

## God Was in the Air: An Invocation to the Oregon Senate

בְּרֵאשִׁית... הָאָרֶץ, הִיְתָה תְהוֹ וְבֵהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-פְּנֵי  
תְהוֹם... וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם. וַיְהִי-אוֹר...

In the beginning...the world was a place of unshaped chaos...and upon all there was a terrible and deep darkness. In such barrenness, nothing could exist.

Then came the Divine Wind—Spirit of God—Hovering above the Waters Themselves...and in this way the Light came, and Life came, and Goodness entered into the World.

So begins the Genesis story. So begins the human story, climbing out of our own depths, rising up to create the shared arts of music and industry, of government and medicine and a thousand things beside...

But a different wind is now blowing over the face of the land. A wind that seeks to sunder order and sow hatred. A storm that would send us downward and destroy all we value.

In Memphis and Montgomery, In Prescott and Charlotte, in Baltimore and Kansas City, in Savannah and Highlands Ranch, our children feel the icy reaches of this chill wind as their schools turn to killing grounds.

At the Tree of Life and Poway, San Diego, Jews were shot for seeking their God; in Louisiana, as the sparks of rage were carried on an angry wind, three black churches were burnt down—St. Mary Baptist Church in Port Barre, and Greater Union Baptist Church and Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Opelousas—.

On the streets of this state, thousands of Your children live beneath cardboard or nylon or huddled with only tattered blankets. Their feet are cracked and bleeding.

And this is but one country in your world, Oh God.

And this is but one year in the human calendar, Oh God. Less than a year.

How are we to stand up against this gale force of hatred?

More than ever, we your people need the moral courage and vision of our leaders.

In a society where friendship increasingly is limited to our own reflections, we need to see our leaders reach across the aisles of distrust.

We are desperate for them to model those bonds of connection which celebrate cooperation and teach us how we too ought to behave. For we are watching and we learn from their example.

As they deliberate on policies and laws to further the noble project of America, guide them to seek not only solutions, but pathways of respect wide enough so that every citizen can follow and find a place to walk.

God, inspire these individuals who are garbed in the mantles of power— To be more than politicians. More even than leaders.

Help them to be Healers of democracy, of our very society.

In that way, I pray, they shall lessen the storms of chaos

and shepherd us back, once more to that First Source,

Divine Breath, Source of Light and Inner Goodness.

May you grant us length of days to witness all this—or a still greater vision unfold.           And let us all say, AMEN