

Monitor Passport Prize Essay Winner – All Class Retreat 2017

Undaunted by the Numbers by Grace Stringer, 2017E

There are about six billion people in the world. Just think about that number for a minute. Six billion. Wow, that's a lot of zeros. The number itself is mind boggling but knowing that each of those numbers represents a person is incredible. When I was told that I would be praying for those six billion people that I've never met... Let's just say that it took a while to compute.

My outlook on the world before reading the Monitor was pretty bleak. All I ever heard or saw on the news made me depressed and it always seemed like things were just getting worse. Unfortunately, I took that mindset with me when I opened my first Monitor. The cover depicted a few individuals with their heads bowed down in prayer, their eyes closed, faces serene. It was a hopeful start. The title was Unified in Spirit - what a great title! As a Christian Scientist, I was all about Spirit, capital S. The subtitle read "prayer meetings in Congress inspire fellowship." That made me even more eager to read the article. The thought of Congress solving issues through prayer was hopeful and inspiring.

According to the article, every Wednesday, Congress meets together to have a prayer breakfast of sorts. It's optional, of course, but more than a quarter of the Senate meets weekly. This prayer breakfast is the only venue on the Hill where members of both parties mix socially. I found that fact soothing. Prayer is more powerful than any sort of rivalry between political parties. That was the most comforting thing I gleaned from the article, especially with the political tension and aggression happening in the U.S. after the election. I was pleasantly surprised to find myself calm and relaxed after finishing the article. After reading it, I instantly recognized this specific article as the topic of my essay. After jotting down a few notes, I read it again, digging deep for inspiration. A certain quote caught my gaze. California representative Janice Hahn said that "Praying together over problems really does begin to break down barriers. You realize everyone's the same." Of course I'd already knew that everyone is equal in God's eyes from my many years of Sunday School, but to read it from someone who didn't grow up in Christian Science really soothed me. I began to understand that Christian Science belongs to everyone, whether they realize they're expressing it or not.



This prayer breakfast has not only changed relationships and opinions, but political outlooks as well. Senator Amy Klobuchar stated that “I’ve gotten to know people through that prayer breakfast. That has led to some positive legislative developments.” Not only was it making people happier, but it was improving politics as well. This was prayer in action. This was something to give gratitude for. This was something to write about.

I couldn’t stop talking about the prayer breakfast. I told my NLC mentor, my parents, even my teachers at the Principia Upper School. My entire outlook on politics had changed thanks to this uplifting article.

My bleak outlook on the world did a complete 360 after I finished Unified In Spirit. I began to see the good in the world instead of the bad. I witnessed random acts of kindness and had more gratitude to give than I’d had in quite some time.

Those six billion people in the world have one more Christian Scientist praying for them. One who has witnessed the healing power of prayer. One who, for once, isn’t daunted by the numbers.

