In this capacity, he provides policy making and strategic advice to the President. Although Mr. Maldon is indirectly involved with a myriad of legislative issues, he is directly responsible for policies, plans and programs for military and civilian personnel management, including recruitment, education, career development, equal opportunity, compensation, recognition, discipline, and separation of all Department of Defense personnel, both military and civilian.

Mr. Speaker, Al Maldon’s dedication to public service, both as a civilian and as a member of the United States Army serves as a model to us all. His effective and compassionate leadership has helped to advance the goals of the United States. I am proud to count him as a friend.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA

HON. PORTER J. GOSS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the creation of the ninth city in the Fourteenth District of Florida, the City of Bonita Springs. After many months of debate and discussion, the people of Bonita Springs cast their ballots in favor of incorporation as the fifth city in Lee County, FL on November 2, 1999.

As a new Millennium begins, so the citizens of Bonita Springs will embark on a new challenge, the challenge of creating a new city from residents’ ideas of what their community ought to be. It comes as no surprise that there are those willing to do the hard work involved with making this city work. Some of his highly visible positions included assignments as the Executive Officer, Armed Forces Staff College; and as Admissions and Public Liaison Officer at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. His career progressed through increasingly responsible positions as a Field Artillery and Adjutant General Corps Officer. He completed his military career as a Colonel with an assignment to the United States House of Representatives as the Deputy Director for Army Legislative Affairs in February 1993.

Mr. Maldon holds a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Oklahoma in Human Relations and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Florida A&M University. He also graduated from various military schools and colleges, including the Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the Army’s Organizational Effectiveness Management Consultant School in Monterey, CA. He is the recipient of numerous military decorations including the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal (with two oak leaf clusters), the Army Commendation Medal and the U.S. Army Staff Badge. In addition, Mr. Maldon is the recipient of the United States Congressional Award for Leadership and Patriotism, and he is listed in Who’s Who in America.

He has been blessed with a loving and caring family including his wife Carolyn and their daughter Kamesha Rachael. The family resides in Fairfax Station, VA.

As Assistant Secretary for Force and Management Policy, Mr. Maldon will be responsible for policies, plans and programs for military and civilian personnel management, including recruitment, education, career development, equal opportunity, compensation, recognition, discipline, and separation of all Department of Defense personnel, both military and civilian.

Mr. Speaker, Al Maldon’s dedication to public service, both as a civilian and as a member of the United States Army serves as a model to all of us. His continued service to the citizens of the United States is an example that we should all strive to emulate.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing him the very best in his new assignment and his continued service to the citizens of the United States. I am proud to count him as a friend.

RECOGNIZING TORNADO RELIEF WORKERS

HON. SAM JOHNSON
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give recognition to a group of 21 young folks who traveled to the cities of Jackson and Clarksville, Tennessee at the request of city officials to provide assistance in clean-up efforts, following a tornado in January 1999. These outstanding young men were noted for their teamwork, enthusiasm and diligence in all they did to serve the people of Jackson and Clarksville. They are to be commended for their selfless service.

Jeff Bramhill, Ontario; Jason Brown, AL; Donald Burzynski, FL; Brian Cahill, TX; Brian Drozdov, WA; Christopher Ekstrom, OR; Paul Ellis, MS; Cory Finch, MO; Joshua Fox, CA; Christopher Hanson, WI; John Hill, IA; Seth Johnson, NE; Jonathan Lancaster, MI; Joshua Meals, TN; Samuel Mills, TX; Daniel Petersen, GA; Lance Stoney, British Columbia; John Tanner, MI; John Thornton IV, TN; Mark Wahl, OR; Andrew Whitaker, NY.

NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

TRANSCRIPT INDUCTION

HON. STEVE LARGENT
OF OKLAHOMA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, since the early 1950’s, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives have hosted an annual gathering in our Nation’s Capital known as the National Prayer Breakfast. The Breakfast has afforded the opportunity for both the House and Senate to come together, in a nonpartisan alliance, whether in times of peace or times of war, in times of

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abundance or times of scarcity, to prayerfully support the President and other leaders in this country. This year I was given the privilege of chairing this event.

We were honored once again to have the President and First Lady, and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore in attendance. We were also honored to have several heads of state from Macedonia, Albania, Estonia, and Benin. President Kerekou of Benin, and his keynote speaker, spoke of the model that Jesus of Nazareth gave of love, not only for those we like and agree with, but most importantly, for those we do not.

On behalf of the Members of the Senate and House who have hosted this Breakfast, I submit the transcript of the breakfast for insertion into the RECORD for our posterity.

1999 NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST
Chairman: Representative Steve Largent

Representative Largent. My name is Steve Largent, an author, pastor, and this year's keynote speaker, of the model that Jesus of Nazareth gave of love, not only for those we like and agree with, but most importantly, for those we do not.

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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

November 17, 1999

As we gather this morning, this is the National Prayer Breakfast, the most well-attended event by many around the world who need our prayers here this morning. I want to take a moment to mention just a few of the people that are in dire need of our prayers this morning, including Billy Graham and John Paul II, and the victims of the recent earthquake in Colombia. In fact, it is my understanding that King Hussein is undergoing therapy for cancer treatment as we are speaking and is watching the prayer breakfast this morning.

In the Senate and the House breakfast group have had the opportunity over the years to become friends in this fellowship with his majesty, King Hussein of Jordan. As friends, we have prayed with his majesty in times of triumph and times of trial. And as he undergoes treatment this week for the trial of a lifetime, we join all our prayers to uplift his spirit and strengthen his family; his loved ones and his medical care team in a special way.

Also, many of you may be here this morning asking yourselves, "What is the prayer breakfast and why am I here?" I want to tell you just a little bit about the prayer breakfast and its genesis. It is not very complicated, actually. The group began in the Senate back in the early 1950s. They were joined later by a small group that began in the House. At some time they decided, why not have a good idea if the House group and the Senate group met together to pray for the President of the United States. And that is how the prayer breakfast began 47 years ago. You are going to hear a little bit more about the Senate and House groups from Senator Hutchinson and what we are doing in both chambers as we speak.

The members concluded that whether our country is experiencing peace or war, bounty or struggle, there is a tremendous need for people of faith to lift the President up in prayer. This is not new, nor has it ever been, a political event. When we come to the prayer breakfast, we take our political hats off and come together as Christians to unite in seeking guidance in our daily lives. I am pleased to report for the United States Senate and the House of Representatives this morning. Each week has a regular weekly meeting at breakfast, and our regulars rarely miss it. It is the priority time on our schedules. It is a time for fellowship and reflection. It is a time of short supply in the course of our daily lives.

It is also a time to renew old acquaintances. One of the regulars who grace the Senate meeting is former Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Every Wednesday morning he comes in and orders bacon and eggs and biscuits, and all of my younger colleagues from the House (Laughter.) We tell him we love to see a guy that still eats like a guy. (Laughter.) We figure for him, because he is 96 years old. (Ap- plause.)

We are blessed with occasional drop-ins. Both the Vice President and the President have dropped in on our prayer breakfasts, and we enjoy it very much. But mostly it is just us, our members and our former members, who are always welcome. We spend our sessions discussing different things. Sometimes it is the events of the day and what bearing they may have on our spiritual growth and renewal. At other times, we hear the testimony of a colleague or we help him or her respond to a personal crisis. There is only one informal rule: we never discuss Senator Largent. Thank you, Dr. Laura. Now Michael W. Smith.

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As you are aware, Senator Glenn made history recently by sleeping for 18 years after he became the first American to orbit the earth. During Senator Glenn’s space flight last year, he kept in contact with the President at one point, the President E-mailed Senator Glenn to let him know he had spoken to an 83-year-old woman from Queens and asked her what she thought of the newly minted line. She replied that it seemed like a perfectly fine thing for a young man like Senator Glenn to do. (Laughter.) So please welcome the young Senator Glenn to the podium for his remarks.

Senator Glenn. Thank you. (Continued applause.) Thank you all very much. Thank you all very, very much. Steve, I thank you for that introduction very much also.

Let me add a couple of Old Testament thoughts to what Dr. Laura just read for you a moment ago. These readers have issues, be- vorites of mine for long time, and I wanted to add those before I get over into a couple of quotes from the New Testament.

I am very, very familiar with that part in Ecclesiastes that starts out, “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.” I don’t know how many times I have read all of it exactly, but you remember that. “A time to be born and die, plant and pluck up that which is planted, a time to kill, a time to heal, a time to laugh, mourn, dance, cast away stones, gather stones, embrace, time to refrain, time to get, time to lose, time to keep, cast away, rend and sowl, silence, love and hate, time of war, time of peace.”

That about covers the whole gamut of the human experience. There is not much we could add to that. That has always been one that I thought leads us to believe that there is a time for everything intended for us, than God wants us to live a full life. There is a time for everything. There is a time to live and a time to do—for all these things.

There is another passage that I also like. This came to me and has been a favorite, be- cause when I was training way back in World War II days, which does show my age, I guess, my mother sent a passage to me that I have always thought was very apropos, not only for that purpose, but I was looking forward to then, but also no matter what happens to us any time in life. (Applause.)

That part in particular says: “Whensoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” A teacher should teach with all his heart, a parent should care for her child as if all heaven were watching, a machinist should work so well every time, because each of us is asked by God to devote our daily work to others and to his glory. All of us have a chance to be made great, not by our achievements measured by our expertise, but by our commitment to a path of righteousness and to one another.

I also believe our nation has a task ap- pointed for it by the Lord. As the Gospel says, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glo- rify your Father, which is in heaven.” Though our founders separated Church and State, they never forgot that this eternal spiritual light illuminated the principles of democracy, and especially the idea of the goodness and equality of every human being. The truth that underlies the Constitu- tion is that every human being, no matter how rich or how poor, how powerful or how frail, is made in God’s holy image and must be treated accordingly.

We have seen, especially in this century, how dangerous and destructive the world be- comes when individuals, nations, and leaders forget this eternal truth. Without it, the door to evil is wrenched open, wreaking un- told misery on the human race; demagoguery and corruption, greed and war, and totali- tarianism may enter unchecked.

When we understand our real nature and responsibility as true sons and daughters of the living God, it does not mean we retreat into a new time, but re- commit to a future where we elevate man- kind’s faith and fill the world with justice. (Applause.)

L. E. Lucado. Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Vice President. I cannot thank you enough for this wonderful privilege that you have given me and my wife, Benayla, to be with you this morning. Thank you, Congress- man Largent, for those kind words.

I never quite know how people respond to the thought of us who write. Not long ago I was speaking at a conference and a man came up to me afterwards and said, “I’ve never had dinner with an author before.” And I said, “Well, you buy, I’ll eat.” (Laughter.) So off we went and had a delightful chat. Some days later I received a note from him in which he said, “I thoroughly enjoyed our visit, but you were not as intelligent as I thought you would be.” (Laughter.) You can’t please everyone.

I have a chance to keep my remarks brief. Not long ago I was speaking and a man got up in the middle of my presentation and began walking out, stopped everything and said, “Mr. Lucado, can you tell me where you’re going?” He said, “I’m going to get a hair- cut.” I said, “Why didn’t you get one before you came in?” He said, “I didn’t need one be- fore.” (Laughter.)

I have had several people associated with the breakfast who the invitation came my
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way. The answer that really made most sense was Jesus. Jesus said, "If I washed your feet and you would not have been offended, then you might have shared a few words about Jesus," a request I am privileged to attempt to fulfill.

The final paragraph on the invitation that we received defines the National Prayer Breakfast as "a fellowship in the spirit of Jesus." How remarkable that such an event even exists. It speaks so highly of you, or leaders, that you would convene such a gathering and clear times out of your very busy schedules to attend such a gathering, not under any fiscal or political pressure in the spirit of Jesus. Thank you for that during these dramatic hours you have made prayer a priority.

This breakfast speaks highly of you, our guests. You weave a tapestry this morning of 160 different nations, traditions and cultures, representing a variety of backgrounds but united by a common desire to do what is right for your people. And you are welcome here. Each and every one of you are welcome.

The breakfast is a testimony to you, our leaders, to you, our guests, but most of all, wouldn’t you agree, the breakfast is a testimony of Jesus of Nazareth. Regardless of our perceptions of him, how remarkable that 2,000 years after his birth, we are gathered to consider this life, a man of humble origins, a brother to none, a friend of sinners and the great reconciler of people.

It is this last attribute of Jesus I thought we could consider for just a few moments. His ability to reconcile the divided, his ability to deal with contentious people. After all, don’t we all deal with people and don’t we all know how contentious they can be? How does Jesus do it? "To live above, with those we love, O, how that will be glory. But to live below with those we know, now, that’s another story." (Laughter.)

I found this out in college when I found a girl whom I really liked and took her home to meet my mom, but my mom didn’t like her, so I took her back. (Laughter.) I found another girl and took her home to meet my mom, but mom didn’t like her either. So I took her back. I found another girl, took her home. Mom didn’t like her. I went to the pastor and they made a list of girls—(Laughter)—until finally I found one that I knew my mom would like because she looked just like my mom. She walked like my mom. She talked like my mom. So I took her home, and my dad could not stand her.

(Laughter.) People are tough to deal with. But tucked away in the pages of the Bible is the story of Jesus guiding a contentious group through a crisis. If you will turn your attention to the inside of your program that you received, you will read the words written by a dear friend of Jesus, the apostle John. And he tells us this story:

"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God. So he got up from the meal, he took off his outer garment and was returning to God. So he could be to the end of the hour, but they are not. They are divided. Another follower by the name of Luke in his gospel writes these words: ‘The disciples began to argue about which of them was the most important.’ Can you imagine? The leader is about to be killed and the followers are posturing for power. This is a contentious group.

Not only are they contentious, they are cowardly. Before the night is over, the soldiers will come and the followers will scatter, and those who sit with him at the table will abandon him in the garden. Can you imagine a more stressful evening—death threats on one side and contentious and quarrelsome followers on the other? I suppose some of you can. That may sound like a typical day at the office. But we know that the real Jesus was typical.

But I wonder what our response would be. Perhaps we would preach a sermon on team work, maybe point a few fingers or pound a few tables. But that wouldn’t do. But what does Jesus do? How does he guide a divided team through a crisis? He stands and he removes his coat and he wraps a servant’s towel around his waist. He takes up the wash basin and he kneels before one of his disciples. Unlacing a sandal, he gently lifts the disciple’s foot and places it in the wash basin, covers it with water and begins to clean it. One by one, Jesus works his way down the row, one grimy foot after another. He washes the feet of his followers.

The final paragraph on the invitation that we received defines the National Prayer Breakfast as "a fellowship in the spirit of Jesus." Jesus washes all of the disciples’ feet except the feet of Judas, but I could not find it. The feet of Judas were washed as well. No one was excluded.

You may be aware that the washing of feet was a task reserved not just for the servants but for the lowest of servants. Every group has its pecking order, and a group of house servants had no exception. One who filled that role was Judas. By all accounts, Judas was at the bottom of that pecking order was the one given the towel and the one given the basin. But the one who washed the other’s feet had its pecking order, and a group of house servants had no exception. One who filled that role was Judas. By all accounts, Judas was at the bottom of that pecking order was the one given the towel and the one given the basin.

Jesus’s were not. Judas still sold out and abandoned him in the garden. Can you imagine that gesture means? To wash someone’s feet in the prison as part of the one to wash feet. I’ve done nothing worse. Perhaps we would preach a sermon on team work, maybe point a few fingers or pound a few tables. But that wouldn’t do. But what does Jesus do? How does he guide a divided team through a crisis? He stands and he removes his coat and he wraps a servant’s towel around his waist. He takes up the wash basin and he kneels before one of his disciples. Unlacing a sandal, he gently lifts the disciple’s foot and places it in the wash basin, covers it with water and begins to clean it. One by one, Jesus works his way down the row, one grimy foot after another. He washes the feet of his followers.

Jesus washes all of the disciples’ feet except the feet of Judas, but I could not find it. The feet of Judas were washed as well. No one was excluded.

It is important to note that Jesus is not applauding their behavior. He is not applauding their actions. He simply chooses to love them and respect them, in auto of their actions. He literally and symbolically cups the grimmest part of their lives in his hands and cleanses it with forgiveness. Isn’t this what this gesture means? To wash someone’s feet is to touch the mistakes of their lives and cleanse them with kindness. Sometimes there is no other option. Sometimes everything else is shattered. Sometimes the most honest confession is inadequate. There are some conflicts, whether in nations or in homes, which can only be resolved with the power of love. Jesus washes all of the disciples’ feet except the feet of Judas, but I could not find it. The feet of Judas were washed as well. No one was excluded.

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But Max,” you might be saying, “I’m not the one to wash feet. I’ve done nothing worse.” Perhaps we would preach a sermon on team work, maybe point a few fingers or pound a few tables. But that wouldn’t do. But what does Jesus do? How does he guide a divided team through a crisis? He stands and he removes his coat and he wraps a servant’s towel around his waist. He takes up the wash basin and he kneels before one of his disciples. Unlacing a sandal, he gently lifts the disciple’s foot and places it in the wash basin, covers it with water and begins to clean it. One by one, Jesus works his way down the row, one grimy foot after another. He washes the feet of his followers.

By the way, this story offers a clear picture of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. We have allowed the definition to get so confused. Some think it means to do with attending a certain church or embracing a particular political view. Really it is much simpler. A follower of Jesus is one who has placed his or her life where the disciples placed their feet—in the hands of Jesus. And just as he cleansed their feet with water, so he cleanses our mistakes with forgiveness.

That is why followers of Jesus must be the very first to wash the feet of others. Jesus goes on to say, “If I, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” I did this as an example so that you should do as I have done for you.”

I wonder what would happen if we accepted this challenge. If we followed Jesus’s example. What if we all determined to resolve conflict by the washing of feet? If we did, here is what might occur. We would listen, really listen, when people speak. We would be kind to those who curse us and quick to forgive those who ask our forgiveness. We would be more concerned about being fair than being noticed. We would not lower our God-given standards, nor would we soften our hearts. We should keep our minds open, our hearts tender and our thoughts humble. And we would search for and find the goodness that God has placed within each person, and love it.

Would our problems be solved overnight? No. Jesus’s were not. Judas still sold out and abandoned him in the garden. Can you imagine that gesture means? To wash someone’s feet in the prison as part of the burden that God has placed within each person, and love it. Let your great blessings be upon our President and his family, our Vice President and his family, and all of these leaders and dignitaries gathered. But we look to you as the ultimate creator, director and author of the universe. Let us lead someone today whose mistakes we might touch with kindness. May your power we pray we may. Amen. (Applause.)

Representative LARSEN: Thank you, Max. At this time I want to make one other brief introduction, and that is the new Speaker of the House of Representatives, my friend from Illinois, Denny Hastert. (Applause.)

I want to say it is my privilege and high honor to be here this morning as President of the United States, Mr. William Jefferson Clinton. (Applause.)

Thank you very much, Steve, distinguished head table guests, to the leaders from around the world who are here, the members of Congress, Mr. Speaker LARSEN, and others here. I feel exactly the way I did the first time I ever gave a speech as a public official, to
The pine Bluff Rotary Club Officers Installation Banquet of 1977. The dinner started at 6:30. There were 500 people there. All but three were introduced; they went home mad. (Laughter.) We had been there since 6:30. I was introduced at a quarter to 10. The guests would have expected me to be insurmountable. He did not know what to do, and, so help me, the first words out of his mouth were, “You know, we could stop here and have had a very nice evening.” (Laughter.) He did not mean it the way it sounded, but I do mean it. We could stop here and have had a very wonderful breakfast. (Laughter.) I am delighted. Max. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

I did want to assure you that one of the things that has been said here today repeatedly is absolutely true. Senator Hutchison was talking about how when we come here, we set party aside, and there is absolutely no politics in this. I can tell you that I am absolutely so. I have had a terrific relationship with Steve Largent, and he has yet to vote with me the first time. (Laughter.) So I know there is no politics in this prayer breakfast. We come here every year. Hillary and I were staying up kind of late last night talking about what we should say today and who would be here today, and who would like to ask you to think about what Max Lucado said in terms of the world we live in, for it is easier to talk about than to do, this idea of making peace with the world and not from within.

We have certain signs of hope, of course. Last Good Friday in Northern Ireland, the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics set aside literally centuries of distrust and chose peace for their children.

Last October, at the Wye Plantation in Maryland, Chairman Arafat, Abu Mazin and the Prime Minister of Palestine, and President Slobodan Milosevic and the president of the Republic of Serbia, with the help of President Bill Clinton, worked it out; they signed the agreement. No one else was in there. They worked it out; they signed the agreement. And when they signed, I stood up and read from each page they were signing. And it was over.

You do not make peace with your friends, but friendship can come, with time and trust and prayer. When we do, I think that our willfulness is an expression of God’s will. I do not know how to put this into words. A friend of mine last week sent me a little story out of Mother Teresa’s life. She was asked, “When you pray, what do you say to God?” And she said, “I don’t say anything; I listen.” And then she was asked, “Well, when does God speak to you?” And she said, “He doesn’t say anything either; he listens.” (Soft laughter.)

In another way, Saint Paul said the same thing. “We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us, with signs too deep for words.”

So I ask you to reflect on all we have seen and felt today, and understand what the book of Ephesians means when it says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers.” We pray that we may heed the ancient summons, pray as if everything depended on God and act as if everything depended on you. Whether we worship in the shadow of the cross, under the Star of David or the crescent of Islam, it is in this spirit that we gather and in this spirit that we pray. We pray with the believers in the Republic of Serbia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are friends; and we pray for all the peacemakers, and for peace within each of our hearts—in silence.

(Moment of silence.) Amen. (Applause.)

Representative LARGENT. Thank you Mr. President, for your remarks. You have asked us to pray for the leaders of the world and for leadership in the world. And at this time, I would like to ask my friend, Representative Harold Ford, to come forward to pray for world leaders.

Representative FORD. Thank you, Steve.

We pray, God, that you will help us to understand what the book of Ephesians means when it says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers.” We pray that we may heed the ancient summons, pray as if everything depended on God and act as if everything depended on you. Whether we worship in the shadow of the cross, under the Star of David or the crescent of Islam, it is in this spirit that we gather and in this spirit that we pray. We pray with the believers in the Republic of Serbia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who are friends; and we pray for all the peacemakers, and for peace within each of our hearts—in silence.

(Moment of silence.) Amen. (Applause.)

Representative LARGENT. Thank you, Harold. One of the real mysteries of the power of Jesus is that, Mr. President, as you said, I have never seen any church that has been able to do it. For four years that I have been in Congress, but I want you to know that I care for you and
love you. That is part of the mystery of Jesus and the celebration that we have here this morning, as we come to pray for our leaders and for our world.

At this time I would like to ask Senator Lieberman to come forward and lead us in our benediction. (Applause.)

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you. Let us pray.

I pray, Lord, that you will open my lips, that I may declare your praise. We love you, Lord, because we come before you with a perfect faith that you will hear our prayer. And we have that faith not because of our confidence in our righteousness but because of our trust in your mercy.

Lord, thank you for waking us up this morning, restoring our souls to our bodies, bringing us to this place, but the destination we seek is a unified one, Lord, and it is you. You are the source of our lives, of our principles, of our purpose. We thank you for all that you have done for us. And as the President said so beautifully and compellingly and truthfully, for reasons that only impress us with our imperfection, so often our attempts to reach you have divided us.

But today, the spirit in this room is yours; in the Hebrew, Shekinah, the spirit of God, is here and now. We are gathered together in a characteristically American way, in a way that the founders of this country understood, and they expressed in the very first paragraph by which they declared their independence that they held certain truths to be self-evident and that the first of these was that the rights they were granting us came from you;还 has not been replaced by philosophers or lawyers or politicians, but were the endowment we received from you, our creator.

Lord, we thank you for the leaders who are here, here who are here who shared their faith with us. We ask your prayers, especially on the leaders of our country, the President and Vice President and their devoted and gifted wives. We pray particularly today for the President of the United States. We thank you for the gifts you have given him of intellect, of judgment, of compassion, of common sense, that have enabled him to be such a successful leader of our country and have raised up so many people in this country to a better life and have brought hope and confidence to people around the world, depending on him.

And Lord, may I say a special prayer at this time of difficulty for our President, that you hear his prayers, that you help him in the work he is doing with his family and his clergy, that you accept his atonement in the spirit in which David spoke to the prophet and said, ‘I am distressed. Let me put my faith not in human hands but in the hands of God, who is full of abundant mercy.’

So, Lord, we pray that you will not restore his soul and lead him in the paths of righteousness for your name’s sake, but help us join with him to heal the breach, begin the reconciliation and restore our national soul so that we may go forward together to make this great country even greater and better.

And I pray, Lord, too, for all the leaders from around the world who are here. And in the spirit that the President himself invoked, I want to reach out particularly to Chairman Arafat and the leaders of Israel and you will guide them in the paths of peace so that their children and grandchildren may truly one day not just live in peace but sit together, as Dr. King evoked in all of us, at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood.

So, Lord, as we leave this place, we pray that you will take us by the hand and lead us home, but let us not leave here the spirit of unity and purpose that has filled this room. Let us resolve, each of us in our own way, to work to honor your name, to bring us closer each day to the realization of the prophet’s vision, “when the valleys will be exalted and the hills and mountains made low, when the rough spots will be made straight and the glory of the Lord will fill the earth, and all flesh will see it and experience it.” On that day, Lord, your name will truly be one and your children will be one.

Amen. (Applause.)

Representative LARGENT. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the 47th National Prayer Breakfast.

Thank you all for being with us here this morning. Let’s leave today and live out the principles Jesus taught about loving one another, loving our God with all our heart, soul and mind. Thank you, and have a good morning.

ACCREDITATION OF THE OAK PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on August 26, 1999 the Village of Oak Park Fire Department was awarded the title “Accredited Fire Department” by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (C.F.A.I.).

The Oak Park Fire Department is only the third fire department in the State of Illinois and one of only 21 departments in the United States and Canada to achieve such accreditation.

Fire Chief Gerald Beeson and the other members of the department worked to complete their application for over 2 years.

Chief Beeson told the Wednesday Journal, “Those who review applications—members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International Association of City and County Managers—look at all facets of fire service, including departmental aspects like training and response time and on the village side like finances and codes.”

The accreditation is a benchmark, a set of standards, Oak Park can use to judge the quality of their fire protection service. The departmental achievement is a credit to all of Oak Park’s fire fighters and we salute them for their outstanding accomplishment.

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, THE PEOPLE OF BELARUS ARE STILL BEING OPPRESSED BY AUTHORITARIAN DICTATOR

HON. SAM GEJDENSON
OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a resolution on the gravity of the political and economic situation in Belarus. I believe it’s time for U.S. Congress to express strong opposition to the continued egregious violations of human rights and the lack of progress toward the establishment of democracy and the rule of law in Belarus and call on President Alexander Lukashenka to engage in negotiations with the representatives of the opposition and to respect the constitutional rights of the Belarusian people.

While the U.S. and Europe are marking the 10 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, President Lukashenka is building a new wall between Belarus and democracy and trying to isolate Belarus by using old Soviet and Stalinist tactics of misinformation and intimidation. The people of Belarus have experienced a great deal of suffering over the years—as the victims of the Nazis, of Stalin, and of the Chernobyl disaster. I visited Belarus several months ago and it is clear to see that the people of Belarus are still getting a bad deal—again at the hands of their leadership.

In the fall of 1996, President Lukashenka used bogus tactics to impose a new constitution on Belarus, to abolish the existing parliament and replace it with a rubber-stamp legislature, and to illegally extend his presidential term. Although Lukashenka says that his government is willing to enter into negotiations with the opposition, his actions indicate the opposite. Lukashenka has created a climate of fear in Belarus, along the lines of Stalin’s and Hitler’s regimes, which he admires. He has targeted the opposition, non-governmental organizations, and the independent media. Opposition figures have disappeared; independent newspapers are fighting for survival; and those Belarussians who are brave enough to publicly protest Lukashenka’s rule, get thrown into prison on trumped up charges.

Lukashenka is pushing his country deeper and deeper into an economic abyss. Prices remain under state control, and there has been no privatization to speak of. The average monthly wage is somewhere around $32 a month, and many people rely on subsistence farming in a backyard plot to feed their families.

We in the U.S. Congress have a moral responsibility to promote democracy and support economic development in Belarus. This resolution condemns the current Belarusian regime and calls for immediate dialogue between President Lukashenka and the Consultative Council of Belarusian opposition and the restoration of a civilian, democratically-elected government in Belarus, based on the rule of law, and an independent judiciary. The resolution urges President Lukashenka to respect the human rights of all Belarusian citizens, including those members of the opposition who