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identity. It was almost like being on one big team, being in one good gang.

And guess what? The crime rate went down; the violence went down; attendance went up; school learning went up. And even upper income students said, ''This is a better deal,'' because they were no longer identified by what they wore, but by what kind of people they were, what kind of values they had and what kind of—[*inaudible*]—they had.

So I say to you, we don't say that you should do this. We say if you have a problem with young people and gangs, it's one thing you should consider. And you sure ought to be free to do it, free of any worries about lawsuits or hassles if you decide to do it.

There are all kinds of other things that schools are doing. A lot of schools are doing more work in character education. And we've tried to help schools deal with that. There are all kinds of initiatives that will work only if people at the local level believe it. So I say to you, I came here today to say I want America to look at New Mexico and say, ''Well, maybe we should consider a curfew policy. Maybe we ought to consider a middle school initiative like the one they have in Albuquerque. Maybe we ought to consider a uniform policy like the one they have in Las Cruces.''

I'm dry—I can't do this today—[*laughter*].

And some of the times, the best thing the Government can do in Washington is just to help you do this. The only thing we have done on all these issues is to make sure that the Justice Department and the Department of Education can give every school district in America guidance if they want to do these things. So there are no legal problems, no legal hassles, and people are free to put our children first and their future first.

So I say to all of you, again, I thank the people of New Mexico for being here today. I thank the political leaders for being here today. Two Members of your congressional delegation called me before I came because they couldn't come, Senator Domenici and my good friend Congressman Bill Richardson, and I thank them for calling expressing their support for these endeavors.

This is something we have to do together. And when you go home tonight, if you have any friends in other States or other communities in New Mexico, the next time they get in touch with you, I want you to talk to them about this, because we don't have any more important responsibility than to give every child in this country, no matter where they are, where they grow up, how tough their circumstances are, the opportunity to live out their dreams. We are going to be able to construct an economy that will permit them to live out their dreams. We know—we know that we can expand educational opportunity so that every single child who's willing to work for it will have access to go beyond high school to 2 years of community college and on to college if they want to do it—every child. We know we can do that.

But we will never, ever seize the promise of the 21st century in New Mexico or anywhere else in the United States until every child can live in a safe neighborhood and go to a safe school and belong to good, positive, constructive groups that reinforce the kind of values and the kind of imagination and the kind of character that our young speaker who introduced me evidenced today. That is a dream that you have to pursue and that every American family, every American community, and every American school has to pursue child by child by child. We'll do what we can to support you, but you need to do what you can to make sure every person you know is committed to that goal.

Thank you, and God bless you. And I hope you get rain tonight. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m at the athletic field. In his remarks, he referred to Tomas Sanchez, Grover Cleveland Middle School student who introduced the President; Jesse Gonzalez, superintendent, Las Cruces Public Schools; Mayor Martin Chavez of Albuquerque, NM; Gov. Gary E. Johnson of New Mexico and his wife, Dee; and former Gov. Bruce King of New Mexico and his wife, Alice.

Remarks at the Dedication of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church in Greeleyville, South Carolina

June 12, 1996

Thank you very much, Bishop and Reverend Mackey. Let me begin by thanking you all for being here and making us all feel so

welcome. And before I—and thank you for that—[*laughter*]—before I go into my remarks, I want to present the Reverend Mackey a little plaque I brought that is dedicated to the congregation of this church, Mount Zion A.M.E. It says, "We must come together as one America to rebuild our churches, restore hope, and show the forces of hatred they cannot win." I hope you will put this up in your church, Reverend Mackey, and remember this day always. I'm honored to be here with you.

You know, first of all, let me say I'm honored to be here with so many distinguished Americans. I thank Senator Hollings, and Congressman Clyburn for coming down here with me today. I thank Congressman Inglis for being here. And our good friend, John Conyers, from Michigan, is either here or on his way here. Congressman Conyers, I thank him. I want to thank all the dignitaries who have come to join us—Reverend Jesse Jackson for coming back home to South Carolina, and thank you for being here. And I want to thank Reverend Joseph Lowery, the very first person who wrote me to say that our National Government needed to do more about these church burnings. Thank you, Reverend Lowery, for doing that. And I thank my old friend, Bishop James, for coming back here; and Reverend Joan Campbell, Mayor Riley, Mayor Coble, Mayor Kellahan, and others who are here.

And of course, I want to thank the mayor of Greeleyville, who met me at the airport and rode in with me and talked to me about this little community and its challenges and its promise. I thank the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury for coming down with me here today to demonstrate just how important we think it is to get to the bottom of these church burnings, and all of us are going to be working together on that. I thank my good friend, Millard Fuller, from Habitat for Humanity, for being here; and Randall Osborne, the SCLC administrator. Reverend Mack Jones, the NCCC; Reverend Ed Johnson; R.A. Leonard; Reverend Patricia Lohman.

And I'd like to make a special recognition and ask him to raise his hand, the Reverend Larry Hill, of the Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, which burned just last week. Reverend Hill, would you raise your hand? Where are you, sir? Here he is. Let's give him a hand. [*Applause*] Good to see you again, sir. Thank you.

First of all, I think it's important to note that we're celebrating a little something today. When the pastor came here, he told me this church had 42 members, and now it has 200 members. This church is like Shadrach, Meshac, and Abednego. They can burn the building down, but they couldn't burn the faith out. And so we celebrate the triumph of the faith of the members of this church. We celebrate those who have walked from the fire unharmed, guarded by God's faith.

We see in the rebuilding of this church that the false idols of hatred and division did not win. The church that burned here, just down the road, was built a long time ago. And when I was driving down that little country road to look at that site, I told Reverend Mackey it was like going down memory lane for me. There's a little road like that off a little highway in southwest Arkansas where my great-grandparents are buried in a country churchyard next to a church that is about exactly the same size that little church was. And I went down there just a few years ago to kind of revisit my past, and I felt like I was doing it all over again today.

Then when we came out here and I saw where this church is, I thought, you know, in just a few weeks this will be one of the few churches in America where everybody can have a fresh ear of corn on the way in or out of church—[*laughter*]—sort of strengthen their bodies as well as their faith as they go along.

You think about what happened 90 years ago when the other church was built, people might have expected things like a church bombing. That was the time of Jim Crow, and there were evening lynchings in the South. It was a time of abject poverty, worse than anything we call poverty today. It was, 90 years ago, an expression of faith and courage for people to get together and build a church.

But it was the church that saved the people until the civil rights revolution came along. And it is, therefore, I think, doubly troubling

to people—some of whom are over here on this platform today who spent their entire lives working for equal opportunity among our people, working for an end to the hatred that divided us for too long—to see our native South engulfed in a rash of church burnings over the last year and a half. We have to say to all of you who have been afflicted by this, ''We know that we're not going back to those dark days, but we are now reminded that our job is not done.'' Dr. King once said, ''What self-centered men have torn down, other centered men can build up.''

The men and women of Mount Zion have shown us the meaning of these words by refusing to be defeated and by building up this new church. Others have come together with you. The pastor told me he got contributions from all over the world to help to rebuild this church. In just a few days we'll have a joyful noise coming out of this church. But today, just as you have come together, I want to ask the people of America to come together. I want to ask every citizen as we stand on this hallowed ground together, to help to rebuild our churches, to restore hope, to show the forces of hatred they cannot win.

I want to ask every citizen in America to say we are not going back, we are not slipping back to those dark days. Every time you hear somebody use race or religion as an instrument of division and hatred, speak up against it—every time you hear somebody do that. If you have the inclination, any evidence of anything you have seen or heard that somebody else might be planning to do something like this, tell the local authorities, and let's stop this before it gets started. If you know anything about any of the unsolved cases, come help us solve them. This is wrong.

The American people are the most religious church-going people of any great democracy. We cannot let someone come into our democratic home, the home of our faith, and start torching our houses of worship. It doesn't matter whether it's this Christian church or the mosque that was burned in South Carolina. People have a right to worship God any way they please. That's what the first amendment of the Constitution is about. We cannot ever let this happen in our country again.

Long before President Lincoln said it, the Lord spoke to us in the Scripture and said, ''A house divided against itself cannot stand.'' It was always true. What a price we paid down here when we forgot it. What a benefit we have gained down here when we let it go. We cannot go back to those days.

But if you look all over the world you see how easy it is for people slowly, step by step, to fall into the patterns of blaming other people who are different from them for the difficulties of the moment. Now we know as we see these fires of racial and ethnic hatred sweeping the world, as we see Africans from different tribes slaughter each other, as we see the ethnic hatred that consumed Bosnia, as we see it place after place all over the globe, we know how easy it is for the heart of human beings to be hardened against one another just because of superficial differences.

I pledge to you I will do everything I can to prosecute those responsible for the rash of church burnings, to prevent future incidents, to help communities to rebuild. But Americans must lead the way, for this is first and foremost an affair of the heart. And our heart must be purged of any temptation to go back to the kinds of divisions that cost us so dearly, especially here in the southern part of our country.

For months, more than 200 Federal agents have been working on these church burnings. There are now 33 active cases. We've closed 10 cases already through investigations, arrests, and prosecutions. Let me say, again, how profoundly grateful I am for the work done by the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury and all those people who work with them. We will continue to probe these crimes. We will continue to use our top law enforcement officers. We will continue to see that these investigations meet a strict code of professional and personal conduct. I expect to get a report on this every week until the job is done. And I want you to help us finish the job.

I also want to say that we must keep this out of politics. This is about America. This is about what it means to be American. I want to say a special word of thanks to a Republican Congressman from Illinois, Henry Hyde, and a Democratic Congressman from

Michigan John Conyers, who have together sponsored legislation that will make it easier for us to punish those who burn houses of worship. And I hope Congress will pass the legislation very, very quickly.

We also must work together to rebuild all these churches. We will work with Congress to give HUD the resources they need to guarantee loans by private lending institutions. And I want to applaud the business and community leaders who provide money and folks to assist in rebuilding these churches all across our country.

Already these burnings have sparked an outpouring of concern. The Alabama association of Habitat for Humanity is recruiting volunteers to rebuild several of the churches in Alabama. Today, Habitat for Humanity International has made a commitment to help all the communities that have lost churches in these arson attacks to rebuild. And I want to thank the founder of Habitat, Millard Fuller, who's here, for what his commitment is today. Thank you sir. Thank you.

I applaud the National Council of Churches—and I thank Reverend Campbell for being here—for their financial commitment to rebuilding. I thank NationsBank for stepping up to the challenge and issuing a $500,000 reward for the arrest of those responsible for church burnings.

But in the end, let me say again, we must recognize that this is everybody's problem. Every citizen, every minister, and religious leader in this country should be speaking out against this violence. Every house of worship in America must be a sacred place, not just Christian churches for those of us who are Christian but our synagogues and our mosques. Any place where people gather to worship according to the dictates of their conscience should be protected from violence.

Reverend Billy Graham wanted to be here today and sent me these words for all of us to reflect on. He said, the problem between various ethnic groups is worldwide; it is a problem of the heart. It seems that much of the world is affected by this terrible disease, which should be called by its right name: sin.

So I ask you today, my fellow Americans, to celebrate the triumph of the rebuilding of this church, to express gratitude for the fact that the huge vast majority of our people of all races deplore what has been done and revere the right of every American to worship God in his or her own way. But I ask you to reaffirm our responsibility to keep working, working together, not to ever let America fall back into those patterns of hatred and division, which can so easily consume any civilized people.

We have to sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has brought us, full of the hope that the present has brought us. Let's face the rising sun of this new day begun. But let us remember we have to march on until victory is won.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop John Hurst Adams, A.M.E. Bishop for South Carolina; Rev. Terrence Mackey, pastor, Mount Zion A.M.E. Church; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Rev. Joseph Lowery, president, and Randall Osborne, administrator, Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Bishop Fred James, A.M.E. Bishop for Washington, DC; Rev. Joan Campbell, general secretary, and Rev. Mac Charles Jones, associate to the general secretary for racial justice, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.; Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., of Charleston, SC; Mayor Robert D. Coble of Columbia, SC; Mayor Russell Kellahan of Kingstree, SC; Millard Fuller, founder, Habitat for Humanity; Rev. Ed Johnson, pastor, Friendship Church of God in Christ, Lincolnville, SC; R.A. Leonard, presiding elder, Kingstree District A.M.E. Churches; Rev. Patricia Lowman, assistant pastor, St. John's Baptist Church, Dixiana, SC; and evangelist Rev. Billy Graham.

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders

June 12, 1996

President Clinton. I'm pleased to welcome Prime Minister Prodi of Italy and President Santer of the European Commission to the White House. This is the Prime Minister's first visit here since his election in May, and I'd like to congratulate him on his fast start in office. Let me also thank President Santer who has worked with us so