

*Feb. 1 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001*

if any, that would require the disclosure of classified information.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 1.

### Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast *February 1, 2001*

Well, thank you all very much for that warm welcome. Laura and I are honored to be here this morning. I did a pretty good job when it came to picking my wife, by the way. She's going to be a fabulous First Lady.

Mr. Vice President, it's good to see you; of course, your wife, Lynne. And I want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are here.

I appreciate you, Senator Frist, for your commitment and strong comments. And Zach, thanks for your introduction. And thank you both for organizing this important event. I want to thank the Members of the House and the Senate who are here.

I appreciate the number of foreign dignitaries who are here. It just goes to show that faith crosses every border and touches every heart in every nation.

Every President since the first one I can remember, Dwight Eisenhower, has taken part in this great tradition. It's a privilege for me to speak where they have spoken and to pray where they have prayed. All Presidents of the United States have come to the National Prayer Breakfast, regardless of their religious views. No matter what our background, in prayer we share something universal, a desire to speak and listen to our Maker and to know His plan for our lives.

America's Constitution forbids a religious test for office, and that's the way it should be. An American President serves people of every faith and serves some of no faith

at all. Yet, I have found my faith helps me in the service to people. Faith teaches humility—as Laura would say, I could use a dose occasionally—[laughter]—a recognition that we are small in God's universe, yet precious in His sight. It has sustained me in moments of success and in moments of disappointment. Without it I would be a different person, and without it I doubt I'd be here today.

There are many experiences of faith in this room. But most of us share a belief that we are loved and called to love, that our choices matter now and forever, that there are purposes deeper than ambition and hopes greater than success. These beliefs shape our lives and help sustain the life of our Nation. Men and women can be good without faith, but faith is a force of goodness. Men and women can be compassionate without faith, but faith often inspires compassion. Human beings can love without faith, but faith is a great teacher of love.

Our country, from its beginnings, has recognized the contribution of faith. We do not impose any religion; we welcome all religions. We do not prescribe any prayer; we welcome all prayers. This is the tradition of our Nation, and it will be the standard of my administration. We will respect every creed. We will honor the diversity of our country and the deep convictions of our people.

There's a good reason why many in our Nation embrace the faith tradition.