

CONDOLEEZZA RICE'S SECRET WEAPON

Dr. Condoleezza Rice became Secretary of State on January 26, 2005. Prior to this, she was the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, commonly referred to as the National Security Advisor, since January, 2001. In June 1999, she completed a six year tenure as Stanford University's Provost. Her notable talent as a classical pianist (she recently performed onstage with cellist Yo Yo Ma), her athletics (she works out daily and was a competitive ice skater in college), and her love for professional football (at times, she has suggested that her dream job would be running the NFL).

Condoleezza Rice ("Condi" to those who know her well) was born on November 14, 1954, in Birmingham, Alabama. The Alabama of Rice's childhood was a strange world of legislated racism, where often the first words that black children learned to read were on the signs above water fountains and on restroom doors: COLORED ONLY. Her devoted parents—Angelena, who taught music and science at an all-black high school, and John, who pastored Birmingham's Westminster Presbyterian Church, was dean of the historically black Stillman College, and later the vice chancellor of the University of Denver—saw to it that their daughter had the best things in life in spite of the racism that surrounded them. But in September 1963, a dynamite blast rocked the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Among the four little black girls killed in that infamous hate crime was Rice's 11-year-old friend and schoolmate Denise McNair. "My father was not a march-in-the-street preacher," instead, John Rice believed in fighting racial injustice "with your mind." It was this guiding principle that inspired Provost Condoleezza Rice to help found the Center for a New Generation, an after-school academy in the impoverished community of East Palo Alto, California, just down the road from Stanford. From the days of slavery, Rice has said, her family seized faith and education and used it as a tool of liberation. Condi Rice is as comfortable speaking publicly about her faith in God as she is about strategic arms reduction and routing out terrorism. "My faith is the most important thing. I never shied from telling people that I am a Christian, and I believe that's why I've been optimistic in my life. When you're a scholar, you are taught, 'You can only believe what you can see,' " Rice has said. But at age 12, during a visit to her grandmother's house, Rice's Uncle Alto became gravely ill. Rice's grandmother sat quietly "on the bed, arms folded. I said, 'Grandmother, aren't you worried about Alto?' And she said, 'God's will be done.'" Her grandmother's quiet spirit convinced her that God was in control in the midst of crisis. Rice recounted these personal experiences for the congregation at Menlo Park Presbyterian five years ago when her pastor invited her to deliver the sermon at the Sunday service. With her father seated in the second row, Rice shared about her spiritual journey and the lessons on faith and perseverance that she received as a child. "The wonders of God's world are being revealed every day, Rice told the congregation." "There is so much more to know. As Christians, we should wrestle with our faith, questioning and trying to understand better our relationship with God."

Through it all, this woman of both charm and strength has been doing what she knows best—bathing her decisions in prayer and turning the ultimate outcome of things over to her God. "I have a very, very powerful faith in God," she has said.

WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Dr. Condoleezza Rice – Secretary of State USA
BRINGING GODLINESS TO GOVERNMENT

Women's Discipleship Group
Terri McFaddin Series #5-11

Scripture Focus: Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home and in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (*Daniel 6:10*)

Opening Statement: Daniel was a prophet who served as the leading political figure in the nation of Babylon during the reign of three kings. During his years of service he never hid or renounced his faith in the God of Israel. When his faith in God was challenged he faced the lion's den, but the Lord delivered him and took him to even higher heights.

You may not agree with the political views of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (the first African American woman to hold her position) but you cannot ignore the fact that she is a powerful and unique woman who has influenced governments and leaders in every corner of the globe. Condoleezza, her name means to play music softly, was born in 1954 and raised in Alabama when segregation ruled the south. She lost one of her close friends, 11-year-old schoolmate Denise McNair, in the infamous bombing of the 12th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. In spite of many challenges that related to racism she overcame the obstacles and went on to become one of the most powerful political leaders in the world under the George Bush Administration. In spite of her high government post, Condoleezza has preached and shared her testimony in churches and in publications around the world. Like the prophet Daniel, she is living proof that God can work through those who serve in the political arena.

OBSERVATIONS: Read Condoleezza's Rice attached bio. How did her early life shape her faith in God?

INTERPRETATION:

1. In Daniel 6:10, why do you think Daniel prayed with his windows open facing Jerusalem?
2. Why do you think Secretary Rice openly speaks of her faith in Jesus Christ? Do you think she should be more, or less vocal about her spiritual beliefs?

3. As a professional, where do you think the line should be drawn between faith and professionalism?

PERSONALIZATION: In your current job or career, what difficulties have you experienced in blending your faith in God with professionalism.

APPLICATION: Make a commitment to openly share your faith in God. What can you do that help people know by your actions that you are a Christian?

