

FEBRUARY 1950

POAU RESOLUTIONS

At the Second Annual National Conference on Church and State, Washington, D. C., January 31, Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State adopted the following:

I. Ambassador to the Pope

The resignation of Mr. Myron C. Taylor from the post of Ambassador to the Pope terminates a relationship which from the beginning was anomalous. We commend the President for his acceptance of Mr. Taylor's wish to relinquish this position and urge him that, by declining to appoint a successor, he put an end to an irregular diplomatic relation that has trespassed on the honored American tradition of the separation of church and state, and given offense to Protestants and other Americans.

II. Federal Aid to Education

In support of the American Constitutional principle of separation of church and state, POAU opposes S. 246 because it leaves a loophole for the violation of this principle and is an encouragement to further violations. POAU opposes tax-paid buses and textbooks for parochial or private schools. We freely recognize the right of any religious group to maintain its own schools, but we hold it is wrong to compel all the people to pay taxes in assistance of special schools which some people prefer to the public schools that are open to everybody.

POAU stands for the following:

1. The educational benefits of any Federal aid bill, if granted, should be limited strictly to free tax-supported, publicly controlled educational institutions, whether or not state constitutions or laws directly or indirectly permit use of state funds for sectarian educational institutions.

2. Any Congressional measure in aid of education should be for educational services alone. Health services, for example, should be considered on their merits apart from any educational bill and, if granted, should provide for administration of public health agencies in behalf of all the community.

3. Any Congressional Act should prevent violation of these principles by making provisions for judicial review so as to insure against unlawful diversion of Federal funds for sectarian purposes.

4. Any act by Congress in aid of public education should clearly assure such aid to each tax-supported, publicly-controlled school in the jurisdiction.

We are happy to announce that the new and improved Barden bill includes all these principles.

III. Federal Aid to Denominational Hospitals

The Bill-Burton Act, passed by Congress in 1946, provides \$150,000,000 from Federal funds to help "public and non-profit" hospitals expand their facilities. Insofar as this Act relates to church hospitals, in the judgment of certain constitutional lawyers, it conflicts with the ruling of the United States Supreme Court in respect to separation of church and state as interpreted by the Court in the Everson and McCollum school cases. A large portion of Protestantism, notably the Southern Baptist Convention, has steadfastly and sacrificially declined to receive any government grants in aid of their hospitals under the provisions of the Act. From opinions of competent legal advisers that to receive such would be violative of the Court's ruling, a demand has arisen throughout the country for a suitable judicial test to be made of that section of the Act which is being utilized in aid of sectarian hospitals.

Recognizing that denominational hospitals are conducted not only with a view to performing a healing ministry, but also for commending the denominations which have established them, POAU would join in the hope that a test will be made, possibly in friendly cooperation by all parties concerned. To this end the Advisory Council authorizes its Executive Committee to take whatever practical steps it may deem desirable to determine what are the facts under the law. It is obvious to all that much larger sums of the people's money, collected under compulsory taxation under the Hill-Burton Act, are being applied to the aid of denominational hospitals than could be used in payment for parochial buses and textbooks, and there is great need for clarification in respect to this matter.

AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT INVOLVING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The following paragraphs appeared in Walter Winchell's column in the Daily Mirror, New York, January 30:

"Dear Mr. Winchell: A vicious attempt is being made through many parts of the U. S. to smear the Catholic Church by use of spurious letters designed to stir up bigotry. Two of these letters are so phony and malicious I feel you could do a great service in bringing them to your wide public. One purports to come from Monica O'Toole McNoonan, a nun...There is no record of any nun by that name and no religious society as given. This letter has been advanced by a Dr. J. M. Dawson.... In it he misuses the name of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen.... the second was circularized widely by the Church of Christ people in Texas, signed Frances Xavier O'Toole....There is no such person listed with the Official Catholic Directory.

"The Gerald L. K. Smiths (who thrive on this kind of propaganda should be exposed....If your voice is raised now....Sincerely, Thomas J. McCarthy, Very Rev. Msgr., (Director) National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C."

Follows the answer of Joseph M. Dawson, Executive Director of the Joint Conference Committee:

Mr. Walter Winchell
Daily Mirror
New York, New York

February 3, 1950

Dear Mr. Winchell:

Believing that you wish your utterances to be in complete accord with facts justly interpreted, I give you a short but full account of my entire connection with a certain letter to which you referred in association with my name in your column in the New York Daily Mirror on January 30.

The strange letter in question which purported to be from "Monica O'Toole McNoonan, Regent, Mother of God Immaculate Nocturnal Adoration Society", with New York postal imprint, came to me on August 24, 1949. It was one of many of like tone and substance received from various Roman Catholic individuals and institutions by me at the time, the genuineness of which I had no reason to doubt. It followed on the heels of newspaper reports of my public withdrawal from a conference of supposedly representative persons invited to the House Committee on Education and Labor by Chairman Lesinski, when his Committee had failed to report out a bill on Federal aid to education. The letters contained anathemas similar to those heaped upon Representative Barden and other supporters of the principle that public funds should be appropriated to public schools only -- preferred such charges of heresy and bigotry as Cardinal Spellman at the time hurled at Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

In one press release explanatory of my withdrawal from the Lesinski Conference, I used the so-called O'Toole letter quite incidentally for illustration. A friendly editor in New York, who had published a letter to him which he believed to be from the same person who had assailed me, wired me that after an exhaustive investigation he had concluded this letter to him was phony. Immediately I recalled the letter addressed to me, nor did I print it in my monthly newsletter. Meanwhile the New Age had gone to press. I did succeed in preventing a great Protestant journal and an important book about to be issued by one of the universities from mentioning it. In addition, I provided Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State with sufficient copies of a memo in disavowal of the letter to answer all inquirers.

The most regrettable aspect of this whole incident, insofar as it relates to me, is that five months after the occurrence, the National Catholic Welfare Conference through its Bureau of Information now sends out an "Information Release", in which it presents "this letter produced by Dr. J. M. Dawson!"

I not only did not produce this alleged letter, but upon learning of its doubtful character promptly declined to reproduce it. I have informed the Catholic director of information of the true facts, as I am now giving them to you.

As one who has devoted most of life to the cultivation of good will and co-operation among differing religious groups, I insist that public discussion invariably should be confined to issues and exclude all ugly name calling. I deplore the use which is now being made of this letter received by me. In particular the portion of the National Catholic Welfare Conference statement quoted above, as indeed all of the NCWC release, can only incite ill feeling among Catholics and Protestants in a manner wholly unwarranted by what actually occurred.

Most sincerely,

(Signed) Joseph M. Dawson, Executive Director
Joint Conference Committee on Public
Relations
Baptists of United States

Note: In the McCarthy letter to Winchell above it is charged that I misused the name of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fulton J. Sheen. As a matter of fact I never used his name at all, but Nun McNoonan, or whoever wrote the letter to me, was the one who used Sheen's name. Since Winchell's publication letters plainly libelous and actionable have been received daily by the Baptist office from readily identifiable sources. Should one smile or weep over such an incident?

CHANGES RECOMMENDED TO CONVENTIONS

Certain changes in respect to the Joint Conference Committee on Public Relations were voted to be recommended to the Conventions at their next annual sessions. The first part to the name which both the General Council of the Northern Baptist Convention and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention agreed should be changed from Public Relations to that of Public Affairs. In regard to the budget, \$500 increase was recommended by the General Council and \$1,100 by the Executive Committee. These recommended changes were reported and reviewed in the next meeting of the Joint Conference scheduled for March 14.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN ITALY

Much stir has been created over press reported stoning of a group of United States Evangelists in Italy. These Texas young people belonging to the Church of Christ complained that an orphanage founded by their church has been closed, that a mob led by Roman Catholics drove them out of Castel Gandolfo, summer home of the Pope.

This Committee has promised sympathetic aid. Our United States Department of State is investigating the matter. Baptists, too, have their grounds of complaint concerning offenses committed against their churches and agencies in Italy, about which the public is likely to hear more.

IMPORTANT BOOKS RECOMMENDED

THE HIGH COST OF VENGEANCE. By Freda Utley, the Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, clothbound, 310 pages, \$3.50.

What does dismantling in Germany mean? The answer is here. The reader does not wonder at the fact that this book helped the Allies to revise their policy. But it is still timely.

JONATHAN EDWARDS. By Perry Miller, William Sloan Associates, New York, clothbound, 348 pages, \$3.50.

Jonathan Edwards ranks as America's first great philosopher as well as one of its foremost preachers and theologians. One cannot understand our history apart from a knowledge of him. This is the necessary book.

ESSAYS ON FREEDOM AND POWER. By Lord Acton, The Beacon Press, Boston, clothbound, 451 pages, \$5.00.

Lord Acton was a Roman Catholic, but this book has made Protestants out of many of the greatest thinkers of our time, because the author has some very clear and satisfactory conceptions of true freedom and the proper use of power.

HOW THE GREAT RELIGIONS BEGAN. By Joseph Gaer, Dood, Mead & Company, New York, clothbound, 424 pages, \$3.00.

Among many books on comparative religions read by me in a life long study of the subject, I regard this one as among the foremost. In the clearest, simplest language Dr. Gaer has used the story form with which to characterize the founders, describe the historic surroundings and evaluate the enduring essentials of most of the religions of the world.