we know his prayers have been answered today. We ask that God would sustain him and continue to give him voice to bring our nation and our world together.

And now we have a very special moment to conclude in prayer. When we began to put this breakfast together beginning almost a year ago, our prayer was that it not just be another annual event, but that it address the deepest needs of the world that are unique to this moment in time and history. In the messages we have heard from Bono and the President, we have touched the heart of the world situation today. In addition, we would like all to welcome to the podium a very distinguished guest, a courageous leader in the pursuit of peace in the Middle East, King Abdullah bin al-Hussein II of Jordan. Your Majesty, please join us up here. (Applause.)

King Abdullah bin al-Hussein II: Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim—In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

My friend Bono, Senator Coleman, Senator Pryor, all of you, thank you very much for the honor to stand with you today, as a brother with people of faith, to reaffirm our common values and beliefs. The principles that we gather to recognize today are grounded in the firmest of foundations, our scriptural heritage.

For Muslims, the essence of the Koran is its opening chapter, Al-Fatiha, each of whose verses echoes the teachings of the Torah and the Gospels. The Koran begins, "In the name of God, the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful." This reflects the famous verse of the Psalms, "We will remember the name of our Lord." The next line of the Koran, "Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds" reminds us of the words of the Psalm, "Let every thing that has breath praise the Lord." The following line, "the Infinitely Good, the All-Merciful," reaffirms the Psalm "gracious is the Lord and righteous." Yes, our God is merciful. The Koran then confirms that God is master of the day of judgment, as does the Good Book: "He has prepared his throne for judgment. He shall judge the world in righteousness."

The last three lines of the Fatiha are supplication. "Thee we worship and Thee we ask for help. Guide us upon the straight path, the path of those on whom is Thy grace, not those upon whom is anger nor those who are astray." This recalls the final words that Jesus—may peace and blessings be upon

him—taught us in the Lord's Prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen."

I now ask you all to join in a special prayer for the Middle East, that not one more generation will grow up knowing conflict and injustice, nor suffer from poverty or oppression; that not one more family will lose a loved one to war and bitterness; and that together, Muslim, Jew and Christian, we can create a new future for the Holy Land, a future of hope, a future of promise, a future of peace.

Let us remember the words of Amos, the words that Dr. Martin Luther King urged for all peoples and all time: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Senator Pryor: Let us pray. Lord, we are grateful for your presence among us. You made us and you love us, so to be in your presence is what our lives are all about. We stand as people from all walks of life, many backgrounds and traditions, as a circle of friends. We know your love waits in the wings, and we ask you to bring it onto the world stage. We grieve for our fellow human beings who suffer the pain and hardship and bereavement of war and disease. We pray especially for the children. May they somehow escape the destruction, the mental scars that would lead them to want to make war in their own adulthood. Lord, as your servant the King has asked, we pray for the peace of the Middle East. We pray that you would restrain the forces of evil, and raise up and propel forward the leaders of peace.

Senator Coleman: Lord, we pray for the people of Africa. We pray that we would each individually in our roles as leaders allow our hearts to be broken by the things that break the heart of the Lord. May we join together in medical solutions and financial solutions and economic solutions which rescue that continent from the problems that it has. We thank you for the joy and faith of the African people. May their example of grace in the face of suffering inspire us all. And Lord, that which we pray for, give us the strength to work for. And together may we say the ancient benediction from the Torah: The Lord bless you and keep you.

Senator Pryor: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Senators Coleman and Pryor: The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. And all of God's people together said: Amen.

Senator Coleman: Thank you all for coming and go in peace. (Applause.)

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### RETIREMENT OF JEROLD L. HARRIS

● Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, today I wish to publicly recognize Jerold L. Harris, president and CEO of U.S. AgBank, FCB, in Wichita, KS. Jerold will retire in January 2007 following a 43-year career in the Farm Credit System.

Jerold is a native of South Dakota, growing up near Denby. He attended high school in Gordon, NE, just across the State line. After receiving a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Colorado State University in 1963, he went to work for the Farm Credit System, where he has served agriculture and rural America ever since.