

My Experience at the USA's National Prayer Breakfast 2018

Frank Kaufmann
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Hello

A little over two weeks ago, I wrote you asking prayers and or good wishes in anticipation of my participation at the National (Congressional) Prayer Breakfast, a meeting that occurs on the first Tuesday of February every year.

The tradition began in 1952 when a Senator invited US President Dwight D Eisenhower to visit their weekly morning prayer one time. When President Eisenhower gratefully agreed, the Senate prayer group asked the House prayer group to also join that morning.

This year (2018) was the 66th such NPB, which continues to be attended by the President of the United States every year without fail. I have been to these for about 7 years, and thus have attended the speeches of US Presidents Obama and Trump.



What began as a small, simple, and personal invitation to President Eisenhower, evolved to become a meeting of 5000 international figures from all spheres of influence (politics, media, sports, culture, business and finance etc.). These world leaders try to shed their importance, and come together just to pray, and to seek heavenly support for positive efforts, be it environmentalism, human trafficking,

improved bi-partisan relations and civility, famine, water, and much much more.

The rule of the week is no politics, no heavy handed proselytizing, but simply prayer and humbly seeking "God's face."

Many of you have written or called me asking how things went, and I promised a word or two of update. I attach a news piece, (not written by me) sent me by a friend. It felt to me to do a good job trying convey the inner purpose and effort of the breakfast.

A big and natural question that came to me quite constantly was "did the President speak." I have a many friends and family members (among you) who viscerally abhor President Trump, and the fact that he breathes is for you, these friends and family the center-most fact of evil in the world. Many others of you are ok with the President, or like him. So reporting on that part of the breakfast is tricky. Yes he did speak. As a person (me, Frank) whose life has been devoted to matters of religion and spirituality at the most rarefied and nuanced realms, including how it interfaces with policy, and with war and peace, I thought he did well enough.



Apart from that. My own experience through the week was greatly blessed. I met a number of important people for the advance of my work, and have been able to move through unexpected blessings and opportunities as a result of attending. Two colleagues and I introduced [an important tool for peace](#) we developed that received wide acclaim at the breakfast. This was a big breakthrough for me, resulting in moving me into cooperative relationships with certain extremely high figures of world leadership. I will write you about [this tool](#) soon.

I was greatly loved and cared for by a family of deeply prayerful leaders as we stayed and worked together through many of the events and meetings at the breakfast.

In conclusion, I want to thank you deeply for your most kind and loving responses and support for me, during this time that was very important for me.

Please read the attachment if you have time and feel like it. I am humbly in your debt

Love

Frank K

UNIVERSAL DESK: Terry Mattingly's religion column for 2/14/18.

In the world of "woke" Twitter, House Majority Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana is a white supremacist, fundamentalist, homophobic, NRA lackey who has tested God's patience by opposing gun control.

Comedy writer Marcella Arguello was blunt, responding to breaking news when Scalise was seriously wounded in an attack on the GOP baseball team. She tweeted that if a few old "conservative white men have to die in order to get the gun control issue discussed then I'm willing to take that risk." She later deleted the tweet.

The mood could not have been more different at the recent National Prayer Breakfast, when Rep. Cedric Richmond of New Orleans offered an affectionate introduction before Scalise -- still on crutches -- rose to speak.

People keep asking, said Richmond, how they can be such close friends. One leads the Congressional Black Caucus. The other once led the conservative House Republican Study Committee. They disagree, Richmond conceded, on about "80 percent" of the issues facing America.

The key, he said, is to understand that faith can transcend politics.

"We don't differ on the end goals -- helping the needy and protecting our citizens and caring for our elders," said Richmond. "We don't disagree on where we want to end up. Most times, we disagree on how to get there. ..."

"Faith allows us to put purpose first. We put purpose over politics, we put purpose over profit, because at the end of the day we know that we're here on earth to fulfill a purpose -- to make this world a better place, and make this country a more perfect union."

The two men met in the Louisiana House of Representatives and came together, from opposite sides of the aisle, to help their state recover from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To this day, said Richmond, they are united in the belief that "we are all created in the likeness of God, no matter what country, no matter what state, no matter what city, no matter what zip code, no matter what block."

When members of the Democratic Party team heard about the attempted assassinations, they fell to their knees for reasons that had nothing to do with politics. They were, Richmond said, praying "for a miracle."

This year's prayer breakfast offered a break from the acidic DC mood, a time to give thanks for a kill shot that deflected off a chain fence at the baseball diamond, as well as the timely presence of an Ohio congressman with combat surgery experience. Richmond and Scalise praised the wounded Capitol Police

officers -- both African-Americans, one a gay woman -- who prevented a massacre.

"There were miracles that happened on that baseball field that day. Not just to save my life, but so many others," said Scalise. He asked for continued prayers for officer David Bailey, who is back at work, and Crystal Griner, who continues to recover.

Ever since he was wounded, Scalise said he has felt supported by the prayers of people he has met in chance encounters, as well as those he hasn't met face to face. These encounters have affected his recovery and his work on Capitol Hill.

"As much as some people want to focus on the negative, I never had the opportunity to do that because I was overwhelmed with all of the outpouring of love and support and prayers from so many people," he said. "It's easy to harp on the negative things that happen to us every day.

"Each of us have struggles in our life. If you just tune that out and you look around at all of the wonderful things that God presents to us -- he is sending us signals every day and he is sending us signs. There might be bad signs, but there are also good signs."

On the first day he was healthy enough to return to Mass, the Catholic congressman said he flipped through the pew missalette in order to find the Psalm for June 14th -- the day he was shot.

It was Psalm 27 and Scalise read key phrases to prayer breakfast crowd: "The Lord is my light and salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, whom should I dread? When those who do evil draw near, they stumble and fall."



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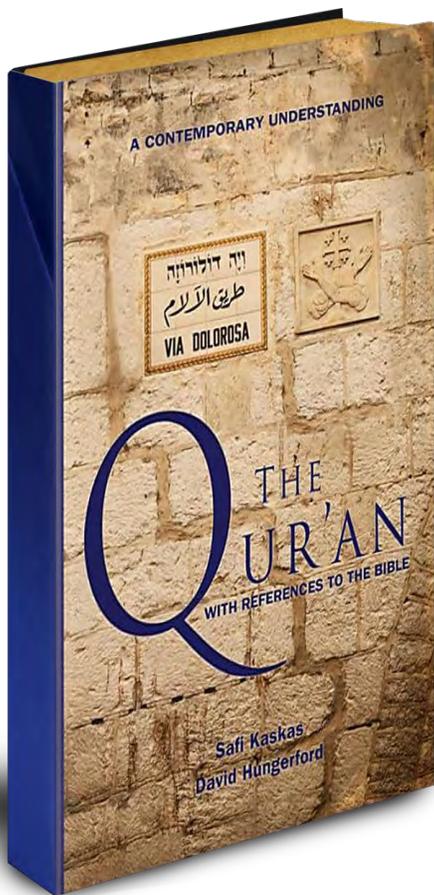
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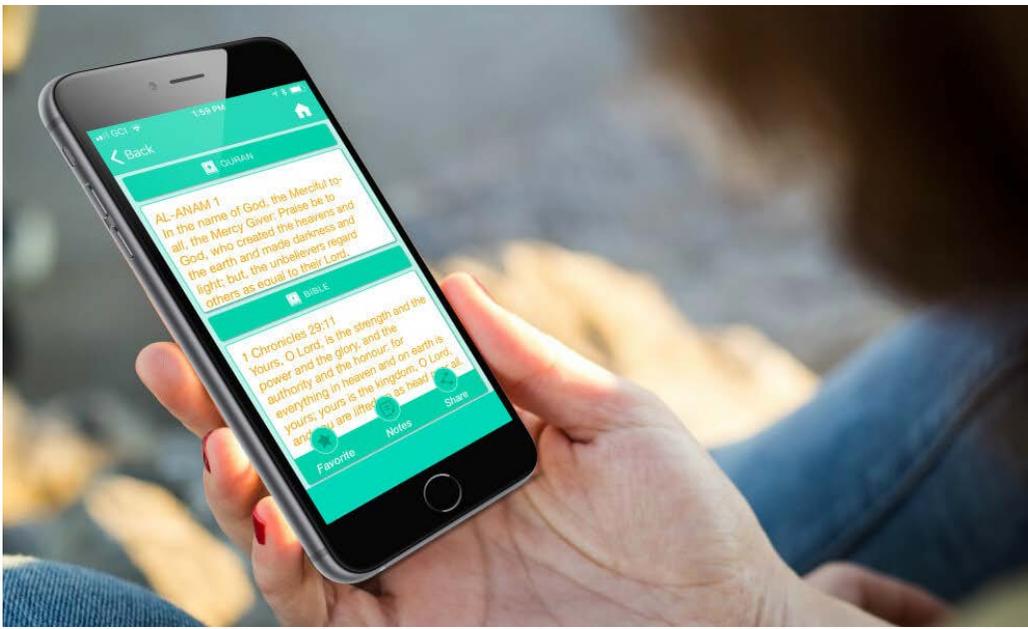
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