

W.D. Muhammad speaks on

The Future of America



"I see my responsibility to government just as I see my responsibility to fathers and mothers in the community, to call them back to spiritual development..."

... W.D. Muhammad

By Ghayth Nur Kashif

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Jan. 20, Jimmy Carter became the 39th President of the United States. In his acceptance speech, he appealed for unity and a rebirth of a spirit of "trust" based upon reaffirmation of morality as the foundation of United States society.

The Georgia born President said he wants to be judged in history as having "torn down the barriers that separated those of different race and religion, and where there had been mistrust, built unity, with a respect for diversity."

One can only guess that while the new President read his prepared text, he might have been aware of the degree of spiritual eminence ranging among his selected inaugural audience.

Among these was the Honorable W.D. Muhammad, Chief Imam of the World Community of Islam in the West (W.C.I.W.), and acknowledged "reviver" of religion and morality in the world today.

In an exclusive interview with Bilalian News, Mr. Muhammad spoke approvingly of the moral tone of the President's address.

"A VERY SINCERE SPEECH"

"I viewed it as a very sincere speech, and a speech that went directly to the real problems in our society, and to the real sentiments of our society," he said.

The speech, he added, "was encouraging in a most effective way, and at the same time reflecting, or shining the light of leadership for the community. He spoke as a religious man."

Mr. Muhammad's acceptance of the inaugural invitation is certain to be

interpreted in some quarters as bearing political significance, or endorsement.

"Yes, I'm aware that most likely many people will interpret this as a political move," he said, "but, believe me, it is not at all a political move. In fact, it was just a move of a concerned citizen who is a Muslim."

Moreover, Imam Muhammad emphasized the correlation between the truly "concerned citizen," the Muslim, and the "Servant of Allah."

Asked, in what capacity had he come, to Washington he said, "First, I'm here as a Servant of Allah, and by Servant of Allah, we mean one who lives his religion, and serves the community as Quran and Hadith and conscience dictate.

"It means that if we are really Servants of Allah — if we are really

who is sincere."

HOPES FOR GOOD THINGS

Commenting on the significance of the occasion, his visit, and the portent for the future, he declared, "It is my hope that there are many things that will come out of this that are good."

"I hope that it will suggest many good things to the hearts and to the conscience, of our people, the Bilalian people, and American people.

"I hope that it will serve to draw the minds of the people away from narrow individualistic concerns, to see the real human concerns that President Carter addressed in his acceptance speech."

These concerns, Mr. Muhammad said, are for "human development, for people who are suffering poverty and don't know how to come out of it, and

functions and how society must function in order for us to survive as human beings."

Many of us, he said, are ignorant of the functions of society and our roles in it.

"We don't know how much responsibility is on each individual citizen to keep the health and life of society. The President expressed a concern for that, and my concern is the same."

DEFINES RELIGIOUS ROLES

The role of religious leadership, the highly respected Imam said, is that of servant of the community.

He explained that when a parent, or a family is endangered morally, spiritually or financially, it is the duty of the religious leader to go to that home, and to stand by that parent and that family and offer them encouragement, and advice for their strength.

The government, he continued, "is just another parent, a political parent."

He indicated that the religious leadership should feel that they have a duty to go to the government and offer their services: to go to the government with compassion, not with a "stick in their hands, but with compassion.

"I see my responsibility to government just as I see my responsibility to fathers and mothers in the community, and that is to offer moral direction, to call them back to spiritual development, to assist them in their difficult times, and to come to the rescue when the vital institutions and establishment, and government are threatened.

"It is my duty as a religious person

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"We have to sink our roots deep economically ... get involved in the economics of America, and that means more than just being interested in barber shops, beauty shops... bakeries, and insurance companies."

... W.D. Muhammad

Muslims; and all Muslims are Servants of Allah — if they are sincere about their religion, it means that we have to be concerned about what is happening to America and what is happening to our cities.

"So I'm here as a Servant of Allah, and that means a 'concerned citizen'

don't have any way to come out of it—concern for the people who are misinformed, miseducated, misguided; concern for the people who are deep in ignorance...

"I don't mean the kind of illiteracy that we generally refer to, but ignorance of society, how society