

Forgive, Love, Unite Becomes Rally Cry

Joy Schmidt [Pople]
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Early morning prayer meetings continued in front of the White House through December as part of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis. Members of the Washington Unification Church were joined by most of the trainees at the Belvedere International Leadership Training Center in a drive for signatures in support of Reverend Moon's statement.

Each day, in rain or snow, dynamic young men formed action teams to collect signatures on the streets, door to door, in shopping centers, and in offices. Outstanding men included Nabil Blanchard from Lebanon and Georgio Re from Italy, as well as Joachim Becker, Rainer Look, Viggo Jorgensen, and Danuel Thomas. Daily highs were over 260 signatures.

Another very dedicated team contacted congressmen and senators until Congress recessed just before Christmas. Many lawmakers were carefully shielded from visitors by their secretaries and aides. The most successful pair was Michael Cate and Karen Gabriel, who persuaded many congressmen to sign the Watergate statement. In all, the signers included at least 32 congressmen and four senators. Congressman Guy Vander Jagt (R-Mich) read the statement into the *Congressional Record*. Other teams contacted churches and professional and special interest groups.



James Cowin (left) presents granariums to Presidential aide Mike Farrel on behalf of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis

White House visit

After the second leg of the 1973 Day of Hope campaign was completed in Tulsa, Oklahoma on December 22, members of the New Hope Singers and the mobile staff returned to Washington, D.C. They joined the local members in their 7:30 a.m. prayer meeting in front of the White House on December 26. After singing and praying for about an hour in the steady rain, they were surprised to see a White House aide emerge from the gate and invite them into the White House. President Nixon had observed them standing in the rain for such a long time and asked that they be invited inside the White House. The New Hope Singers presented several songs, and James Cowin gave two granariums made by Washington members to Dr. Mike Farrel, a Presidential aide.

By the end of December, coordinators of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis estimated that 13,000 responses had been received to the ads appearing in 21 cities. About 90 percent of these were favorable. In late December and early January, Reverend Moon's Watergate statement was to appear in all 50 states, and rallies were planned to publicize the National Prayer and Fast in each state.

Ten regional coordinators arranged city-wide prayer meetings and rallies in each state. These coordinators included: Paul Werner, Reiner Vincenz, Philip Burley, Hugh Spurgin, Jon Schuhart, Gary Fleisher, Joseph Sheftick, Joe Tully, Takeru Kamiyama, and Michael Smith.



Joseph Sheftick reads Rev. Moon's Watergate Statement at Washington rally

Local rallies

The New York City rally on January 11 drew a large crowd, including Rabbi Korff, who had organized the Citizens Committee for Fairness to the President. The rabbi and local representatives of the NPFWC met with Mayor Beame. The *New York Times* carried a large photograph of the event and two television stations covered it in the evening news. As far away as Seattle, Washington local stations aired the network's footage of the rally. In Seattle, where the Day of Hope talks were just beginning, the local announcer mentioned that Reverend Moon, whose photograph was being carried by one of the demonstrators, would soon be speaking in Seattle.

The F Street shopping mall in Washington, D.C. became the setting for a surprising rally. Shoppers and businessmen saw young men and women dressed as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Betsy Ross, and a Pilgrim lady explain the hopes these Americans had in their country as a nation based on faith in God. The *Washington Post* commented that passers-by stopped to listen carefully to the rally speakers. Onlookers included anti-Nixon youths who remained after the rally dispersed to ask more about the reasons for the call to forgive, love, and unite.

The January, 10 *Washington Star-News* commented about a citywide prayer meeting in the Arthur Fletcher Elmes Center on January 9: "Members of the modestly-sized but fiercely energetic Unification Church of the United States, who in recent weeks have become President Nixon's most formidable supporters in the world of religion, last evening wound up their 40-day Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis." The article included an interview with Neil Salonen, President of the American Unification Church, who explained that after the 40 days were over activities would continue on the state level, with local prayer meetings and rallies.

A cold plunge in North Dakota

Unusual stories began coming in about these rallies. Perhaps most striking was the plunge into the below-freezing water of a North Dakota river. The January 10 *Fargo-Moorhead Forum* story (reprinted in several other papers around the country) explained that Susan Jacobson and Jim Gavin jumped into the Red River in 10- below zero weather on January 8.

"We felt we had to do something to draw attention to the need to renew our faith in God," they quoted James Gavin. "We want to show we are very, very serious about this. Each of us feels it's important to unite people at this time, important enough even to suffer a little personally."

About four dozen onlookers watched the NPFWC members pray,.. and sing before two of them entered the water, some heckling and others shaking their heads a little puzzled. Other activities of the group included scooping out the words, "God Loves America," on the snow-covered river, a cross-country ski trip, a rally.

Jim Gavin explained about the prayer and fast, "People are calling him (Nixon) names every day, but nobody is praying for him. If we're not supporting him spiritually, how can we hope for him to do his job?" Young people in other states agreed with the spirit of the North Dakota demonstrators. In Tampa, Florida, the NPFWC volunteers marched in a relay to the downtown rally site. In one leg of the relay, demonstrators had to swim across a river.

Other newspapers commented on the effects of the National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis. In New Orleans, the *Times Picayune* wrote, "Passers-by curious enough to check out what was going on in

front of City Hall Monday got a healthy dose of a commodity which seems to be in short supply of late-support for President Nixon." A New Castle, Delaware *Gazette* editorial explained about the stacks of mail that come to an editor each day, all seeking publication. The editor selected Reverend Moon's Watergate statement, saying, "In this hour of trial and need, the message is positive and affirmative," and quoted substantially from the statement.



Washington ralliers included Felice Walton [Hart] and Isaiah Poole

Others call for prayer

As a result of Reverend Moon's statement on the Watergate Crisis, Americans are being inspired to participate in a spirit of Christian love and forgiveness, in hopes of achieving national unity.

One such group involved in this rising national trend is led by Dr. Derek Prince of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In early December, Dr. Prince gathered more than 10,000 people in support of the President and national unity. Oregon senator Mark O. Hatfield sponsored a resolution in the U. S. Senate calling for a "national day of humiliation, fasting and prayer" on April 30, 1974. Hatfield's proposal is modeled after a proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln fixing April 30, 1863 -- when the Union cause in the Civil War had reached a low point as a day for reflection. In a Senate speech Hatfield said, "We witness a country torn apart with division and lacking the spiritual foundation which would restore its vision and purpose."

One reason why Reverend Moon published his Watergate statement was because no American religious leader had spoken out giving God's viewpoint on the crisis in America. Nearly a month after Reverend Moon's statement, an interview with evangelist Billy Graham was published in major newspapers throughout the country.



National Prayer and Fast for the Watergate Crisis coordinator Daniel G. Fefferman explains the purpose of the rally to an incredulous audience.

"I have a high personal regard for the President," Mr. Graham said. "I think many of his judgments have been very poor, especially in the selection of certain people, or the people who selected others for him.... I also think there is a difference between judgment and integrity. Until there is more proof to the contrary I have confidence in the President's integrity.... " Mr. Graham felt that if the President was wrong in the Watergate affair he should admit it, and he speculated that Nixon was so occupied with detente with the Soviet Union and Red China that he left the management of his reelection up to his aides.



Prominent Americans of another era attend Washington rallies

Willoughby cites national trend

Nationally syndicated *Washington Star-News* writer William F. Willoughby credited the Unification Church as one of the first groups to call for fasting and prayer for national repentance and the spiritual wellbeing of the country. In an article entitled "National Mood: Time to Pray and Fast," he wrote, "From the spiritual point of view, Watergate, the fuel crisis and the problems in the Middle East, are the best things that could have happened to the United States at this time. It is driving the country to its knees. Not since the dark days of the Civil War have praying people been moved so deeply."

Citing Matthew 6:33, which asks men to seek first the kingdom of heaven, Willoughby added, "All you'd have to do is to read my mail to hear of the estrangement and disillusionment people have with government, leaders, politicians, institutions -- even churches they're not exempt either. "So, therefore, I feel a spiritual renaissance is the ultimate solution for the healing of the nation.... The most powerful instrument God's people have is united prayer and fasting. And the Bible specifically tells us to pray for our government."

Willoughby feels that if a nation does not have good government today, it is the responsibility of the Christians who have failed to know and apply God's will. If a nation is on its way to collapse the responsibility is the Christians'. "We get the kind of government we deserve," he added.

Jeane Dixon predicts unity

A well-known Washington seeress, Jeane Dixon, predicted in an article in the October 21, 1968 *Washington Daily News*:

A wiretapping scandal which I had predicted previously is yet to come. It will involve Richard Nixon, but will show him as a sincere man and will help his public image. I saw a ball going round and round.... The ball seemed always to stop on a double 0. It seemed to indicate a name or names which I could not interpret.

In this time of concern about the Watergate crisis, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an interview with Jeane Dixon in the September October, 1973 issue. She said:

There are favorable signs' in which sincere members of the President's party and the opposition such as Senator McGovern and Senator Proxmire will demonstrate that they are loyal Americans, true Christians, and will rally behind our President, on behalf of all Americans, as never before.... Watergate will prove to be the turning point for good.

She implies that the cold war will heighten and that there were double agents involved in the Watergate activities. But she predicts a cleansing for the government and concludes, "I feel President Nixon will unite us as we have not been in a long time."

Some newspapers are continuing their campaign to discredit Nixon, although reporting that senators and congressmen returning to the Capitol after the holiday recess find their constituents more concerned about the energy crisis rather than the Watergate crisis. At any rate, the voices calling for prayer and unity are increasing, and the people are responding.