

who can often shame the avowedly religious. Those who do God's work are God's people. I only say that there are limits to humanism, and beyond those limits, God and only God can work. The phrase "fear of God" conjures up the vengeful God of parts of the Old Testament. But fear of God means really obedience to God: humility before God; acceptance through God that there is something bigger, better, and more important than you. It is that humbling of man's vanity, that stirring of conscience through God's prompting, that recognition of our limitations, that faith alone can bestow. We can perform acts of mercy, but only God can lend them true dignity. We can forgive but only God forgives completely in the full knowledge of our sin. And only through God comes grace; and it is God's grace that is unique. John Newton, who had been that most obnoxious of things, a slave trader, he it was who wrote the hymn, "Amazing Grace" — "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved." It is through faith, by the grace of God, that we have the courage to live as we should and die as we must.

When I was Prime Minister I had cause often to reflect on leadership. Courage in leadership is not simply about having the nerve to take difficult decisions or even in doing the right thing—since oftentimes God alone knows what the right thing is. It is to be in our natural state—which is one of nagging doubt in perfect knowledge, an uncertain prediction—and to be prepared nonetheless to put on the mantle of responsibility and to stand up in full view of the world, to step out when others step back, to assume the loneliness of the final decision-maker, not sure of success but unsure of it. It is in that "not knowing" that the courage lies. When in that state our courage fails, our faith can support it, lift it up, and keep it from stumbling.

As you begin your leadership with this great country, Mr. President, you are fortunate, as is your nation, that you have already shown in your life courage in abundance. But should it ever be tested, I hope your faith can sustain you, and your family. The public eye is not always the most congenial. I was reminded of this, as I waited in London in the snow to fly to America and made the mistake of reading a British newspaper. It was the very conservative Daily Telegraph. A few days ago I gave an interview in which I remarked how much cleverer my wife was than me. The Telegraph has a famous letters page. In it was a letter from a correspondent that read something like, "Dear sir, with reference to your headline, 'Blair admits wife more intelligent than him,' I fail to see why this is news. Most of us have known this for a long time," and as a P.S. perhaps: "the bar has not been set high."

I finish where I began: in the Holy Land at Mount Nebo in Jordan, where Moses gazed on the Promise Land. There was a chapel there, built by pilgrims in the fourth century. The sermon that day was preached by an American, who spent his life as an airline pilot and then, after his wife's death, took holy orders. His words are the words of a Christian, but they speak to all those of faith, who want God's grace to guide their life. He said this:

"While here on earth, we need to make a vital decision . . . whether to be mere spectators or movers and shakers for the Kingdom of God . . . whether to stay among the curious, or take up a cross. And this means no standing on the sidelines—we are either in the game or we are not. I sometimes ask myself the question: 'If I were to die today, what would my life have stood for?' . . . The answer can't be an impulsive one, and we all need to count the cost before we give an an-

swer. Because to be able to say yes to one thing means to say no to many others. But we must also remember that the greatest danger is not impulsiveness but inaction."

It is fitting at this extraordinary moment in your country's history that we hear that call to action; and we pray that in acting we do God's work and follow God's will.

And by the way, God bless you all.

Congressman Shuler: Our next speaker, the 44th President of the United States has consistently made unity an important part of his ongoing message. His message of national and international unity is one that has given people around the world faith, hope, and the spirit to follow their dreams. I have met with numerous leaders who tell me that the citizens of their nations have a higher hope for the future because of the inspiration provided by this President.

My own children moved by the experience of the recent inauguration said to me, "Daddy, let's pray for the President." Children, politicians, and everyday citizens around the world are showing their hope and faith, through their prayers for this President. Today we continue in an unbroken tradition of 57 years as we are joined by the First Family at the National Prayer Breakfast. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great honor to introduce to you the President of the United States of America.

COMMEMORATING THE 57TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST, FEBRUARY 5TH, 2009

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of participating in the 57th Annual National Prayer Breakfast with my colleagues, Congressman HEATH SHULER of North Carolina and Congressman VERN EHLERS of Michigan, on February 5, 2009. This annual gathering is held here in our Nation's Capital and is hosted by Members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives weekly prayer breakfast groups. I would like to request that the summation of the transcript of the 2009 proceedings be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this time.

57TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST—THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009, HILTON WASHINGTON HOTEL, WASHINGTON, DC

CO-CHAIRS: U.S. REPRESENTATIVE VERN EHLERS AND U.S. REPRESENTATIVE HEATH SHULER

President Barack Obama: Good morning. I want to thank the co-chairs of this breakfast, Representatives Heath Shuler and Vernon Ehlers. I also want to thank my good friend Tony Blair for coming today, as well as our Vice President, Joe Biden, members of the cabinet, members of Congress, clergy, friends, and dignitaries from across the world.

Michelle and I are honored to join you in prayer this morning. I know this breakfast has a long history in Washington, and faith has always been a guiding force in our family's life, so we feel very much at home and look forward to keeping this tradition alive during our time here. It is a tradition that I am told actually began many years ago in the city of Seattle. It was at the height of the Great Depression, and most people found themselves out of work. Many fell into poverty and some lost everything. The leaders of the community did all that they could for those who were suffering in their midst. And

then they decided to do something more—they prayed. It didn't matter what party or religious affiliation to which they belonged. They simply gathered one morning as brothers and sisters to share a meal and talk with God. These breakfasts soon sprouted up throughout Seattle and quickly spread to cities and towns across America, eventually making their way to Washington, DC. A short time after President Eisenhower asked a group of Senators if he could join their prayer breakfast, it became a national event. And today, as I see presidents, prime ministers and dignitaries here from every corner of the globe, it strikes me that this is one of the rare occasions that still brings much of the world together at a moment of peace and good will.

I raise this history because far too often we have seen faith wielded as a tool to divide us from one another—as an excuse for prejudice and intolerance. Wars have been waged, innocents had been slaughtered. For centuries entire religions have been persecuted, all in the name of perceived righteousness. There is no doubt that the very nature of faith means that some of our beliefs will never be the same. We read from different texts. We follow different edicts. We subscribe to different accounts of how we came to be here and where we are going next. And some subscribe to no faith at all. But no matter what we choose to believe, let us remember that there is no religion whose central tenet is hate. There is no God who condones taking the life of an innocent human being. This much we know. We know too that whatever our differences, there is one law that binds all great religions together. Jesus told us to "love thy neighbor as thyself." The Torah commands, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow." In Islam there is the hadith that reads, "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself." And the same is true for Buddhists and Hindus, for followers of Confucius, and for humanists. It is, of course, the Golden Rule—the call to love one another, to understand one another, to treat with dignity and respect those with whom we share a brief moment on this Earth. It is an ancient rule, a simple rule, but also perhaps the most challenging. For it asks each of us to take some measure of responsibility for the well-being of people we may not know or worship with or agree with on every issue or on any issue. Sometimes it asks us to reconcile with bitter enemies or resolve ancient hatreds—and that requires a living, breathing act of faith. It requires us not only to believe but to do—to give something of ourselves for the benefit of others and the betterment of our world. In this way, the particular faith that motivates each of us can promote a greater good for all of us. Instead of driving us apart, our varied beliefs can bring us together to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the afflicted, to make peace where there is strife and rebuild what is broken, to lift up those who have fallen on hard times. This is not only our call as people of faith, but our duty as citizens of America, and our duty as citizens of the world, and it will be the purpose of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships that I am announcing later today.

The goal of this office will not be to favor one religious group over another—or even religious groups over secular groups, it will simply be to work on behalf of those organizations that want to work on behalf of our communities, and to do so without blurring the line that our founders wisely drew between church and state. This work is important, because whether it is a secular group advising families facing foreclosure or faith-based groups providing job training to

those who need work, few are closer to what is happening on our streets and in our neighborhoods than these organizations. People trust them, communities rely on them, and we will help them.

We will also reach out to leaders and scholars around the world to foster a more productive and peaceful dialogue on faith. I am not naive. I don't expect divisions to disappear overnight, nor do I believe that the long-held views and conflicts will suddenly vanish. But I do believe that if we can talk to one another openly and honestly, and if perhaps we allow God's grace to enter into that space that lies between us, then the old rifts between us will start to mend, and new partnerships will begin to emerge. In a world that grows smaller by the day, perhaps we can begin to crowd out the destructive forces of excessive zealotry and make room for the healing power of understanding. This is my hope. This is my prayer. I believe this good is possible because my faith teaches me that all is possible, but I also believe because of what I have seen and what I have lived.

I was not raised in a particularly religious household. I had a father who was born a Muslim but became an atheist, grandparents who were non-practicing Methodists and Baptists, and a mother who was skeptical of organized religion—even though she was the kindest, most spiritual person I have ever known. She was the one who taught me as a child to love, and to understand, and to do unto others as I would want done. I didn't become a Christian until many years later when I moved to the South Side of Chicago after college. It happened not because of indoctrination or a sudden revelation but because I spent month after month working with church folks who simply wanted to help neighbors who were down on their luck, no matter what they looked like or where they came from or who they prayed to. It was on those streets, in those neighborhoods that I first heard God's spirit beckon me. It was there that I felt called to a higher purpose—His purpose. In different ways and in different forms, it is that spirit and sense of purpose that drew friends and neighbors to that first prayer breakfast in Seattle all those years ago, during another trying time for our nation. It is what led friends and neighbors from so many faiths and nations here today. We come to break bread and to give thanks, but most of all to seek guidance. And to rededicate ourselves to the mission of love and service that lies at the heart of all humanity. St. Augustine once said: "Pray as though everything depends on God and work as though everything depends on you."

So let us pray together on this February morning, but let us also work together in all the days and months ahead. For it is only through common struggle and common effort, as brothers and sisters, that we fulfill our highest purpose as beloved children of God. I ask that you join me in that effort and I also ask that you pray for myself, for Michelle, for my family and for the continued perfection of our nation. Thank you so much, God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

Congressman EHLERS. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Michelle, for being with us. This is an auspicious occasion. As I had said earlier, this prayer breakfast started with President Eisenhower and every year since then it has been graced by the presence of the President of the United States. It has been a real blessing to have the President and the First Lady here today.

Congressman SHULER: Welcome back Casting Crowns.

CASTING CROWNS: [sing] Who am I that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name, would care to feel my hurt. Who am I

that the bright and morning star would choose to light the way from my ever wandering heart but not because of who I am but because of what you've done and not because of what I've done but because of who you are and I am a flower quickly fading here today and gone tomorrow a wave tossed in the ocean, the vapor in the wind, still you hear me when I'm calling but you catch me when I'm falling and you told me who I am, I am yours.

Who am I that the eye that's seen the sin would look on me with love and watch me rise again. Who am I that the voice that calmed the sea would call out through the rain and calm the storm in me, not because of who I am but because of what you've done, not because of what I've done but because of who you are.

And I am a flower quickly fading, here today and gone tomorrow, a wave tossed in the ocean, a vapor in the wind, still you hear me when I'm calling, Lord you catch me when I'm falling and you told me who I am, I am yours.

Whom shall I fear, whom shall I fear, because I am yours.

Congressman EHLERS: Thank you again Casting Crowns for your words of faith and encouragement, we appreciate your participation today.

I hope that all of you have been uplifted and inspired by what you have seen up here—people of different parties, nations, races, generations and backgrounds coming together. As the Prime Minister and the President both said, faith can be a tremendous force for good in this modern world and we all need it—all the help we can get. It all begins with obeying the simple commands that Jesus talked about. Loving God with everything we have and loving our neighbors as ourselves. This is the first and great commandment. We in the Congress are trying to do that and I hope that you will commit to do that more and more in your daily lives. We ask that you will also join in prayer every single day and pray for us in the Congress and in other agencies of leadership around the world as we all try to serve God above all and to serve people and to keep them safe and secure in their lives.

Congressman SHULER: Now to close the event, I am honored to turn to a great American hero—from the age of 23 he was a national leader in the struggle for civil rights and for more than four decades he has been a shining star of justice. To present our closing prayer, the Honorable Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia.

Congressman JOHN LEWIS: My beloved brothers and sisters, let us pray. Lord our God, this morning we stand before you as citizens of the world, as leaders of many great nations, and as humbled public servants, tasked with a powerful responsibility. Lord my God, your people are suffering in teeming cities and in the distant corners of the earth—too many of your children are hungry and naked, homeless and poor, too many are sick, too many forgotten, too many are locked in the struggles of war and suffering alone in silent despair. Lord, we stand before you today as a human family in need of your help. Please Lord, give us the faith to be still and know that you are God. Give us the faith to trust that you are with us at all times. Lord God, give us the power to see that your light shines brightest in times of the greatest need. Lord, give us a will to seek your divine understanding in every decision that we make. Thank you Lord for sending us a man, a leader and a President Barack Obama, we ask for a special blessing on his behalf. Guide his steps and please direct his path. Hold him and his family in the palm of your magnificent and all powerful hand. Let your angels watch

over them, protect them and be their preferred and invisible God. Thank you Lord, thank you this morning for sending men and women who prepare to do thy will. Pour out your blessing upon us all. Give us the power to do what is right, what is fair and what is just. Please Lord show us how we can bring peace to a violent world. Let the day come when we can lay down the tools and instruments of war and study war no more. Lord, give us the will and the way to build and not destroy. Give us the capacity to be reconciled and not divide. Give us the strength to love and not to hate, that these gifts be made manifest in all that we do and in every way that we serve your people. We ask all these things in Thy divine name. This is our plea. This is our cry. This is our prayer. Amen.

Congressman EHLERS: Go in peace, love God. Serve God and your neighbor.

TRIBUTE FOR MR. CHARLES R. COUSINS

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the extraordinary life and exceptional accomplishments of Charles R. Cousins. Charles Cousins has been an important part of the Denver African-American business community. A remarkable citizen, he merits our recognition and esteem as his leadership, service and lifelong devotion to the city of Denver has done much to enrich our community. His license plate: "IOU-00" reflected this self-made success story.

Charles Cousins was born in Denver on New Year's Day, 1918, delivered by Justina Ford, the first African-American doctor in Colorado. The first son in a family of four daughters, he came to be called "Brother" by family and friends, a name that stuck throughout his entire life. His parents, Charles L. and Alta raised a family of six children in the Five Points neighborhood of Denver. As a youngster, Charles started a lifetime of hard work making deliveries on his bicycle for drug stores and dry cleaners and catching worms in the summertime to sell to anglers at City Park.

Charles Cousins began his business career while a student attending Manual High School in 1936. At Manual High, Charles found a way to provide music for the school dances of African American students that were segregated from those of white students. He did the same while a student at Colorado State University, beginning his long career in the jukebox industry.

When white-owned jukebox businesses tried to take over the restaurants and bars where his machines were located, Cousins purchased the buildings, beginning his successful career in real estate. He was a major investor in Denver rental properties and ultimately became a community philanthropist. He owned properties throughout the metro area, including more than 30 buildings in the Five Points area.

A lifetime jazz fan, Cousins is credited with being a key financial backer of the Five Points neighborhood's internationally-recognized jazz scene. Known as the "Godfather of Jazz" in Five Points, he made the famous Rossonian Hotel a must-stop venue for African American