

## Three Days at the Capitol Praying and Fasting for the Future of America

Joy Schmidt [Pople]  
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*Fasters lead in singing and prayer in the "Christ is the Answer" tent on the Washington Monument grounds*

Three solemn days in July -- America's top leaders debating the fate of a President and 610 of America's youth praying for a new vision and new direction for America and her leaders.

Rabbi Baruch Korff, in planning a second annual Citizens Congress for Fairness to the Presidency in Washington, thought of holding a prayer and fast vigil as part of the program. The only volunteers for a three-day fast were members of the National Prayer and Fast Committee.



The fast was planned for July 22-25, to take place on the East Capitol steps. Each faster would carry the name and photograph of one person, for whom he would pray during those three days. Reverend Sun Myung Moon, whose Watergate Statement stirred wide interest when it was issued on November 30, 1973, planned the focus of the fast and promised to go fishing for enough fish to feed 610 fasters at the end of three days.

As events turned out, the week chosen for the fast was a momentous one. The Supreme Court handed down a decision limiting executive privilege. The House Judiciary Committee opened its final debates to the public and at the end of the week passed three articles of impeachment. Not long afterwards, when transcripts of Presidential conversations showed Nixon was indeed aware of the Watergate break-in and ordered its cover-up, Nixon announced his resignation.

This was a time for serious prayer, as has been the American tradition during times of past crises and new beginnings. As the 610 prayed for Nixon and

leaders of Congress and the Supreme Court, they will continue to pray for America's new President, Gerald Ford.

National Prayer and Fast Committee President Neil Salonen briefed the fasters on July 19, 1974, in Barrytown, New York. "The underlying principle of this whole demonstration is sacrifice. We must demonstrate a deeper heart and more dedication than others who have come to the Capitol to demonstrate. Each one of you has come here with a deep commitment, but I expect that you will leave with a deeper commitment than when you came."

Mr. Salonen recounted the other public events of the National Prayer and Fast Committee since the issuance of Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Watergate Statement on November 30, 1973. In Washington,

D.C.; Huntsville, Alabama; Chicago, Illinois; Saginaw, Michigan; Nashville, Tennessee; and Phoenix, Arizona, rallies were held, calling Americans to unity in the spirit of forgiveness and love. In addition, rallies at least in one major city in each state focused attention on the nation-wide appeal.



*Among the 81 congressmen and senators who visited the rally and met the person praying for them were Cong. Seiberling (left) and Cong. Zion (right)*

As Mr. Salonen recounted recent developments, the 610 who had gathered for the prayer and fast gained a deeper sense of the significance of their act. Fasters had gathered from each of the ten International One World Crusade teams in the United States and their region. For many of the fasters, it was their first occasion to meet Reverend Moon and to participate in such a nationwide rally.



For many it was also to be their first experience of fasting. The enthusiasm was high, and upon Mr. Salonen's announcement that the 610 young people would be fasting and praying on the Capitol steps day and night, with no place to sleep, there was an outburst of clapping and cheering.

"The way to bring unity," Mr. Salonen continued, "is to call people to their greatest moment. God will inspire them if they turn to Him. The vast majority of our congressmen are sincerely trying to do a proper job. We have had experiences in the past two months that congressmen and senators have really changed their hearts through your prayers. I don't think that there will ever be a demonstration of the magnitude and intensity of this one."

Mr. Salonen explained according to the Divine Principle the reason for supporting the Presidency. The functions of government in American

democracy are divided into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. These three functions are comparable to the three main organs of the human body, the lungs, heart, and stomach, which function according to the directives of the brain.

Ideally, in human society there should be smooth give and take among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, centered on the will of God. But the executive branch, comparable to the heart, is the most central organ. If the heart is ruled by the stomach (as when the legislative branch controls the executive branch) the organism cannot move forward. Mr. Salonen gave as an illustration of this point recent political developments in Europe, where Prime Ministers are often subservient to the legislature and therefore the governments cannot be truly stable.

"The President should not be tied to the internal struggles of Congress," he concluded. He explained further, "When God gives His forgiveness, He does it in an unconditional way. Peace will never come about by one side clobbering the other; peace only comes through a perfected relationship between a Cain and an Abel figure."

After a film of the 160 Japanese youths who gathered in May 1971 for a public prayer and fast to protest Japan -- recognition of Red China, Reverend Moon spoke to the gathering.

"It is a historical occasion when over 600 young people make a fast for something," he began. "This is fantastic-to make a fast for the purpose of a whole nation." He urged the fasters to sing and pray and do all things as if they were not fasting, and to seriously pray and summarize the purpose of the fast before breaking it.



"Your ancestors came to this nation as exiles," he continued, "and now your nation is in crisis, not fulfilling God's will. If we have no clear view of our nation, and no clear view of our family, where can America go? Because of the present individualism, people don't care about the nation of America. Now there is no tie between the nation and the family. Each individual goes his own way, and each family goes its own way, and each nation its own way."



*Pastor William H. Luke shares his heart at a Washington Monument prayer*

"Who will stem the flow?" he challenged. "Christians as individuals and as groups do not have this power. We are the only ones who carry this destiny on our shoulders. Because of you, your ancestors' expectations will be fulfilled."

Reverend Moon recounted how ethical decay and corruption has been the cause of the fall of nations in the past. "This is going on in this nation," he affirmed. "But if people have a positive stimulus, maybe this will change."

He attributed the loss of faith in God and the rising individualism to the failure of Christianity. "Therefore, God is raising up spiritual groups to bring a new tradition for the new future of Christianity. By 1977-78 we have to fulfill this part."



"You are making a tradition for the future," he encouraged the fasters. "This is a great hope for God. You are going to restore morality to God's standard. You will be the great champions to reconstruct the heavenly family. Because of you, a new America shall be born."

In farewell to the fasters, Reverend Moon urged them to "pray for God to accept me as the sacrifice for all mankind." Vans, busses, and cars left the large training center in Barrytown, New York for Washington, D.C. to begin final preparations for the fast beginning at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, July 22. NPFC Executive Director Dan Fefferman explained the organization of the staff of the fast, which included Wolfgang Waldner, coordinating public information; Dr. Joseph Sheftick, in charge of the program; and Keith Cooperrider, organizing special services.

As Dr. Sheftick organized the fasters into eleven tribes, according to geographic regions, he exclaimed, "Everything is moving like an orderly, flowing organism. I wish you could see a moving picture of all this. It is so beautiful."

And Dan Fefferman added a final note of encouragement to any apprehensive member, "I am sure that God is going to guide us in an

unprecedented way during this time."

Washington, D.C. National Prayer and Fast Committee members had worked day and night in preparation for these three days on the Capitol steps. About 560 posters were silkscreened and identified with the photograph and name of a senator, congressman, Cabinet member, Supreme Court official, or the President and his family. Each senator and congressman was informed in advance about the prayer and fast vigil and invited to come out to meet the person who was praying and fasting for him. Also, permission had to be obtained from police and Secret Service and Parks Department officials for the various activities planned during the period.



*Mr. and Mrs. Neil Salonen opened the three-day prayer and fast with prayers for the President and other government leaders.*

By 11:00 a.m. Monday all arrangements were completed and the 610 fasters arranged themselves on the central steps of the east front of the Capitol. Mr. and Mrs. Neil Salonen donned the placards of President Nixon and his wife Pat, and Mr. Salonen gave an opening speech before the fasters, newsmen, congressmen, and passersby.



"Over 600 members of the National Prayer and Fast Committee will be praying for congressmen, senators, Cabinet members, the President and his family, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court," he began. Continuing with a history of the founding of the National Prayer and Fast Committee with Reverend Moon's Watergate Statement and its subsequent action, he said, "We are determined to pray and fast on these steps for at least three days, so that God's spirit can move in this land."

Mr. Salonen recounted the mission of America, founded by people of all nations and cultures. "God has given America special blessings and responsibilities in the moral leadership of the world. We have mixed emotions. We cannot condone moral decay, but there is a definite need for a strong Presidency rather than one subservient to the legislature."

He strongly emphasized that in the past dictators such as Hitler and Lenin took power on the heels of weakened leadership. "We ask God to keep the hurt we feel now from growing into bitterness," he added. "We hope that God will lead us in rebuilding our characters into His image."



After recounting Nixon's achievements in international affairs, Mr. Salonen expressed hope that our "acceptance of him as our brother will inspire him and his workers to good leadership. America can build a good society maintained by conscientious people."

"We hope that as a result of our progress, God will make His will known," Mr. Salonen continued.



*Mr. Salonen and Susan Hughes appeared with Barbara Walters on the Today Show*

"We hope that God will accept this sacrifice and that it will bring His presence to the Supreme Court, the Presidency and the Congress.

"This begins a commitment that will not cease until righteousness is restored in this nation. This is our pledge to peace and harmony in the world."

Following this speech, Mr. Salonen led in an opening prayer for the nation and its leaders. Congressman Tim Lee Carter of Kentucky also addressed the crowd: "It gives me great pleasure to be here today and to take part in this prayer for the people of America and the world. We return to the principles that have made this country great-Jesus Christ and his teachings. Let us put them into practice."



Rabbi Baruch Korff of the Citizens Committee for Fairness to the Presidency briefly visited the opening ceremony and added, "I have come to declare my personal solidarity with these young people who are following the path of their forefathers who 198 years ago declared a day of prayer and fast." He pledged to fast for one day in the spirit of the demonstration.

There was little chance for boredom during the three days.

Eighty-one congressmen and senators came out to briefly address the fasters. Song and prayer services four or five times a day developed a deep spirit of love for America and her leaders and a strong desire for God's will to become known and carried out in a time of national crisis.

Monday evening the demonstrators rode to the Washington Monument for a prayer service. The next afternoon's activities included a march on foot the three miles from the Capitol Building to the Lincoln Memorial. The 610 marched and sang down Pennsylvania Avenue, the traditional route of violent anti-war demonstrators, and Constitution Avenue. A color guard and costumed dancers dressed in period clothes of the revolutionary era added considerable interest to the parade.

At the Lincoln Memorial, a candlelight service captured the tradition of American visionaries calling for a land of freedom and justice under God. At the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 Martin Luther King delivered his renowned "I have a dream" speech. "With this faith," proclaimed the American civil rights leader, "We will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

Col. Bo Hi Pak, who had just finished a ten-city tour with the Celebration of Life program calling Americans to a new spirit of love for God and Christ, joined the marchers. At the Lincoln Memorial he announced, "This is my greatest day, walking down Constitution Avenue with all of you. In spirit hundreds and thousands of brothers and sisters will join you. There are millions of people around the world who will join you in the cause of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. America was

founded by blood, sweat, and tears. We are determined to restore it with our blood, sweat, and tears. We will unite America under God and Christ."



*Speakers at the final service included (left to right) Rabbi Baruch Korff; Neil A. Salonen; Bruce Herschensohn, Deputy Special Assistant to the President; Reverend Sun Myung Moon; and David S. C. Kim*

At the close of the service each of the fasters lit one of the candles that lined the sides of the reflecting pool between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, signifying the hope for a better world. The third day's activities included a motorcade to the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial for evening prayer and worship.

"It's worth every minute of it!" Mr. Salonen exclaimed at one point in the three days. With each succeeding day, congressmen and senators who came to speak to the fasters expressed more amazement that young people should be so dedicated to God and their country to sacrifice so much. Over and over they stressed that if ever America needed prayers, it was now. Many speakers stressed that they could definitely feel the impact of prayer on their own lives and in their work.

"I think the three most powerful words in English are love--for our nation and each other, prayer-for the future, and freedom-the desire for continued freedom." -- Cong. Ralph Regula, Ohio

"I don't believe that there has been anything more exciting or memorable to me than seeing you all on these steps. This must be the most constructive effort to put this country on the right footing again." -- Cong. Bill Archer, Texas

"The job is monumental-I need all the prayer possible. It will require all the wisdom man has, bolstered by divine guidance." -- Cong. Mario Biaggi, New York

"I don't know if you know what it means when you people come and visit our office. You don't know how much your prayers mean to us. It is very difficult to make decisions sometimes, and your prayers do help." -- Cong. Angelo Roncallo, New York

"I hope you are hungry like I am for truth and fair play. If there ever was a time in the history of our nation or the world that we need a real spiritual revival, now is the time. Ask God to exorcise the hate in the hearts of people and fill that vacuum with God's love. I am satisfied if that happens, that the future of this nation is secure." -- Cong. Bill Young, Florida

"The thing that inspires me more than anything else is the prayers of the people in my district. I really feel it is the thing that enables me to go on." -- Cong. Marjorie Holt, Maryland

"You brought something we need-enthusiasm. Also, you have something we need-a deep respect and faith in God. I receive the prayers you are offering for me with deep thanks." -- Cong. John Wydler, New York

"You bring clear air to America, to a somewhat polluted Washington.

You are praying for us and we will pray for you." -- Cong. John Zwach, Minnesota

"Continue to remember us as we go about our difficult work. I promise you, we will come up with some answers that will make you proud of your nation." -- Cong. Victor Veysey, California

"Let me thank you on behalf of the other 37 members of the House Judiciary Committee -- we need your prayers now more than ever in our deliberations. I thank Reverend Moon for what he is doing for the people of this nation and the world." -- Cong. Charles Rangel, New York

"There is nothing wrong with this country that a good, old-fashioned revival won't cure. Almost every Sunday I can be found in a church, no matter what denomination, speaking about God. I belong to the congressional prayer breakfast and my wife often speaks to prayer groups. Stand by God and your beliefs, and we cannot be beaten." -- Cong. John Hunt, New Jersey

"We have so many blessings, we haven't thanked God enough. I pray, 'God, I don't ask you for anything more, just let me keep what I have a little longer.' Forty-nine countries changed hands last year. Time was when people would pray for their leaders instead of condemn them." -- Cong. Tennyson Guyer, Ohio

"You are like a warm embrace. It is very difficult unless you have people like you around." -- Cong. George O'Brien, Illinois

"I'll pray for all of you. I'm glad I found the person who is praying for me." -- Cong. Henry Reuss, Wisconsin

"We congressmen have been receiving letters, often with a rock, which read, 'He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone.' All of us need the strength that comes from God." -- Cong. Garner Shriver, Kansas

"Our founding fathers came to this country often because they were denied the right to pray as they wished.

They had a prayer before they got off their ships... They placed their destiny in the hands of their Creator." -- Cong. John Myers, Indiana

"You have been a great inspiration to all of us." -- Cong. Donald Clancy, Ohio

"Thank you for your love and faith. It is one of the evidences of what is right in America and with a great Christian movement. Thank you for giving us a demonstration we can be proud of" -- Cong. Barber Conable, New York

"It is a pleasure for us to come over and visit you. Prayer for this country and all the people around the world should be on the lips and hearts of each one of us. It's good to be with you." -- Cong. Bill Chappell, Florida

"I had some practice sleeping sitting up, too. I don't know about fasting, but I do know about praying.

Thank you very much." -- Cong. Albert Quie, Minnesota

"Although I came here yesterday, I just can't stay away. This sort of patriotic enthusiasm does catch hold of me. One congressman said at a very high level meeting what an exciting experience he had this morning. I came by to see how you are bearing up. You are doing very well. Maybe we should all do that. We must be positive, we must be confident." -- Cong. Earl Landgrebe, Indiana

"I believe that we are one nation under God, and that God listens. I believe our prayers will be answered if we but listen. I think that with God's help our nation will remain strong and be a beacon of light to freedom-loving people around the world." -- Cong. Chalmers Wylie, Ohio

"You are clad in the armor of a righteous cause." -- Cong. O.C. Fisher, Texas

"George Washington laid the cornerstone of this Capitol. The British burned it. It was rebuilt because of the faith of the people. We need faith in this land." -- Cong. Mark Andrews, North Dakota

"I think it is a marvelous thing you all are doing -- praying for this country. We all need it, not just members of Congress." -- Cong. Henry Smith III, New York

"None of us try to direct our prayer other than that right shall prevail.

We take a solemn oath that we shall render impartial justice. At our family prayer service at the breakfast table every morning we close our prayers, "Trust in the lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." -- Sen. Charles Percy, Illinois

"I greatly admire and respect the love of your country that has brought you here. I want to assure each of you that I will make no judgments until we have all the evidence." -- Sen. Alan Cranston, California

"Please tell all the young people I admire their determination and to please keep up the work." -- Cong. Charles Wiggins, California

The first day of the fast was a typical sunny and very hot Washington day. The lines back and forth to the water jugs never ceased. But the sun descended below the Capitol building about 4:30 and brought welcome relief.



The afternoon and evening of the second day brought intermittent light rain, and the Capitol police allowed the fasters to retreat under the central portico to doze during the night. After this, the weather was kind.

Many tourists and employees of the Capitol stopped to try to listen to the singing, speeches, and prayers throughout the three days, but the police consistently forced them to move on, preventing the rally from having a substantial impact on the minds of the passerby.

However, news reporters and photographers abounded because of the Supreme Court hearings and the House Judiciary Committee debates. More than 350 stories and or photographs appeared in newspapers throughout the United States. Overseas wire services carried photos and stories to Europe and Asia, which appeared in print in Spain, France, Germany, and Denmark. Television coverage was extensive, especially the first and last days. Barbara Walters interviewed Mr. Salonen and Susan Hughes on NBC-TV's Today

Show for five minutes on Thursday morning.

One professor at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky noticed a picture of the prayer and fast and told his students about it. Five of them drove through the night and arrived in Washington, D.C. about 8:00 a.m.

They stayed for about four hours, observed the rally, and talked with Gary Fleischman, Unification Church state representative in Kentucky. According to Gary they were moved and inspired by their experience.

Some visitors came from even farther away. One was Mr. Heinz Seal from Germany. Last March God told him to go to America to help support the President and help America be one nation under God. "God is giving the U.S. a new chance," he said, "to live under prayer, and to live in peace and joy for many generations. This can only be done through God's grace." Mr. Seal met the fasters during their first evening's service at the Washington Monument and joined in the remainder of the prayer and fast.

Los Angeles Church of God pastor, William H. 'Luke, addressed the fasters at the Washington Monument: "I am a bit weak at the knees, but my heart is strong for God. I feel that this above all places in America is holy ground. I feel a burning commitment, for I behold the Promised Land.

"I can see not just a land flowing with milk and honey, but flowing with the order and holiness of God. Not only do the heavens declare the glory of God, but He would have all people declare it.

"I don't just see a land that Dr. Martin Luther King saw, where children can play together.... I see a time when legislation from without can no longer suffice. In this time we need legislation from within; then people will live a Godly life, because the very nature of God is controlling them.



"The tribe of Judah was set upon by a million Ethiopians. They prayed to God and went out to war, and overcame the Ethiopians. As they came back, the prophet came out and said, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is with you. If you will be with Him, He will be with you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.'"



"The people took this seriously; they fasted and prayed and vowed that if anyone strayed from God, he would be killed. "If you want to see our sin-sick land healed, God is the answer! He promised, 'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.' (II Chron. 7: 14)"

And praying was as natural as breathing during those three days, whether led by Congressman John Ware, or at 6:00 in the morning as the fasters prepared to begin another day, or under the big tent with the "Christ is the Answer" crusade. Throughout the day, individuals and groups sat quietly and studied the Bible or prayed quietly as well.

Fasters ranged from the youngest, Jo-Ann Lurie (age 11) from New York, who told us, "I have never loved America before as much as I do now," to the oldest, Dorothy Haley (age 66) from Florida, "I now have many sons and daughters that I am very proud of."

The first night the House Judiciary Committee's hearings were open to the public, the fasters returned from the Lincoln Memorial to sing and pray in the East courtyard. One reporter (Saul Kohler) covering the event must have been struck with the difference in atmosphere inside and outside and wrote, "It was pitch dark outside the massive marble-and-granite Rayburn House Office Building... and voices of six hundred persons -still musty after two days without food or sleep-sang to the glory of God and nation..."



"Outside, clearly it was nicer. The full foliage on the trees blocked out the light of the mercury vapor lamps, and if you have never heard the 'Star Spangled Banner,' 'America the Beautiful,' the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and 'A Generation of Righteousness' under those conditions, you haven't quite led a full life."

The heavy atmosphere that had settled around Washington for the past two years during the investigations of the Watergate scandal pressed more heavily during this critical week. The 610 gathered for fasting and prayer felt like representatives of all of America calling upon God for forgiveness for this land and for guidance for the leaders of America.

Many received new visions of the mission of America and the depth of God's personal love and care. As the three days drew to a close, Reverend Moon came down from New York. "We represent the people of America," he said. "We are here on behalf of the senators and congressmen and President and Cabinet. We participated in this fast in order to bring unity to the three branches of government, to lead them

to become one, centering on God."

Deputy Special Assistant to the President, Bruce Herschensohn, read a telegram from Nixon, and Rabbi Baruch Korff gave his benediction: "Heavenly Father, the image of our President is before us and we pray that we may evoke your blessings upon him, and sustain him during this ordeal.

We pray that you endow us with the wisdom of mind and compassion of heart, to invoke thy blessings, repeated by Aaron and his sons, 'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.' " Breaking the fast was a truly joyous occasion, celebrating with fruit, yogurt, rolls, milk, and soft drinks. After the Capitol steps -our home for three days and three nights-were completely cleaned off, I looked back and thought I could still hear the beautiful songs and prayers of the 610 who came to bring hope to

God and their country.

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**Telegram from President Richard Nixon**

PMS NATIONAL PRAYER AND FAST COMMITTEE

219 PARK LANE BUILDING NW

WASHINGTON DC 20006

AS YOU COMPLETE THIS THREE DAY FAST ON THE CAPITOL STEPS, I WANT EACH OF YOU TO KNOW HOW TRULY GRATEFUL I AM FOR THIS GREAT SACRIFICE YOU HAVE MADE. I REALIZE THAT MANY OF YOUR SIGNS CARRY THE WORDS, "GOD LOVES NIXON," BUT I KNOW WE ALL SHARE THE SAME BELIEF THAT THE MESSAGE OF GOD IS TRULY A MESSAGE OF LOVE FOR ALL MANKIND. THE WORLD HAS ALWAYS KNOWN THE SHRILL VOICES OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION, BUT WHAT HAS SAVED MANKIND EVEN IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF OUR CIVILIZATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE VOICES THAT ARE RAISED IN PRAYER AND A SPIRIT OF LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. WHATEVER LIES AHEAD, I KNOW WE CAN COUNT ON YOU, THE MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP, AND MILLIONS ACROSS THE NATION, TO MAINTAIN THIS SPIRIT, OF LOVE, SO THAT IN OUR PRAYERS AND IN OUR WORK WE WILL HELP ONE ANOTHER TO REALIZE THAT INDEED THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY HAVE THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL IDEALISM TO CONTINUE TO MERIT GOD'S BLESSING ON OUR LIVES AND ON ALL OUR ENDEAVORS.

WITH MY HEARTFELT APPRECIATION

RICHARD NIXON.