



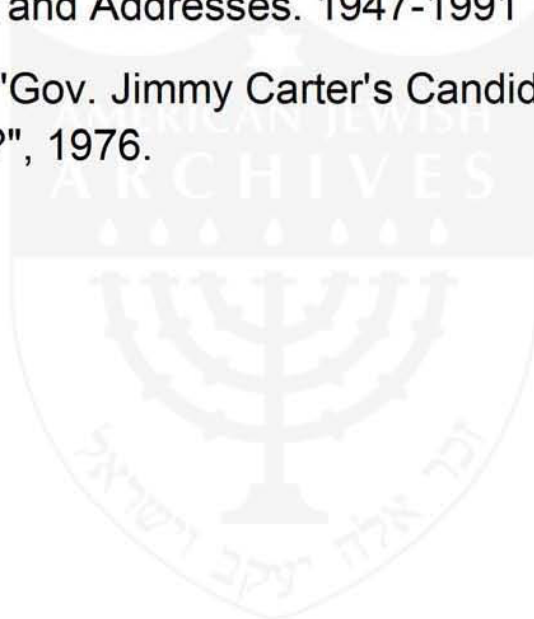
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GOV. JIMMY CARTER'S CANDIDACY -

THE FOURTH GREAT AWAKENING?

by Marc H. Tanenbaum

The nomination of Governor Jimmy Carter as Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States has introduced a new element into the American national political scene but an old element in American society. For the first time in modern politics, a presidential candidate has publicly identified himself as an evangelical "born again" Christian and has spoken freely of his personal religious convictions and their relationship to his political behavior.

"The most important thing in my life is Jesus Christ," Carter has testified, "I turn to Him in prayer daily and before every decision I have to make which affects the life of others...I don't want anything that's not God's will for my life." (From an interview with the Associated Press, May 24, 1976).

The Democratic National Convention in July nominated Carter and his vice-presidential running mate, Senator Walter "Fritz" Mondale, in a carnival-like demonstration of jubilant unity which ~~was~~ ~~ended~~, momentarily, to give the impression that the doubts and misgivings about Carter-as-President were somehow resolved, ~~and that the main task that lies ahead is mainly ~~the~~ the conventional political one of producing a Democratic victory in November.~~ And yet it is significant that during the weeks following the post-convention period, the same doubts and misgivings were given wide public utterance, and to a very large extent, much of that questioning revolved about

"the mystery" of what it ~~will~~ ^{would} mean for America to have a "born again"

Christian in the White House.

Should Carter win the election in November, it is safe to speculate that the issue of an "unrepentant" evangelical President will continue to hover in the air for months to come and the anxieties, and emotions that have been raised will of course respond to his political behavior. Are we moving from a "Sovereign" President to a "moral" President? an Episcopalian priest asked during a recent TV interview.

The President's closest spiritual advisor, Michigan evangelist Billy Zouli, sends the President a weekly memo of spiritual guidance. The President has written to him, "Because I've trusted Christ to be my Savior, my life is His."

Republican candidate Ronald Regan, a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), once a Sunday School teacher, now attends Beblaire Presbyterian church in Los Angeles, an evangelically-oriented congregation. Regan's wife, Nancy, says he prays before every major decision.

