

"The president has shaken hands with just about everyone along the central aisle," Leslie Sloane said, voicing over the picture of William Harrison as he walked into the hall, offering his personal greetings to the assembled political and judicial might of the nation and moving toward the steps leading up to the central podium. There he shook hands with the Speaker of the House and the vice president, who would be seated behind him during his speech. Behind all three of them was a large American flag hanging down the entire back wall. And throughout the seven minutes it took William to make his entrance and to be introduced by the Speaker, the applause had been almost continuous.

Smiling and looking physically fit and confident, his graying hair adding a distinguished touch, the president waved several times from the podium, but he also used those moments to locate Carrie and his children in the balcony. Husband and wife locked eyes for a moment, and her solid smile and nod gave him a boost he could feel. It overcame the nagging doubts that had crept up so quickly as he had walked down the aisle, surrounded by so much that was familiar, comfortable, and unchanging. As he reached the podium he had been tempted to open the text left on the lectern for him and ignore the different, more difficult road he knew God wanted. But with Carrie's spiritual support he again felt a chill, which this time visibly shook him. He grew serious, said a last silent prayer, and reached into his suit pocket for his text.

After several final waves of his hand, the chamber fell silent. William Harrison looked around at the most powerful assembly in the world and began.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, justices of the Supreme Court, members of the Cabinet, distinguished foreign guests, and citizens of our nation, it is our custom every year at this time for the president to give his assessment of the state of our historic union and to use this occasion to chart a course for the following year.

“In this age of media-defined reality, of image over substance, of positive projection for favorable instant polls, and of instant solutions to oversimplified problems, we are tonight going to try something different. We’re going to travel a different, more traditional road not seen in this setting for many years—a road of truth over image, honest assessment over impossible promises, and long-term cures for long-term, complex problems. We are, in short, going to give you a *real* state of the union, focusing unfortunately on our problems, because they could shortly overwhelm us, but then also offering a specific program of workable but difficult solutions, and leaving the outcome where it always belongs—with you, the people.

“If you listen closely tonight, no matter what your political persuasion, you will undoubtedly find one or two subjects in this assessment not to your liking—you’ll probably disagree with them. I can’t help it. I believe with all my heart that what we are going to lay before you tonight is the absolute truth. I’m at peace that we must face these issues now, today, if our nation is going to survive, and I don’t use that overworked term lightly. I mean it quite literally—if we are to survive much longer in this world as a nation of free people with free institutions blessed by the God who made us. You will have to decide, as will every American, whether the truth we lay before you tonight is worth accepting for our nation’s sake, even when it is personally unpleasant or temporarily inconvenient. Please listen, wait, and see.”

William could feel the silence in the chamber and noticed members of his audience looking questioningly at one another. His heart rate, already high, increased. Again he felt momentarily unsure. The thought crossed his mind to stop and to pick up the other text, to start over. But then suddenly he was at peace, ready to tell God’s truth to the nation. As an affirmation to himself, he smiled briefly, picked up the text that had been left at the podium, and moved it to the side.

“Before we really start, let me apologize to those of you with an advance copy of the anticipated text of this speech. We won’t be using it. And you can turn off the Teleprompter. Those words don’t address the real state of our union. Listen carefully, and we’ll tell you the truth here. Then we’ll make copies available tonight for your review. I’m sorry for the inconvenience, but the road we are going to outline begins now.”

“What’s he doing?” Leslie asked Ryan, as they watched the monitors built into their desks.

“I think you can call off the people trying to find someone who was at

Camp David, Leslie. I don't think after tonight we'll need any third party corroborations of what has happened to him. We'll only need to find out *why*."

As William began his speech the vice president and Speaker of the House were clearly visible on the nation's televisions. Patricia Barton-North looked down at her hands in her lap. But when William first mentioned God, she suddenly glared at the back of the chief executive's head.

The president continued. "We've got a lot to cover, but let's start with a brief recap of the state of our union today. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on these points because most of you living outside Washington already know these issues well, and you've just been waiting for someone here to voice them for you. Here goes:

"We are overcome by a sense of helplessness to deal with the crime and violence that invades our lives and our homes, making many of us prisoners in our own houses.

"We don't trust our leaders, and often for good reason. And good people are afraid to step forward to become leaders because their private lives will be ripped open by the press.

"Our families are being assaulted at every turn. In the name of 'rights' for women and children, we've instead created an impoverished class of women and children, sent tens of millions of unborn babies to their deaths, and unhitched millions of men from any sense of male responsibility to raise, protect, or train a family."

The vice president, visible behind the president whenever the television director chose a wide angle, twisted in her chair and looked off to her right, her arms folded tightly across her body.

"Our educational system, only two generations ago the pride of our nation, is a disaster.

"Selfishness, materialism, and 'me-first,' or at least 'my group first,' rule the nation. Our country was built on sacrifice, generosity, savings, delay of gratification, and building for the next generation's good. But today we are awash in the false 'truths' of instant everything, consume now, discourage savings, and forget the children. I'm ashamed to say that my generation is probably the first in all of recorded history that, by ignoring our education system, promoting abortion, and encouraging divorce has openly and consciously chosen its own immediate happiness and convenience over the well-being of the next generation, our own children.

"Think about it. We've pushed suffering on those least capable to cope or to understand—our children—so that we don't have to be bothered with some inconvenience, like figuring out how to stay married. And on top of that, we've saddled *them* with paying for the mess we've created by astronomically increasing the national debt, because we like to spend but haven't even got the guts to pay for our own extravagances! This is almost unforgivable and has to stop."

For the first time there was a smattering of applause from the audience, and even the Speaker of the House clapped briefly.

“Our welfare system, originally designed to help families with short-term needs, is now in many cases supporting the fifth or sixth generation of welfare dependency, promoting by its own inherent system the perpetuation of the problem. I said dependency, and I meant it. Our system promotes addiction, from one generation to the next, and destroys families.

“Our federal tax code, now stretching to several thousand pages of misguided social engineering, is incomprehensible. It’s estimated that over *six billion* man hours every year are wasted in some part of the tax industry, making, enforcing, calculating, collecting, or escaping taxes. This entire industry—including the hours and hours we all spend trying to understand it—serves no productive purpose whatsoever; it’s a huge drain on our economy, as we pay people to send paper to other people, for no productive result.

“In the name of ‘rights’ and ‘free speech,’ we’ve legitimized all types of aberrant behavior: pornography, abortion, divorce, homosexual activity—yes, you heard me right—and now suicide and polygamy, most of which not only fly in the face of our own Judeo-Christian rules for correct living, but also violate the laws of almost every civilized society that has ever prospered on this earth. You don’t have to be a rocket scientist—and thank God, because we aren’t making many of them any more—to figure out that we violate these universal moral laws at great and immediate risk to us and, again, to our children and their children.”

There was more applause, this time stronger and louder, though still clearly a minority in the chamber.

Leslie turned to Ryan and said, “He’s lost his mind. Next he’ll bring out clay tablets and show us the Ten Commandments! Where is he going with this?”

“I can’t imagine.”

“We could go on recounting these problems,” the president continued, “but there’s no need. As I said, most of you are dealing with one or more of these every day of your lives, and our purpose is not to further worry you, but to offer a real path for solutions. Unfortunately and tragically, what we’ve just reviewed is the state of our union today, and it can’t be papered over with pleasant political rhetoric.

“We’ve talked about the visible problems, but they’re just the logical and predictable results of the underlying cause, which we’re now coming to. In order to fix something, you’ve got to know the cause of the trouble. So before

offering solutions, we need to examine what got us to where we are.

“We’re going to start with a very simple concept, one that really defines everything that is to follow. This concept is that we are standing today at the scene of a colossal collision of historic forces—a collision of two diametrically opposed worldviews which have been at war for a long time. If we understand these two opposing worldviews, then the details of everything else we’ll discuss tonight will fit into place. Without this understanding, we’ll endlessly debate secondary issues, which both political parties have done for three decades, missing the important points. So, please listen and begin now to decide which worldview is yours—that’s the key to turning this nation around.

“The first worldview is the Judeo-Christian one on which this nation was founded. It begins with the belief that there is a God, that he created us, and that he has a purpose for each one of us. It’s that simple. Do you believe that?”

William paused and looked around the chamber. There was only silence. Then he continued. “Since he created us, he’s given us rules to live by which, if we follow them, will benefit us, both as individuals and as a society; and if we break them, will result in our harm. Moreover, God has chosen to reveal himself and his laws through the Bible, which represents his ‘Creator’s Manual’ for us to read and to understand his will. Man in this worldview definitely has reason—he is created in the image of God. He is to be the master of the earth, which he needs his intelligence and reason to accomplish. But he uses these abilities within the moral framework provided by his Creator.

“This worldview also acknowledges that this world is only temporary, that there is more importantly an eternal world, and that what we do here influences what happens to us there. Finally, God has provided by his grace the only means for joining him in that eternal world through our individual belief in his Son, Jesus Christ, who voluntarily died on the cross, as a real historic fact, so that we have the opportunity to live with God forever.”

As the president spoke, the vice-president, seated behind him, lowered her head and rubbed her forehead with her right hand. The camera panned around the hushed audience, some of whom were listening attentively as the president spoke. Others, however, had joined the vice-president in postures of obvious disagreement.

“The second worldview begins with the belief that man and woman are it. It believes either that there is no God, and we’re all the result of some still-unexplained mistake, evolving on our own incredible strength from some unexplained but conveniently present ooze, or that there may be a God, but he simply made us and then left town, leaving us to our own devices. This worldview tells us that we’re on our own and that we’ve got to improve and even perfect ourselves on our own. There are therefore no overriding rules or

absolute values in this view—everything like that is to be determined by us and refined continuously by our so-called enlightened reason.

“We’re to be fervently all-inclusive, and *everything* anyone might want to do is basically fine because it all starts from human reason. So what’s *really* okay and not okay must be decided by the majority or, better yet, imposed by those who have somehow obtained more ‘enlightenment’ than the rest of us.

“Since mankind has evolved on its own in this view, we and what we do must be inherently good because it’s ‘human.’ If an individual goofs up, it must just be because of poverty or educational deprivation or a bad neighborhood or bad parents or some other fixable mistake. If we could just fix those or get rid of outdated, constraining rules so that his behavior is redefined as acceptable—or perfect this person a bit further with one more government program to help him—then he’d be okay, too. And all of us could then work toward our ultimate goal—to be ‘free,’ to return to a state of pristine nature, where everything is wonderful and people are pleasant and prosperity pours out on everyone in a paradise of human enlightenment.

“Now those are the two opposing worldviews. One starts and ends with God. The other starts and ends with man. As a nation we’ve recently debated a lot of issues and programs, but the real question is very simple: which one of those views do you believe to be correct? They’re mutually exclusive, meaning that they can’t both be right. It’s either one or the other. They lead to completely different conclusions and completely different activities for our government. And tonight I’m proposing that each one of us has to choose.”

William paused again and looked around the House, stopping for a second to glance up at Carrie, who again gave him a nod.

Bruce, sitting with his mother in Boston, picked up the phone and called Atlanta. When Rebecca answered, he asked, “Are you watching this?”

“Yes. How are your parents?”

“Okay. Later. But how can your brother be saying all this? He’s talking like we’re living in the Middle Ages!”

“I don’t know. It sounds pretty logical to me so far. Let’s listen and I’ll call you back when it’s over.”

“Fine. But I hope he doesn’t go completely off the deep end.”

William continued, “How have these two worldviews played themselves out over the last three centuries, to arrive at this point? Historians use the words ‘the Reformation’ and ‘the Enlightenment’ to describe their two separate

beginnings. And we have early examples of the two distinct results in the American and French Revolutions.

“Despite recent myths to the contrary, which I’ll address in a minute, America was founded as a Christian nation with the Christian faith as the foundation for its laws and morals. The colonies were essentially the completion on freer soil of the Christian Reformation begun in Europe, providing a new place and a new beginning for men and women seeking to submit their lives to God’s will. We don’t have time now, but if you read through the papers and the speeches of all the early leaders of the colonies and of our nation, as my wife, Carrie, and I have done over the past eight months, you’ll be struck by how much virtually every one of them not only believed strongly and publicly in God, but also gave him all the credit for their free nation, their lives, and their new government.

“The American Revolution was a revolt by one set of governments against another—calling on God’s authority in the Declaration of Independence to override laws which the colonists believed to be wrong and unjust. They never proposed doing away with rule by law, but proclaimed that the colonies had a responsibility to follow God’s higher law for their citizens’ lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. And throughout the long years of the Revolution and then during the creation of our nation, these same leaders constantly called upon God—publicly, in these chambers, in their speeches, and in their laws—for his guidance, his protection, and his forgiveness.

“Contrast that approach, clearly following the first worldview, with the French Revolution only a few years later. There the rallying cry was not for God’s law, but for just the opposite—unchecked individual liberty and equality. The humanistic philosophers behind that movement believed that man was inherently good and government was always bad—and if they could get rid of oppressive government, first the king and then subsequent manifestations, then real ‘freedom’ could be obtained. As a symbol of their intent, the cross in Notre Dame Cathedral was replaced by a statue of Reason.

“The result was an orgy of death, destruction, and dictatorship that perfectly previewed later revolutions also begun by supposedly enlightened philosophers who believed in the second worldview. But these later revolutions in Russia, Germany, and elsewhere were all ultimately defeated, like the French Revolution, not by the promised blossoming of perfection, but by their own godless murdering strongmen: Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler. These killers filled the vacuums that are created every time we turn over the rule of society to some group that is going to ‘perfect’ us, because then the only arbiter of resources and power becomes the state. This is the ultimate irony of the second worldview: in its rush to embrace romantic individual freedom, it always degenerates into the loss of *real* freedom, either to a coercive state in a humane society or to a dictatorial state in a less tolerant one. But

freedom is *always* lost to the government.

“And why not? In this view, since there is no God in control, then by default, who is? The state *must* be. And who is the state? The ones with the most power. Who loses? Those without power, such as the weak, the non-violent, and the ‘unenlightened.’ The natural state, which the second view seeks, turns out *not* to be a pristine and glorious paradise, which it never was anyway. What we have instead are the ugly rules of ‘eat before you are eaten’ and ‘survival of the fittest.’ *That’s what nature has really always been.* And mankind always returns to it without God’s laws to lift up his better ideals and to promise punishment for those who insist on doing wrong. Far from being constricting, a Christian society is actually freeing and uplifting. Without its influence, we are each someone else’s meal. And we’re already seeing that truth beginning to infect our own society today.

“Back to our worldviews. The overriding view of our own founders was the first, the one in which man only acts knowing that God is in control. It’s not surprising that hardly anyone realizes this fact any more. For forty years if the word ‘God’ appeared in a text, that text couldn’t be used in our schools. And because our nation’s founders spoke so often with references to God, hardly anything they said could be taught to our own children! Isn’t that absurd? Is it any wonder we’ve lost our way, when simply quoting a speech by our first president, George Washington, in which he gives thanks to God for delivering our nation, is somehow equated with establishing a state religion to which we all must belong?

“So, what, then, is the cause for our current unhappy state of the union? It’s that we’ve slowly but certainly been led off the path of a nation founded on God’s worldview and are instead fast becoming just another one of the many nations that have come and gone because they’re founded on man’s worldview. Look at history—what a miracle the founding of this nation was! How have we then been led astray?

“As recently as 1892, Supreme Court Justice David Brewer could write in an official court opinion, ‘This is a religious people.’ And he quoted an earlier opinion that stated, ‘Christianity, general Christianity, is, and always has been, a part of the common law.’ And it was. Then starting in about 1910 our universities began seriously embracing the teachings of men such as Freud, Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, and others—all of whom proclaimed, like Rousseau before them, that man is the master and God is meaningless.

“By the 1930s many of the university faculties in this country accepted that worldview, and by the sixties, when my generation came of age, it was further embraced by the media and the nation’s entire ‘enlightened intelligentsia,’ from students to, sadly, the Supreme Court, which at that time was made up of men almost exclusively from *political* rather than judicial backgrounds.”

William looked down at all the Supreme Court justices seated just in



front of him and noted a look of surprise on most of their faces. "While rightly correcting the aftermath of one great blemish on our Constitution—the institution of slavery—this court also went, without precedent, directly against 150 years of rulings and many judicial precedents to falsely proclaim, on its own, that our Constitution erected a 'wall of separation between church and state,' which was simply not true."

Several of the justices shifted in their seats, and the vice president, already red, was almost hugging herself in obvious anger.

"Since then, the eternal principles on which this nation was founded have been removed from almost every aspect of public life. Again, it's no wonder that people today don't realize what's happened, because this same spurious idea of separation and the ever present threat of a lawsuit keep us from even being exposed to the real founding principles of this country. And most people's obvious first reaction—believe me, I understand it—is to discredit the kind of statements like I've just made. But from the bottom of my heart I want you to know that I'm telling you the truth. The problem is that you can never be taught the real truth if by definition you can never be taught about God's role in our nation! Why, any day now I expect the Declaration of Independence to be proclaimed unconstitutional because it mentions God! Could the Constitution be unconstitutional as well? Only the justices in their enlightened wisdom know—and the rest of us will find out."

There was a smattering of laughter as the thought sank in of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution being declared unconstitutional.

"This is wonderful," Graham Prescott whispered to his wife in the fourth row of the chapel in Raleigh. "I can't believe he's saying this to the nation."

"Yes, it is," Mary replied. "God bless him and give him strength."

"This is preposterous," Ryan Denning hissed under his breath in the press booth in Washington. "I can't believe he's saying this to the nation."

"Yes, it is," Leslie replied. "Where does he get this stuff?"

William continued, "Now there's one last connection that has to be made in the chain causing our problems, but this connection also starts us on the way to understanding the cure: the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

"Institutions, no matter how bad, don't directly make problems by robbing banks or committing murder or deserting children. People do. And

people act like that because their hearts don't know or respond to God's leading or his law. And they don't know about him or his laws because he's been evicted from debate, discussion, school, the news, television, movies, history, government—everywhere other than churches themselves.

"But God's worldview is true seven days a week, not just on Sunday. God is still in control of our lives on Monday at the office, but you'd never know it. And if he's evicted from schools and not allowed in our offices, then it's no wonder he's also not in the housing projects or the streets or in the divorce courts or at the pornography stands or anywhere else in our society. We've shown him the door, and then we wonder why our society is falling apart. Every day in a hundred ways, no matter what we may say on Sunday, we proclaim the worldview that man is in charge and God doesn't matter. He's shown that he's very patient, but if we really want him to leave, he will. Ask the people of Russia or Germany or Cambodia or Rwanda what that's like, when he's gone.

"So the ultimate answer to our problem, Christian faith proclaims, is not an election or a parade or a speech or a new law, but a change of individual hearts—a national turning to him, one heart at a time. The ultimate solution against the man who has just pulled a trigger and killed someone is not more police to chase him or more prisons to incarcerate him, but a change of his heart so that *he doesn't pull the trigger in the first place*. That can only come from inside. But it gets inside from being taught, from seeing role models, from having fathers, mothers, and teachers who teach values and discipline. So while the ultimate solution is the individual heart, the first important step toward that solution is the creation of a society in which faith, God's laws, and his moral expectations can be seen and can flourish.

"That brings us to the question of what we *can* do as a nation, and for that answer we should look back to what the men and women who founded this nation believed they were creating. First, let's be clear on what they never intended: this is certainly not supposed to be a theocracy—a Christian Iran—where you have to be a card-carrying Christian to vote, or where the state can collect your tithe with a tax. That would be the worst thing that could happen, both for our nation and for Christianity. No, that's *not* what Americans ever meant by a 'Christian nation.'

"So what *was* their intent? After much listening to others, prayer, and the reading of their own words, I believe that while the founders never meant America to be a Christian theocracy, they did assume that our society and its leaders would always be set on a *foundation* of Christian morality and belief. In fact, they openly despaired of what this nation would be like without that foundation.

"The First Amendment to our Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion—without restriction on where or when. It's the same amendment

that guarantees freedom of the press, which everyone today accepts as meaning universal freedom for the press within government, schools, everywhere. Why should the press be freer to exercise its rights in our nation than religion is?

“This amendment simply prohibits Congress—not the states or schools or any other institution—from making a law respecting an establishment of religion. Notice the ‘an’—it isn’t talking about religion in general—in that case it would say ‘the’ establishment. It’s referring to officially establishing any specific faith or sect, as had been the case in England, and was already the case in some of the states at that time.

“Because of a couple of Supreme Court rulings, made without judicial precedent, and threats of other suits, we have incorrectly focused on removing all discussions or manifestations of religion from government, schools, public buildings, and almost everywhere else. We’ve forgotten the free exercise part of the same First Amendment, unless someone tries to restrict the free exercise of the press, of course! And the result is that Christians and people of other faiths are afraid to speak or to proclaim their spiritual values in the public arena, with the negative result being that the foundation meant for our society—its Christian morality and ideals—is removed from consideration in any and all public debate. To say you are a Christian and want to discuss any topic today from the perspective of your faith is a sure ticket to being labeled a nut—just the opposite of what the founders envisioned. They believed our national leaders would debate and discuss issues, as I’m doing tonight, within the context of Christian ideals and of God’s will for the nation.

“So I propose to offer us all a new path, which is really an old path, to begin restoring God’s worldview to our national agenda and to our political debates. It’s a path that, if followed, will begin to underpin us again with the biblical morality and laws we so desperately need, without creating a theocracy and without denying anyone of any other faith his or her absolute right to pursue that faith openly and freely.

“At the end of the Book of Joshua, after the Israelites have entered the Promised Land and initially subdued it, their leader, Joshua, calls the entire nation together in one place and reminds them that it is God who has provided their victories. He then has the entire nation vote together, at one time, whether they as a nation will serve God or not. They vote to serve the Lord, and their successes continue when they do.

“We are proposing tonight that it’s time for this nation, this generation, to decide which worldview we believe. Is God in control, or is man in control? Is this government really a miracle among nations, founded by God, or just a fortuitous coincidence? Will we seek to be ruled by God’s laws, or will we just create our own changing version of what’s right and wrong as we

go along? Will we, in short, serve the Lord, or not?

"If we vote to serve God again as the creator and protector of this nation, then it's time to examine all our national goals, priorities, programs, and laws to honestly ask whether they conform to the guidelines he wishes for us.

"If we vote that God is not worth serving, that man is in control, then our nation can continue on that chosen path. And we can then no longer consider it contradictory, for example, that the murderer of an unborn baby by abortion is paid, while the murderer of an unborn baby by gunshot is prosecuted. But if a majority of our nation votes for the second worldview, once and for all pushing God's presence in our nation aside, then I'm announcing tonight that I will at that time resign from this office, and the vice-president can assume my duties as the leader of this nation."

Patricia Barton-North, who had been sitting in almost every possible position during William's address, was at that moment slumped forward, looking like she was napping. But at William's announcement of his possible resignation, her head popped up, and the television captured a serene but confident look, as if she had just found a reason for enduring the president's speech.

William continued, "Now we can't all come together in one place and vote as the Israelites did in Joshua's day. And we all need time to consider the implications of what I've said tonight and what this vote will mean for ourselves, our families, and our future. I hope most of you will want to study as my wife and I have, and even pray about your decision. I hope there will be a true and honest national debate that will last longer than a ten second sound bite.

"So this is what I'm asking you to do. Will you serve the Lord? If you will, then I ask you to vote in the congressional election this November for men and women who openly and clearly hold the worldview that God is in control and that they are serving him. You may have to do some real studying of candidates. You may have to ask hard questions. I don't care which party they're from, or even if they're from a party. They can be current members up for reelection or new candidates. I don't care whether they're liberal or conservative. I don't care whether they're black, white, male, or female—just people who try every day to submit their lives to God.

"If you, the American people, will elect a House of Representatives and a third of the Senate according to those criteria, then I promise strong leadership to break all gridlock, to examine *all* programs and laws in light of their adherence to biblical principles, and to work with Congress to produce a completely fresh program that will truly turn this nation around.

"I not only urge all of you to vote next November, but I urge many of you to prayerfully consider whether you should run for office, to use your talents in a way that will honor God."

There were some murmurs in the House as the elected officials realized

that the president was openly advocating that many of them not return next year.

Richard and Janet Sullivan were sitting with their son Tommy in their den, watching Richard's old law school classmate. "Isn't God's power amazing?" Richard asked, the note of astonishment obvious in his voice. "To think that William hardly knew the Lord in June, and now he's challenging our nation to return to God's healing ways! I can't believe what God can do."

"Our youth group leader says," Tommy replied, "that if you can explain it, then it can't be God!"

"Finally, when I say a completely fresh program, I mean it. One that will reestablish biblical principles in our nation, that will tell the world it *does* make a difference in America that it was the Ten Commandments which until recently were on the wall of our Supreme Court, not Hammurabi's Code. That it *does* make a difference that our coins say 'In God We Trust,' not 'In Buddha We Trust.' That it *does* make a difference that our public buildings abound in quotes from the Bible, not the Koran. We need a program which will ground us again on God's principles and which will unlock the creative spirit God has put within all of us.

"I'll address some of those possible programs in a minute. But first I want to reiterate to those who are not Christians that I am *not* talking about creating a theocracy. Though this nation has always been predominantly Christian, it has, with rare exception, always encouraged all faiths and will continue to do so. As one conservative Jewish writer has said, people of his faith should pray for Christianity remaining the dominant religion in America because of the protection and tolerance it has traditionally provided.

"In fact, Christianity by definition can't be coercive—each individual is a 'prospect' until the moment he dies—a 'prospect' with a choice to accept Christ. The Christian can't demand your faith from the barrel of a gun—he can only plant seeds and let God himself work on your heart. So no one should fear that by electing people who believe in God's rule that he or she will give up any freedoms. In fact, just the opposite. I welcome other faiths in the public debate. Christianity can hold its own in that arena, and one's faith can be sharpened when debate occurs. The tragedy is that for more than a generation no one has been able to discuss faith in public—*any* faith—and that has got to change.

"Now, finally, what are some possible programs and policies that this new Congress of men and women seeking God's will might consider, if you, the American people, elect to serve the Lord?"

“We’ll soon publish a short paper on each of these, and there’ll be more suggested between now and November fifth, I’m sure. So tonight, because of the hour and because you’ve been so patient, I’ll only touch on some highlights—but we want you to see that we mean real and productive change.

“This ought to be good,” Ryan said. “Everyone take notes—they’re all we’ll have for our discussion afterwards.”

“I still can’t believe this,” Leslie added, picking up a sharp pencil and turning the page on her pad.