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By Katelyn Caralle, U.S. Political Reporter and Elizabeth Elkind, Politics Reporter For  
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President Joe Biden repeated questionable claims that he frequented a black church during the civil rights movement while attending a service honoring Martin Luther King Jr. on Sunday.

During the 2020 presidential campaign trail, Biden would frequently comment that he attended services at a black church as a teenager, but members of that church in Wilmington, Delaware do not recall him ever attending.

Speaking at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia on Sunday, Biden honored slain civil rights icon Dr. King on his 94th birthday. He is the first sitting president to deliver a Sunday morning sermon from the pulpit where King preached from 1960 until his assassination in 1968.

The stop at Ebenezer came at a fragile moment for Biden after Attorney General Merrick Garland on Thursday announced the appointment of special counsel to investigate how the president handled classified documents after leaving the vice presidency in 2017.

The church's senior pastor, Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia noted that the president was “a devout Catholic” for whom “this Baptist service might be a little bit rambunctious and animated. But I saw him over there clapping his hands.”

'Let's lay one thing to rest,' Biden said at one point during his remarks. 'I may be a practicing Catholic, but [I] used to go to 7:30 Mass every morning in high school and then in college before I went to the black church.'

'Not a joke, Andy knows this,' the president insisted, referencing former U.N. ambassador and former Southern Christian Leadership Conference executive director Andrew Young, who was in attendance.

Biden condemned 'racism, extremism, insurrection' during remarks Sunday in Atlanta.

'Andy, it's so great to see you, man,' Biden continued. 'You're one of the greatest we've ever had. Andy and I took on apartheid in South Africa and a whole lot else. They didn't want to see him coming. But we used to – that's when we would organize to march and to desegregate the city.'

During a speech in 2019, Biden told Jesse Jackson's Rainbow PUSH coalition: 'I got raised in a black church.'

'We would go sit in Reverend Herring's church, sit there before we'd go out, and try to change things when I was a kid in college and in high school,' he added, referencing the prominent African American Union Baptist Church in Wilmington.

Herring's longtime assistant Phyllis Drummond, who attended Union Baptist for 39 years, said does not think Biden attended in the 1960s.

'No, not at our building,' Drummond told the Washington Free Beacon in a 2020 interview. 'I think he was probably in Claymont, [Del.], [or] in Pennsylvania then.'

In his remarks, the president said that for all the progress the United States has made, the country had now reached a critical point in its history.

'This is a time of choosing - direct choices we have,' Biden said from the pulpit. 'Are we have people who choose democracy over autocracy?'

'Couldn't ask that question 15 years ago, we thought democracy was settled - not for our African Americans - but democracy as an institutional structure was settled. But it's not.'

King's mission, Biden said, was to 'redeem the soul of America.'

'It's a constant struggle between hope and fear, kindness and cruelty, justice and injustice - against those who traffic in racism, extremism, insurrection.

He repeated that the country was at an 'inflection point' and added, 'we know there's a lot of work that has to be continued on economic justice, civil rights, voting rights, protecting our democracy.'

The service ended with Biden and Warnock, linked arm in arm with several other people, singing 'We Shall Overcome.'

The president, whose job approval rating has hovered in the low 40s and even dipped into the high 30s at times, gave the Peach State a wide berth while making appearances in battlegrounds like Wisconsin and Colorado.

Biden plans to be in Washington, D.C. on Monday to speak at the National Action Network's annual breakfast on the King holiday.