



## COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY

### Board of Governors Brunch Event *Sponsored by Alliance Defending Freedom* May 15, 2015

MR. ALAN SEARS:

It is so good to be with you. Good morning and bless you. Thank you, Tony for your gracious introduction, and Tim, thank you for the opening prayer, and thanks to all of you for joining us here today. We also want to thank the CNP Board of Governors for the privilege of again presenting this event in conjunction with the Council for National Policy.

CNP members have been standing boldly and consistently for over thirty years for the Constitution, for the values and the beliefs the Alliance Defending Freedom was formed to defend every day in courts across the land, and increasingly across the globe. A few welcomes, today is with us a member of our ADF governing board, Mrs. Marjorie Dannenfelser. Marjorie, thank you for being with us. We are also honored and I would ask if you wouldn't mind, Mary Ellen, to stand so people can see where you are, we are honored by the presence of Mary Ellen Bork, the wife of the late Judge Robert Bork who was the 2010 recipient.

We also are especially honored this morning to have our 81<sup>st</sup> Attorney General of the United States, Mr. Michael Mukasey. All of you remember his stalwart defense of the Constitution, ordered liberty, and our great nation. He served for many years as federal judge and then chief judge of the southern district of New York. He was the trial judge for the first World Trade Center case involving what is commonly referred to as the blind chic. Then he served as our nation's chief law enforcement officer in a very difficult time. We thank you General Mukasey for all that you've done for us.

I'll be introducing in a few moments, we're delighted and thankful as always to have our nation's 75<sup>th</sup> Attorney General the Honorable Edwin Meese, who this award bears his name. Ed, thank you for being here this morning.

Twenty-two years ago, thirty-five faith leaders from across the theological spectrum came together to discuss their growing alarm at the rapidly declining state of religious freedom in America. They knew that for 70 years various organizations and sadly, many government officials, had systematically used the courts to aggressively advance a secular progressive agenda and to reorder constitutional liberty through litigation. All too many times our freedoms were lost by default because constitutional advocates and people of faith either failed to show up or if we did, we were woefully short of training, resources, unanimity, and manpower. And the results, as many of you know firsthand, were tragic. Legal precedents reconstructed much of the Constitution fabricating concepts that would be completely unknown to its authors that limited religious and other freedoms. These precedents allowed the loss of 57 million children from their mother's wombs. Other revisions eroded the foundations of our most fundamental societal and cultural units, marriage and family, and as we all know we are awaiting sometime before the end of June a major ruling from the Supreme Court on the issue of marriage of family.

Watching what was happening and sensing that more was to come, thirty-five faith leaders, including several members of CNP, those members included Dr. Bill Bright, Dr. James Dobson, Larry Burkett, and Dr. D. James Kennedy, all of them decided to take unprecedented action. They rallied to create a unique

new kind of legal alliance—an alliance of the willing, to engage in training, funding, coordination, and legal advocacy to defend life, marriage and family, and religious liberty. They commissioned us, gave us the name of Alliance Defense Fund, and now we came to the new name Alliance Defending Freedom and our assignment was to work to reclaim as much of that legal ground previously lost and to work to restore, secure, and defend liberty in our nation. Two decades later I am blessed to still be part of leading that organization. We now have 220 full-time team members, 2,500 allied attorneys who stand on your behalf every day in 40 different nations around the world. We now have full-time staff at the United Nations in New York, not that the United Nations would ever attempt to limit our American sovereignty or anything we are concerned about here. We are dealing with the U.N. in Geneva, we have an office in Vienna with the OSCE, in Brussels with the European Union, in Mexico City, in New Dehli, and by the end of this year we will be in Straussberg, France, home of the European Court of Human Rights. We also have, as Tony mentioned, the office here in D.C. and we are active at the Organization of American States, trying to preserve liberty and family in this hemisphere.

ADF allied attorneys have reported more than \$181 million worth of pro bono service hours and they have been blessed to win a lot of cases. Allied attorneys and our staff attorneys are standing right now at 20 to 1 against the Obama Administration on the issue of the Obamacare mandate. We are very delighted with that and our team represented Conestoga Wood Products, the co-party with Hobby Lobby, that won at the Supreme Court last year on this ongoing fight. You think after the administration has lost some 50 cases, they lost twice at the Supreme Court, they've had several adverse rulings at the Court, they would get a hint. But, they haven't yet and we continue to fight. We also were thankful last year for the victory in the town of Greece case which upheld the right of public officials to follow the original congressional practice of public prayer to open meetings as desired by those officials. We graduated over 1,500 law students from our Blackstone Legal Fellowship. Blackstone was greatly inspired by Ed Meese's leadership. Both Ed Meese and Attorney General Mukasey teach our prospective fellows about first principles and we're very thankful for that participation. There are also several young men and women who are already becoming members of CNP, some in the Buckley Council, who have come through the Blackstone program.

As you all know, equipping, training, and positioning our next generation is critical because as Morton Blackwell always reminds us, personnel is policy. People make the decisions that set not only laws but history in motion. Those that we are honoring today, those receiving the award, and the public servant for whom the award is named, are those who have invested their professional and private lives to mentor, to teach, and to encourage the next generations. We also know that words make policy. That's why textual originalism is so important. The words we cherish, the words we live by, the words we recognize as truth that are worthy of our commitment, our courage, and our sacrifice are under attack. This, too, is an idea well grasped by all of those we honor today. We are in a time when our most timeless and sacred ideas, the words that express them, the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures, and our Federal Constitution have been come to see as expendable, pliable, and even irrelevant to the challenges and questions we face as Americans today. But those we honor have held fast to the faith of our fathers, to the wisdom of our nation's founders, and the sacred truths of God's word. Leadership matters. What we teach matters. People matter. Words matter. And legacies matter. Those we honor today have established a legacy of integrity, insight, moral courage, and vision thoroughly grounded in first principles. They love God and country, and their brothers and sisters and they know that even those that are our opponents on their earthly contests, that even those we oppose the most are endowed by their Creator with dignity and rights. Rights that were not created by or granted by any government and they have understood that nations and peoples can remain great only so long as they remain free. They know the most important freedoms are those of conscience and religious liberty.

Our first speaker this morning is Edwin Meese. Every time I remember Attorney General Meese, I am again reminded of what an honor it was to serve under his steadfast leadership during President Reagan's

administration. Several of you, Ken Cribb and others I have seen, were blessed to either work with or work under Ed Meese during that period. We all know that his exemplary character bore witness every day to his unflinching devotion to the country he loves regardless of the detractors and the attackers. General Meese has been a mentor and a friend to almost everyone in this room. He has served as an inspiration and a role model for countless judges, lawyers, and law students. His wisdom and friendship provided crucial support and guidance for ADF in our formative years and continued to inspire us. When our board was working and planning to develop this award, there was no one else whose name even came close to that of Ed Meese as the one who should bear the name. Six years ago we presented Attorney General Meese with the first such award and we've been blessed, as you will see in the back of the program, to have a wonderful list of people that we have recognized since. President Reagan once said, "The most essential element of our defense of freedom is our insistence on speaking out for the cause of religious liberty." Earlier, you remember Ronald Reagan had reminded us that freedom is never free, that it's fragile and must be defended in every generation. Attorney General Edwin Meese, throughout his career, has been a bold and uncompromising voice speaking out defending religious liberty and our Constitution. He understands that without religious liberty and freedom of conscience other freedoms cannot be maintained and that religious freedom can only be preserved if we follow the blueprint given to us through the United States Constitution. As Ed has said, "Constitutional fidelity through originalism is critical to the protection of religious liberty." This award is presented to those who clearly demonstrate through their lives and callings a profound understanding of an public commitment to defending the originalist meaning of the United States Constitution and our liberty. Now it is my honor to welcome Ed Meese to make a few remarks. Ed.

GENERAL ED MEESE:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Alan for those very kind words and thank you ladies and gentlemen for that very warm welcome. It is a pleasure and an honor for me to be here today and to join you particularly in this particular ceremony and particularly to recognize this award.

You know, I'm awfully proud and honored to have my name associated with this award for a couple of reasons. One, because it is being presented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, one of the most important, one of the most outstanding organizations, and one of the most successful organizations that I know of. When Alan was giving that history of the people who put it together names that most of us recognizes as champions of liberty and champions of the American way of the life and the fact that they were able to bring together so many people, their thoughts, their ideas, and particularly their resources and join them together in such a great organization, and I'll say a little bit more about it later on, but that's one of the reasons.

The other reason I am so honored to have my name associated is the people to whom it has been awarded has really distinguished this honor and this award over the years. You have them listed but let me just mention them now. The first award that was given after mine was Bob Bork. Now the word originalism, which is part of the award, you cannot think about without thinking of Bob Bork and what he did to bring that concept to the legal profession, to the courts, and to the American people. It was his law review article back in the early 1970s that first raised this an issue. People hadn't thought much about the original meaning of the Constitution up until that point but he made it a part of the language and then some of us were able to carry on and to take that concept and bring it to the attention of the courts, to bring it to the attention of the law schools, to bring it the attention of the legal profession, and ultimately the American people. Bob was certainly the right person to receive that award.

Then the others. Chuck Colson and Robbie George. The Reverend Charles Chippuit who has been so important in his church raising these issues. Frank Wolfe, an international champion of religious freedom.

Paul Clement and Maryanne Glendon. An today's recipients, Cardinal George and Dr. Mohler, who certainly have carried on this tradition of honor that has accrued to this award because of the people who have received it. You'll hear more about both of today's recipients, and by the way, I want to thank Bishop Murphy for being here and being kind enough to represent the late Cardinal George. Bishop Murphy was one of his close followers and the person who had the privilege of working with him so it is appropriate for him to be here today on behalf of the Cardinal. Cardinal George we know has been a champion of religious liberty by showing great courage in standing up for those things, the rights of conscience and the other aspects of religious liberty that are so important. And likewise, Dr. Mohler in his denomination, in a denomination that suffered a great deal for a period of time when there were attacks on religious liberty, attacks on the sacredness of the doctrines of the Bible, and the basic religious doctrines were under fire. He was one of those, when our own Judge Pressler here, stood up for those concepts. As everyone of us knows here who has stood up for things that are important that are under attack, it is not an easy task and there are many times in which you wonder almost "why me, Lord?" Dr. Mohler was one of those and was there at the floor when it was necessary to do this.

Let me just say a couple of words about the importance of originalism and religious liberty. As Alan mentioned, the two go hand in hand because unless we observe the original understanding of the Constitution as the founders gave it to us we can be lead down the wrong path and actually have the ideas and the concepts that underlay the foundation, if you will, over our Constitution be perverted by those who would use it for their own purposes and would lead our nation into ways that would be unbelievable to those who founded the country and did so much to give us the kind of freedom we enjoy today. That's why originalism and religious liberty remain the stalwart foundation of the meaning of the Constitution and the way in which the Constitution should be interpreted. I don't know what's going to happen, none of us do in this room at least know what's going to happen, when the Court comes down with the way in which they handle the marriage issue but I can tell you this. If they are following the Constitution there is only one honest way in which they can come down and that is to defend natural marriage.

Today, as was mentioned by Tim in his excellent prayer, religious liberty is under attack as never before that I have seen and I don't believe in the history of our country in which so many forces are against preserving freedom of conscience and religious liberty. We were talking before the breakfast this morning about one of our friends who was recently laid off, fired if you will, because he was defending religious liberty and a client of the law firm objected for reasons totally incomprehensible to me but as a result he was let go because the client was more important to the law firm than was one of their trusted lawyers. Now I don't know which one of the two were worse, the law firm or the client, but it certainly illustrates how all over this country people who are willing to stand up for religious liberty, for their own conscience, and for the conscience of others are being demonized, are being attacked, and in many cases are suffering as this lawyer did. Paul Clement, one of the people who received this award just two years ago, in fact had to leave his law firm because he was defending religious liberty before the Supreme Court and that's the situation we have today. Never before in our history, I believe, has it been more important for people everywhere to stand up for the principle of the Constitution and particularly the first amendment to the Constitution, the first part of our bill of rights and that is our protection of religious liberty. That's why the Alliance Defending Freedom is so important and why Alan Sears and his leadership and the others that are here from that organization and their now thousands of lawyers are so important to defend this first freedom that is so important to all of us. But it is also important that all of us do everything we can, we all have affiliations, we have organizations, we have businesses, we have people we talk to, audiences, we have opportunities in dealing with the news media to stand up in every opportunity we have to stand up for the cause of religious liberty. As we have seen here in Washington, D.C., in my home state of California, and elsewhere, people are suffering because of their willingness to stand up and we have to support them in every way we can. That includes the people we do business with. If we're doing business with someone who has entered the fray on the other side to destroy religious

liberty or to attack or punish those who stand up for it, we have duty I think to take action ourselves to the extent we can to make our own beliefs and freedoms known.

We have a great opportunity to do what is right for our country, do what is right for our fellow citizens, and particularly today as we stand here to congratulate our recipients as well as to say to Alan Sears and Alliance Defending Freedom that we stand behind you because you are doing the right thing for America. Thank you very much.

MR. ALAN SEARS:

Thank you very much for those very kind words and I just second what Attorney General Meese said that we really have to support those that are standing for these first principles, these first freedoms and we really probably should look at who we are doing business with, who some of our vendors are and if they are opposing these key values that certainly gives us an opportunity to evangelize.

The late Francis Cardinal George learned early on that the world can be a hard and challenging place even, maybe especially, for people of faith. Born in depression era Chicago, he survived polio as a child and was still on crutches when he showed up at the school where he hoped to train for the priesthood only to be turned away and told that he would probably never be ordained. But as usual, the young Francis George had other ideas. He persisted, he got into that school, he persevered, he graduated with distinction, he was ordained, and he went to worldwide recognition always standing with courage, determination, and an unswerving commitment to truth. As a result of his life of sacrifice and service, he accomplished a few of his own dreams but much more importantly he blessed, strengthened, and enabled the dreams of countless others. His priesthood touched so many dimensions. His lifelong ministry to the poor, his outstanding reputation as a teacher and professor, his support for legal originalism, his work as a missionary, a bishop, and finally archbishop of Chicago, the nation's third largest Catholic archdiocese. He used the bully pulpit of that position to speak out boldly for justice amid the terrible scandals that engulfed his own church and he stood against the imposition of the Obamacare abortion mandates. He stood against the cultural pressures to embrace a progressive redefinition of marriage and so many other things. In time, Cardinal George came to be recognized not only as an intellectual leader of the American Catholic Church but also as a driving force for its conscience. At a time when all too many of faith and sadly many religious leaders were shell-shocked, unwilling to stand up, fearful of loss of name or favor, and unsure of how to respond to the increasingly aggressive attacks on their nations and their laities' religious freedom posed by the Administration, by activists courts, and inhibited by the Constitution, Cardinal George showed many of us the way. Part of his way was to support an alliance of faith efforts, joining together with Jewish, evangelical, protestant, Catholics, and others to stand together and unite to stand for eternal truths, individual liberty, and the rule of law. One of the things that I always liked about Cardinal George is that he blended candor with unsurpassed compassion, he called things as he saw them and he saw them with an astonishing clarity. He understood the implications of what he saw happening in our nation. He was so straight-forward and sensible in his response and much of what he said resonates like the visions of a prophet. For those that insisted that his church and people of faith waver, that they needed to accommodate a new morality of a new world order, that we should bow to the demands of an increasingly aggressively secular progressive culture, abandon constitutional orders, they said of Cardinal George that he was going to find himself on the wrong side of history, on the short end of executive orders and judicial decrees. When this was told to him, Cardinal George responded this way. He said, "A world divorced from the God who created and redeemed it will inevitably come to a bad end. A world divorced from God is on the wrong side of the only history that finally and really matters." And he warned that those pressing people of faith to embrace new concepts, progressive concepts of family and marriage, he warned that they were defying not just a timeless Jewish, Christian, and almost every other theology and culture of the history of the world, but they were defying natural law and God himself. He

said what may be obvious. He said, "Sexual relations between a man and woman are naturally and necessarily different than other things. This truth is part of the common sense of the human race and trying to change that truth means we are all trying to pretend to accept something we know is physically impossible." He said, "We might as well just repeal the law of gravity." And I understand off the record he said, "Only judges could thing they could do that," leaving out a couple of judges in the room here today. He knew all too well how unpopular and unacceptable such simple truths were becoming in a nation engulfed with self-centeredness. He said famously, "I expect to die in bed. My successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." But his successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization as the church has done so often in human history. We talked to the Cardinal's staff and to him in the closing weeks of his life, we asked him if he would be able to be here and he told us he could not. We asked him if he would be able to make a video to greet and we learned from him that he would not even be able to do that. But as we think of him, we think of the final note of what he said. The church and those of faith with stand together to rebuild civilization. Cardinal George always had his eyes open not only to the challenges before us, but to the great good that can be accomplished if we stand together for truth. Less than a month ago on April 17, Cardinal George did die in his bed and while the fate of his successors remains to be seen, it is in the hands of us, our nation, and God, we know that his witness and wisdom will endure because he knew the truth, he spoke the truth, and worked so faithfully to keep his church grounded in the enduring truth of God, to keep us focused on loving our neighbors even with those whom we disagree and to keep his nation mindful of how fragile the freedom to speak and live out our truth is becoming. With his recent passing, Francis Cardinal George leaves a powerful legacy of courage and mercy, selfless service, and unswerving commitment to truth. It is a privilege to honor his memory this morning with the 2015 Edwin Meese III Originalism and Religious Liberty Award. The inscription reads, "Alliance Defending Freedom honors Francis Cardinal George for his significant efforts in promoting and defending religious liberty and a principled jurisprudence through the active advancement of constitutional originalism." Here this morning to accept this award, in honor and memory of Cardinal George, is his brother bishop and good friend Bishop William Murphy of the diocese of Rockwell Center on Long Island in New York.

John Paul II appointed Bishop Murphy to head the diocese and he was installed as its fourth bishop on September 5, 2001. Bishop Murphy, would you please come and accept the award on behalf of our friend and our hero, the late great Francis Cardinal George.

**BISHOP WILLIAM FRANCIS MURPHY:**

Thank you, Alan so very much. General Meese, it's an honor to be with you and I thank you for your kind words. To all of you who are here who knew Cardinal George, you know that I am not the right person to try and take his place. For me it is a distinct and humbling privilege that you pay me by asking me to accept this recognition from the Alliance Defending Freedom who wish to honor one of the leading moral and intellectual forces for good in our country, Francis Cardinal George, the late and much lamented archbishop of Chicago. He and I have been friends for 40 years. Our friendship begun in Rome, where he became my first counselor when I began my work in peace and justice with Pope Paul VI and then he became my friend. That friendship has enriched my life and priest, as a bishop, and I hope as a faithful disciple with him in service to God's truth and to all humankind. For me, coming here is what I would call and act of pietas. In the classical sense of dutifulness to those who have guaranteed the good of society and in the Christian sense of pietas or piety, which is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which offers to those noble souls the armor that is their due because they are the ones who we have put our trust in, the ones the Lord has called to fulfill his goals. The Cardinal has a wealth of speeches, homilies, essays, books, all of which reveal his original thinking, his analytical mind, and his profound wisdom. His book, *The Difference God Makes*, I believe will stand as a classic for many years to come. His latest and last book, *God in Action*, which is on the bookshelves today for the first time, promises to

build on that. If I have time, and I know you have a busy day, I would like to quote something from that book. The addresses he gave to the United States Bishops and our semi-annual meetings during his tenure as our president shed light on the Church's life both internally and the Church's life in the world, particularly in our nation. He offered a vision that all of us bishops who knew him continue to admire and appreciate and continue to seek to fulfill. His commentaries of the challenges the Church faces in an increasingly secular society earned him the attention and respect of all fair-minded people. And again, my conviction, his observations continue to have a value that goes beyond the immediate challenges of the issues of our day. Today, however, I want simply to call your attention to the address he gave in 2010 at Brigham Young University. The Church of Latter Day Saints and the Catholic Church has both experienced periods of difficulty in our American history, none more challenging than today. Dr. Mohler, I'm pleased and privileged to come to know you and be with you here today. I know the good things you have done and you are a man of great courage.

At Salt Lake City, that February 23, 2010, Cardinal George shared with his hearers the Catholic understanding of religious freedom, addressed the current threats to that freedom, and called Mormons and Catholics to, in his words, "to stand together with other defenders of conscience and the public exercise of religion." He reminded them and he reminds us today, again his words, "the lesson of American history is that churches and other religious bodies prosper in a nation and in a social order that respects religious freedom and recognizes that civil government should never stand between the consciences and the religious practices of its citizens and almighty God." The Cardinal reaffirmed the centrality of family for the social good and the priority of the person and his or her rights and responsibilities as sovereign before any other social institution including the government. And finally, he insisted that civil laws and obligations to protect that personal freedom, the basis of all his religious freedom because it is our relationship with God that determines our relationship with everyone else. In the first chapter of the book that was made public today, which I was reading on the plane as I came down here, I would like to share with you. He was speaking in the first chapter about de Tocqueville and John Paul II and pointing out that de Tocqueville had an analysis of the United States in 1835, also while he noted all the good things, he also talked about the risks of freedom and what happens when freedom is misused. He says this, "John Paul II echoed elements of Tocqueville's arguments in pointing to the corrosive effect upon democratic ideals by the passage of bad laws. These form people in ways and thought. (ENEMICO) to even constitutionally protected rights. If a democratic society comes to believe for example that religious agnosticism and moral relativism are necessary to preserve social peace, truth becomes the enemy of freedom and freedom itself if reduced to individual autonomy. The common life, which participatory democracy was designed to protect, can then be lost to dominant interests divorced from the common good but capable of influencing politics and public life. Democracy is based on more than legal procedures. It needs a shared vision." In the name of my brother Catholic bishops, and indeed in the name of all of those in our church who hold Cardinal George's memory in esteem, I thank you all for conferring this honor on his posthumously and I pledge to you, that to the extent that it is in my power, my brother bishops and I are one with you in the important service you render to religious freedom and its defense. A more noble service to our nation, I cannot think of. A more important service to the world, I cannot imagine because our nation and our world depends on our defense of religious freedom and all those other freedoms that make us into who we want to be. Thank you all very very much.

MR. ALAN SEARS:

I think we all need to track down Cardinal George's new book. Thank you, Bishop Murphy. I mentioned that Cardinal George was often referred to as the intellectual leader of the American Catholic Church, well no less than Time magazine named our next honoree as the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the United States." Dr. Al Mohler has been one of the most outspoken leaders in the

Christian community, of his generation in confronting the moral confusions, the attacks on textual originalism that has swept across our culture, and identifying the growing threats to religious freedom in our nation. Since 1993, Dr. Mohler has served as the President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and under his incredible leadership—and it has been incredible, that seminary has prospered and grown to become one of the largest seminaries on earth. Its training for pastors is now a full undergraduate degree program, they have more buildings, more students, more funding than at any time in their history and it's due to Al's strong and sound leadership. In that role he has been uniquely positioned to influence the spiritual growth of countless of the next generation of Christian leaders and he has moved boldly not only to inspire young pastors and ministers but his entire denomination and evangelicals worldwide with his passionate efforts to defend textual originalism of the word of God, of freedom of conscience, and all religious freedom. Dr. Mohler is the host of two podcasts, which I know several of you listen to daily, both which engage evangelicals and others to be alert in, to be involved in, and thoughtful about current events and their implications for people of faith.

Al, one of the things you said that I liked the most is that “Religious liberty for Christians means full religious liberty for all our citizens.” Through your speaking and your blogs and your columns and regular appearances on national news programs, you, Dr. Mohler, have articulated a consistent and explicit Christian worldview. You have acted as an eloquent ambassador for evangelicals and as a tireless advocate for religious freedom for all. Like Cardinal George, you have been a key part of building bridges among people of faith. I have personally witnessed you in New York and other places with your bright light of fellowship, friendship, faithfulness, and encouragement among gatherings of rabbis, bishops, orthodox, and other leaders but at no time compromising those basic values and truths even when you run into those who, shall we say, might differ on a few “small issue.” Dr. Mohler has been able to combine a cleared-eyed understanding of the times we live with words of hope for those who are intimidated by the swiftness and magnitude of some of the changes about us. Another thing I like so much that you said, Dr. Mohler, is that “we dare not underestimate the challenges before us. Religious liberty is under direct threat and we find ourselves at a moment of great peril.” You said, “This is no time for the weak-kneed or the weak-thinking,” and you reminded us that we do not choose our times but this is a time for choosing.

In recognition for Dr. Al Mohler's faithful commitment to the truth of scripture, the priority of religious liberty, his lifelong service to his denomination and to people of faith, the world across, it is a great honor for me, on behalf of the governing board of Alliance Defending Freedom, to present the 2015 Edwin Meese III Originalism and Religious Liberty Award to Dr. Al Mohler. The inscription on the award reads, “Alliance Defending Freedom honors Al Mohler for his significant efforts for publically promoting and defending religious liberty and a principled jurisprudence through the active advancement of constitutional originalism.” Dr. Mohler, would you please come forward and accept our thanks as you receive this award.

**Dr. AL MOHLER**

Mr. Attorney General Meese, Mr. Attorney General Mukasey, Mr. Sears, and distinguished guests, it is a great honor to accept the Edwin Meese III Award for Originalism and Religious Liberty. That honor is greatly magnified by the presence of Mr. Meese himself and the fact that this award bears his name. He is one of the nation's most courageous defenders of human freedom and the American experiment of religious liberty. I am also honored to receive this award from the Alliance Defending Freedom and its President, my dear friend, Alan Sears. I have known Alan for many years and I know him to be one of the most powerful advocates of virtue and liberty of our age. The work of the Alliance Defending Freedom is essential, singular, and urgently vital. This battalion of defenders fights most of all, and most effectively, for our first freedom, religious liberty. I am also personally honored to receive this award along with the late Francis Cardinal George, one of the great voices for human rights and human dignity in his generation. Bishop Murphy, thank you for continuing that legacy and reminding us of it today.

This room is filled with so many people who are such powerful advocates for the things which are right and virtuous and true, and I am humbled to be in your presence this morning. I simply want to state that the way has been paved by so many for so long that we would be here and this is certainly true for me. In my denomination I cannot imagine standing here but for the work of Judge Paul Pressler for example and what he has given to the Southern Baptist Convention. I want you to know that above all I could not be here without the constant love and support of my wife Mary Mohler. Thank you, Mary.

I would wish just to make reference in my comments to what I call the gathering storm, the eclipse of religious liberty in the threat of a new dark age. You'll recognize that I borrowed from Sir Winston Churchill for the title of my remarks. In the first volume of his history of World War II, the great statesman looked back at the storm clouds that gathered in the 1930s, when he had bravely warned about a war that would determine the destiny of human dignity and liberty for untold millions of people. We are not facing the same gathering storm but we are now facing a battle that will determine the destiny of priceless freedoms and the very foundation of human rights and human dignity. Speaking thirty years ago, 1985, Attorney General Meese warned that, in his words, "There are ideas which have gained influence in some parts of our society particularly in some important and sophisticated areas that are opposed to religious freedom and freedom in general. In some areas there are some people who have espoused a hostility to religion that must be recognized for what it is and expressly countered." That was 30 years ago. Those were prophetic words, prescient in their clarity and foresight. The ideas of which Attorney General Meese warned have only gained ground in the last 30 years and now with astounding velocity. A revolution in morality now seeks not only to subvert marriage but also to redefine it. Thus, to undermine an essential foundation of human dignity, flourishing, and freedom. Religious liberty is under direct threat. Just days ago, the Solicitor General of the United States served notice before the Supreme Court that the liberties of religious institutions will be an open and unavoidable question. Already religious liberty is threatened by a new moral regime that exalts erotic liberty and personal autonomy and openly argues that religious liberties must give way to a new morality, its redefinition of marriage, and its demand for coercive moral, cultural, and legal sovereignty. A new moral and legal order is ascendant in America and this new order is only possible in the arena of American law and jurisprudence if the original intent and very words of the Constitution of the United States are twisted beyond recognition. These are days that will require courage, conviction, and clarity of vision. We're in a fight for the most basic liberties God has given humanity, every single one of us made in his image. Religious liberty is being redefined as mere freedom of worship, but it will not long survive if it is reduced to a private sphere with no public voice. The very freedom to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ is at stake and thus, so is the liberty of every American. Human rights and human dignity are temporary abstractions if they are severed from their reality as gifts of the Creator. The eclipse of Christian truth will lead inevitably to a tragic loss of human dignity. If we lose religious liberty, all other liberties will be lost one by one. I'm a Christian and I believe that salvation is found in no other name than Jesus Christ and in no other gospel but I will fight for the religious liberty of all. There is a gathering storm and its threat is urgent and real but there are arguments to be made, principles to be defended, rights to be respected, truths to be cherished, and permanent things to be preserved. We face the danger of a new dark age marked by the loss of liberty and the denial of human dignity. Thus, there is a battle to be joined and much work to be done. Together may we be found faithful to these tasks.

As no one less than Churchill would remind us, "In every gathering storm, there is a summons to action." Thank you very much. May God bless us all.

MR. ALAN SEARS

Maybe I should ask for a show of hands. Did we make good choices? I want to thank you Dr. Mohler. I want to thank you Bishop Murphy. One of the things we have heard this morning is, thank you Al, for

clarity, the number one word I would say that you gave us was clarity and a call. We all must stand in this perilous hour and may we, as Churchill called his people in that gathering storm to stand, may we all come together and stand because together we can save this United States of America and defend religious freedom for all.

What a privilege it is for us to recognize these servants of God. Thanks to all of you for attending this morning to honor these outstanding Americans, these great champions of religious liberty. And I'm going to all you if you could join me again in thanking Ed Meese, Attorney General Mukasey, Bishop Murphy, and Al Mohler one more time for defending our liberty. Tony Perkins is now going to dismiss us and I understand we are on time and I understand the rest of this weekend is going to be the precision of the Marine Corps. God bless you. Thank you.

MR. TONY PERKINS

It will be the precision of the Marine Corps cadence or it will be the Marine Corps snipers, which do you want? Well, Alan Sears, thank you. Alliance Defending Freedom, we are so grateful here at the Council for National Policy to be able to partner with you each year to be able to recognize those who are defending religious freedom for us. Dr. Mohler, thank you so much for being here with us. Bishop, thank you for being with us today. We are grateful for this opportunity and grateful that each and every one of you are here this weekend. We are actually just slightly ahead of schedule, Alan, so thank you and you will be dismissed. The general session will begin promptly at 12:00 in salon I & II so I encourage you to move quickly to get a good seat because we have a full afternoon lined up for you. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Have a great weekend.

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