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(Smith/Blessey)
12:00 A.M.
January 24, 1990
CAST

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS
SHERATON HOTEL
MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1990
2:00 P.M.

President Rose, Director Cook -- and I want to salute your leadership of the NRB. ~~Fellow communicators~~. Ladies and gentlemen. ((It is often said of a group or individual that "He hasn't got a prayer." Today, I am pleased to be with an audience about whom that will never be said.)) //

? ((Two years ago, I had the honor of addressing this annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters. And now, I'm back again. Even though I know this isn't what you had in mind when you preach about the Second Coming.)) //

Still, I'm delighted to be with you. And in the spirit of the occasion, I intend to keep two vows. First, I'll be brief. I know there's a mention in the Bible about the Burning Bush, but I know I'm not that hot a speaker. //

The second promise is for those of you in the back of the room. I'll try to speak up. // Robert Schuler warned me that the agnostics in this room are very bad. //

((You know, this is quite a multitude. Jerry Rose was telling me: Nearly 5,000 people. Yet I understand you have the lowest catering bill of any convention that comes to this hotel.

// It's amazing how far you can go on just seven loaves and fishes.)) //

There's a word for that -- a miracle. Just as looking back over the past several centuries, it's amazing how far America has gone on a miracle called religion. // Perhaps that's why as I was looking forward to today, I got to thinking about America's believers. // And wondering: What message have they -- have we -- to carry to the world?

As prelude, a simple statement of fact. According to the Gallup Poll, no society is more religious than the U.S.A. // Seven in 10 Americans believe in life after death. Eight in ten in a final Judgment Day and that God works miracles. Nine in ten Americans pray. And 94 percent believe in God. // To which I say: Thank God. //

Sure, we have differences -- quarrels over sect and denomination. I'm reminded of the Methodist joke: "I have nothing against the way the Baptists baptize, except it should last forty seconds longer." // Yet we know what unites us eclipses what divides us. // For we believe that political values without moral values cannot sustain a Nation. //

Abraham Lincoln knew this. Leaving Springfield in 1861 to assume the Presidency, he said, "Without [God's] assistance, I will surely fail. With it, I cannot fail." So did Dwight Eisenhower -- beloved Ike -- praying on D-Day for the safety and success of our invading force. "Let us beseech the blessing of almighty God," he said, "upon this great and noble undertaking."

Yet perhaps it was a small boy who best sketched America's devotion to religion. "God bless mother and daddy, my brother and sister," he prayed. And then he added: "And, oh God, do take care of yourself -- because if anything happens to you we're all sunk." //

His testimony, I think, shows why Jesus truly loved the little children. It also reaffirms the essence of your role. For you are charged with upholding the eternal teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Lessons which tell us that while God can live without man, man cannot live without God. //

Since Plymouth Rock, this truth has been good news for each American generation of modern man. And today, it finds new voice over your electronic media. You reach an estimated ___ million of America's good, quiet, decent people -- touching Protestant, Catholic, Jew. Do your listeners ask for much? Only a merciful providence. And from their government, only to be respected. We do -- and we hear what they are saying: They want a separation of church and state. But they do not -- cannot -- accept a separation of conscience and government." //

This conviction means that most believers support the sanctity of life. // Remember the song, "Bless the Beasts and the Children. Keep them safe. Keep them warm." // We need policies that preserve the right to life. //

Most Americans also want parents, not government, to choose the best child-care for their kids. // So we have sent legislation to the Congress to make good this pledge: I want to

protect the right of every parent to send their kids to the care center of their choice. That includes -- especially -- church-sponsored centers. //

Next comes an issue that concerns all children: the quality and diversity of America's schools. // Our pioneering legislation -- the "Educational Excellence Act of 1989" -- will let parents -- not Big Brother -- choose which schools their kids will attend. The gospel truth is crystal clear: We must make our education system No. 1 once again. //

Finally, looking toward today, I thought of a belief held by the overwhelming majority of Americans: The right to say voluntary school prayer. I share that belief. So I support a Constitutional Amendment restoring voluntary prayer. We need the Faith of our Fathers back in our schools. //

Together, these beliefs can help us do God's work. Can and, I think, will. You know me. I'm an optimistic guy. ((After all, last year I had an experience when I was running out of prayers and had given up hope. Then a true miracle occurred. // I caught a fish.)) // And yet our work is not for America alone.

What, after all, does religion cherish? The dignity of the individual. // And what does dignity require? Inevitably, the freedoms of democracy. // Well, the past year has been a triumph for the freedoms with which God has blessed America. We have seen how religious principles can move mountains or -- as in East Berlin -- even move a wall. //

Now, let us carry those principles to every corner of the earth. For it was Christ Himself who said, "Be a light unto the world." // I mean the freedom of expression. And to think, dream, and worship as we please. The freedom of equal protection under the law. And to choose our leaders and our destinies. Our Administration has, and will, reaffirm these freedoms. *Yet, we've*
to make sure
that the
we're
 above all, it has been the Church which must, and has, proclaimed: Let // my // people // go. //

Think of Central America, where men of God condemn terrorism whatever the ideology. And to the Vatican, especially: Every American thanks you. // Think of the Phillipines, where church leaders are ~~spurring~~ the fight against tyranny. // And, yes, of that miracle called Eastern Europe. Where for centuries religion has been a catalyst for democracy. And braved persecution to renew the faith which sets -- and keeps -- us free. //

More than five centuries ago, the Hungarian patriot Janos Hunyadi (YAHN-osh HOON-yah-dee) stopped a would-be Turkish invasion. In his honor, the Pope ordered each Catholic church to ring a bell at the time of day the battle ended. And since then, Catholic church bells around the world ring precisely at mid-day. // The Church has been a soldier of God. // And so have the Protestant and Reformed churches of Eastern Europe. Few will forget heroes like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and __, who led the anti-Nazi resistance. They, too, were soldiers of God. //

Recall, more recently, this last miraculous year. And one of the great soldiers of God of this or any time, the Reverend

Billy Graham. // Four years ago, Billy went to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. And upon returning foretold a movement there toward more religious freedom. Perhaps Billy knew it before many others because it takes a man of God to sense the early movement of the hand of God. // Yet not even he could predict how in 1989, the walls of bayonets and barbed wire -- the walls of tyranny -- would, yes, come tumbling down. //

Look, first, at Germany -- where in 1982, members of Leipzig's St. Nicholas Church began weekly prayers for peace. At their Bible Study, kids were taught non-violence. And started the candle-light vigils that would one day rouse a continent. The police told them to stop. They failed. The students vowed to stay. They did. And became the "flagship" of resistance.

As with the disciples, word spread to Dresden and Berlin. Becoming a light unto the world. And as it shone, a Wittenberg pastor said, "I would rather see 1,000 drops of candle wax on the market place than one drop of blood." // And there was no blood -- just as Christ admonished us. // Only the stirring sight of 500,000 workers -- brave, defiant -- in the streets and squares of Leipzig. Weapons? They carried candles. Their march rivaled "a blizzard of fireflies in the night." Ask anyone that evening. God was moving in mysterious -- miraculous -- ways. //

Look, next, at Bulgaria. Where the State press agency conceded: "People [were] wishing Merry Christmas to each other without fear they would be accused of being 'religious.'" // And Czechoslovakia. There, too, a miracle. For years police

chased carolers from Prague's King's Road. This winter, Charles Bridge was filled with young carolers singing Christmas carols.

// In Hungary, the churches opened. And, yes, Romania: Still further miracles. Carols heard on the radio for the first time in forty-three years. And brave Christians lit the fuse that torched a dictator's rule. //

Let me close, then, with their story: The story of two Romanian. And how their example -- and followers -- illumined Christ's special mission to mankind.

The first was a Lutheran minister, Laszlo Tokes, who dared to speak of freedom. So government forces beat him, stabbed his pregnant wife, and deprived them of food. // When parishioners brought bread, police arrived to deport the pastor. But the flock protected him -- forming a human chain around his apartment in Timisoara. In time, the chain grew across the land -- until the dictator struck back. // But from that sacrifice came a resolve by the living to honor the dead. How could a mere tyrant combat the lamb of God? //

Truly, Laszlo Tokes was a soldier of the Lord. // As is that second man I spoke about -- a man who's with us here. His name is Gheorghe Calciu -- a Roman Orthodox minister. His story proves you can't shoot an idea -- nor subdue the human heart. //

Reverend Calciu has spent 21 of his 61 years in prison-- where he found God while serving time for opposing the government. Upon release, he defied that government -- preaching a series of Lenten sermons. And for that was imprisoned again --

tortured beyond belief. // Yet he refused to break -- and so was sentenced to death by firing squad. But as he was praying, a miracle occurred. His two executors called to him, saying, "Father" -- that was the first time they called him that -- "we have decided not to kill you." //

__ days later, Reverend Calciu asked permission to celebrate the Mass. And while making preparations, felt these same two men approach. Moments later, he turned around. And was astonished to see them on their knees on the cold concrete of the cell. // They, too, had found the miracle of religion.

In time, Father Calciu was exiled to America. But he wants to return to his native land. And in this season of miracles, who can doubt he will? // For the work of God is not done. It lives in Eastern Europe. // And the word of God is heard through those who seek it. Through His disciples in Romania. Through His apostles in America. Wherever one finds the truth that comes when on one's knees. // *then the miracle*

Today, the times are on the side of peace. Because the world, increasingly, is on the side of God. // For that, I thank you. And let me thank you for this wonderful occasion. God bless America. And as the hymn proclaims to believers everywhere: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

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1990 JAN 25 PM 8:40

(Smith/Blessey)
7:00 P.M.
January 25, 1990
CAST

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS
SHERATON WASHINGTON HOTEL
MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1990
2:00 P.M.

President Rose, Director Cook -- and I want to salute your leadership of the NRB. Ladies and gentlemen. ((It is often said of a group or individual that "He hasn't got a prayer." Today, I am pleased to be with an audience about whom that will never be said.)) //

((Two years ago, I had the honor of addressing this annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters. And now, I'm back again. Even though I know this isn't what you had in mind when you talk about the Second Coming.)) //

Still, I'm delighted to be with you. And in the spirit of the occasion, I intend to keep two vows. First, I'll be brief. ((I know there's a mention in the Bible about the Burning Bush, but I also know I'm not that hot a speaker.)) //

The second promise is for those of you in the back of the room. I'll try to speak up. // ((Jerry Rose warned me that the agnostics in this room are very bad.)) //

Let me begin with some good news for modern man. According to the Gallup Poll, no society is more religious than the United States of America. // Seven in ten Americans believe in life after death. Eight in ten in a final Judgment Day and that God

America. A true season of miracles. // We have seen how moral values can move mountains or -- as in East Berlin -- even move a wall. //

It was Christ Himself, of course, who said, "Be a light unto the world." // So let us carry that light to every corner of the world -- freedom of expression. And to think, dream, and worship as we please. The freedom of equal protection under the law. And to choose our leaders and our destinies. Our Administration has reaffirmed these freedoms. What's more, we have -- and we will -- support those individuals, and movements, who proclaim: Let my people go. //

Think of Central America, where men and women of God -- facing great personal risk -- condemn terrorism whatever the ideology. Think, especially, of Panama -- and let me say to the Vatican: Every American thanks you. // Think of South Africa and the Phillipines, where church leaders are fighting against oppression and tyranny. // And, yes, of that miracle called Eastern Europe. Where for centuries religion has been a catalyst for democracy. And where men and women of faith braved persecution to renew the faith which makes us free. //

More than five centuries ago, the Hungarian patriot Janos Hunyadi (YAHN-osh HOON-yah-dee) stopped a would-be Turkish invasion. In his honor, the Pope ordered each church to ring a bell at the time of day the battle ended. And since then, Catholic church bells around the world ring precisely at mid-day. // The Catholic Church has been an apostle of God. // And so

have the Protestant, Reformed, and Jewish churches of Eastern Europe. Few will forget heroes like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Raoul Wallenberg, who led the anti-Nazi resistance. They, too, were apostles of God. //

Recall, more recently, this last miraculous year. And one of the great soldiers of God of this or any time, the Reverend Billy Graham. // Four years ago, Reverend Graham went to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. And upon returning foretold a movement there toward more religious freedom. Perhaps he saw it before many others because it takes a man of God to sense the early movement of the hand of God. // Yet not even Reverend Graham could predict how in 1989, the walls of bayonets and barbed wire -- the walls of tyranny -- would come tumbling down.

Look, first, at the miracle of East Germany -- where in 1982 -- long before last November's mass demonstrations -- members of Leipzig's St. Nicholas Church began weekly prayers for peace. At Bible Study, students were taught non-violence. And started the candle-light vigils that would one day rouse a continent. The police came and threatened them. But the students would not be moved. They vowed to stay, and did. Becoming, yes, a light unto the world.

As with the disciples, that light spread to Dresden and Berlin. And as it shone, a Wittenberg pastor said, "I would rather see 1,000 drops of candle wax on the market place than one drop of blood." // And there was no blood -- just as Christ taught us. // Only the stirring sight last October of 70,000

workers -- brave, defiant -- in the streets and squares of Leipzig. Weapons? They carried candles. Their march rivaled "a blizzard of fireflies in the night." Ask anyone that evening. God was moving in miraculous -- not merely mysterious -- ways.

Look, next, at Bulgaria. Where last month the State press agency conceded: "People [were] wishing Merry Christmas to each other without fear they would be accused of being 'religious.'" // And Czechoslovakia. There, too, a miracle. For years, police chased carolers from Prague's King's Road. This Christmas, the cold night of Charles Bridge echoed with young voices. Their carols warmed the heart of the city. There was wonder in the air. // And in Romania: Still further miracles. Christmas songs on the radio for the first time since 1946. And heroes who showed that you can't lock people behind walls forever -- when they have religious faith locked in their hearts. //

Let me close, then, with the story of two such heroes -- both Romanian. And how their example -- and miracle -- illumined Christ's special mission to mankind.

The first was a Lutheran minister, Laszlo Tokes, who dared to speak of freedom. So last November, masked thugs broke into the small apartment in Timisoara of Tokes and his pregnant wife. They beat and stabbed him. The government allowed them no food. // When parishioners brought bread, police arrived to deport the pastor. But the flock protected him -- forming a human chain around his apartment. In time, the chain grew across the land.

Until -- as the world celebrated Christmas -- Romania's morning star of freedom summoned "lightness against the dark." //

Today, Laszlo Tokes preaches his faith without fear -- ministering to ever-larger numbers -- truly, an apostle of the Lord. // As is that second man I spoke about -- a man who's with us here. His name is Gheorghe Calciu [CUL-chew] -- a Romanian Orthodox minister. His story proves you can't slay an idea -- nor destroy the human will. //

Reverend Calciu has spent 21 of his 61 years in jail. In fact, he found God there while imprisoned for opposing the government. Released, he risked his freedom by preaching a series of Lenten sermons. And for that he was imprisoned again -- tortured beyond belief. // Yet Reverend Calciu had faith. He refused to break -- and was sentenced to death. So he went to a corner of the prison yard, and began to pray for his wife and for his son. // It was then that the miracle occurred. //

His two executioners called him over. Surely, thought Reverend Calciu, this was the end. But instead they said, "Father" -- that was the first time they called him that -- "we have decided not to kill you." // A few days later, he asked permission to celebrate the Mass. And while making preparations, heard these same two men approach. He turned around, and was astonished. // His would-be executioners were on their knees on the cold concrete of the cell. //

In 1985, Father Calciu was exiled to America. But he hopes to return to his native land. And in this season of miracles,

who can doubt he will? // For today, the times are on the side of peace. Because the world, increasingly, is on the side of God. //

If you doubt it, think of this past Christmas of miracles. And of miracles yet to come. // Miracles that will occur in Eastern Europe, in America, and around the globe. Wherever one finds the truth that comes on one's knees.

Thank you for this wonderful occasion. God bless America. And let me leave you with a favorite hymn, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

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