

The second thing I would say is, to everybody listening to me, we may have very different political views about certain issues, or maybe a lot of different political parties, but I think every church needs a mission that goes beyond its members. And I think that this church does, and I respect it very much.

I think that the words of Christ in St. Matthews about how we're all going to be judged in part by how we dealt toward the least of these is very important, especially in a time of extraordinary prosperity like this one.

And the final thing I would say is you asked me today about whether these pastors should minister to other politicians, and I said some things about politicians and their spiritual needs and me in mind. But that's really true of everyone.

One of the things I think that must be hardest—one of the most rewarding things I think about being a pastor, and yet one of the hardest things to remember, especially as you have some success, is that whether you have 20,000 members in your church or 200, they've all got a story, and they all have their needs, and they're all—they have a claim as a child of God to have a certain level of connection. And as you get bigger and more successful, you've got to figure out how to keep giving it to them, because nobody goes through this whole life without a slip or a turn or a scar or a challenge or something that seems just beyond their ability to cope with.

And so I think learning these leadership skills and thinking about what your job is—all I can tell you is that's what's kept me going for 8 years. I just kept thinking about the personal stories of all the people who touched me and

reminded me of why I was supposed to show up every day.

I think if you can do that and have a mission that deals with your members as individuals and that goes beyond your members, I think America will be better. And I know that all of us who are involved in these endeavors will be better.

The last thing I want to say is—I used to say this about Al Gore all the time; I used to say, when I was being criticized, he doesn't get enough credit for what we did together that is good, and surely no fairminded person would blame him for any mistake that I made. I hope you'll feel that way about Hybels. I've got to make up for these two cuts I took him. [Laughter] He didn't fail in his ministry because I did. And what he did was good for America, because I needed somebody to talk to, to brace me up, and make me think about things in another way. It was a gift. It's something I'll treasure all my life. And for those of you who have whatever political or personal differences you have, I hope you will still believe that he did the right thing, because he did.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the Willow Creek Community Church. In his remarks, he referred to Gordon McDonald, senior minister, Grace Chapel Congregation, Lexington, MA; Tony Campolo, associate pastor, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, West Philadelphia, PA; Rev. J. Philip Wogaman, pastor, Foundry United Methodist Church, Washington, DC; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. Rev. Hybels is the pastor of Willow Creek Community Church.

Statement on a Report of the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics

August 10, 2000

Today I am pleased that a new study has been released that demonstrates that older Americans are healthier and prospering more than ever before. The findings of the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics' report "Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being" shows that the life expect-

ancy for Americans has increased by more than 20 years since 1990—women from 51 to 79 years old and men from 48 to 74 years old—and that the number of older Americans living in poverty has decreased by nearly 25 percent since 1959.

These trends reinforce that our efforts over the last 7 years to strengthen Medicare and Social Security, while also paying down the debt, have been successful. However, there is still a tremendous amount to be done to ensure the well-being of all older Americans, which is becoming more critical as the baby boomers approach their senior years. By 2030, one in five Americans, 70 million people, will be 65 years of age or older.

We need to prepare for the inevitable health and financial challenges that confront Medicare

and Social Security. As an important first step in that direction, we should follow Vice President Gore's suggestion to take Medicare off budget. If we do, we will ensure that Medicare payroll taxes are only used for Medicare. We should also modernize and strengthen Medicare by making the program more competitive as well as providing for a long overdue and voluntary prescription drug benefit. I urge Congress to work this fall across party lines to improve our seniors' health security and pass these important reforms.

Remarks at a Dinner for Hillary Clinton in New York City

August 10, 2000

First of all, I want to thank John and Margo and Dennis and Mike and Peter and everybody else that made this dinner possible tonight. And I'd like to thank Attorney General Spitzer and Comptroller McCall for coming. And all the rest of you, I thank you for being here for Hillary and for our country.

I can be quite brief, but I won't be. [*Laughter*] I will be. I will be. The only thing that I'm concerned about in this election is whether people really know what it is about and believe it's important. In over 200 years, the American people have almost always gotten it right when they had the facts and the time to digest them, and that's why we're all still around here, why it's still a great country. It's why we've done what we've done as a people and taken in wave after wave after wave of immigrants and met crisis after crisis, challenge after challenge. Democracy actually works.

And we have to trust the people, if they know what it's about. And the only thing—as I said, what's concerned me is I have repeatedly seen stories to the effect that many people didn't think this was such a big election. I mean, after all, things are going so well, and you couldn't mess up the economy if you tried, so is it really a big deal? And then the second thing that's bothered me is I've seen lots of stories which indicate that people don't have any idea what the real differences are between the parties, the candidates for President, the candidates for the New York Senate race and other things.

A big story in USA Today about 3 weeks ago: What's the difference in the Vice President and Governor Bush's economic policy? A story just 10 days ago interviewing suburban women who favored greater gun safety legislation—our candidate had a six-point lead. And then when this polling outfit just read the positions of the two candidates—and by the way, they had nothing to do with either party; this was an independent polling outfit—they just said, "Okay, here's their positions"—they went from 45 to 39, to 57 to 29.

So what I want to say to you—you came here tonight; you've helped Hillary. I am profoundly grateful, and I want to say a few words about that. But every one of you has friends who are less political than you are. Every one of you has friends who may not even be active Democrats. You have networks of people you contact. And what I want to ask you to do is to remind people that this is a big election. And how many times in your lifetime have you a chance to vote in an election solely on the basis of how we can use this astonishing prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence to build the future of our dreams for our kids? It may never happen again in your lifetime. So to pretend that this is like a no-consequence election because we don't feel like we're on the edge of a cliff about to be pushed off, I think is a grave error.

The second thing I want to say is, there are huge differences. And we mustn't be shy in pointing out to the best of our ability what we