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appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

***In Witness Whereof,*** I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., April 12, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 13.

## Remarks Following a Performance of "Messiah 2000" in Alexandria, Louisiana

*April 8, 2000*

Well, I am rarely at a loss for words. I use words for a living. I have done reasonably well at it. And I am virtually speechless.

First, I want to say to my friend Anthony—we were talking, oh, maybe 6 months ago, about how much I wanted to come down here one more time before I left office and see this "Messiah" service as President. And it worked out for me to be here. I wish Hillary could be here. I wish Chelsea could be here. We came, the three of us, 11 years ago. Chelsea and Miquell were just little girls; Gentry was so small he was almost invisible. [*Laughter*] And our friendship goes back long before that, to 1977.

So I just want to say how much this has meant to me. I thank you for acknowledging all the people who came down with me, and I'd like to thank the people from your church from Arkansas who came: my good friends Keith and Janice Sjostrand, and brother Bill Harden, Mrs. Harden, and the others who came. Thank you for coming to be with us tonight. I love you, and I'm glad to see you.

We've had an unusual relationship, Anthony and Mickey and Hillary and I and our kids. We're sort of an odd couple. I say that so that you will not hold him responsible for anything I have ever done you disagreed with. But we love each other a lot. I bet I cried through more of this tonight than anybody else here.

I want you to know something about this guy. There for a period of time, a day or two at least, there was some question about whether I would finish my term. He called me on the phone, and he said, "Mickey and I want to come spend 20 minutes with you. And we won't spend more than 20 minutes, because we know you've got a lot to do." I said, "You're going to come all the way to Washington, DC, from Alexandria, for 20 minutes?" And he said, "Yep. And we won't stay long." So I said, "Okay, come on."

So he shows up. She shows up. First thing they did was give me a tape of a song she sang, wrote and sang for me, that I was supposed to listen to every day to keep my head in the right place—[*laughter*]—which I dutifully did. Then he gives me about seven pages of points he wants me to study up on every day to make sure I know where I want to be. [*Laughter*]

Then he says, "I don't know how this is going to come out." But he said, "I know you. You are my friend. We have raised our children together. I love you. I was here when you were going up. If the ship starts to sink and other people start to bail out, you call me; I want to go down with you." He said, "I will be there. If not another living soul were standing there, I would be there."

And I say that not for some personal reason but because that was the embodiment of his Christian faith and the witness of the Pentecostal Church that I have been blessed by for 23 years now. And I just want you to know I'm grateful to you and your wife and kids and both sets of parents that are here and your extended family, for what you meant to me and Hillary and to our daughter.

And I'm grateful that you gave me the chance to help your church advance the cause of liberty in—last time I counted, three or four different countries, now. I would have done it for anybody, but you gave me the chance to do it for you.

And I'm grateful that one more time in my life I got to sit here and be bathed in the glorious love of all these singers and actors and all the people that put together this "Messiah" service. It was a blessing that I will have with me for the rest of my life.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 p.m. in the sanctuary at The Pentecostals of Alexandria. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Garold Anthony Mangun, pastor, The Pentecostals of Alexandria; his daughter, Miquell Mangun Hennigan, his son, Gentry, and his wife, Mickey; Rev. Keith Sjostrand, pastor, First United Pentecostal Church, Lonoke, AR, and his wife, Janice; and Rev. Bill Harden and his wife, Margaret. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Message on the Celebration of Jubilee 2000

*April 7, 2000*

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in our nation's capital to celebrate Jubilee 2000. You can take pride in being a part of this extraordinary grassroots effort to reduce the debt of the world's most impoverished countries. Your work is helping to raise awareness and put this issue at the forefront of the national agenda.

In too many countries around the world today, excessive debt and unwise economic policies divert crucial resources from health, education, environment, and other social investments. Every year, two-thirds of the world's heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC) spend more on debt service than on health or education. At the same time, basic human needs go unmet. In these countries, one in ten children dies before his or her first birthday, one in three children is malnourished, and the average adult has had only three years of schooling. This is wrong.

Last year, we worked with other creditor nations to reach agreement on a plan to triple the debt relief available for the world's poorest nations. The Cologne Debt Initiative promises to reduce more than 70 percent of the total debt of these countries, enabling them to commit additional resources to the health and education of their people. Thanks to your efforts and the efforts of a bipartisan group in Congress, we have made significant progress in lifting the burden of debt from half a billion people around the world. This year we must build on that progress. For debt relief to move forward, Congress must take action on my request to cover the remaining cost of the U.S. share of debt relief.

I applaud each of you for your commitment to Jubilee 2000. Let us say today that no nation on this Earth should be forced to choose between feeding and educating children or paying interest on excessive debt. Let us say that no children—no matter where they are born—should be deprived of the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Best wishes for a memorable event and continued success in your efforts.

**Bill Clinton**

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9.

## Statement on the V–22 Aircraft Tragedy

*April 9, 2000*

On Saturday, April 8, the United States lost brave members of the Marine Corps, who died in the line of duty in the service of their country. They sacrificed their lives in a training accident involving a V–22 aircraft in Arizona. This terrible loss of life is a reminder of how so many men and women in the Nation's military put their lives at risk each and every day, so that we might be a free people and the cause of peace can be advanced throughout the world.

Hillary and I offer our prayers for those we have so suddenly lost and for their family and friends, whose burden of grief is so great. We pray that God may bless them all. Though their names and faces were not known to most of America before this tragic moment, I know that the American people will recognize in their names and faces in the days ahead the genuine quality of heroism.

## Statement on the Department of Health and Human Services Report on Prescription Drug Coverage

*April 10, 2000*

Today's release of the Department of Health and Human Services report on prescription drug coverage, spending, and pricing practices provides further evidence of the need for a voluntary, affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit that is available to