

Imam Mohammed and the Inaugural Interfaith Prayer Service

Notes, Comments, and Photos

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President Bill Clinton’s first Inaugural Interfaith Church Service (January 20, 1993) was held at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, Washington, D.C. In addition to President-elect Clinton and his family, the service was also attended by Vice President-elect Al Gore and his family, the president-elect’s mother, and the family of the Secretary-designate for the Department of Commerce Ron Brown. The service included hymns and a sermon from the church minister. The entire service can be viewed from the beginning at the webpage linked at the end of this paragraph. Wearing a gray suit, gray necktie, white kufi, and white shirt, the imam, identified as “Imam Wallace Mohammed, Muslim-American Spokesman for Human Salvation,” delivers his remarks at approximately **48 minutes, 30 seconds** into the ceremony. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?37247-1/inaugural-interfaith-church-service>

Transcription of Imam Mohammed’s January 20, 1993 presentation at Clinton’s first Inaugural Interfaith Church Service

The imam approached the podium and spoke as follows:

“Our Prophet said he saw in a vision the followers of Moses, the followers of Christ Jesus, and his followers. Peace be upon the prophets in heaven, in paradise. With that I give you this reading from the book of all Muslims, about one billion Muslims now today. It reads; I give it in the language of the Qur’an, in Arabic, and then translate it.”

He then recited a passage from Qur’an in Arabic (Surah 5:69, Al Ma’idah –The Repast), and then provided this English translation.

“Surely those who have faith and those who are Jews, and those who are Christians, and those who are Sabians, whoever believe in God and the last day and does good work, for them is their reward with their lord, there shall be no fear on them nor grieve.”

Following the translation, the imam said the following:

“Again our Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, he said there is no superiority of a black over a white or a white over a black, a nationalist over another nationalist, an Arab over any other nation. He said the only criteria is consciousness, regardfulness.” [The preceding is an excerpt from the *Last Sermon* or *Farewell Sermon* of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on March 6, 632 AD (9th of Dhul Hijjah, 10 AH at Mount Arafat). The Wikipedia page addressing that event can be found at this link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farewell_Sermon]

After quoting from the *Last Sermon*, the imam said the following, recited from Qur’an in English (Surah 49:13, *Al Hujurat, The Chambers*), and departed from the podium:

“With that I give this reading from the Holy Book, the Qur’an.

“Oh people surely we have created you from a male and a female; have made you nations and tribes that you may regard each other and recognize each other. Surely with God, the most honored one is the most conscious one of his duty to God.”

President Clinton’s second Inaugural Interfaith Church Service (January 20, 1997) also was held at Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C., a historic Black church. His family and many Washington dignitaries attended. The service included singing by several choirs and soloists and the congregation, as well as sermons by Jesse Jackson and several other ministers. The entire service can be viewed at the webpage linked at the end of this paragraph. Wearing a blue suit, gray & black patterned tie, white kufi, and white shirt, the imam, again identified as “Imam Wallace Mohammed, Muslim-American Spokesman for Human Salvation,” delivers his remarks at approximately **1 hour, 28 minutes into the ceremony**. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?78109-1/inaugural-interfaith-prayer-service>

Transcription of Imam Mohammed’s January 20, 1997 presentation at Clinton’s second Inaugural Interfaith Church Service

The imam approached the podium and spoke as follows:

“Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

“With God’s Name, the Merciful Benefactor, the Merciful Redeemer”

He then read a passage from Qur’an in English. (Surah 2:177; Al Baqarah “The Heifer”).

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east or the west; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the last day, and the angels and the book, the prophets, to spend of your wealth out of love for God, for Him, on your kin, on orphans, on the needy, on the forsaken child of the road, for those who beg for help, and for the ransomed slaves, to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made, and to be firm and patient in pain and adversity, and throughout all periods of anxiety, such are the people of truth, the regardful.”

Then he recited the above in Arabic and, before leaving the podium, ended by saying, “And God Speaks the Truth.”

Interestingly, neither of Clinton’s interfaith services are listed in the Wikipedia page about such events. One must ask why? Perhaps an experienced techie familiar with Wikipedia can correct these omissions.

No mention of first 1993 morning prayer service

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_inauguration_of_Bill_Clinton#Religious_elements

No mention of second 1997 prayer service:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_inauguration_of_Bill_Clinton

Clinton’s consultation list for reconciliation remarks. Clinton enlisted the imam as a consultant for one of his favored projects. *See*, the “One America Folder: Reconciliation Group,” National Archives Identifier 27499346, which includes the imam on page 2 as “Wallace Muhammad (American Muslim Community)”: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/27499346>

Imam Mohammed as America’s “most underappreciated religious figure.” When referring to the imam as the most underappreciated religious figure, Taylor Branch identifies him as “Imam Wallace D. Muhammad.” *See*, *The Clinton Tapes*, p. 24, Simon & Schuster, New York (2009).

Imam Mohammed and President Jimmy Carter’s Administration.

Imam W. Deen Mohammed (R.A.) was an invited guest to Jimmy Carter’s 1977 oath of office inaugural ceremony. (*See*, Ghayth Nur Kashif, “W.D. Muhammad Speaks on the Future of America,” *Bilalian News*, Feb. 11, 1977, p. 11).

President Carter included Imam Mohammed in his meeting with Black leaders at the White House and had earlier invited him to attend an October 1977 dinner honoring the Nigerian head of state, Olusegun Obasanjo. (*See*, *Bilalian News*, Jan. 20, 1978, p. 4.)

Miscellaneous Notes & Observations:

Mohammed Magid: Interestingly, when Imam Mohammed Magid, executive director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, recited the same Qur’anic passages as Imam W. Deen Mohammed during the January 21, 2017 inaugural prayer service for Donald Trump, he was asked by the media whether he was being provocative for choosing passages “with clear political implications.” His remarks may be viewed at the following C-Span link:

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?422134-1/president-vice-president-attend-national-prayer-service>
Minute 36:50-38:23

Ingrid Mattson: On January 21, 2009, Sis. Ingrid Mattson became the first Muslimah to present inaugural remarks during Barack Obama’s first interfaith service:

“On this day of new beginning, with hearts lifted high in hope, may we be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations. We pray to you oh God saying keep this nation under your care.”

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?283503-1/inaugural-prayer-service> (at 1:04:27-50)

Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church information is posted online at the link below. Clinton’s interfaith services were the only ones ever held at a Black church.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_African_Methodist_Episcopal_Church



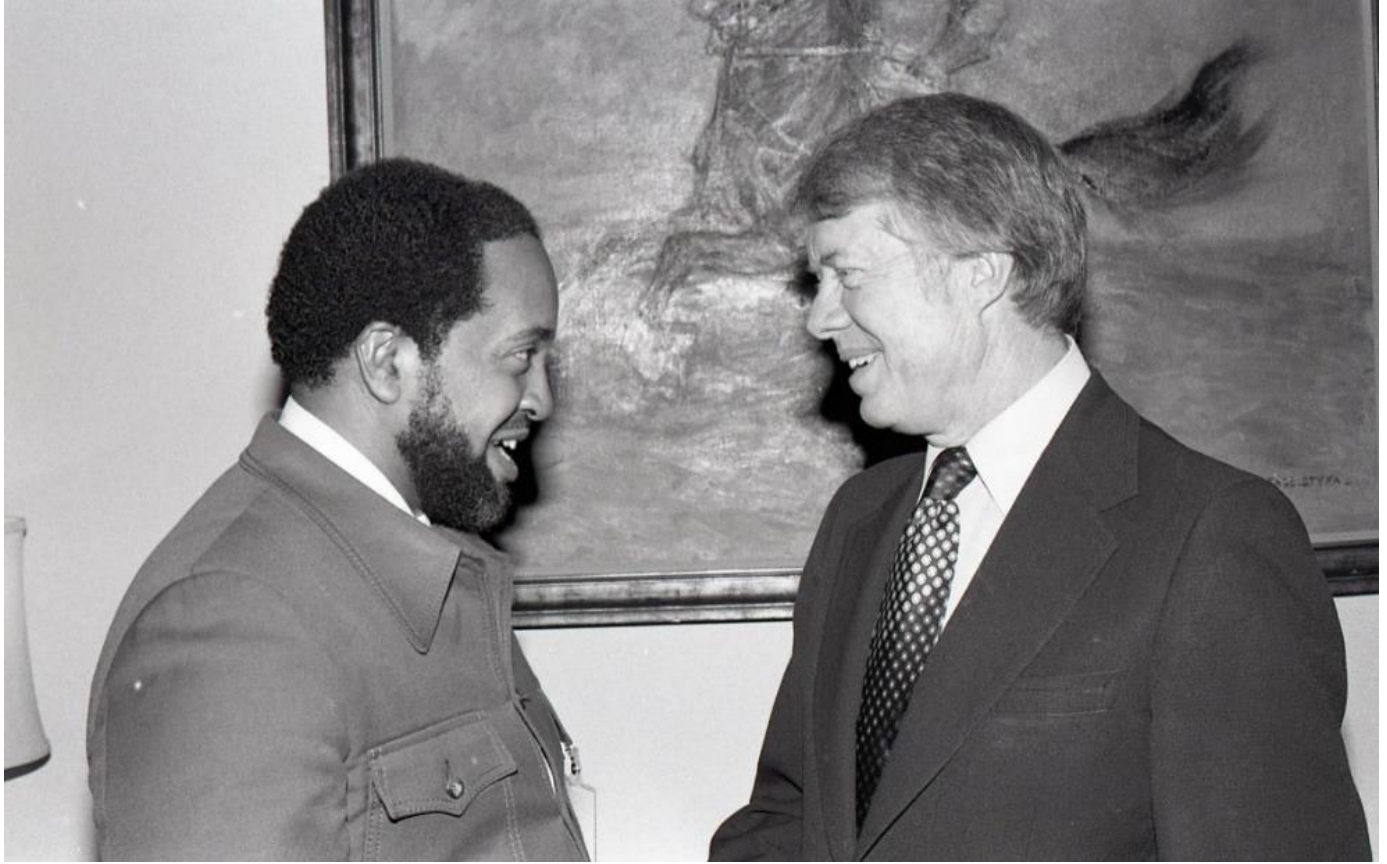
Imam Mohammed speaking at Clinton's 1993 Inaugural Interfaith Prayer Service.



The imam presenting remarks during Clinton's 1997 Inaugural Interfaith Prayer Service.



On December 14, 1977, Imam Mohammed, seated next to Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), attended President Carter's meeting with 14 other members of the Black Leadership Forum. Patricia Roberts Harris, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and first Black woman to serve in a cabinet position, is seated next to the president. (Courtesy of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum)



Here Imam Mohammed is greeted by President Carter in the Roosevelt Room during a historic White House meeting with notable Black leaders. (Courtesy of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum.)

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