

Pastors Tread Tightropes on Ballot Topics

By GEORGE W. CORNELL
Associated Press Religion Writer

If your minister tries to influence your vote, you may resent it. But if he stays completely silent about election issues, some members of his congregation may think he's shirking his duty. It's also a problem of his own conscience.

That's the stickler that keeps many clergymen treading a tight rope today as the campaigns for public office roll toward a decision.

Should the minister cautiously avoid taking any stand on specific political questions? Or should he risk speaking out plainly on his own convictions?

"As an ordained leader of a representative of God's community, I question his freedom to act and speak as just one more private citizen," says the Rev. Gibson Winter, an Episcopal rector of Parishfield, Mich.

"But many clergymen would legitimately argue this point." A symposium of clergymen and other authorities on the subject has been published by "Information Service," edited by Dr. Benson Y. Landis, head of the research bureau of the National Council of Churches.

'Don't Mix'
There's a common saying that "religion and politics don't mix," but Dr. Samuel W. Blizard, a sociologist of Pennsylvania State University, says:

"To avoid mixing religion and politics, the minister's only real alternative is to be neutral, non-committal or indifferent."

In few other professions is there such concentrated pressure on a man to watch his political step. It can, Dr. Blizard said, virtually crush a minister's rights and duties as a citizen in this field.

Besides, he adds, it tends to deprive the community of "insights and understandings" of religious leaders on specific issues. The persuasion comes from other, perhaps sometimes less ethical, quarters.

Politically Active
Many Protestant ministers, however, are highly active in party politics in this country. A number of congressmen and other public officeholders and candidates are ordained clergymen.

"It is the duty of the minister of the local church to declare his faith in the system of government that he believes serves the best purposes of the people," says Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-N.Y.).

The Rev. Mr. Powell, Negro pastor of New York's Abyssinian Baptist Church, says that when he thinks candidates are right on vital issues, "I support them directly from the pulpit."

Others would draw a clear distinction between opinions expressed in the pulpit, and those advocated as a private individual.

"It is all right if the church members know that the minister favors a particular party and particular candidates," says the Rev. Kenneth E. Reeves of University Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, Tex.

"This is better than 'hush hush'."

Draw the Line
But, he adds, "there is a place to draw the line. The minister has no business espousing candidates or introducing obvious political controversy in the church's worship of sermons."

In the Roman Catholic Church in this country, diocesan decrees generally bar priests from any direct participation in politics, such as running for office or activity in partisan campaigns.

"They would not deal with such matters from the pulpit or in their priestly functions," said the Rev. Joseph O'Brian of the New York Chancery Office. As a private citizen, however, a priest may take definite positions.

But only in "extraordinary circumstances," when authorized by hierarchical authority, may he carry these positions into parish work. Pope Pius XII, at times, has advised specific action, such as voting against Communists.

Mental Hospital Escapee Taken

SPOKANE, Sept. 20 (AP)—Laverne F. Laughlin, 27, a convict who escaped from the maximum security ward at Eastern Hospital Aug. 28, was captured Wednesday at Pocatello, Idaho, sheriff's officers here said.

Laughlin was transferred to the mental institution from the state prison at Walla Walla two years ago, officers said. He escaped from his guard when taken out of the security building to have his photograph taken.

GOOD SCHOLARS BAD

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Opposition to Western Controls System Arises at 81-Nation Atomic Energy Meeting

By FRANCIS W. CARPENTER
UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Sept. 20 (AP)—An 81-nation conference to set up an international atomic energy agency opened today. There were immediate indications of growing opposition to Western-approved control proposals.

Switzerland joined India, the Soviet Union and some others with objections to powers of inspection and control laid down in a proposed constitution the conference will debate. A floor battle loomed before the constitution-signing ceremony is reached about Oct. 26.

The opening session in the redecorated U. N. Assembly Hall was marked by 84 minutes of speechmaking in a vain attempt of the Soviet Union, India and 11 other countries to get an invitation extended to Red China. They did not present a formal resolution to back up their demand, however.

James J. Wadsworth, U. S. delegate and temporary chairman, heard out the debate for the record. There was no vote.

Red China was not invited because the original General Assembly resolution limited invitations to 87 members of the U. N., and its specialized agencies. Communist China belongs to none.

Only San Marino, among those who accepted invitations, was absent from the hall today. Ireland, Finland, Luxembourg, Sudan and Laos turned down the invitations. Nepal did not respond at all.

Joao Carlos Muniz, Brazilian diplomat, was elected president of the conference. Pavel Winkler, Czechoslovakia, was elected vice president.

Smooth Start
The conference got away to a smooth start with greetings from President Eisenhower, who originally advanced in the U. N. the

idea of sharing atomic energy for peaceful uses. His welcome was read by Adm. Lewis S. Strauss, chairman of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission. U. N. Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold also welcomed the delegates.

Soviet Ambassador Georgi N. Zarubin then said the barring of Red China created an "intolerable situation." He said Peiping is a "tremendous factor for peace" and should be at the conference.

Dr. Homi J. Bhabha, Indian nuclear expert and chairman of the first U. N. atoms-for-peace conference in Geneva last year, endorsed the Soviet stand. They were seconded by delegates of Syria, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Soviet Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and White Russia.

Oppose Invitation
T. F. Tsiang, Nationalist China, replied bitterly that Red China is

a creature of the Soviet Union. Delegates of Korea and Paraguay opposed an invitation for Red China.

Strauss told the delegates that the creation of the agency would speed up the application of peaceful uses of atomic energy and divert fissionable material from atomic bomb arsenals.

He invited them to visit the National Laboratories at Brookhaven, N. Y., and the nuclear power plant

under construction at Shippingport, Pa.

From Bulgaria
Shortly before the conference opened, a message from Soviet Premier Bulganin wished it success and repeated the Soviet demand for prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons.

The proposed agency would distribute fissionable material for peaceful uses to nations that do not have any.

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