

when you are praying, you are doing something about it.

You are revealing the presence of God. Whenever people are in grief, or even when they are about to start some great undertaking, they feel the worst pain of all. They feel alone. How am I going to get through this? Why is this happening to me? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That is why there is nothing more comforting, or more humbling really than to hear someone say, "I am praying for you." Because when you hear that, you realize you are not alone—God is there. And hundreds, if not thousands, if not millions of people are all speaking to Him on your behalf. They are not praying for some abstract notion, they are praying for you, the person. You know it says a lot about our country, that people of both parties and of all faiths will drop everything and pray for their fellow Americans. What it says is "We believe in the dignity of the individual, of the human person," and that is why prayer should always come first. All Americans believe this; but as Christians, we can especially appreciate this truth. We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe God came down from heaven and became a man with a name and a body so that we could know him, we could begin to understand. He walked among the poor and the lowly of this world so that he could raise us to new heights in the next. It is a miracle. It inspires us every single day, and that is why we should rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in all circumstances, give thanks. Thank you, and welcome.

64TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST: PART FOUR

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, February 4, 2016 I had the privilege of attending the 64th Annual National Prayer Breakfast chaired by Representatives ROBERT ADERHOLT and JUAN VARGAS. I would like to submit Part Four of the transcript:

64TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST: PART FOUR

The President: Thank you so much. Thank you. You're very kind. Thank you very much. Well, good morning. Giving all praise and honor to God for bringing us together here this morning.

I want to thank everyone who helped organize this breakfast, especially our co-chairs, Robert and Juan, who embody the tradition of friendship, fellowship, and prayer. I will begin with a confession: I have always felt a tinge of guilt motorcading up here at the heart of D.C.'s rush hour. I suspect that not all the commuters were blessing me as they waited to get to work. But it's for a good cause. A National Prayer Brunch doesn't have the same ring to it.

And Michelle and I are extremely honored, as always, to be with so many friends, with members of Congress, with faith leaders from across the country and around the world, to be with the Speaker, the Leader. I want thank Mark and Roma for their friendship and their extraordinary story, and sharing those inspiring words. Andrea, for sharing his remarkable gifts.

And on this occasion, I always enjoy reflecting on a piece of scripture that's been meaningful to me or otherwise sustained me throughout the year. And lately, I've been thinking and praying on a verse from Second Timothy: "For God has not given us a spirit

of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

We live in extraordinary times. Times of extraordinary change. We're surrounded by tectonic shifts in technology and in our economy; by destructive conflict, disruptions to our environment. And it all reshapes the way we work and the way we live. It's all amplified by a media that is unceasing, and that feeds 24/7 on our ever-shrinking attention spans.

And as a student of history, I often remind people that the challenges that we face are not unique; that in fact, the threats of previous eras—civil war or world war or cold war, depressions or famines—those challenges put our own in perspective. Moreover, I believe that our unique strengths as a nation make us better equipped than others to harness this change to work for us, rather than against us.

And yet, the sheer rapidity of change, and the uncertainty that it brings, is real. The hardship of a family trying to make ends meet. Refugees fleeing from a war-torn home. Those things are real. Terrorism, eroding shorelines—those things are real. Even the very progress that humanity has made, the affluence, the stability that so many of us enjoy, far greater prosperity than any previous generation of humanity has experienced, shines a brighter light on those who still struggle, reveal the gap in prospects that exist for the children of the world.

And that gap between want and plenty, it gives us vertigo. It can make us afraid, not only of the possibility that progress will stall, but that maybe we have more to lose. And fear does funny things. Fear can lead us to lash out against those who are different, or lead us to try to get some sinister "other" under control. Alternatively, fear can lead us to succumb to despair, or paralysis, or cynicism. Fear can feed our most selfish impulses, and erode the bonds of community.

It is a primal emotion—fear—one that we all experience. And it can be contagious, spreading through societies, and through nations. And if we let it consume us, the consequences of that fear can be worse than any outward threat.

For me, and I know for so many of you, faith is the great cure for fear. Jesus is a good cure for fear. God gives believers the power, the love, the sound mind required to conquer any fear. And what more important moment for that faith than right now? What better time than these changing, tumultuous times to have Jesus standing beside us, steadying our minds, cleansing our hearts, pointing us towards what matters.

His love gives us the power to resist fear's temptations. He gives us the courage to reach out to others across that divide, rather than push people away. He gives us the courage to go against the conventional wisdom and stand up for what's right, even when it's not popular. To stand up not just to our enemies but, sometimes, to stand up to our friends. He gives us the fortitude to sacrifice ourselves for a larger cause. Or to make tough decisions knowing that we can only do our best. Less of me, more of God. And then, to have the courage to admit our failings and our sins while pledging to learn from our mistakes and to try to do better.

Certainly, during the course of this enormous privilege to have served as the President of the United States, that's what faith has done for me. It helps me deal with the common, everyday fears that we all share. The main one I'm feeling right now is that our children grow up too fast. They're leaving. That's a tough deal. And so, as a parent, you're worrying about will some harm befall them, how are they going to manage without

you, did you miss some central moment in their lives. Will they call? Or text? Each day, we're fearful that God's purpose becomes elusive, cloudy. We try to figure out how we fit into his broader plan. They're universal fears that we have, and my faith helps me to manage those.

And then my faith helps me to deal with some of the unique elements of my job. As one of the great departed heroes of our age, Nelson Mandela, once said, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. . . The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

And certainly, there are times where I've had to repeat that to myself while holding this office. When you hear from a parade of experts, just days after you're elected, that another Great Depression is a very real possibility—that will get your attention. When you tell a room full of young cadets that you've made a decision to send them into harm's way, knowing that some of them might not return safely—that's sobering. When you hold in your arms the mothers and fathers of innocent children gunned down in their classroom—that reminds you there's evil in the world. And so you come to understand what President Lincoln meant when he said that he'd been driven to his knees by the overwhelming conviction that he had no place else to go.

And so like every President, like every leader, like every person, I've known fear. But my faith tells me that I need not fear death; that the acceptance of Christ promises everlasting life and the washing away of sins. If Scripture instructs me to "put on the full armor of God" so that when trouble comes, I'm able to stand, then surely I can face down these temporal setbacks, surely I can battle back doubts, surely I can rouse myself to action.

And should that faith waver, should I lose my way, I have drawn strength not only from a remarkable wife, not only from incredible colleagues and friends, but I have drawn strength from witnessing all across this country and all around this world, good people, of all faiths, who do the Lord's work each and every day, who wield that power and love, and sound mind to feed the hungry and heal the sick, to teach our children and welcome the stranger.

Think about the extraordinary work of the congregations and faith communities represented here today. Whether fighting global poverty or working to end the scourge of human trafficking, you are the leaders of what Pope Francis calls "this march of living hope."

When the Earth cleaves in Haiti, Christians, Sikhs, and other faith groups sent volunteers to distribute aid, tend to the wounded, rebuild homes for the homeless.

When Ebola ravaged West Africa, Jewish, Christian, Muslim groups responded to the outbreak to save lives. And as the news fanned the flames of fear, churches and mosques responded with a powerful rebuke, welcoming survivors into their pews.

When nine worshippers were murdered in a Charleston church basement, it was people of all faiths who came together to wrap a shattered community in love and understanding.

When Syrian refugees seek the sanctuary of our shores, it's the faithful from synagogues, mosques, temples, and churches who welcome them, the first to offer blankets and food and open their homes. Even now, people of different faiths and beliefs are coming together to help people suffering in Flint.

And then there's the most—less spectacular, more quiet efforts of congregations all across this country just helping people. Seeing God in others. And we're driven to do this because we're driven by the value that

so many of our faiths teach us—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper. As Christians, we do this compelled by the Gospel of Jesus—the command to love God, and love one another.

And so, yes, like every person, there are times where I'm fearful. But my faith and, more importantly, the faith that I've seen in so many of you, the God I see in you, that makes me inevitably hopeful about our future. I have seen so many who know that God has not given us a spirit of fear. He has given us power, and love, and a sound mind.

We see that spirit in people like Pastor Saeed Abedini, imprisoned for no crime other than holding God in his heart. And last year, we prayed that he might be freed. And this year, we give thanks that he is home safe.

We pray for God's protection for all around the world who are not free to practice their faith, including Christians who are persecuted, or who have been driven from their ancient homelands by unspeakable violence. And just as we call on other countries to respect the rights of religious minorities, we, too, respect the right of every single American to practice their faith freely. For this is what each of us is called on to do: To seek our common humanity in each other. To make sure our politics and our public discourse reflect that same spirit of love and sound mind. To assume the best in each other and not just the worst—and not just at the National Prayer Breakfast. To begin each of our works from the shared belief that all of us want what's good and right for our country and our future.

We can draw such strength from the quiet moments of heroism around us every single day. And so let me close with two such stories that I've come to know just over the past week.

A week ago, I spoke at a ceremony held at the Israeli Embassy for the first time, honoring the courage of people who saved Jews during the Holocaust. And one of the recipients was the grandson—or the son of an American soldier who had been captured by the Nazis. So a group of American soldiers are captured, and their captors ordered Jewish POWs to identify themselves. And one sergeant, a Christian named Roddie Edmonds, from Tennessee, ordered all American troops to report alongside them. They lined up in formation, approximately 200 of them, and the Nazi colonel said, "I asked only for the Jewish POWs," and said, "These can't all be Jewish." And Master Sergeant Edmonds stood there and said, "We are all Jews." And the colonel took out his pistol and held it to the Master Sergeant's head and said, "Tell me who the Jews are." And he repeated, "We are all Jews." And faced with the choice of shooting all those soldiers, the Nazis relented. And so, through his moral clarity, through an act of faith, Sergeant Edmonds saved the lives of his Jewish brothers-in-arms.

A second story. Just yesterday, some of you may be aware I visited a mosque in Baltimore to let our Muslim-American brothers and sisters know that they, too, are Americans and welcome here. And there I met a Muslim-American named Rami Nashashibi, who runs a nonprofit working for social change in Chicago. And he forms coalitions with churches and Latino groups and African Americans in this poor neighborhood in Chicago. And he told me how the day after the tragedy in San Bernardino happened, he took his three young children to a playground in the Marquette Park neighborhood, and while they were out, the time came for one of the five daily prayers that are essential to the Muslim tradition. And on any other day, he told me, he would have immediately put his rug out on the grass right there and prayed.

But that day, he paused. He feared any unwelcome attention he might attract to himself and his children. And his seven-year-old daughter asked him, "What are you doing, Dad? Isn't it time to pray?" And he thought of all the times he had told her the story of the day that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rabbi Robert Marx, and 700 other people marched to that very same park, enduring hatred and bigotry, dodging rocks and bottles, and hateful words, in order to challenge Chicago housing segregation, and to ask America to live up to our highest ideals.

And so, at that moment, drawing from the courage of men of different religions, of a different time, Rami refused to teach his children to be afraid. Instead, he taught them to be a part of that legacy of faith and good conscience. "I want them to understand that sometimes faith will be tested," he told me, "and that we will be asked to show immense courage, like others have before us, to make our city, our country, and our world a better reflection of all our ideals." And he put down his rug and he prayed.

Now, those two stories, they give me courage and they give me hope. And they instruct me in my own Christian faith. I can't imagine a moment in which that young American sergeant expressed his Christianity more profoundly than when, confronted by his own death, he said "We are all Jews." I can't imagine a clearer expression of Jesus's teachings. I can't imagine a better expression of the peaceful spirit of Islam than when a Muslim father, filled with fear, drew from the example of a Baptist preacher and a Jewish rabbi to teach his children what God demands.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. I pray that by His grace, we all find the courage to set such examples in our own lives—not just during this wonderful gathering and fellowship, not just in the public piety that we profess, but in those smaller moments when it's difficult, when we're challenged, when we're angry, when we're confronted with someone who doesn't agree with us, when no one is watching. I pray, as Roma so beautifully said, that our differences ultimately are bridged; that the God that is in each of us comes together, and we don't divide.

I pray that our leaders will always act with humility and generosity. I pray that my failings are forgiven. I pray that we will uphold our obligation to be good stewards of God's creation—this beautiful planet. I pray that we will see every single child as our own, each worthy of our love and of our compassion. And I pray we answer Scripture's call to lift up the vulnerable, and to stand up for justice, and ensure that every human being lives in dignity.

That's my prayer for this breakfast, and for this country, in the years to come. May God bless you, and may He continue to bless this country that we love.

Rep. Aderholt: Thank you so much, Mr. President. Thank you for your encouraging and also your challenging word this morning. As you know, this breakfast began with one of your predecessors, Dwight Eisenhower; we appreciate you being with us all eight years.

And now, let us get ready for the world that awaits us outside the walls of this hotel, and let's hear again from our friend and our brother from Italy, Andrea Bocelli singing *Amazing Grace*.

[Mr. Bocelli sings *Amazing Grace*]

Mr. Andrea Bocelli: Thank you. Thank you very much. A few words in my terrible English. Ladies and gentlemen, and Mr. President, there is a dark shadow on the world in this period. Many children, elderly die under the bomb. The war is the worst in-

cident of our intelligence. There is a very small word, an honorable word that is to the base of our tragedy. This word in Old Greek, is hubris. Hubris means pride. But there is also on the other side a big reason of happiness, a big reason to be optimist. This reason is the will to be all together and pray together. To be all together also for a moment, to put aside our opinions, our ideas, our different goals, and to be really very close and to pray. Thank you for this invitation. Thank you very much.

Rep. Vargas: Wow, what a great morning. Better than what we ever imagined. Thank you, Jesus. Let's take away the right kind of pride in what we have experienced today, the right kind. As my mother often said, "Never be ashamed of your faith in Jesus because you never want him to be ashamed of you." As Democratic Leader Pelosi reminded us in her reading, Jesus prayed for us to be one and brought to complete unity, and we also heard that today with Mr. Bocelli. So here is my question to you, does Jesus get what he prays for? Let's work for unity. Jesus asked God to send us all together to be one.

Rep. Aderholt: In closing, let me challenge you with this. We have heard a lot about unity this morning, that is what Juan and I wanted, just what we were hoping would be the case. Division is a great problem, so unity is our greatest need, and we believe that we need to pray our way to that unity. We cannot achieve unity on our own. Humanity has tried and humanity has failed for centuries. We have tried, and we have failed in this city, Washington D.C. Unity is a gift from God and Jesus says, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and the door will be open to you." Bring us the unity we need, Lord Jesus. And now to offer our closing prayer, Derrick Henry.

Mr. Derrick Henry: Good morning. I am so glad and honored to be here to do this closing prayer. We bow our heads. Lord Jesus, I thank you for gathering us here today, to hear from these great leaders and these great people, to hear God's word about unity and us being united as one, and how important it is. Jesus Lord I pray for the people who weren't able to eat breakfast today, people who don't have clothes on their back or shoes on their feet, but I pray that you make them find a way and have faith in you that they will receive better days. Father God, I pray for the people who have cancer, who suffer every day with pain and heartache and that you one day will heal them from all the suffering and all the pain. And Lord, I want to pray for my generation, that every day we wake up we seek you, Lord for guidance and wisdom, and one day that we can stand up here and be great leaders, be great people, men and women to speak on unity and united as one, and how important it is to this country and to this world. My Father God, I pray that us as people, great people in here, that we continue to use our platform to help others and inspire others. And last, I would like to pray on the food that we are eating today. I pray that we bless the hands that prepared this food, and let it be nourishment to our bodies. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Rep. Aderholt: Thank you again. Paco and I are very happy that you have joined us here this morning for this breakfast. I think it was very successful. Again, let's give everyone at the head table a great hand.

That concludes our breakfast, and the President and the First Lady will be leaving shortly. If you could stay in your seats for the next few minutes, but we do appreciate them as they're leaving the building and their support for the National Prayer Breakfast. May God bless each of you that are here. May God bless the United States of America, and every country around the world. Thank you, and God Bless.

64TH NATIONAL PRAYER
BREAKFAST: PART THREE

HON. JEFF DUNCAN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, every week when the House of Representatives is in session, I like to attend the Weekly Members' Prayer Breakfast in the Capitol. The United States Senate also holds a Prayer Breakfast each week as well. This weekly meeting of Congressional Members of faith, gave birth to the yearly National Prayer Breakfast. On Thursday, February 4, 2016 I had the privilege of attending the 64th Annual National Prayer Breakfast chaired by Representatives ROBERT ADERHOLT and JUAN VARGAS. I would like to submit Part three of the transcript:

64TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST: PART
THREE

Mr. Burnett: Yes, we are really fortunate and we are very grateful. But our faith has in fact led us to entirely build our TV careers and film careers on family friendly franchises, I mean shows like what was mentioned—The Voice, Apprentice, Shark Tank, Survivor. Often every week four nights out of seven, we have the number one show in America. It is a lot of leverage, which is what matters in Hollywood. We took that leverage and we told Hollywood we wanted to make a brand new series called The Bible. Yes, The Bible on prime time American TV.

Of course our friends told us we are going to destroy our great careers because mixing entertainment and religion is going to make people really angry. But worst of all, they said we were idiots because nobody is going to watch The Bible on prime time TV—they know the story and they can get that in church. Well, as the Americans in this room know, The Bible became the most talked about television show in America, the number one series that year, and 100 million of you watching.

And here is what is really great—The Bible was also shown in Canada but they showed it up against the first game for the National Hockey League—but head to head, The Bible beat hockey. I guess we do know now up in Canada we can officially say that hockey is not God.

Ms. Downey: At that time, The Bible was also up against a show called The Walking Dead and we won, and my favorite headline ran on CNN, "God beats zombies." But far more important than the ratings were the stories of families sitting together in their living rooms watching The Bible. The stories of how God's love for us unfolded through the ages, moved them, and engaged them because faith was and is alive and well in America. The series helped to ignite a much larger conversation about God and faith in this country. We were also humbled that people were inspired to see us, a Hollywood couple of producers daring to speak out about our love of Jesus, daring to talk about our faith in God, and our sincere belief in the power of prayer. I can honestly say that I have never made a decision in my life, big or small, that I didn't pray about first. The Bible series began with a prayer that started as a whisper in our hearts. Our dear friend, Rick Warren had said to us once, "The most dangerous prayer you can pray is, Lord, use me, because then you have to be ready that He might just do so." All we did was ask him to use us.

Mr. Burnett: And use us, he did, trust me. Yeah, it was a TV show but we are also still

telling the story of the most sacred book of all time, the Bible, and we knew we had to get it right. It is a really important, huge responsibility on our shoulders. So the first thing that we did was sign up 40 scholars and advisors—by the way, many of you are in this room right now—you know who you are—you backed us from the very beginning and stood shoulder to shoulder with us. And we thank you so much, all of you in this room who backed us.

You know it was difficult to bridge all the theological gaps, the sway of denominations, but we prayed our way through the process and managed to create a series that brought people together and glorified God. I think it is fair to say—we have become Hollywood's noisiest Christians. You know at least 90 million Americans attend church each Sunday in this country; millions more find inspiration and hope in the person, the story, and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Christian community is a mainstream community. They watch the NFL they watch The Voice, they buy tickets to Star Wars and go to Beyonce concerts. It is a community that loves Jesus, loves their country, it is a very cool community made up of millions of young believers. Many who have tattoos, earrings, they ride skateboards, they surf, they tweet, they are entrepreneurs and are a vibrant part of the new American economy. It is a very broad audience indeed. It is a community that we are really proud to be a part of, and a community that has covered us in prayer—as to our own surprise we almost became the international spokespeople for The Bible.

Ms. Downey: The making of The Bible series was covered in prayer every step of the way. I can still remember sitting in the Moroccan desert under the shade of a rock and reading Scripture with actors, or praying together with them as they prepared for a scene. When we were getting ready to shoot the crucifixion scene, I sent out an email requesting that prayers would be sent ahead of us to clear the way. There were emotional and spiritual challenges of filming such a scene, as well as the physical challenge because we had to hang an actor on a cross and that day the winds were very high and the sun was scorching, and we prayed for safety, and that God would use this series to open hearts to him. We had a man on the set whose job it was to wrangle snakes and scorpions from each of the locations, and normally he found about 1 or 2 snakes a day, but on the morning of the crucifixion, he removed 48 snakes from around the hillside of Golgotha and we believe that was the power of prayer at work—the symbolism of the snake wasn't lost on any of us. We also prayed as we cast the series. We were only a few months away from beginning filming and we still hadn't cast the most important role of Jesus.

So I sent out an email to all my contacts with a header "Looking for Jesus." We asked in prayer that the right actor would show up. Through a series of remarkable coincidences, we came across Portuguese actor, Diogo Morgado. As he walked up our garden path to meet us for the first time, I turned to Mark and said "There he is; there's our Jesus." He was an answer to a prayer, and his touching and affecting performance as Jesus helped to inspire millions of people around the world.

Mr. Burnett: Yes, that role of Jesus was so important and it was last minute casting, and it was the answer to prayer, and the incredible Hispanic actor Diogo Morgado beautifully portrayed, as you saw on the screen, Jesus in The Bible series. Everyone in the whole country was talking about this Hispanic actor. And it reminds me of a great story.

There are a couple of old men who are Christians, they lived next door to each

other. One was an old black man; one was an old white man. They loved each other and they did everything together. In fact, they've only had one disagreement, the old black man was sure Jesus was black, and the old white man was just as sure that Jesus was a white man. Neither could ever convince the other. One day these great friends died together in a car accident. On their way up to heaven the old black man said "Buddy, we're about to find out I was right all along, Jesus is a black man." And the old white man said "I'm sorry you're going to have to find out this way, because when we meet him, you're going to see that Jesus in fact a white man." They got there in great anticipation and Jesus walked out to meet them, and he smiled at them and said, "Buenos dias."

Ms. Downey: Well, you know I suppose when you think about it, Jesus could have been Irish. He lived at home until he was 30. He never got married, and his mother thought he was God. You know, as a husband and wife producer team, not only do we get to do what we love to do but we get to do it together, and we have fun, you can tell, we have fun. But we also know that being in media comes with responsibility, for to those to whom much is given, much is expected. We are so pleased that our step of faith has reinvigorated faith and family programming in this country, and has hopefully inspired a whole new generation of artists to invest their talent and content that inspires and unifies. This is why we named the company that produced The Bible, Light Workers Media, because we have always believed that it is far more effective to light a candle than to curse the darkness. Let me say that again, we believe it is far more effective to light a candle, than to curse the darkness, and that is what we try to do—to light as many candles as we can. We just keep lighting candles in this often very dark, hostile and hurting world.

Mr. Burnett: It is very easy to divide people, and it is very difficult to bring people together. Did you know what we learned making The Bible? That just among Christians alone, there are over 30,000 denominations. When you think about that, it is crazy, right? And many have argued about their views of Jesus for thousands of years. So for us, working across the Protestant and the Catholic community, working in a very detailed way with the Jewish community, it was very, very challenging to make everybody happy as we told the story of The Bible. But we worked very, very hard, and as many people here advised us so closely, we learned to become bridge builders; and bridge building became our mission.

Ms. Downey: Building bridges has become so much of our mission and I know the power of a bridge from my own life's journey growing up in war torn Ireland. But today, if you go to Derry, you will find something new there. Peace has been restored there and there is now a walking bridge built across the River Foyle, and it is aptly called The Peace Bridge. It stands in defiance of all that once divided us—our very own bridge over troubled water. Protestant and Catholic children now play together, but more than that, the old hurts are healing. The leaders in Northern Ireland finally sat down and talked to each other, and listened to each other, and started to work things out together. We are at a time in the world's history where there is so much pain and fear, and division everywhere, and these divisions show up in race, and in religion, and in politics. The dividing lines are easy to find. The bridges to peace are harder to build. May we all find our dividing lines and work until we have built our own bridges of peace across them. On this day of the National Prayer Breakfast, we pray that with God's help, our world