

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, February 5, 1964 WHD

It began early, getting up in the dark hour of 6:30 in order to be able to leave by 7:30 for the Congressional wives Prayer Breakfast. As I went into the familiar room at the Mayflower, already full of women, and walked among the tables, I thought of how many times I had done this before and how much alike it was. As I got to the head table, there was Mrs. Langford of North Carolina, <sup>presiding</sup> and Mrs. B. Everett Jordan, wife of the Senator from North Carolina, who was going to introduce the main speaker, who was Mrs. Billy Graham, wife of the Evangelist, from North Carolina. Seated directly in front of us was a table full of Embassy wives. There was Mrs. Chang You Kim, wife of the Ambassador of Korea; a lady from one of the African countries, perhaps from Guinea, in full and very exotic native costume, at least one or two from Arab countries, <sup>that</sup> I feel sure must be Moslem. I wondered what all of this must seem like to them.

My greeting was to quote <sup>a</sup> prayer that I heard on my trip to Greece <sup>[at]</sup> the American Farm School that was founded by an American Mission there. A very lovely song sung by the Greek farm boys had been taught by the American Missionaries.

This is my song, Oh God of all the Nations  
A song of peace for lands afar and mine  
This my home, the country where my heart is  
This is my hope, my dream, my shrine  
But other hearts in other lands are beating  
With hopes and dreams the same as mine

It made a considerable impression on me, that long ago day in Greece - and so I brought it out for this occasion. I think it filled in very well.

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*Copy in  
Graham's  
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Mrs. Luther Hodges, also incidentally from North Carolina, did the old testament part of the morning's procedure, and then we sang some old familiar songs - What a Friend We Have in Jesus. Here I have been a member of the Episcopal Church for more than 30 years and I can still remember and participate in far better, *those* old songs from my Methodist upbringing. I think if I had done a count on those present, I would have found that a sizeable proportion of them were Southerners and Westerners. To get up and pray in public and just be a real outspoken about it is - well, it comes a little easier to us, I think. I find myself a little self-conscious about it but if it is one of the strongest feelings in your make-up, why not say so right out loud?

Mrs. Billy Graham, who is as pretty as her husband is handsome, gave a very down to earth talk about the religion in the housewife's life when she is full of lots of children and shortage of money and plenty of problems.

Then the men came in, Lyndon, then a few of the leading Senators that had started the Prayer Breakfast. Billy Graham - they had a few words to say. We got an early departure and back to work. I took Dr. and Mrs. Graham back with me to Lyndon's office. She hadn't seen it and we had a little visit there and I went on to a very important meeting - for me - a meeting with my correspondence staff in the East Wing. There was Bess, and those who work with her; Liz and those who work with her, especially Wendy, and Ashton.

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The whole group, I would say, was some 15. I spent about two hours asking questions and talking. I wanted to give them my general philosophy of answering letters and told them the much-used story of "Johnnie," which I had heard at a political meeting at one of Lyndon's campaigns long ago and which I think was a basis of his success, of a great many of his years in this life. I told them, a dozen or so of the phrases that were most my own, came easiest to me, and passed out about six letters that I thought were exceptionally well-answered, some of which I had dictated and possibly several of which Bess had simply, by the process of osmosis, had learned what I say and then say it back, only it's likely to sound better when she says it, because she adds some humor. I found out a lot about the number of the different categories of letters, who handles what. I am still disturbed by the fact that we - that I find myself signing a letter that must have been received two weeks or more ago, but I do think this improved morale, made us understand each other better, and made for a better working relationship. I was particularly impressed with Hortense Burton, whom I asked to gather for me once a week, one page resume of the type of letters that week and something about the number and perhaps four or five of the most interesting ones. This long meeting caused me to miss lunch so I was glad to sit down for a cup of tea with Mrs. Carl Sanders, the wife of the Governor of Georgia, Mrs. Farris Bryant, the wife of the Governor of Florida, who arrived a little bit - about one thirty, after a tour of the White House and we had a little

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tea and sandwiches and visit. Mrs. Sanders gave me a charming little bangle for my bracelet with the map of Georgia - and what's more important - some kind words about Lyndon on it.

Then I plowed into my desk - and got one hot coal of fire off of it - that being a letter from Madame <sup>nhu</sup> ~~Nu~~ - which after due consultation with McGeorge Bundy was handled.

Lyndon left in the middle of the afternoon to go to New York for the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation dinner but I didn't go with him. I've been away too much from Luci - and it shows. And one of the good rewards for not going, was a talk I had with her. She came in and had dinner with A. W. and me - just the three of us - and she was all wound up and she talked and talked and talked. And I learned a lot about my short-comings and something about my virtues. She's a very interesting, exciting, perceptive, emotional, high-strung little girl - for whom my heart aches and who I know can achieve great things if I can just help her stay healthy enough and level-headed enough, and realize that life is one long series of problems that you handle one day at a time. A. W. and I had a lot of business to talk about - the house, the ranches - it's a great comfort to have him here. I can't say that we settled anything, signed, sealed and filed away, but at least we put some steam in behind some matters and got them moving.

I said goodnight to him early and then went in for a very luxurious evening of watching Jason Robards in a play called Abe Lincoln in Illinois. And I can't

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remember whether it's by Sherwood Anderson or Robert Sherwood. I was very much aware of - and atingle with - that I was watching this excellent play in the room where Lincoln had slept. The fire was burning and there were flickering shadows on the ceiling - and it's one of those evenings when you feel very much alive and wouldn't want to be doing anything else except exactly what you were doing.