

OCTOBER 10, 1976
 Pool report, Oct. 10-- Mohr, ~~XXXXXX~~ *Frischer*

Because of tight writing time in wire car, we will dispense with color and get to substance. Satan was never mentioned at Church, but Jimmy Carter caught hell from the Rev. Criswell, although Carter's name also not mentioned.

At start of his sermon in red brick church with white paneled interior, Criswell recalled that he was one of 34 evangelical leaders who visited White House ~~xxxxx~~ week ago Thursday. He said he asked: "Mr. President, if playboy magazine were to ask you for an interview what would you do?" The Pres. replied, "I was asked by ~~Playboy~~ Playboy magazine for an interview, and I declined with an emphatic no." Congregation broke into prolonged applause and Criswell cried out, "I like that."

Criswell said "there are other public ~~media~~ through which we can discuss moral issues... other than the pages of a salacious, pornographic magazine." Many in a congregation gave a loud, "Amen!"

Later the pastor said a "spectre" of government action had brought "dread and forboding to my deepest soul." This, Mr. Criswell said, was the ~~possibility~~ "increasing verbalization of the possibility of taxing our churches."

"A church cannot be separated from its institutions," he added. He referred to missions, schools and hospitals, calling the latter "the church healing."

"To tax any one of them (institutions) is to tax the church itself...leading to the possibility of our destruction."

This, of course, was a reference to Carter Liberty interview on possibility of taxing some church property other than church buildings.

~~xxxxxxx~~ "With gratitude and thanksgiving to God," said Criswell, "I heard Gerald Ford, our president, say boldly and courageously that he would interdict any such movement in American. May the Lord give him strength..."

-0-

The entire tone of the occasion was very friendly to the President. Several hundred people applauded politely as he arrived at a side entrance and entered the church. Mr. Ford sat near the front, near a full orchestra larger than most Broadway pit orchestras.

When the very large choir, dressed some in tan and some in blue robes, sang Handel's "Worthy Is The Lamb," Criswell said, "I think if Handel looked down from heaven, he would be proud of this choir and this orchestra. And Mr. President, that's why the White House ought to be in Dallas, Tex, instead of Washington." Laughter and applause. "Just so he could come and be with us every Sunday."

In another passage of the sermon, ~~xxxxxxx~~ Criswell said, "In 1917 President Woodrow Wilson came to this very church bearing tidings of war. In 1976...President Gerald R. Ford comes to the same church bearing tidings of peace and good will."

Criswell also noted that last June he had heard Mr. Ford speak to the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk, Va., "It was," said Criswell, "one of the most moving and masterful addresses I have ever heard in my life."

Criswell indicated to his congregation that he would be giving another sermon at 7 p.m. tonight to report on his visit to the White House. Presumably that will be the "political" sermon. Most of his address was on desirability and necessity of ~~the~~ making donations to the church. He announced that the goal for fiscal year beginning this fall for the 1st Baptist Church was \$6,804,962.00, and said he expected it to be oversubscribed since it had been ~~xxxxx~~ oversubscribed every year.

-0-

At another point, ~~he~~ Criswell described his visit to the White House as "One of the highest days in my life. I went away encouraged and full of hope." Often the government is "depicted as corrupt and immoral and these things make headlines. But you rarely hear of the Godly men who ask heaven's wisdom" in making decisions.

(More)

Criswell is an organ lunged, old fashioned orator. At one point he was describing how the head of Mike Ford's seminary had, at the White House conference, described the President's eldest son as "a sweet humble boy. You'd never know he was the son of the President of the United States."

"And I like that!" Criswell cried out in a loud voice and wept audibly for a moment, later daubing his eyes.

The Church building was full, and, we hear, can hold about 6,000 people. Patriotic as well as spiritual themes are evident. Bi-Centennial 13 star flags and snare drums, apparently symbolic of Revolutionary military, were clustered together behind the pulpit and on the frontings of the balcony. Also hanging on balcony was special bunting showing bald eagles clutching an American flag in their talons.

Later at close of Church Criswell said in answer to question did he want Ford to win. "Yes". He also indicated he was endorsing the President

Dean Fischer, Time
Charles Mohr, New York Times

#

Criswell is an organ lunged, old-fashioned orator. At one point he was describing how the head of Mike Ford's seminary had, at the White House conference, described the President's eldest son as "a sweet humble boy. You'd never know he was the son of the President of the United States."

"And I like that!" Criswell cried out in a loud voice and wept audibly for a moment, later daubing his eyes.

The Church building was full, and, we hear, can hold about 6,000 people. Patriotic as well as spiritual themes are evident. Bi-Centennial 13 star flags and snare drums, apparently symbolic of Revolutionary military, were clustered together behind the pulpit and on the frontings of the balcony. Also hanging on balcony was special bunting showing bald eagles clutching an American flag in their talons.

~~END~~
LATER AT CLOSE OF CHURCH

~~Later at door of Church~~
CRISWELL SAID IN ANSWER

~~Answered as follows~~
~~to question did he want~~

~~to Ford to win~~
"YES" HE ALSO

~~he was endorsing the Pres~~
INDICATED HE WAS ENDORSING
THE PRESIDENT

~~...~~
END