



RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN NATIONAL AIR ENGINE

Reverend Edward L. C. Elton

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Reviewed by: Col Ingnire Date: 26 Jan 60

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Religious Factors in National Strength

31 October 1962

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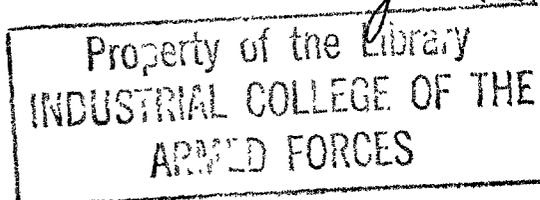
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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington 25, D. C.

RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN NATIONAL STRENGTH

31 October 1962

COLONEL INGMIRE: The power of a nation rests on its political, economic, moral and military strength. In our examination of human and natural resources as essential components of a nation's strength, we will today take a closer look at the moral ingredients. The moral fiber of a nation, to encompass its will to fight, is obviously of crucial importance. A major determining factor of its moral base is religion. You have read the biography of our speaker this morning and will have noted that he is well qualified to speak on the topic of "Religious Factors in National Strength."

Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you, for his first lecture at the college, the Pastor of the National Presbyterian Church, the Reverend Edward L. R. Elson. Dr. Elson.

DR. ELSON: Admiral Rose and Gentlemen:

I presume it is fitting for me to observe at the outset that you have invited a clergyman to be your lecturer on the day which, universally in Christendom, is regarded as "All-Saints Day." I therefore presume to be addressing the saints who are students in the National Industrial War College.

Long before he became Secretary of State in 1950, John Foster Dulles wrote: "Something has gone wrong with us or we should not be in our present plight and mood. It is not like us to be on the defensive and to be fearful. This is something new in our history. What we lack is a righteous and dynamic faith. Without it all

else avails little. The lack cannot be compensated by politicians, however able, or by scientists, however inventive; or by bombs, however powerful. Our greatest need is to regain confidence in our spiritual heritage."

Eight years later, when both Mr. Dulles and President Eisenhower had become my parishioners they were confronting a crisis in Lebanon, in the Middle East. The President being acquainted with the fact that I frequently travel in the Middle East and have made the Middle East a study - an avocation - asked me for a memorandum of my views. I prepared for him a brief statement, delivered it to the White House late on Sunday afternoon, and then took off for our summer cottage in Nova Scotia. On arrival there three days later I found a three-page, single-space letter from the President. And before I had opportunity to reply to it, the next day was a six-page, single-space letter from the President. These two letters written during a great international crisis in July 1958 contain some of the greatest items of Americana which I have ever read, and doubtless someday I shall have the privilege of making known more of the contents of these communications.

Today I read to you a brief statement from the second letter, and this letter is not yet in the public domain. "There is," wrote President Eisenhower, "an old military saying that nothing positive can be accomplished except from a strong base." So, our position of strength must comprise not only the necessary military force in critical spots with proper support and reserves behind it, but the United States itself must be a strong base out of which positive action can be projected when necessary. The real strength of America must be described in values that are intangible. We must get down to the fundamentals of human behavior, values and aspirations. We

must be true to our religious heritage. We must not fail to recognize that it is humans who must make temporal decisions. "The phrase, 'Will to greatness,' he wrote, "is an expression of a noble ideal. It will be achieved only if all of us, leaders and followers, each in his own sphere, uses his heart, his brain and his body, to make it so." It is significant also, that the word "spiritual" as a source of strength, is the first word mentioned by General Dwight D. Eisenhower in his remarks at the dedication of this building which are inscribed over the doorway.

Now, gentlemen, what is this spiritual heritage of which Mr. Dulles writes? What ought to be this strong base for which General Eisenhower has contended? These are the substantive questions we must ask as we consider religious factors in national strength. Religion, broadly speaking, has been defined as the total response of the total man to the totality of life. But in its profounder sense, religion has to do with man's encounter with deity, his description of that experience, and the manner of life which issues from that experience. By religious faith this morning we mean the acknowledgment of, and faith in, a divine being who is regarded as the creator, preserver and redeemer of men; the sovereign ruler of a moral order; to whom all men as individuals and all nations are accountable. This is our frame of reference.

The very moment we give exclusive attention to religion as a national resource or an element in national power, we are in difficulty; for, religion viewed solely as a national resource is not pure religion. Authentic religion transcends national concerns as God himself transcends nations. God is to be worshiped and served, not in order that we shall be nationally strong. We do not have religious faith and practice

in order to get something from God. Long ago it was said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." God is to be sought, worshiped and served, because he is God. Righteousness is to be sought for righteousness' sake. When God is sought for God's sake, and righteousness is sought for the sake of righteousness, then all else falls in order. Something is added. There is a plus factor in personal life and in group motivation and national strength, and conversely, when that faith is not there we become, in this kind of world, ideologically vulnerable.

At the outset it ought to be said that such a nation as ours viewed from the perspective of our origin, from the presuppositions and explicit ideas of our instruments of government, from the philosophies and mores of our people, cannot be true to itself without vital religion as a pervasive force in common life. In his significant book, "Heritage and Destiny," Dr. John MacKye, the President Emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary, observes three attitudes which men take toward God and the divine as these are expressed through the national entity. The first he calls the "Secular Nation," which considers that public welfare demands the complete elimination of God from all official relations with its life and its culture. Its supreme loyalty, it says, is not to God, but to ideas. Its heritage is not deity, but ideology. It's a nation whose life is organized without any specific reference to God.

The second type he calls the demoniac nation. This describes a nation which has transformed itself into an ultimate; which takes the place of God, or which has deified some reality associated with its national existence. It makes absolute something which is purely relative and in time. This is the characteristic of most totalitarian

nations. In our own age we have seen this dramatically portrayed in Nazi Germany where German boys swore allegiance to a "Youth Nationalist Socialist Creed," the four tenets of which, went something like this: "I believe that national socialism is the only saving faith for Germany. Secondly, I believe in a God who has sent us Adolph Hitler. Third, I believe in a God who has sent us Adolph Hitler to save us from parasites and do-nothings. Fourth, I believe in a God who has sent us Adolph Hitler to bring us beauty and truth." Many young Germans said, "I believe," to this blasphemous formula with its worship of the Man-God instead of the God-Man, imputing to him the Messianic quality of the Savior and demanding of young Germans absolute commitment of body and soul.

Dr. MacKye proceeds to the third type of nation which he defines as the "Covenant Nation;" a nation which recognizes dependence on God, and its responsibility to God. This is a nation which acknowledges in its instruments of government and its national institutions, that God is the source and being of its life and culture. Now, ours is, and has been, a covenant nation. Our forefathers covenanted with God in a unique sense. Our pioneer fathers covenanted with God not as a tribal deity, but with the Eternal God, who, while being the God of all men, nevertheless becomes in a special way, the support and strength of those who seek to discover His Will, and to do it in all of life.

Our spiritual kinsmen covenanted with God to serve him and proclaimed to the world that the highest role of the nation, therefore, is to reflect God's righteousness and to promote His glory. Our early ancestors began where the Bible begins. And you will recall the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning, God." He is acknow-

ledged as the Lord of Creation, Life, and the source of all human rights. They wrote this into the Declaration of Independence, and put it implicitly in the Constitution. From the very beginning of our national existence there was tolerance of all religions and of none. Never has our national policy been one of indifference to religion. The First Amendment was created and was meant to shelter religion, not to hamper it. As a colleague of mine put it some time ago, "If the foundations of the nation and the ideals that gave it birth stem from a view of the universe which sustains belief in a personal God who has revealed himself to the world in the record of the Bible and history itself, he would on the one hand claim to adhere to these basic American principles and at the same time hold the view that God does not exist, puts himself in an extremely difficult dialectical position. In the philosophical sense an atheistic American is in a difficult position. He is living in a culture he never could have produced. In a philosophic sense he has accepted for himself the spiritual capital of the Judao-Christian culture, but at the same time he denies by his own view or reality the source of the Judao-Christian culture.

The atheistic American, when driven to the dialectical conclusion of his philosophical position is really a spiritual parasite and becomes an exponent of something which might well be described as subversive of the American reality. It is quite true that the Christian or Jewish ethic has validity only for those who accept the biblical view of God. But the biblical doctrine of man is the American doctrine and is derived from the biblical doctrine of God. Man is created, we say, in the image of God. The nature of that human image depends upon the view of the Creator. If the atheist or the humanistic secularist denies the validity of this biblical culture, then

all that America has stood for, and still stands for, is challenged. If we deny the existence of God, whom we say, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "The God who made us made us free;" if we deny the existence of the God who gave us liberty, how can we accept, then, the validity of the liberty so given?

Under our present Pledge of Allegiance, whatever man believes or disbelieves personally, whatever may be his personal beliefs as to the nature and character of God, he is pledging allegiance to a state - a collective entity - which, through its founders, its laws and culture, does, as a matter of fact, believe in the existence of God. We are, and we assert that we are, a God-conscious people. Now, the atheist is not asked to make a personal confession of God whose existence he denies or doubts, but he is pledging allegiance to a nation "under God," which derives its being from the concept of deity. If the atheist and the humanistic secularist insists upon omitting this phrase from the pledge he is asking the majority of the people who are theists to acquiesce in a secular pledge to a society that is at heart theistic.

While the majority must respect the rights of the minority the minority, nonetheless, must recognize the truths of the majority. Herein rests one of the reasons why it seems to me important that the public schools should at some point in their daily activity have some ceremonial recognition of the Supreme Being from whom we derive what we call our liberty, our national character and strength.

Now, God in the most vivid and concrete sense, was the source of our being at the beginning, and in the highest moments this faith has been our guiding light. God is still at the heart of our culture; not because this is expedient or because belief in God is good for America, or because it makes us nationally strong, but rather,

because this was the view of the universe upon which, as a matter of historical fact, this nation was founded. The theistic premise, I assert today, is the American premise. Apart from faith in God, American history and American life has no meaning. Our ideals are religious ideals, our goals are religious goals, our standards are religious standards, our motivations when at their best, religious motivations. Allow religion in the United States to languish and we begin to deteriorate as a people. In this New World there was to be no established church, no particular denominations as the Old World knew, with Lutheranism in Germany, Anglicanism in England, Presbyterianism in Scotland and the Netherlands, and others in other nations.

There was to be here the separation of the institutions of religion from the institutions of government. But never was it presumed that religion could be separated from national policy or alienated from our common rights. It is a simple fact of history, of course, that not one of our earliest statesmen was a professed atheist, Thomas Paine not being a statesman, and certainly all of our Presidents have been professed believers. In many ways - I need not emphasize all of them - we publicly recognize the authority of the religious principle in national life. The sessions of our Congress and our State Legislatures open with prayers. We proclaim a national day of Thanksgiving, a national day of prayer; we provide Chaplains for the military services. The Army Engineers were the largest builder of churches in the world in 1942.

Penal institutions and disciplinary institutions have their Chaplains which operate under federal and state auspices. We swear our oaths in court, on the Bible.

The official pledge contains the words, "One nation under God." We use the phrase, "A God-fearing people." We put on coins the words, "In God we trust." The oath of responsible office is taken on the Holy Bible. And immigrants, upon taking the oath of naturalization conclude their vows by saying, "So help me God." Philosophically speaking, not as an individual attitude, but as a class, an atheistic American is a contradiction in terms. How did this all come about?

It is a fact of history that when the 13 Colonies became a nation nearly 2/3 of the three million people had in some way been trained in the schools of John Calvin, the Protestant reformer, whose work was carried on for the most part, in Geneva, Switzerland. Nearly 4/5 of all the Colonial clergymen of all denominations were at least tinctured in some way by the theological concepts which emanated from this young Frenchman who taught at Geneva, whose intellectual and theological competency are ranked historically with St. Augustine and with St. Thomas Aquinas.

At the beginning of our history as a nation more than 900,000 of the 2 1/2 million settlers in the Colonies were either Scottish or Scotch-Irish. And if you find any of this breed who is not a Calvinist or a Presbyterian, somebody has been tampering with his religion. Even the Irish in those days for the most part were from the orange part of that Republic rather than from the green part; a fact which I pointed out to Mr. Walter Winchell one day at a St. Patrick's Day dinner. He had remarked that more than half the troops in George Washington's Army were Scotch-Irish or Irish-Scotch, but they were the orange, as Presbyterian as John Calvin and John Knox.

In any case, Ranke, the German historian, reports that John Calvin is the prac-

tical founder of America. [And Horace Walpole in 1776 stood up in British Parliament and said, "Cousin America has run off with a Presbyterian Parson." He was referring to the Reverend John Witherspoon whose national monument reposes in front of our church here in Washington, who, in the Revolution, foresook the Presidency of Princeton College, to become a part of the government, and traveled up and down the Colonies raising money to keep the tenuous government afloat, and regiments to keep the feeble armies in the field. He was the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. He had been so accustomed, as were the other Scottish and Scotch-Irish, to fighting the English in the Old World that when they came here they simply took up here where they left off in the Old World.

Somebody has said that a Calvinist is a man who bends one knee before Almighty God, and the other knee upon the neck of a king. There was no doubt about where these people would be in a war against the British king. It's very interesting to note that John Witherspoon lifted the academic standards of the College of New Jersey which is now known as Princeton. It was cosmopolitan in its student composition rather than local as were the other universities of the time. And not only was John Witherspoon the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence, but there were more graduates of Princeton who were signers of the Declaration than all those of Harvard and Yale put together; a fact we might well note in this day. And I speak not as a Princeton man.

More than half of the men in General Washington's Army were, as a matter of fact, Scottish or Scotch-Irish. Once General Washington was asked if he would ever surrender and he said he would never surrender, but if need be he would retreat to

the mountains of the West, by which he meant Pittsburgh, and fight it out with his Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, by the tactics that we know today as guerrilla warfare. When the surrender of Cornwallis took place at Yorktown it is a notable fact to me as a Presbyterian Parson that all of the Colonels in command of the Colonial Troops except one, were ruling elders of the Presbyterian Church. These were the people who fought the war and there is no question, historically speaking, that these people, my own spiritual kinsmen, - I'm a Gordon Clansman from my mother's side - exercised the decisive and the determinative influence at the beginning. It is also true that they brought with them some of their defects, and we must accept some of their failures. The form of beverage that bears the name of some of these people is one of the things they brought, much to the delight of some people, and to the disdain of some others.

In this New World, individualism rather than conformity was to be the order of the day, but the people of this New World were, to some extent, children of the enlightenment - the Industrial Revolution - but to a much greater extent they were the children of the Protestant Reformation. There was a diversity of organization but there was a central dominating core of faith, a sufficient consensus to hold the scattered peoples together in their faith and life. The minimal elements of this consensus were that God is sovereign, Lord of the universe and of the universes beyond, the Lord of Creation, of Life, of Man, of Nations, and of Life beyond this Life. They believed in the moral law made known by revelation by God in nature, in the biblical revelations, and in the historical process.

Thirdly, they believed in the supreme worth of the individual person, and this

worth was implicit because of his createdness, and immortal soul with an eternal destiny. They believed also that government or the ordering of mans' life by the consent of the governed; that a man possessed of this dignity derived from his createdness and his redemption, possessed such dignity and worth that he could be trusted with his own destiny. More recently, Father John Courtney Murray finds that the American spiritual consensus is rooted in what the Roman Catholic theologians call "Natural Law." He says the American Bill of Rights is not a piece of 18th Century rationalistic theory; it is far more the product of Christian history. Behind it one can see not the philosophy of the enlightenment, but the older philosophy that has been the matrix of the common law.

"The man," he says, "whose rights are guaranteed in the face of law and government is, whether he knows it or not, the Christian man - the Judao-Christian man - who had learned to know his own personal dignity in the school of his faith. These people had not only a way of faith, but they had a way of life. Some time ago I spoke at the anniversary of the establishment of the Presbytery of the Redstone in Western Pennsylvania. I was intrigued by the boundaries of that early ecclesiastical jurisdiction. They said it would be bounded on the north by Lake Erie, on the east by the ridges of the Alleghenies, on the south by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and west to the setting of the sun. And to this vast domain they sent three Presbyterian clergymen who not only established churches, but what excited me was that each of them established a classical school out of one of which came Washington and Jefferson College, the oldest institution of higher learning west of the Allegheny Mountains.

It was the cultural climate, the social soil produced by this kind of testimony and

witness, that produced McGuffey and his McGuffey Readers, which contained not only lessons in how to read, but also moral and ethical maxims by which to live. These people, our spiritual forebears, possessed at least four distinguishing characteristics in their way of life. First, they were committed to the elemental virtues: Chastity, sobriety and frugality. Secondly, they believed in work as a way of life, not merely as a means to a livelihood. Industry was everywhere commended; insolence was everywhere condemned. When they had a problem or came upon hard times, everybody went to work. Now when we come upon hard times everybody loads up in the automobile and comes to Washington with their hands out.

Thirdly, they believed in the exaltation of the intellect, in the discipline of the mind. The Colonial home was a sort of miniature university and the hearthside was a political arena.

And fourthly, they believed in the religious home where father was the priest of his own household. Now, there are those who say that America became great and strong simply because of great natural resources secured to us by ocean frontiers and friendly neighbors. Other nations have had these resources and for longer periods of time. No, America became great and strong because of a creative spirit at the heart of her life, a creative spirit derived from her religious faith, a faith mediated to the people by a wide variety of religious denominations. In some, this faith has been intimate and very personal. In others it has been an attitude of life derived from the cultural climate and the social atmosphere produced by religious faith.

Much has been said and written these days about the domestication of American Christianity. As you know, the 1950s brought to the United States an unprecedented

revival of religious activity. In 1850 about 15% of the population belonged formally to some religious institution. Today more than 65% of our population is identified with some organized institution of religion; nearly all of the people in the land over 16 years of age. Today there are evidences about us that the decade of the '60s is to be a leveling off period and an effort to go deeper into a comprehension of the meaning of our several faiths. But also, as has been indicated in the events of the last year, to come to a better comprehension of the meaning of the American reality. We've heard the criticisms about our kind of religion, but less, it seems to me, is understood about the penetration of vital religion consciously or unconsciously into the American culture.

Well, the case for religion as a factor in national strength, it seems to me is clearly answered in the framework of the American heritage. Theistic faith answers the personal philosophic questions of where we came from, why we're here, and what is our ultimate destiny. Theistic faith brings to the individual person a wholeness and fulfillment in life. It produces what the psychologists call "the integrated personality," for the whole individual personality is organized around the objective reality we call "God." Theistic faith brings a reinforcement of human powers; the feeling that man does not act alone; he is supported by intangible forces underneath him, and he has power because he has come into harmony with the spirit that is at the heart and center of the universe. There is in the individual a plus factor.

Theistic faith - that is to say, ethical theism - is founded on the proposition that there is an eternal moral law made known to man and that this law gives him the fixed point of reference in what is right and wrong for human conduct; that this moral

law which is theistically derived, is as inexorable as the law of nature, or, the laws are as inexorable as the laws of nature. If you lie, if you cheat, if you lust, you destroy the individual personality just as surely as bullets or poison destroys the body. Take away these moral absolutes, this standard of reference, let morality change styles, or change with the styles, and you make it possible for the capricious politician and the demagogue - and at his worst, the dictator - to divine for himself what is to be right and wrong.

And lastly, theistic faith provides us with a concept of the ultimate order toward which the human race strives. In the Judao-Christian sense, it is the Kingdom of God, that ordering of life in a kingdom of perfect justice, the law of which is love, and the ruler of which, is God. All of this sharpens the conflict of our world today. For, in the ideological sense, the world conflict involves differing views of man, his nature and his destiny, and radically conflicting views of reality. The only reason why we treat human beings with a sense of dignity and worth is that we have been taught that he is a creation of God, a living soul with an eternal destiny, and that the chief purpose of life is, according to the catechism, to glorify God, to manifest God's reality in all of life. This makes a tremendous difference in your attitude toward other men and nations.

The theist will always have a higher view of the atheist as a man than the atheist will have of himself. Take the view that this is an impersonal universe as the Marxists say; that individual man is driven by relentless materialistic forces over which he has no control; that the chief end of man is to serve the party's program and the purposes of the socialistic state and the end of the individual is extinction; take that

view and put it beside the former view, and the cold war has become much hotter. And this is precisely what the cold war is about. Should we adopt the secularist view or the atheist view of life, we're in a very bad way indeed. For, in this area the communists are experts. This is their philosophy.

In any examination of religion as an aspect of national power we ought to face quite frankly the value of faith, worship and prayer in individual men's lives. The analysis made by the Department of Defense, of the men who became American prisoners in the Korean conflict is very revealing in this respect. The men who capitulated, who gave way under the stress of imprisonment and persecution, violated their vows to the United States and became the instruments of communist propaganda for three chief reasons, it was observed.

First, they had limited education in the basic American creed and faith. Secondly, they lacked vigorous and disciplined religious commitments. And thirdly, they frequently were reared in broken homes. On the other hand, the men who went into combat with a thorough religious foundation, a comprehension of American standards and with strong spiritual motivations, were the most effective in combat, the least vulnerable to enemy propaganda, and the most determined and aggressive in their actions on behalf of their own country. In these studies made by psychologists, intelligence and Personnel Officers of the department, the discovery was made that the stronger one's religious convictions and the more unyielding the man to an alien ideology, the more trustworthy and cooperative his personal efforts and the more purposeful his total response to duty.

There was, to be explicit, a definite correlation between a strong religious life

and an effective combat performance. Many of you may have known or heard Lt Colonel William E. Myer who concluded an address, in part, with these words; "Our national superiority, if there be any at all, that can matter at all over the Godless materialistic communist super-state, is not a superiority of weapons or numbers of men or quantities of luxuries; our superiority must lie in the moral character of our people individually and collectively, and in the ideals enunciated by our founders in their declarations, and by our current leaders in government, and by our military leaders in the code of conduct" about which I do not have time to make comment today. Colonel Myer was one of the people who made to study which I alluded to before.

Perhaps many of you in this room saw some years ago the television drama called "The Brainwashing of John B. Hayes," or you read the synopsis of it in the Readers' Digest. When I came to Washington in 1946, Dr. Hayes was one of my colleagues, an assistant Minister of the staff of our church. He was sent by our congregation and supported in China from the year 1917. He is one of the greatest men I ever met, a Christian martyr and hero of this age. At Worcester and Princeton he had been a basketball, football, and tennis star. An able student, he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. He studied at Oxford. He took graduate theological studies at Edinburgh. When World War II came he was imprisoned for nearly 4 1/2 years during which time he buried his own father in the camp.

At the end of the war he came here to Washington for rehabilitation and served with me, as assistant, for two years. Then, after this period he returned to China as a teacher and Evangelist. He knew the people and he felt he could have some

impact upon the rising agrarian reformers. At first the communists had too many other concerns to give John Hayes their attention. But by and by in the middle of the night he was arrested and taken to jail in the manner with which you are all so familiar. John Hayes, in that hour and thereafter, had only one weapon - his faith in God. But it was that which saw him through and that which made a tremendous impact upon the communists. They brainwashed him without mercy. Five times they threatened to cut off his head. They accused him of being the center of an American spy ring and I was his American axis in Washington. They grilled him for three weeks because at that time J. Edgar Hoover was one of the trustees of our church and his name appeared on the church bulletin. They had our church bulletins in his dossier, I might say.

And for two additional weeks they worked him over on the subject of Admiral Sidney W. Sauer who had organized Central Intelligence and who was a member of the Security Council at the time, and also was a trustee of our church. Hayes had never even had a conversation with Mr. Hoover, but he was a good friend of Admiral Sauer, and he had received on plain stationery, a number of letters from Admiral Sauer. Well, the long and the short of it is this. These people did not confound him, and they did not break him, though he came very near to the breaking point.

One day they suddenly turned him loose and he returned with his testimony which has appeared, as I said, in these places. The revelation of the strength of religion was the insight we derived from this. John Hayes said, "I resolved to be true to truth and to be true to Christ." And this has been true over and over again. Did not Einstein say that he expected to encounter stiff resistance to the Nazi Regime from

the Press, but was disappointed? Then from the educators, but was disappointed? But not until he saw how men of faith - the religious people - stood up to this new paganism, did he understand the reality of religion.

I did the War Crimes Survey of the imprisoned clergymen at Dachau Concentration Camp, and published a cleared article in one of the American journals in the summer of 1945. There were 2,443 Ministers of Religion imprisoned at Dachau, only 1,034 of whom lived on the day we captured that camp. These men were considered to be, by the Nazis, their chief antagonists. They crossed all denominational barriers - 23 different denominational jurisdictions and 18 different nationalities. Only eight of them ever came out of Dachau alive before the day that we captured the camp.

But, the history of the age in which we live, there is testimony to the fact that the people who have been able to stand up in the full stature of their manhood against the tyrannies and the paganisms of our age, have been the people rooted and founded in our theistic heritage. Of one thing we may be certain; we shall never achieve our national objectives about which two Presidents have talked materially, until, as Woodrow Wilson said, "We are redeemed spiritually." We cannot remain American if we jettison our heritage, trespass upon our ancient sanctions, walk over our ancestors' decency, or by default or neglect, allow our spiritual sinews to become soft or flabby. It is only by a robust and rugged faith that we can meet the threatened pulverizing pressures of our age.

So, then, in our society, in our kind of order, a religious life is not an option. It is an imperative. We cannot have our culture, we cannot have the national reality

we have known as the United States of America, except we have at the center a core of worshipping, witnessing, praying, serving and self-sacrificing men and women. On occasions such as this I like to reflect upon our pioneer kinsman, the early settler who went out facing the frontier and the future carrying three implements in his hand. He carried the ax, the gun and the book. With the ax he felled the trees, built his home, his school, his church; with the gun he hunted game, pelts for his livelihood, and protected himself from the predatory forces of the wilderness. His book was not only his manual of devotion, the self-communication of God to man, but it became the textbook for his education and the guide to the founding of his political institutions.

Today's American no longer carries the ax, the gun and the book. His ax has become our great industrial empire and the world knows all about that. His gun has become our great national defense establishment, the arsenal of the Free World, and mankind is beginning to understand that. What is important is that the book and the person revealed in that book shall become today the pervasive reality it was of old. So that, in this hour of history, Americans may become a great bastion of spiritual power.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Dr. Elson, from your comments, your views on the recent Supreme Court decision on the use of prayer in schools seems rather obvious. If there are future followup decisions which carry out the direction of removing the religious influence from public schools, what is your opinion as to what the American Protestant

churches should do in order to counter-act it? Should it go more into a parochial school effort of its own?

DR. ELSON: First let me say that I agree with the Supreme Court decision of last summer because I think it was fundamentally based upon a particular prayer proposed by a governmental agency. Secondly let me say that three of the nine justices of the Supreme Court happen to be my parishioners. Two of them are communicant members of the church, and the third worships and is the son of a Presbyterian elder. So that, I have an interesting relationship. I personally believe that some way must be found in public education under government auspices, to have some ceremonial action which testifies to the fact that we are a God-conscious people.

Being a God-conscious people is different than having an established institutional church. This is the distinctive and unique feature of American life. The Superintendent of Schools in Washington has given a very good case for the religious exercises at the beginning of each day, for he says, among other things it creates a better mood in which education can be conducted. It testifies to the world that our educational philosophy is not materialistic or mechanistic, but rather, spiritual.

If the succession of cases before the Supreme Court should eliminate this altogether, then I believe there will be a great debate in the Protestant Church as to whether some kind of amendment should be sought, or to what extent we should engage in parochial education. The Presbyterian Church forsook its big program of prep schools in Pennsylvania in the middle of the last century which was the heart of our system of prep schools, believing that the best way to express our views in

education was to put the right kind of people in the educational process.

I would say, in concluding this comment, that Dr. Hanson has intimated that the exercises in the District of Columbia schools, though more ceremonial than religious in content, nevertheless have significance. And I think the church must be very careful about condemning ceremonies and rituals when worship itself is a liturgical act, and all of the actions and ceremonies mean more than the thing which is done. This is what I think is important. Just as we stand to sing the National Anthem, I believe somewhere young people ought to be brought up with this consciousness that this is the source of our being. And from my point of view it's quite as important that the minority should know that it is being done. That's all.

QUESTION: Doctor, one frequently hears the charge that the church in America has failed to stay abreast of the technological revolution. Whereas in the past, the church was in the forefront, either as a leader or up with the leaders in the revolution. For the past 50 years or so, the church has fallen behind. The charge, then, is that the church is not performing its primary role of staying with the nation and adjusting it. Would you care to comment on the validity of the charge?

DR. ELSON: The organized religion in America is so diverse that I think a general conclusion here is very difficult. The church was the creator, the provider of most of the academic institutions that are significant today. Even the University of Southern California was started by Congregational clergymen. And the great academic places of scientific research had their origin in religious institutions.

I think, however, on the one hand it is easy to conclude that theologians in their norms, their vocabulary, have not in all cases, or even in many cases, kept pace

with the new dimensions that we must think in. But on the other hand there are some remarkable exceptions. I rode with the Chairman of the Geophysical Year on a plane one day, who is a tremendous man, religiously. Dr. Wilson, a Member of the Atomic Energy Commission, is an elder of our church. You find among the laymen there seems to be no conflict between the new insights about the universe and their faith. Some of the greatest scientists have themselves been religious men. I think of men like Arthur Compton. He is profoundly religious.

But I share with you the observation that some of the spokesmen for our churches have been sluggish in their accommodation. I've said yes and no, if you want to know precisely.

QUESTION: Sir, I would like to direct my attention to the Middle East. The Moslem religion seems to foster a fatalistic attitude about life. This fatalistic attitude seems to impede or interfere with the efforts of political leaders in that area to progress industrially. Would you care to comment on that?

DR. ELSON: Islam has, as you indicate, in its theology, what people believe is a fatalistic attitude and a concept which suggests that man is what he is born to be. He is born to one class, to do one kind of work, and that he shall remain, and this is his fate. This has been an impediment. The interesting thing to those of us who are not Moslems is that the breakthrough in this has come at a point where other religions have penetrated that part of the world.

Monday night the Arab students of Washington met in our church hall for a lecture and a forum. That which they attested to was their great debt to the American Church for having established institutions of learning on the grade school, prep

school and college level. I wonder if you realize that when the United Nations was created the university which was most numerously represented by the delegates at San Francisco was not Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Oxford or Cambridge, but was the American University in Beirut. Now, our penetration of the Middle East and these hardened concepts of Islam has not, churchwise, been in the sense of the old evangelistic technique of winning individual converts or counting additions. Rather, the device has been the penetration of the culture. And where this has been happening, strange things have been taking place; in Syria where the lot of the woman is gradually being improved; in Iraq and Iran this has been a cultural penetration rather than a religious conversion. It will take some time for this dogmatic orthodox philosophy of Islam to be broken down, but I believe that the contacts which the world of Islam makes with America and with the Western powers, is gradually showing that the differing views of man and his place, and the differing views of Allah or God, have something to do with social progress.

I think it's going to be pretty slow. It's going to be very slow in a place like Saudi Arabia. Incidentally, I wear a watch here today that was presented to me by King Saud on one of my recent excursions, as a guest of the Royal Household. And since I do not work for the government, I didn't give it back. I'm not sure that I've answered your question, but dogmatic orthodox Islam makes it very difficult for these progressive attitudes. The other side of it is that they are making progress.

Even in Saudi Arabia - the land of Mecca and Medina - the idea of having schools for the population is now being born in some of the leaders. This was unheard of even 10 years ago. There is no university in Saudi Arabia, nor is there a university

or college in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. But they're clamoring for it and we're helping them do some things like this. The ideology here is a tough one and I recognize this is what's fundamental in your question. They make good soldiers sometimes.

QUESTION: Sir, you mentioned the studies which were made of the behavior of Prisoners of War in Korea. Have you any comment on the remarkable case of the Turks, which I believe was covered in the same subject?

DR. ELSON: Do you know Turkish soldiers? Have you met them? They're great individuals. And the beginning of a Turkish soldier is not when he gets into the Army, but when he's a boy. He has this relationship to the achievement of an objective, whatever that objective is that's defined for him by command, with the utter and complete self-abnegation that seems to be a very, very unique phenomenon in military circles. In Korea he turned out to be about the best individual combat star there was. I do not know what the inculcation is in the beginning of the life of a Turkish young man apart from his Islamic discipline.

If he's a devout Moslem he doesn't worry about the end of life on this side, for he believes it's uninterrupted and he has it on the other side. This can account for his attitude and willingness to die, but I do not know that that accounts for his ferocity in combat which is another feature. I can't answer that. I think he does have a faith that enables him to suffer and to die, but what makes him a terrific man in an encounter I can't answer.

I said I'd answer any question. Most of the answers would be, "I don't know," and this is one of them. If there is time, I'd like to comment on the Slovik case

where I was the senior witness at the execution of the only soldier executed for desertion in World War II. If you have the time, I'd be glad to speak on that case.

QUESTION: Go right ahead.

DR. ELSON: Could I see how many of you read Bill Hewie's book called, "The Execution of Eddie Slovik." How many have some familiarity with the case? Could I ask how many of you read in last summer's George Washington University Law Journal the treatment of the legal aspects of it in that edition? Did anybody see that? That's a very recent one. I might say that the copy I saw was sent to me by Mr. Justice Tom Clark. I read it with a great deal of interest.

On the 30th of January 1945, when I was the Chaplain of the ~~XXI~~ Corps, our corps under General Millburn who died just a few days ago, was expanded to become almost a complete field army. And General Devers who was the group commander as you recall, was anxious to straighten out that pocket which the Germans had on the French side of the Rhine River between Strasbourg and Colmar. It was bitter winter, the snow was heavy in the Vosges Mountains, and the night before the attack was to begin - the offensive was to be launched - General Millburn invited the General Officers involved in this operation, to a dinner in his quarters, and two other persons. One was Lt Colonel Henry Cabot Lodge, and I was the second.

At that time I was an eagle Colonel and it's the only time I ever sat farther up at the table than Mr. Lodge. When the dinner was over, General Millburn drew me aside and said that the 28th Infantry Division, the next morning, was to execute a soldier for desertion. Everybody was aware, as he was, that this was the first in World War II. There were under our command at that time, something like 22 cases

under review, or in the Army group, and it was likely that some others might be carried forward. He said, "With all that we have to do, I want to keep my line staff with me tomorrow, but I'd like you to be my representative." And so, in response to this direction I reported to the chateau with the bridge and the moat around it where this ceremony was to take place. We were checked in - name, rank, serial number, why we were there, etc.

I had never seen Private Slovik nor had most of the other officers who witnessed this, though the enlisted men had. As it turned out, when we began to form in the courtyard for the ceremony I was the senior officer among the official witnesses present, and the other officers formed on me. I took the number one post in the front file, facing the stage where the accused was to stand for the ceremony. On the flank were the enlisted men - representatives of each of the companies in the regiment of which he was part - and beyond that, other elements of the division. There was quite a company of people there.

Describing the ceremony is one part of it, but analyzing the man is quite another part. As it turned out, though, this was the only execution by a firing squad of an American member of the Armed Forces for desertion since the Civil War. I would place a different evaluation upon Mr. Hewie's book than Mr. Hewie places upon it.

Ten years after the war was over Mr. Hewie came to see me and asked me to answer some 17 questions for him concerning this. I at first declined. But by this time, General Eisenhower who authorized the execution was now one of my parishioners. General McNeil who was the Judge Advocate of the European Theater was the ruling elder of our church, and I, the senior officer present at this and now the

pastor, all of us in one ecclesiastical jurisdiction - I was very loath to speak about it at all.

Hewie got the letters of Slovik's widow and scanned them. Then he had a detective agency hunt up some of the men who had been on the firing squad. And he met the trial Judge Advocate and some others and put some material together, and then he went up to the Pentagon and said, "I have this material and I'm writing a book about this. Can I now have the official records so that I'll be accurate in what I say?" General Groves who was the PRO, then, and some others, were really in a dither about what they ought to do. Finally it was agreed that if the manuscript could be reviewed in the Pentagon they would let him see the official records, and he got the official records.

The detailed description that appears in Hewie's book, about the chateau, the courtyard, the conduct of some people, the color of the shutters on the windows, the depth of the snow, the paths through the snow, etc., is what Hewie got when he heard me read my own account of it. The night of the day on which the execution took place I sat down at my field desk with a little candle in a bombed-out cellar and wrote an account of what I had witnessed that day. I put one copy in my 201 File, sent one copy to Colonel Bill Wiley who was right here at this post at the time as the historian of Army ground forces. He was a college classmate of mine. He played first base and he made me look like a better shortstop than I had been. And then I sent the third copy to my wife's father so that we might have these three in existence.

Well, the ceremony was carried out according to the prescriptions in the regula-

tions. At the exact hour a column moved out of the house, led by the Provost Marshal, and was followed by a couple of M. P. s, one of whom carried a black hood and the parachute cords that were used to bind him to the stake. The accused came in company with Chaplain Cummings of the 28th Division who attended him. And then the three doctors, the Judge Advocate Officer, a couple of reporters, and the last M. P. s carried a great big collapse board which, as you may know, the prisoner is bound to in the event that he is not able physically to stand at the stake for the volley.

The ceremony took place. We all came to attention and remained this way. The soldier had not seen the firing squad nor had the men on the firing squad faced him. After they read through all the reviews and the pronouncement of the order to carry out the execution, the man was secured to the stake and this black hood placed over his head. During this process the firing squad was marched in from behind the house, wheeled up in front of us, did a right face, and the command was given: Ready, aim, fire. The black-hooded head slumped on the chest. For eight minutes, then, we still stood at attention while the doctors went over the body, after which the senior surgeon reported to the Provost Marshal and he announced that Private Slovik was dead and there would be no need for a second volley.

As you know, they reload the rifles, prepared for a second one, for the sentence is, "shall be shot until dead." Much thought went into what happened after this was over. We lingered in the house. General Kota commanded the division, and came and stood in the corner of the courtyard while the ceremony took place. And we talked at some length with Father Cummings, Chaplain Cummings, who attended Slovik.

When Hewie 's book was in the process of preparation the McCall's editors were reading it and said that I had made the only constructive comment about this, and wondered if I'd do a piece for them, analyzing what happened to Slovik and what we have been trying to do in the Armed Forces since, to avert this sort of thing. So, I wrote an article for McCall's which they have not yet published, in which I tried - I should say they paid me for it, but they haven't used it yet - in which I tried, through the knowledge I derived about this man from Father Cummings and others.

Here was a boy who was born in Hamtrammick, a part of Detroit, Michigan, in the depth of the depression. His father was an acute alcoholic. His mother had no real spiritual discipline. He was one of those persons formerly related to the church but not committed in depth. He never belonged to a Boy Scout troop. He was never a part of a Sunday School class. He never had a close friend as he was growing until he became a friend of a supervisor in a reform school and he carried to his death with him the name of this prison supervisor as his very best friend. He married before he was drafted.

What happens to a person like this? Here was a man who was basically and fundamentally a weak person. He was executed, I suppose, because for one reason he had not deserted once; he had deserted twice. The evidence was so clear. He had carried, for example, stationery in his cartridge belt instead of ammunition.

Well, put beside this kind of person - there's a question as to whether he ought to have been in the military service. We took steps after World War II to develop these character guidance lectures that you now know so much about. When I was on duty for a short period of time as a member of the staff and faculty of the Chap-

lains' school, had something to do with their beginnings. We now have a "Code of Conduct." All of this is important, and I think, mandatory, in the military service, to avoid having more Eddie Sloviks. But, none of this is a substitute for the thing I was talking about today. A good home with committed parents, with regular religious discipline, and a high character inculcated on a day-to-day basis. I have a feeling, and I've always had a feeling, that if Eddie Slovik could have had something like that, he might not have been delivered at a stake that day.

COLONEL MULLER: Dr. Elson, in view of the time now I wish to express on behalf of the Commandant, the faculty and the Class of 63, our real appreciation to you for coming over here this morning to talk to us, and for this most inspiring lecture. Thank you very much.