

It is my hope and understanding from the bill sponsors that this was the one and only time Congress draws money from the Health Center Fund to pay for other programs.

Mrs. MURRAY. I am proud of the progress we have been able to make for survivors of trafficking and that we were able to use community health centers funding to help this very vulnerable population at a time when they need it the most.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CASEY and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

63RD NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, earlier this year, Senator CASEY and I had the honor of serving as the cochair of the National Prayer Breakfast. The annual event is a longtime tradition that celebrates the importance of faith and fellowship in our lives. This year's breakfast featured moving prayers, songs, and speeches from a number of notable guests, including race car legend Darrell Waltrip.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, Senator WICKER and I would like to thank all of the individuals who were involved in making the 2015 National Prayer Breakfast a great success. Thousands of people from across the country and world participated, including President Obama and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On behalf of Senator WICKER and myself, I ask unanimous consent that the full transcript be printed in the RECORD.

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

63RD NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2015, WASHINGTON, DC, CO-CHAIRS: SENATOR ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

The Honorable ROGER F. WICKER: Good morning, everyone. I am Senator Roger Wicker from Mississippi, and together with my colleague, Senator Bob Casey from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we welcome you to the 63rd Annual National Prayer Breakfast.

It is an honor to serve with Bob as co-chairman this year, and we thank you for joining us this morning. Each year this event is one of the most special and memorable in Washington. Today, some 3,500 of us have gathered in this ballroom and in auxiliary rooms down the hall. We represent all 50 states and 130 nations. As the Psalm says, "Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for Thou shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations of the earth. Let the people praise Thee, oh God. Let all the people praise Thee." So, for the 130 nations represented in this room today—be glad, be joyful, and praise God.

Since 1953, the National Prayer Breakfast has exemplified and celebrated the power of prayer and fellowship in our lives. We come together as Ephesians 5:19 directs us, "Addressing one another in Psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart."

We have a truly remarkable program with guests and performers this morning. Like our weekly prayer breakfasts in the Senate and the House, we will have Scripture, prayers, songs, and speakers sharing their stories and reflections. Our hope is that you leave today with new blessings and perspectives about the strong community of faith in this country and around the world.

The Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.: My name is Bob Casey and I'm honored to be here this morning with my co-chair, Roger Wicker, my friend who has labored with us these two years. Roger, we're grateful for your work.

In just a few minutes we'll have the opportunity to give a warm welcome to the President and the First Lady when they arrive. And in the meantime, we hope you are enjoying your breakfast and getting to know those at your table, if you don't know them already. We're honored you're with us.

And now to lead us in our first prayer, I'm happy to welcome Rabbi Gregory Marx to the podium. For more than twenty-five years, Rabbi Marx has been the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. We are grateful that he is with us today. And he will do our prayer and then we'll have a break, and then we'll go to the second part of the program. Rabbi Marx.

Rabbi GREGORY S. MARX: Thank you, Senator. Good morning.

The Biblical prophet, Micah proclaimed: It has been told you what is good, and what the Lord requires of you, only to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. Justice without mercy leads to harsh judgment. Mercy without justice creates a world where there's no accountability, no moral goodness. At this moment, may God bless us with both mercy and justice so that we may tenderly care for those in need of compassion and rejoice in the good of others. We celebrate this morning our uniqueness as well as our commonality. We come from our different faith perspectives, yet are united in a fervent desire to strengthen the hands and the hearts of those who seek to build an enduring society, which tolerates neither bigotry nor hatred. Master of the universe, inspire us to release those reservoirs of spirit and mind which make us truly partners with you. Grant us patience and hopefulness in our daily tasks. May we never give in to despair, despite their enormity. Give us love for truth above cleverness, for people above things, for God above all else. Remind us in the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln, that religious devotion is not about having God on our side, which mistakenly prompts us to condemn the faith of others, but rather it is about being on God's side, which requires devotion to civic duty, tolerance, humility, justice, mercy, and peace. Be with us, oh God, as we seek to establish new ties of friendship across religious, racial, and ethnic boundaries, to create innovative opportunities of service, to rejoice in the growth of all of our children. And to lovingly and faithfully support our fellow men and women who are in need of God's care and affection. May God bless our beloved and noble country and those who defend her, so that each may one day sit under their own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid. Give us, oh God, the good sense and understanding to buttress the moral fiber of American life, that we may gird ourselves with integrity, and to successfully meet the immense challenges before us. Keep us, oh God, from pride which prevents us from seeing the need for real change and steel us with a commitment to stay the course when necessary. Most of all, oh God, shield us from impatient judgment towards those who differ from us. May we always remember that you are exalted, oh God when-

ever and wherever men and women work together to fulfill Micah's prophetic vision of justice, mercy, humility. And let us say, Amen.

Senator WICKER: Thank you Rabbi Marx. At this point, continue enjoying your breakfast and the conversation with our table guests. The President and his party will be here in a few moments.

[Applause]

Senator CASEY: May everyone have a seat. Thanks very much everyone. We're honored that the President and the First Lady are with us. As Senator Wicker and I said earlier, we're honored you're with us this morning, and we're grateful for the folks who helped put this breakfast together every year.

I'm honored to share with everyone in this audience an excerpt from a message from Rome, by Pope Francis. This message is to all of us gathered here at this National Prayer Breakfast, and he writes in part, and I quote:

"Dear Friends, I send prayerful good wishes for you, for the fruitfulness of your work. I ask you to pray for me, and to join me in praying for our brothers and our sisters throughout the world who experience persecution and death for their faith. Upon you, your families, and those whom you serve, I cordially invoke God's blessings of wisdom, joy, and peace."

We're honored that the Holy Father would send us that message. The entirety of the message will be read at today's luncheon. While Pope Francis couldn't be with us today in person, His Excellency the Papal Nuncio, the Holy Father's representative in the United States is here today and we're honored by his presence.

All of us, as well have the extraordinary privilege today to be joined at this breakfast by another inspirational spiritual leader and peacemaker, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We're honored by his presence. [Applause]

When I was in state government in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I worked in the finance building, and right over the building in the front of the building, was an inscription that I think is a good summation of what it means to be in public service. And I'm quoting from that precept inscribed on the building—here's what it says: "All public service is a trust given in faith and accepted in honor." Senator Wicker and I, and those who are in the room who are elected officials, have accepted that honor to serve. We also feel privileged. I know this is true of Roger, and me, and so many others, but we're privileged to do our work in the Senate, but the excessive partisanship and politics that occurs in this town too often gets in the way and divides the Senate. That's why the weekly prayer breakfast on Wednesdays, on every Wednesday that the Senate is in session, is a way for us to have an oasis from the politics of the place. We gather at that breakfast for prayer and to share some time with each other every Wednesday morning—just as we're doing this morning with people from so many different states, different countries, backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. We're reminded this morning of the journey, the journey of faith that we're all on, and we believe that faith is a gift, and a gift that we're blessed by today and express gratitude. Senator Wicker. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you, Bob. The Senate prayer breakfast dates back to World War II when a group of legislators met in the Senate restaurant. We can only imagine the conversations that took place during those early days as the deadliest conflict in human history swept the globe. Then as now, the weekly meetings which occur when the Senate is in session have remained largely low profile. In January of 1943, an article from

the Washington Post describes them as without fanfare, front-page publicity or ballyhoo, and that is still true. In many ways our prayer breakfast is a welcome sanctuary from the politics and the partisanship we hear about. Each week we sing a hymn, we hear prayer requests that we call the "sick and wounded report." We actually join hands and we pray together. And we hear a presentation from one of our members, but not before a very thorough introduction of that member by either Senator Mike Enzi or Senator Jim Inhofe. Now, Senator Inhofe and Enzi are here today, and I think it's high time that something be said about their introductions. Everything we do at the prayer breakfast is off the record, but this needs to be said about Senator Enzi and Senator Inhofe's introductions. Neither opposition research professionals nor the FBI have a thing on Enzi and Inhofe when it comes to background checks. Mike and Jim relentlessly call former classmates, teachers, old friends, and relatives to discover something a little unusual about each week's presenter. Sometimes I wince. Sometimes I cringe. But the introduction always ends on a high note with a verse of Scripture and the suggestion that our speaker is much like a Biblical character of old. Thank you for that, Jim. Thank you for that, Mike.

And then we hear from the Senator himself or herself, a Democrat one week, a Republican the next week. What we learn about each other is a lot. During my time in the Senate prayer breakfast, we've heard from our own American sniper, our own astronaut, he's here today, our own missionaries, and we've had several, and our own award-winning composer. From camp directors, to university presidents, we've heard the good and the bad. We've heard about difficult family backgrounds. We've heard about financial bankruptcy and home foreclosures, and we've heard about spiritual journeys, from the heights of achievement to really, really tough times. It has been said, "There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us that it ill behooves any of us to find fault with the rest of us," and that is true about the attendees in the Senate prayer breakfast. In short, on Wednesday mornings we learn we are a lot like you, and you, and every other child of God, and almost always I come away with a blessing. This morning, I acknowledge and thank the people who have gone before Bob and me in the Senate prayer breakfast leadership over the period of six decades, and along with Bob, I'm honored to continue in their tradition.

Now at this time, it is my pleasure to recognize a few distinguished guests at our head table who will not be given the opportunity to speak. And I'll ask the next three ladies to stand and remain standing, Mrs. Stevie Waltrip, Mrs. Therese Casey, and Mrs. Gayle Wicker. Thank you for joining us, ladies. Thank you so much, you may be seated.

And it is my very special honor at this point to ask each of you to give our appreciation and love to the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Michelle Obama. [Applause]

And now, it is a special privilege for me as a Senator from Mississippi to introduce a familiar face from home. Jasmine Murray is from Columbus, Mississippi. She has been a broadcast communication major at Mississippi State University. She was a finalist on American Idol. And she was a finalist in the Miss America Pageant where she proudly represented my home state of Mississippi. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Miss Mississippi, Jasmine Murray. [Applause]

Ms. JASMINE MURRAY: [Singing]
Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,

Why should my heart feel lonely, and long for heaven and home,

When Jesus is my portion? A constant friend is He:

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over me.

I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free.

His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

I know He watches me.
I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free.

His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

He watches me. I know He watches me. He watches me.

Ms. MURRAY: Thank you.
Senator WICKER: Thank you! Jasmine, that was wonderful. Thank you, that was just great. I'm delighted to introduce our next guest. He's a former Mayor of San Antonio and current Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. As a member of the President's Cabinet, he represents the executive branch of the family while his twin brother, Joaquin, covers the legislative side as a member of the House of Representatives. Please warmly welcome to read from the Old Testament, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Julian Castro. [Applause]

The Honorable JULIAN CASTRO: Thank you. Thank you so much Mr. President for the great assist, good morning, and to Mrs. Obama, and to co-chairs Senator Casey and Senator Wicker, and to all of our distinguished guests. It's a great honor to join you on this day of prayer and of peace. Last week I had the opportunity to travel to Los Angeles where I met some of our nation's most vulnerable citizens, men and women living every day with homelessness. Although they have endured incredibly difficult circumstances, it was clear to me that they have never let their hardship extinguish their hope. I spoke with an older woman who spends her nights on a tattered quilt over cold concrete. Night after night, that wears on a person's body, yet this woman's spirit was unbroken and her faith is a true testament of strength and of grace. And it was this angel in the City of Angels, who reminded me that the true measure of our progress is how we care for those with the least.

The passage that I will read speaks to the hope we must preserve, the needs we must meet, and the common humanity that we must always honor. A reading from the book of Isaiah:

Is this the manner of fasting I would choose, a day to afflict one's self, to bow one's head like a reed and lie upon sack cloth and ashes? Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is this not rather the fast I choose—releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and homeless into your house, clothing the naked when you see them and not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall be quickly healed. Your vindication shall go before you and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer. You shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am." If you remove the yoke from among you, the accusing finger and malicious speech, if you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted, then

your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom shall become like midday.

Thank you, and may God bless you. [Applause]

Senator CASEY: Thank you, Secretary Castro. Our prayer for the poor this morning will be offered by Sister Mary Scullion, a woman who has devoted her life to service, advocacy, and of course, God. She is one of the founders of Project HOME in Philadelphia; I'm proud to say that today. Project HOME is a truly exceptional organization that does the important work of providing housing, employment opportunities, and medical care and education for the homeless and the impoverished. For her work, Sister Mary was named one of Time Magazine's world's 100 most influential people in 2009. Sister Mary.

Sister MARY SCULLION: It's an honor to be here, Mr. President and Mrs. Obama, thank you very much, and all honored guests. And greetings to everyone from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

God of compassion and justice, we humbly come before you with gratitude and a clear understanding that it is in you that we all find our home. For when we are rooted in your truth and grace, we are empowered to pray: thy kingdom come. We recall how through the ages, you've been a God of compassion, justice, and liberation, with a special love for the poor and the oppressed. We remember your servant Moses leading your people out of bondage. We recall Jesus, healing the sick and proclaiming good news to the poor. We recall those times in our own nation's history when moved by the promise of liberty and empowered by Your Spirit, courageous leaders worked to end slavery, to enfranchise women, to welcome immigrants, and to expand economic opportunity for all. Your constant revelation, God, is one of non-violent liberation from anything that oppresses the human spirit. As we gather here, millions of your beloved children are suffering under the burden of poverty, oppression, and violence. Our prayers today can only be authentic if they compel us to act. Let us hear the cry of the loving parents struggling to provide for their children. Let us hear the cry of those all around our world impacted by violence, and those in our nation who suffer the wounds of gun violence. Let us hear the cry of millions of children whose magnificent gifts and possibilities are lost in under-resourced schools and economically plundered neighborhoods, condemning them to a life of persistent poverty. Let us hear the cry of our veterans suffering from the wounds of war, especially those who are homeless. Open our eyes, Lord, so we can see suffering as a prophetic sign that calls us to radical transformation. God, we know that our faith does not give us answers; it gives us courage. As a people of faith, we pray for the courage to live truthfully, justly, and compassionately. Help us to see through our hypocrisy and falsehood, empower us to stand squarely on the side of those who are poor and struggling on the margins. Help us to move beyond our ideological polarizations and economic disparities. Form us into a united community that affirms each person's dignity and works towards a shared prosperity. Let us build a society free from the scourge of poverty, a society that truly reflects Your Kingdom. Most of all, let us understand that your ancient call for compassion and justice is in truth, an invitation to us for fullness of life, and richness of human community. As we meet the needs of those who are poor, we are healing ourselves and our nation. As we ensure that all families have enough to eat, we are building the banquet table for everyone. As we work to provide health care and education, we are making our whole society healthier and wiser. As

we bring those living on our streets home, we are finding our own way home because none of us are home until all of us are home. Fill us with that same spirit of liberation that filled Jesus and the prophets. Fill us with that spirit of joy, of hope that inspired the prophet Isaiah in his powerful challenge. If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noon day. God of compassion, God of justice, fill us with this yearning and give us the strength, the grace, the courage to make it real each and every day as we pray: thy kingdom come. Amen. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you, Sister Mary. A few minutes ago when I said, "Perhaps someone within the sound of my voice could come to my assistance," I guess that did include you, Mr. President. Though I thought perhaps someone else would step forward, but thank you young man for figuring that out.

I first became involved in the Prayer Breakfast as a House member, and I'm delighted today to introduce to say a few words, the co-chairs from the House Prayer Breakfast, Congressman Robert Aderholt, serving his 10th term from Alabama, and Congressman Juan Vargas, serving his second term from California, are the co-chairs in the House, and by virtue of that, they will be the co-chairs of the next breakfast, the 64th Annual National Prayer Breakfast. Ladies and gentlemen, Robert Aderholt and Juan Vargas. [Applause]

The Honorable ROBERT B. ADERHOLT: Good morning. It's a real honor for Juan and myself to be here on behalf of the House breakfast, which meets every Thursday morning at eight o'clock, about this time in the Capitol, when the House is in session. The House of Representatives weekly prayer group meets and we come together as Democrats and Republicans. We come together once a week, not promoting a party; we're not promoting a particular issue, or a particular agenda. I'm a Republican from Alabama, Juan is a Democrat from California but we come together that one hour during the week to promote Jesus.

We're told in John 3 that Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the son of man must be lifted up . . . that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." And that is what we promote during that week—Jesus of Nazareth. And we are honored to be here this morning. We're glad to be here with our colleagues and all of our friends, and our family from literally around the world and it is an honor to work together in a bipartisan effort and to work as I say, with our colleagues and especially this year to work with my colleague, Juan Vargas from California. [Applause]

The Honorable JUAN C. VARGAS: Thank you, and greetings from the Prayer Breakfast. Mr. President, it was great to see the assist that you gave today. We went to law school together, played against him a couple times in basketball, he didn't assist like that. It was a little rougher out there. That was great to see.

We do come together every Thursday morning and we call it the best hour of the week. We come together as Democrats and Republicans. Who would have guessed—a California Democrat and someone from Alabama who is a Republican? But we come together and we pray, and we bring Jesus into our prayers and we lift up the country, we lift up the Congress. And we know that special things can happen, and they do. And because of that, I think we're all here today and appreciate very, very much the prayers that you all have for us. We know that you pray for us throughout the country. I've

gone to many, many services where we hear that you pray for your leaders, you pray for the President, you pray for all of us in public office. And we love that and understand that, and we bring those prayers up too. So again, thank you very much. And for all of my colleagues, I invite you to come and pray with us every Thursday morning. It's the best hour of the week from eight in the morning until nine, and it really is something special. You get to meet people that you wouldn't otherwise. Who would have known that I would have loved Louie Gohmert? Louie Gohmert has been one of our leaders and it's just fabulous to come and pray with him. He brings us Jesus every Thursday, so thank you very much. It's an honor to be here. [Applause]

Senator CASEY: Thank you very much for the Members of Congress. I'm pleased to introduce The Honorable Deborah Lee James, the 23rd Secretary of the United States Air Force. She joins us today to offer a prayer for the leaders of our nation. Secretary James, of course is a distinguished leader in her own right for our nation's military, and has the responsibility of managing more than 690,000 Air Force personnel and a budget of 110 billion dollars. Please welcome Secretary Deborah Lee James. Madam Secretary. [Applause]

The Honorable DEBORAH LEE JAMES: Thank you so much, Senator Casey, Senator Wicker. It is truly an honor and a privilege for me to come before all of you today. Mr. President, Mrs. Obama, Senators, Congressmen, distinguished guests, friends and allies from around the world, may I please invite all of you to join me in a prayer for our national leaders.

Oh mighty God, it is in you that we trust. We ask for your blessings on our President, Barack Obama. Lord, grant him the wisdom and the vision to lead our nation toward a more just, peaceful, and prosperous world. Help him to keep the beacon of American freedom burning brightly as an inspiration to all who long to live free from fear, free from want, free to speak, and free to worship as they choose. We ask you also, Lord, to bless our First Lady, Michelle Obama. Strengthen her as she works to inspire all of America's children to reach higher and to live healthier lives, so that one day they will be ready to build strong families of their own, compassionate communities, and contribute to a better world. Please guide our Vice President, Joe Biden, Lord, and all the members of the President's cabinet. Grant to these and all others who serve and advise our President the grace to lean not only on their own understanding, but also to trust in you with all of their hearts. Lord, bless our lawmakers sent from every corner of America to form our Congress. Grant them the priceless gifts of insight, courage, and unity. Shepherd them by your spirit to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. Grant our Chief Justice and all of our judicial leaders across the nation your wisdom, Lord, that they may judge the law impartially as instruments of your will. And very close to my heart, Lord, please, please protect our men and women in uniform and all who stand in harm's way to preserve the freedoms we cherish for our children and grandchildren. And as you watch over those serving far from home, also please encourage those who wait for their return, and comfort those who have suffered unspeakable losses. Lord, may the service and sacrifice of those who have gone before us, and the lives of the heroes who walk amongst us, let those individuals inspire the rest of us to give our country, and our communities, and our families the very best that we can with our wholeness of heart, particularly in these uncertain times. Being always mindful and

grateful to you, Lord, for the many blessings that you have bestowed on us, Amen. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you so much. As you can see from the program in front of you, our next speaker was to be King Abdullah II of Jordan. We all know the heartbreaking circumstances his country is experiencing at this point. They required that His Majesty King Abdullah return to Jordan. Our prayers are with the people of Jordan during this troubling time of crisis. The passage that King Abdullah was expected to read is from the New Testament, Luke 10, and I will read this passage at this point. Luke 10:

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus, "Teacher," he asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself." "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply, Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was and when he saw him he took pity on him. He went to him and he bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the inn keeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hand of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

May God add His blessing to the reading of His Holy Word.

Senator WICKER: At this point it is my pleasure to introduce to you our next guest. He too has been recognized by Time Magazine. For 2014, he was one of the persons of the year of Time Magazine. Dr. Kent Brantly and his colleagues became known as the Ebola fighters for their work saving lives and caring for those affected by this deadly disease. As a doctor with the Christian relief organization, Samaritan's Purse, Dr. Brantly contracted Ebola in Liberia. Now fully recovered, he gives thanks to God and to the power of prayer. Today he is with us to offer a prayer for the leaders of the world, please warmly welcome Dr. Kent Brantly. [Applause]

Dr. KENT BRANTLY: Let us pray. Our Father who art in heaven. The Lord, the Lord, the God of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness, lover of all peoples of the earth, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion. Hallowed by thy name. Remind us that all nations are as nothing before you, their governments but a shadow of passing age, all authorities are intended to be your servants, to do good to the people under their care and to ensure justice for those who have been wronged. But we all, including our leaders, will stand before your judgment seat, oh God, and as surely as you live, oh Lord, every knee will bow

and every tongue confess and give praise to you. Thy kingdom come on earth. Grant to thy children throughout the world, and especially to the leaders of the nations the gifts of prayerful thought and of thoughtful prayer that following the example of our Lord, we may discern what is right and do it. Bless the leaders of the nations that they may not walk in the council of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers. Bless the leaders of the nations that they might delight in the law of the Lord, that they might meditate on it day and night that Thy will might be done on earth as it is in heaven. Help us, Lord to protect and to provide for all who are hungry and homeless, especially those who are deprived of food and shelter, family and friends. For true religion that is acceptable to you, oh Lord, is this, to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to flee corruption. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us for neglecting to seek peace and pursue it, and finding ourselves in each new crisis more ready to make war than to make peace, for choosing violence and war over peace and reconciliation. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and we have not loved our neighbors as our selves. Forgive us for neglecting the needs of our people, for choosing corruption and greed over integrity and generosity. Forgive us for oppressing the minority while the majority is filled with pride and self reliance. We have all sinned and fallen short of your glory, oh Lord. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Let us not seek revenge but reconciliation. Let us not delight in victory but in justice. Let us not give ourselves up to pride, but to prayer. Lead us not into temptation. Be present, Lord, to all your children. Be present to those who are killing, and to those who are being killed. Be present to the oppressed and to the oppressor. Be present to the leaders of the nations. Deliver us from evil. Subdue our selfish desires to possess and to dominate. Forbid us arrogance and victory, and self-pity, and defeat. Bless the leaders of the nations, Father, that they might act justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with you, oh God. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you Dr. Brantly, and please pass along our good wishes to our friends at Samaritan's Purse. Ladies and gentlemen, the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing, commonly known as NASCAR, is second only to the National Football League in terms of TV ratings in our country. NASCAR races are broadcast in over 150 countries. Our keynote speaker this morning is one of the best known figures in NASCAR. Simply put, Darrell Waltrip is one of the great race car drivers in history. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 we hear, "Do you not know that in a race, all runners run." (The internal combustion engine had not been invented back then.) "All runners run but only one receives the prize." Well, Darrell Waltrip has received that winning prize some 84 times. He's driven 809 races and 237,773 laps. His life story includes an important faith journey. I believe God has placed a message on Darrell's heart that can benefit us today. But first, let's see this clip from 1991 at the Daytona Speedway.

[Clip from Daytona Speedway, showing Darrell Waltrip's car crashing]

Senator WICKER: Well, he made it. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Darrell Waltrip. [Applause]

Mr. DARRELL WALTRIP: Let's go racing boys. I always chuckle when I see that clip because my insurance man says, "Have you ever had an accident?" I've had a couple. But good morning, Mr. President, First Lady, all

of the distinguished guests, Congress members, everybody that's here this morning. This is a huge honor for a kid that grew up in Owensboro, Kentucky, and now resides in Franklin, Tennessee.

So, I knew about the Prayer Breakfast. I'd heard about it. It's been going on since the early 1940s, so I'd heard about it for a long time. But I have to tell you a quick story:

When the "committee" called me and asked me, "Would I like to come have breakfast with the President?" I said, "Wow, they must know it's my birthday. What an honor to go to Washington, D.C., and have breakfast with the president. Oh, this is going to be great." "And by the way, we'd like for you to be the keynote speaker." "Ah, I'll get back to you on that." But I thought about it, prayed about it—and I've got a lot of really great friends that pray for me all the time—but I thought about it, Mr. President, and said, "I've got it. I'm not a brain surgeon, and I'm not running for office, so I'm the perfect guy to be here this morning." [Applause]

I hope that was okay. My wife told me maybe I shouldn't say that, but she's sitting down there shaking her head now. But anyway, I'd like to introduce my family. You've already met my beautiful, redheaded wife Stevie. Jessica and Sarah, my two daughters, and their husbands, Fausto and Matthew, are out there, and it makes me feel so good to have them here this morning with me. I love my family, and I love the Lord.

If the room should start vibrating just a little bit—don't get excited, don't get nervous—it's just all my friends back in Franklin, Tennessee, my Tuesday morning Bible study group, all my friends over in Charlotte, North Carolina, at Motor Racing Outreach, our ministry at the track. All my friends are praying for me right now. And I don't know if you can feel it or not, but I certainly can, and I'm thankful for it. So if it starts shaking a little bit, it's okay. It's just the Lord. He's amongst us. [Applause]

Being here this morning reminds me of this: Before you start a big event as a driver, like the Daytona 500, which comes up in a couple of weeks on Fox, you go down on pit road, you get in your car—and quite honestly, I did it for 30 years but it never failed, always that adrenaline, those butterflies, being excited, nervous. Because when they dropped the green flag and they say, "Let's go racing boys," you didn't really know what was going to happen. And so, that's kind of how I feel this morning. I really don't know what's going to happen here, folks. They kept asking me, "Do you have an outline?" I said, "No, I've never really done an outline for a speech before." That's when they thought maybe I wasn't the right guy for this show.

I've got to tell you this. I probably shouldn't, but I'm going to: So, they call me up, and they tell me all the great speakers that have been here before. And as they went down the list, I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait just a minute, boys. I'm just not sure I'm qualified for this job." And they said, "Well, we kind of knew that going in." So, right away I knew I was in good company.

I think all of us in this room know that sometimes your biggest assets can be something that works against you. They can be a blessing and a curse, and that's really how racing was for me. It was sort of a blessing and a curse. I grew up in Owensboro, Kentucky. My dad drove a Pepsi-Cola truck. My mom was a cashier at the local grocery store. I had two brothers and two sisters. We didn't have a lot of money; we worked hard to put food on the table. And so, when I went to races as a six-year-old kid with my grandmother and came home and told Mom and Dad that someday I wanted to be a race car

driver, they said, "Good luck, son." My dad was a believer in hard work. He said, "You know, if you really work hard, and that's what you want to do, then maybe someday you'll be successful." But that was about all the encouragement my dad gave me, because racing is expensive. It costs a lot of money to go racing, so we didn't have a lot of money. So, I had to figure out a way to make that happen. I became a self-promoter—in other words, I bragged a lot. God had given me a talent; there was no question about that. I don't know where it came from. There's no reason for me to be able to do what I did other than that was my passion, that's what I cared about. I tell kids every day—and Mr. President, you know this—there's nothing any more discouraging and disheartening when you ask a kid, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" "I don't know." "Really? Embrace something. You've got to have a passion." Well, my passion was racing, and quite honestly, I went at it all the wrong ways in the early years. I was just as aggressive off the racetrack as I was on. I didn't have a lot of friends. I didn't think I needed friends. I looked over in the car, and I was the only one ever in there, so I didn't need any friends to be with me. So, my relationships early on in my life were shallow. I didn't have any really close friends. Quite honestly, I looked back, and it's the hardest thing for me to do this morning—to look back—because when I look back, I see things that are disturbing to me. I can see things and say, "How could I have felt that way? How could I have acted that way? How could I have been that way?" But I was.

And you're going to love this. This is what people said about me: They said I was brash, ruthless—ruthless?—pushy, cocky, conceited, aloof, boastful, arrogant, and just downright annoying. I hope you don't feel that way this morning, but if you do, I'm sorry. And I've got to tell you, those were people that liked me. You could imagine what people who didn't like me had to say about me. The fans booed me when we'd have driver introductions. It would be just like if I got up this morning to speak, and they started booing. Instead of hollering "boogity, boogity, boogity," they would start booing. Fans wore "Anybody but Waltrip" T-shirts to the track. They hated me. The drivers despised me. Richard Petty once told me: "I don't know how you keep a sponsor. You're so unpopular with the fans; I don't know how you keep a sponsor." And this is Richard Petty. He's the icon of our sport. He's the king of our sport. I wanted to be king, but I went at it all the wrong ways, for sure. I was always arguing with NASCAR. I didn't like the rules, mainly because they never worked in my favor, so I was always trying to change the rules. We know guys like that, right? Always wanting to change the rules. [Laughter, Applause.] I always like to say I fought the wall, [and] the wall won. I fought the law, and the law won. Those were the things that were going on at the track, and quite honestly, my personal life wasn't much better. I was so arrogant. I really was, and that's why I say it's the hardest thing for me to do. My kids are sitting out here for heaven's sake. But the hardest thing to do is to look back and see how you were. My personal life was a mess. I drank too much. I liked to go to the bars and hang out with the boys. I did everything to satisfy me. Whatever felt good to me, I did it; I didn't give it a second thought—that was my lifestyle, that's how I lived. Like I told you, I didn't have any great friends. I didn't have any close friends. Heck, I always figured if you wanted a friend, get a dog. I have several dogs.

But my wife, my beautiful wife, my red-headed wife whom I love dearly—we've been

married 45 years. [Applause] That in of itself is a miracle. She was married to that guy I was telling you about. She lived it. My wife once described me as this: that she had lived with two different men with the same name. And that might be a little confusing to you, and so obviously I must explain. But that first guy that I told you about, that was the guy she was married to originally. I knew God had his hand on me when I met Stevie. I didn't acknowledge it. I didn't necessarily follow through, but it's one of the few times in the early years of my life that I felt like God spoke to me. God said to me, "I gave you this woman. I brought you this woman. Don't let her get away." And so, I tried to always be on my best behavior when I was around her, and certainly when I was around her mother and father, because they didn't think a whole lot about a race car driver. When her father asked me, "How are you going to support Stevie?" I said, "I'm going to be a professional race car driver." He was the president of Texas Gas, and he didn't quite understand how a race car driver could make a living and be able to support his daughter. He wasn't sold on the idea at first but he became a big fan as time went by.

So, Stevie would always pray for me. She is a Godly woman, and she loved the Lord way before I did. And she would always pray that someday, somehow we would get involved in a Bible study or that I would, that I would get involved in a Bible study, or a church, or something. And I'd always kind of blow her off, and I'd say, "Look honey, I race on Sundays. I don't have time to go to church. I'm busy all through the week getting ready for the next race. I just don't have time for this church stuff and this God stuff. I just don't have time, okay." And you know what she said? "Well, I'll just keep on praying." And let me tell you, when somebody says they're praying for you, you better pay attention and don't take it lightly. People don't pray for you if they don't care about you and if they don't love you. [Applause.] Amen, amen. It used to happen to me at the track, and people would come up and say, "I'm praying for you." And I'd say, "Oh, thank you very much. I've got to go now." Don't ever do that. Embrace that person, because it's not a waste of time. It's them embracing you and caring about you, and that's the most important thing in the world is that we all care about each other.

I almost had us do this, and Stevie talked me out of it. At home when we pray, we hold hands. And in Bible study when we pray, we kind of lock arms or hold hands. I was going to ask everybody in the room to hold hands while we pray, but then I thought maybe you weren't that close just yet, so I kind of let that one go.

I got a great opportunity in 1983. I got a chance to drive for Junior Johnson. Junior Johnson was a childhood hero. He's the last American hero. They made a film about him. They wrote books about him. He was the last American hero. As a kid growing up in Owensboro, I listened to my little transistor radio, and Junior Johnson drove this white #3 Chevrolet with a 427 mystery engine. Junior Johnson, a moonshiner from Wilkesboro, North Carolina, car #3 with a mystery engine. I mean, that's hero material right there for a guy like me. So obviously, I thought maybe someday I'd get to meet him, but never thought that someday I'd get to drive for him. Those were the best years of my career—'81, '82 we won 24 races, 18 pole positions, 2 championships. But Junior was a no-nonsense kind of guy. He said, "Let me tell you something, boy: When you come to drive for me, you work your hands and not your mouth." I said, "Yes, sir." Because when Junior spoke, I listened. We had great times together. We won races together, but

in 1983 I had a horrible wreck—worse than that one you saw there. I had a concussion. I went for a couple of weeks to the next couple of races, and I didn't even remember being there. And when I finally came to, or woke up, I realized that that wreck had knocked me conscious. It scared the hell out of me, and I mean that literally. I realized I could have been killed that day. What if I would have lost my life right there that day at Daytona? What would I have done? Would I have gone to heaven? Or would I have gone to hell? I thought I was a pretty good guy. But folks, let me tell you something: Good guys go to hell. If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you don't have a relationship, if He's not the master of your life, if you've never gotten on your knees and asked him to forgive you of your sins, you're just a pretty good guy or a pretty good gal. You're going to go to hell. Think about that. I did. And like I said, it was a wake-up call. It literally knocked me conscious.

Stevie and I started going to church. We met Dr. Cortez Cooper, one of the Godliest men—preached from the Bible, loved sports, a lot like the President. He could play any sport, he pretty much knew a little bit about every sport there was, and he knew me personally. And because of him, and him talking to me just like I'm talking to you this morning, every time I went to hear him preach, I felt like he was talking directly to me. And so, we met in a high school in Hillsboro, just outside of Nashville there while they were building a big sanctuary. It was July; it was hot, kind of like being in a race car—no air conditioning. I got down off my high horse, I got down on my knees, and Dr. Cortez Cooper and Stevie and I prayed that the Lord would come into my life and forgive me of my sins and be my Lord and Savior. And that was the greatest day of my life. [Applause]

That changed everything. I'll never forget: We were going home from that night, and I told Stevie, "Man, I feel like the weight of the world has been lifted off of my shoulders. I feel like I've been born again. I feel like a new man." I felt different, and I knew I was different. When the Lord comes into your life, you're going to be different. You have to be different. If he comes into your heart, into your life, and you're not different, you better go back and try it again, because the Lord changes you. And He changed me, and it was for the better. And we left there that night, and did it fix all? Listen, you don't make a deal with the Lord: "Hey Lord, if you do this, I'll do that." It don't work that way, folks. He's there for you. He's there to walk with you. But you've got to do your part, too. So did my life, my personal life, change things on the race track? I still had wrecks. I still had problems. Things still happened, but I wasn't in it alone. Where I felt like I was always in it by myself, now I had somebody to pray with, talk with, to guide me, direct me—the wisdom of the Lord. I had it, and I needed to use it.

Stevie and I wanted to have a family. We were having trouble having kids. We had a couple of miscarriages, and we were praying, "God, can you give us a child?" And we'd gotten to the point where we thought we'd just adopt. We're not going to be able to have kids on our own, so we'll adopt. And then Stevie got pregnant, and we prayed, and the Lord gave us peace about it. He said, "Hang in there this time, I've got something special for you." And sure enough: Jessica Lee Waltrip. September the 17th, 1987, we had our first child. I, folks, was on cloud nine. I was so excited. I couldn't wait to get to the track. I left that weekend to go to Martinsville. I get to the racetrack, I'm a proud papa, and everybody's congratulating

me because they knew how badly we wanted kids. I go over to my race car on Sunday morning, and in the seat of the car is a vase with one rose in it and a note. I pulled the note out, I opened it up, and it said, "Win this one for me, Daddy." That was quite a moment. I'd never been called Daddy before, and I'd never been a father before, and I was so happy. And I have to tell you: This is a fairy tale. I never led a lap of that race. I wanted so badly to win that race for Jessica—never led a dadgum lap, until the last one—and you won't believe what happened. People say, "Can you tell me a time when God showed up?" I don't think he was working against those other guys, but he sure was working for me—I know that. We go off the last lap, the white flag's in the air, and I thought, "Oh man, I'm running third." There's nothing I can do. Dale Earnhardt and Terry Labonte, they're a little bit quicker than I am. They go down the back straightaway into third turn at Martinsville, a little paperclip racetrack, and Terry bumps into the back of Dale. And when he does, both cars get a little loose, and they slide up the racetrack, and DW goes driving by. [Applause]

Daddy won that one. Same thing—1992, Sarah was born. Sarah Kaitlin Kerns Waltrip. Same deal: Go to the racetrack. It had been kind of a tough year. I dominated that race, Bristol half-mile track, like being hung up in a salad bowl for 500 laps. Spinning around—your head's hurting, your eyes are burning. I get out of the car, and I can't remember my daughter's name. So, I'm trying really hard. I'm saying "Sarah, Sarah, Kaitlin"—she had a lot of names—"Kerns Waltrip." Because when I left the hospital, we really hadn't decided on exactly what her name was going to be. So, it took a little time, but it came to me, and certainly Sarah's never let me forget that I couldn't remember her name.

One final story for you, and it's about Dale Earnhardt Sr. And I don't know how many of you people knew the old intimidator. He was one tough customer and my biggest competitor. We were 'frenemies.' We were friends off the racetrack but not so much on the race track. And this beautiful redhead down here—she loved Dale, and Dale loved her. And she witnessed to him just as much as she witnessed to me. In 1994, Neil Bonnett lost his life at Daytona in a practice crash. Sunday morning, Stevie had always put Scriptures in my race car on a note card. Not good luck charms, just encouragement. Whatever happened that week, the Scripture sort of fit the events of that week.

We're standing on pit road praying with some of the chaplains from MRO, and Dale walks by. Now, Dale is one of those guys that you know he's a tough guy, so for him to pray or to acknowledge that he may have a relationship with the Lord was pretty hard for him to do. But he walks by, Stevie grabs him and says, "Come and pray with us." We all huddled up on pit road there, and when we finished praying, Stevie hands me the note card with the Scripture on it, and Dale grabs it, and he says, "What's that?" And he read it. And he looked at Stevie, and he said, "Where's mine?" Oh my gosh, she ran to the pit box, got a note card, wrote a Scripture, put it on the note card, and ran back to Dale's car, and Dale put it on his dash. And so from that day until 2001, when he lost his life at Daytona, he had a Scripture in his car just like I had in my car. You have to know something: Me and this guy, we were fierce competitors. He didn't like me, and I didn't like him when we were on that racetrack. That woman would make us pray together. Stevie would grab him and grab me and say, "I want you all to pray together," and we'd "[makes mumbling noises]." And then, and

then to make it worse, she'd say, "Tell him you love him." [Laughter, Applause] So, as he was walking away and I was walking away: "I love you." [stated in perfunctory tone]

As I said, the hardest thing about being here this morning was, as I prepared—and I did prepare—was looking back and remembering how I was. But the good news this morning is I'm not that way anymore. I just share this: You don't have to walk alone. You don't have to carry all those burdens like it's you against the world. You have to do like I did. You've got to get off your high horse and get on your knees and ask for forgiveness. He's waiting for you. He was there all the time. I just didn't know it or acknowledge it. I told you when I got up here I wasn't running for anything, but I will tell you this: I am running to something. The Lord is a strong tower; the righteous will run to it and be safe. God bless you. God bless America. God bless our President, and thank you for letting me share with you this morning. [Applause]

Senator CASEY: Darrell, thank you for that great message. Darrell, I want to ask your permission but I'll do this as I'm pretending to ask your permission. Your birthday is today?

Mr. WALTRIP: Yes.

Senator CASEY: It's also the same birthday as my mother-in-law, Nancy Foppiano, so I've just scored big points, Darrell, thank you very much. It's my honor now to introduce the President. Mr. President, First Lady Michelle Obama, we're honored you're with us, honored by your presence. And they've been here every year. So we're grateful to have them back. [Applause]

President Obama is a person of faith who has spoken often about his faith journey. His life has been, and continues to be, a life of service, public service, in the pursuit of justice here, at home, and around the world. My mother, Ellen Casey, (that way I've got my mother-in-law and my mother in the same remarks) always told us when we were growing up over, and over again, she would say, "Count your blessings." Count your blessings. And I've tried to do that; probably don't do enough of it. But I know that the President is one who follows my mother's advice, especially about the blessings of his family. So today as we gather to pray and to express gratitude for so much on a morning like today, I count as one of our blessings, Mr. President, your good work as our President and your abiding commitment to your family, to your faith, and to our country. Ladies and gentlemen, the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama. [Applause]

The PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, good morning. Giving all praise and honor to God. It is wonderful to be back with you here. I want to thank our co-chairs, Bob and Roger. These two don't always agree in the Senate, but in coming together and uniting us all in prayer, they embody the spirit of our gathering today.

I also want to thank everybody who helped organize this breakfast. It's wonderful to see so many friends and faith leaders and dignitaries. And Michelle and I are truly honored to be joining you here today.

I want to offer a special welcome to a good friend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama—who is a powerful example of what it means to practice compassion, who inspires us to speak up for the freedom and dignity of all human beings. I've been pleased to welcome him to the White House on many occasions, and we're grateful that he's able to join us here today. [Applause]

There aren't that many occasions that bring His Holiness under the same roof as NASCAR. This may be the first. But God works in mysterious ways. [Laughter] And so

I want to thank Darrell for that wonderful presentation. Darrell knows that when you're going 200 miles an hour, a little prayer cannot hurt. I suspect that more than once, Darrell has had the same thought as many of us have in our own lives—Jesus, take the wheel. Although I hope that you kept your hands on the wheel when you were thinking that. [Laughter]

He and I obviously share something in having married up. And we are so grateful to Stevie for the incredible work that they've done together to build a ministry where the fastest drivers can slow down a little bit, and spend some time in prayer and reflection and thanks. And we certainly want to wish Darrell a happy birthday. [Applause] Happy birthday.

I will note, though, Darrell, when you were reading that list of things folks were saying about you, I was thinking, well, you're a piker. I mean, if you really want a list, come talk to me, because that ain't nothing. That's the best they can do in NASCAR? [Laughter.]

Slowing down and pausing for fellowship and prayer—that's what this breakfast is about. I think it's fair to say that Washington moves a lot slower than NASCAR. Certainly my agenda does sometimes. [Laughter.] But still, it's easier to get caught up in the rush of our lives, and in the political back-and-forth that can take over this city. We get sidetracked with distractions, large and small. We can't go 10 minutes without checking our smartphones—and for my staff, that's every 10 seconds. And so for 63 years, this prayer tradition has brought us together, giving us the opportunity to come together in humility before the Almighty and to be reminded of what it is that we share as children of God.

And certainly for me, this is always a chance to reflect on my own faith journey. Many times as President, I've been reminded of a line of prayer that Eleanor Roosevelt was fond of. She said, "Keep us at tasks too hard for us that we may be driven to Thee for strength. Keep us at tasks too hard for us that we may be driven to Thee for strength. I've wondered at times if maybe God was answering that prayer a little too literally. But no matter the challenge, He has been there for all of us. He's certainly strengthened me "with the power through His Spirit," as I've sought His guidance not just in my own life but in the life of our nation.

Now, over the last few months, we've seen a number of challenges—certainly over the last six years. But part of what I want to touch on today is the degree to which we've seen professions of faith used both as an instrument of great good, but also twisted and misused in the name of evil.

As we speak, around the world, we see faith inspiring people to lift up one another—to feed the hungry and care for the poor, and comfort the afflicted and make peace where there is strife. We heard the good work that Sister has done in Philadelphia, and the incredible work that Dr. Brantly and his colleagues have done. We see faith driving us to do right.

But we also see faith being twisted and distorted, used as a wedge—or, worse, sometimes used as a weapon. From a school in Pakistan to the streets of Paris, we have seen violence and terror perpetrated by those who profess to stand up for faith, their faith, professed to stand up for Islam, but, in fact, are betraying it. We see ISIL, a brutal, vicious death cult that, in the name of religion, carries out unspeakable acts of barbarism—terrorizing religious minorities like the Yazidis, subjecting women to rape as a weapon of war, and claiming the mantle of religious authority for such actions.

We see sectarian war in Syria, the murder of Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, religious war in the Central African Republic, a rising tide of anti-Semitism and hate crimes in Europe, so often perpetrated in the name of religion.

So how do we, as people of faith, reconcile these realities—the profound good, the strength, the tenacity, the compassion and love that can flow from all of our faiths, operating alongside those who seek to hijack religions for their own murderous ends?

Humanity has been grappling with these questions throughout human history. And lest we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ. In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ. Michelle and I returned from India—an incredible, beautiful country, full of magnificent diversity—but a place where, in past years, religious faiths of all types on occasion have, on occasion, been targeted by other peoples of faith, simply due to their heritage and their beliefs—acts of intolerance that would have shocked Ghandiji, the person who helped to liberate that nation.

So, this is not unique to one group or one religion. There is a tendency in us, a sinful tendency that can pervert and distort our faith. In today's world, when hate groups have their own Twitter accounts and bigotry can fester in hidden places in cyberspace, it can be even harder to counteract such intolerance. But God compels us to try. And in this mission, I believe there are a few principles that can guide us, particularly those of us who profess to believe.

And, first, we should start with some basic humility. I believe that the starting point of faith is some doubt—not being so full of yourself and so confident that you are right and that God speaks only to us, and doesn't speak to others, that God only cares about us and doesn't care about others, that somehow we alone are in possession of the truth.

Our job is not to ask that God respond to our notion of truth—our job is to be true to Him, His word and His commandments. And we should assume humbly that we're confused and don't always know what we're doing and we're staggering and stumbling towards Him, and have some humility in that process. And that means we have to speak up against those who would misuse His name to justify oppression, or violence, or hatred with that fierce certainty. No God condones terror. No grievance justifies the taking of innocent lives, or the oppression of those who are weaker or fewer in number.

And so, as people of faith, we are summoned to push back against those who try to distort our religion—any religion—for their own nihilistic ends. And here at home and around the world, we will constantly reaffirm that fundamental freedom—freedom of religion—the right to practice our faith how we choose, to change our faith if we choose, to practice no faith at all if we choose, and to do so free of persecution and fear and discrimination.

There's wisdom in our founders writing in those documents that helped found this nation, the notion of freedom of religion, because they understood the need for humility. They also understood the need to uphold freedom of speech, that there is a connection between freedom of speech and freedom of religion. For to infringe on one right under the pretext of protecting another is a betrayal of both.

But part of humility is also recognizing in modern, complicated, diverse societies, the functioning of these rights, the concern for the protection of these rights calls for each of us to exercise civility and restraint and

judgment. And if, in fact, we defend the legal right of a person to insult another's religion, we're equally obligated to use our free speech to condemn such insults—[Applause]—and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with religious communities, particularly religious minorities who are the targets of such attacks. Just because you have the right to say something doesn't mean the rest of us shouldn't question those who would insult others in the name of free speech. Because we know that our nations are stronger when people of all faiths feel that they are welcome, that they, too, are full and equal members of our countries.

So humility I think is needed. And the second thing we need is to uphold the distinction between our faith and our governments. Between church and between state. The United States is one of the most religious countries in the world—far more religious than most Western developed countries. And one of the reasons is that our founders wisely embraced the separation of church and state. Our government does not sponsor a religion, nor does it pressure anyone to practice a particular faith, or any faith at all. And the result is a culture where people of all backgrounds and beliefs can freely and proudly worship, without fear, or coercion—so that when you listen to Darrell talk about his faith journey, you know it's real. You know he's not saying it because it helps him advance, or because somebody told him to. It's from the heart.

That's not the case in theocracies that restrict people's choice of faith. It's not the case in authoritarian governments that elevate an individual leader or a political party above the people, or in some cases, above the concept of God Himself. So the freedom of religion is a value we will continue to protect here at home and stand up for around the world, and is one that we guard vigilantly here in the United States.

Last year, we joined together to pray for the release of Christian missionary Kenneth Bae, held in North Korea for two years. And today, we give thanks that Kenneth is finally back where he belongs—home with his family. [Applause]

Last year we prayed together for Pastor Saeed Abedini, detained in Iran since 2012. And I was recently in Boise, Idaho, and had the opportunity to meet with Pastor Abedini's beautiful wife and wonderful children and to convey to them that our country has not forgotten brother Saeed and that we're doing everything that we can to bring him home. [Applause] And then, I received an extraordinary letter from Pastor Abedini. And in it, he describes his captivity, and expressed his gratitude for my visit with his family, and thanked us all for standing in solidarity with him during his captivity.

And Pastor Abedini wrote, "Nothing is more valuable to the Body of Christ than to see how the Lord is in control, and moves ahead of countries and leadership through united prayer." And he closed his letter by describing himself as "prisoner for Christ, who is proud to be part of this great nation, the United States of America that cares for religious freedom around the world." [Applause]

We're going to keep up this work—for Pastor Abedini and all those around the world who are unjustly held or persecuted because of their faith. And we're grateful to our new Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Rabbi David Saperstein—who has hit the ground running, and is heading to Iraq in a few days to help religious communities there address some of those challenges. Where's David? I know he's here somewhere. Thank you David for the great work you're doing. [Applause]

Humility; a suspicion of government getting between us and our faith or trying to

dictate our faiths, or elevate one faith over another. And, finally, let's remember that if there is one law that we can all be most certain of that seems to bind people of all faiths and people who are still finding their way towards faith but have a sense of ethics and morality in them—that one law, that Golden Rule that we should treat one another as we wish to be treated. The Torah says "Love thy neighbor as yourself." In Islam, there is a Hadith that states: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." The Holy Bible tells us to "put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Put on love.

Whatever our beliefs, whatever our traditions, we must seek to be instruments of peace, and bringing light where there is darkness, and sowing love where there is hatred. And this is the loving message of His Holiness Pope Francis. And like so many people around the world, I've been touched by his call to relieve suffering, and to show justice and mercy and compassion to the most vulnerable; to walk with the Lord and ask "Who am I to judge?" He challenges us to press on in what he calls our "march of living hope." And like millions of Americans, I am very much looking forward to welcoming Pope Francis to the United States later this year. [Applause.]

His Holiness expresses that basic law: Treat thy neighbor as thyself. The Dalai Lama—anybody who's had an opportunity to be with him senses that same spirit. Kent Brantly expresses that same spirit. Kent was with Samaritan's Purse, treating Ebola patients in Liberia, when he contracted the virus himself. And with world-class medical care and a deep reliance on faith—with God's help, Kent survived. [Applause.]

And then by donating his plasma, he helped others survive as well. And he continues to advocate for a global response in West Africa, reminding us that "our efforts need to be on loving the people there." And I could not have been prouder to welcome Kent and his wonderful wife Amber to the Oval Office. We are blessed to have him here today—because he reminds us of what it means to really "love thy neighbor as thyself." Not just words, but deeds.

Each of us has a role in fulfilling our common, greater purpose—not merely to seek high position, but to plumb greater depth so that we may find the strength to love more fully. And this is perhaps our greatest challenge—to see our own reflection in each other; to be our brother's keepers and sister's keepers, and to keep faith with one another. As children of God, let's make that our work, together.

As children of God, let's work to end injustice—injustice of poverty and hunger. No one should ever suffer from such want amid such plenty. As children of God, let's work to eliminate the scourge of homelessness, because as Sister Mary says, "None of us are home until all of us are home." None of us are home until all of us are home.

As children of God, let's stand up for the dignity and value of every woman, and man, and child, because we are all equal in His eyes, and work to end the scourge and the sin of modern-day slavery and human trafficking, and "set the oppressed free." [Applause]

If we are properly humble, if we drop to our knees on occasion, we will acknowledge that we never fully know God's purpose. We can never fully fathom His amazing grace. "We see through a glass, darkly"—grappling with the expanse of His awesome love. But even with our limits, we can heed that which is required: To do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

I pray that we will. And as we journey together on this "march of living hope," I pray

that, in His name, we will run and not be weary, and walk and not be faint, and we will heed those words and "put on love."

May the Lord bless you and keep you, and may He bless this precious country that we love.

Thank you all very much. [Applause]

Senator CASEY: Mr. President, thank you for your message, and we're honored by your presence here today. We close our program with one song and one prayer. Our last song this morning will be sung by a remarkable young man, and those words don't do justice to who this person is. A young man from Tennessee named Quintavious Johnson. If you're a fan of the television show, America's Got Talent, you might recognize him as one of last year's finalists. But today, singing at the National Prayer Breakfast in front of more than 3,500 at the age of 13. Just imagine that, that's going to be hard to top. And now to sing the Lord's Prayer, please welcome Quintavious Johnson. [Applause]

Quintavious Johnson [Singing]

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come
and thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

And give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

And the glory, forever.

Amen.

[Applause]

Senator CASEY: Wow! Quintavious, thank you for your great performance, we're grateful you're with us this morning. And finally this morning, our last prayer at this breakfast will be offered by an extraordinary public servant who also happens to be a minister. He's a former Member of Congress, Ambassador to the United Nations, Mayor of Atlanta, and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, a well-known civil rights leader and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our next speaker was instrumental in the civil rights campaigns in Selma, and in Birmingham that ultimately led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. [Applause] But of all of his many titles and accomplishments, he's most proud of his role as husband, father, and grandfather. Ladies and gentlemen, the Honorable Andrew Young. [Applause]

The Honorable ANDREW J. YOUNG: This morning I woke up to the hearings of the Senate committee on your new appointment as Secretary of Defense. And as they went around talking about all of the dangers and problems that he must confront, and that you must face every day, I realized that's why we need prayer. And I wondered, has the world ever been in this bad of shape? And I remember when I was about the age of Quintavious, even a little earlier, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and Germans were sinking ships, and America was far weaker then. We still had the same conflicts in Congress. We still had the same differences racially, and emotionally, and religiously, but somehow we pulled together and we heard the President say, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." And then a little while later, in fact quite a while later, the people with whom we had gone to war became our best friends and our trading partners. And this country of ours helped unite the world, and in thanks for that, President Eisenhower asked that we come together and form this prayer breakfast, to thank God—for only the spirit of Jesus can forgive as we forgave, can reconcile enemies to each other, and that same Jesus that walked with President Eisenhower and all the presidents since, therefore, with you Mr. President. And when

I look at these young people from Mississippi, Senator, we have overcome so much. [Applause] And we thank you, and we thank all of you, and we thank God. May we pray:

Be with us dear Father, as we take on the challenges of life, not just as government but as business, as private sector and nonprofit sector, as religious leaders, as community leaders, as volunteers, as fathers and mothers, as brothers and sisters, as mothers and sons, and fathers and daughters, bind us together, heal our wounds, calm our spirits and make us always mindful that you came into the world to say you would make all things new, but that you would be with us always. So as we go through many dangers, toils, and snares by your amazing grace, make us always mindful that your presence is in the midst of us. That each of us, because of you, know that we too are your children and that our Father loves us, forgives us, saves us by the mercy that we must share with each other and with the world in which we live. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you, Ambassador Young. And as we conclude this, the 63rd Annual National Prayer Breakfast—depart with these words of God from the Book of Numbers: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” Amen.

RECOGNIZING THE FIFTH AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR FRIENDSHIP DELEGATION TO JAPAN

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to honor veterans from America’s “greatest generation” who were held captive as prisoners of war, POWs, by Japan during World War II and to recognize seven veterans—including three from California—who recently participated in a historic trip to Japan to promote reconciliation and remembrance.

At the invitation of the Japanese Government, the veterans were joined by their family members to become the 5th delegation of American POWs to visit Japan as part of the official Japanese-American POW Friendship Program that began in 2010.

These brave men fought in the historic first battles of World War II and endured years of hardship as POWs. This year, as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, I want to recognize them and honor their service and sacrifice.

Anthony Costa, 95, from Concord, CA, was a private first class in the famed 4th Marine Regiment, also known as the China Marines, which arrived in the Philippines days before the Japanese invasion. He fought to defend the island of Corregidor in the Philippines from December 1941 to May 1942 before he was captured by the Japanese. As a POW, Private Costa was force-marched through Manila and taken to the Cabanatuan prison camp, where thousands of POWs died from starvation, dehydration and abuse. He was then moved to Japan to work as a slave dockworker in the freight yards in and around Osaka before being liberated in September 1945. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

William Sanchez, 96, from Monterey Park, CA, was an Army sergeant with

the 59th Coast Artillery assigned to the island of Corregidor in the Philippines where he helped defend the harbor against the Japanese invasion. In May 1942, Sergeant Sanchez and the rest of his division were captured and paraded through the streets of Manila to Bilibid Prison. He was later transported to Japan in the hold of a Japanese hell ship, where he endured a 33-day oceanic journey plagued by dysentery, malaria and malnutrition before reaching Camp Omori. At the POW camp, he was forced to work as a slave laborer and dockworker at the railway yards in Tokyo prior to his liberation in August 1945.

Jack Schwartz, 100, from Hanford, CA, was a Navy lieutenant junior grade serving on Guam when the Japanese Navy attacked the island on December 8, 1941. When Guam fell to the Japanese, Lieutenant Schwartz was taken to a POW camp in Japan where he was repeatedly beaten, starved and provided insufficient clothing to endure the harsh winters. He was sent to several POW camps before being moved to Camp Rokuroshi, which was hidden in the Japanese Alps. After being liberated on September 8, 1945, he remained in the Navy and retired after a distinguished career in 1962.

My constituents were joined on their trip by Daniel Crowley, 92, of Connecticut, an Army Air Corps infantryman who participated in the defense of Bataan and Corregidor; Oral Nichols, 93, of New Mexico, who served as a civilian medic in the historic defense of Wake Island; Warren Jorgenson, 93, of Nebraska, a marine who defended Corregidor; and Darrell Stark, 91, of Connecticut, who served as an Army infantryman on the Bataan Peninsula.

This trip was part of a reconciliation process that, while undoubtedly painful, is critical to help provide closure to POWs and their families and continue building stronger relations between the U.S. and Japan. It is important that this reconciliation program continue so that this history is remembered and the families can continue to heal.

REMEMBERING PETTY OFFICER SECOND CLASS HEIDI FRIEDMAN

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, today I have the solemn duty of memorializing U.S. Navy PO2 Heidi Jo Friedman, a New Hampshire native who was tragically killed on April 12 at the age of 33. Petty Officer Friedman was serving aboard the aircraft carrier USS *George H. W. Bush* as an engineman, having transferred from Navy Operation Support Center Manchester in January. She entered the Navy in 2002, and previously served on the guided-missile destroyer USS *Ross* and in the Navy Reserve with Amphibious Construction Battalion Two Detachment 101.

Heidi was born on June 28, 1981 to her father Robert, a retired Navy chief petty officer, and her mother Shari

Murray. She graduated from Ledyard High School, in Ledyard, CT, and enjoyed volunteering as a mentor to children and with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Foundation. Heidi was also a lifetime Girl Scout with a passion for rugby and traveling. To those who knew her, Heidi was a loving and caring friend—someone who touched people in a positive way. I know there are many who feel her absence deeply.

Petty Officer Friedman is survived by her mother Shari L. Murray, her father and stepmother Robert B. and Laurie E. Friedman, her grandmother Arlene Canin, her brother Michael L. and wife Erin Friedman, three step-sisters: Jaime and wife Rochelle, Kara and Maria and fiancée Chris; three stepbrothers, Cito and fiancée Lyne, Quique and wife Amanda and Nolan; two nephews, Alexander and Ashton; and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the life and service of PO2 Heidi Jo Friedman.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING SALLY WAGNER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, too often we forget or take for granted just how important teachers are. I try not to do that because I married one. But the positive impact teachers have on our youth and on society is incalculable. Today, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge one outstanding teacher who is retiring after a distinguished 40-year career—the last 34 years of which have been spent at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, ERHS, in Greenbelt, MD—Ms. Sally S. Wagner. Ms. Wagner is the chair of the Instrumental Music Department at ERHS. In 2005, a Washington Post article took note of Ms. Wagner’s extraordinary achievements as an educator noting, “The school [ERHS] has several legendary teachers, including band director Sally Wagner . . . and a 750-student musical juggernaut with so many ensembles and bands that one can barely keep count.”

For the past several years, we have been properly involved in an effort to improve so-called STEM education in this country. That acronym stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Bolstering STEM education is important for economic competitiveness, national security, and keeping America at the forefront of the technological changes that will make life better for all of humanity. But too many schools, grappling with budget cuts, have scaled back or even eliminated their arts and music curricula. Fortunately, there is burgeoning awareness of the importance of these courses, too. And now people are talking about STEAM, where the “A”