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challenges. The U.N. and its agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, provide vital assistance to developing countries through grants and loans of over $25 billion a year. With the current disruption in the world financial markets, the U.N. also plays a pivotal role as a stabilizing force, attracting investment in emerging economies in the developing world by promoting political stability, transparency, and good governance. And the U.N. continues to serve the world as an effective forum for instant consultation and cooperation among governments when attacking such shared threats as terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental degradation, and infectious disease.

The United States can best honor and celebrate the good work and many accomplishments of the United Nations by ensuring its continued strength and effectiveness. The U.N. has made great strides in streamlining its programs and cutting its costs. I applaud this progress, and I deeply regret the failure of this Congress to agree to pay our overdue U.N. dues. I pledge to work with the next Congress to meet our financial treaty obligations to the U.N. America played a vital role in the birth of the United Nations more than 50 years ago, and, if we are to remain true to our values and goals, we must work constructively with this great institution and maintain our vote in its deliberations.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Commission and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 1998, as United Nations Day. I encourage all Americans to acquaint themselves with the activities and accomplishments of the United Nations and to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities furthering the goal of international cooperation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 27, 1998]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church's 160th Anniversary Celebration

October 23, 1998

Thank you very much, Reverend Green. [*Laughter*] You know, Ernie was doing so well up here, it reminded me about what my grandmother used to say to me. She said, ''Bill, I think you could have been a preacher if you'd been just a little better boy.'' [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Ernie Green for his lifetime of friendship. I thank my longtime friend Secretary Slater, who has done a magnificent job in our Cabinet. I am delighted to be here with Secretary Togo West and Mayor Barry, Congresswoman Norton, Johnnie Booker, Bishop Anderson, Reverend Harvey, Assistant HUD Secretary Cardell Cooper, many members of our White House staff. And I'm really glad to be here with Gwen Ifill. I told the Bishop on the way in—and Reverend Harvey—I said, you know, Gwen Ifill's daddy was an AME preacher. And we used to talk about the AME back in 1992 when I was—back when I had a life, when I was a real citizen, and I was running for President and she was covering me. And you know, when you get in the press corps in Washington, you tend to drift away. And I'm glad to see her back, getting close to the faith again tonight here, working with all of you. [*Laughter*] It's very good.

I wish you a happy 160th birthday. I thank you more than you will ever know for the prayers, the friendship to me and to my family over these last few months and, indeed, over these last many years. And I am honored to have been invited to be with you on this occasion. And believe you me, I am very happy that we wound up those Middle East peace talks today, so I could be here.

It is now 8:30, and I have been awake for 36 hours and 30 minutes. [*Laughter*] I think

I can finish tonight. [*Laughter*] But in these last 9 days, when I have come home at 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning almost every night—and then last night we had to work the whole night through—then it looked as if we were going to lose everything we had worked for. And then it came back together again. I felt so blessed to have had the opportunity to engage in these labors, to do this for our country, for the cause of peace, for the land of our faiths, the home of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. I felt that it was a part of my job as President, my mission as a Christian, and my personal journey of atonement. And I am grateful that God gave me the chance to do this for the last 9 days.

The agreement that the Israelis and the Palestinians signed is a big step. It gives Israel genuine security, the cooperation of their neighbors among the Palestinians in fighting terrorism, the recognition that Israel has a right to be there, now and forever. It gives the Palestinian people at long last a chance to realize their aspirations to live free, in safety, in charge of their own destiny.

How tragic it is that two different groups of people, each who have known so much oppression in life, so much deprivation, so much downright abuse, because there is such a little bit of land there and so much accumulated insecurity, would be fighting with each other when they should be embracing one another. Now they have a chance to do that.

There's no way in 9 short days to wipe away decades of distrust. But you can do an awful lot in 9 days if you just lock people in a room and—[*laughter*]—see how well they get along. I believe if we can maintain the will and the momentum for peace, the future is bright there. But I also believe that we have to be realistic. There are enemies of peace. And in some ways, the very advance these people have made together will make them both more appealing targets to those who believe their lives only have meaning when they are hurting someone else, that they can only lift themselves up when someone else is being put down.

I say that to make a point about this church. I think the most moving thing to me about the last 9 days were the periodic visits to the peace talks of King Hussein of Jordan. Many of you know that he has been treated at the Mayo Clinic for several months for a serious illness. He's lost a lot of weight, and as he joked today, he's lost his hair, and what little he's got left, even in his mustache, has turned white. But even though he was the smallest person in the room, he was always the largest presence. Here was a man fighting for his own life, willing to take time to remind the people at the peace talks of what it was really all about.

I thought about today, when we were signing, that Mr. Netanyahu was in the Israeli commandos. Some of you may remember that his brother was the commander of the famous raid by the Israeli soldiers on Entebbe and Uganda, where they liberated their people who had been kidnapped, but his brother was killed. Mr. Arafat has been in battle after battle for decades. King Hussein, himself, was a jet fighter pilot; in the Israeli Cabinet now, two of the great generals in the history of Israel, Ariel Sharon and the Defense Minister General Mordechai. And I think all these people have come to a common realization, that in life all of our victories over other people are ultimately hollow. And the only victories that really matter are those that we win for our common humanity.

And when King Hussein would walk in the room, people would see that he was frail, but strong of heart and voice. And he would admonish them to think of their children and grandchildren and to let go of some of their resentments and suspend some of their distrust and make one more reach. You could see, almost like a balm washing over the parties, how their attitudes would shift, and their hearts would open, and they would resolve to try again and try again.

That, after all, is the lesson of the church, isn't it? That is, children of God—the real victories in life are not the victories we win over other people. They are the victories we win for our common humanity as children of God. So this was a victory for the peace.

Exodus says that ''If thou shalt do as God command thee, the people shall go to their place in peace.'' The Koran says, ''They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only peace.''

A couple of years ago, I almost gave a sermon at one of my State of the Unions because I took the theme from the 12th verse

of the 58th chapter of Isaiah: ''They that shall be of thee shall build up the old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations. Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.'' That is the work in which we have been involved.

But every good work is that kind of work. I thank God we have people like Eleanor Holmes Norton in the Congress of the United States to do that kind of work.

This church has received people in these 160 years, from Frederick Douglass to Mary McCloud Bethune to Nelson Mandela to Jesse Jackson to Ernie Green. It's easy to forget when you see old Ernie and all of his prosperity—[*laughter*]—that he was just a scared, skinny kid 41 years ago at Little Rock Central High School, enduring the jeers, the waving fists, for the simple proposition that he ought to have the right to get the best education he could. Today, Central High School has become a place in our history as hallowed as Gettysburg. Earlier this week, Congress passed a bill to officially designate Little Rock Central High School as a national historic site. And thanks to our Senator from Arkansas and others, the budget bill I signed authorizes me to give Congressional Gold Medals to each and every member of the Little Rock Nine.

The victory they won was not over the Governor who tried to keep them out, not over the angry racial epithets of those who hurled them. It was a victory for all of us, even those who opposed their entry into the school.

How did people keep on going? Rodney reminded me when back when I was Governor, and Rodney worked for me, and we had—he didn't have such a big, fancy office, and he wasn't so far away—[*laughter*]—we used to talk all the time about Bible verses and first one thing and another, and he knew that one of my favorite verses was the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. And he mentioned it to me tonight because of the Middle East peace talks: ''Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.'' After about 30 hours, I was beginning to lose the admonition of the Scripture. [*Laughter*]

But what is it that gives people the power not to grow weary? What is the message emanating from this church, not only from this great pastor, whom I have had the privilege of sharing worship with, but for 160 years—that we walk by faith and not by sight? This is not a science course: faith in a loving and protective God; faith in the righteousness of worship; faith in a citizen's ability to be guided by respect for others and justice and equality and freedom; ultimately, faith not only in our God but in what our country is and what it can become. We walk by faith and not by sight, the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen.

What a dreary world it would be if we had only to live with what was before us. If we could not imagine how things could be different, if there were no faith in the room I have occupied these last 9 days, I promise you there would be no agreement today.

So that is what I come to thank you for. When something really important happens like this agreement today, when we win a good struggle in Congress, as Eleanor and I and our colleagues did, and against all the odds we prevail in our battle to put 100,000 teachers out there to lower the class size in the early grades, we know it wouldn't have happened because it wasn't rational when we started; or when we are defeated, but we do not quit, even more importantly, we walk by faith, not by sight.

And so, I came here to thank you for 160 years of that gift of faith that without regard to the color of our skin or the condition of our pocketbook, or even the stain of our past sins, we are all children of God.

One of my favorite verses is the first verse in Isaiah 43 because it is the promise of faith: ''Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine.'' When you believe that, there's nothing you can't do. And if you don't do what you want to do, then you know God may have another plan. But you can still live with vision and hope; you can always be a repairer of the breach, and you are never stupid enough to think that beating somebody else out of something is what life is really all about. That is a gift, to this Capital City and to this country, that this church has given.

I only want to say one other thing to you. For all the good things that have happened in our country—and I thank Ernie for mentioning them—for all the prosperity we enjoy, we still have many challenges. You know them well enough. You pick up the paper every day, and you know that there are still a lot of trouble spots in this old world. And as soon as we put out one fire, another one crops up. You know that for all of our prosperity, the world financial system is troubled, and you see it in other countries, the problems they're having. And we need to fix it, and I'm working on that.

You know that when all us baby boomers, like me, retire, there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And that's why I didn't want to spend that surplus until we fix Social Security for the 21st century. And so I say to you that even though we don't have all the answers, we also have to have faith that we can be good citizens. And when we're citizens, we have to realize, number one, we have a moral responsibility to exercise our franchise on November 3d. But we should be voting not just to defeat the people we don't vote for but, in a far larger sense, to find ways to reaffirm our common humanity as children of God. And I want you to think about that.

President Franklin Roosevelt was a deeply religious man. On the day he died, he was working on a speech. And he would get these typewritten speeches that speechwriters would do and then he'd get his ink pen, and he'd scratch through the words and write the words over and write a line here and a line there. This is the last line of the last speech the longest serving President in United States history, and certainly one of the greatest ones, ever wrote: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with a strong and active faith."

So, your faith is strong. For 160 years, it has been active. You have taken me in and, on occasions, given me the chance to have my inaugural memorial service here in this church—some of the best music I ever heard, some from your choir, and some I brought to you. [*Laughter*] And every time when I left, I felt like I was 10 feet tall. But you do, too, don't you? And when the choir was singing, you felt taller, didn't you? And you felt stronger, and your heart was lighter, and so was the load you carried when you came to this dinner tonight.

So again I say to you, happy birthday. Thank you for 160 years of the gift of faith and the energy that flows from it. Be good citizens with your faith. Show up every chance you get. Don't grow weary in doing good. Don't be discouraged when it doesn't work out. And help me every day to convince America that the real victories we have to win are not our victories over one another, but the victories together we win for our common humanity as children of God.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:28 p.m. in the International Ballroom Center at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to event cochairs Ernest Green and Johnnie B. Booker, senior steward board members, and Rev. Dr. Louis-Charles Harvey, senior pastor, Metropolitan AME Church; Presiding Bishop Vinton Anderson, Second Episcopal District, AME Church; Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr., of Washington, DC; Gwen Ifill, reporter, New York Times; King Hussein I of Jordan; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 24, 1998

Good morning. Yesterday, after 9 days of difficult negotiations on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed an agreement that restores hope for peace in the Middle East. It strengthens security, increases cooperation against terrorism, and brings both sides closer to the day when they can live together as free people.

Keeping the peace process on track will require continued courage by Israelis and Palestinians in the months ahead. But this agreement shows what is possible when the will for peace is strong. And I'm proud that, together, we were able to make real progress. America will continue to work for a just and lasting peace in this land that is holy for so many people throughout the world.