

Editorial

The Washington Post

Postal Rates And Public Interest

The following editorial is reprinted from the Washington Post of July 16.

As a newspaper with about 10,000 mail subscribers, and even more as part of the company that publishes Newsweek, we have an obvious corporate interest in keeping the postal rates for publications reasonably low. But our interest, while not entirely selfless, is not wholly selfish either. However important low postage costs may be to general-circulation magazines, those rates are far more vital to thousands of smaller and more specialized publications that depend on the mail. These range from weekly newspapers to scholarly journals, from religious magazines to periodicals for farmers, children, gardeners, professionals and hobbyists of a thousand kinds. Such publications, which so enrich our national life, are the ones most directly and immediately threatened by the current sharp escalation in second-class postal rates.

Historically, national policy has been to help keep down the cost of circulating ideas and information through the mails. In the early days of the republic, of course, the mail was the main channel of communications among far-flung citizens, and the nation's leaders rightly viewed efficient, low-cost postal service as essential to public education and the survival of democracy. Throughout the 19th century, Congress several times reaffirmed the policy of fostering the growth of newspapers and magazines by maintaining cheap postal rates. The development of radio and television did not undercut this principle, for publications and broadcasting are complementary media, with magazines providing the depth, diversity and specialized services that cannot be furnished over the airwaves.

Within the past several years, however, Congress and the Postal Service have turned away from the traditional principle that the public interest justifies low second-class postal rates. As part of the effort to put postal service on a business-like basis, Congress approved a gradual phasing-in of higher rates, intended to reflect the full cost of transporting newspapers and magazines. At the same time, the failure of the Postal Service to function well as a business has pushed all rates up and up. As a result of these two factors, second-class rates have already gone up 90 per cent since 1971. Another hike already scheduled would bring the total increases to 175 per cent next year. On top of that, an administrative judge has recommended further increases that would make mailing costs prohibitive for subscribers to countless newspapers and magazines.

Faced with a similar problem in the early 1790s, President George Washington told Congress that "a full conviction of the importance of facilitating the circulation of political intelligence and information will, I doubt not, lead to the application of a remedy." In much the same spirit, a House subcommittee has just recommended a partial remedy in the form of a \$1.7-billion-per-year increase in public service subsidies of the postal system. This would not only help curb further increases in second-class rates, but would also help meet other postal costs. While not a full or permanent solution to the nation's postal woes, the bill is an important step back toward the principle that the postal service is a public service, not just another business.

About Time

The World Football Conference may be on shaky grounds in most respects but it certainly took a firm and positive step forward when one of its teams, the Philadelphia Bell, named a black man its head coach. Willie Wood is the first black head coach in major league football since the 1920s.

Professional basketball has long shown that blacks in managerial positions pose no special problems. It took baseball, supposedly the national pastime, almost a century to make it.

So now it is gratifying to be able to say to professional football, "Welcome to the world."

Opinion

Israel's Claims Seen Valid

Editor:

In his letter (Courier-Journal, 7/16/75), Kenneth O'Loane accuses Father Atwell of quoting the Bible as a "valid reference source for political disputes on a particular territory" (Israel). He then proceeds by the same method, referring to Scripture (Galatians) to conclude that "the true descendants of Abraham" (those who should rightfully inherit the land?) are "practicing Christians, who accept the fullness of revelation brought by Christ and the Holy Spirit."

Firm grounds for the founding of the State of Israel can be established without recourse to religious references. There have always been sizable numbers of Jews living in Palestine. They were a majority in the area allotted to them by the UN resolution and have been a majority in Jerusalem for the last hundred years. This falls within Mr. O'Loane's definition of "immemorial possession." The Balfour Declaration recognized the historical association of the Jewish people with Palestine, and this was later confirmed by the League of Nations Mandate. In 1947 the UN partition resolution was passed, and in 1949 the State of Israel was formally admitted, and recognized as a State by a majority of the nations of the world.

It is true, as Mr. O'Loane says, that at the time of the partition the Arabs were a majority in Palestine as a whole. This was due to the rapid development brought about by Zionist settlement. Opportunities for work and education attracted an influx of Arabs from surrounding countries, while at the same time the "perfidious" British, under Arab pressure, began to restrict Jewish immigration into the country. Finally, just when they were desperately trying to escape Hitler's "final solution," the ban on Jewish immigration was made complete.

Mr. O'Loane says "the Balfour Declaration gave the Jews cause to think they could have carte blanche to a sizable part of Palestine." They soon learned otherwise when Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill cut away about four-fifths of Palestine, some 35,000 square miles, and created the new state of Transjordan. Today, the Arab League covers an area of more than five million square miles with a population estimated at 134 million. (1974 Associated Press Almanac). Saudi Arabia, a part of this empire, controls the largest oil reserves in the world. Israel has a territory of less than 9,000 square miles, a population under 3 million, and there are many who would deny them even this small niche.

Father Flannery states the

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"LOOK AT IT THIS WAY - GOD IS LOVE, SO HE WAS ON YOUR SIDE IN EVERY GAME WE PLAYED!"

problem very well in his booklet, A Christian View of Israel: "The politics of the State of Israel and its theology should be kept scrupulously apart. On the other hand, political beliefs hostile to the State of Israel cannot, in their turn, be allowed to inhibit an open and honest theological exploration of Israel's existence and meaning... the Apostle (Paul) makes clear that Jews still have the covenants... and the promises... (Rom 9:4-5); that God's gifts are irrevocable (Rom 11:29); that because of our common patrimony Jews are 'most dear' (Rom 11:28)."

Can we ignore the moving prophecies in the Old Testament foretelling the return to Israel of her people after 2,000 years of exile? "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth... He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." (Jer 31)

For one who believes the Bible to be the word of God, it seems insensitive not only to invalidate Scripture as a reference to the State of Israel and her people, but also to question the firm moral and juridical foundation on which they rest.

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Bishop's Talk Criticized

Editor:

On June 13, Bishop Hickey addressed the graduating class of Our Lady of Mercy High School. His talk, based on considerations of the coming bicentennial year, brought out the fundamentally Christian origins of our country, and his message to the graduates was to "continue" the Christian culture and attitudes that our founding fathers expressed.

Now it is certainly true that there was an integrally Christian impetus involved in the beginnings of our nation. The bishop could have mentioned the famous statement in Article 3 of the Northwest Ordinance that weds religion to education: "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." He could have mentioned George Washington's first inaugural address in which our first President stated that "it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect." Or he could have mentioned the statement in the Declaration of Independence to the effect that

all men "are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights."

But what surprised and disappointed me about the Bishop's talk is that he apparently subscribes to the superstition that this is still a Christian country, when some of the most basic attitudes regarding Christian living have been torn up by the roots and discarded. Three examples will suffice:

- Although it was intended that religion was to be integral with education, the First Amendment has been perverted to completely extirpate religion from public schools. The only alternative now to Catholic schools is atheist schools.

- In Christian terms, greed is considered immoral, but the entire economic life of the country is based on corporate greed. Giant corporations, banks, and foundations, with enormous financial power, have exploited the poor countries of the world and have funded the obscenity of "population control" to ensure their continued dominance over the world's economy. (Pope Paul has excoriated "the international imperialism of money," and Popes from Leo XIII on have condemned not only communism but also the evils of laissez faire capitalism.)

- The Supreme Court has sanctioned the most terrible evil that the world has known, in approving the wholesale murder of unborn children.

Thus, in my opinion, Bishop Hickey missed an opportunity to present a significant message. He told the graduates to "continue" a Christian civilization that does not exist. He could have told them, to be realistic, that they are participating in a society which has largely abandoned "that Almighty Being who rules over the universe," an enormous wealthy and acquisitive society that ignores the poverty of the mass of mankind, a society that approves that slaughter of the innocents. He could have mentioned what the graduates are likely to be up against, the personal heroism that their responsibility as witnesses for Christ might call for, and the deep Christian hope and joyful faith that they will certainly require. He could have told them that their mission is to gradually restore a sense of Christian values to our nation. He could have even mentioned, in relation to what one woman can do, the examples of Catherine of Siena, Francis Xavier Cabrini, Elizabeth Bailey Seton, and Dorothy Day. But as I see it he retreated from responsibility by settling for a chauvinistic platitude.

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(Three Americans, three saints, two laywomen.)