

**Complete Text**

**Bishops' Statement, 'Victory - Our Faith'**

(N.C.W.C. News Service)  
Washington, Nov. 21 — The following is the full text of the statement issued by the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of the United States at the close of their annual meeting here:

**Victory - Our Faith**

The Bishops of the United States of America, gathered in annual assembly at Washington, send greetings and paternal blessing to all their priests, religious, and people. This greeting and blessing we send to you with mixed hope and concern. For while our hope is in the blessing of Christ and His Church, our concern is aroused by a tyranny already imposed upon a billion souls. It threatens the destruction of our own land as it has already attacked the culture of others. That tyranny is atheistic materialism, whether revealed in communism or in godless humanism. The battle is joined. If our nation is to escape the fate of Poland and of China, of Yugoslavia and of Hungary, and of so many others, if we are to survive as a free Christian nation, then we must be clear-eyed and we must be strong. It is the blind and the weak who fall into the pit.

We need, first of all, to identify our enemy; to recognize it, for what it really is. Some see the enemy only as a political state or group of states, or merely as an economic system. Spiritual vision gives better intelligence of the fact. The enemy is atheistic materialism. Whether it be entrenched in the organs of a foreign state, or in one of our own domestic institutions, it is atheistic materialism that seeks to destroy us. This is the enemy.

In the second place, we must possess a strong spiritual strength in ourselves, and its proper organization and disposition are of immediate urgency. But material strength, like physical vision, is not enough. This nation must look to its spiritual strength. Our vast physical resources and our masterly technical skills will avail us nothing unless we are a people strong in faith. Faith gives purpose to action, and in the morality which fosters discipline and courage. The true strength of a Christian nation is in the power of God which outweighs all force of arms.

UNFORTUNATELY, in recent times the drift from God and from the spiritual and supernatural view of life has seriously weakened this country. It is true that a rise in church membership has been reported during the past few years, but in the light of other evidence, one is forced to question how significant such mere statistics may be. One looks in vain for any corresponding increase of religion's beneficial influence upon the nation's life. Indeed, the trend in public and private morality has been downward; there is an alarming disregard in practice for God's teaching and for God's law. Is there any need to instance the growing evils in family life, the justful self-indulgence which leads from birth prevention to divorce, from broken homes to the broken lives of youthful delinquents? Need we adduce in evidence the appalling circulation of indecent literature, and the low moral level of so much

of the public entertainment in these days? It is not that the existence of God is expressly or generally denied; it is rather that so many men ignore Him and His law in their absorption with the material world which He created. There is not yet a deliberate turning away from God, but there is an excessive preoccupation with creatures. This form of materialism reveals itself as secularism in politics and government, as avarice in business and in the professions, and as paganism in the personal lives and relations of all too many men and women. "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." (Mark 7, 6)

Materialism has brought about a decline in the influence of religion upon American life. Confusion in our thinking and a sort of paralysis of the national will have been the inevitable results of this decline. Here then we have the source of that weakness which is causing so much concern to men of good will. Unless we arrest this religious decline, unless we push back the domestic invasion of materialism, we shall not be able to meet the great challenges which the century ahead will bring. Materialism is the real enemy, at home as well as abroad. In its varieties there is little difference of kind; the difference is largely one of degree. Both are deadly for America. The way of matter and of the flesh is the way of death; the way of God and of the spirit is the way of life. If we would have life, we must renew and reaffirm our faith in God and in His Christ; we must cling again to that Christian moral code which is the American way of life at its purest and its best.

WE NEED FAITH, first of all; belief in God and in the Son Whom He sent us, Jesus Christ. Faith is the first essential of human living. But let us be clear about what we mean by this wonderful word. Faith is not a mere emotion. It is not a vague sentiment of reverence in the presence of goodness and beauty; or of awe in the presence of mystery. Faith has to do with knowing, not with feeling. It is knowledge in its highest and surest form. Faith is the intellectual act by which, under the influence of grace, we accept on the authority of God the truths by Him revealed. By Faith, we know. It is a key to knowledge, to knowledge of the highest and noblest character. By Faith, we rise above the things of earth and of time and glimpse the things of heaven and of eternity. From this high point of vantage, we sweep the horizon of human life from origin to destiny, and make the discovery that God is our beginning and our end. With Faith we break through the barriers of nature to the supernatural vision of grace. How they misunderstand who consider Faith a mere pious emotion! It is, indeed, the surest of all forms of cognition; the word of Him Who knows unerringly and speaks with truth because He can neither deceive nor be deceived. God Himself is both Revealer and Guarantor of the truths of Faith. Let us be clear, too, as to what we mean when we utter the Sacred Name of God. Those who have confused the notion of

**Hierarchy Warns Nation On 'Atheism'**

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gion's beneficent influence upon the nation's life," the Bishops said. "Indeed, the trend in public and private morality has been downward; there is an alarming disregard in practice for God's teaching and for God's law."

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the things of earth and of time and glimpse the things of heaven and of eternity. From this high point of vantage, we sweep the horizon of human life from origin to destiny, and make the discovery that God is our beginning and our end. With Faith we break through the barriers of nature to the supernatural vision of grace." In closing, the Bishops warned

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