

## RELIGION AND NATIONAL STRENGTH

11 December 1963

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## NOTICE

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LT COLONEL KNIGHT: No study of the human resources of our Nation would be complete without examining the motivations of the individual citizens. Religion has been a very definite and major influence upon our national character and upon our people.

Our speaker this morning, Dr. Charles Wesley Lowry, has made a lifetime study of this subject and we are very happy to have him with us today to share his thoughts.

Dr. Lowry--welcome.

DR. LOWRY: Colonel Knight and My Dear Friends: I am not going to take up much time in a conventional introduction. I will just say that it is a genuine pleasure to be here and share in the curriculum; the systematic study that I have gone over in your publications of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Now, you have my subject and I start out with a reference to the key word in this subject. This key word, in orienting our thought as we approach today's assigned topic, I think is the word "strength." Strength in an individual, and still more in a nation, is a balance of qualities. Now, strength denotes material might, but such prowess is not enough.

The attributes of a clumsy giant however menacing and fierce in sheer physical power will not suffice when confronted by intelligence, ingenuity, determination, the conviction and the confidence that spring from truth and right. National strength can be analyzed under four main heads; power defined as military and material force; intelligence defined as the effective rational application and utilization of all resources; morale or energy; and durability of will--you might call it "the will factor;" and fourth, religion or the conviction that there is an ultimate reality or ground of being to which as conscious selves and as members of social entities we are inescapably related.

Now, these four aspects of national strength are distinct, but they are also related. A strong factor of interaction, of interrelationship, is present within them. This is especially true if we view the four factors--power, intelligence, morale, and religion--as constituting a pyramid of some kind of a storied structure with military and material force the foundation and first floor of the structure.

Now, of course, any spatial arrangement in terms of an image like that falsifies; I am quite aware of that, as you are. Yet, because there are lines of relationship that are multidimensional--the whole thing is intangible--when we construct something special or material, we are bound to get away from the concrete reality. It is an abstraction, in other words. Nevertheless, I think this image, the thought of a storied structure, falsified the four in their relationship the least. For, there can be no national security; indeed, there can hardly be a continuing nation unless there is a fundamental presence of power expressing itself in a military and material form. In some sense I believe that to be true.

Adhering therefore, to this image or picture of a storied material structure, each new layer adds something basic and momentously important. Without intelligence, in the broad meaning of the word, the power can amount to little, especially in an advanced technical and scientific age. Without morale there can be no success except of a temporary and fugitive character. With regard to the fourth factor--our subject--it is easy to resort, as I do not need to tell you gentlemen; you are a critical audience, to platitudes and cliches. I suppose that is a temptation in many areas. It is a particular danger, I think, in the area we have today.

You trust to the courtesy and goodwill of an audience, whether ecclesiastical or secular. Now, I hope we shall avoid this today, and I certainly do not wish you gentlemen to have any regard in the question period to my susceptibilities. Because, I want you to be entirely frank.

What we can and must say, I think, from the strictest, most factual standpoint, is that a faith factor of some sort is always present in a powerful nation, and always a factor in that power. An example is the most remarkable nation and people, perhaps, known to all history. I refer to Rome and the Roman Empire. For 900 years that expanding and expanded city-state gave order, unity, and civilization to most of the known world. No other great power in history, I suspect, compares with it so far in dynamism and stability.

Now, Rome had a state religion. It was not a very theological religion; it was a religion that, rather curiously, was content to remain undeveloped and rather vague. Possibly this was one among a number of factors that favored the emergence and victorious spread of a universal salvation religion in the West. As we know, that successful religion was Christianity. Its rise and advance to eventual establishment as the religion of the Roman Empire West and East is possibly--and I say "possibly"--the most influential single factor in history. At any rate I think you could make out an argument for that.

Now, the state religion of Rome, as I said, was rather undeveloped; it was principally ritual, involving sacrifices in propitiation of the gods and involving attempts to secure guidance or information; guidance in national crises and other situations, through the mediation of a priesthood. The Emperor himself was the chief priest of this cult, holding the august title of Pontifex Maximus. Now, as you may or may not know, that means Supreme Pontiff. We are familiar with that because it is the title of the Pope, the head of the great Roman Catholic Church which embraces some 500 million human beings.

The first Emperor who took to himself the title of God--and this was an augmentation of this cult--was, I believe, Domitian, who was the Emperor from 81 to 96 A.D. He was hailed as a god and worship of him became mandatory. This is the background of a lot of the persecution of the Christians. Doubtless this development reflected the need of a greater vitality in the state cult. But I now go on to add that there was a great deal more, as you undoubtedly now are suspecting, to the faith of the Romans and of Rome than this ritualistic state religion.

The real ideology of Rome was Stoicism, a philosophy that goes back at least to Xeno who flourished in Greece about 320 B.C., and that to some extent was a continuation of the ideas of one of the greatest of the Greek philosophers, Heraclitus, who flourished about 500 B.C.

In Rome last September, in Michaelangelo's great piazza on the Capitoline Hill--I do not know whether it was the first time I have seen it, but it is the first time I remember it--I saw the great equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius which is right in the center of the arrangement that Michaelangelo worked out. Now, I understand that this really magnificent statue in bronze, of Marcus Aurelius,

was thrown into the Tiber by some of the barbarians who sacked Rome and was pulled out in the Middle Ages. At any rate, it was pulled out, and it seemed to me as I looked at that, that this was a symbol, and of particular value as a symbol. Because Marcus Aurelius was the last great Stoic thinker. He was also the Emperor of the Roman Empire.

Let me give you an example because this illustrates my point about the role of Stoicism. If I had time I could also go back 200 or 300 years and cite Cicero; some very interesting examples. But I am only going to cite this morning, Marcus Aurelius, who said the following in his Meditations--and I quote:

All that is from the gods is full of providence. The workings of chance are not separated from nature or without an interweaving and dependence on the dispositions of Providence. From Providence all things flow. And side by side with it is necessity; that which works to the advantage of the whole universe of which you are a part. . . .

Every moment think steadily as a Roman and as a man, to do what you have in hand, with perfect and simple dignity, and kindness, and freedom, and justice; and to give yourself relief if you do every act of your life as if it were the last, renouncing all carelessness and passionate resistance to the demands of reason and all hypocrisy and self-love and discontent with the portion which has been given you.

Now, that is a very high, a very lofty example indeed, of ethics and of theological morality, because there was a theology behind that. That is an instance from history.

But what of our own period in history which is characterized by a wide and sharp revolt against Christianity and which some theologians wish to designate as the "Post-Christian Era?" The two great powers of our time, next to the United States, have been Germany and Russia. The Germans have the defects of their strong qualities. But I have been convinced ever since I first went to Europe in 1930--quite a long time ago--that the Germans were the ablest of modern peoples. That is not too important but I am now going to mention the Germans.

What is interesting is that neither Hitlerite Germany nor Soviet Russia is an exception to what I am saying is central, the role of faith and national strength. It escaped most people and doubtless there was a nauseating hypocrisy about it, but Hitler had a full-blown theological vocabulary. I used to say that Hitler in vocabulary was the most theological of all the world's rulers, a vocabulary in which he applied consistently and tirelessly these ideas in those long-winded tirades that so strangely held spellbound the German masses.

A story is told of a very young German who was in the French action, was seriously injured, and was on the point of death; a German boy 18 or 19 years old. As he was about to die in a French hospital he got a nurse to try to help him get his wallet. They got his wallet and she helped him to pull out a picture that he had in there. The boy, really suffering very much, looked at the picture and a look of peace, a look of happiness came over his face and he breathed his last. The nurse looked at the picture and it was a picture of Adolph Hitler, the German Fuehrer.

Now, no doubt that oversimplifies the situation, as does the following example: a story about a brilliant young Communist woman in Russia. This was a story that I heard some years ago and I believe that it took place, according to the American journalist who recorded it, in the 1930's. I am not absolutely certain of that, but it certainly was not very recently. This American was going through factories in Russia. In one of them he met this brilliant young Russian woman who had come up quite high in the hierarchy of the factory.

He noticed on her desk a copy of "Das Kapital" by Karl Marx, in Russian. So, he got into conversation with her about that. He said, "I notice you have this work by Marx." This caused the young woman to go into ecstasy, and she said, "Oh yes; I couldn't get along without that book. It is the most wonderful work." This was an electrical factory. She said, "I never have a problem in the factory that I can't turn to this book and find the answer to it."

I thought of this story told by some American journalist, when I read just recently after the assassination of our late President, John F. Kennedy, that soon after Lee Oswald was 15 years old he discovered in a library that same "Kapital" by Karl Marx. He said later, on a television interview, I believe--but this has been quoted widely in many papers; and it is a quotation from Oswald

himself that I quote; "It was what I've been looking for--this book 'Das Kapital.' It was like a very religious man opening the Bible for the first time." That is what Oswald, an American, recently said; the same thing that that young Russian woman said. Incidentally, these same newspaper accounts have made it clear that Oswald had first been attracted to communism by a pamphlet on the Rosenbergs, the atomic spies who were executed after a great hullabaloo in this country.

I was very much interested in seeing this reference because I too had been quite interested in the Rosenbergs, from a different standpoint. It so happened that right before they were executed I called one evening--and at that time I was the rector of a large church in Chevy Chase--on the head of all Federal prisons. This man told me that he had just been to New York to see the Rosenbergs. Naturally, I was very much interested and got him into conversation

He said to me, "It was my duty to go up and see them and ask them if there was anything they wanted." But he said, "I got very little response from them; those people were like Christian Martyrs. They seemed to be looking forward to martyrdom. They weren't concerned to talk about lesser things or to get some lesser comforts. He said, "Really, they are martyrs, in their own thinking about themselves."

Now, this was a shocker in a way. Yet, it corroborated perfectly the theory of communism that I had held and had developed just a little while before that in my book "Communism and Christ;" the view namely, that communism is more than a secular system with vague faith elements in it; that communism, on the contrary, must be regarded as a new religion; a rival substitute faith; an alternative universal salvation plan for all mankind; an all-comprehending gospel which sets itself without compromise against all other claims to truth, and to the allegiance of the human mind and the human spirit.

Now, this is something, I am aware, essentially fantastic. Yet the whole shape of contemporary history is witness to the emergence and continued presence of something immensely forceful and dynamic. Who can deny that? We can see this in both the revolutionary mentality of our world which, by and large--and this is a sobering thing--has all tradition on the defensive. I wonder if you have thought about that. That is one of the most important things about the world we are living in. All tradition is on the

defensive, and I think that Marxism has won its greatest victory right at this point. That is worth a great deal of thought and development, though it is not my purpose to develop it now much further.

We can see this also, secondly, in the impressive modernization and rise to world power status of the great colossus, the Soviet Union. It is with the latter--Communist Russia--that our own mighty Nation, far more advanced and sophisticated technically, industrially, and managerially than any other country, is locked in the most deadly power duel in all history. This duel, I fear, is destined to continue for a long time, for the respective resources of the contending parties are vast. They are very well matched, relatively at least.

Now then, what about the religious aspect of this struggle? Here there is present, and I think, gentlemen, that this is a very important point not to lose sight of, there is present an element of extreme novelty. Things like this have happened before, but this has a new element in it also. We have for the first time in history a religion based upon absolute atheism. This is a paradox; yet, it is true; absolute atheism and materialism locked in combat with a theistic and transcendental faith.

Now, before there have been many struggles with ideological and religious overtones. But always before, the confrontation from the religious standpoint had a big element that was common in it. One needs think only of Buddhism and Islam; or Hinduism and Islam; or Hinduism and Buddhism; or Islam and Christianity; or Catholicism and Protestantism and the terrible wars of the 17th century.

Now we have something that is different. The Communists have in their faith system, because of this, some advantages. The material is tangible, graspable, very real, and especially in a scientific and technical age; and in the Communist plan confined to earth and time, eschewing the metaphysical in a transcendental sense, it also has certain advantages. It is total and complete. The salvation proposed and offered is political and social. It is not heaven; it is not something beyond this order. This appeals to both alienated and frustrated intellectuals, and it may also be made to appeal to the restless mass of the world, the poor and the illiterate, who know more because of modern mass-media than their counterparts at any previous time in history.

But the picture has another side, fortunately. Christianity knowing what is in man, and being bound also as is the main tradition of the West, to truth as to something sacred, cannot compete with communism in the delineation and decoration of political and social Utopias. We are compelled by our whole tradition to speak in a hectic and feverish world words of truth and soberness. Now, this may be a difficulty, but we have great advantages also; our faith in a transcendent Holy God, a reality other than man and the Corrector and Judge of men, yields as the very basis of sane and creative living the virtues of reverence and humility.

The Communists have neither, and they cannot have either because they are locked into this totally timebound and earthbound system without any window that is open to the infinite, the eternal, the transcendent. I think that is a very great handicap and will prove to be such. They are not able to know; not able to cherish either reverence or humility. I suggest this is a fatal predicament. This is the Achilles Heel of communism. It may well be the incurable wound which will lead to sickness and death in the strange, new world of dialectic; the negation of the negation; the expropriation of the expropriators; the rejection of the individual; the ridicule of religion; the exaltation of the conditioned reflex as the key to production of a new, fully socialized humanity; the meek acceptance of terror and tyranny as steppingstones to a good that is forever coming but never begins to be; an Orwellian universe of doublespeak, doublethink, unperson, equality but with the select ones more equal; and perpetually changing, managed truth.

It is, I should say, a safe prediction that in Russia today--and I was just talking with one of your number; I believe, Mr. Freers from the State Department, who has a great knowledge of this--it is, I should say, a safe speculation that in Russia today there is a gnawing and ever-spreading hunger of the soul. A people that has known Christianity for a thousand years and that has produced spiritual giants like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Berdyaev, and many others, is not going to be satisfied for long with the dry husks of materialism, atheism, and total secularism.

So, I should say that we have very great advantages. But here an embarrassing question arises. I told you I was not going to take refuge in cliches. Granted that religion is an essential element in national strength and that our religion, derived from the Prophets of Israel and Jesus the Christ, is infinitely superior to the tenets of dialectical and historical materialism, how is it with America

morally and religiously? An honest answer requires a great deal of soul-searching and, I believe, considerable apprehension respecting the spiritual health of America as a nation and people.

Here it is most important to look for trends; for underlying tendencies; and to distinguish between superficial symptoms and these powerful, underlying, ultimately influential trends. The most disquieting thing that I see on the horizon of national life is the dismissal--it is not the only disquieting thing but the most disquieting--of religion from public status and significance; thus reversing a trend as old as our history in the New World and our prehistory in the Old World.

This, I think, is most serious. Today prayer in any form in a public school has been called into question by the Supreme Court of the United States. The Bible, if the Court means what it has said in the double-barrelled case of *School District vs Schempp* and *Murray vs Curlett*, can no longer be read devotionally and inspirationally; it can be consulted in the classroom as an illustration; it cannot be read anymore. I do not believe that it is generally appreciated how upsetting and revolutionary this decision and its implications are.

Let me give you a personal experience. A few weeks ago I was asked to lecture, be present all day, make several speeches, and answer questions at a very interesting teachers' institute where I had all the teachers of a certain county in a neighboring state, present. We began this meeting fairly early in the morning and went into one of these brand new high schools that always make me blink because I belonged to a little more poverty-stricken era from the standpoint of school buildings. I noticed on the program that the host high school where we were meeting would have the devotions; which, incidentally, catches up a tradition that had become very widespread in American high schools and I presume, junior high schools.

I know this because I have spoken in a lot of high schools to student bodies. So I wondered what was coming, and the following occurred: Two students came out as the county superintendant, the presiding officer, and myself went up and took our seats on a platform not unlike this. The boy came forward and gave as the Meditation a meditation about George Washington Carver, the wizard chemist of Tuskegee Institute. Now, Carver is a man I admire very much, a very religious man; I am not in any way

criticizing him, but this was the substitute for the Bible. Then, I did not know what was coming in prayer, but a girl got up and sang "The Lord's Prayer." So, I assume the idea was to do what could be done without violating from a literal standpoint the implications of this recent decision.

Now, I want to describe my own feelings. I found myself in a peculiar, and I suppose, rebellious frame of mind. I felt as if I were rubbing my eyes to make sure I was real. I said to myself,

Here I am in America; I believe in this country; I've studied its traditions and I think I know a lot about them; and here I am in a school provided by the funds of the public of this area, and a prayer cannot be said in this school. The Holy Bible cannot be read in this school. Is this real? I can't quite believe it is.

Yet, although we probably know the intricacies of court decisions, and theoretically the Supreme Court settles one case in a particular decision, nevertheless this has implications and now many people say we cannot do these things anymore.

Then in the same connection, gentlemen--and I do not mind how much you take this up and criticize it; I share it with you honestly--I have had over and over a very troublesome thought which will not leave me. In the Soviet Union dedicated to the extirpation ultimately of religion and the enthronement of atheism there is formal freedom of worship and right of religious choice by the individual. Now, I say formal. This has been set forth in three Constitutions--three Soviet Constitutions. I have gone over all those and I know them in detail.

Any Communist will assure a questioner now if you ask him about religion in his country; he will say, "Well, it's up to the individual." I have heard them say it. "And if you don't believe me I'll take you to a church in Moscow and show you." Also, though all religion was struck out of education at one blow by Lenin when he came to power in 1917-1918, religion can be, and obviously is, taught in the home; at least by mothers and grandmothers. Otherwise, the church could not have survived. You would not have any Christianity at all, as you do have it in the Soviet Union.

Admitting that the situation differs here, in that churches in this country are free to educate to the extent that children come to

or are sent to them, I find it strange and more than a little frightening to hear so many Americans say from the very highest circles down, "Well, religion has no place in government or in public matters. The place of religion is the home and the church." I have heard this over and over and so have you.

Gentlemen, let me warn you most solemnly that if this is what the American people really think today; if they really believe that God is not the concern of the State at all, then religion as we have known it in the United States is on the way out. We are on a route that is headed in the direction of a secularism, atheism, and materialism that do not differ substantially from those enthroned and established as orthodox in the Communist states.

In the sacred books of the American canon and tradition I read a doctrine, gentlemen, that is very different. I read in the Declaration of Independence that there are self-evident truths, and that one of these affirms as inalienable and coming from the very hand of the Creator the rights of the individual. I read in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, a document under which all the great States northwest of the Ohio River were carved out, the most powerful States, perhaps of the Union; a document that had a double stamp on it; the last Congress under the Articles of Confederation promulgated it and the first Congress under the Constitution reconfirmed it, so it is a rather potent document in that sense. Here is what it says; I quote Article III:

Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

Now, what has happened to that doctrine? I do not see that it is held today, apparently, by the leaders of this Nation.

Or, I read in George Washington's Farewell Address his spiritual and patriotic testament to Americans of his generation and all generations. I quote:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who would labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness--these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens.

The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity.

Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.

I want to talk, in conclusion, about the two subjects on which the Father of his country dwelt with so marked an emphasis; namely morality and religion. They are very big subjects and I just want to hit now two or three high points. I think we would all agree that basic morality is essential to social health and ultimate national security in any country. We would probably agree also with the generality of observers of the American scene in the 19th century, who felt that the American as a type was characterized by a high respect for religion and a strong moral sense.

I have here two or three quotations that I am going to run over and not, I think, give you, from Alexis De Tocqueville, a discussion he has about the spirit of religion and the spirit of liberty. You may know this; it is not unfamiliar. But I think it is a very important discussion. Then I have got a quotation where he compares the strong morals of the Americans with their predecessors, the English; and emphasizes that the Americans are a remarkably moral people.

Then I have another quotation here from a man named Francis Grund, an Austrian who came over here a little after De Tocqueville. He makes the point that religion is all wrought into morality and into the governmental system. He says he does not think the American Government could survive if they lost this strongly moral and religious element. He was an observer; a foreign observer. A great deal more could be accumulated on the impression that Americans gave in the 19th century with respect to this element in our heritage.

But now I go on to ask a much more searching thing. How is it with the United States today, at a time when our civilization is at its zenith in wealth and splendor and we are the most powerful nation in the world? Is it with us as it was with the Roman Empire which at its highest material height was actually being eaten out by moral decay within? Or, are we as moral as our ancestors, with our essential national integrity unthreatened and unimpaired?

Now, we must admit that this is an issue on which there is not by any means, complete agreement. President Truman, for example, is sure that there has been no moral decline in the United States. I have heard him say this on television. Recently a prominent lay religious leader, Mr. J. Irwin Miller, Rhodes Scholar, industrialist, and president of the National Council of Churches, came out with a strong pronouncement to the effect that we are certainly as moral as our forefathers, and that opinions to the contrary are ill-judged and without foundation in fact.

That is the one view, but the reverse view is as strongly held. I have here a very recent quotation from the Head of the FBI, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover. I am going to give that to you.

Moral retrogression is not confined to any one group; to any one sector of our country. This social illness is universal. Immorality rears its ugly head in every American institution and profession. None is free from its stigma. It is reflected equally as much in corporative price-fixing as in teen-age vandalism; in payoffs to politicians as in classroom cheating; in sportsworld briberies as in law enforcement scandals; and in income tax returns padding as in voting frauds.

Mr. Hoover adds more reflectively, and I think, quite profoundly:

Immorality is not the only danger of the crisis. Some theorists suggest our moral standards be scrapped for a less restrictive code by which our moral derelictions can be justified. Such thinking is a flight from responsibility and an accelerant to further moral decadence.

If the destruction of our great nation itself were the goal of these advocates they could not devise a better means to secure it.

Another authority whom I will cite is Mr. Norman Jaspan, a man you may not know of, whom I just happened to get to know; a management consultant and author of a very interesting book, "The Thief in the White Collar." Incidentally, Jaspan is a consultant to at least 500 corporations on their problems regarding dishonesty and stealing. Here is a short quotation, all I have time to give you from Mr. Jaspan:

Right this minute I would estimate that American businesses are weighted down with several billion dollars worth of similar bribes and payoff. In fact, I earnestly believe that if the blight of dishonesty could be removed from American business the overall level of prices could be reduced as much as 15%.

Now, that is an astonishing statement, but Jaspan has written a great deal on this; he knows more about it than anybody I happen to know. I have only given you just a little bit there. Let me, without citing further authorities or quotations, simply say that in my view--and I just give you now Charles Lowry's view, but I have shown you two different sides--in my view we confront an extremely serious long-term situation, morally and spiritually, in this country. The point that is critical and decisive is not the existence of crime, delinquency, or immorality--even on a big scale--but the crux, rather, is the trend; the underlying psychological condition. I believe that we are now in a situation in the United States, in which we are subject to a law of diminishing returns in the moral sphere; and that this is the aspect of the case which is grave from the angle of national strength; and is what should be of urgent concern to all thinking Americans.

The explanation of this predicament is complex; it would take many lectures to get into it. Some of the difficulty is environmental and is incident to the fact that we are in a period of rapid and cumulative change. More crucial is the character of the American educational process over a period of several decades and the effect registered in its product, the youth of our country. I do not mean just now alone, but the youth of a bit earlier, and earlier, and the youth that will come later.

This is not to say that there is not much that is attractive in our youth and much that is good about American education. I do believe, however, that our education is, and has been for a considerable period, philosophically defective. It is this defect which

is beginning to register and that will do so more and more in coming years unless drastic remedies are instituted. It is indeed a case--a Douglas MacArthur quotation--of chickens coming home to roost.

I can best put my case and stimulate thought and discussion on this problem by saying that in my view we are failing to communicate to transmit to the coming generation the basic moral and human tradition that has been at the heart of all great civilizations.

My last point; I said I wanted to say a word on religion. We can take it, I think, for granted, that morality and religion are not the same thing, but that they are closely and separately related, especially in the Jewish-Christian tradition. I think our problem in religion is not that we are becoming irreligious--though there is some shift in this direction, and there is an increasing impact from the cleavage between the trend among our intellectuals and the trend at the American grass roots that remains, I think, strong.

Father Gustave Weigel has observed with an acute perspicacity, that two entirely different theologies intermingle in our people. One, he goes on, is a preferred theology and is the faith of the literati; it is faith in a secular culture. The other is the more traditional religious faith of the people.

Our religious problem, I believe, is fundamentally one of profundity. It is the dimension of depth, of high seriousness, of the will to grapple with and not escape from the final questions, which is too often missing in American religion. Our greatest sins are perhaps superficiality and complacency. Because of these moods we go along like sleepwalkers. We are indeed like a nation of sheep, while the spirit of secularism waxes ever stronger and the attacks mounted upon the American religious heritage grow bolder and more wanton.

I believe that we must wake up, renew our strength in the Lord and bear witness to our faith. This faith can be stated, I am convinced, in a nonsectarian form. It is faith in a Supreme Being, the God of Israel: "Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord!;" the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Creator and Providential Ruler of the world. "In God we trust." *Annuit Coeptis*, from the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States; He has blessed our beginnings, and so, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*; there is a new order of the ages.

Then this faith is faith in man; man as the child of God; man created, having stamped on him the image and likeness of God himself; with eternity implanted within his heart; capable of hearing and doing the word of God; not a mere animal or a mere thing; not an infinitely complex piece of matter, though he is indeed that; not an electrochemical curiosity, though he is indeed a wonderful being from the electrochemical standpoint.

Finally, this faith is in truth and right which do not depend upon man or upon man's desire, and which are the same in Washington, Moscow, New Delhi, Jakarta, Paris, London, and Rome. Our vocation as human beings is to serve not our own small and shifting designs, but the Lord of all Being enthroned afar; the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, Whose name is Holy; Whose attributes are truth, beauty, and goodness; Who has a great purpose for mankind and for history; and Whose will is going to prevail with or without our submission and free response in trust and love.

I set out to give you a lecture; not a sermon. Yet, I think this is where we end up. I think this is the point of decision to which we finally have to come, one way or the other, because we are human beings and we cannot shed our humanity.

"Moses, Moses, draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground."

Thank you, gentlemen, very much.

QUESTION: Dr. Lowry, what are the common factors of social and political environment that have been attendant to the great expansion periods of the world's major religions?

DR. LOWRY: Well, it would take two or three lectures to do that well, but let me give you what I think are one or two very important things. I believe that a great deal of uncertainty and insecurity of a kind are big factors in this. I will give you a famous quotation illustrating that. It comes from one of the fine intellects of our time, Sir Gilbert Murray, whom I once met and had tea with out near Oxford, England. Gilbert Murray has said that in the Roman Empire period that I talked about, as Christianity was beginning to gather force--and we ought to always remember that religiously this was a competitive period--Christianity was only one of a number of competing faiths. He said that this

world of the Roman Empire was characterized by a failure of nerve.

Now, I know he did not mean military nerve; he meant the individual. The individual was unsure and seeking. So, I think that that is one of the big things. Behind that, of course, would be many elements in the social and material environment. But I would say that probably, just to sum it up, that religion tends to come in strongly against a background not of great success, prosperity, or everything going well, but a background of troubles and uncertainty; difficulty one way or another. It may not be mainly economic, but the economic may have a lot to do with it. But let us say social uncertainty and dis-ease--uneasiness.

QUESTION: Sir, do you have any comment on the desirability or efficacy of the so-called Honor System?

DR. LOWRY: Well, I am a Washington and Lee man and, of course, I do have quite an emotional reaction to the Honor System. I would say it is one of the greatest things at Washington and Lee. It has held up, but I believe we have to be realistic and add that a great deal depends here on the power of the tradition. Now, if you have a going, powerful tradition, then I think it is a great thing. But I believe that it is also something that is hard to put in and that can be abused. You do not want that to happen because then your last state is worse than the first.

But in the end, of course, let us face it, there is no substitute for honor and duty. This came home to me, gentlemen, very strongly on the day of President Kennedy's funeral. I had been thinking about the Oswald business and I was wandering around the Mayflower Hotel. I got into the Mayflower up where there was a window. I got by a policeman; I wanted to see a friend of mine there. I thought to myself, "The police don't really deter very much except psychologically."

If you really want to commit a crime you can probably get away with it. I think this may be very important from the standpoint of honor. We have ultimately got to have it. It seems to me that a good honor system is the right way of gaining it. But there is much difficulty of putting it in and having it as a real honor system. I believe that is it.

QUESTION: Sir, would you comment on the current concern and confusion over the Supreme Court decision concerning the public area of religion?

DR. LOWRY: I have to put a severe rein on myself here because I am very much interested in this. I will take the opportunity, though, to tell you that I have a book coming out on this subject; I hope within the week; certainly within 10 days. It is going to be called, "To Pray or not to Pray!" Then it has a very important subtitle, "A Handbook for Study of Recent Supreme Court Decisions, and American State-Church Doctrine." The book is really intended as a handbook for the person--college or high school student, or adult--who really would like to have the basic documents of the American tradition before him, as well as the pros and cons.

Although I feel rather strongly about this, as you can tell, nevertheless my appeal in the book is to reason and to the facts. So, I think maybe that is the best.

Now, I will just say--not to neglect to answer your question; it is too long to get into very much--that in my own opinion--and in the book, of course, I speak with great respect for the Supreme Court; I am not attempting in any way to undermine the Supreme Court. Those men do their job. They have to do a very hard job. We have a peculiar system, in a way. There is no other national system like ours with respect to the role of the judiciary. It is a rather peculiar development, too, historically.

One of the amusing things is that Thomas Jefferson and men of his kind were very fearful of just the thing that has happened with the Supreme Court. They suspected that we were going to get a powerful judiciary that would interfere with the will of the people; with the functioning of the democratic system. The Supreme Court is not very democratic. You could almost say it is oligarchic; or that it is functioning like a platonic group of guardians.

Now, I think this has played an important role in the country. But nevertheless you have got to understand it. My feeling is that the Court has gotten onto the wrong track here. I would almost say that they had brainwashed themselves. I believe that the tendency of secularism; not secular, but secularism; namely, it reached its ultimate expression in a system like communism that will force the idea that there is nothing but time and space--and history; nothing beyond the present, the here and now. That is

secularism carried to the ultimate extreme as opposed to the belief that there is such a thing as eternal truth, eternal right and an eternal order of reality that gives meaning and is itself the explanation of the whole marvelous passage of time; an event in history; and in nature, et cetera. It is a big philosophical issue, of course.

Now, I think that the Supreme Court--and this is where in my view it differs from the American tradition and from the founding fathers who were very clear about the eternal, and who regarded religion in a very general sense as relationship to the eternal, which is not a bad working approach--I think that no doubt without meaning it they have gotten into the thought that they must promote the secular and must knock down the idea that there is any difference from the standpoint of public policy between religion and irreligion. That is really what is up in these recent decisions.

To my mind this was not the classical American position; it was certainly not the 19th century position. We tended, and I believe this is the classic American doctrine, to give the individual the utmost protection. I favor that. I do not want you to misunderstand me. If anybody wants unbelief, irreligion individually, he has a perfect right to it; he ought to have every legal protection. But I think it is fallacious to say what the Court is now saying; that public policy should also be based on no difference between religion and irreligion. This has not been the American position. The American position has been that public policy involves, as George Washington said, that morality and religion are necessary to good government; to happiness; to the safety of the state, I would say.

I believe, therefore, that from the angle that we are all interested in immediately here, which is national security--the health of the Nation--I believe this to be a very serious issue from this angle as well as from many other angles. You see I could talk for a very long time on this, so I will stop here.

QUESTION: I gather from your talk that you feel the basic weakness of religion is that it is subject to perversion, as evidenced by the deifying of the Roman Emperors, Hitler, or Communist materialism. Since this is a basis can it not be argued that the constitutional provision for the separation of church and state, and the recent Supreme Court decision, was basically sound in that it was designed to prevent a similar perversion in this country?

Could one not also argue that the general decline of religion in this country can be attributed to the discontent; rather, perhaps, a subconscious discontent with religion's not meeting the problems of today, so that it has already become somewhat perverted by self-righteousness as evidenced by evading the issues on our side of the question?

DR. LOWRY: Well, that covers a good deal of territory. Of course there are many people who would argue this position, and you have got eight Justices of the Supreme Court who hold this position. So, obviously it is a position that can be argued. I want, however, to stick to the facts. I point out to you that what the Constitution says is not separation of church and state; there is nothing in the Constitution which speaks of separation of church and state, or of separation of government and religion, which, I think, is the real issue.

All that the Constitution says--and I think all that the founding fathers had in mind--concerns the twofold guarantee which I believe to be very great. One reason I hesitate about a Constitutional Amendment--someone asked me about that outside--is that I think we do have such a wonderful statement in the First Amendment.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Now, that is the first point. That had a very definite meaning at the time it was written. There is no question about that. Even if we broaden that, as I think we must to some extent because some of the states after the Revolution established more vaguely a religion. For example, in some of the Southern States they established the Christian religion. That is rather general.

So that, even if we go on and make that a little broader; and James Madison, incidentally, wanted very much to have the reading: "An establishment of national religion," which I think actually is a little more clear from the standpoint of the mind of that time. But, it is a misunderstanding if we make it "religion" instead of "an establishment of religion;" that is my point.

The second is equally important: "or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In other words, I think that what the founding fathers wanted--and I think that this is separation of church and state as we ought to hold it--was that the organized state and the organized church should abstain mutually from getting in and trying to organize one another, or the opposite. Now, this, I believe,

is the American position. This does not mean that the State cannot be "under God;" that it cannot say, "In God We Trust;" that it cannot be concerned about the religious upbringing of the youth of the Nation.

You see, what I am afraid of is that we are on the verge of saying, and we have said it about our public schools, "We are not interested from the national angle whether the children are brought up religiously or irreligious." To me that is an appalling thing. I find that a really appalling thing. I do not think we have thought it through. I do not believe the Supreme Court Justices mean that, really. Yet, how does it seem? I am in correspondence with some young people. How does it seem to the young people in the high schools?

Well, it seems to them that their people--their elders whom they should respect the most, are saying, "Religion is not very important; you can't do anything about that in school." I think that is the way they will take, in many instances, these decisions. So, I do feel it is a very important issue, but the first thing is, let us get back to what is stated in our Constitution and what the real meaning of this thing is. Also, on your point about perversion, you have got a very good point.

Of course there is great danger of perversion, and the greater and better anything is the more inevitable and more difficult is the problem of perversion. Now, I could give you some very interesting illustrations in the moral area. Obviously, one of them is sex, the whole area of sex. It is a terrible problem because it is such a great and good thing. It is the same way, it seems to me, with religion.

QUESTION: Dr. Lowry, since you feel that religious faith is essential to national existence, do you favor State and Federal assistance to parochial schools?

DR. LOWRY: Let me give you, very succinctly, my position on that. I do not believe personally; I do not get into this in the book, because I am so anxious to get at the American tradition, and to get at what is certain. My own belief is that from the constitutional standpoint there is nothing unconstitutional in the support of a parochial school. Remember, this does not have to be Roman Catholic; this could be Lutheran; it could be Baptist; it could be any kind of school.

I do prove, I think, in a chapter in my book on Thomas Jefferson, that Jefferson expected to support religion in Virginia in a general way. He did not want to bring in all kinds of church sectarian teaching, but he believed absolutely in supporting with public money, basic religious teaching. I believe I have proven it in this book. So, I think that that bears on the parochial school issue. However, I do not think it is advisable for us to get in from a Federal standpoint and insist on making all Americans support parochial schools. I do not believe that this is a good idea. I think that the right thing is that the local government, or government whether it is State or local, must decide on its policy respecting parochial schools and public money.

This seems to me to be a right thing. I do not think there is anything wrong if the great majority of people feel that their problems will be solved educationally through a plural system and if they observe the Constitution in that the freedom of religious exercise--and the freedom of individuals must be respected to the utmost possible extent. But as a matter of prudence, I think it unwise to go too far in, so to speak, setting a Federal policy that in a sense forces everybody into line in what is a matter that people feel strongly about and have a right, it seems to me, to take up a position on.

In other words, I am trying to separate the Constitutional issue from the issue of prudence, of good government, of social health in a given area. You see there may be so much difference. For example, we will say Boston and Jackson, Mississippi. I probably should not say "Mississippi" because it gets other things into our mind. But we will say some southern place that has very few Roman Catholics. You get such different situations that I think you have got to take those situations into account from the standpoint of wisdom. A lot of this must be decided by wisdom and prudence, and the good sense of Americans.

One thing I feel strongly about is that Americans were working out this problem of religion in the schools. This could have been worked out. It is not necessary to have these edicts and say people cannot do this and cannot do that. I think the American people are actually very tolerant, and do desire to do the right thing to one another. Let us stress this; let us stress the need of the greatest consideration for how people feel, and work it out in a local and State way rather than saying allow the Federal Government, if it has a policy, to offer uniform support, on a national basis.

QUESTION: Doctor, do you believe that the current emphasis which contemporary science is placing on science and technology, is creating conflicts toward religious tradition?

DR. LOWRY: I doubt that it is creating conflicts that have not already existed. For example, possibly the greatest conflicts that arose in the minds of religious people happened in the Victorian Period--in the 19th century, where the sense of intellectual contradiction, I believe, was very much stronger. Take a man like Matthew Arnold, for example, or Thomas Huxley, a different type of man in the 19th century. You have there a real sense of contradiction. I do not believe that is as strong today, but I believe something else is very vital; namely, that we get in our type of age, the habits of mind and certain preoccupations and absorptions which tend to get us entirely away from the sense of what I call a window out to eternity, or the infinite, or to an order that is not the time-space order.

Now, I do think that we have a real problem that is coming in from the standpoint of the fact that we are preoccupied most of the time with the things that we manipulate; our actual ability to control a great deal of nature. That is a big change in man's history. I do think, therefore, that this creates a real problem. It could create a possibility if you got the right political developments, of stampeding the people into something, not necessarily communism, but something that would be along the same lines philosophically. Because, people get away from the awareness of realities beyond our normal ken. Here I think we do have a very, very important question.

QUESTION: Doctor, the custodian of the doctrines and teachings about this window on eternity has been the church. My understanding is that the church is a defendant now and is very irate, and is possibly a corollary of your position this morning that organized Christianity has been weighed in the balance and found wanting?

DR. LOWRY: What is the corollary? I am afraid your logic escapes me a little bit, sir? I heard your words, but I am not sure of your logic.

QUESTION: That organized Christianity has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Where has the church been during the development of these trends toward immorality and secularism?

DR. LOWRY: The church has been right here. The church is people. The church is subject to the same things that society is subject to in a very real sense. Because, the church is made up of people, and let us not--we speak of the custodian, but remember that even the most authoritarian church depends on persuading the people. It does not rule by military force. You are all aware of the quotation that is being bandied around a great deal; somebody said something to Stalin about the Pope, and he said, "How many divisions has he?"

Even the Pope, you know, has to depend on persuasion. So, we have to remember, therefore, that the church is liable to go wrong; to have great difficulties; because, after all it is the way the people react and the way the people behave. So that I myself, while I am quite ready and believe we ought to look at the weaknesses of the church, do not follow the tendency of a great many people in the churches, especially in Protestant churches, who really blame communism on what you said only more specifically, upon Christianity. I know plenty of leading theologians who tend not to blame the Communists at all. I believe they overdo this.

They say, it is the church's fault; we did not do what we should have done. Now, of course, as a generalization that is true. But I do not believe it is very helpful, actually, when we come to grapple with the actual situations--social, economic, cultural, and temporal situations, say, of the 19th century. I believe there are elements in Marx, and in the rise of Marxism-Leninism, just as there are elements in the rise of the world religions; there is a question over here about that, and I did not say this; maybe I should have; they are creative elements. They are elements that come out of the mystery of human freedom; the mystery of human creativity. I do not know how anybody can really blame Karl Marx on any other basis except this area of the mystery of faith. Because, Marx was a great believer.

Marx got an idea that was Messianic. He got an idea that he could understand the whole universe. Now, I think he was mixed up, but nevertheless, there was a lot of power in it. I do not think it was just because the church was wobbling and did not understand the rise of industrialism very well, and also was corrupt and perverted. After all, you see the church happens to teach--the Christian church as a whole--that man is not entirely right inside. It teaches that he is afflicted with what could be called "original self-centeredness" that deflects his rationality and his reactions, and attempts or tends to lead him into wrong ways.

Now, this is a pretty rigorous analysis; so much so that man--modern man--has not liked it and has tried to say it is not true; that man is a perfectly good being, really. Marxism actually says this; it says man is all right; all he needs is a good environment and good teaching.

The church says no, man has a lot of problems. Well, this means he is going to do wrongly despite all the church can do in certain situations; that is what I am trying to say. So, I think we have to bear this human situation in mind.

QUESTION: Doctor, as far as national strength is concerned I think you indicated that the faith factor was an essential ingredient to all strong nations, and I got the impression that you felt that the Supreme Court decision would lessen this faith factor, probably, in the United States. In this connection, I wonder what factors you found to really support this idea that this was pretty inevitable. Because, looking at Rome when they threw the Christians to the lions their faith factor did not diminish; the state simply was not supporting Christianity. The Jews in Nazi Germany, their faith factor did not diminish.

I just wonder what faith factors you have found which lead you to the position, as I gather it, that we pretty much are going to go downhill in terms of the faith factor.

DR. LOWRY: I have not said that we are going downhill; I do not think I have in any way indicated that. I merely said we have got to look realistically at where we are. Now, I think that the Supreme Court factor is certainly one that will take a long time to register. It has, I think, created confusion. I think I mentioned the illustration of the teachers. I have talked with a lot of teachers and I think the schools are confused. I did not say this, but I believe that a majority of the school systems are quite confused now as to what they ought to do. I think they also had more impulse to what I would call a "sound devotions" with young people.

Every high school that I have lectured in has had devotions at the beginning of the assembly, led by picked students who took pride in it, and I believe it was a good thing. Now that is all confused, you see. But it will take a long time.

More important was what I said about the long-term trend in the communication to the younger generation, and the great moral

and human tradition of mankind. To me, that is the most important thing I have said today. I do not know whether it is correct or not. I submit it to you for your own thinking. As I look at our young people, they are wonderful people, many of them. But I think because of the environment and other things, they are in a very difficult situation. I think we are not giving to them in teaching, the principles and substance of a tradition that will enable them to meet the problems they have got to face; let us say their relations with one another; this business of honesty and dishonesty; the temptations that an industrial-business civilization like ours puts on the individual.

You see, it is a greater temptation than in a rural society. So that, it is not necessarily that they are worse people; it is that the environment subjects them to a greater challenge. I think that the moral education--the ethical and religious teaching is more necessary, if anything. I am suggesting that the trend in education has been not to give this to them, and that we have a lot of strain therefore upon the young people because we have not given them these resources, moral and spiritual, that are in the highest teaching of our race. That it ought to be a big part of the big business of education, including the churches and the home, but also the schools, to transmit to our young people.

COLONEL KNIGHT: Dr. Lowry, on behalf of the College, I want to thank you for being here. I am sure you have stirred all of our thoughts.

DR. LOWRY: Thank you very much.

(24 April 1964--7, 600)H/pd:syb