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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are perfect in wisdom and goodness. Thank You for the great and mysterious opportunities of our lives. Empower our Senators to seize these opportunities, thereby, fulfilling Your purposes for their lives in this generation. May Your Spirit guide them in their thoughts, words, and deeds, providing them with the wisdom they need to navigate through life's turbulent seas. Keep their thoughts pure, their words truthful, and their actions trustworthy, giving them consciences void of offense toward You or humanity. Lord, inspire them to be mindful of their eternal destiny and their accountability to You. Use them today as instruments for Your glory.

And, Lord, comfort the families and loved ones of the victims of the Charleston, SC, church shooting.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRAGEDY AT EMANUEL AME CHURCH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I don't know another way to describe what I

heard this morning in my morning briefing and then the news accounts of this sickening revelation of what took place in South Carolina last night.

Think about this. The sanctity of a house of worship was violated as a gunman opened fire in the historically Black Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC.

We know now at least nine people are dead, and others, of course, are hurt. I don't know how to describe it. This individual was like a wolf in sheep's clothing. He sat among the congregation for a substantial amount of time before he pulled out a weapon and started firing at people. The thought of people who were in a house of worship being gunned down as they gathered to pray is heart-wrenching, devastating, and is the ultimate act of cowardice and hatred.

As our good Chaplain said, our hearts go out to the families and friends of the people who were gunned down in that church. It is hard to even comprehend anything so awful. So, on behalf of the Senate family, we send our support and our sympathy.

We hope Charleston law enforcement are able to capture this murderer, and the perpetrator be swiftly apprehended and brought to justice.

Mr. President, I had some remarks I was going to give, but they could be deemed partisan in nature and I can give them some other time. I don't feel it would be appropriate for me now to talk about these things that are definitely inappropriate today with this pall hanging over our country.

Based upon that, I would ask that the Presiding Officer announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the time equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, typically I would come to the floor and talk about the business at hand before the Senate, but I think that in light of the horrific news we all woke up to this morning, I wish to touch briefly on the tragic events that unfolded overnight in Charleston, SC.

Although we don't know all the facts, by all appearances, the gunman targeted worshippers while they were in church in a way that certainly shocks all of our conscience and sensibilities. I think it is the sort of act that we all find hard to understand, and it is truly unspeakable.

Law enforcement is doing what it does best, which is conducting its investigation, including looking for the suspect.

I think it is appropriate that we all offer our thoughts and perhaps say a private prayer for all of those who were affected by this senseless and horrific tragedy.

Obviously, the Senate has some important business to do, and I will come back later and talk more specifically

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



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about the Defense authorization bill and the next business we have in line, which is to make sure that our troops get paid and that we provide them the resources they so justly deserve and are entitled to.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. KING. Mr. President, before beginning my remarks, I want to express my profound sorrow, sympathy, and condolences to the people of South Carolina and the people of Charleston for the tragedy that occurred last night. To my colleagues, Senators SCOTT and GRAHAM, and to all the people of South Carolina, these things are very hard to understand, very hard to fathom, and I think I speak for all of our colleagues when I say our hearts go out to the people of South Carolina this morning concerning this unspeakable tragedy.

PAPAL ENCYCLICAL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, there has been a great deal of discussion this week, and there will be, I am sure, over the next few days, about Pope Francis's comments in his encyclical issued this morning on the issue of climate change and on the issue of the preservation of the environment. Some of the reaction has been that the Pope should stay away from science and stick to morality and theology. I am here this morning to say I believe that is exactly what he is doing. He is sticking to morality and theology, and that is why he has made the statement that he has.

I have always viewed this issue in fundamentally an ethical and moral context. There has been a lot of talk, discussion, and debate in committees and on this floor about the science, which I think is irrefutable—the science of climate change, the science of the increasing load of CO₂ in the atmosphere, the most we have ever had in some 3 million years, and the impact it will have. I have talked about the practical impact it will have on the lobster population in Maine and on the shellfish, on our forests, on moose in New Hampshire, on water-edged cities and communities all over this country. All of those practical and scientific things we have talked about at great length on this floor. The only thing I would say is that I am convinced the science is irrefutable that, A, something is happening; B, it is detrimental

to the future of the world; and, C, we—people—are largely responsible for it.

Fundamentally, this is a moral and ethical issue. It has always occurred to me in two moral and ethical contexts. One is that I don't understand what right several generations of people on this Earth have to use up a finite resource that was created over millions of years. It took 3 or 4 million years to create the oil and gas that is underneath our Earth. How do we have the right to use it all up in 200 or 300 years? That assumes we are the only people who will ever occupy this planet. Indeed, I don't believe that is the case. Obviously, it is not the case. There are generations that will come after us—6, 7, 8, 10 generations of people who will come after us. Why do we have the right to use resources that the Earth created for all of time?

One of the fundamental premises of the Old Testament is, of course, the Ten Commandments. One of the basic Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not steal." I believe we are stealing resources from future generations by simply using them up in our lifetimes. That is moral and ethical issue No. 1.

The second ethical issue is the fundamental ethical and moral principle of stewardship. The first line of the Bible says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." God created—God created—the heaven and the Earth. We have a responsibility to steward, to take care of the creation that God gave us.

There are some very interesting Biblical references early in the Bible, in Leviticus, the third Book of the Bible, about this concept of stewardship. One is in Leviticus 25. The Lord said to Moses: "The land must never be sold on a permanent basis, for the land belongs to me." This is God speaking: The land belongs to me. "You are only foreigners and tenant farmers working for me."

That is the concept of a long-term stewardship—that we don't own the land. Yes, we have deeds and we think we own it, and we can pass it on to our children, but we don't own the planet, and we have a responsibility to pass that resource on to our children in good shape and not destroy it.

Another interesting provision in Leviticus—and I hope it is OK to make notations in the Lord's Book because that is what I did. In Leviticus 25, Moses is told a very interesting thing about how to take care of the land. God talked about a Sabbath for the land, just as He talked about a Sabbath for people—a day of rest. "For six years you may plant your fields and prune your vineyards and harvest your crops, but during the seventh year the land must have a Sabbath year of complete rest."

Very interesting—the land must have a Sabbath. It is the Lord's Sabbath. Do not plant your fields or prune your vineyards during that year.

And then later on in Verse 32, God tells Moses what will happen if you

don't observe that rule. In other words, if you just keep planting and abusing the land, He said—this is again quoting God here in Leviticus 25: "Your land will become desolate." There is an interesting observation. God said:

Your land will become desolate, and your cities will lie in ruins. Then at last the land will enjoy its neglected Sabbath years as it lies desolate while you are in exile in the land of your enemies. Then the land will finally rest and enjoy the Sabbaths it missed.

The concept is we have an obligation to the land, to the Earth that has been given to us.

Then, we skip all the way from the beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the New Testament to the Book of Revelations, and there is a kind of admonition, I think, for all of us in terms of our stewardship of the Earth.

In Revelations 11:18, the Chapter says: "But your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants . . . and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

That is something we ought to take very seriously; that the time will come for the destroying of the destroyers of the Earth. This is all about morality, theology, and ethics. This is about simply taking care of the asset the Good Lord gave us—whatever Name you give to the Good Lord. It is the Earth we have been given. It is the only Earth we have. It is the only home we have, and we simply can't destroy it. Yet in Genesis it says man is given dominion over the waters, the Earth, and the animals. But that doesn't mean we are entitled to destroy it. It means we have to steward it, we have to conserve it. That is really what this discussion is all about. This is about ethics. This is about morality. It is about theology, as I have demonstrated.

Now, I want to go from the Good Book to another way to state this. In Maine we have what is called the Maine rototiller rule. It is all you need to know about environmental stewardship: If you borrow your neighbor's rototiller to clean up your garden in the spring, the principle is you always return it in as good shape as you got it, with a full tank of gas. That is environmental stewardship. We don't own this planet. We have it on loan. Therefore, we have a responsibility to pass it on to our children and grandchildren and countless generations ahead of us in as good of shape as we got it and maybe with a full tank of gas. And that means we just can't willy-nilly act like there are no consequences for our actions, that we can be foul the air and the land and the water for our convenience, for our aggrandizement, for our material comfort. We have to think about other people. That is of course the fundamental principle of every religion in the world: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I would submit that "others" includes not only those of us here or those of us in America or those of us around the world but those of us who haven't been born yet.