

# PRESIDENT URGES COUNTRY TO PRAY

## Tells Prayer Breakfast Unit Nation Should Attempt to Determine God's Will

By EDWARD B. FISKE

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 —

President Nixon, looking vigorous and refreshed after his State of the Union address last night, urged Americans today to join in silent prayer to determine God's will for the country.

"Too often we are a little too arrogant," he said in a 15-minute talk to 2,500 Government officials, diplomats, clergymen and laymen from across the country. "We try to talk and tell Him what we want. What all of us need to do, and what this nation needs to do, is to pray in silence and listen to God to find out what He wants us to do."

The occasion was the 22d annual National Prayer Breakfast, which was held in the grand ballroom of the Washington Hilton Hotel and at times evoked the feeling of an evangelistic rally.

Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi who served as chairman for the affair, moved the audience by telling them how much his prayers and the prayers of others had meant in his recovery from wounds suffered when he was shot during a robbery a year ago.

"Short silent prayers were my rallying point in those days," he said. "The chief surgeon told me, 'A high hand entered your case.' I know that he means what he said."

### Faith and Alcoholism

In the principal address, Senator Harold E. Hughes, Democrat of Iowa, who is leaving the Senate at the end of his current term to become a lay religious worker, told the breakfast crowd how religious faith had rescued him from alcoholism more than 20 years ago.

"I was beaten to my knees in despair," he said. "I cried out to God, and from that moment my life changed."

Senator Hughes, who received a standing ovation at the end of what amounted to a sermon, said that God can use men's "indiscretions" to "build up his people."

"No prison can contain the spirit of Christ," he said. "The word of God came in truth in Jesus Christ and revealed eternal life. The debt has been paid

in the blood of our Savior."

Mr. Nixon spoke of the prayer life of Abraham Lincoln and recalled a conversation he had had with his grandmother, a devout Quaker, when he was a boy. He said that when he asked her why Quakers prayed in silence, she replied, "The purpose is not to tell God what thee wants but to find out what God wants for thee."

His remarks seemed to be welcomed with enthusiasm by most listeners. The Rev. Leighton Ford, the evangelist who is a brother-in-law of the Rev. Billy Graham, who was on the dais, called them "tremendous."

"I got the feeling that there was real depth," he said.

John K. C. Liu, a member of the National Assembly in Taiwan who had flown here for the occasion, said, "He is very sincere. I was deeply moved."

### A Minister 'Upset'

The Rev. John Huffman, who recently resigned as pastor of the Presbyterian church that Mr. Nixon sometimes attends in Key Biscayne, Fla., however, said that he was "upset."

"I don't know that what Lincoln had to say is particularly relevant today," he stated. "To exegate the writings and prayers life of a previous President instead of the Bible is to make the history of the nation the divine atuthority, not God. This is Baalism."

He continued, "I wish he had the courage that Hughes did. This was a great opportunity for him to state whether he is a Christian or not. For five years, by his silence, he has said that he is not."

The National Prayer Breakfast, which was initiated by President Eisenhower in 1953, is jointly sponsored by members of the weekly Senate and House prayer breakfasts.

The administrative work is carried out in their behalf by officials of Fellowship House here, the center of a loosely organized movement to promote prayer breakfasts and similar gatherings in 50 countries.

### Broadcast by Military

In his opening remarks, Senator Stennis said that the breakfast was being broadcast over the Armed Forces Radio Network and that more than 100,000 military personnel were converging for simultaneous affairs at about 500 locations around the world.

While the prayer breakfast was being held, more than 1,000 followers of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church International gathered in Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House, to sing patriotic songs and demonstrate their support of the President.

### Daughter Defends Nixon

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 (UPI) — Her eyes flashing with emotion, Mrs. Edward F. Cox said today that she felt a "sense

of outrage" over attacks against her father and asked: "Why should he resign? He hasn't done anything wrong."

In a rare public appearance outside the White House, the President's daughter attended a rally supporting her father in Lafayette Square across the street and then vigorously lectured reporters at an impromptu sidewalk news conference.

Standing by her side was her 27-year-old husband who said the President was the victim of "one of the most vicious witch hunts in American history."

Mr. Cox also dismissed as "absolutely ridiculous" reports that his marriage to the President's daughter Tricia was breaking up.





President and Mrs. Nixon leaving the Washington Hilton Hotel yesterday morning after attending the annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast with their daughter Mrs. Edward F. Cox and the Rev. Billy Graham.

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