

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL

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NOVEMBER, 1951

SHALL AMERICA KNEEL TO THE VATICAN?



No nation except a Roman Catholic country sends a full ambassador to the Vatican. If America sends a full-ranking ambassador there, he will have to kneel to the Pope. This will undoubtedly be interpreted by the world as equivalent to confessing that America is Catholic, which is contrary to the fact. It will require \$75,000 a year to maintain an ambassador at the Vatican - money that will come out of the income tax paid by our citizens, a majority of whom object to the United States having an interlocking arrangement with the Holy See as the proposal, says Time news magazine, November 5, 1951, was construed by Cardinal Spellman. The same article in Time says the Pope has complained that the appointment was not undisguisedly to the Holy See, rather than to the Vatican City State as affected by the official announcement.

When the news of the appointment went around the world and reaction of the Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee was included in the same Associated Press story, a cablegram came immediately from Rev. A. Mauricio, President of the Baptist Convention of Portugal, commending our protest. He followed up with the letter below:

"Upon the first news of the decision of Mr. Truman the Catholics here exclaimed, 'Truman kisses the hand of the Pope! America kneels to the Vatican! Soon America will be Catholic!' If Mr. Truman succeeds in sending somebody to the Vatican, all missionary work among the Catholic people will be in great danger. America is the hope of all free peoples. The two great foes of freedom are Catholicism and Communism, but in my judgment Catholicism is worse for the United States because your people do not know of the real situation in Catholic lands. We are under so-called 'tolerance', not liberty. As one example, we cannot build houses for our churches. If I could I would say this and more to your people, but I cannot write all that I desire. God keep America the friend of religious liberty for all peoples."

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It should be understood that the Pope demands that his nuncio, sent in exchange for a full ambassador to the Vatican, shall become the dean of all others. Little wonder that Great Britain has never consented to send a full-ranking ambassador or to receive a papal nuncio. It can well be understood also why Norway, Sweden and Denmark have no envoys at the Vatican.

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CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE WHITE HOUSE

October 19, 1951

The President of the United States
c/o General Vaughan
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

Although I have represented sixteen million Baptists in Washington through this office during the past five years, I have never intruded upon you except once, then about an important matter connected with voluntary relief work in Europe. I do not now and shall never try to take advantage of the fact that we are fellow Baptists to urge any subject upon your attention. There is, however, now an urgent question entrusted to me by people of many faiths and no faith affecting the Government, about which I wish a few moments to confer with you as early as possible. If at all permissible, I would respectfully solicit a few moments of your time Monday, October 22, or as early thereafter as you can allow.

With deepest appreciation, I am

Most sincerely yours,

Joseph M. Dawson, Executive Director

THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington

October 30, 1951

Dear Dr. Dawson:

Almost simultaneously with the receipt of your letter of October nineteenth requesting an appointment, the President read in the press a statement credited to you attributing a base and despicable motive to his action in nominating an Ambassador to the State of Vatican City. Indeed, you were quoted as saying it is "a frantic bid for holding machine-ridden big cities in the approaching hot Presidential race."

If this is a correct quotation the feeling at the White House is that no useful purpose could be served by the conference which you request.

Very sincerely yours,

MATTHEW J. CONNELLY, Secretary to the President

November 2, 1951

Mr. Matthew J. Connelly
Secretary to the President
The White House

Dear Mr. Connelly:

Your letter of October 30 has been received. Allow me to say that my request for an interview with the President was made before I had any inkling of the President's

forthcoming announcement of his appointment of General Clark to the position of Ambassador to the Vatican, and concerned a different matter, namely: the bill, H. R. 2094, (providing for government aid to District of Columbia church hospitals and passed by Congress). Since the President in the meantime has signed the bill as passed, I agree with you that no useful purpose could be served by granting the conference which I requested, hence I am not disappointed.

In regard to my statement to the press about the Vatican appointment, which you assign as the reason for the White House decision not to grant the conference, I must first be permitted to call attention to the slight error in your statement. I said his appointment "perhaps", etc., which of course, is not a positive declaration as stated in your letter. Apparently my statement is the common judgment of practically all Americans, who, whatever their position in regard to the propriety of the appointment, feel that political expediency dictated the appointment. I am one of very many Americans who trusted the President's pledged word made more than once to Protestants that no diplomatic relations would be established with the Vatican. I have repeatedly defended the President's pledged position before critical audiences throughout the country, and sometimes at considerable cost to myself in doing so. I was so shocked that you can well understand how I would agree with millions of others in their expressed judgment as to the reason for it.

The signing of the hospital bill in violation of the Constitution, as many of us think, which appropriates millions of dollars to a teaching unit of the Catholic University of America, founded by the Pope and under his direct control, shows to what extent the leaders of the Administration are willing to go to favor a single church. The unbroken succession of Roman Catholic Chairmen of the National Democratic Party, now emphasized by the selection of Mr. McKinney, publicized as a Roman Catholic leader, constitutes another important element of the total picture of the President's effort to utilize the favor of the big city voters.

As a life-long Democrat from the deep South, it is exceedingly painful to me to confront such astounding facts, but I think the White House is entitled, if for information only, to know how profoundly disturbed large portions of the population feel about the future of the American system when political considerations can induce the President to go so far in the direction of a working alliance of the Government with a single church.

Very truly yours,

Joseph M. Dawson, Executive Director
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN SPAIN

November 13, 1951

Editor the Washington Post:

The Rev. James A. Magner, Procurator of the Catholic University of America, in the Post of November 12 rebukes "continued allegations of Protestant persecution in Spain". He claims that these allegations "obscure the real facts". Then he declares that "impartial, competent observers of the Protestant and Jewish faiths" have reported in line with the Roman Catholic claims of religious liberty in Spain. He cites one Brotherhood leader among the Protestants of Washington in support of his contention.

The Magner statement might be allowed to remain in the category of a personal judgment except for his grave charge against Protestants and his insistence upon facts. It is exactly the almost uniform continuing complaints of trusted Protestants and the tragic nature of the facts in regard to religious minorities in Spain that demand attention to his misleading statement.

On May 11, 1949 the United States Department of State released to the press a statement on Spain, which was later submitted as a memorandum to the United Nations in 1950, containing these words: "Then there is the question of religious liberty, which is fundamental to a free exercise of human personality. That right does not exist in Spain."

About the time of this State Department release I had occasion to make representations to the Spanish Charge de Affaires here in behalf of Baptist J. D. Hughey in Spain concerning twenty-odd serious complaints of religious persecution. I was handed the so-called Spanish charter (Fueros de los Espanoles) promulgated by the Dictator Franco, and my attention called to Article 6, which technically protects religious freedom in Spain. It reads as follows:

"The profession and practice of the Catholic Religion, which is that of the Spanish State, will enjoy official protection.

"Nobody will be molested because of their religious beliefs or the private exercise of their cult. No external ceremonies or manifestations will be permitted except those of the Catholic Religion."

Unfortunately Spain, which is more of a church-state than a state having an established church, is under the control of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. When the Charge de Affaires here, upon my urging, communicated Mr. Hughey's complaints to Franco, the offensive Article 6 was at once interpreted more rigidly than ever, so that not only were the Protestants forbidden to make any kind of publication, but prohibited from marking their places of worship in any manner. Thus it would seem that effort to obtain ordinary religious rights only induced a harsher interpretation of the so-called charter provisions, and did intensify the hoodlum acts against minorities which Father Wagner admits occur in Spain.

Perhaps Father Wagner would say with some that since the United States made a loan to Franco, a more liberal policy is being followed in Spain. That is not the latest word from responsible persons, however. The New York Times in February of this year sent C. L. Suleberger to Spain to make an exhaustive report on conditions there. Suleberger confirmed abuses and on February 8, 1951 wrote:

"The Bishops of Spain continually proclaim the existence of only one true religion and do not permit dissidence. Protestantism is therefore regarded as an evil. In 1949 Ecclesia, a church publication, said, 'The objective right to profess a false religion does not exist'."

Other reputable publicists such as Homer Bigart in the New York Herald-Tribune and Joseph G. Harrison in the Christian Science Monitor, might be quoted in detail, but the more recent word of President John A. Mackay of Princeton Theological Seminary, a few months ago upon returning from Spain, was that in no country abroad which he visited did he find such a denial of religious liberty as he came upon in Spain, and appealed for correction of this anomaly in the modern world. His testimony accords well with a published statement by the National Council of Churches a few months previous:

"Article 6 is, of course, ambiguous. Permission to open Protestant chapels was to be secured from the civil governor of the province, according to the interpretation of the Charter issued November 12, 1945. Some of the most restrictive measures were eased for a time. The degree depended, in part at least, it seems, on the attitude of the provincial governors in different sections of the country. Naturally, the Protestants attempted to take advantage of the new freedom. Since 1947, following bitter formal statements by various members of the Spanish hierarchy against Protestant activities, the laws have been interpreted much more harshly."