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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m., and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Rev. Eugene F. Rivers, from Azusa Christian Community Church, Dorchester, MA.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, Rev. Eugene F. Rivers, offered the following prayer:

Father, we thank You, praise You, and adore You for how You have blessed us. May we be good stewards of all the resources with which You have entrusted us. Provide the men and women of this Senate with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that they may make decisions that are just and fair.

God of strength and love, because You care for us, we are never alone. Give us the wisdom to turn our fears into courage, so that we will have the power to make good decisions, even in bad situations. Thank You for loving us and teach us how to love ourselves.

Father, give us a love that is patient and kind; that does not envy or boast; that is not proud; that is not rude or self-seeking or easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. Give us a love that does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth; that always hopes and perseveres. Give us a love that never fails.—1 Corinthians 13.

Amen.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, it is my great privilege today to introduce to my colleagues in the Senate a very special person who is here with us, a long time friend of mine and a true leader, nationally as well as in Massachusetts, the Rev. Eugene Rivers.

Reverend Rivers is the pastor of the Azusa Christian Community in Four Corners, which is an inner-city commu-

nity in Boston. He honored the Senate today by delivering our opening prayer, asking particularly that each and every one of us are bestowed with the wisdom to turn our fears into courage so that we will have the power to make good decisions even in bad situations. I think those words are particularly important to us in the context of this debate in the last few days.

Not only should we be touched by Gene Rivers' words this morning, but I emphasize to my colleagues the degree to which the words of this person of the cloth and the acts of life come from his heart. As someone who knows him and has worked with him and has been inspired by him, I can tell my colleagues that he is the living embodiment of the words he shared with us today. Those words reflect the important work that he has made his life's work—walking often in places of danger, always in places of difficulty, in order to try to bring the word of God and the spirit to our fellow citizens—in fact, the citizens of the world.

Gene Rivers comes from a place that understands some of the toughest fights in our country. He was born and raised in south Chicago and in north-west Philadelphia. He found himself in a bad situation as a gang member. He was struggling to break free from the life that he knew was either going to take him to jail or to a cemetery.

After, from that difficult life of the streets, Reverend Rivers persevered and he attended Harvard University and then did studies at the Divinity School. Ultimately, he has returned to the streets to live out his inner self in the spirit that commands his life. He has been part of what we call the Boston Miracle. As he puts it, he has let God use him to fight the gangs. Most recently, through his tremendous efforts in Boston, with Operation 2006 and the Baker House, my staff and I have seen Gene Rivers go out into the community, knocking on doors, standing on street corners to develop the

services and assistance and the inspiration that so many young people need. He works very closely with the law enforcement authorities in helping to defuse the danger of the gangs.

As a consequence of his hands-on efforts, we went through, I think, almost a 2-year period in which we had not one young person killed in the city of Boston. He is consistently working to try to defuse those kinds of situations. Because of his direct hands-on action, Operation 2006 reduces juvenile violence and it brings the community together in ways that perhaps no one in public life could do without that special kind of connection.

I might add that, since then, Gene Rivers has tackled a much larger call beyond Massachusetts. The Senate this year has become particularly aware of the devastation taking place in Africa as a result of the AIDS epidemic. Gene Rivers has tackled that issue, challenging leaders in Africa, as well as leaders here, to engage in a candid discussion that tries to bring us all together in a united effort to deal with this terrible scourge. He has helped to make us all aware of the responsibility to do something about this, and he has had an impact.

Reverend Rivers was, in fact, the subject of a cover story in Newsweek magazine, I think a little over a year ago. They described him as an "intellectual burst of firecrackers spinning off ideas and energy."

He has been called an "impolitic preacher" and a man of action. Today, I simply want to thank him for always answering the call of leadership, for battling, from every day for the souls and safety of our inner-city kids to standing up to halt the spread of AIDS throughout Africa. I thank him for being a great voice of our generation, and he graces us with his wisdom and his prayers. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Rev. Eugene Rivers for his guidance, his friendship, and his leadership.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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