

MAY 23, 1976

## POOL #6

## PFC BREAKFAST AND THE BAPTIST CHURCH SERVICE

After a private breakfast with local President Ford Committee people at his hotel, the President paused briefly for a chat with the pool. When he was asked how the situation looked to him this morning, he said: "The news looked awfully good." He was asked if he had read the SUNDAY OREGONIAN endorsement of him and what he thought of it. He answered "Yes, it was well written. It had the right twist." He was asked how he saw the immediate future, and answered: "The news is going to get better."

The President then motorcaded to the Hanson Baptist Memorial Church, an old, rather grimy, stone building. Three greeters, the two named in the schedule, and Pastor Donald R. Baker, each of them with red carnations in their lapels, met him on the sidewalk on the foot of the entrance steps. A stone marker in the outside wall near the entrance to the church reads: "East Side Baptist Church--Inc. 1910"--apparently the name of the original church.

Pastor Baker--this is the way he is referred to in the church program--indicated that this was one of a series of sermons based on the Ninth Chapter of Mark, and that his text and sermon for today had been determined before it was known that the President would attend. Pastor Baker read from verses 34, 33, and 35 of the Ninth Chapter of Mark. The passage tells of Jesus meeting the 12 disciples in Capernaum, discovering as to who shall lead them after the then expected death of Jesus, whereon Jesus says to them: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all."

Pastor Baker then said that he had heard the President's foreign policy speech in Portland last night, and thought as the President discussed his problems of foreign policy, "I thought to myself we must pray for him." So I ask all of you to pray silently for each of us." After a moment of silent prayer, Pastor Baker opened his own prayer by saying, "A gain our Heavenly Father, we come to Thee, as little children." Your pooler recalled the President's reference yesterday to "Babes."

Pastor Baker early in his sermon said that there are some 40 million Evangelical Christians in this country and that some 15 million of them are "not even registered" and are therefore are ineligible to vote in this year's primaries. He said it was the duty of all Evangelical Christians to vote and that this church would provide for facilities for registration for this year's general election. Helen Thomas whispered to the pool seated beside her on the rear pew, "He does not realize that this church has a candidate already."

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Pastor Baker plugged a new book by "my good friend, Senator Mark Hatfield," who accompanied the President to the service. Baker said it was a book that all Christians should read. He also mentioned, "Born Again", Charles Colson's book, citing it as a praise-worthy account of what Pastor Baker evidently considered to be a genuine conversion of an over ambitious heathen to Christ.

Pastor Baker said that he as a boy often played a game that he and a friend called, "King of the Mountain", in which each would try to reach the top of the mountain first. He said, "When I was the king, I love him," speaking of his friend. "But when he was king, I hated him." His point, which he elaborated at considerable length is that God is not against ambition as such, and only that against ambition that is centered and directed at one's self.

After the service, the President was introduced by Pastor Baker to his wife and children. A pooler heard only the name of a daughter, Catherine.

An usher said the circular auditorium of the church which was completely filled, with a few spare chairs lined against the rear wall also occupied, normally seats about 1,000 people. He said that this was an unusually large crowd, but said that about 1,000 persons attended two separate morning services normally. The two services were combined into one for this occasion.

At the start of the service before the Pastor began his prayers and went into his sermon, he mentioned the presence of the President. There was instant and loud applause and the entire audience stood for 30 seconds while continuing the applause. A highlight of the service for one of your poolers was the sight of Robert Orben and Robert Hartmann seated along side the pool in the rear pew, singing each of the hymns with lusty enthusiasm. The pooler remarked to Hartmann that this was something he never expected to see or hear.

Phil Jones--CBS

John Osborne--New Republic

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