



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

January 21, 1977

77-11

Carter's Inaugural Speech
Based on Bible Concepts

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter took his oath of office with his hand on Micah 6:8 in the Bible given to him by his mother a few years ago.

This prophetic admonition for social justice also set the tone for the new President's inaugural speech. Micah exhorted, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (KJV).

Carter's 15-minute speech was interrupted frequently by applause and shouts of approval from the crowd of more than 100,000 people who jammed the east side of the Capitol grounds.

Key words in the President's speech were "freedom," "justice," "human rights and dignity," and "a new spirit."

To amplify these concepts, President Carter set forth his goals, "Within us, the people of the United States, there is evident a serious and purposeful rekindling of confidence, and I join in the hope that when my time as your President has ended, people might say this about our nation:

--"That we had remembered the words of Micah and renewed our search for humility, mercy and justice;

--"That we had torn down the barriers that separated those of different race and region and religion and, where there had been mistrust, built unity, with a respect for diversity;

--"That we had found productive work for those able to perform it;

--"That we had strengthened the American family, which is the basis of our society;

--"That we had ensured respect for law, and equal treatment under the law, for the weak and the powerful, the rich and the poor;

--"And that we had enabled our people to be proud of their own government once again."

At the outset of his speech, President Carter paid high tribute to the outgoing President Gerald R. Ford. "For myself and our nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land," he said. Then in an emotional moment for both Ford and Carter, the two men shook hands as the crowd roared its approval and agreement.

The greatest applause from the crowd came when the new President declared his ultimate goal--"The elimination of all nuclear weapons from this earth."

He said, as the crowd shouted its approval, "We will ever be vigilant and never vulnerable, and we will fight our wars against poverty, ignorance and injustice, for those are the enemies against which our forces can be honorably marshalled."

Carter, who later shattered precedent by walking with his family down Pennsylvania Ave. to the White House, renewed his pledge for freedom: "Two centuries ago our nation's birth was a milestone in the long quest for freedom. . . . I have no new dream to set forth today, but rather urge a fresh faith in the old dream. . . . Because we are free we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere."

-more-

The new President came down heavily on human rights and dignity. He declared, "We have already found a high degree of personal liberty and we are now struggling to enhance equality of opportunity. Our commitment to human rights must be absolute, our laws fair, our natural beauty preserved; the powerful must not persecute the weak, and human dignity must be enhanced."

Giving emphasis to the inaugural theme of "A New Spirit," Carter said, "The world itself is dominated by a new spirit. Peoples more numerous and more politically aware are craving and now demanding their place in the sun--not just for the benefit of their own physical condition, but for basic human rights."

He then commented: "The passion for freedom is on the rise. Tapping this new spirit, there can be no nobler nor more ambitious task for America to undertake on this day of a new beginning than to help shape a just and peaceful world that is truly humane."

Only two prayers were offered at the Carter inauguration, a contrast to the numerous and lengthy prayers recited at inaugurations in recent previous administrations. United Methodist Bishop William R. Cannon of Atlanta prayed in the invocation that God would "save us from the arrogant futility of trying to play God." He asked forgiveness for the corporate sins of the American people, asserting that "our leaders mirror the people" and that we should not blame national sins on politicians.

Roman Catholic Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis pronounced the benediction and appealed for a national sense of compassion, for courage to change injustice and for attention to just dissent.

The oath of office was administered to Vice President Walter F. Mondale by Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr., Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives. Warren E. Burger, chief justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, administered the oath of office to President Carter.

Preceding the inauguration, a concert was given by the United States Marine Band under the direction of Lt. Col. Jack T. Kline. Special choral music was sung by the Atlanta University Center Chorus, an all-black ensemble conducted by Wendell P. Whalum.

-30-

Baptist Leaders Pray
For President Carter

Baptist Press
1/21/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Leaders from both the American Baptist Churches in the USA, Inc. and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) met at the First Baptist Church here the night before the inauguration to pray for President Jimmy Carter and his new administration.

Robert Campbell, executive secretary of the American Baptist Churches, Valley Forge, Pa., prayed for President Carter: "Save him from his friends, who in misdirected devotion, would make his way easy but compromising. Deliver him from the colleagues who, in the name of the party or even the nation, would persuade him from the holy path of righteous leadership for all people."

Bruce Edwards, pastor of the Plains (Ga.) Baptist Church, President Carter's home congregation, emphasized the responsibility of Christian citizenship on the part of the people. He said that the Bible teaches responsibility both on the part of the leaders and the followers.

Scheduled to participate in the service but delayed because of traffic jams were Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville; Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham; and Glendon McCullough, executive director of the SBC Brotherhood Commission, Memphis, of which Carter was a trustee.

In his invocation, Charles A. Trentham, senior minister of First Baptist Church, stressed the Christian's interaction with God, especially in fulfilling moral obligations.

-more-

Others who participated in the program included James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington; James A. Langley, executive director of the D. C. Baptist Convention; Jimmy Allen, pastor of the First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tex.; Edward Hughes Pruden, pastor emeritus of the First Baptist Church; and C. Welton Gaddy from the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Members of the local church who participated included Charles R. Sanks Jr., associate pastor; Floyd Davis, a deacon; and Mrs. Eleanor Bingham.

-30-

Carter Family Has Private
Worship Before Inauguration

Baptist Press
1/21/77

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Jimmy Carter and his new administration were exhorted, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord," in a private worship service at the First Baptist Church here, Jan. 20, before the inauguration ceremonies at the U. S. Capitol Building.

Nelson L. Price, pastor of the Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, Ga., pointed out in a sermon that a positive spirit cannot replace good choices. "Misplaced priorities have often been the downfall of a country," he said.

"Let the spirit of Heaven permeate the spirit of Washington with a new spirit of prayer," Price urged.

Price has been a "prayer partner" with Carter since his days as governor of Georgia and delivered the invocation at his inauguration as governor.

The private service, to which the press and the public were not invited, was attended by President Carter and his family, Vice President Mondale and his family, members of the new President's cabinet and military escorts for the families. Some 200 persons were present.

Charles A. Trentham, pastor of First Baptist Church, read 1 Corinthians 13, often called "the love chapter" in the Bible. He then prayed for the personal needs of the Carter family. Nine-year-old Amy Carter nestled under her father's arm as the pastor prayed.

John M. Adams, emeritus chaplain and professor of religion at MacAlester College, St. Paul, Minn., read Scriptures describing Moses' call at Sinai and Solomon's accession to the throne of Israel. Adams is the father of Julia Mondale, wife of Vice President Mondale. Both the Vice President and his wife are ministers' children.

The Scripture reading continued with Isaiah 61:1: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Adams concluded by citing Mordecai's challenge to Esther: "Who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). He applied it to the new administration of President Carter.

The private presidential worship service was coordinated by Chip Carter, the President's son. The choir of First Baptist Church provided music. Myrtle Hall, artist in residence, King's College, sang "The Lord's Prayer" and "Here is My Life." She has sung with Billy Graham crusades.

Charles R. Sanks Jr., associate pastor of First Baptist Church, also participated in the service.

-30-

Carol Franklin, a reporter with the Washington Bureau of Baptist Press, is a member of the choir of First Baptist Church, Washington, scene of the private prayer service for President Carter and his administration.

Worshippers Brave Bitter
Cold to Pray for President

WASHINGTON (BP)--A group of about 100 worshippers gathered in the bitter cold on the steps of the U.S. Capitol the day before the inauguration of Jimmy Carter as President to pray for God's blessings on the new administration and a "new beginning" for the nation.

The mid-day prayer service was a part of a series of interfaith religious events during inauguration week sponsored by the host inaugural committee chaired by Mrs. Lillian J. Huff.

Ruth Carter Stapleton, sister of the President-elect, led in a litany written for an ecumenical service held at the start of the inaugural week at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception here. The litany was written by Jack E. McClendon, pastor of the New York Ave. Presbyterian Church here.

In the meditation Dr. Aurelia Downey, president of the Nannie Helen Burroughs School here, said, "Whatever level or state we may find ourselves today as a nation, it is certain we can achieve a higher, more noble one. May we rise to the fullness of stature demanded to attain it. Our times of 'new beginnings' are not to be frittered away, or used in idle dreams. May we together as a nation seize them, their responsibilities and challenges."

Rabbi Dr. Abraham M. Hersberg, president of the Union of Rabbis for Latin America and president of the World Organization of Peace and Religious Freedom, led in a prayer for peace and freedom. "We know how to fly near the heavens like the birds, we know how to swim in the ocean like fish but we should pray to God to teach us how to live in this earth like humans," he said.

Other participants in the interfaith service were James Langley, executive director, District of Columbia Baptist Convention; E. E. Smith, pastor, Florida Avenue Baptist Church here; and W. L. Richardson, pastor, Grace Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon, New York.

Also participating were A. Knighton Stanley, pastor, People's Congregational Church here; Rabbi Herzl Kranz, Silver Spring, Md. Jewish Center; and Sardarni Premka Kaur, secretary general of the Sikh Dharma of Los Angeles and New Mexico.

Annette Poulard sang "This Little Light of Mine" and "Climb Every Mountain."

-30-

Inauguration Day Begins at
Lincoln Memorial Service

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--Just hours before his famous church member was to be inaugurated 39th President of the United States, Pastor Bruce E. Edwards of Plains, Ga., called upon the nation to support its new leader with prayers and with renewed political activism.

Edwards, who has come into the national limelight in recent months as President Carter's pastor, presided over a "People's Prayer Service" held at the Lincoln Memorial and attended by an estimated 5,000 persons. Millions more watched on television.

The Plains pastor was joined on the program by Martin Luther King Sr.; Ruth Carter Stapleton, the President's sister; and Metropolitan Opera performers Leontyne Price and Sherill Milnes. Also, a choir of several hundred voices from churches in the metropolitan Washington area was joined by the Atlanta Boys Choir in performing and leading the singing. The choir was directed by Norman Scribner.

Edwards, whose Plains congregation survived a painful crisis in recent months over desegregation, declared: "The man for whom we pray is himself a man of prayer...who seeks God's leadership."

He spoke of the appropriateness of beginning inauguration day festivities with a prayer service and cited the dependence upon prayer of three earlier national leaders--Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr.

-more-

Edwards also reminded the audience that another way of helping the nation is by "becoming involved in the political process....We are the government."

The elder King, father of the slain civil rights leader and long-time pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, opened his brief sermon on a solemn note, recalling that it was 14 years ago that his son stood on the same Lincoln Memorial steps to deliver his famous "I Have A Dream" address.

"I stand here with a bit of reluctancy and timidity on these hallowed grounds," he began. "I'm glad to be alive....I had no idea I'd ever be here."

King challenged the people to prove their love for Christ in the same way Jesus told Simon Peter he could demonstrate his love--by feeding Christ's sheep.

"The sheep must be fed," he declared. "That's why Martin Luther King Jr. gave his life... that the least of these may not be forgotten....That's why the President-elect is up here."

The crowd at the Lincoln Memorial repeatedly shouted its approval as King preached, perhaps most audibly when he stated that the role of government is to "feed the sheep instead of fleecing them."

The crowd also came alive when Metropolitan Opera star Leontyne Price pierced the cold morning air with her rendition of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." Earlier, baritone Sherill Milnes sang "The Lord is My Light and My Salvation."

Yet perhaps the most moving moment of all was saved for last, when thousands joined in singing President Carter's favorite Gospel song, "Amazing Grace."

In an interview with Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention news service, after the ceremony, Edwards said he felt good about the service and said he was looking forward to a "good inauguration service." And, in fact, the new President's inaugural address turned out to be as much a sermon as a political speech.

Asked about the health of his congregation back in Plains, Edwards said the spirit is "excellent, probably better than it's ever been." He indicated that the small church's crisis is over and observed that "perhaps some of our problems will be eliminated with Jimmy and Rosalynn coming to Washington."

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: A set of photos on the inauguration day activities will be mailed on Monday, Jan. 24, from the Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press. The Washington Bureau handled reporting of inauguration events, with an assist in photography from the Richmond Bureau. The photo mailing will go to state Baptist editors.