

Information Desk

What About Praying Frequently? Friendly Separation of Church, State

St. Bernard's Seminary

I try to pray frequently, so much so that I am ridiculed by some of my relatives for being "such a fanatic." They tell me that Our Lord Himself said: "Do not multiply words as the Gentiles do, for they think that by saying a great deal they will be heard. For your Father knows what you need even before you ask." (Matt. v, 7-8).

A. There are two difficulties here: first, why pray at all, if God knows what we need before we ask?; second, why repeat prayers, if Our Lord told us not to multiply words?

In the Sermon on the Mount (from which the text above is taken), Our Lord was talking about prayer, and trying to free his disciples from some wrong ideas about it.

Some people had the idea that when we petition God, we are informing Him about our needs; they thought of prayer as a message sent to God, letting Him know what was needed. From this notion, came another, the idea that in praying it would be advisable to "explain fully," and, like a grade-school teacher, repeat the request over and over again so that God would finally understand what we needed.

Our Lord points out that this is an erroneous idea about prayer, because it rests upon an erroneous idea about God. God knows all things; we cannot, then endeavor to "explain fully" to Him. This would be treating Him like a pupil. He is anything but that.

"Well, then," you say, "why pray? If God already knows, there is no reason to pray." There still remains a purpose of prayer, not for God's information, but for our reformation. The evil man does not pray, because he considers himself sufficient. He acts like God Almighty, for, as God never prays to anyone, neither does he. For any creature to consider himself self-sufficient is to have a false opinion of one's self; for all creatures are completely dependent on their Creator. When we do pray, we recognize our own utter dependence on God, and this is a true judgment (because we really do depend entirely on Him); and if true, good, and if good, desired by God. That is why we are commanded to pray, not to inform God, but to reform ourselves.

What about frequent prayer? Our Lord certainly did not mean to condemn frequent prayer. He Himself often spent the whole night in prayer, and commanded us to "pray constantly." What he condemned in the Sermon on the Mount was not frequent prayer as the Christians of old did it, but multiplying words "as the Gentiles do."

One who takes these words of Our Lord as forbidding all repetition of prayer will end up with the bizarre conclusion that we should say the "Our Father"

once in our lifetime, and never pray again. If we said it once a year, that would be repetition. How often may you say it? Once a month? Once a day? If daily, what is wrong with saying it hourly? Or if you have just said one Our Father, and that was good, why may you not say it again at once? Has it suddenly become an evil prayer?

Q. In the United States, there is a friendly separation of Church and State. What is meant by such a friendly separation? And what is the attitude of the Church in regard to such a condition?

Separation of Church and State is had when the State, i. e., the Government refuses special recognition to any one denomination as the official religion of the State and also refrains from lending financial support to any one particular denomination to the exclusion or detriment of any other. This separation can be termed friendly when the State pursues such a policy with the intention of insuring the freedom of all denominations to carry on their work for human welfare without any governmental interference whatsoever. A government which adopts such an attitude does so, therefore, on the practical political grounds that such a civil religious freedom encourages religion in general without incurring the risk of arousing denominational antagonisms by encouraging one religion in particular.

We should not forget however, that we are dealing here with practical policies not with theological ideas of Church-State relationship. The teaching of the Catholic Church on the ideal relationship between Church and State is quite another matter. The Church's constant teaching is that the State, while remaining independent of the Church in its jurisdiction, still has the duty of giving friendly recognition and aid only to the one true church established by Christ, for the State must help its subjects in the "pursuit of happiness"; and the normal road to the eternal phase of human happiness is through the Catholic Church. Therefore every CATHOLIC State should give a privileged portion to the Catholic faith.

Today, however, few States can be called really Catholic. Most States have a mixture of religions in their populations. In such cases the Church is content if the non-Catholic State allows the Catholic Church within its boundaries complete freedom to carry on its work for the salvation of souls. In other words, the Church shows itself content, in non-Catholic countries, with those with that form of political, Church-State separation which we have referred to above as "friendly."

The Coming Red Terror

By STANISLAW MIKOLAJCZYK (Former Prime Minister of Poland and President of the Polish Peasant Party)

INSTALLMENT 3 (Editor's Note: In the following installment Stanislaw Mikolajczyk reveals how Roosevelt and Churchill learned the impossibility of attempting to "do business with Stalin" and the Anglo-American "sellout" of Poland at Teheran.)

If Roosevelt and Churchill needed any additional confirmation of the fact that they could no longer do business with Stalin—they, of course, had never been able to do so—their efforts to supply the Warsaw Underground by air in the Summer of 1944 should have taught them.

I besought Anglo-American aid after my successive appeals to Stalin began to be returned to me unopened.

In Warsaw, our undaunted Home Army was suffering terrible losses at the hands of the Germans. We were fighting Tiger tanks with little more than homemade gasoline grenades. The civilians of Warsaw were being shipped by the hundreds of thousands into slavery in Germany. Stalin had promised me early in August, 1944, that the Red Army would take Warsaw within a matter of a few days thereafter. Yet the Russians remained planted just outside the city, never lifting a finger to aid a courageous ally.

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN Washington and Moscow opened in mid-August of 1944 by which time Gen. Bor-Komorowski's forces were in tremendous peril. They were being held together by the precious crumbs the RAF dropped, some of which landed so far off the mark—the RAF missions were at night—the supplies had to be carted as many as 80 miles to the capital, at great risk.

After ignoring a number of messages from Washington, the Russians consented during the first week of September to permit the American planes to run a shuttle mission. But even after consenting, the Kremlin delayed in naming a specific date for the mission. In mid-September, word came from Moscow that the Eight Air Force could come immediately. But almost as the planes warmed up for the take-off, laden with arms and other sorely needed supplies, the permission was withdrawn. "Technicalities," said Stalin, "will be a delay of three or four more days."

During that delay, the Red Air Force suddenly appeared over Warsaw on the night of September 13-14 after the 4th day of the uprising, and dropped supplies.

THE AMMUNITION they dropped did not fit the guns they dropped. The food they brought—American Lent-Leaf rations—was dropped with either defective chutes or no chutes at all. It smashed against the ruins of Warsaw and was wasted.

But Moscow, having "beaten" the Americans to the aid of Warsaw, crowed happily through its propaganda mills that the U. S. A. was the true friend of the Polish people, and that the Americans were long on promises and short on deliveries.

The Americans finally were permitted to come on September 18. They drummed over with 104 B-17's, escorted part of the way by 200 fighters. Two of the supply laden bombers and two fighters were lost. The desperately grateful people of Warsaw came up from their ruins and sewers to cheer the Americans.

The only land attack on Warsaw made by the nearby Red Army in support of our Home Army was turned in by one of Gen. Berling's Polish Kosciusko divisions. There had been some Red Army artillery shelling of certain German positions in Warsaw, spotted by Home Army men. But as the Kosciusko Poles forged across the Vistula to help their blood brothers in the city, that artillery fire suddenly ceased.

With no "cease" the advancing Poles were annihilated by the defending German.

THE AMERICANS were not permitted to run another shuttle mission. The British, too, were forced to give up in despair. Beyond all human endurance, Gen. Bor-Komorowski surrendered to the Germans on October 3, 1944. A million people were living in Warsaw, or existing there, when the insurrection against the Germans began. A quarter of a million human beings were killed, wounded or were missing by late September. Some 350,000 were forcibly evacuated, mostly to Germany, during the fighting. When the Russians finally came in, the following January, they found human life only in the Praga suburb—120,000 Poles who remained there while the retreating Germans systematically leveled the city.

"Traitors! They surrendered to the Germans!" the Moscow radio said of the dead and the deported. And the Red Army marched into the ghostly place, bringing in their wake NKVD men and Polish stooges who, protected by Red Army guns, claimed the streets made sacred with the blood of a free people.

BACK IN LONDON, after my fruitless visit to Moscow in August, 1944, I reported my failure, to come to terms with Stalin and set to work on a compromise.

A Look at Labor Civil Rights for Negro

By A. C. Tuckey

The Civil Rights program of President Truman deserves the support of every American. It is aimed primarily at securing for the Negro his natural and civil rights. The reaction of Southern politicians to this program is shocking. These men intend to keep the Negro in his place, even if it means that Negro children must go hungry.

Anti-Negro forces are calling the program "a Communist plot." Like most reactionaries they give the Communists great credit. It would be much better for these antagonists to recognize it as applied Christianity. Christ called all men brothers. This includes Negroes.

Negroes are poor. They have been kept poor. They do not like their poverty. They want better clothes for their children, richer foods, and job which pay decent wages. More than anything else, the Negro father wants a good job. But it frequently happens that he is the last man hired and the first fired.

LABOR UNIONS, on the whole have been friendly to Negro workers, at least more friendly than comparable American organizations. The CIO particularly has aided Negroes to secure their rightful place in American society. Some unions, however, have discriminated against Negroes. Foremost among the discriminating unions are the Railroad Brotherhoods. The Railroad Brotherhood consistently have refused to accept Negroes to equal membership with whites.

They have refused to allow the carriers to promote Negroes to decent-paying and clean occupations.

The Railroad Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen has finally reversed its age-old position. It has now agreed to accord equal treatment to Negro firemen. It has already formed the railroad organization that they must promote Negro firemen to the status of engineers as they promote whites. This victory marks the end of union discrimination against Negroes. It means that practically the entire labor movement is on record in favor of equality in employment.

This Negro victory was not won without some pressure from outside the labor movement.

That the Polish lands then liberated were really White Russia and the Ukraine, which, of course, was not true. He spoke of heavy losses, and he reminded him of Poland, which, proportionately, were the greatest suffered by any ally.

If Soviet losses "entitled" the U. S. S. R. to half of Poland, then Poland's losses demanded at least that our country be returned to us, I argued. I concluded that even if we did yield the vast area, we still would have no guarantee for the future independence of what was left of Poland.

"Who is threatening the independence of Poland?" Stalin thundered. "Soviet Russia?"

"I ANSWERED that all we wanted was freedom, and that we had earned it. But there was no way to evade the matter of the Curzon Line, and when I continued to argue, Molotov stopped me roughly.

And he told me—officially—that the Big Three had agreed on the Curzon Line as a Polish-Russian frontier at their Teheran conference—a fact which had never been revealed.

I looked from Churchill to Harriman silently begging them to call this damnable deal a lie.

Harriman was silent. Churchill looked straight back at me. "I confirm this," he said quietly. It made Churchill angry and, turning on me, he demanded that I agree then and there. He reminded me of Britain's aid to Poland, but, though I expressed my gratitude I insisted I had no power to agree with such a division of my country.

"YOU DON'T" have to make a public announcement," Churchill said. "I don't want to put you in a difficult position with the Polish people."

I could make no private deal either, I told him. He went on: "But you can at least agree that the Curzon Line is the 'de facto' frontier, and you may appeal for adjustment at the peace conference."

But before I could answer, Stalin rose indignantly.

"I want this very clear," he said gruffly. "Mr. Churchill's thought of any future change in the frontier is not acceptable to the Soviet Government. We will not change our frontiers from time to time! That's all!"

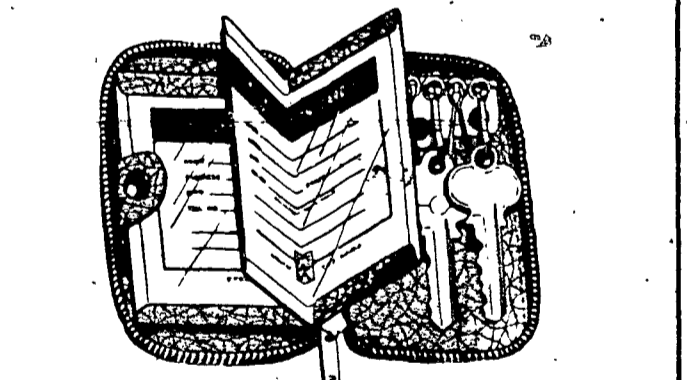
Churchill held out his hands. "I can't accept the Curzon Line," I said. "I have no authority to yield 48 per cent of our country and five million Poles."

(Next week: Churchill and Stalin went into a lengthy Mikolajczyk engage in an historical argument in which he insisted he behind-the-scenes battle.)



"I WANT THIS VERY CLEAR," Stalin said gruffly, "Mr. Churchill's thought of any future change in the frontier is not acceptable to the Soviet Government." Stanislaw Mikolajczyk reveals in this installment of "The Coming Russian Terror," how Russia's claim to 48 percent of Poland was based on the secret "Big Three" agreement at Teheran.

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