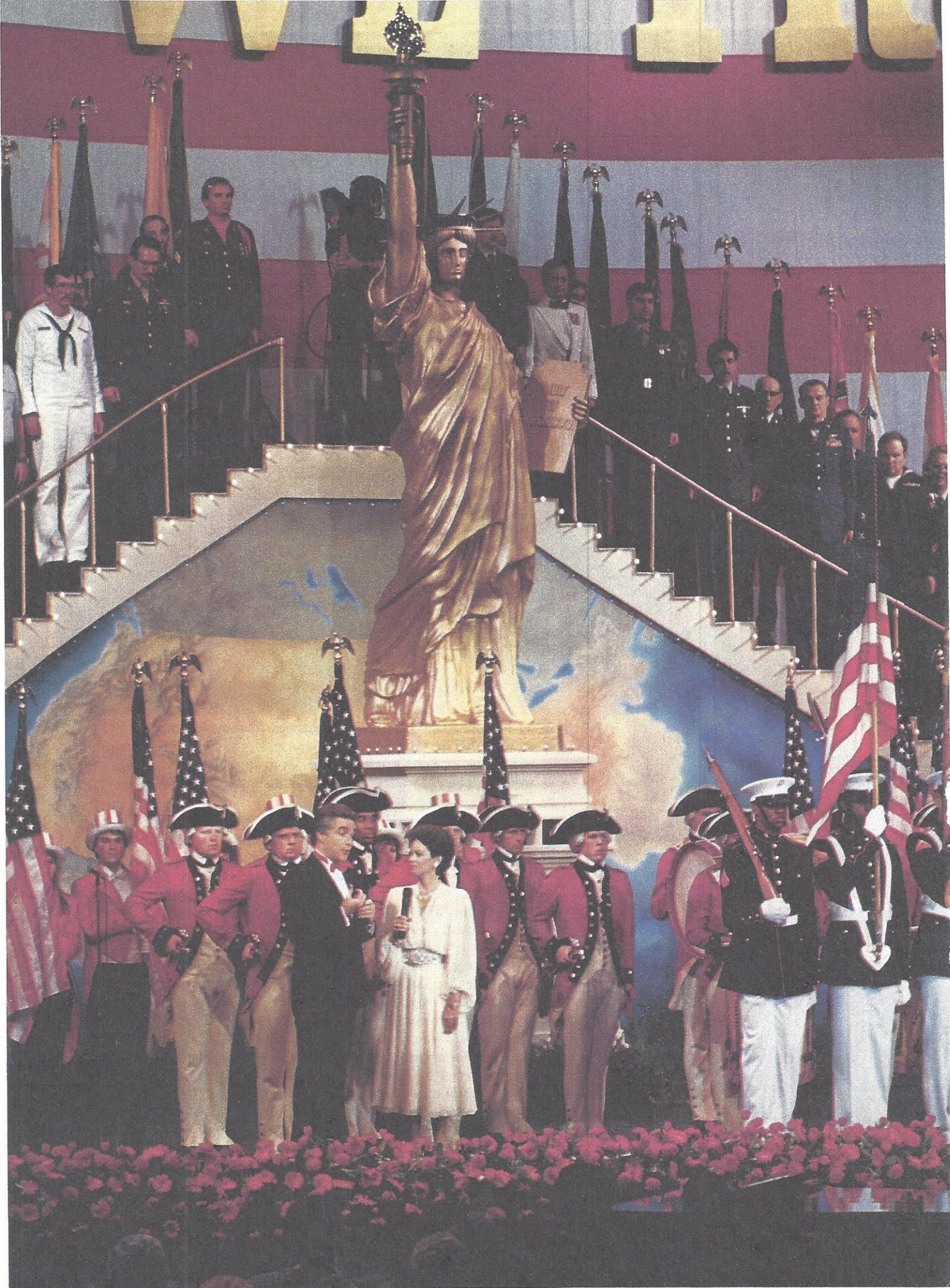


# NATIONAL DAY of PRAYER









BY  
BRUCE BUCKINGHAM  
AND RICHARD DAVID

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he National Day of Prayer threatened to remain simply another day on the calendar in the minds of many Christians. But to Robert and Marte Tilton, this historic day would not be allowed to pass without adequate attention—world-wide attention.

The Tiltons, founders of Word of Faith World Outreach Center and Satellite Network in Dallas, Texas, set out to organize an entire network of Christian TV and radio stations to broadcast the largest “star-spangled gala event ever” in a joint celebration of the National Day of Prayer and the United States of America. This was a chance for the entire Christian community to join in the acknowledgment of the greatness of God and the country He gave us.

Marte Tilton’s dream began over three years ago when she realized the apathy of many Christians toward the government of the United States. She had heard a close friend of President Reagan say, “If Christians did not get actively involved in the 1984 elections, they would not have a say in our government.”

The Tiltons’ intent was to “turn around this apathy and rebuild faith in God and country and in our nation’s youth and armed services.”

On May 3, 1984, the day set aside for prayer by a Congressional resolution, the Tiltons assembled over 1,500 worshippers in Washington, D.C., for a nationally televised “Celebration of the National Day of Prayer.”

The two-hour program was telecast live from historic Constitution Hall over the Christian Broadcasting Network, the PTL Network, the Trinity Broadcasting Network and 60 independent radio and television stations into potentially over 50 million homes throughout the United States, and over the Armed Forces radio and TV network and 200 radio stations abroad.

According to Francis Calloway, producer of the program, the celebration was geared toward “rekindling the flame of God and patriotism in the heart

PHOTOS STEPHEN F. GILL



# Millions of Christians watched over the largest network ever as patriotic hymns were raised to God.

of every American...the dream of having a strong nation built upon strong godly principles."

The hall, located directly behind the headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, was decorated with patriotic banners and bunting.

The prayers and celebration began with the live audience at precisely 7:14 p.m., corresponding with 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land."

For the next 45 minutes, the live audience was led in intense prayer. Charles Capps, Amos Dodge and Charles Nieman took turns offering praises to God before the excited crowd.

At 8 p.m. the television lights were turned on and the program began.

The master of ceremonies was Paul Landry, a pastor from Linden, Washington. Former football star Rosey Grier and Christian entertainer Carol Lawrence hosted different segments.

Carol Lawrence introduced special guest Dino Kartsonakis, who began the evening with a piano rendition of the theme from "Chariots of Fire." As he

played, his piano was raised from the orchestra pit to stage level hydraulically, and he was joined by two Christian athletes, 1968 Olympic gold medalist Madeline Manning Mims and 1984 contender Kyle Hefner. The two runners scaled 50 steps to light the torch of a 25-foot reproduction of the Statue of Liberty. Then Larnelle Harris sang and the Word of Faith Orchestra played.

The production was arranged for prime-time television audiences. Marilyn Hickey presented a message on "What Must Be Done" for America. Other speakers included Peter Marshall, Jr., the Tiltons and Bill Basansky, a Russian immigrant and pastor from Ft. Myers, Florida.

Basansky, also a former professor at Oral Roberts University, said "I am an American by choice; a Christian by choice. America is great because God is in charge." Interrupted by frequent applause, he affirmed, "In 1935 Lenin, the Russian god, died. But Jesus is alive today. God said, 'Love Me and I will deliver you.'"

In addition, telegrams were read from Bob Hope, Billy Graham and Yitzhak Shamir, prime minister of Israel, who in a moving dispatch referred to the United States as Israel's "great friend and ally."

Finally, the main speaker, Bob Tilton,

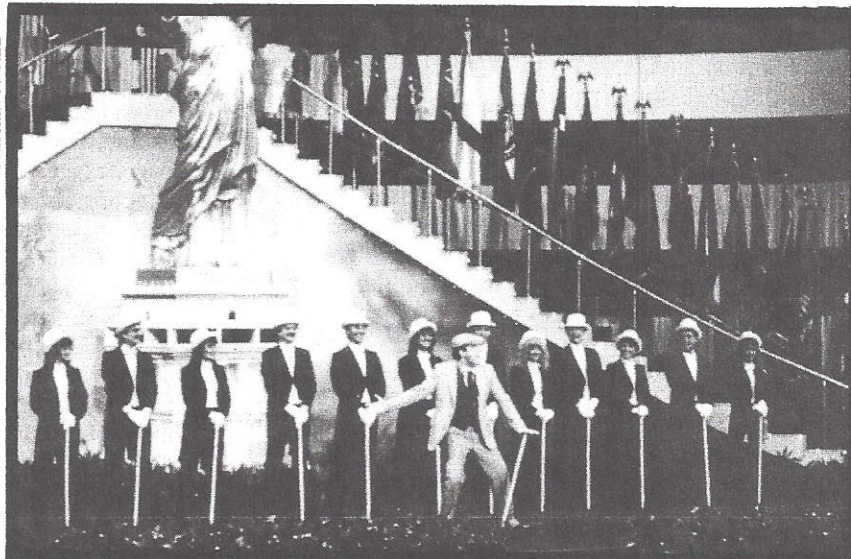
appeared on center stage and delivered his own message, "Charting Your Course by the Dream in Your Heart."

The televised celebration ended with a salute to American patriotism. Veterans from all 50 states marched on the stage carrying state flags as the president's own "Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps" sounded the salute. The live audience waved small U.S. flags and sang praises to God and patriotic hymns in a dramatic conclusion to the celebration of God and country.

"This is the most powerful program I have ever seen produced within the body of Christ," said Jim Moss of Global Media in Dallas, which worked on the networking of the evening. "Getting CBN, PTL, TBN and the largest conglomeration of Christian stations to agree to air this one program was a miracle. Several stations, including PTL, even cancelled their flagship evening programs to make our special available to the viewers. I was blessed to be part of such unity among the media of believers."

*Bruce Buckingham is a staff assistant to U.S. Rep. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and heads Charisma's Washington bureau. Richard David is a staff member of Word of Faith World Outreach Center and Satellite Network in Dallas, Texas.*

STEPHEN F. GILL



Facing page: Bob and Marte Tilton appear on stage for the grand finale of the National Day of Prayer.

Left: Living Praise from Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas, backs up Mike Trent, Word of Faith music minister, in "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy."