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An Analysis

President Carter Offers

New Hope For America

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--The War Between the States has finally ended. To everyone's amazement, 111 years after Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, April 3, 1865, a peanut farmer from a remote hamlet in Georgia peacefully stormed the nation's capital and took over the presidency. The South has risen again.

As President Jimmy Carter walked down Pennsylvania Avenue on inauguration day hand-in-hand with his wife Rosalynn from the United States Capitol to the White House with hundreds of thousands of people shouting the victory, it was quite a contrast to another march over a century ago.

When General William T. Sherman invaded Atlanta in 1865, burned it to the ground and marched on to the sea, he left behind a path of destruction and suffering. When President Carter took over the White House in 1977, he quoted Micah 6:8:

"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?"

The new President proclaimed, "The bold and brilliant dream which excited the founders of our nation still awaits its consummation. I have no new dream to set forth today, but rather urge a fresh faith in the old dream."

He then described the kind of war he would continue in the United States. "We will be ever 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."

Indeed, the inauguration of Jimmy Carter as President of the United States of America signaled a new spirit of hope for the nation.

After the civil disorders and riots of the 1960's, after the debacle of the Vietnam War, after the political scandals of Watergate and the sex scandals in Congress during the early 1970's, a Southern Baptist deacon from Georgia restated the highest hopes of the American people, and they elected him as their President.

During inauguration week in the nation's capital, the new spirit for a new commitment for a new America exploded among all segments of the population as it finally dawned on the people that something "different" had happened with the coming of Jimmy Carter. Many signs of a new determination to recapture the best in the American experiment were evident everywhere.

The trend toward a recovery of lost American ideals really began when Gerald R. Ford succeeded the scandalized Richard M. Nixon as President. Mr. Ford had been in public life many years and had risen to minority leader in the House of Representatives. His hands were clean. His record bristled with integrity. He was an open man with an open policy

When Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigned in disgrace, "Gerry" Ford was nominated and confirmed to succeed him. This brought a gentle breeze of relief to the strife-torn capital. But when President Nixon resigned and Ford was sworn in as President, the nation relaxed for the first time in a decade. As refreshing as a cooling summer shower on a sweltering July day was the new administration of Gerry Ford. He prevented the nation from going to pieces until a new President could be elected.

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Then a new face appeared on the scene. Little-known Jimmy Carter, peanut farmer from the rural southern hamlet of Plains, a former governor of the state of Georgia, said he wanted to be President of the United States. He faced an uphill battle all the way. He had no national public record to make him known. He was from the rebel South, which has been misunderstood and underestimated for a century following the War Between the States. He was even a devout evangelical Christian, from a denomination--the Southern Baptist Convention--which has also been misunderstood, underestimated and misrepresented by many since its beginning in 1845.

The enigma of Jimmy Carter continued through the campaign, during the post-election days, and right into the White House. The established order, the traditional politicians and political news analysts are baffled at the unorthodox approach of the new President. He carries his own luggage. He moved to Washington in a peanut warehouse truck. He walked down Pennsylvania Avenue in the bitter cold as a "people's" President. He had never been in the White House before he moved in on inauguration day.

Carter's inaugural address was a simple statement of his basic goals, based on biblical concepts, devoid of oratory and political hoopla. The analysts are completely confused, but the plain people understand and their spirits are revived.

There's no way to predict at this stage whether or not President Carter's administration will succeed or be a total disaster, but there's the possibility that another Lincoln or another Roosevelt has emerged to lead the nation into the third century of its existence. Let us pray that this will happen.

As the political analysts try to unscramble the new approach to America's future, they can only speculate, "We don't understand this man and his way, but maybe it will work." They are skeptical, but hopeful. The traditional ways of recent politicians have not led to the most glamorous results, to put it mildly. Maybe the new way, which actually is as old as the prophets, will be the best after all.

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Carters Join Church Their
First Sunday in Washington

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1/24/77

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--On his first Sunday after moving into his new home in the nation's capital, President Jimmy Carter with his wife and family went to Sunday School and joined the First Baptist Church here.

Amy, nine-year old daughter of President and Mrs. Carter, made a profession of her faith in Jesus Christ as her saviour and will be baptized into the church membership.

The Carters have been active members of the Plains Baptist Church, Plains, Ga. When Carter was elected governor of Georgia and moved to Atlanta, he transferred his membership to a church there and became active in its program.

Other members of the Carter family who joined First Baptist include the President's son, Chip Carter, and his wife, Caron, and Annette, wife of Jeff Carter, another of the President's sons.

The First Baptist Church here is fully integrated racially. At the same time the Carters joined, the church also received William Hinton, a black from North Carolina. About 50 members of the 946-member church are black.

Apparently the Carters intend to become active church members, not just occasional drop-ins. Fred Gregg, a Washington life insurance executive with roots in Georgia, is the teacher of the couple's Sunday School class attended by the Carters. He has asked the President to teach the class and he has agreed to do so once a month.

Also, Iris Hatcher, teacher of the Dawson Bible Class, a woman's group, and named for Mrs. Joseph Martin Dawson, who taught the class many years, said the President agreed to teach this class sometime.

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Charles A. Trentham is pastor of the First Baptist Church, which claims to be "the oldest Protestant church in the District of Columbia." Organized March 7, 1802, First Baptist is affiliated with both the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, U. S. A., as are all churches in the D. C. Baptist Convention. Harry S. Truman frequently worshipped there when he was President.

Trentham came to Washington from the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Knoxville, Tenn. He is a former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex., and former dean of the University of Tennessee School of Religion. He has served as chairman of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

As Trentham stood in the pulpit he said, "Suppose you had the responsibility of preaching the first sermon the President of the United States would hear after his inauguration? Where would you begin?"

He chose as his theme, "To Begin Again." His texts were Genesis 1:1, "in the beginning God," and John 1:1, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"God offers to be with us in all our beginnings," Trentham emphasized. He said that January is a good month to begin again for students going away to college and for government workers with new jobs.

Between Sunday School and worship service, the First Baptist Church has a half-hour coffee-break. During this time the Carters mingled with the other church members, visiting and getting acquainted.

As Trentham received the Carters into the church at the close of the service, he said, "Mr. President, next to the privilege of serving my Lord, I count this the highest privilege of my career. This church undergirds you and surrounds your family with prayers."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Baptists Among Victims
Of Caribbean Shipwreck

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RICHMOND (BP)--The two oldest sons of a Baptist lay preacher and many other members of Baptist families were among more than 50 persons who died when an inter-island motor launch sank in late December in heavy seas off Old Providence Island, Colombia, according to a report received here in January.

Only 21 persons of an estimated 75 passengers survived until rescuers found them, five days after the "Betty B" sank, just before Christmas, on its regular run between San Andreas Island and Old Providence Island, some 75 miles apart.

In a letter describing the incident, John N. Thomas, a Southern Baptist missionary, said. Baptist church members and the Colombia Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) mobilized quickly to provide food and clothing needed by families of victims of the sea tragedy.

He said people from every section of the island expressed appreciation for Baptist relief assistance and their efforts to console and minister to grieved family members in Christ's name.

Thomas said the motor launch was only seven miles south of Old Providence Island when it began filling with water through damaged planking on the bottom of the boat. The electric power plant that operates the pumps flooded, the engine cut off, and the launch wallowed in the stormy sea. Minutes later it sank.

When the ship did not arrive on schedule, airplanes from the United States Rescue Center in Panama and also from Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua flew over the Caribbean Sea searching for the boat or survivors.

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On the fifth day a small boat with the captain, his 9-year-old son and some crew members was found, according to Thomas. Others were later rescued. But most of the women and children perished, he reported.

"Most of those who drowned were from our sister island of Old Providence," said Thomas, who lives on San Andreas Island. "Also there were many students lost who were returning home for the Christmas and New Year vacations. A Baptist lay preacher whom I have known for years lost his two oldest sons, 17 and 15 years of age. Many other Baptist families lost loved ones."

The Central Baptist Church, San Andreas, and the Colombia Mission gave more than 22,000 pesos (\$550) to purchase flour, rice, beans, canned meats, powdered and liquid milk and cooking oil to aid the victims' families. Church members also collected clothing and shoes to send.

Arturo Parra, pastor of Central Church, assistant pastor Eduardo Criollo, and Thomas helped other church members and government officials distribute the relief packages.

Thomas said it was the "worst marine catastrophe ever to happen in this archipelago." The Colombian Tri-Color flag flew at half staff over Old Providence Island during the holidays, and theaters and other places of public amusement were closed for almost a week.

"A pall of sorrow lay heavily upon all the island's residents," Thomas said. "We, as Baptists, are thankful we were able to move into this tragic scene with an extended, helping hand and deep Christian compassion."

-30-

Carter Gets Special "Why
Not the Best" Edition

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Broadman Press, book publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board, presented President Jimmy Carter with a special printing of its new Presidential Edition of his best-selling autobiography, "Why Not The Best?" in an informal ceremony at the White House here.

"We want you to know how proud we are to have you in the White House, and we know that you are going to have a great effect on the morals of our country," said Robert G. Fulbright, manager of the Broadman Products Department, in presenting the book to the President.

"I'm certainly going to try," Mr. Carter replied.

The presentation on the President's first full day in office took place in the "Map Room" adjacent to the "Fireside Chat Room," made famous by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The "Map Room" got its name because many of the operations of World War II were handled there, and the walls were covered with maps of the world and battle areas.

Also participating in the presentation were James W. Clark, acting executive vice president of the Sunday School Board and director of Broadman; Johnnie Godwin, supervisor of Broadman Books and Music Section and his wife; Mrs. Robert Fulbright; W. Barry Garrett, bureau chief of the Washington Bureau of Baptist Press; and Robert Harper of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., who took photos.

Since the Sunday School Board, the world's largest publisher of religious materials, first released the book through Broadman in Oct. 1975, it has sold over two million copies, including 16 foreign editions and a paperback edition by Bantam Books. It has become the fastest seller in Broadman history.

Mr. Carter will receive six copies of the Presidential Edition, specially bound in leather, and the first six numbered copies of a limited signature edition of 5,000 which has pages gilded in gold and a number stamped in gold. The name of each purchaser of the limited edition, which costs \$16.95, will be recorded and become part of the records in the Carter Library in the Georgia Archives. The regular printing of the Presidential Edition will sell for \$8.95 in book stores.

-more-

1/24/77

Page 5

Baptist Press

The Presidential Edition contains two additional items beyond the first editions-- 16 pages of color photos and another chapter, including the President's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention and an epilog he wrote on Nov. 20, 1976.

During the presentation, the President leafed through the book and commented on the superb color reproductions. "This book has made a lot of money," he said, "and we have put it all into the foundation." (The President has set up a special, non-profit educational foundation, to which royalties are being paid.

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(BP) Photos mailed to state Baptist editors from the Richmond Bureau of Baptist Press.