

say for your funeral—[laughter]—and I don't think we're there yet. [Laughter]

What you're here to do and what you said about what I tried to do is what I'd like to ask you to think about just for a few minutes. Just about everybody in our administration who's here has been introduced; they do come from all over, from all walks of life and all backgrounds. I'm proud of them. I'm proud of the work that Congressman Rangel and Congressman Bishop and Congressman Meeks and Congressman Jackson and others have done to help us. I'm proud that you have people like Jack Kemp and some Republican business leaders who are here. I'm proud of the fact that you have John Sweeney and Percy Sutton and my friend Ron Burkle and others here. I'm proud of the fact that you have tried to reach across all the lines that divide.

I'm very, very proud especially, Reverend, that you have made this initiative to Appalachia. You know, 20 years ago this year, I became the youngest Governor in America. And when I became Governor of my home State, 5 of the 25 poorest counties in America were in Arkansas: 2 were in the Mississippi Delta; 3 were in the Arkansas Ozarks, our Appalachia. Twenty years ago, that was a very sobering thing to me. It's all the more sobering that it hasn't changed all that much in a lot of rural America.

Fifteen years ago this year, I worked with other Governors to establish the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. It went from the mouth of the Mississippi up through the Mississippi Delta, all the way up into all-white areas of east Tennessee and southern Illinois, who had—by the time I ran for President in 1992, in southern Illinois there were still counties with 20 percent unemployment.

Twenty-five years ago, when I came home wet behind the ears from law school, among my first clients were old coalminers whose lungs were rotted out with black lung disease and whose families barely had enough to live on. I have never understood, from the time I was a child in my grandfather's store—he had a sixth grade education and an African-American clientele—why in the wide world people with common needs, common dreams, and common capacities would spend their time fighting over a shrinking pie instead of building a bigger one. And this is a good thing for America.

Previous speakers have talked about the economy. I am proud of this visionary effort to build a bridge between Wall Street and our greatest untapped markets. And because the economy is so good, now is the time to build that bridge. If we can't do it now, when in the wide world will we ever get around to it? If there was ever a time when none of us have an excuse, this is that time. But the world changes very fast, and we have to seize the moment.

You know, Tuesday night when I give the State of the Union Address, I want to talk about the great long-term, still-unmet challenges of the 21st century: the aging America, the fact that we have the largest and most diverse population of children in our schools in history. But a big part of it is the need to build strong, economically successful communities in the places where prosperity has not reached, in the inner cities, in rural America, and don't forget, on our Native-American reservations, as well.

Jesse Jackson came to Wall Street—the same reason Willie Sutton robbed banks: That's where the money is. [Laughter] And I don't mean that in a pejorative way. How could any American of any station in life not be proud of the financial markets we have built and, as Mr. Grasso said, of the fact that now 200 million of our 260 million people actually benefit from it? We are beginning to share the wealth. We need to do more of that, and I'll have some more to say about that later. But that's why Jack Kemp is here and why I always liked him. [Laughter]

*Mr. Kemp.* I like you, too, Mr. President. [Laughter]

*The President.* Although, when Reverend Jackson said he was the ultimate Republican, I thought, would that it were so. [Laughter] I probably just destroyed his future prospects. [Laughter] I'll be glad to renounce that anytime you want. [Laughter]

But I ask you to think about this. Wall Street has done a great thing in spreading the wealth across America because now 200 million people directly or indirectly benefit from the stock market, because a lot of the stock market are pension funds, retirement funds, now mutual funds, things that get all kinds of people into the stock market. It is only natural that not only is this where the money is, but they have found ways to involve large numbers of people. And yet we know there are still pockets that are relatively untouched.