



By Paul S. Williams

## Unbiased Reporting?

**I**n February it was my privilege to attend the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. Fifty-six senators and 240 members of the House of Representatives joined the president, along with members of the cabinet, military leaders, and other dignitaries. And, of course, a few ordinary folks were there as well.

I was pleasantly surprised at the prayers and comments offered during the breakfast. Now you must understand, for the past quarter of a century I have lived on Long Island, New York, where 89 percent of the residents are either Roman Catholic or Jewish, or have no religious convictions at all. I am not accustomed to hearing people speak “my language.” I was therefore quite surprised to discover that so many leaders of the United States are committed Christians.

The prayers of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and CIA director sounded like prayers at my home church in Akron, Ohio. Condoleeza Rice, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, preached a very fine message.

Senators Bill Nelson of Florida and James Inhofe of Oklahoma mentioned the many Senate and House members who meet weekly for prayer. Other

members of Congress spoke of their “personal commitment to Jesus.” And of course, the president himself provided a clarion call to faith.

Back in New York, I turned on the evening news to hear the sound bites from the National Prayer Breakfast. There were none. I switched from NBC to CBS, then ABC. Still none. So I waited until Friday morning and checked the newspapers. I picked up copies of *USA Today*, *Newsday*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. None of the papers had a single line of type or picture devoted to the National Prayer Breakfast.

I remembered the words of the late dean of British broadcast journalism, Malcolm Muggeridge. In speaking of the biased news reporting of the major Western media outlets, Muggeridge said, “The editor is king.” A great gathering of prayer was deemed irrelevant by the editors of our newspapers and television news departments. And what was newsworthy on February 6, 2003? Almost every paper had a lengthy article about the ABC two-hour interview with Michael Jackson!

It was very good to see how devoted the leaders of this nation are to prayer. I wish the folks at the television networks and major newspapers had reported that news to you.

*I wish you could have seen how devoted our leaders are to prayer.*

## Seen & Heard

Compiled by S. J. Dahlman

“**Grief**, especially shared grief like we are experiencing now, **has unparalleled power** to open our eyes and open our heart, but only over the patient long haul—which is why many call it ‘grief work.’”

—Richard Rohr, *Sojourners* magazine, January-February 2002

It’s a whole new meaning for “e-mail.” **The post office in Os-kaloosa, Iowa, was put up for sale on eBay**, the Internet auction site, in January. The city of 11,000 built

the facility in 1989 and leases it to the federal government, but it has been losing up to \$6,000 a year, according to City Manager Don Sandor. If sold, residents’ postal service won’t change. The buyer will take on a guaranteed lease that keeps the post office in the building for another 30 years. The minimum bid is \$300,000.

—Associated Press

More than seven in 10 Americans said **the threat of terrorism has**

**brought no extra stress or anxiety in their lives**, according to a mid-February poll of 1,042 adults, taken while the nation was on a heightened state of alert. Overall in the ABC News-*Washington Post* poll, about a third said they were worried that they might become the victim of a terrorist attack, but only one in 10 expressed a “great deal” of such worry. These levels are about the same as in November 2001.

—Associated Press