

JOHN F. KENNEDY BEFORE
THE GREATER HOUSTON MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION,
SEPTEMBER 12, 1960: THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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DEANE ALWYN KEMPER
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THESIS



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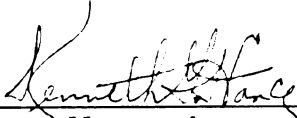
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ABSTRACT

JOHN F. KENNEDY BEFORE THE GREATER HOUSTON MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION, SEPTEMBER 12, 1960: THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

by Deane Alwyn Kemper

In 1960, for the second time in the twentieth century, the Democratic Party nominated a Roman Catholic for the office of President of the United States. Long before his official selection by his party's convention, however, Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy was aware of the issues concerning his faith that would be spawned in a national election. Accordingly, he inaugurated a practice of speaking forthrightly on these religious questions.

Kennedy first detailed his views on church and state in a Look magazine interview that appeared in March of 1959. Then, during the West Virginia primary campaign, when religion overshadowed all other issues, the Senator prepared and delivered an address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on the subject of his Catholic faith and the Presidential election. It was the wistful hope of the Kennedy campaign staff that these statements of the candidate's views on religion and politics would stand throughout the campaign and that no other discussion of the issues would be necessary.

During the summer of 1960, however, anti-Catholic campaign literature enjoyed a wide circulation. Then, in August, Democratic campaign manager Robert F. Kennedy received a report from the Simulations Corporation indicating that the Democrats would lose no

further votes on the religious issue if the matter were to be openly discussed. Accordingly, the Kennedy staff planned to speak on the Roman Catholic question late in the campaign.

A statement released by a group of 150 Protestant ministers meeting in Washington, D.C., on September 7, 1960, forced the Democrats to change their plans. The National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom, which was promptly renamed the "Peale Group" in honor of its official spokesman, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, questioned the ability of a Roman Catholic President to withstand pressures from the hierarchy of his Church. As a result of the religious charges put forth by the Peale Group, Kennedy accepted a long-neglected invitation to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and answer questions put to him by the clergymen.

This study presents an analysis and evaluation of John F. Kennedy's appearance before the Houston clergy on September 12, 1960. The analysis of the address follows the structure of the text read by Kennedy and seeks to determine the principal lines of thought, the nature of adaptation to the audience and occasion, and the developmental materials. A thorough evaluation of the occasion includes treatment of events leading up to the address as well as the aftermath and impact of Kennedy's Houston appearance. In addition to the consultation of press accounts and works of history, biography, political science, and religion, research was conducted in Houston and Washington, D.C.

In the introduction of the 1600-word address that was prepared by the candidate and speechwriter Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy indicated what he thought were the "real issues" in the campaign and chided his audience for their preoccupation with religion.

The two-part body of the speech presented Kennedy's position on the relationship of church and state in America as well as his views of religion and the Presidency. The Senator supported his stands by citing the Constitution, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the war records of his brother and himself, and the lack of a religious test at the Alamo.

In the Peroration, Kennedy stood on his record as a Congressman and on his stated positions on matters relating to church and state. He added that, if elected, he would resign the Presidency rather than violate his conscience or the national interest. He appealed to his audience to judge his candidacy on his record and on his stands on the issues, instead of his faith.

John Kennedy answered the questions of seven ministers in the interrogation session that followed the prepared address. Again, he stood on the Constitution and historical precedent, rather than arguing Catholic theology. His only mention of an ecclesiastical source was a citation of the statement of the National Catholic Welfare Council of 1948 that supported the separation of church and state.

The confrontation of the Senator and the ministers of Houston was telecast live on twenty Texas television channels and was rebroadcast in all sections of the United States in the concluding weeks of the campaign. Between press accounts and the television film, the stand of Senator Kennedy on the religious issue was made known to the entire nation.

An immediate result of the meeting was the withdrawal of three of Kennedy's severest critics from the religious fray. Dr. Daniel A. Poling and the Peale Group issued statements praising the candidate's stand.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale went into seclusion and was not heard from until a week later when he, too, retreated from the controversy.

John F. Kennedy's strong and articulate defense of his faith in Houston eliminated religion as a respectable campaign issue. To be sure, the polemicists continued their anti-Catholic activity into November. However, no churchmen or political leaders took up the cause so hastily dropped by Norman Vincent Peale and Daniel A. Poling.

JOHN F. KENNEDY BEFORE THE
GREATER HOUSTON MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION,
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By

Deane Alwyn Kemper

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

In 1960, for the second time in the twentieth century, the Democratic Party nominated a Roman Catholic for the office of President of the United States. John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the son of an ambassador, a graduate of Harvard, a military hero, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and the junior Senator from Massachusetts, began his run for the White House in 1956 after narrowly losing his party's Vice Presidential nomination to Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee.

He was too astute a politician not to be aware of political problems stemming from his Roman Catholic faith. Beginning in March of 1959, nearly a year before he became a declared candidate for the nation's highest office, Kennedy began to speak forthrightly on issues relating to his faith. On that occasion the young Senator spoke his views to writer Fletcher Knebel of Look magazine in an interview that placated many Protestants but drew negative reaction from the Catholic press. During the West Virginia primary in April of 1960, Kennedy changed the subject of a scheduled address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C., from foreign policy to religion.

It had been the hope of the Kennedy campaign staff that these two complete and widely publicized statements of the candidate's views on church and state would serve to answer any religious questions that

might arise during the campaign. It soon became apparent, however, that the anti-Catholic attacks of Protestant clergymen and publishing houses could not be effectively silenced with a repetition of past statements. When, on September 7, a group of 150 clergymen, headed by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and Dr. Harold John Ockenga, issued a position paper questioning the ability of a Roman Catholic President to withstand pressure from the hierarchy of his own Church, the Democratic candidate could no longer maintain his silence on the religious issue.

John F. Kennedy delivered his only "religious issue" address of the post-Convention campaign to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on September 12, just four days after publication of the press release issued by the Peale Group. This study will present an analysis of this single speech, which was delivered in the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel in Houston. The analysis will include research on the preparations and expectations of those involved in the event, the occasion itself, including the question-and-answer session which immediately followed the speech, and the impact of, and critical reaction to, the address in the days and weeks after Kennedy's appearance before the Houston clergy.

The research will focus on this speech alone and will not be an analysis of the overall speaking of President Kennedy. The brief biographical data included will be presented as a religious biography of John F. Kennedy. Addresses delivered by the candidate prior to September 12, 1960, will be considered only as they relate to the Houston presentation. Special attention will be paid to the Look interview and the A.S.N.E. address as these two sources contain much material that was incorporated into the Houston remarks.

Repeated attempts over a period of fifteen months to secure a filmed copy and a voice tape of Kennedy's Houston appearance ended in frustration. As a result, there will be no detailed treatment of delivery factors. Comments relating to delivery will be included only as they are found in research sources.

The events of history between 1960 and the present have created an emotional atmosphere that makes a precise assessment of the effectiveness of Kennedy's presentation all but impossible. As a result, the impact of the candidate's speeches on the religious issue will be judged by reaction to the Senator's remarks from the audience, his critics on the religious issue, and the nation's press.

As proposed, the subject possess historical merit for light that can be shed on John F. Kennedy's handling of the potent religious issue. Rhetorically, an investigation of this occasion may be of value as historians, members of the Democratic campaign staff, and even some of Kennedy's most severe critics agreed that the candidate had presented forthright, satisfactory answers to the questions of church and state raised by his faith.

Catholic nominees for the nation's highest office in 1928 and 1960 faced withering fire from anti-Catholic polemicists, but the candidacy of Congressman William E. Miller, a Roman Catholic, for the Vice Presidency on the 1964 Republican ticket headed by Barry Goldwater failed to generate even an anti-papist whisper. Similarly, the tragic and meteoric Presidential effort of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the sustained drive of Senator Eugene McCarthy in 1968 have not resulted in discussion of any religious topic.

It may well be that the enormous issues of war, crime, race relations, poverty, and the urban crisis have, in 1968, made religious debate a luxury the nation can ill-afford. John Kennedy's election and performance as President may also have served to still the voices of bigotry. But the young Senator's eloquent defense of his faith before the clergy of Houston cannot be discounted as a stifling influence on those who would judge a political aspirant by his church affiliation.

Method of Research

The speech under consideration in this project lends itself very well to rhetorical research that considers the key segments of an extremely critical campaign address. The specific segments to be analyzed and evaluated in the study include:

1. the issue: the religious question was the primary concern of millions of voters in 1960. The entire matter of a Roman Catholic chief executive had been left unresolved and largely undiscussed since 1928. The thought of a Roman Catholic heading a major party ticket was a political taboo until Kennedy's nomination.

2. the setting: Kennedy's appearance before the clergy of Houston and the actual arrangements for the meeting were the result of complex historical and political factors that demonstrate the need for the modern Presidential candidate to adjust and adapt to immediate issues.

3. the occasion: never before in the history of the United States had a Presidential aspirant been called upon to defend publicly his religious views and be publicly questioned on them. The Kennedy confrontation with the Houston ministers represents a unique chapter in American political lore.

4. the audience: John F. Kennedy's immediate audience was a group of several hundred South Texas clergymen, newsmen, and various spectators. By television, however, the Senator addressed thousands of Texans. In addition, through the press and a film made of the presentation, the speaker communicated his views to the entire nation.

5. the speaker: Senator Kennedy was responsive to the issues of the campaign and the sensitivities and loyalties of his audience. He demonstrated this responsiveness in his address and his answers on the evening of September 12, 1960.

The vehicle for the analysis of these separate elements of the address is the speech itself. There are, in all, eight chapters in the entire work. The first six chapters are headed by a portion of the address as read by Senator Kennedy. The entire address is presented chronologically in these six opening quotations. The chapter titles are taken from the segment of the speech studied in each chapter. All quotations from the address, whether at the heads of chapters or in the text of the study, are set in italic-type. The complete text of the speech is presented in Appendix A.

Thus, the subjects of Chapters I through VI are as follows:

Chapter I: the background of the occasion, the preparation of the speech, and the preparations for the event in Houston.

Chapter II: the issues of the campaign, a religious biography of John F. Kennedy, and a description of anti-Catholic political activity in 1960.

Chapter III: Kennedy's views on church and state in America and an analysis of Senator Kennedy's religion as a factor in his own political career.

Chapter IV: Kennedy's views on religion and the Presidency, an analysis of the Senator's appeal to the Constitution, and a description of the "Poling incident" as an issue in the campaign.

Chapter V: Kennedy's use of personal proof in citing his war record, an appeal to American documents, and an appeal to the Alamo.

Chapter VI: Kennedy's appeal for fair play based on his record in the Congress, his disavowal of church control, and his offer to resign rather than to violate his conscience.

Chapter VII presents an analysis of the question-and-answer period that followed the address, while Chapter VIII concerns itself with audience and critical reaction to the program and the continued use of the event in repeated television showings of the film record. Appendix B contains the uncorrected copy of the text of the question-and-answer period as printed by the Democratic National Committee.

Throughout the study, the arguments and evidence employed by the speaker are analyzed and evaluated. By use of "flashback," Kennedy's historical and personal references are presented in detail. When the Senator looks to the future, his prophetic utterances are elaborated on from the vantage point of the present which allows, on the researcher's part, generous use of the glorious gift of hindsight.

The Text

There are two available texts of John F. Kennedy's address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. The first record presents the speech as it was written by the candidate and Theodore Sorensen. This text was printed verbatim by the Washington Post the morning after the

speech was delivered and is included in the collection of the speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy, published by the Congressional Subcommittee of the Committee on Communications.

The second text is the record of the address as it was delivered by the speaker on September 12, 1960. It is this spoken account that has been employed in this study. The New York Times ran this second version of the speech as "a transcription of a television broadcast" on September 13, 1960.¹ The particular version chosen for incorporation into this study was taken from The Making of the President 1960 by Theodore H. White. This record was selected as it represents what was actually said and is set in paragraphs in essentially the same form as the written text.

A careful collation of the two accounts reveals twenty discrepancies between the two records, most of which involve only one or two words. No differences in meaning or emphasis are to be found. An expanded treatment of textual matters is included in Chapter IV.

The text of the question-and-answer session, which was utilized in the study and reproduced in Appendix B, is taken from a document printed and circulated by the Democratic National Committee. The original text was the work of a press stenographer who recorded what was said for distribution to the various news services and papers. Not surprisingly, because of the haste involved, the first newspaper printings of the interrogation period are filled with errors.

¹New York Times, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 22.

Many of these mistakes were eliminated from the later Democratic National Committee printing of the record. For example, one minister's quotation of a Catholic source originally identified as the Solace of Errors has been corrected to the Syllabus of Errors. Despite this general "cleaning up" of the text, many incorrect references remain such as Max Gaulke being identified as Max Delcke. Inasmuch as no voice tape, video tape, or film record of the occasion was made available, no attempt was made to correct the errors contained in the record. The text distributed by the Democratic National Committee is presented "as is," as it is the best recording of the proceedings to be found.

Sources

The following works were read for biographical material on John F. Kennedy and the Kennedy family: James MacGregor Burns, John Kennedy, A Political Profile, which is a campaign biography, yet still the labor of a professional historian; Leo Damore, The Cape Cod Years of JFK; Richard J. Whalen, The Founding Father, which remains the standard biography of the late President's father; Joseph F. Dinneen, The Kennedy Family; Robert J. Donovan, PT 109; a chronicle of Kennedy's exploits as a PT boat captain in World War II.

"Inside" views of Kennedy and of the 1960 election campaign were gleaned from Paul B. Fay, The Pleasure of His Company, a light, but personal work of a former shipmate; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, an excellent history of the New Frontier, but which offers little on the religious issue in 1960; Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy, the memoirs of the former White House press secretary; Evelyn Lincoln, My

Twelve Years with John F. Kennedy; and, most importantly, Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy, the lucid account of the co-author of the Houston speech whose work was invaluable for the information provided regarding the planning for and preparation of the address.

Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960, is still the standard work on the Nixon-Kennedy election and was close at hand throughout the preparation of this study; Lucy S. Dawidowicz and Leon J. Goldstein, Politics in a Pluralist Democracy, a thorough demographic analysis of the 1960 Presidential contest; Paul T. David, The Presidential Election and Transition, 1960-1961, was valuable for insight into the effects of religion and voting in 1960 as was the article by Philip Converse, Angus Campbell, Warren Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election"; Ithiel deSola Pool, Candidates, Issues, and Strategies: A Computer Simulation of the 1960 Election, presented data upon which campaign strategies were based, including strategy on the religious issue. The Republican view of the campaign was found in Richard M. Nixon, Six Crises.

Numerous works were consulted regarding religion as a personal and political force in the life of John Kennedy. Among the more valuable efforts were Patricia Barrett, Religious Liberty and the American Presidency, and Lawrence H. Fuchs, John F. Kennedy and American Catholicism. Of decidedly lesser worth was T. S. Settel, The Faith of JFK. Historical and political backgrounds were researched using several sources. Histories consulted were Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People; Nathan Schachner, Thomas Jefferson; Thomas D. Clark, Frontier America: The Story of the Westward Movement.

Political insight was gained from Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics; and John Gunther, Roosevelt in Retrospect: A Profile in History.

Journalistic sources provided valuable information about the events as they occurred as well as editorial opinion. The Houston Chronicle, the Houston Post, and the Houston Press were surveyed for local coverage. The major news magazines, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, and Life were consulted. Roman Catholic opinion was taken from the pages of America and Commonweal. Specific articles that were especially valuable for purposes of this study include Fletcher Knebel, "Democratic Forecast: A Catholic in 1960," Look; and John W. Turnbull, "The Clergy Faces Mr. Kennedy," The Reporter. Turnbull's piece was an extremely perceptive evaluation of the Houston confrontation. The New York Times was constantly used and its coverage of the events of the 1960 election provided continuity.

Materials on the activities of anti-Catholic propagandists were taken from news sources and from a large number of tracts and pamphlets, many of which were made available from the officers of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.

The unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Elton H. Wallace, "Alfred E. Smith, the Religious Issue: Oklahoma City, September 20, 1928," was often referred to in order to make points of comparison between Smith and Kennedy.

The voluminous files of the Democratic National Committee in Washington, D.C., yielded a wealth of material on Kennedy and the religious issue in 1960. Mary Klynnes, head librarian of the National

Committee, was extremely helpful in providing records that included articles and editorials from scores of American newspapers.

In Houston, interviews with George Reck and Herbert Meza of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and Sidney Hopkins of the Rice Hotel provided a verbal reconstruction of the preparations for the event in the Gulf Coast City. In addition, Mr. Reck and Mr. Meza graciously lent their personal files on the Kennedy appearance; and the hundreds of newspaper clippings, religious pamphlets, and letters in these collections were utilized frequently in the preparation of this study.

CHAPTER I

YOUR GENEROUS INVITATION

I am grateful for your generous invitation to state my views.¹

The Greater Houston Ministerial Association meets for lunch once each month. It is a "sleepy" organization that is not unlike similar groups of clergymen that convene in cities across America. Of the more than one thousand Protestant ministers serving in the Houston area, somewhat less than fifty break bread with their fellow pastors at regular meetings of the Association. The body is entirely Protestant, as Catholic and Jewish clerics have never expressed an interest in the group. At the same time, however, the Association is hardly representative of the city's Protestant clergy as Southern Baptist ministers refuse to unite with interfaith organizations. In a metropolitan center where Southern Baptist Churches occupy eleven columns of listings in the telephone directory, no ecclesiastical group can be thought of as representative while the Baptists remain outside.

On September 12, 1960, however, all of this was to change. More than six hundred clergymen, including rabbis, Roman Catholic priests,

¹John F. Kennedy, Address delivered to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, September 12, 1960. Verbatim record in Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 468-72. Original edition published by Atheneum House, 1961.

and Southern Baptist preachers would assemble somewhat self-consciously in the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel in downtown Houston to hear the junior Senator from Massachusetts express his views on the number one emotional issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy's appearance before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association came about primarily through the efforts of one man--the Rev. Herbert Meza. In June of 1960, some three months before the September 12 meeting, Meza, in his capacity as Vice President and program chairman of the ministerial group, proposed that both the Republican and Democratic nominees for President of the United States be invited to appear before the Association in the fall. Except for the eminence of the personalities involved, the programs suggested by Rev. Mr. Meza represented a standard practice of the Houston clerical body. At previous meetings the clergymen had heard and interrogated members of the Houston board of education, representatives of the police department, hopefuls for the office of mayor of Houston, and, on one occasion, a Roman Catholic candidate for the United States Senate. This Senatorial aspirant, Henry B. Gonzales, spoke at the invitation of his friend, Herbert Meza. His appearance, according to Meza, caused some stir among several members of the Association who were not kindly disposed to liberal, Democratic, Roman Catholic politicians.

Herbert Meza was well aware in the month of June that Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy were the probable standard bearers for their respective parties. His own personal sentiments, as a Democrat, were with Kennedy. The adverse criticism resulting from Henry Gonzales'

speech, however, convinced him that an invitation extended only to the Bostonian would be interpreted by the clergy of Houston as a manifestation of his own biases. Accordingly, Meza carefully proposed that both nominees be invited to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.¹

A month later, after both parties had adjourned their conventions, invitations were sent to both Presidential aspirants. The Republicans responded promptly in the affirmative--Richard Nixon would speak to the clergy of Houston.² From the Democrats, however, nothing was heard.

It would be difficult to envision a more unlikely candidate to promote a meeting encouraging a fair exchange of ideas on the religious issue than Herbert Meza, the associate pastor of the Bellaire Presbyterian Church of Houston. While Meza was born and reared a Roman Catholic in a Spanish-speaking family in Tampa, Florida, he became, at the age of eighteen, a Protestant convert and joined the Presbyterian Church. After serving in the Marine Corps in World War II, Meza enrolled at Davidson College in North Carolina. Following graduation, he attended Union Theological Seminary of Richmond, Virginia where he earned the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

Upon ordination Meza served as a missionary for four years in Spain and Portugal. "I had trouble getting into the Iberian Peninsula

¹Interview with Rev. Mr. Herbert Meza, former vice president of Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Feb. 16, 1968.

²Vice President Nixon visited Houston during the campaign, but he was forced to cancel his appearance before the clergymen because of a scheduling conflict.

because I was a Protestant missionary," he recalls. He taught for a time at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary near Lisbon and later helped found a clinic in the city. Meza was expelled from Portugal "on at least two occasions" for proselytizing activity.¹ But, unlike other Roman Catholics turned Protestant who devoted their efforts in 1960 to opposing a Catholic Presidential candidate, Herbert Meza was, by contrast, an ardent supporter of John F. Kennedy.

Meza disclaims partisan considerations in initiating Kennedy's speech to the Houston ministers, however. Rev. George Reck, pastor of the Zion Lutheran Church in Houston and president of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960, agrees. Reck, a political independent who voted for Richard Nixon in the Presidential election, gives full credit to Meza for the original idea of having the candidates address the city's clergy. "We were neutral," he says, "I wish we could have had Nixon."²

The actual invitation to the Kennedy campaign party to address the Houston clergy was tendered by the Harris County Democratic organization. The co-chairmen for the Democrats in the county in 1960 were Woodrow Seals (now a Federal judge in Houston) and John H. Crooker, Jr. (presently Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board). Judge Seals was contacted by the Rev. Mr. Meza, and it was he who proffered the original invitation to the Kennedy party in late July. The invitation specified that the subject of Kennedy's address should be his religion. Nixon's invitation indicated no subject.

¹Meza interview.

²Interview with Rev. Mr. George Reck, former president of Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Feb. 17, 1968.

The Greater Houston Ministerial Association does not meet during the summer months of July and August, and during the hot Houston summer the city's clergy all but forgot about the offer extended to Senator Kennedy. Richard Nixon followed up his original acceptance with a statement of regret that he would not be able, after all, to appear before the group. It became apparent to George Reck and Herbert Meza that the Democrats had pocketed their invitation and were waiting for the course of the campaign to determine whether their candidate should speak to and be interrogated on the religious issue when he visited Houston in mid-September.

During the silent summer, however, the sequence of events that would place Kennedy before the Houston ministers was beginning to unfold. On August 25, Robert F. Kennedy, the Senator's campaign manager, received a 125-page report from the Simulmatics Corporation. The study was a green light for open discussion of the religious issue and the engaging of Richard M. Nixon in the now famous television debates.

The Simulmatics Corporation was fostered by the Advisory Council of the Democratic National Committee and was ominously dubbed "The People Machine." Chairman and chief theoretician of the corporation was Professor Ithiel de Sola Pool of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "It is an activity that tries to predict human behavior," said Pool by way of definition. "In the 1960 election, the services of Simulmatics were used by the Kennedy strategists to estimate the reaction of the electorate to different sets of campaign strategies."¹

¹"The People Machine," Newsweek, April 2, 1960, p. 57.

John F. Kennedy was identified as just one member of a new generation of politicians who both read and understood polls. Dwight Eisenhower, Harry Truman, and Adlai Stevenson, according to Pool, neither used nor trusted public opinion findings.

The same cannot be said of any of the top political figures of 1960. Nixon, Rockefeller, and Kennedy all relied on polls, read them carefully, and understood them. A new political generation finally completed the revolution that had begun with Gallup's technological revolution in 1936. John F. Kennedy in particular not only understood enough to trust research; he understood enough to know when and in what respects to distrust it. He could ask the right questions and could distinguish between findings and implications. The same capacity for remembering and using numbers that so awed economists who dealt with him also stood him in good stead with survey researchers.¹

The Simulmatics people employed three essential components in their behavior predictions. An IBM 704 computer was engaged for necessary mathematical computations. Secondly, raw data on the electorate consisting of interviews with 100,000 registered voters taken between 1952 and 1960 by several organizations were sorted into 480 voter classifications. These data were then reduced to tape and stored in the computer. The final element consisted of communications and social-psychological theory taken from research studies done at several universities, primarily Columbia.²

Pool, Dr. William McPhee of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia, and Edward Greenfield, a businessman in New York and a

¹Ithiel deSola Pool, Robert P. Abelson, and Samuel L. Popkin, Candidates, Issues, and Strategies: A Computer Simulation of the 1960 and 1964 Presidential Elections (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1964), pp. 20-21.

²Newsweek, April 2, 1960, p. 57.

former aide to Governor W. Averill Harriman, believed they could find suitable financing for their project (\$65,000) from New York City Democrats.¹ "Most professors in the social sciences are Democrats," offered Pool in explanation for the group's search of partisan support.² When financing was secured in early 1959, Dr. Robert Abelson, a Yale professor of psychology and an expert in designing computer models, became a fourth partner. The Simulmatics Corporation was formed; and Pool, McPhee, and Abelson began designing their model of the American electorate.

Several questions were submitted to the People Machine in an effort to discern the attitudes of the American voting public. One such question asked: "What would happen on election day if the issue of anti-Catholicism became 'much more salient' in the voters' minds?"³ A definitive answer, it was felt, would provide the Kennedy campaign staff with a guideline for handling the explosive religious issue.

The report of the Simulmatics Corporation concluded on August 25:

Kennedy today has lost the bulk of the votes he would lose if the election campaign were to be embittered by the issue of anti-Catholicism. The net worst has been done. If the campaign becomes embittered, he will lose a few more reluctant Protestant votes to Nixon, but will gain Catholic and minority group votes. Bitter anti-Catholicism in the campaign would bring about a reaction against prejudice and for Kennedy from Catholics and others who would resent overt prejudice. It is in Kennedy's hands to handle the religious issue during the campaign in a way that maximizes Kennedy votes based on

¹Thomas B. Morgan, "The People Machine," Harper's, CCXXII (January, 1961), 55.

²Newsweek, April 2, 1960, p. 57.

³Morgan, Harper's, CCXXII, 53.

religious prejudice and minimizes further defections. On balance, he would not lose further from forthright and persistent attention to the religious issue, and would gain. The simulation shows that there has already been a serious defection from Kennedy by Protestant voters. Under these circumstances, it makes no sense to brush the religious issue under the rug. Kennedy has already suffered the disadvantages of the issue even though it is not embittered now - and without receiving compensating advantages inherent in it.¹

No member of the Simulmatics staff, it should be pointed out, was involved in strategy decisions in the Democratic Presidential campaign as the People Machine was strictly advisory. Pool, in fact, disclaimed a king-maker role. Even though Simulmatics had spelled out the mood of the nation on the religious issue and had indicated the best postures for Kennedy in the television debates, Pool minimized his firm's efforts, saying, "Any experienced politician using his own internal computer could come up with the same conclusions. . . . The machine was another voice that the candidate consulted."²

It is, however, difficult to minimize the report of the Simulmatics Corporation regarding the religious issue. "Even though it is not embittered now"--in the words of the report--the coast was clear for John F. Kennedy to speak out decisively on the question without fear that candor might lose the election. As the campaign began, the question left in the minds of the Kennedy staffers now was that of timing--When should the religious issue be discussed?

Democratic Presidential aspirants traditionally open their campaigns in Detroit's Cadillac Square on Labor Day when they address

¹Ibid., 54.

²Newsweek, April 2, 1960, p. 57.

union workers from the automobile industry turned out by the ever-faithful Walter Reuther. Before this official Monday opener, however, Kennedy made "unofficial" appearances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in Maine, San Francisco, and Alaska. From Michigan the candidate jetted to the West Coast, where he left his own Convair in favor of a train in which he whistle-stopped his way down the length of California in a style reminiscent of Harry S. Truman twelve years before.

It was in California, observes Theodore H. White, that Kennedy began to sense anew the question of religion on the minds of the nation. The first questions concerning the candidate and his religion in this campaign had been asked long before the quadrennial election year began. The murmuring continued in the West Virginia primary and on through the Convention in Los Angeles.

Now, in September, the old echo of fear was slowly being amplified - not only in the border states of Tennessee and Kentucky, but in downstate Indiana and Illinois, in the farm belt, above all in the South. No politician as sensitive or as well-informed as Kennedy, traveling through California's Central Valley, where lived transplanted Oklahomans, Texans, Arkansans, needed to be told that these gut Democrats were disturbed by this candidate of Roman Catholic faith; and if they were, so were millions of others.¹

It was in California also--at Modesto--that a heckler from the crowd surrounding Kennedy's rear platform shouted, "Do you believe all Protestants are heretics?"

¹Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 310-11.

"No," came the instant reply from the candidate. "And I hope you don't think all Catholics are."¹

The Senator's brother Robert, meanwhile, was touring the South. In Atlanta on September 7 the campaign manager identified Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas as "problem states." The handicap that created the problem in these states, he said, was the candidate's religion. Robert Kennedy indicated that his brother hoped to overcome religious objections with the same approach used in the West Virginia primary some months before. On that occasion, when Kennedy crushed the 1960 Presidential hopes of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, he had faced the issue squarely and had given frank and candid answers to all sincere questions.

"The overriding question and the only question is whether Senator Kennedy believes in the separation of church and state," argued the younger brother. "He's said unequivocally that he does." Two Southern governors, Luther H. Hodges of North Carolina and J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. of Virginia agreed with Robert Kennedy that religion could well determine the results of the election in their states.²

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, meanwhile, took the liberty of speaking for Richard Nixon and said that under no circumstances would the Republicans interject the issue of religion into the campaign. A candidate's faith, the President hoped, was a matter that could be "laid on the shelf and forgotten until after the election is over."³

¹Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 186.

²New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 24.

³Ibid., p. 1.

It seemed to Herbert Meza that the Democratic candidate's religion would be forgotten until Kennedy's scheduled Houston campaign appearance on September 12 was over. On September 6 Meza wrote to Texas State Senator Henry Gonzales in Austin:

We have been trying to get Senator Kennedy to be our speaker here in Houston and I think we may yet be successful. You may remember the very warm response that you had when you addressed us some time ago. I have been working through Woodrow Seals and he is very anxious to have the Senator speak to us. I would be very grateful if you could lend your influence towards the fulfillment of this invitation.

You realize, of course, as I do and perhaps more so, that Senator Kennedy will have to face the religious issue and it may be that addressing the Protestant ministers as you did will be helpful. If you can help us in this matter, I would be grateful.¹

Thus, even though Simulmatics had reported that open discussion of religion could aid the Democratic cause--and even though Kennedy's political sensitivities told him that frank discussion was needed, the Democrats preferred to wait until late October to speak to the question. At a date near the end of the campaign, it was reasoned, the issue could be treated frankly without time for a possible backlash. But, as Theodore White observes, "Decisions in a campaign are forced on one by timing of emotions over which no one has control." The emotional determinant in this case occurred on September 7 as on this day Robert Kennedy and President Eisenhower were not the only ones speaking to reporters on the religious issue. For on that same date, a statement was made by the National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom.²

¹Letter from Rev. Mr. Herbert Meza, vice president of Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas, Sept. 6, 1960.

²See Appendix C for a complete text of the statement by the National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom.

The National Conference was an ad hoc body whose importance stemmed from the eminence of the co-chairmen of the group, the Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale of Marble Collegiate Church in New York and the Rev. Dr. Harold John Ockenga of Park Street Church in Boston. Dr. Peale read the organization's position papers to assembled reporters, and the National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom was immediately rechristened "The Peale Group" in honor of its spokesman.

The Peale Group, which had met at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, was composed of 150 ministers and laymen identified by Peale as being "more or less representative of evangelical, conservative Protestants."¹ The conferees, meeting under the motto, "Take care to be fair," included Daniel Poling, editor of The Christian Herald; Dr. George M. Docherty, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington; Glenn L. Archer, executive director of the P. O. A. U.; Dr. Clyde W. Taylor, public affairs secretary for the National Association of Evangelicals; Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, former editor of The Christian Century; and Dr. L. Nelson Bell, associate editor of Christianity Today and father-in-law of Billy Graham.

The Peale Group's statement expressed a concern that a Catholic President would be unable to resist church pressures in matters involving foreign relations, freedom of religion, and education. Beginning with a premise describing the Roman Catholic Church as "a political as well as a religious organization," the National Conference stated:

It is inconceivable that a Roman Catholic President would not be under extreme pressure by the hierarchy of his

¹New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 1.

church to accede to its policies with respect to foreign relations in matters, including representation to the Vatican.¹

The statement cited persecution of Protestant ministers and missionaries in Spain and Colombia. After observing that nations in which the Roman Catholic population constitutes a majority often institute repressive measures against other religions, the report accused the Catholic Church in America of attempting to break down the wall of separation of church and state by a continuous campaign to secure public funds for the support of its schools and other institutions. In choosing an example to support their charge of Catholic exploitation of the public treasury, the Peale Group resorted to half-truth and insinuation.

In Ohio today (a state with a Roman Catholic governor), according to an Attorney General's ruling, Roman Catholic nuns and sisters may be placed on the public payroll as school teachers.²

In rebuttal, Time magazine reported the facts concerning employment of nuns in the Ohio public schools. The decision to hire Catholic sisters to teach in public classrooms was made before the Roman Catholic Mike DiSalle took office as the state's chief executive. In 1958, while Protestant Republican C. William O'Neill was serving as governor, Attorney General William B. Saxbe ruled that the thirty-nine year old practice of hiring nuns to relieve teacher shortages was not in violation of the Ohio Constitution. Governor DiSalle demanded an apology from Dr. Peale, saying, "This matter has never been before me."³

¹Ibid., Sept. 7, 1960, p. 25.

²Ibid.

³"The Campaign," Time, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 21.

The seeming influence of Daniel Poling in the position paper of the National Conference of Citizens for Religious Freedom was evidenced by a section questioning the ability of a Roman Catholic President to attend and participate in meetings of other faiths. "Would not a Roman Catholic President," the Peale Group asked rhetorically, . . . be gravely handicapped in offering to the American people and to the world an example of the religious liberty our people cherish?"¹

A terse evaluation of the nature and origin of the religious issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign concluded the Protestant organization's statement.

Finally, that there is a "religious issue" in the present political campaign is not the fault of any candidate. It is created by the nature of the Roman Catholic Church which is, in a very real sense, both a church and a temporal state.²

Dr. Peale told reporters that the statement had been prepared before the National Conference convened and had been unanimously adopted by the body. He refused to identify the author(s) of the document. According to L. Nelson Bell, a medical doctor and a Presbyterian layman, "The only discussion concerned its length. Some people thought it was too long."³

Dr. Bell expressed alarm at a Protestant lack of understanding of Catholicism. "Psuedo tolerance," he said, "is not tolerance at all but simply ignorance." If Kennedy were to be elected, then Senate majority leadership would pass to Mike Mansfield of Montana; and John W. McCormack

¹New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 25.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

of Massachusetts would continue as majority leader in the House of Representatives. "Both are fine men, but both belong to a church with headquarters in Rome," concluded Bell.¹

Kennedy was compared to Nikita Khrushchev by Harold Ockenga. Each man, said the Boston cleric, is "a captive of a system."² When asked if the group had considered Richard Nixon's Quaker faith, Peale, an announced supporter of the Vice President, said, "I don't know that he ever let it bother him."³

Reaction to the National Conference meeting was not long in coming. John C. Bennett, dean of the faculty at Union Theological Seminary in New York, wrote in Christianity and Crisis:

The religious opposition to Senator Kennedy of the type associated with a kind of Protestant under-world - an opposition that expresses itself in unsigned manifestoes and stirs up undisguised hatred of Catholics - is still with us, and it is hard to say whether there is more or less of it now than in earlier periods.

.....

There is one curious coincidence in these attacks: it is that those who take the leadership in this Protestant attack on the Roman Church as a campaign issue are also persons who would not support a liberal Democrat no matter what his religion; that the opposition on the religious issue centers in that part of the country where the opposition is equally strong on the issue of civil rights and on the economic philosophy of Senator Kennedy and his platform.⁴

¹Time, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 21.

²Ibid.

³New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 25.

⁴Christianity and Crisis, Sept. 19, 1960, pp. 125-26.

Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, a co-chairman with Dr. Bennett of New York's Liberal Party, said, "Dr. Peale and I disagree on everything, religiously and politically."¹

The New York Board of Rabbis likewise denounced the Peale Group statement. Rabbi David I. Golovensky, president of the body, termed voting against a candidate because of adherence to Catholicism a "sinister betrayal of the fundamental precept of American democracy."²

The Democrats were no less swift in issuing statements to the press than were the theologians. Vice Presidential nominee Lyndon B. Johnson declared, "I think it's a mistake when we permit any religious test as a requirement for holding office." Mr. Johnson then added a personal barb directed at one of the Peale Group participants. "Perhaps it was just a coincidence," he said, "that Dr. Poling is a Republican."³ Robert Kennedy played on the same theme in commenting on Poling and Dr. Peale. "Their close relationship with Mr. Nixon and the Republican Party in the election leads me to question the sincerity of their statement and their judgment in issuing it."⁴

It was, as Johnson and the younger Kennedy pointed out, the political inclinations of the leaders of the National Conference that made their religious smokescreen readily transparent. Along with Peale's support of Mr. Nixon, critics pointed to Daniel Poling's previous candidacy for the office of mayor of Philadelphia on a Republican ticket. Harold Ockenga was a consistent advocate of conservative,

¹Time, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 22.

²New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 8.

³Ibid., Sept. 9, 1960, p. 14.

⁴Ibid.

Republican causes. And L. Nelson Bell was on the staff of a decidedly right-leaning religious periodical. Theodore Sorensen lists three factors that discounted the credibility of the Peale Group statement:

1. Men well known to be Republicans had pretended their opposition to Kennedy was for religious reasons.
2. Protestant clergymen opposed to the Catholic Church's intervention in politics showed no compunction about openly intervening themselves.
3. The political position of the Catholic Church has not only been inaccurately described but also inaccurately ascribed to Senator Kennedy, whose own views and legislative votes the group largely discounted.¹

T.R.B., in The New Republic waxed poetic in offering his judgment of the National Conference.

'The Pope, the White House seeks to steal,'
Cried Dr. Poling to Dr. Peale.
'For Heaven's sake, get Nixon rolling!'
Cried Dr. Peale to Dr. Poling.²

Activity in Washington, D. C., however, disclosed that the Democrats would seek to counter the Peale Group's allegations with more than mere counter-charges against the participants. The Democratic campaign workers in the nation's capital quickly assembled selected Kennedy quotations on church-state relations, birth control, aid to parochial schools, the Knights of Columbus oath, and the issue of an ambassador to the Vatican. These statements were combined with excerpts from the Constitution of the United States, the Congressional Oath of Office, and the Statement of the Catholic Bishops of the United States of 1948

¹Sorensen, p. 189.

²"T.R.B., From Washington," The New Republic, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 1.

and published as a position paper spelling out the Senator's views on the separation of church and state.¹ The basic sources for the candidate's own words were a Look magazine interview published in 1959, an article from the Philadelphia Inquirer, a speech delivered to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the acceptance speeches at the Los Angeles Convention, and an interview with James Reston printed in the New York Times. The memorandum was distributed to the press and used as a "mail-out" to answer the thousands of letters the Democratic campaign staff was receiving asking questions regarding Kennedy's religion.²

Meanwhile, in California, the stir precipitated by the Peale Group statement was causing some hard thinking in the Kennedy campaign party. The problem was that the Peale Group had lifted the entire religious issue above the level of the rantings of right-wing pulpit pounders and the hastily drafted resolutions of little-known religious sects. When, for example, Harvey Springer, self-billed as the Cowboy Evangelist of the Rockies, had denounced the candidacy of Senator Kennedy because no Roman Catholics had come over on the Mayflower, few Americans listened and his views were given almost no circulation by the mass media. Similarly, when the annual convention of the North Bend Baptist Association of Northern Kentucky had unanimously passed a resolution opposing the election of a Catholic to the nation's highest office, little notice was paid because the 17,542 member group is composed entirely of

¹Democratic National Committee, Memorandum (n.p.: Democratic National Committee, n.d.).

²New York Times, Sept. 9, 1960, pp. 1, 14-15.

fundamentalistic people who could be expected to look with disfavor on a politically liberal as well as a Roman Catholic candidate.¹ But when the widely read author of The Power of Positive Thinking and the weekly newspaper column "Confident Living," backed by figures associated with The Christian Century, Christianity Today, The Christian Herald, the National Association of Evangelicals, and Billy Graham openly questioned the ability of a Roman Catholic to serve as President of the United States, then the nation paused to listen. "The prestige of Norman Vincent Peale," in the words of Theodore White, "had now, in early September, given respectable leadership to ancient fear and prejudice."² The attack by the Peale Group had also preempted the plan of the Democrats to address the religious issue in late October.

John F. Kennedy's scheduled appearance at a Houston Coliseum rally was now just four days away. The long-neglected invitation to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association was now remembered and brought to the candidate's attention. "With considerable reluctance," reports Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy himself, on Thursday, September 8, made the decision to appear before the Houston clergy after the Coliseum rally on Monday evening.³ The Democratic standard bearer also agreed to Herbert Meza's proposed format for the event: He would present a statement on the religious issue and answer questions from the floor. Time was at a premium as preparations began in Houston and California.

¹Washington Post, Sept. 2, 1960.

²White, p. 311.

³Sorensen, p. 189.

Even before the Senator had announced his formal acceptance of the Ministerial Association's invitation, Harris County Democratic co-chairmen Woodrow Seals and John H. Crooker, Jr., told the press about the bid. The local political leaders stated that they had reserved the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel in case Kennedy accepted the ministers' bid. "We are not only urging him to accept, but we are suggesting he answer questions from ministers in the audience," they said.¹

When Kennedy's affirmative answer to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association was disclosed, Crooker and Seals announced that the event would be shown "live" on television on twenty Texas channels with local coverage on Houston's KTRK-TV. The co-chairmen said they had consulted with Herbert Meza before arranging for the telecast. The Houston Press reported:

Mr. Crooker and Mr. Seals said they had checked with Rev. Herbert Meza, associate pastor of the Bellaire Presbyterian Church and program chairman for the association, to see if they could televise the program.

They got permission and KTRK-TV Channel 13 will carry the entire half-hour program live.²

There was some disagreement, however, between the pastors and the politicians over the final arrangements for the meeting. George Beck speaks of the Ministerial Association's being "victimized" by having the meeting at the Rice Hotel instead of a local church. "We intended to meet in a church, possibly First Methodist downtown," he explains. But by the time Kennedy's formal acceptance was made public, the local Democratic committee had already engaged the Crystal Ballroom.

¹Houston Chronicle, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 1.

²Houston Press, Sept. 9, 1960, p. 1.

At this point the officers of the clerical group, curiously, remembered the widely publicized "Poling incident" of 1947 in which Kennedy, as a Congressman, refused to represent the Roman Catholic faith at a banquet honoring the memory of the four chaplains who heroically went down with the troopship Dorchester in 1943. Poling's son, Clark V. Poling, was one of the four. The dinner was held to raise funds for an inter-faith chapel to be situated within the Baptist Temple in Philadelphia. From this incident, the leaders of the Houston group reasoned that Kennedy might not be able to take part in a meeting in the sanctuary of a non-Catholic church.¹ "We realized it might embarrass him if it were in a Protestant church," Reck remembers. "So we were guests, really, of the Democratic Party and this caused us to compromise somewhat."²

It seems that the Democrats were not content only to name the meeting place; they wanted to control the introduction of the candidate as well. Accordingly, without consulting the Ministerial Association, the local Democratic organization let it be known that Senator Lyndon Johnson would introduce Senator Kennedy. The New York Herald Tribune reported "a furious verbal tussle" between the preachers and the politicians and quoted an official of the Ministerial Association as saying, "We didn't want to make a political rally out of our little

¹The ministers were in error in their belief that the Four Chaplains Dinner was held in a church. The banquet took place in a Philadelphia hotel.

²Reck interview.

meeting. But L.B.J. and Mr. Sam wanted to get on that platform and were mighty put out when we wouldn't let them."¹

On the morning of September 12, George Reck and Herbert Meza were invited to the Rice Hotel by the Democratic Committee. "They asked us if Johnson could introduce Kennedy and Rayburn could be on the stage," says Reck. The ministers replied in the negative, arguing that such arrangements would take the meeting completely out of the hands of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and turn it into a television rally. "The Kennedy party wanted to take over the meeting," Reck remembers, but Meza was very firm." Meza carried the argument by saying that if Johnson and Rayburn sat on the platform, no representatives of the city's clergy would take part in the meeting.²

That evening only Meza and Reck appeared before the audience and television cameras with Kennedy. The senior Senator from Texas and the Speaker of the House of Representatives viewed the program on television in another room in the hotel.

As the Houston preparations were being made, the New Frontier Special traced its way through the San Joaquin Valley, climbed the Tehachapi Mountains, and made the long descent into Los Angeles. Here, in California's largest city, the nominee addressed a rally at the Shrine Auditorium and spent the greater part of the weekend with Ted Sorensen in the Ambassador Hotel composing his remarks for the appearance before the Houston clergy.

¹New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 16.

²Reck interview.

Sorensen relied, for the most part, on previous positions expressed by Kennedy on church-state relations. The candidate's chief speech writer gathered material from the Look magazine interview, the speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the acceptance address at the Democratic Convention in the same city two months before, and various statements made to press conferences.¹ Impressed with the significance of the coming confrontation, Sorensen remarked to a friend, "We can win or lose the election right there in Houston on Monday night."²

While the Democrats were seeking primarily to placate fearful Protestants on the religious issue, they wanted, at the same time, to avoid charges of "overaccommodation" which might cause a defection of Catholic voters from the Kennedy ticket. The Look magazine article of the previous year had prompted bitter charges in the Roman Catholic press that the Senator was going so far to pacify Protestants that he was betraying his own faith. Now, in 1960, critics were pointing to these attacks as examples of Catholic reaction to Kennedy's liberal views on church and state. "In the hopes of avoiding any loose wording that would unnecessarily stir up the Catholic press," says Sorensen, "I read the speech over the telephone to Rev. John Courtney Murray, S.J., a leading and liberal exponent of the Catholic position on church and state."³ The speech writer also conferred with two campaign advisors:

¹Sorensen, p. 189.

²White, p. 311.

³Sorensen, p. 190.

James Wine, a Presbyterian, who handled matters relating to the Protestant community, and James Cogley, a Roman Catholic formerly on the staff of Commonweal magazine.

Even as the Harris County Democrats were at work, another group was preparing a reception for Senator Kennedy. Some two hundred people assembled in the downtown First Baptist Church on Thursday night to formulate plans for the distribution of anti-Catholic leaflets at the Coliseum rally.¹ (Newspaper reports after the event mentioned such pamphlets as being circulated but did not indicate the identity of those handing them out.) One man stationed himself in the lobby of the Rice Hotel, according to one eye witness, with "copies of an unspeakably malicious anti-Catholic pamphlet . . . and he would not tell you his name because he was afraid you might be a reporter."²

On Monday, September 12, John F. Kennedy campaigned across Texas. He began the day in El Paso and appeared later in Lubbock. Late in the afternoon the Democratic entourage flew into Houston from San Antonio. The candidate and several of his party went to the Rice Hotel, where suite 1760 had been reserved. Ordinarily, the Senator would have been booked into the Gold Suite, the Hotel's most luxurious accommodation on the sixth floor.³ On this occasion, however, the Gold Suite was

¹New York Times, Sept. 11, 1960, p. 69.

²John W. Turnbull, "The Clergy Faces Mr. Kennedy," The Reporter, Oct. 13, 1960, p. 33.

³Three years later, Kennedy spent the night of November 21, 1963 in the Gold Suite before flying to Fort Worth and Dallas and the fatal rendezvous with Lee Harvey Oswald.

occupied by John Wayne, the motion picture actor, who was in town for the premier of the film "The Alamo."¹ Before leaving for the Coliseum speech, Kennedy dressed and ate dinner in his room.

Observers of John F. Kennedy's appearance before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association almost to a man speak of the atmosphere as being "hostile" or "tense." As space was at a premium and seats were available to the ministers on a "first come, first served" basis, the clergymen arrived early. The clerics were seated by ushers recruited from a University of Houston fraternity by a member of George Reck's congregation. (Several of them sported Nixon buttons to show their own political preference.)²

Crowd estimates range from a low of 600 (Theodore White) to a high of nearly 1,000 (Sidney Hopkins of the Rice Hotel catering staff). Hopkins bases his conjecture on a knowledge of the capacities of the rooms employed for the occasion. The Crystal Ballroom takes its name from two overly large, opulent chandeliers that hover over the room like a pair of pregnant cut-glass clouds. The dark wood panels at either end of the room may be removed, as they were on this occasion, thus incorporating the San Jacinto and Trinity Rooms and producing a meeting place 148 feet wide and 51 feet deep. Seats were set up in the Crystal Ballroom in two broad sections with a center aisle. A platform at the rear held radio equipment and television and motion picture

¹Interview with Sidney Hopkins, Director of Public Relations, Rice Hotel, Houston, Texas, Feb. 17, 1968.

²Reck interview.

cameras. Seats in the two side rooms faced in toward the center. Members of the press, for the most part, sat on the speaker's left in the San Jacinto Room.

The newspapers mentioned spectators as well as ministers being present. Mr. Hopkins places these laymen on the Senator's right in the Trinity Room. Estimating that the Crystal Ballroom seats 400 people and each of the side rooms approximately 250, Hopkins calculates a live audience approaching 1,000.¹ Rev. Mr. Meza and Rev. Mr. Reck disagree with the press on the matter of spectators, however. Although admitting that several non-clergymen were present, the two pastors believe that the crowd was not equally divided between clergy and laity as several press reports stated. Both men are convinced that the reporters interpreted the applause that greeted Kennedy and followed his address as coming from spectators as the ministers present would be disposed against the Bostonian and would not applaud. One writer, commenting on applause in the question-answer period, chronicled, "Several times his [Kennedy's] answers drew applause from the crowd fringe - not ministers - crowded into the hotel ballroom where he spoke."² It was this acclaim, therefore, in the opinion of Reck and Meza, that caused the newspapers to describe the crowd as half ministers and half spectators.³

Writers and eye-witnesses of the occasion have employed a variety of ominous adjectives to describe the audience assembled in the Crystal

¹Hopkins interview.

²Houston Press, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 4.

³Meza and Reck interviews.

Ballroom. Kennedy was on "plainly hostile ground," wrote Time magazine.¹ "There was a strange feeling of tension, uncertainty, perhaps hostility in the air," according to the Rev. John W. Turnbull on The Reporter.² Theodore White depicts the gathering as sullen, almost hostile."³ Sorensen says the ministers were "glaring."⁴ Herbert Meza speaks of "A highly, emotionally charged audience, it was highly expectant."⁵ George Reck adjudged his brethren of the cloth sufficiently threatening in appearance to encourage the candidate with the assuring words, "They're not as beastly as they appear."⁶ It is Turnbull who offers, perhaps, the best explanation for the crackling atmosphere before Kennedy spoke.

The peculiar atmosphere of the gathering was probably due in much larger part to the ambivalence and embarrassment that every sensitive Protestant minister present must have felt somewhere in his being. Several times Senator Kennedy expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to discuss his convictions with us, and his gratitude gave every evidence of being genuine. But most of us were not so sure that we ought to be grateful for the occasion. Too many uncomfortable thoughts assailed us. The meeting had many of the earmarks of an inquisition, and we always thought we were against inquisitions.

A few minutes before the meeting began, James Wine sought Herbert Meza. "Mr Wine asked me to be fair and protective and not allow any

¹"Test of Religion," Time, Sept. 26, 1960, p. 21.

²"The Clergy Faces Mr. Kennedy," The Reporter, Oct. 13, 1960, p. 33.

³White, p. 313.

⁴Sorensen, p. 190.

⁵Meza interview.

⁶Reck interview.

⁷Turnbull, The Reporter, Oct. 13, 1960, p. 33.

abuse," Meza says. "He had apprehensions about rude questions."¹

Kennedy himself was concerned about the demeanor of his audience. He returned to suite 1760 after the Coliseum rally, where he dressed in television basic black with a contrasting white shirt. As aide Dave Powers had left the Senator's black shoes on the plane, brown shoes had to suffice. "What's the mood of the ministers?" Kennedy inquired of Press Secretary Pierre Salinger.

"They're tired of being called bigots," came the reply.²

At seven minutes before nine o'clock the Democratic Presidential nominee entered the Crystal Ballroom and strode to the head table, where George Reck and Herbert Meza were already seated. The audience rose and tendered a polite ovation. Kennedy took a chair between the two ministers at a table facing the audience. Two lecterns flanked the table. Only the left rostrum was used during the course of the evening, and no one seems to remember why the second lectern was in the room.

In the moments before the telecast, the three men at the front of the room made sparse conversation. Both ministers noted that Kennedy's hands were shaking and that he seemed quite tense. "He was very, very nervous," recalls Reck.³ At nine p.m., the Rev. Mr. George Reck made a general welcome accompanied by an admonition urging restraint, respect, and good conduct. When asked eight years after the event why he thought such remarks were necessary in a meeting of clergymen, Reck answered matter-of-factly, "I know Southern Baptists. I was just afraid."⁴

¹Meza interview.

²Time, Sept. 26, 1960, p. 21.

³Reck interview.

⁴Ibid.

Herbert Meza, in his capacity of vice president and program chairman of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, introduced Senator Kennedy.

This program this evening does not constitute an endorsement of either the speaker of the evening or the party which he represents.

The program has been motivated by the religious issues in the campaign - issues that are not modern. There are some who insist that nothing has changed within the Roman Catholic Church. And there are others who insist that nothing should change. The problem is not to deny the religious issue or to brand as intolerant those who raise it. The problem is to place it in perspective and to determine where the candidate stands in relation to that perspective.

The extremists on both sides have tended to dominate the debate. Contrary to foreign propaganda, the South is not a hotbed of religious and racial intolerance. There are many honest minds that are raising honest questions. Many Catholics differ with us on many questions that are relevant to the welfare of our country. The fact that the Senator is with us tonight is to concede that a religious issue does exist. It is because many are seriously and decently raising these questions that we have invited our speaker of the evening and have allowed this meeting to be broadcast. To that end I should like to introduce at this time the Senator from Massachusetts and the Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Senator John F. Kennedy.¹

"When he got up to speak," says Meza, "I felt that all of his nervousness had gone."²

Now, some three months after the decision of the Ministerial Association to provide a forum for the Presidential candidates, two months after the invitation had been extended to the Democratic party, and five days after the intemperate blast of the Peale Group, John F.

¹Herbert Meza, Introduction read before the meeting of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas, Sept. 12, 1960.

²Meza interview.

Kennedy stood before nearly 1,000 ministers, reporters, and guests in the Crystal Ballroom and thousands of Texans watching on television.

"I am grateful," he began simply, "for your generous invitation to state my views."

CHAPTER II

BUT BECAUSE I AM A CATHOLIC

While the so-called religious issue is necessarily and properly the chief topic here tonight, I want to emphasize from the outset that I believe that we have far more critical issues in the 1960 election: the spread of Communist influence, until it now festers only ninety miles off the coast of Florida - the humiliating treatment of our President and Vice-President by those who no longer respect our power--the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctor's bills, the families forced to give up their farms--an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space.

These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues--for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier.

But because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured--perhaps deliberately in some quarters less responsible than this. So it is

apparently necessary for me to state once again--not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me, but what kind of America I believe in.

John F. Kennedy had lamented previously that the religious question was overshadowing the more significant issues of the campaign. In Houston, he conceded religion was "*necessarily and properly the chief topic here tonight.*" Earlier in the year, however, he addressed the American Society of Newspaper Editors concerning the preoccupation of the press with his Church affiliation. Referring to the recently completed Wisconsin Democratic primary election in which he had defeated Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, Kennedy, in very frank terms, accused the journalistic fraternity of keeping the issues from the people:

I spoke in Wisconsin, for example, on farm legislation, foreign policy, defense, civil rights and several dozen other issues. The people of Wisconsin seemed genuinely interested in these addresses. But I rarely found them reported in the press - except when they were occasionally sandwiched in between descriptions of my hand-shaking, my theme song, family, haircut, and, inevitably, my religion.

At almost every stop in Wisconsin I invited questions - and the questions came - on price supports, labor unions, disengagement, taxes, and inflation. But these sessions were rarely reported in the press except when one topic was discussed: religion.¹

Kennedy went on to cite one article which, in supposedly presenting an overview of the primary, mentioned the word "Catholic" a score of

¹John F. Kennedy, Text of address to American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D. C., April 21, 1960. U. S. News and World & Report, May 2, 1960, pp. 90-91.

times in fifteen paragraphs with no mention of other campaign issues. Referring to the Milwaukee Journal by name, the Senator described a campaign map of Wisconsin printed two days before the election assessing the "relative strength of three types of voters--Democrats, Republicans and Catholics."¹

Now, in mid-September, the religious issue had peaked again. At the precise time when both Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Nixon were gaining campaign momentum after forced detention in the Senate and in the hospital, respectively, the Peale Group statement with its echoing charges and countercharges had resulted in a one-week vacation for the significant issues of the campaign from the front pages of the nation's newspapers. The Democratic candidate now reminded his audience of campaign topics relating to Communism, to the prestige of America abroad, and to domestic problems. He cited the Cuban revolution of 1959, which resulted in a Communist state headed by Fidel Castro, as a very graphic and threatening example of the spread of Communism. Kennedy alluded to the Caracas riots, that threatened Richard Nixon's life in 1958, and the mid-1960 demonstrations in Japan, which caused the cancellation of President Eisenhower's state visit, as evidence of declining regard for American power in foreign places. In concluding his listing of issues, the Senator mentioned the poverty he had seen while campaigning in West Virginia and spoke of domestic problems relating to hunger, medical care, farms, the cities, education, and the space race.

An exasperated Senator Kennedy, therefore, stood before the ministers and microphones in the hopes of banishing the religious issue from page

¹Ibid.

one so that the *"real issues"* could be discussed. *"For war and hunger and ignorance and despair,"* the young Democrat pleaded, *"know no religious barrier."*

But John F. Kennedy, as he himself said, was a Catholic. He was known to the nation as a member of a prominent Irish-Catholic family--a family, incidentally, that had known the ravages of *"war and hunger and ignorance and despair."*

In the mid-nineteenth century they came by the thousands to the New World seeking a new life. Beginning in 1845 there had been a succession of potato crop failures that left the Irish countryside an odorous, putrefying bog. Nearly half of the crop was destroyed in 1845, and the next crop failed as well. The farm folk of Ireland had never been prosperous; and now they were forced to pawn and sell what they had in the futile hope of staving off eviction. For the fortunate few who could raise the equivalent of twenty dollars, America beckoned from across the sea.

Payment of the required sum to the conniving and unscrupulous English ship captains, however, often meant an early death rather than a new life. The law required that food and water be provided for all passengers; but, as often as not, there was no food, and the water quickly turned bitter from the unclean casks in which it was stored. Disease ran rampant on the overcrowded vessels in which sanitation was non-existent and privacy impossible. It is estimated that thirty percent of those who embarked on the six weeks' journey to America never set foot on land again.

Patrick Kennedy of New Ross, Ireland, received the blessing of the parish priest, turned his back on his home, and boarded an emigrant ship for the voyage to Boston in October, 1848.¹ He was twenty-five and sufficiently strong and determined to survive the Atlantic crossing. When he landed on Noodle's Island in East Boston, however, he found that the battle for survival had only just begun.

Young Pat found work as a cooper in East Boston. He married Bridget Murphy, and the couple lived in an overcrowded Irish tenement. Irishmen were the proletariat in Yankee Massachusetts and were expected to work more than one hundred hours per week--fifteen hours per day with no Sabbath rest.² The men worked on the waterfront, in construction gangs, or in the factories of the developing New England economy. Starvation wages paid by the Protestant Yankees meant starvation diets and disease-ridden slums. The toll in human life and misery was staggering. In 1857 a son, Patrick Joseph, was born to Pat and Bridget Kennedy. A year later, at the age of thirty-five, Pat Kennedy was dead of cholera.³

The younger Kennedy was determined to escape the usual cycle of Irish life in East Boston that had made his father's life one of impoverished drudgery. His meager education came from the local Roman Catholic school taught by the sisters of Notre Dame. He became a cooper as his father had been and began saving a portion of his earnings each payday.

¹Richard J. Whalen, The Founding Father: The Story of Joseph P. Kennedy (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 7.

²James MacGregor Burns, John Kennedy: A Political Profile (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960), p. 6.

³Whalen, p. 13.

When he had saved enough money, he bought a saloon. By shrewdly investing his profits, Kennedy soon became a part owner of a whiskey distributorship and two other taverns.

The saloon was the center of social life for the hard-drinking Irish laborers. By dispensing welfare in the form of small quantities of food, drink, coal, or even money, Patrick was able to build up a loyal following of considerable proportions. In 1886, at the age of twenty-eight, Kennedy traded good will for votes and was easily elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Six years later, he was elected to a seat in the Massachusetts Senate. More importantly, however, the saloonkeeper became a member of the Board of Strategy, a power group that determined the course of politics in the city of Boston. A fellow member of the Board was a rising young politician from the North End named John F. Fitzgerald.¹

The Kennedys had come a long, long way in just two generations. It was left to Patrick's son, however, to lead the family out of the confines of Irish-Boston society. Joseph Patrick Kennedy was born in 1888 and spent a boyhood that was probably typical of that of other lads in upward bound Irish families. He was atypical, however, in that his father sent him to the prestigious and overwhelmingly Protestant Boston Latin School. Here, Joseph Kennedy studied in the halls that once knew Cotton Mather, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sumner, and George Santayana.²

¹Whalen, pp. 16-17.

²Ibid., p. 22.

After Joe's graduation from Boston Latin, the Kennedys violated a strong local taboo by sending their son to Protestant Harvard. Boston College and Holy Cross were founded by the Jesuits so that promising Catholic young men could have the advantages of higher education as William Cardinal O'Connell disapproved of secular schooling for members of his see.

In view of the commercial success of Joseph P. Kennedy, it would be difficult to fault the educational direction provided by his parents. Kennedy's own feeling was that training in non-parochial Protestant schools helped prepare Catholics to compete in Protestant American society.

The saloonkeeper's son (Joseph P. Kennedy) in the course of time married the mayor's daughter (Rose Fitzgerald). In the first years of their marriage, they lived in a large house in middle-class Brookline on the edge of Boston. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. was born in 1915, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1917. In all, another two sons and five daughters were born into the Kennedy home between 1920 and 1932.

The children received their earliest religious instruction from their mother. Rose Kennedy recalls:

On pleasant days I took the children for walks. I wheeled one in a baby carriage and two or three others toddled along with me. I made it a point each day to take them into church for a visit. I wanted them to form a habit of making God and religion a part of their daily lives, not something to be reserved for Sundays.¹

As the Kennedy boys became old enough to begin school, their father's influence was evidenced as they were enrolled in the nearby Dexter

¹Ibid., p. 57.

Academy. Here, in Protestant Brookline, Joe and Jack Kennedy were probably the only Catholics in the school.¹

In later years, Rose Kennedy was a daily communicant at mass at St. Francis Xavier Church in Hyannis on Cape Cod. She drilled her children in their catechism lessons and taught them the meaning of the vestments worn by the priests and the liturgy of the mass.² As her sons became adolescents, Mrs. Kennedy wanted them to be educated by the Church. "Their mother insisted that the girls go to Catholic schools," said Joseph P. Kennedy. "I had other ideas for the boys' schooling. There is nothing wrong with Catholic schools. They're fine. But I figured the boys could get all the religion they needed in church, and that it would be broadening for them to attend Protestant schools."³

John did spend his thirteenth year at Canterbury, a school operated by thirteen Catholic laymen in New Milford, Connecticut. In the spring he was struck by acute appendicitis and left school before the year was over. He did not return to Canterbury but transferred to Choate, where Joe was already enrolled. From Choate, Jack Kennedy matriculated at Princeton; but, after withdrawing because of illness, he followed his brother to their father's alma mater, Harvard.

The biographer of Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. says that the elder Kennedy "was doubly an outsider at Harvard, by choice and by circumstance."⁴ He was an outsider by choice when he entered the Yard and violated the

¹Ibid.

²Leo Damore, The Cape Cod Years of JFK (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 23.

³Whalen, p. 165.

⁴Ibid., p. 25.

Boston Irish taboo against a Harvard education. He was an outsider by circumstance as there were not many Catholics enrolled at Cambridge and the ward boss' son would be subtly but frequently reminded "that he was an intruder in a place to which others were born."¹

A generation later, the future President encountered little, if any, religious intolerance while attending Protestant prep school and Harvard University. John Kennedy said:

My roommate at Harvard was a Catholic, but I had some friends who were not. I don't think my experience was comparable to the usual one, such as someone growing up and going to school as an Irish Catholic in Boston, where social barriers between racial groups--between Irish and Italian, or so-called Yankee and Irish are extremely sharp. I had gone to private school, I came from New York instead of Boston, my father had some money, and was well known. I may have had a little feeling of a barrier but not acute.²

In describing the religious posture of John F. Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., compared him with two fellow Senators: Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut and Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota. Dodd and McCarthy, suggested Schlesinger, represent the two directions of Roman Catholic intellectualism in American politics. Senator Dodd frequents the circuit of Communion breakfasts, Holy Name societies, and chapters of the Knights of Columbus. The historian describes McCarthy as one who seeks "to rescue Catholic doctrine from fundamentalism and demonstrate its relevance to the modern world."³ Kennedy, who seemed to have little

¹Ibid.

²Burns, p. 238.

³Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 107.

time for Catholic organizations and whose "religion was humane rather than doctrinal,"¹ fit into neither camp.

He was not an overtly religious man: That is, he made little outward show of his religious convictions. Theodore Sorensen records, however, that Kennedy was unhappy when a biographer depicted him as being "not deeply religious." He regularly attended mass even at times when the public could not possibly be aware of whether he worshipped or not.² In fact, Time magazine wrote in mid-1960 that "Kennedy is one of the few candidates ever to turn down the requests of photographers for pictures of himself in church."³

If Kennedy made little pretense of piety in public, neither did he make a habit of discussing his beliefs in private. "Not once in eleven years -- despite all our discussions of church-state affairs -- did he ever disclose his personal views on man's relation to God," offers Sorensen.⁴ Other men who were close to the President disclose similar views of his beliefs.

Paul B. Fay, a former shipmate and later Under Secretary of the Navy as well as a Roman Catholic himself, wrote that Kennedy's view of his faith was not unlike that of other Catholics of his generation: "Life was full and demanding and the need for religion generally seemed remote. But the basic faith acquired as a child in a Catholic family

¹Ibid.

²During the war when Lt. Kennedy was in the South Pacific and thousands of miles from his devout family, he went to Catholic services whenever possible. Robert J. Donovan, PT 109 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 66.

³"The Campaign," Time, July 11, 1960, p. 23.

⁴Sorensen, p. 19.

instilled in him a total allegiance to his faith that only real faith brings."¹ Schlesinger chose to make a comparison suggesting that Kennedy was "a Catholic as Roosevelt was an Episcopalian--because he was born into the faith, lived in it, and expected to die in it."²

Despite his loyalty to the Church, Kennedy could at times sufficiently detach himself from it to offer caustic comments about its leaders. Unlike those who expressed fear of clerical influence, he remained unawed by the power of the hierarchy. "Naturally most of the clergy are extreme conservatives," he remarked to Theodore Sorensen. "They are accustomed to everyone bowing down to them, to associating with the wealthiest men in the community. They like things as they are--they aren't going to be reformers."³ During the 1960 election campaign when word came from the Vatican hinting that the Church questioned his views of church and state, Kennedy quipped, "Now I know why Henry VIII set up his own church."⁴

The Roman Catholic faith of John F. Kennedy was but one facet of his total personality. If he was, as John Cogley said, "the first President who was a Catholic rather than the first Catholic President,"⁵ then he was as he described himself at Houston: "*not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens to be a Catholic.*"

¹Paul B. Fay, The Pleasure of His Company (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 240-41.

²Schlesinger, p. 107.

³Sorensen, p. 112.

⁴Schlesinger, p. 107.

⁵Ibid.

Richard Cardinal Cushing, friend and confidante of the Kennedy family and the officiator at the requiem mass for the President on November 25, 1963, has written:

President Kennedy wore his religion like his patriotism, lightly, and, again like his patriotism, he felt his religion profoundly.

.
I was close to John Kennedy at those moments of his life which were most meaningful - his marriage, the family christenings, the death of his infant children. I can testify that he was a man of strong religious commitments, that his grace of style, his boundless courage, his patient suffering, his self assurance, and the warmth of his affection - all these were firmly rooted in a faith that was anchored beyond this world, truly in God himself.¹

If John F. Kennedy chided his audience for their preoccupation with religion when the nation faced far greater issues, he also praised them for their restraint in their consideration of the Roman Catholic question. Others, said the candidate, who were "less responsible" than the Houston clergy, had deliberately obscured "the real issues." The Houston ministers, Kennedy seemed to be saying, were guilty of over-emphasizing his religion at the expense of other more important questions. They were not guilty of throwing up an ecclesiastical smokescreen in order purposely to becloud the issues of the campaign. And, to the Ministerial Association's credit, they had invited him to discuss his faith in open forum which is far more than the great majority of his critics had done.

Early in the election campaign the Fair Campaign Practices Committee predicted that there was "a substantial danger that the campaign in 1960

¹T. S. Settel, The Faith of JFK, in the Introduction by Richard Cardinal Cushing (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1965), pp. 5, 6.

will be dirtier on the religious issue than it was in 1928."¹ There is some difficulty, however, in determining the exact proportions of the attack on Senator Kennedy's church affiliation. We have in our nation today, as we have had in all of our history, those who take it upon themselves to attack minority groups, be they ethnic, religious, social, political, or fraternal. Many of the polemicists, for example, did not mention the election, the Democratic Party, or John Kennedy but concentrated their literary guns on the Roman Catholic Church or the overall topic of church-state relations. Thus, certain critical sermons or leaflets, even though anti-Catholic in nature, might be difficult to pigeon-hole as scurrilous campaign literature because of the omission of specific mention of the election or the election principals.

Politicians, church leaders, and the Justice Department in 1960 identified some 144 producers of anti-Catholic propaganda.² This number includes individuals, printing houses, and established organizations.

Individual polemicists, by and large, represented the least responsible element in the anti-Catholic camp of 1960. A reading of their works reveals charges that are more extreme and buttressed by less support than those which emanated from churches, organizations, and publishers.

Mrs. F. M. Standish, a diminutive octogenarian widow in San Francisco, wrote a lengthy letter beginning with the ominous words, "Now is the time for all 100 percent Americans to begin planning ways and means to preserve our liberties and safety."³ The goal of the Vatican

¹"The Campaign," Time, Sept. 5, 1960, p. 10.

²New York Times, Oct. 16, 1960, p. 56.

³Mrs. F. M. Standish, Open letter (lithographed), distributed by "The Church Speaks," Portland, Oregon, October, 1958.

the first paragraph continued, is to "make America Catholic." Then, with the gold reserves of Fort Knox and the missile stockpile of the American military, the Pope could wage war on all non-Catholic populations in the world.

Roman Catholics serving in the military as well as those who have been discharged are a potential papal militia waiting only for the word of a Catholic Commander-in-Chief to send them into action. "The secret organizations of the Catholic Church are now getting ready for this just as fast as they can. The Catholic women and girls will support their men to the last detail and will be given their assignments."

Mrs. Standish supports her thesis with an anti-Catholic "ramp" through American history. Roman Catholics killed Presidents Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley, and attempted to shoot both Roosevelt and Truman. She interprets the deaths of Wilson, Harding, Franklin Roosevelt, and Wendell Wilkie as being extremely mysterious and hints broadly that a Catholic conspiracy was involved in the demises of all four men.

Concerning the dissemination of her letter in 1960, the authoress said:

People send me orders, and send me lists, and send me money. I don't know who they are, or who is reprinting my letter, but I say it's not copyrighted, and anyone can take it and send it out.

.....

I opened up one day last week, and there were some boxes of envelopes, right on my doorstep. Somebody just left them and went away. They must think I'm doing a good job.¹

¹New York Times, Oct. 17, 1960, p. 24.

The Rev. J. Harold Smith, a Dallas, Texas, Baptist radio preacher, followed one of Mrs. Standish's arguments in his allegation that if a Roman Catholic were ever elected Vice President, the President would never live out his term. Preaching a sermon entitled "Big John and Little John" (XXIII and Kennedy, respectively), Smith spoke of the coming Republican Convention and expressed the hope that Richard Nixon would be nominated to oppose the already nominated Kennedy. "If a Vice President is chosen who is a Roman Catholic," he intoned, "I predict Mr. Nixon's assassination before his term expires."¹ After giving testimony to his own freedom from bigotry against Catholics (as well as a lack of prejudice toward Negroes and Jews), Smith beseeches his readers to pray that a Roman Catholic never be elected Chief Executive. "This prayer," he assures, "may be prayed completely without prejudice and without RANCOR!"² The preacher then incredulously concludes: "By the way, Mr. Nixon is NOT a Baptist--so you see there is no bigotry in my recommendation."³

The spurious Knights of Columbus Oath, dating from the era of the Know Nothings in the 1850's, was resurrected and anonymously distributed by several individuals. The version most widely circulated was taken from the Congressional Record for the 62nd Congress, Third Session, February 13, 1913, page 3216. On that occasion, the Oath was entered into the Record as an exhibit of religious smear in the 1912 Congressional

¹J. Harold Smith, "Big John and Little John," sermon reprinted in Your Good Neighbor, n.d., p. 4.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

election for the Seventh Congressional District of Pennsylvania. The individuals disseminating the fabrication cited this source to lend an impression of authenticity; but, of course, they very carefully omitted the circumstances under which the piece was entered in the Congressional Record.¹

The document itself is inflammatory and morbid beyond reasonable belief. One paragraph states: "I do now denounce and disown any allegiance as due to any heretical king, prince, or state, named Protestant or Liberals, or obedience to any of their laws, magistrates, or officers." A later "gory" section proclaims:

I do further promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly and openly, against all heretics, Protestants, and Masons, as I am directed to do, to extirpate them from the face of the whole earth, and that I will spare neither age, sex or condition, and that I will hang, burn, waste, boil, flay, strangle, and bury alive these infamous heretics; rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women, and crush their infants' heads against walls in order to annihilate their execrable race. That when the same cannot be done openly, I will secretly use the leaden bullet, regardless of the honor, rank, dignity, or authority of the persons, whatever may be their condition in life, either public or private, as I at any time may be directed so to do by any Agents of the Pope or Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Father of the Society of Jesus.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch commented on the oath as follows:

We say again what we said on July 29, 1928:

It is difficult to conceive of persons so credulous as to be influenced by such palpably fake and malignant material. But the surreptitious circulation of it shows

¹"Statement Concerning the Fraudulent Character of the Alleged Knights of Columbus Oath," Library of Congress (bulletin), Form Reply BX 801-A.

the length to which religious and partisan bigotry will go in attempting to play upon ignorance and credulity for their own purposes.¹

According to the Fair Campaign Practices Committee (F.C.P.C.), at least thirty different versions of the Knights of Columbus oath found their way into circulation in 1960. Only three of these versions carried the identity of the disseminator.² Members of the Catholic fraternal order, needless to say, took a dim view of being accused of espousing arson, treason, murder, and torture and took legal action against those who spread copies. A Baptist minister in Greensboro, North Carolina, made a hasty apology when threatened with libel proceedings.³ The pastor had distributed 500 copies of the oath as inserts in bulletins at Sunday services. Legal action was actually taken against a Pennsylvania preacher who quoted the libelous fraud and refused to retract or apologize when confronted with proof of the spurious origin of the oath.⁴ It was, no doubt, the fear of court action that resulted in the oath's being printed, in the great majority of cases, without identification.

The American Religious Educational Society of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, is a fundamentalistic proselytizing group headed by the Rev. Joseph

¹"No Religious Test," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sept. 8, 1960.

²"The State-by-State Study of Smear: 1960," Report, Fair Campaign Practices Committee. Charles P. Taft, chairman (New York: Fair Campaign Practices Committee, Inc., 1962), p. 11.

³Democratic National Committee, Statement (Washington, D. C.: Democratic National Committee, 1960), p. 2.

⁴National Conference of Christians and Jews, Southwestern Division, Educating for Brotherhood (Dallas, Texas: National Conference of Christians and Jews, Inc., 1960), p. 1.

Zachello, an Italian-born converted priest. The Society publishes numerous pamphlets and a magazine called The Convert with the basic aim of evangelizing Catholics.

In 1960, the publishers of The Convert made extensive efforts to influence votes as well as souls. Articles from the organization's magazine such as "A Vatican Dynasty in Washington" and "A Roman Catholic America . . . Then What?" were reprinted and widely circulated. The arguments in these articles as well as in the glossy six-by-seven inch tracts disseminated over Zachello's signature fit John F. Kennedy's description of quotations torn from context, "*usually in other countries, frequently in other centuries.*" The author of "A Roman Catholic America . . . Then What?" quoted extensively from Popes Pius IX and Leo XIII regarding the papacy and individual liberty,¹ while the piece on the Vatican dynasty argued, rather curiously, that the worse the Catholic, the greater the risk. "A Catholic President, even a bad Catholic," it was reasoned, "is bound to follow the Vatican directives, and the worse Catholic he may be, he will feel more constrained to please Rome in order to atone for his un-Catholic life."² The article concluded with an appeal for Paul Revere to travel the countryside crying, "The Romans are coming! The Romans are coming!"³ Other Zachello efforts included titles such as "To Kill Protestants" (illustrated with a

¹Luther W. Stevens, A Roman Catholic America . . . Then What? (n.p., by the publishers of The Convert, n.d.) Reprint.

²John J. Arrien, A Vatican Dynasty in Washington, (n.p., by the publishers of The Convert, n.d.), p. 3. Reprint.

³Ibid., p. 4.

figure being burned at the stake), "The Pope for President" (based largely on the Poling incident and a Papal encyclical from 1885), and "Protestants in a Spiritual Stupor" (which attributes Catholic power to Protestants' indifference).

Perhaps the most prolific printer of anti-Catholic material in 1960 was the Osterhus Publishing Company of Minneapolis, which printed some 1352 tracts of which seventy-five were concerned with Roman Catholicism. The most published and polemical Osterhus effort was the spurious "Lincoln's Warning," which, according to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, is a vintage fraud.¹ The tract quoted the Great Emancipator as saying:

I am for liberty of conscience in its noblest, broadest highest sense. But I cannot give liberty of conscience to the Pope or his followers, the papists, so long as they tell me, that their conscience orders them to burn my wife, strangle my children, and cut my throat when they find the opportunity.

If the American people could learn what I know of the fierce hatred of the generality of the priests of Rome against our institutions, our schools, our so dearly bought liberties, they would drive them away, tomorrow, from among us, or would shoot them as TRAITORS."²

A footnote was included to remind the reader that Lincoln was assassinated by Roman Catholics.

Cyrus Osterhus, the director of the company bearing his name, offered a most improbable explanation of his own role as a political

¹N. C. C. J., "Educating for Brotherhood," p. 1.

²Lincoln's Warning (Minneapolis: Osterhus Publishing House, n.d.), p. 1.

propagandist. "I'm a businessman," he said. "I'm an innocent victim of the situation. I'm not political at all."¹

Osterhus published most of his polemics on newsprint that was, suitably, yellow in color. One effort "proved" Catholic aspirations for America by reproducing a letter written by a Rochester, New York, priest in 1937. The alleged horrors of the nunnery were luridly chronicled under the title, "Convent Brutality." Still another sheet exposed "The Enemy Within Our Borders." The enemy was, of course, the Roman Catholic Church.

"Innocent" Cyrus Osterhus was, as he said, a businessman. By his own word, his output of tracts increased from 25,000,000 in 1959 to 35,000,000 in 1960. "And the Roman Catholic category has increased the most," he admitted. At prices of thirty-five to eighty-five cents for every one hundred copies, the increase of 10,000,000 tracts in a single year would mean a great deal of additional revenue for Osterhus Publishing.

It is, of course, impossible to assess the entire production of the literary polemicists. The figures that are available, however, indicate that the output was staggering. The Fair Campaign Practices Committee counted 392 separate "pieces of unfair anti-Catholic political literature, eighty of them anonymous." An additional ninety-five items of non-political orientation but also anti-Catholic were noted.²

¹New York Times, Oct. 17, 1960, p. 24.

²F. C. P. C., p. 8.

A report on expenditures in the 1960 campaign attempted to place a dollar value on the efforts of the hate-printers. Estimating a total output of 15,000,000 pieces (probably very low) and setting handling and mailing costs at five cents per item, the Citizens' Research Foundation at Princeton concluded that at least \$750,000 were poured into the effort. A total of just eleven of the tracts, it was noted, enjoyed an overall circulation of more than five million.¹

Nat Belth, the public relations director of the Anti-Defamation league of the B'nai B'rith, concluded that for the publishers who lurk on the fringe of American Protestantism the religious issue of 1960 was the end of the rainbow. "They go along scraping for years," said Belth, "and they suddenly become flush. What happens is that some 'respectable' citizens provide funds for them to do a particular job. Suddenly a publisher who has been putting out thousands of these things puts out a million of them."²

Belth also commented that "the haters' appeal is probably the least effective politically since it is aimed at other extremists."³

Indeed, observers of the 1960 Presidential Campaign believed that the most effective material relating to the issue of Kennedy's Catholicism came from organizations playing on the theme of church and state. Foremost among these groups, according to a mid-campaign New York Times study, were the National Association of Evangelicals (N.A.E.),

¹Herbert E. Alexander, Financing the 1960 Election (Princeton, N.J.: Citizens Research Foundation, n.d.), p. 39.

²New York Times, Oct. 17, 1960, p. 24.

³Ibid.

Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (P.O.A.U.), and members of the Southern Baptist Convention. "By their own testimony," wrote the Times, "all these groups are cooperating closely. They direct their arguments at uncommitted or vacillating Protestants, inside the churches and out, who have vague worries about the 'Catholic question.'"¹ The abortive Citizens for Religious Freedom was, in fact, an off-shoot of both the N.A.E., and the P.O.A.U.

George L. Ford, executive director of the theologically conservatives N.A.E., authored a pamphlet entitled, "A Roman Catholic President: How Free from Church Control?" Circulated originally as an article in a N.A.E. sponsored magazine called United Evangelical Action with headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois, the leaflet contained quotations from papal decrees, Catholic journals, the testimony of various clerics, and a recitation of the ever-popular Poling incident. Ford concluded rhetorically: "The big question is: Would Mr. Kennedy or any other Catholic president do what he says he will do or would he yield to the pressure of the hierarchy in Rome when the chips are down?" The question was answered dogmatically: "There is strong indication that no Catholic president would be as free as Mr. Kennedy claims he would be."²

There is, in Ford's work, a complete absence of inflammatory, emotional material. It is, in fact, quite dull. Although one might quarrel with the significance and relevance of much of the data Ford

¹Ibid.

²George L. Ford, "A Roman Catholic President: How Free from Church Control?" Reprinted from United Evangelical Action, n.d.

offers as support for his thesis, his effort could hardly be classified as vile or irresponsible.

Similarly low-key in its pronouncements was the P.O.A.U., a Washington-based body embracing both liberal and conservative Protestants. The group published numerous flyers in 1960, many of which were reprints of articles appearing in Church and State, the P.O.A.U.'s monthly paper. Issues of greatest concern to the association were public and parochial education, censorship, official representation at the Vatican, the dissemination of birth control through foreign aid, and clerical pressure on Roman Catholic public officials.

In mid-1960, Church and State quoted Kennedy speech writer Theodore Sorensen in defense of those who raise religious questions:

The issues of public education, an ambassador to the Vatican, our relations with such nations as Spain, or Colombia, our own religious liberties and traditional separation of church and state, even the use of our foreign aid for birth control--these are legitimate questions because they involve public policy. No one would feel bigoted about raising them, and no candidate for public office should feel persecuted if he is asked them.

It is unfortunate that all of our potential Presidential nominees have not answered these legitimate questions on religion with equal candor.¹

The P.O.A.U., in its published materials, followed Sorensen's first paragraph to the letter. As a group, the P.O.A.U. were far less concerned with dogma than were other organizations. Their spokesmen, instead, raised questions relating to actual church-state issues. Much of the P.O.A.U. literature cites specific examples of special privileges given the Roman Catholic Church by local and municipal governments. A favorite

¹"The Religious Issue," Church and State, XIII (June, 1960), 1.

incident involved the sale of a parcel of land to the Catholic St. Louis University by the city of St. Louis at a deflated price. The presence of nuns in public schools in Ohio was another repeated theme. The abridgment of religious and civil freedoms in overwhelmingly Catholic nations was frequently mentioned as well. Except for an unsupported allegation by associate director C. Stanley Lowell that Congressman John C. McCormack of South Boston "has brought public funds of more than \$30,000,000 to the institutions of his church," the P.O.A.U. literature seems devoid of accusations against high-ranking Catholic officeholders. James MacGregor Burns, in observing this lack, commented:

In all the endless debate, there was no reference to the actual transgressions of Catholic governors and Senators—there could be none—except for mention of an Ohio official under Governor Mike DiSalle, a Catholic, who turned out to have been appointed by a previous governor who was a Protestant. To be sure, one can cite many dismal local examples of improper Catholic influence on or through Catholic councilmen, members of boards of education, and so on. But nobody seemed to face up to the fact that the higher and more responsible the office, the more Catholics in office have resisted Catholic pressures on them and in them. Lacking examples to support their suspicions of a Catholic President, the Protestant leaders had to resort to unhappy instances of anti-Protestant discrimination in foreign Catholic nations in order to produce a "parade of imaginary horrors" if a Catholic President were elected here.¹

If the P.O.A.U. was slavishly literal in its interpretation and application of Sorensen's first paragraph, it was slovenly prodigal in its failure to implement the second. The reader searches in vain through the P.O.A.U. 1960 publications for challenges to candidates other than Senator Kennedy and for religious questions addressed to bodies other

¹"The Religious Issue," The Progressive, XXIV (Nov., 1960), 22.

than the Roman Catholic Church. "We want all candidates of all faiths to answer all pertinent questions with equal candor," verbalized executive director Glenn L. Archer in a Boston address. But, unfortunately, even though Kennedy spoke out clearly on such matters as federal aid to parochial schools and an ambassador to the Vatican while Richard Nixon did not, the P.O.A.U. contented itself with a running cycle of questions addressed to the Catholic Church and the Catholic candidate.

W. A. Criswell is, perhaps, the most influential clergyman in the South. His parish, the first Baptist Church of Dallas, has some 12,000 members and may be the largest Protestant congregation in the world. Early in 1960 he preached a sermon opposing the election of a Roman Catholic to the Presidency. By October, more than 100,000 copies had been printed and distributed, largely through the N.A.E. Criswell, a segregationist and social conservative, bluntly defined the Catholic Church as a "political system that, like the octopus, covers the world and threatens our basic freedoms."¹

The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville was besieged by requests for an obscure pamphlet, "Baptists, Roman Catholics, and Religious Freedom." Letters asking for 300,000 copies reached the publishers by the end of August.²

In Waco, Texas, the Rev. Harold E. Lindsay of the First Baptist Church proclaimed from his pulpit, "It is a published fact that the Roman Catholic Church is 75 years ahead of its adopted schedule" in its

¹"Southern Baptists," Time, Oct. 17, 1960, p. 88.

²"Undecided," Time, Sept. 5, 1960.

efforts to take over the United States. Luther A. Smith, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council 33^O Masons, purchased copies of the sermon from Lindsay and mailed them to Masons in Virginia.¹ Smith himself had written an anti-Catholic article in the Masonic publication The New Age in February of 1960.

The foregoing accounts represent descriptions of only a very few purveyors of anti-Catholic propaganda in 1960. There were, obviously, many, many more. A recitation of the efforts of the Southern Baptists to bar a Roman Catholic from the White House, for example, would fill volumes. Perhaps the prominence of the polemicists' activity in 1960 can be evidenced by a page count in the report of the Fair Campaign Practices Committee. Five and one half pages are devoted to Part I: "The 1960 Campaign Exclusive of the 'Religious Issue'." Part II, "Religion and the Presidency, 1960," contains nine pages.¹

Three weeks before the election, two F.C.P.C. officials speculated on possible sources of financial backing for the disseminators of the numerous tracts, leaflets, and sermon reprints. "The amounts involved in paying for millions of copies of a wide variety of leaflets was so great," said chairman Charles P. Taft,² brother of Senator Robert A. Taft, "that they are clearly beyond the resources of the hate groups, or, in the case of slightly more 'respectable' material, beyond the

¹F.C.P.C.

²Taft, by strange coincidence, attended Dr. Poling's Four Chaplains Dinner as spokesman for the Protestant faith.

resources of organizations like churches and other non-profit corporations."¹ Taft warned such bodies that they were endangering their tax-exempt status by wandering into the political realm.

The executive director of the F.C.P.C., Bruce L. Felknor, also spoke of tax advantages in offering the opinion that wealthy, conservative laymen were bankrolling the church and religious groups who were turning out the bigoted material. By supporting such enterprises the businessmen could maintain anonymity and, at the same time, deduct all contributions from their income taxes.² The Citizens' Research Foundation reported:

Money spent for such literature is usually spent outside normal political channels, and may, in fact, be tax-deductible if given to church or other groups active in this area of the campaign. The so-called religious issue can be raised for either religious or political purposes. If for the former, the political campaign is being used as an instrument by which religious bias can be expressed. If for the latter, the religious issue can be used by political rivals, as was the case in 1960, or as often seemed to be the case, by economic conservatives who were willing to exploit³ religion as a means to expose a liberal candidate.

The great expenditures involved in the anti-Catholic crusade are exemplified by the admission of Cowboy Evangelist Springer, who confessed to spending \$55,000 on printing and \$10,000 on postage in one three week period in sending out his pamphlet "Kennedy Cannot Win: the Roman Octopus." The cover of this leaflet was graced by a cartoon bearing a representation of the globe with an octopus sitting on the

¹New York Times, Oct. 16, 1960, p. 56.

²Ibid.

³Alexander, p. 39.

Italian peninsula and spreading its tentacles across the Atlantic to the United States. When the Democratic National Committee identified Springer as one of the "four major anti-Catholic extremists operating in the current political campaign,"¹ he had the temerity to demand formal apologies from Senator Kennedy and Committee Chairman Senator Henry M. Jackson.² No apologies were given.

The New York Times study of the religious issue in mid-campaign 1960 and the exhaustive analysis of the F.C.P.C. failed to disclose any Republican complicity in the efforts of those who made attacks against the Catholic Church or the Catholic candidate. Richard Nixon's directive concerning the matter seems to have been rigidly adhered to. The Republican candidate had ordered:

There should be no discussion of the religious issue in any literature prepared by any volunteer group or party organization supporting the Vice President, and no literature of this kind from any source should be made available at campaign headquarters or otherwise distributed.³

This, then, was the state of the religious issue in September of 1960: An admixture of hate-mongers, evangelicals, Masons, fundamentalists, anonymous millionaires, and, in the case of the P. O. A. U., religious liberals. Thomas O'Neill, writing the day before Kennedy stood before the clerics and cameras in Houston described the scene:

At this stage the religious question is undisputably the No. 1 topic of public interest in the election,

¹Democratic National Committee, p. 2.

²Washington Evening Star, Oct. 17, 1960.

³New York Times, Oct. 16, 1960, p. 56.

fanned from thousands of pulpits, by promoters who are cashing in on tracts spreading fear of a Vatican-dominated White House and by ultra-conservative quarters who regard a fake issue as good as any other if it serves to stall the strongly liberal direction¹ charted by the Democratic convention at Los Angeles.

"The real issues in this campaign have been obscured--perhaps deliberately in some quarters less responsible than this," said the Democratic standard bearer. The Senator was right on both counts--the issues had been obscured; and, indeed, much of the obscurantism had been deliberate.

¹Baltimore Sun, Sept. 11, 1960.

CHAPTER III

I BELIEVE IN AN AMERICA

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute - where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be a Catholic) how to act and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote - where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference - and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish - where no public official either accepts or requests instructions on public policy from the pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source - where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials - and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew - or a Quaker - or a Unitarian - or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of

Baptist preachers, for example, that led to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today, I may be the victim - but tomorrow it may be you - until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart at a time of great national peril.

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end - where all men and all churches are treated as equal - where every man has the same right to attend or not to attend the church of his choice - where there is no Catholic vote, no antiCatholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind - and where Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, both the lay and the pastoral level, will refrain from those attitudes of disdain and division which have so often marred their works in the past, and promote instead the American ideal of brotherhood.

Following the introductory material of the address in which Mr. Kennedy made his opening remarks, cited the major questions of the campaign, and alluded to the religious issue, the candidate began the body of the speech with a four-paragraph statement tracing his views of the relationship of church and state in America. In this section, Kennedy touched on the themes of clerical pressure, ecclesiastical liberty, and religious bloc voting.

Senator Kennedy, throughout the Houston address, coupled mention of the Catholic Church with the Protestant tradition. Thus, when he stated the ideal of no Catholic clerics exerting pressure on a co-religionist Chief Executive, he stated his belief, at the same time in a

country where "no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote." Kennedy thus combined a hypothetical criticism of his own church with a very real criticism of many Protestants.

As previously mentioned, critics of the Democratic nominee and his Church cited, for the most part, examples of evils in local government to lend support to arguments that the Catholic hierarchy influences public servants. Opponents were hard put to find any such incidents in Kennedy's own record as a Congressman and Senator. The Poling incident was often employed, but this related to a banquet and not a Congressional vote or governmental function. Early in the campaign, a Masonic writer, Dr. Willard Givens, director of education for the Supreme Scottish Rite Masons, Southern Jurisdiction, pronounced that he knew of a case in which Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston had ordered Representative Kennedy to change his vote from affirmative to negative on a Federal aid to education bill. The supposed incident enjoyed a rather modest notoriety, perhaps due to Givens' vagueness in relating that it all occurred "about ten years ago."¹ Cardinal Cushing called attention to the charge by flatly refuting it in an address to the National Council of Catholic Women. After seeing the allegation in a Dallas newspaper editorial, the Archbishop of Boston rebutted: "In that editorial I am specifically named as the man who on one occasion obliged Senator Kennedy to change his vote in a matter of a bill pertaining to federal aid to education. That charge is a colossal lie."² A spokesman for Kennedy echoed the Cardinal's denial, saying, "No such incident ever took place."³

¹New York Times, Nov. 2, 1960, p. 27.

²New York Journal American, Nov. 1, 1960, p. 3.

³New York Times, Nov. 2, 1960, p. 27.

Cardinal Cushing, in concluding his remarks, took issue with the very thought of the hierarchy's influencing the holders of public office. "I don't know where people get the idea that the Holy See is a political power," he said, "and that the Bishops are instruments for the realization of success in the realm of political power."¹ The Senator himself seemed concerned about how he should answer questions concerning the Papacy. Kennedy related how he "asked Cardinal Spellman what I should say when people ask me whether I believe the Pope is infallible, and the Cardinal replied, 'I don't know, Senator - all I know is he keeps calling me Spillman.'"²

In his mention of possible Presidential appointees not being chosen with regard to religion, Kennedy touched on what had been a prominent emotional issue in Al Smith's run for the White House thirty-two years before. Even as Smith was preparing to journey to Oklahoma City to speak to the religious issue on September 20, 1928, the minister of the First Baptist Church in the Oklahoma capital, Dr. Mordecai Ham, announced that he held a list of twenty-three Roman Catholic judges in New York State who were appointees of Governor Smith. When the local Democratic organization put up \$10,000 and dared the minister to disclose the names, the Rev. Mr. Ham published his list in the Oklahoma News.³

¹ New York Journal American, Nov. 1, 1960, p. 3.

² Sorensen, p. 113.

³ Oklahoma News, Sept. 12, 1928, p. 9, cited by Elton H. Wallace, "Alfred E. Smith, the Religious Issue: Oklahoma City, September 20, 1928" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1965), p. 203.

New York Secretary of State Robert Moses then compiled data on the Governor's appointments so that Smith could refute Ham's charges in his Oklahoma City appearance. Each appointee was classified according to party and religion. The survey of 177 office holders designated by Governor Smith disclosed 131 Democrats, thirty-four Republicans, two independents, and ten with no indicated political preference. Religiously, the governor had appointed sixty-four Catholics, ninety Protestants, eleven Jews, and twelve with no indicated religious affiliation.¹

Kennedy, however, managed to escape questions relating to appointments, the reason being, presumably, the nature of his service. Al Smith was the Chief Executive of the nation's most populous state and was, therefore, responsible for filling many public offices. As a Senator, however, Kennedy's appointments were limited to his personal staff.

Senator Kennedy expressed a belief, as would almost every American, in a nation "*that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish.*" He again linked Catholic and Protestant in the same sentence in envisioning public servants who do not respond to pressure "*from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source.*" The view of church and state articulated by the candidate in Houston is quite similar to sentiments he expressed five months previously regarding an attack on the National Council of Churches in a

¹"Appointments by Governor Smith," Smith Papers, Albany (New York: Democratic National Committee, 1928), p. I, cited by Elton H. Wallace, pp. 204-05.

manual published by the Air Force. Kennedy aide James Wine was instrumental in having the material deleted from the manual.

The book in question was the Air Force Center Training Manual for Reserve Noncommissioned Officers which was prepared at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. The offending pages alleged that "Communists and Communist fellow travelers and sympathizers have successfully infiltrated into our churches." Further, the manual charged, thirty of the ninety-five translators of the National Council of Churches-sponsored Revised Standard Version of the Bible "have been affiliated with pro-Communist fronts, projects, and publications."¹

James Wine, acting in his capacity as general secretary of interpretation for the N.C.C., appealed to Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., for the removal of the attacks. Wine proved that the charges originated from right-wing sources and secured a formal apology from the Air Force and the assurance of an investigation into the precise origins of the material.² Rev. Billy James Hargis immediately jumped into print claiming the allegations were his,³ but Defense Department probes identified Homer H. Hyde, a civilian writer employed at Lackland as the author.⁴ According to the ultra-conservative Dan Smoot Report, Hyde gathered his information for his accusations from material published by the Circuit Riders and Hargis.⁵ Smoot, of

¹ New York Times, Feb. 18, 1960, p. 13.

² Murray S. Stedman, Jr., Religion and Politics in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), p. 115.

³ New York Times, Feb. 19, 1960, p. 8.

⁴ Ibid., Feb. 20, 1960, p. 10.

⁵ The Dan Smoot Report, Feb. 29, 1960, pp. 67-68.

course, lauded Hyde's literary efforts and offered "documentation" for his charges in the form of quotations from the Circuit Riders, Hargis, Edgar C. Bundy of the Church League of America, and Dr. Carl McIntire.

When the Rev. Mr. Harold Glen Brown, president of the Oregon Council of Churches, wired Senator Kennedy to protest the abusive treatment of the N.C.C. in the Air Force manual, Kennedy sent a return telegram that anticipated his words to the Houston clergy.

No church shall undertake to impose its views on public agencies; and no public agency should single out for attack any church organization. Under the First Amendment our government cannot-- directly or indirectly-- carelessly or intentionally-- select any religious body for either favorable or unfavorable treatment.

I do not say our government should be blind to the views of our churches and synagogues. On the contrary, they are responsible organizations entitled to have their views responsibly considered along with the views of others. The most unfortunate aspect of the Air Force Manual fiasco is that it plays into the hands of those who want to silence the views of the National Council-- because they do not share those views.¹

Perhaps more than any President since Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy was able to bring to his public utterances a sense of history. The historical allusions in the address to the Houston ministers display not only Kennedy's ability to view present conditions in the light of past occurrences, but also considerable skill in citing events that relate to his hearers. Thus, in buttressing his observation that the object of religious suspicion "*in other years has been, and may someday be again,-- a Jew-- or a Quaker --or a Unitarian-- or a Baptist,*" Kennedy appeals to Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute of Religious

¹Telegram, Senator John F. Kennedy to Rev. Mr. Harold Glen Brown, April 15, 1960, Democratic National Committee, Files.

Freedom. The candidate deftly noted that "*It was Virginia's harrassment of Baptist preachers*" that led to the enactment of the law.

The passage of the statute in Virginia in 1786 culminated a decade-long struggle to disestablish the Anglican Church that Jefferson indicated was the toughest battle of his life.¹ The statute declared "that legislative and ecclesiastical leaders are 'but fallible and uninspired men,'" and "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical." Section II of the Bill reads:

We, the General Assembly of Virginia, do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that shall be free to profess, and by agreement to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.²

Jefferson's effort, however, was far broader in its implications than the mere abolition of church taxes and the protection of Baptist preachers. As ratified, the measure allowed religious liberty outside the sphere of Christian belief. In his autobiography, Jefferson described an effort to limit the scope of the statute:

Where the preamble declares, that coercion is a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, an amendment was proposed, by inserting the word "Jesus

¹Samuel Eliot Morrison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: The Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 293.

²Thomas Jefferson, "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom," in The Jefferson Cyclopedia, ed. by John P. Foley (New York: Funk and Wagnallis Company, 1900), p. 976.

Christ," so that it should read, "a departure from the plan of Jesus Christ, the holy author of our religion;" the insertion was rejected by a great majority, in proof that they meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and ¹ Mahometan, the Hindoo, and Infidel of every denomination.

Upon receiving word in Paris in early 1786 that the Virginia Assembly had at last ratified the Statute of Religious Freedom, Jefferson enthusiastically distributed copies of his work to the French intelligentsia. European reaction to the new Virginia law was decidedly favorable.²

Senator Kennedy, therefore, in seeking to persuade his audience of the rightness of his case, made reference to a champion of church and state. The ramifications of the speaker's allusion would be readily apparent to those who heard: The harrassment of Baptist preachers two centuries before had been ended by the efforts of a prominent public servant. Now, in 1960, the harrassment of a prominent public servant could be ended by the efforts of Baptist preachers.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was nothing if he was not a Roman Catholic politician. Throughout his political career, from his first election to the House of Representatives in 1946 at the age of twenty-nine, until the solemn requiem mass that gripped the nation in 1963, Kennedy was known to his ever-expanding constituency as a communist in the Church of Rome.

¹Thomas Jefferson, Autobiography (New York: Capricorn Books, n.d.), pp. 58-59.

²Nathan Schachner, Thomas Jefferson (New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 310.

Politicians and observers of the political scene would argue in 1956 and 1960 as to whether Senator Kennedy's religion was an asset or a liability to a candidate for national office. To Joe Kennedy's son seeking the Democratic nomination for the House of Representatives from the Massachusetts Eleventh District, however, affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church was a political necessity.

The year 1946 was the year of "the last hurrah." James Michael Curley tired of the regimen of Congressional service in Washington, D. C. and longed for the rough-and-tumble wars of Boston politics. Curley's decision to forego re-election from the Eleventh District to seek the mayor's office in Boston brought filing papers from nine candidates for the Democratic primary. Among them was the boyish millionaire from Hyannis Port, who, amid charges of "carpetbagger," set up official residence in a Boston hotel.

The Eleventh District stood as a monument to gerrymandering. The district included East Boston, the North End, the West End, and stretched across the Charles River into Charlestown, Cambridge, and Somerville, and incorporating Irish, Italian, Polish, and Portuguese ethnic neighborhoods as well as the Harvard academic community. In religious preference, the constituency is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and candidates within the district invariably bear names indicating birth in one of the indigenous ethnic blocs. Despite the "outsider" label his opponents tried to hang on him, a gilt-edged Irish name, the blessing of grandfather John F. Fitzgerald, an infusion of family funds, and the campaign wizardry of brother Robert all combined to give John Kennedy an easy victory with forty-two percent of the vote in the nine-man race.

For Kennedy, still gaunt and yellow-complected from a bout with malaria contracted in the Navy, triumph in the Democratic primary was tantamount to election as the Massachusetts Eleventh District votes Republican just about as often as the College of Cardinals elects a Presbyterian pope. In November, after spending as much time relaxing in Hyannis Port as campaigning in Boston, Jack Kennedy defeated his sacrificial lamb Republican opponent by better than two to one.¹ In 1948, the young Congressman was returned to Washington without opposition in either the Democratic primary or the November election. Two years later he overwhelmed Republican Vincent J. Celeste by a margin of nearly five to one.² It would be more than a mild understatement to say that John F. Kennedy held a "safe" seat in the Congress.

Because he held a safe seat, Representative Kennedy could afford to return to Massachusetts on weekends and make appearances throughout the Commonwealth while spending little time among his constituents. Kennedy very carefully cultivated a political following that stretched from the Berkshires to Cape Ann. In 1952 the Irish Representative from the Eleventh District announced that he was giving up his safe seat in the House to campaign for an impregnable seat in the Senate--the seat occupied by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.

Lodge was so confident of victory that early in the election year he sent word to Ambassador Kennedy through a mutual friend: "Tell Joe not to waste his money on Jack because he can't win. I'm going to win

¹ Burns, p. 60.

² Ibid., p. 69.

by three hundred thousand votes."¹ The Senator's confidence turned to foolhardiness as he devoted the majority of his campaign efforts to stumping the nation for the shoo-in Eisenhower-Nixon ticket and ignoring his own race at home. By the time Massachusetts Republicans correctly assessed Kennedy's strength and called the Senator back to the Bay State to campaign, it was too late. On election day, while Eisenhower was sweeping Massachusetts by 208,000 votes and Democratic Governor Paul Dever was going down to defeat before Christian Herter, John F. Kennedy was victorious over Henry Cabot Lodge by 70,000 ballots.²

It is difficult to believe that Kennedy could have emerged victorious in 1952 had he been, as was Lodge, of Protestant Yankee stock. Ideologically, there was little to choose from between the two candidates. In addition, both men were urbane, articulate, well-educated, and born to wealth. Kennedy, however, was able to pick up sufficient majorities in the working class Catholic centers of Boston, Brockton, Lawrence, Haverhill, Lowell, and Fall River to offset Lodge's strength in Protestant areas. In Massachusetts, with its fifty percent Roman Catholic population, religion was not, of course, a campaign issue. Yet Kennedy's faith allowed him to attract enough support to topple an incumbent senator bearing the awesome name of Lodge.

It was defeated Governor Paul Dever who offered what was, perhaps, the most accurate assessment of the young Kennedy. "Jack," he said, "is the first Irish Brahmin."³

¹ Whelan, p. 417.

² Burns, p. 115.

³ Ibid. p. 103.

In Houston, Senator Kennedy spoke of an America "where there is no Catholic vote, no anti-Catholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind."

These words paralleled sentiments which the candidate had expressed on April 21, 1960, before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. On that occasion Kennedy said:

Nor am I appealing, as is too often claimed, to a so-called Catholic vote. Even if such a vote exists - which I doubt - I want to make one thing clear again: I want no votes solely on account of my religion."¹

The candidate's words disclaiming an interest in, or, indeed, the very existence of, a Catholic vote in the land raise some significant questions in the light of earlier Kennedy campaign activity. It may well be that the Senator and his aides had been reading Elmo Roper who, a year before the 1960 election, spoke of the Catholic vote as a "myth." After estimating that forty percent of the people question the advisability of a Catholic chief executive and twenty percent would express an unwillingness to vote for a Catholic, Roper asked rhetorically:

But how many would actually forsake the party of their choice to vote against a Catholic? One can only estimate - my own estimate is from 6 percent to 8 percent.

I think I can, however, dispel . . . the myth of a captive, precommitted Catholic vote. The nomination of a Catholic would not "sew up the Catholic vote." Catholic voters are just as free, just as unfettered, just as intelligent, and just as divided in their opinions as any other group."²

¹U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 1960, p. 90.

²Elmo Roper, "The Myth of the Catholic Vote," Saturday Review, XLII (October 31, 1959), 22.

That Kennedy based his statement on this article is doubtful, however, as Roper's was a minority voice. Commenting on a seeming wave of Roman Catholic political power in the 1940s and 1950s, Theodore White wrote: "This drift of Catholics away from Democratic leadership was all through the 1950s the chief concern of Democratic party leadership."¹

The sixty-five to seventy percent of the Catholic vote that Roosevelt had captured in the 1930s had begun to erode in the 1940s. Harry Truman had attracted them again in 1948; but Adlai Stevenson, according to Gallup, retained only fifty-six percent in 1952 and a bare majority, fifty-one percent, in 1956.²

As early as 1951, Samuel Lubell contemplated the future of the Roosevelt coalition of ethnic groups, Negroes, Southerners, poor whites, and Roman Catholics. "In the long run," mused Lubell, "the fate of the Roosevelt coalition is likely to hinge upon the outcome of this battle for racial and religious tolerance among its own elements."³ If the Democrats were to remain in power, the coalition had to be maintained in spite of these tensions; for, "If both the Southerners and Catholics bolt the Democratic ticket at the same time, a Republican victory is certain."⁴ Lubell was to be proved a prophet the next year as Dwight Eisenhower, in the first of his two landslides, took forty-four percent of the Roman

¹White, p. 287.

²Ibid.

³Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1951), p. 87.

⁴Ibid., p. 239.

Catholic vote along with the electoral votes of Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Tennessee, Missouri, and Virginia in the formerly "solid South."

In view of the Eisenhower elections, Samuel Lubell's assessment of a possible Catholic bid for the Presidency is anti-climatic: "If and when another Catholic bid for the White House comes, it could prove a make or break it test for the Democratic coalition."¹

John F. Kennedy's awareness of his religion as a political fact of life seemed to increase at the same rate as his ambition for national office. In the spring of 1956, rumor swept Illinois Democratic circles that Adlai Stevenson, the heavy favorite to head the party's ticket in November, would open the Vice Presidential nomination to the Convention. Sargent Shriver forwarded this piece of intelligence to his father-in-law in Hyannis Port. The elder Kennedy advised his son not to seek or accept the second spot. "I knew Adlai Stevenson was going to take a licking and I was afraid Jack might be blamed because he was a Catholic," Joseph Kennedy recalled later. "That would have made it much more difficult for another Catholic in years to come."² Eisenhower's retirement in 1960, the Ambassador reasoned, would produce a much brighter Democratic picture.

Kennedy's efforts in attempting to gain the Vice Presidential nomination in the Chicago Convention demonstrate that he not only acknowledged the existence of a Catholic vote, but that he also tried to

¹ Ibid., p. 234.

² Whalen, p. 443.

exploit its existence. Theodore Sorensen, the Senator's chief aide, had been collecting data on the political gains of a potential Catholic vote. On Kennedy's advice, Sorensen turned this material over to author Fletcher Knebel, who had amassed similar research data for a newspaper story. Knebel asked Sorensen to write up his material for an article to be published in Look magazine. The result, in Sorensen's words, "was a sixteen page memorandum of statistics, quotations, analysis, and argument summarizing Stevenson's need to recapture those strategically located Catholic voters who normally voted Democratic."¹

The document focused on fourteen states having Catholic populations ranging from twenty to sixty percent which may vote for either party in a national election (see Table 1). Thirteen of these states had voted for Roosevelt in 1940, twelve in 1944, eight for Truman in 1948, and, in 1952, none of these states went Democratic; all 261 of their electoral votes went to Eisenhower, thus making possible the first Republican victory in 24 years.²

The report considered Roman Catholicism and the Democratic defeat of 1928 under the heading, "How about Al Smith?" Charging that "the 'Al Smith' myth is one of the falsest myths in politics," the author argued that: a) the Republicans were invincible in 1928; b) Smith failed to carry only four states captured by Democrats in 1920 and 1924; c) the attitude of the nation toward Roman Catholic aspirants for

¹Sorensen, p. 82.

²"Catholic Vote," U.S. News & World Report, August 10, 1956, p. 41.

TABLE 1
14 KEY STATES AND CATHOLIC POPULATIONS¹

<u>States</u>	<u>% Catholic Voters</u>	<u>Electoral Votes</u>
New York. . . . .	.40. . . . .	.45
Pennsylvania. . . . .	.39. . . . .	.32
Illinois. . . . .	.34. . . . .	.27
New Jersey. . . . .	.47. . . . .	.16
Massachusetts . . . . .	.57. . . . .	.16
Connecticut . . . . .	.55. . . . .	.8
Rhode Island. . . . .	.65. . . . .	.4
California. . . . .	.27. . . . .	.32
Michigan. . . . .	.30. . . . .	.20
Minnesota . . . . .	.27. . . . .	.11
Ohio. . . . .	.25. . . . .	.25
Wisconsin . . . . .	.38. . . . .	.12
Maryland. . . . .	.31. . . . .	.9
Montana . . . . .	.26. . . . .	.4
	Total.	261

public office is far different in 1956 than it was in 1928; d)

religion was an asset, not a liability, as it allowed the Democrats to carry Massachusetts and Rhode Island for the first time in this century as well as to score impressive gains in almost every section of the country and especially in the nation's urban centers.² Stanley Lubell was quoted as saying, "The Republican hold on the cities was broken not by Roosevelt but by Al Smith."³

Without naming names, the obvious implication of Sorensen's findings was that a Roman Catholic Vice Presidential nominee would attract a large enough percentage of the 261 electoral tallies to give the

¹Text of an Analysis of the "Catholic Vote," U.S. News & World Report, (Aug. 10, 1956), p. 42.

²Ibid., pp. 44-45.

³Ibid., p. 45.

Democrats a fighting chance against Eisenhower in 1956. With this goal in mind, copies of the document were placed in the hands of key party leaders and newsmen.

As Sorensen's opus gained a wider circulation among convention delegates, John Kennedy became apprehensive about the possibility that his own top aide might be publicized as creating a religious controversy. According to Sorensen, he and Kennedy "arranged with Connecticut State Chairman John Bailey, a strong supporter, to assert responsibility for the memorandum. I kept Bailey supplied with copies. He kept me entertained with tales of gullible inquiries."¹

Among the gullible were U.S. News & World Report, which printed the entire document,² and Time magazine, which ran a summary.³ The press attributed the work to Kennedy supporters and dubbed it "The Bailey Memorandum." No one seemed to link the study to Kennedy's staff, much less to the Senator's top assistant.

Even while describing his work as "oversimplified, overgeneralized, and overextended,"⁴ Sorensen maintains that the document made a distinct political contribution.

The "Bailey Memorandum" made no pretense at being a comprehensive and objective study. It was a political answer to the sweeping assertions made against nominating a Catholic for Vice President. . . .

¹Sorensen, p. 82.

²U.S. News & World Report, August 10, 1956, pp. 41-46.

³Time, August 6, 1956, p. 17.

⁴Sorensen, p. 83.

The politicians who read the document were more concerned with probabilities than certainties - and, whatever the memorandum's faults, the widespread attention accorded its contents at least reopened the previously closed assumption that a Catholic on the ticket spelled defeat.¹

Four years later, on the day following Kennedy's address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, columnist James Reston considered the Bailey Memorandum as compared to 1960 Kennedy campaign oratory. Writing under the auspicious title, "How to Clear the Air and Muddy the Waters," Reston applauded the Senator's statements on not considering those who voted against him anti-Catholic bigots as well as his affirmation that the Democratic Convention did not necessarily face a Catholic walkout in August if he were denied the party's nomination.

Mr. Reston, in what was obviously the "muddying the water" portion of his column, very pointedly took issue with the Senator's doubt that a Catholic vote exists. The recently completed Wisconsin primary, in which Kennedy carried the ten counties with the greatest percentage of Roman Catholics while Hubert Humphrey swept the ten least Catholic counties, was cited as strong evidence of Catholic bloc voting. The Times writer then referred back to the unsuccessful Kennedy Vice Presidential effort:

In the Democratic convention of 1956 Kennedy's staff prepared and circulated with his consent a 3,000 word memorandum which purported to show not only that there was a "Catholic vote," but where it was located, how it could be organized, and why it would be decisive in winning the election for the Democratic party.²

¹Ibid.

²James Reston, New York Times, April 22, 1960, p. 30.

James Reston's April words in taking Kennedy to task for the gap between his practice and his preaching would hold true in September when the candidate clouded the water again. In Houston, however, the Bostonian was careful to qualify his statement on religious bloc voting so that his disclaimer of religious voting patterns was expressed as an ideal. Said Kennedy:

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end - where all men and all churches are treated as equal - where every man has the same right to attend or not attend the church of his choice - where there is no Catholic vote, no anti-Catholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind.

In the final analysis, the observer cannot help but note the discrepancies between the idealistic and the pragmatic Kennedy. The idealistic Kennedy disavowed support on religious grounds and equated the absence of bloc voting with freedom of religion. The pragmatic Kennedy, on the other hand, authorized the Bailey Memorandum and distributed filmed copies of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association appearance to television outlets in Northern, urban, Catholic centers.

In the final analysis, John F. Kennedy was a politician.

CHAPTER IV

I BELIEVE IN A PRESIDENT

That is the kind of America in which I believe. And it represents the kind of Presidency in which I believe - a great office that must be neither humbled by making it the instrument of any religious group, nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding it, its occupancy, from the members of any religious group. I believe in a President whose views on religion are his own private affair, neither imposed upon him by the nation or imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

I would not look with favor upon a President working to subvert the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty (nor would our system of checks and balances permit him to do so). And neither do I look with favor upon those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test - even by indirection - for if they disagree with that safeguard, they should be openly working to repeal it.

I want a Chief Executive whose public acts are responsible to all and obligated to none - who can attend any ceremony, service, or dinner his office may appropriately require him to fulfill - and whose fulfillment

of his Presidential office is not limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual, or obligation.

After presenting a description of "the kind of America" in which he believed, John F. Kennedy offered a parallel three paragraph section indicating "the kind of Presidency" in which he believed. The candidate, specifically, outlined his preference for a Presidency that is open to citizens of all faiths, that is consistent with the precepts of the Constitution, and that is free of encumbering influences.

As Kennedy read the paragraph beginning his statement on the Presidency, he committed what was, perhaps, the only noticeable reading error in the entire address. Where the written text of the speech¹ contained the words "nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding its occupancy from the members of any one religious group," the Senator said, "nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding it, its occupancy from the members of any religious group." Kennedy's redundant statement, "withholding it, its occupancy," is readily apparent as an incorrect recital of the prepared text.

The second departure from the text in that same sentence, the deletion of the word "one," is typical of the great majority of the twenty differences between the written and spoken records, ten of which involve the simple insertion or deletion of a single word. There were also eight omissions, additions, and substitutions involving

¹ Congressional Subcommittee of the Committee on Communications, The Speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy: Presidential Campaign of 1960. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, n.d.), pp. 206-18.

between two and five words. None of these eighteen discrepancies represents a change of meaning or emphasis from the written account.¹

Senator Kennedy's failure to depart from his prepared text represented a departure from his usual pattern of campaign speaking in which he would modify, revise, revamp, or discard his text as he stood before his audience. Theodore White depicts these early campaign speeches as the groping efforts of a man trying to find "the proper manner and posture of a man who seeks the Presidency."² The whistle-stop dash through California served as a trial run in which the campaigner constantly revised his basic speech after carefully noting those issues that aroused audience reaction and those that were heard with indifference. While White assesses the tour itself as a technical failure because of poor scheduling and advising, he concludes:

But all could be balanced and outweighed by the fact that the candidate had found his voice, had sensed a mood, had struck an attitude to the future and to the onward movement of America that would shape the rest of the campaign. He had come clear to himself and his audience. The sharpness of this single theme was to grow and grow, then communicate itself with the strength of simplicity.³

Time magazine also noted Kennedy's propensity for doing away with his scripts and described his "vote-appeals" as "unpredictable."

Often, when his political antennae sensed the mood of his listeners, he threw away his carefully prepared

¹The remaining two discrepancies occurred near the end of the address and will be considered in Chapter 6.

²White, p. 306.

³Ibid., p. 310.

texts (to the despair of such high-caliber, hard-working speech writers as Dick Goodwin, Ted Sorensen, and John Bartlow Martin) and launched into impromptu speeches with an eloquence and fervor that reminded middle-aged listeners of the young F.D.R., and touched off wild ovations.¹

Speechwriter Sorensen, however, writes of Kennedy's impromptu speaking without seeming despair or even embarrassment, nothing that the candidate did not "even follow his prepared text on the vast majority of occasions, deviating sometimes slightly with his own interjections and interpretations, more often substantially and sometimes completely."² Sorensen identifies his own role in the Democratic candidate's speech-making process as one who "drafted, revised, or reviewed every text."³

Just as Franklin Delano Roosevelt had his "brain trust" and relied on the speech writing talents of a multitude of advisors, so Kennedy made use of the suggestions and efforts of numerous staff members. But, just as Roosevelt had his Sherwood, and Rosenman⁴ as his most consulted and trusted speech chroniclers, so, too, Kennedy had his Sorensen. The relationship between writer and politician is usually a personal one that neither party wishes to discuss in any detail. Perhaps the best assessment of Kennedy-Sorensen teamwork is that by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.:

They had worked closely together for a decade, and on these matters their minds rolled in unison. I do not

¹"Democrats," Time, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 23.

²Sorensen, p. 177.

³Ibid., p. 184.

⁴John Gunther, Roosevelt in Retrospect (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 123.

know which of them originated the device of staccato phrases ('We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty') or the use of balanced sentences ('Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet or together we shall perish in its flames'); but by the time of the Presidency their styles had fused into one.¹

The address to be delivered to the Houston ministers, however, was not a simple campaign speech. The stakes were extremely high—perhaps the White House itself. Schlesinger comments that "When the occasion was serious, he would read the draft with intense care, scribble illegibly on the margin and then go over the result with the writer."² This description tallies with Sorensen's account of the preparation of the address in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles (see Chapter 1).

There would be, on September 12 in the Rice Hotel, no significant departure from the prepared text and certainly no impromptu recital. Kennedy was well aware that a weak performance before the clerics and cameras would mean defeat in November. Accordingly, he carefully read the statement that he and Sorensen had painstakingly prepared. "His speech was short and in his best clipped style,"³ said Theodore White.

John Kennedy supported his views of the Presidency by referring to the Constitution of the United States. Without offering a direct quotation, the Presidential hopeful mentioned the safeguards of

¹Schlesinger, pp. 689-90.

²Ibid., p. 690.

³White, 312.

religious liberty of the First Amendment and the strictures against any religious tests for federal office in Article VI. This paragraph presents a subtle continuation of Kennedy's pattern of coupling reference to issues Catholic and Protestant, as he said he would look with disfavor "upon a President working to subvert the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty" (a Protestant suspicion of a Catholic Chief Executive) as well as "those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test -- even by indirection" (a Catholic suspicion of partisan Protestant campaign activity).

In his April address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Kennedy also argued from the First Amendment and Article VI.¹ On that occasion, he announced his view that a President should consider the public interest rather than his own religious views in signing or vetoing any legislation. Kennedy concluded:

I have made it clear that I strongly support - out of conviction as well as constitutional obligation - the guarantees of religious equality provided by the First Amendment - and I ask only that these same guarantees be extended to me.²

Appealing to Article VI, Kennedy embellished his argument with a "sidetrip" into Constitutional history:

¹The portions of the Constitution referred to by Senator Kennedy read as follows:

U. S. Constitution. Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for redress of grievances.

U. S. Constitution, Art. VI, Clause 3

No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

²"I Am Not the Catholic Candidate for President," U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 1960, p. 91.

I believe that the Founding Fathers meant it when they provided in Article VI of the Constitution that there should be no religious test for public office--a provision that brought not one dissenting vote, only the comment of Roger Sherman that it was surely unnecessary--'the prevailing liberality being a sufficient security against such tests.' And I believe that the American people mean to adhere to these principles today.¹

Religious tests for public office were not, in fact, unknown in the Colonial period. In some colonies, these tests were carried over into the Republic and applied to state positions. Clause 3 of Article VI was designed to correct this evil on the federal level, even though, interestingly, it is not binding on the states.² Article VI, however, refers only to the avowal or disavowal of religious belief. Illegal or immoral conduct engaged in while ostensibly practicing religious belief may be sufficient grounds to bar an individual from public office. Polygamy is one such disqualification as specified in *Reynolds v. the United States* (1878) and *Mormon Church v. United States* (1890).³

John F. Kennedy sought the refuge of the Constitution and from it launched a stinging counterattack against his critics. The Constitution, with its system of checks and balances, he argued, does not provide for the kind of Presidency that could abridge the First Amendment. Citing the protection of Article VI, Kennedy lashed out at those who raise religious objections while ignoring the law of the land. *"If they disagree with that safeguard,"* he argued, *"they should be openly working to repeal it."*

¹Ibid.

²Edward F. Cooke, A Detailed Analysis of the Constitution (Ames, Iowa: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1958), p. 91.

³Edwin S. Corwin, The Constitution and What It Means Today (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 185.

In view of the intensity of anti-Catholic efforts in 1960, it is, perhaps, surprising that no one group or individual devoted himself to the erasure of Article VI from the Constitution. The nearest that any of the polemicists seemed to come to raising Constitutional objections to Kennedy's candidacy was an argument that a Roman Catholic could not be a loyal American citizen because he owed an allegiance to the Vatican, which is a temporal state. One tract writer demanded:

If you should be elected as president of the U. S. and take the oath of office, your oath would be nullified by your prior and supreme loyalty to the Vatican State and its supposedly infallible head, the pope. Do you deny the logic and reality of the above statement?¹

The anti-Catholic critics could take polemical "pot-shots" as the above, but none had the courage to train his guns on the Constitution of the United States.

That Kennedy anticipated certain queries in the question-and-answer session to follow the address, as well as those raised by his detractors, is evidenced by his advocacy of a "*Chief Executive . . . who can attend any ceremony, service, or dinner his office may appropriately require him to fulfill.*" The inclusion of this statement was a frontal attack on what was, perhaps, the least important but most bothersome incident in John Kennedy's entire career in public service.

The speaker's reference was, of course, to the much publicized Four Chaplains Dinner held in the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia on December 15, 1947. The Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Poling, editor of the

¹Eugene M. Harrison, Seven Important Questions for Senator John Kennedy (n.p.: by the author, n.d.).

magazine Christian Herald, spearheaded the banquet which was part of an overall effort to raise funds for the construction of a chapel in memory of the four chaplains who sacrificed their own lives by giving their life preservers to soldiers when the troopship Dorchester was sunk off Greenland in 1943. Of the four chaplains, one was Jewish, another a Roman Catholic, and two were Protestants. One of the Protestants was Clark V. Poling, the editor's son.

Many years after the banquet tables had been cleared, the funds had been collected, and the chapel had been built as part of the Baptist Temple on the campus of Temple University, the Four Chaplains Dinner became an issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign. On the occasion of his seventy-fifth year in 1959, the late Mr. Poling published his autobiography, Mine Eyes Have Seen. Poling, understandably, devoted considerable space in his volume to events surrounding the ecumenical Chapel of the Four Chaplains. It is curious to note, however, that in a work of less than 300 pages, printed the year before the Presidential election in which John F. Kennedy would almost certainly be the standard bearer of the Democratic Party, the author chose to include a six page castigation of Senator Kennedy for his cancellation from the program of the Four Chaplains Dinner twelve years before.¹

In his description of the banquet, which he mistakenly placed in 1950, Poling described the Chapel as a monument to peace and brotherhood. Then, shifting his gaze to the dinner itself, Poling identified Kennedy

¹Daniel A. Poling, Mine Eyes Have Seen (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 256-61.

as the "fly in the ointment." His depiction of the Bostonian's role (or lack of role) in the banquet was prefaced with an ominous paragraph that read:

How difficult it is for Americans to maintain the unity that our sons, and we too, on the homefront, achieved during war is illustrated by the problem that faced us even before the chapel was finished and dedicated.¹

Poling then related how he had three spokesmen of the three major faiths to address those gathered for the dinner. Charles P. Taft, the mayor of Cincinnati and President of the Federal Council of Churches was the Protestant speaker. Herbert H. Lehman, Senator from New York, came speaking for the Jewish faith and representing President Truman. "Our third speaker," wrote Poling, "was to have been Congressman Kennedy of Massachusetts. He had graciously accepted our invitation to take part in the program as a spokesman for his Roman Catholic faith."²

Just two days before the dinner was to be held, however, Kennedy informed Poling that he would not be able to attend. In Poling's words:

His Eminence Denis Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia had requested him not to speak at the banquet and not to appear. The congressman's distress was obvious as he relayed this information. All but overwhelmed with my disappointment, I reminded Mr. Kennedy that the banquet was a civic occasion, that all faiths were participating, and that we were meeting not in a Protestant church, but on neutral ground in a hotel. The Congressman said that he understood all this and that he had done everything he could to change the Cardinal's position. His speech was prepared, he said, and he would gladly forward it to me, but as a loyal son of the Church, he had no alternative but not to come. Unquestionably,

¹Ibid., p. 256.

²Ibid., p. 257.

Mr. Kennedy was grieved as he reported Cardinal Dougherty's decision to me, and unquestionably also he was profoundly embarrassed.¹

After his recitation of the events preceding the banquet, Daniel Poling acknowledged the possibility of Kennedy's nomination for the Presidency as well as the Senator's public statements on issues regarding church and state. Nevertheless, Poling concluded:

Today, though I respectfully read what Senator Kennedy has to say, one thing in his record is unmistakably clear. The Church did claim and exercise authority over him while he was in high public office . . . The fact remains that the authority itself is implicit in the Church, and that at least once John Kennedy of Massachusetts submitted, apparently against his own inclinations and better judgment, to its dictates.²

Poling's charges and conclusions were printed in the nations' newspapers on December 5, 1959. Two days later, Kennedy refused to comment on the allegations. The Senator's office, on December 8, released a terse rejoinder: "Senator Kennedy's office states that the story is inaccurate."³

A few months after his autobiography appeared in print, Poling republished his version of what he called "The Kennedy Incident" in the January, 1960 issue of Christian Herald. This piece and a succeeding article were reprinted and distributed in folio form, threatening to make the Four Chaplains Dinner the most famous meal since Belshazzar's Feast.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 261.

³"Interfaith Chapel: Dr. Poling: Senator Kennedy and an Invitation Declined," U.S. News & World Report, Dec. 21, 1959, p. 65.

On January 14, 1960, twelve days after he had thrown his hat into the Presidential ring, John Kennedy was quizzed by the press concerning the charges made by Mr. Poling. Following his address to the National Press Club in Washington, D. C., the candidate was asked by Club president, W. H. Lawrence, "Did you or did you not refuse to participate in such a ceremony and did you or did you not take this action on the advice of a Cardinal?"¹

Kennedy answered the first question in the affirmative and hedged slightly on the second: "On the advice of the leading church groups, which I assume to be the Cardinal [William Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia], the answer to the second question is yes."² Elaborating on his statement, the Senator said that a conversation with a priest he knew in Philadelphia had informed him that the archdiocese of the city was not supporting the fund drive for the Chapel and was embarrassed because Congressman Kennedy was the announced representative of the Church. Mr. Kennedy, seemingly, while not speaking to the Cardinal personally, interpreted the remarks of the clergyman to whom he did speak as reflecting Cardinal Dougherty's sentiments on the matter.³

Finally, the candidate showed his memory for dates was little better than Dr. Poling's as he expressed regret that the incident should be recalled after nine years. Kennedy said that he would stand on his

¹New York Times, Jan. 15, 1960, p. 14.

²Ibid.

³After the National Press Club meeting had adjourned, Pierre Salinger told reporters that Kennedy definitely had not spoken to Cardinal Dougherty before cancelling his appearance. Ibid.

record in the Congress. He conceded that facts were as Poling had indicated, "But in this case, however, the conclusion he drew was inaccurate."¹

Later that same day, Senator Kennedy prepared a written statement on the Four Chaplains Dinner which his office distributed to members of the press. The statement read as follows:

I was invited by the Reverend Dr. Poling to attend the dinner in connection with the financial drive to build the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. I was happy to accept.

A few days before the event, I learned, as the Reverend Dr. Poling describes in his book, that I was to be the spokesman for the Catholic faith. I was not being invited as a former member of the Armed Forces or as a member of Congress or as an individual, but as an official representative of a religious organization.

I further learned that the memorial was to be located in the sanctuary of a church of a different faith. This is against the precepts of the Catholic Church.

Because of the fact that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was unable to support the drive, therefore, I felt I had not credentials to attend in the capacity in which I had been asked.

As the Reverend Dr. Poling noted in his book, a number of Catholics attended the dinner and participated in the drive as individuals, which is quite different.

I informed the Reverend Dr. Poling of my difficulty and told him I would have been delighted to have taken part in any joint memorial to which I was invited as a public official.

My record on the question of the relationship between Church and State has been written in the past 14 years in Congress and I believe that my support of the Constitutional provision of separation of Church and State is well known.²

¹Ibid.

²Philadelphia Inquirer, Jan. 15, 1960.

The "Clergyman-Congressman" debate continued as Daniel Poling took to the presses to return Kennedy's volley. Writing under the title, "The John F. Kennedy Incident," Poling fielded the statements in Kennedy's press release, item by item, rendering verdicts of "correct" or "incorrect" along the way. There are, incidentally, far more "incorrects" than "corrects" in the minister's judgment.

Poling renders as "incorrect," for example, Kennedy's allegation that the chapel is situated within a non-Catholic church. His rebuttal smacks of semantic hair-splitting, however, as he says the chapel is not within the sanctuary of Baptist Temple; "but within the walls of the Temple in what was known as the 'Lower Temple' and at the heart of Temple University,"¹ Kennedy's statement that he was invited as "the official representative of a religious organization"² also receives an "incorrect" rating. But when Poling states that "no speaker was named as of his faith,"³ he contradicts his earlier record in Mine Eyes Have Seen, in which he very clearly identifies Lehman, Taft, and Kennedy as spokesmen for their respective religious beliefs. The single "correct" judgment assigned to Senator Kennedy's explanation is his identification of the chapel in question being dedicated to the memory of the four chaplains.

Dr. Poling ended his rebuttal with a restatement of his earlier conclusions: John F. Kennedy, when a member of the House of Representa-

¹"The Kennedy Incident," Christian Herald (Reprint), n.d., p. 3.

²Philadelphia Inquirer, Jan. 15, 1960.

³"The Kennedy Incident," Christian Herald, p. 2.

tives, had bowed to the will of a member of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and refused to appear at the inter-faith dinner. It is significant, perhaps, that Poling chose to ignore the conclusion of Kennedy's statement in which the Senator stood on his performance in the Congress.

The editor of the Christian Herald, instead, seemed content to question the fitness of John Kennedy for national office on the basis of one brief incident in the life of a first-term Congressman, rather than the fourteen-year record of which the candidate spoke.

The words and conclusions of Daniel Poling gained wide circulation as many polemicists incorporated accounts of the Four Chaplains Dinner into their works. Versions of the incident appear to have made good pulpit material also as many people wrote letters to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association immediately before and after September 12, explaining that their pastors had told them about the time that Kennedy submitted to the authority of a cardinal. In the retelling, considerable accuracy was lost as the letter writers placed the dinner in a church, in New York, or in Boston. Other correspondents identified the cleric as Richard Cardinal Cushing or Francis Cardinal Spellman and the sponsor of the event as Norman Vincent Peale.¹

Although the two principals chose not to argue the matter after February of 1960, both men seemed to be aware of its salience as a campaign issue as election day approached. The Kennedy forces reprinted the Senator's January 14 press release in the memorandum distributed

¹Herbert Meza and George Reck, collections of correspondence received with regard to Senator Kennedy's Houston appearance.

by the Democratic National Committee immediately after the Peale Group statement of September 7. Poling, of course, had been a member of the Peale Group. Then, on the morning of September 12, Dr. Poling had a telephone conversation with the Rev. Mr. K. O. White, who, as minister of the First Baptist Church of Houston, was one of the city's most influential clergymen. Later that same day, White received a telegram from Poling.¹ In the question-and-answer period in the Crystal Ballroom, White addressed a question to the candidate in which he mentioned the telephone call and quoted from Poling's wire:

The memorandum on religion as an election issue prepared by Senator Kennedy's associates has a section on the Poling incident. This section contains serious factual errors. I believe the Senator will wish to correct the errors or he will wish to withdraw that section. The original draft of the program on the Interfaith Dinner held in the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel on December 15, 1947, identified Mr. Kennedy, then Congressman from Massachusetts, as Honorable John F. Kennedy, Congressman from Massachusetts. Mr. Kennedy was never invited as an official representative of a religious organization nor indeed as the spokesman for the Catholic faith. No speaker on that occasion, Catholic, Jew, or Protestant, was identified by his faith. Then, two days before the dinner occasion Mr. Kennedy cancelled his engagement, expressed his regret and grief but stated that since His Eminence, the Cardinal, requested him not to come, he as a loyal son of the Church had no other alternative. Therefore, it was necessary to destroy this first program and reprint it.²

The candidate, in a carefully worded answer that gave evidence of thorough preparation, shrewdly refused to debate on the grounds of the

¹Houston Press, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 4.

²Ibid.

printed program. Kennedy, instead, exploited Poling's inconsistency and quoted the words, "Spokesman for the Catholic faith" from Mine Eyes Have Seen. The Senator also corrected Poling's dating of the event, observing that it took place in 1947, rather than 1950.

Kennedy flatly denied the charge that Cardinal Dougherty had instructed him not to attend. "I never discussed the matter with the Cardinal in my life," said Kennedy. The candidate went on to challenge Poling's description of the Chapel as an interfaith sanctuary. Stating that one of the reasons for his withdrawal from the program was the physical location of the Chapel, Senator Kennedy pointed out that the Chapel "has never had a Catholic service. It is not an interfaith Chapel."

In his concluding remarks, Kennedy appealed to his hearers to place the event in proper perspective. Observing that the dinner was a private and not a public affair and "did not involve any responsibilities as a public official," the Senator said that his "only error was in accepting the invitation without having all the facts." Again Kennedy stood on his record in the Congress, asking rhetorically:

Is this the best that can be done after fourteen years?
Is this the only incident that can be charged? . . . I
have voted on hundreds of matters, which involve all kinds
of public questions, some of which border on the relation-
ship between church and state. Quite obviously that record
must be reasonably good or we wouldn't keep hearing about
the Poling incident.

The Senator's answer, by far his most lengthy reply to any of the fourteen questions put to him by the clergy, represented Kennedy at his

¹Ibid.

eloquent best. He sought to refute accusations against himself with direct quotations, specific factual data, and a hortatory appeal for proper perspective on an event that had been blown out of all reasonable proportion.

This exchange marked the final skirmish in the lengthy war between the pastor and the politician. The next day Daniel Poling retreated from the field of battle with the words, "I'm in favor of dropping the issue as of today."¹

¹New York Times, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 34.

CHAPTER V

NO ONE KNOWS WHETHER THEY WERE CATHOLICS OR NOT

This is the kind of America I believe in--and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a "divided loyalty," that we did "not believe in liberty" or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened "the freedoms for which our forefathers died."

And in fact this is the kind of America for which our forefathers did die when they fled here to escape religious test oaths, that denied office to members of less favored churches, when they fought for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom--and when they fought at the shrine I visited today--the Alamo. For side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes and McCafferty and Bailey and Bedillio and Carey--but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not. For there was no religious test there.

The candidate's personal views regarding religion and America--and religion and the Presidency--had been detailed. Now, preceding the lengthy Peroration that was to occupy the lion's share of the address,

John Kennedy inserted a two-paragraph transition containing personal and historical notes that looked back to the previous sections and anticipated the conclusion. In these four sentences, the Senator alluded to the war records of his brother and himself, raised an argument regarding Catholics and military service, referred to the American forefathers and religious freedom, mentioned the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and spoke of the Alamo.

The heroic war records of the two eldest sons of Joseph P. Kennedy were, in 1960, known to the entire nation. The young Senator's nearly-successful dash for the Democratic Vice Presidential nomination in 1956 had, through television, made him a national personality. Kennedy became known to the press as "good copy"; and magazines were filled with pictures of the Senator, his wife, his daughter, and his brothers. When Kennedy campaigned for the Senate in 1958 and began his drive for the Presidency in 1960, his mother, his sisters, and his sisters-in-law were photographed and featured as the "Kennedy women."

The probing lights of publicity also revealed that behind the glamor and vitality of youth, there lurked the spectre of tragedy. The husband of Kathleen Kennedy, the Marchess of Huntington, had died in action in World War II. In 1948, Kathleen was killed in a plane crash in France even as her father waited for her plane to land.¹ And the father's namesake, Joe, died a hero's death over the English Channel.

In 1944, Joseph Kennedy, Jr., had flown his required number of missions as a Navy bomber pilot and was eligible for rotation from

¹Whalen, p. 65.

Great Britain back to the United States. He received word, however, of a top secret operation, known as "Project Anvil." In typical Kennedy fashion, he responded to the challenge put before him and remained in Europe. "Project Anvil" was directed against German submarine pens on the Belgian coast that had proved immune to Allied air strikes. According to the plan, a Liberator bomber was to be loaded with 22,000 pounds of explosives and radio-guided to its destination by two control planes.¹ A pilot was required, however, to take the craft aloft and fly it to a point over the English Channel where the control planes would take over. At this point, according to script, the pilot and co-pilot would parachute into the Channel. Joseph Kennedy volunteered for the pilot's assignment; and Lieutenant Wilford J. Willy, of Fort Worth, Texas, was the co-pilot.²

Kennedy and Willy took off and climbed to their assigned course and altitude without difficulty. Shortly before they were to bail out, however, two giant explosions prematurely destroyed the aircraft and killed both men. The cause of the mishap was never determined. Lieutenant Kennedy was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross, the American Defense medal, and the European-African-Eastern Campaign medal. Willy received the same decorations.³ After the war, Robert, the third

¹Ibid., p. 370.

²On September 13, 1960, the day following the address to the Houston clergy, Wilford Willy's widow appeared with John Kennedy as he campaigned in Fort Worth. New York Times, Sept. 14, 1960.

³Joseph F. Dinneen, The Kennedy Family (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1959), pp. 115-16.

Kennedy brother to serve in the Navy, was assigned to the destroyer named in Joe's honor--The U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. In 1962, President Kennedy viewed the America's Cup yacht races from the decks of the same ship.¹

John F. Kennedy campaigned for the White House a year before his naval exploits were to be chronicled by Robert J. Donovan in the best-seller, PT 109. This hardly meant, however, that the American public was unaware of Kennedy's heroism in the South Pacific. In his first election campaign in 1946, an aide noted keen interest among voters in Kennedy's war experiences. The result was that:

A standard nonpolitical speech was prepared for delivery before religious and fraternal organizations. In telling the story, Jack modestly referred to himself in the third person and emphasized the bravery of his crew.²

Reprints of a Reader's Digest article on Lieutenant Kennedy's rescue of an injured crewman and his efforts to secure help for his crew were used as campaign literature in the Massachusetts Eleventh

¹The death of Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. may have changed the course of Presidential history. John Kennedy often spoke of his reluctance at entering politics and said that Joe would have been the family politician, had he lived. In 1957, columnist Bob Considine recorded John Kennedy's observations of his older brother. "'Joe was the star of our family,' he said. 'He did everything better than the rest of us. If he had lived, he would have gone on in politics and he would have been elected to the House and Senate as I was. And, like me, he would have gone for the vice-presidential nomination at the 1956 convention, but unlike me, he wouldn't have been beaten. Joe would have won the nomination.' Jack paused and smiled. 'And then he and Stevenson would have been beaten by Eisenhower, and today Joe's political career would be in shambles and he would be trying to pick up the pieces.'" Whalen, p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 400.

District in 1946.¹ In succeeding campaigns, the candidate's war record was similarly emphasized, although discretion had to be observed as an overstress on the PT 109 sinking raised questions about Kennedy's health. When the bow of the Japanese destroyer Amagiri knifed through the hull of the PT 109, the skipper was slammed against a bulkhead and aggravated a football back injury. Twice, in 1954 and 1955, Kennedy had undergone serious spinal surgery. Twice, alarming complications had developed. And twice, Kennedy had received the last rites of his church. Rumors concerning the Senator's health persisted into 1960, although his legislative and campaign schedules could hardly have been endured by a man in less than excellent physical condition.¹

The holder of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal used the one-sentence mention of his brother's and his own war records to draw an implied analogy between service in the military and service in the White House. There was no one who questioned the loyalty and patriotism of Roman Catholics when bullets were flying and bombs falling, the Democratic aspirant observed, repeating the catch phrases so often employed by the polemicists.

In April, when addressing the newspaper editors, Kennedy had presented the same argument with more elaboration:

Little or no attention was paid to my religion when I took the oath of office as Senator in 1953 -- as a Congressman in 1947 -- or as a naval officer in 1941. Members of my faith abound in public office at every level except the White House. What is there about the Presidency that justifies this constant emphasis upon a candidate's religion and that of his supporters?²

¹Burns, pp. 156-60.

²U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 1960, p. 92.

If a Catholic can be private, first class, the candidate was arguing by implication, then why can he not be Commander in Chief?

Referring back to the kind of America he had described, Kennedy said it was for just this kind of nation--a nation free of an official church, free of religious barriers, and free of religious tests for public office--that "our forefathers did die when they fled here." The early patriots, said the speaker, "fought for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom." Then, in parallel structure with these three documents, Kennedy invoked the memory of that most sacred of Texas landmarks with the words, "and when they fought at the shrine I visited today -- the Alamo."

The thought of incorporating reference to the shrine of Texas independence into the address was Kennedy's. Realizing that he would visit the Alamo the afternoon before addressing the Houston clergy, the Senator asked Theodore Sorensen to find how many Catholics had fought and died on the side of the Texans. "I telephoned Mike Feldman in Washington at 4 a.m., Texas time. A few hours later, he had a list of possible Irish-American names but added that no religious affiliations were known." recalls Sorensen.¹ The Irish names of McCafferty, Bailey, and Carey were incorporated into the prepared text. By the time the Massachusetts Senator of Irish descent addressed the Houston ministers, two names of Spanish origin had been inserted in the record. The line in its final form read:

*For side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes
and McCafferty and Bailey and Bedillio and Carey --
but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not.
For there was no religious test there.*

¹ Sorensen, p. 189.

This incident as read by a Roman Catholic aspirant for national office to a group of Protestant Texan clergymen, represented a strong emotional appeal for religious tolerance. It stands as a brilliant example of a speaker's adapting his material to his audience. It also stands, as does the aforementioned Bailey Memorandum, as an example of John Kennedy himself raising a religious issue.

Kennedy was correct in his assertion that religion was not an issue when the little band of 187 men faced the guns of Santa Anna from behind the walls of the Alamo Mission between the dates of February 23 and March 6, 1836. One hundred, twenty-four years later, however, a religious test of sorts, was imposed as the Senator's staff tried to determine how many of the 187 martyrs were of Roman Catholic faith in the hope that twentieth century Texans would share the spirit of acceptance of their illustrious forebears.

John F. Kennedy employed a considerable degree of understatement in his citation of the personal and historical elements contained in this brief section. There was no embellishment of the bare facts; and, despite the listing of three significant American documents, there were no direct quotations.

This lack of quoted material, in fact, makes the address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association a somewhat atypical Kennedy effort. The only direct quotation to be found in the entire speech occurs in a final-sentence recitation of the Presidential Oath of Office.

A reading of the Senator's campaign speeches reveals a liberal sprinkling of the words of poets, historical figures, and the Bible.

Among the literary figures quoted by the Democratic candidate were Longfellow, Whitman, Frost, Shakespeare, and an Irish poet, John Boyle O'Reilly. Kennedy reached into history and repeated the words of Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Jefferson, and Webster. In addition, he often quoted from the Bible, showing a fondness for texts of exhortation and confidence.¹

When employing the words of the Biblical writers, Kennedy almost always quoted from the King James Version of the Bible, rather than the Douay Translation of his own church. A week before his Houston appearance, in a San Francisco speech, the candidate made a rare quotation from the Douay Version, reciting Isaiah 41:6: "Everyone shall help his neighbor, and shall say to his brother: Be of good courage."² The probable reason for the candidate's turning to the Catholic version of the Scriptures is that its use of the imperative mood was better suited to the context of his speech than the King James, which rendered the words of the prophet in the indicative: "They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage."³

At Houston, however, Kennedy's references to religion were to the Church as an institution, rather than to dogma, the Bible, or any other Church authority. When Al Smith denounced the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma City, he accused the K.K.K. of profaning "the Cross, the emblem of faith,

¹Congressional Subcommittee of the Committee on Communications, pp. 1-205, passim.

²Settel, p. 10.

³Isaiah 41:6.

the emblem of salvation, the place upon which Christ Himself made the great sacrifice for all of mankind."¹ Similarly, Smith struck back at a Baptist minister, who accused him of being drunk in public, with the words:

Now I am compelled to the observation that the man or men responsible for that libelous slander against my character cannot possibly believe in Christ.

And, if I was in his place or in their places, the day after they uttered it, the thing I would be most concerned about would be, "What would Christ think of me?"²

Ill-tempered religiosity, such as that displayed by the Governor of New York in 1928, would have been out of character for the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1960. The junior Senator from Massachusetts, in addressing himself to the religious issue, was content to ignore religious arguments and base his case, instead, on historical precedent and public documents.

¹Wallace, p. 104.

²Ibid., p. 195.

CHAPTER VI

I ASK YOU TONIGHT TO FOLLOW IN THAT TRADITION

I ask you tonight to follow in that tradition, to judge me on the basis of fourteen years in the congress--on my declared stands against an ambassador to the Vatican, against unconstitutional aid to parochial schools, and against any boycott of the public schools (which I attended myself)--instead of judging me on the basis of these pamphlets and publications we have all seen that carefully select quotations out of context from the statements of Catholic Church leaders, usually in other countries, frequently in other centuries, and rarely relevant to any situation here--and always omitting, of course, that statement of the American bishops in 1948 which strongly endorsed church-state separation.

I do not consider these other quotations binding upon my public acts--why should you? But let me say, with respect to other countries, that I am wholly opposed to the state being used by any religious group, Catholic or Protestant, to compel, prohibit or persecute the free exercise of any other religion. And that goes for any persecution at any time, by anyone, in any country.

And I hope that you and I condemn with equal fervor those nations which deny their Presidency to Protestants and those which deny it to Catholics. And rather than cite the misdeeds of those who differ, I would also cite the record of the Catholic Church in such nations as France and Ireland--and the independence of such statesmen as de Gaulle and Adenauer.

But let me stress again that these are my views--for, contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic.

I do not speak for my church on public matters--and the church does not speak for me.

Whatever issue may come before me as President, if I should be elected--on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling, or any other subject--I will make my decision in accordance with these views, in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictate. And no power or threat of punishment could cause me to decide otherwise.

But if the time should ever come--and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible--when my office would require me to either violate my conscience, or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office, and I hope any other conscientious public servant would do likewise.

But I do not intend to apologize for these views to my critics of either Catholic or Protestant faith, nor do I intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election. If I should lose on the real issues, I shall return to my seat in the Senate, satisfied that I tried my best and was fairly judged.

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40,000,000 Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of our own people.

But if, on the other hand, I should win this election, I shall devote every effort of mind and spirit to fulfilling the oath of the Presidency--practically identical, I might add, with the oath I have taken for fourteen years in the Congress. For, without reservation, I can, and I quote, "solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, so help me God."

John F. Kennedy began the lengthy Peroration to his address with an exhortation for his listeners to follow in the tradition of the heroes of the Alamo and the founding fathers, whose beliefs led to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Virginia Statute of Religious

Freedom. In so doing, Kennedy asked the members of his audience to join those who refused to judge a man by his religious belief and who actively opposed the imposition of religious tests.

Indicating that he was well aware of the scurrilous literature being circulated regarding his candidacy, Kennedy requested that he not be judged by the standards of the polemicists. The Senator, instead, desired to be appraised according to his record in the House and the Senate and on his declared stands on the issues. He specifically mentioned issues relating to Federal aid to parochial education, American representation at the Vatican, and Catholic opposition to the public schools.

Kennedy's reference to his record was much like his earlier mention of his military career—both were handled with considerable understatement. Governor Al Smith, by way of contrast, cried to the people of Oklahoma City, "Let's look at the record."¹ Then Smith proceeded to unfold a rambling, egoistic monologue, characterized by the fractured English of a son of the Bowery heralding his own accomplishments as a champion of education, business, labor reform, public welfare, conservation, agriculture, and highway construction. Very little of what Smith said related to the religious issue that was, ostensibly, the subject of his address.²

Senator Kennedy, very simply and without a trace of bombast, asked those who heard him *"to judge me on the basis of fourteen years in the*

¹New York Times, Sept. 21, 1928.

²Ibid.

Congress." With an economy of words, the Ambassador's son, speaking in accents native to Harvard Yard, pointed to specific issues directly related to the subject at hand.

The candidate reiterated his opposition to the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. He had not, however, expressed such opposition during his entire Congressional career. In 1954, as a Senator, he wrote to a constituent in Cambridge indicating that he would vote for confirmation of an ambassador to the Vatican inasmuch as both Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman had favored such representation.¹ By 1959, his thinking on the matter had taken a 180 degree turn. Fletcher Knebel quoted Senator Kennedy as saying:

I am flatly opposed to the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. Whatever advantages it might have in Rome-- and I'm not convinced of these -- they would be more than offset by the divisive effect at home.²

A little more than a year later, Kennedy, now a declared candidate for his party's Presidential nomination, expressed similar sentiments to the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

An ambassador to the Vatican could conceivably become a real issue again. I am opposed to it, and said so long ago. But even though it was last proposed by a Baptist President, I know of no other candidate who has been even asked about this matter.³

It is readily apparent that a radical change in thinking regarding representation to the Papal State occurred within the Senator's mind

¹Burns, p. 249.

²Fletcher Knebel, "Democratic Forecast: A Catholic in 1960," Look, March 3, 1959, p. 17.

³U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 1960, p. 91.

sometime between 1954 and 1959. On the question of Federal aid to private and parochial education, however, no such severe change in attitude took place, the allegations of the Senator's critics to the contrary. To be sure, Representative Kennedy had sponsored legislation in the Eighty-first Congress that would have extended Federal funds to non-public schools; but the Democratic nominee's careful insertion of the adjective "*unconstitutional*" before his mention of "*aid to parochial schools*" served to blunt much potential questioning of his early record in the Congress.

In 1949, the Democratic Representative from the Massachusetts Eleventh District was the second ranking member of his party on the House Education and Labor Committee Sub-committee on Federal Aid to Education. On August 1 of that year, Mr. Kennedy introduced a bill that would provide funds from the Federal treasury for buses, textbooks, and health services for non-public schools.¹

The measure touched off a widely reported public debate between Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York and Eleanor Roosevelt. This debate, needless to say, so polarized public opinion that passage of the bill became an impossibility. The measure, H.R. 5828, died at the adjournment of the Eighty-first Congress.

A year later, in 1950, a Senate-passed "aid to schools" bill was referred to the House Subcommittee on Federal Aid to Education. John Kennedy proposed an amendment to the measure that would permit states to use Federal funds, if they so desired, for school buses for private and

¹William T. O'Hara, John F. Kennedy on Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966), p. 6.

parochial schools.¹ After his amendment was defeated, Kennedy withdrew his support of the bill and cast a decisive vote in a thirteen to twelve tally against reporting the measure onto the floor of the House.² The Pilot, the newspaper of the Boston archdiocese, praised Kennedy as fighting "valiantly in the interests of large groups of citizens who are merely asking for their just share."³

Although Kennedy's efforts in behalf of parochial schools in the Congress were endorsed by Cardinal Spellman and lauded by The Pilot, not all of the Congressman's support came from ecclesiastical sources. The New York Times had raised its editorial voice to back Kennedy's position on the Federal aid dispute.⁴

In Houston, the candidate was to express his opposition to unconstitutional Federal aid. By 1949, however, there seemed to be ample legal precedent to assure the Constitutionality of Representative Kennedy's proposed legislation. Citing *Cochran v. Louisiana State Board of Education* (1930) and *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), Edwin S. Corwin concluded:

In 1930 the use of public funds to furnish nonsectarian textbooks to pupils in parochial schools in Louisiana was sustained, and in 1947 . . . the use of public funds for the transportation of pupils attending such schools in New Jersey.⁵

¹Burns, p. 87.

²O'Hara, p. 7.

³Burns, p. 88.

⁴New York Times, Mar. 16, 1950, p. 30.

⁵Edwin S. Corwin, p. 192.

While the philosophical attitude of John F. Kennedy toward Federal aid to parochial education may have remained the same between 1947 and 1960, the public posture of the man on the issue underwent a severe change. During the eight years he spent in the Senate, Kennedy was a constant supporter of Federal aid; yet he affixed his name to no such obviously partisan measures as those he sponsored in the Eighty-first Congress. In addition, the public statements opposing the appropriation of Federal monies for use in non-public schools emanating from the Massachusetts Senator in 1959 and 1960 were hardly those of a politician thinking only of a Roman Catholic constituency.

Perhaps the Bostonian's most complete and definite statement on the entire question was made to Knebel in the Look magazine interview of 1959:

The First Amendment to the Constitution is an infinitely wise one. There can be no question of Federal funds being used for support of parochial or private schools. It's unconstitutional under the First Amendment as interpreted by the Supreme Court. I'm opposed to the Federal Government's extending support to sustain any church or its schools. As for such fringe matters as buses, lunches, and other services, the issue is primarily social and economic and not religious. Each case must be judged on its merits within the law as interpreted by the courts.¹

John Kennedy's early support for parochial schools' sharing in Federal education allotments is certainly understandable in view of the religious composition of the Congressman's home district. James MacGregor Burns offers the opinion that because Kennedy had not encountered anti-Catholic bias early in his life, he had never been driven back to a rigid defense of his Church. "It was not surprising, therefore," says

¹Look, Mar. 3, 1960, p. 17.

Burns, "that Kennedy entered the Congress without strong convictions about the problems of Church and State."¹ Thus, in his early political years, he could introduce legislation that favored limited aid to parochial schools while later Kennedy-supported measures could make no provision for private or parochial education.

With all due deference to the explanation of Professor Burns, the observation must be made that the increase of the mention of Kennedy's name for national office was accompanied by a marked decrease of Kennedy support for Federal aid to non-public education.

The Senator carefully mentioned that he himself had attended public schools and could hardly qualify as a Catholic who advocated a boycott of public education. (Much of Kennedy's schooling was taken in non-public schools such as Choate and Harvard. These schools were public, however, in that they were not religious.)

As a Senator, Kennedy had drawn the fire of enraged Catholics for his vote confirming Harvard President James B. Conant as ambassador to West Germany. In 1953, Conant had published a book entitled Education and Liberty, in which he described non-public schools as a divisive force in American society and categorically opposed all government aid to such institutions.² A year later, when the Harvard President's name came before the Senate, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin and others had aroused Catholic opinion against his appointment. Despite a personal

¹Burns, p. 242.

²Lawrence H. Fuchs, John F. Kennedy and American Catholicism (New York: Meredith Press, 1967), p. 131.

appeal from McCarthy that he cast a negative vote,¹ the junior Senator from Massachusetts sided with the senior Senator, Leverett Saltonstall, and voted for confirmation. Thus, those Catholics who would have punished Dr. Conant for his anti-parochial school sentiments by denying him a portfolio found no ally in John Kennedy.²

Coupled with the speaker's citation of his legislative record is the only appeal to an ecclesiastical source to be found in the entire address. In describing the practices of the anti-Catholic publishers active in 1960, Kennedy observed that they always omitted "*that statement of the American bishops in 1948 which strongly endorsed church-state separation.*" At this point, for some unknown reason, the Senator deleted from the prepared text the phrase "and which more nearly reflects the views of almost every American Catholic." This omission represents the only significant deletion from the written text of the speech.

The statement mentioned was released by the National Catholic Welfare Council on November 21, 1948. This body is composed of the American Cardinals and Bishops and is the voice of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the United States. The Bishops issued their statement shortly after the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of a suit brought by Mrs. Vashti McCollum that cooperation between public schools and the churches on programs of release time religious education should be terminated.³ The N.C.W.C. decried a secularistic trend in American

¹Sorensen, p. 46.

²Burns, pp. 142-43.

³"The Bishops Speak," Newsweek, Nov. 29, 1948, p. 74.

society that is "preparing the way for the advent of the omnipotent state."¹

The hierarchical body, however, stated very strongly that they were committed to the separation of church and state. "If tomorrow Catholics constituted a majority of our country," wrote the Bishops, "they would not seek a union of church and state. They would then, as now, uphold the Constitution and all its Amendments."²

Referring back to the previously mentioned quotations and statements employed by the polemicists, Kennedy continued, *"I do not consider these other quotations binding upon my public acts -- why should you?"* Then, anticipating questions relating to Roman Catholic oppression in Spain and Colombia, the Senator stated his opposition to religious persecution in other lands. This statement was reinforced with Kennedy's only significant addition to the prepared text as he added the sentence, *"And that goes for any persecution at any time, by anyone, in any country."* Thus, the Democratic nominee forcefully expressed his enmity for those who abridge religious freedom.

The candidate, however, was not only concerned about those nations whose Catholic majorities discriminated against Protestants. Kennedy again linked Catholic and Protestant together and, without mentioning the United States, said: *"And I hope that you and I condemn with equal fervor those nations which deny their Presidency to Protestants and those which deny it to Catholics."* Positively, Kennedy cited the records of

¹"Secularism," Commonweal, Dec. 3, 1948, p. 187.

²Fuchs, pp. 136-37.

Konrad Adenauer of West Berlin and Charles de Gaulle of France as examples of Catholic statesmen operating independently of Church control.

In this concluding section of the address to the Houston ministers, the focus of attention shifted from the past, to the present, and then to the future. The speaker directed the attention of his auditors to the past with his brief recitation of his legislative record. Kennedy then shifted to the present with his description of anti-Catholic campaigning, his condemnation of religious prejudice in other lands, and his citation of examples of responsible Catholic leaders.

Then, emphasizing that he spoke for himself and not for his Church, the nominee changed focus again, looking to the future with the words, *"Whatever issue may come before me as President."* John F. Kennedy, then, devoted his concluding paragraphs to a discussion of future events as they might occur if he were or were not elected to the Presidency in November.

With a view to the hypotheses advanced by the Democratic nominee on September 12, 1960, it is an interesting exercise to trace the course of events in the November election and in the months that followed. The candidate stressed that whatever issues might arise in a possible Kennedy administration would be weighed and decided upon on the basis of *"what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictate."* The issues mentioned by the Senator as being the sources of possible conflict were birth control, censorship, gambling, and divorce. Four months later, however, when the young President was enjoined with the hierarchy of his church in the only major religious dispute of the New Frontier, the

battle ground was the same one on which Kennedy had fought as a Congressman in the Eighty-first Congress—Federal aid to parochial education.

Religion became an issue in President Kennedy's Federal aid to education program even before the inauguration when the President-elect's task force on education released its report in early January of 1961. The group recommended a three-part program of Federal aid to: 1) all public schools for the upgrading of educational programs; 2) schools in economically distressed areas; and 3) schools in urban centers. Funds were to be authorized by local boards of education for school construction, teacher salaries, "or other purposes related to the improvement of education."¹

The task force report was important religiously for what it did not say—there was no mention of private or parochial schools. The only designated recipients of Federal funds were public schools. Three days before the inauguration, Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York issued a statement condemning the report and the incoming Kennedy Administration for its stand on the issue of aid to private education. "Cardinal Spellman," commented the New York Times, "who rarely has taken so strong a stand on a legislative proposal, expressed confidence that this one would not be enacted."² In his denunciation of the task force the prelate said:

By denying this measure of equality to church-related school children and their parents the task

¹"Educational Frontiers," New Frontiers of the Kennedy Administration (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1961), p. 65.

²New York Times, Jan. 18, 1961, p. 16.

force proposals are blatantly discriminating against them, depriving them of mind and freedom of religion guaranteed by our country's Constitution, whose First Amendment was adopted to protect the individual person from Government repression, the very danger implicit in the proposed program of the task force.¹

The Roman Catholic publication America rushed to the support of Cardinal Spellman. The editors praised the Cardinal for his expression of his point of view and lamented that, "Today's Federal aid programs tell the religious-minded parent to pay for his children's education from his own resources, while at the same time taking more and more of those resources in taxes."²

In a second editorial a month later, America viewed Federal aid to education as a plot perpetrated by public school educators and designed to increase funds available to public schools, thereby making it more difficult for private schools to maintain quality programs. The editors concluded:

We should and will support Federal aid to education to the extent that it is needed. But we still have to be convinced that there is a need for general Federal aid -- especially if it is confined to public schools.³

On March 2 the position of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in America was made known in a statement drafted by the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.⁴ Archbishop Kurt J. Alter of Cincinnati, the spokesman for the Board, said that the

¹Ibid.

²"Freedom to Educate," America, Jan. 28, 1961, p. 552.

³"Federal Aid to Education," Ibid., p. 25.

⁴The Board was composed of the five American Cardinals and the ten Archbishops and Bishops who headed departments of the Conference.

hierarchy would press for an amendment to the Administration's Federal aid bill that would provide long-term loans to private schools. Alter further stated that a bill that did not contain such an amendment would be opposed:

In the event that a Federal aid program is enacted which excludes children in private schools, these children will be the victims of discriminatory legislation. There will be no alternative but to oppose such discrimination.¹

Representative Peter Zelenko, a New York City Democrat, introduced a bill into the House that would permit private and parochial schools to share in Federal funds. Cardinal Spellman promptly announced his support of the measure, which action caused the New York Times to comment, "The Cardinal's message confirmed reports that the Zelenko proposal had the endorsement of the Roman Catholic hierarchy."²

In a move that bears all the earmarks of a deliberate attempt to exploit religious feeling for the purpose of defeating the Federal aid bill, Senator Barry Goldwater said he favored the inclusion of parochial schools in the Federal aid bill but that he was against all Federal aid legislation.³

President Kennedy stubbornly resisted both ecclesiastical and Congressional pressures for a private school amendment to the Administration education bill. In each of his three press conferences in the month of March, the President faced questions regarding his anti-private school stance. On March 2 Kennedy expressed Constitutional objections.

¹ New York Times, Mar. 3, 1961, p. 18.

² Ibid., May 9, 1961, p. 18.

³ Ibid., Mar. 22, 1961, p. 21.

"There isn't any room for debate on the subject," he said. "It is prohibited by the Constitution."¹ Seven days later the Chief Executive was asked a question relating to the stand of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in advocating an amendment for long-term loans to parochial schools; and he answered, "I definitely believe that we should not tie the two together." The President then expressed his hope that the position of the Conference, "should not be made an issue now in such a way that we end up the year again with no aid to secondary schools."² When questioned the next week about the inflexible stand of the hierarchy of his Church, Kennedy replied, "I stated that it is a fact that in recent years when education bills have been sent to Congress, that we have not had this public major encounter. I don't know why that was but now we do have it."³ The New York Times noted that these remarks were interpreted as a reminder by the President to the Roman Catholic hierarchy.⁴

John F. Kennedy's position was put on record for all the nation to observe: the nation's first Roman Catholic President would not bow to pressure from his co-religionists on the question of Federal aid. Just in case Congress missed the message, however, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Abraham Ribicoff was dispatched to Capitol Hill with a report prepared by the legal staff of his own department in consultation with the Department of Justice. According to the H.E.W. Report,

¹ Ibid., Mar. 2, 1961, p. 12.

² Ibid., Mar. 9, 1961, p. 1.

³ Ibid., Mar. 16, 1961, p. 20.

⁴ Ibid.

grants and loans to church schools and tuition payments to pupils attending church schools are illegal.¹

Clearly, an impasse had been reached. Attempts at compromise were made even though neither side seemed interested in meeting the other halfway. The Roman Catholic hierarchy continued to demand an amendment to the Administration-proposed legislation, and the President refused to support modifications such as those advanced by the Church. The Administration held out the promise of a separate bill for private and parochial schools, but the Bishops were not interested. In the words of Arthur Krock:

The President, for sound reasons, . . . wants to defer legislation for church school construction until his bill for Federal grants-in-aid to public elementary and secondary schools has been acted on. Representatives of the Catholic hierarchy fear that, unless their program is part of the President's, it will have no chance of passage, and there is a sound basis for this fear.

But in this sector the President is on firmer ground than the hierarchy. . . . For the prospect [for passage] would be greatly narrowed if the two pieces of legislation are joined.²

Theodore Sorensen indicates that he and Secretary Ribicoff met quietly with a Roman Catholic cleric who had contact with the National Catholic Welfare Conference in an attempt to formulate possible amendments to the National Defense Education Act of 1958. An essential ground rule of the talks was that all such amendments were to originate in the Congress—not in the White House.³

¹"Aid to Parochial Schools -- Why Kennedy Says It's Illegal," U.S. News & World Report, April 10, 1961, p. 100.

²Arthur Krock, "In the Nation," New York Times, Mar. 16, 1961, p. 36.

³Sorensen, p. 360.

According to Newsweek, Sam Rayburn, in a breakfast meeting of Congressional leaders with Mr. Kennedy, mentioned the dilemma of the parochial school issue and said, "The school bill faces tough sledding, Mr. President." When Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson suggested a compromise amendment for aid to church schools, Kennedy replied, "I am going to use every power at my command to defeat such an amendment." When a separate bill for private schools was suggested, the President said he would not be opposed to such legislation so long as the Administration bill was considered first.¹

Sorensen also suggests that this was the essential position of Mr. Kennedy regarding a program of private school aid that would have its origins in Congress:

While the President remained formally committed only to his original program, advocated no other and did not want it amended to cover parochial schools, he had no Constitutional or policy objections to the Congress, by separate bill, removing Catholic opposition to his bill by broadening the NDEA's categories and increasing its loan funds.²

The early attempts at compromise, therefore, had failed; and as the bill came up for consideration in the Senate, the Administration and the hierarchy were still at odds. The religious controversy had, of course, done nothing to increase the chances of the bill's passage. Many members of Congress were against Federal aid to education for teacher salaries and construction. "Their numbers reportedly have been increased," wrote U.S. News & World Report, "because of the dispute over

¹"Catholics vs. Kennedy," Newsweek, Mar. 20, 1961, pp. 24-25.

²Sorensen, p. 361.

aid to parochial and private schools, which has made some Congressmen shy of the whole aid proposal."¹

Despite these misgivings on Capitol Hill, passage of President Kennedy's Federal aid to education bill through the Senate was so smooth as to be almost dull. On May 2 the Labor and Public Welfare Committee reported the \$3,298,000,000 bill onto the floor by an eight to one margin. The only negative vote in committee was cast by parochial school champion, Barry Goldwater of Arizona. One of the more significant aspects of the committee action was that it killed a plan to join the measure with one to enlarge and extend the NDEA to include loans to private and church-related schools for construction of science, mathematics, and foreign language facilities.²

This did not mean, however, that efforts were not still being made to effect a compromise with the Church hierarchy. Majority Whip Hubert Humphrey said that Democratic strategy was to push for passage of the Administration bill and then to work for an extension of the NDEA. Humphrey termed this strategy "a reasonable compromise" and carefully pointed out that it was being advanced on Capitol Hill and not on Pennsylvania Avenue. This move was interpreted as being acceptable to President Kennedy, but there was doubt that the hierarchy would be satisfied.³

On May 25 the Senate passed the Administration's Federal aid bill by a vote of 49-34. By the time the bill came up for a vote in the

¹"The Fight Over Parochial-School Aid," U.S. News & World Report, April 3, 1961, p. 54.

²New York Times, May 3, 1961, p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 20.

House Rules Committee, two other measures had been joined to it. The first was a \$300,000,000 appropriation for loans for higher education. The second provided \$375,000,000 in loan money for private school construction as a part of NDEA and was obviously designed to mollify Roman Catholic critics of the Federal aid program.

One Catholic who was not mollified, however, was James J. Delaney, Democratic Representative from Queens, New York. Delaney had a solid record of joining seven Northern Democratic colleagues on the fifteen-member Rules Committee and supporting Administration proposals against the opposition of five Republicans and two Southern Democrats. On July 18, however, in a move reminiscent of Representative John F. Kennedy's performance in Sub-committee in the Eighty-first Congress, Delaney deserted the Administration, complaining that the President's Federal aid program represented "discrimination" against parochial schools.¹ He termed the \$375,000,000 extension of NDEA "Just a little bit of sop."²

Sorensen explained that Delaney voted with the conviction that, once passed by committee, the NDEA section of the Federal aid law would be killed by Protestant members of the House. At any rate:

No amount of pleading by the President or Ribicoff could budge him. More adamant than many leaders of his church, he had no interest in bargains or trades on other subjects. "He didn't want a thing," said O'Brien [Kennedy aide]

¹Two other Northern Roman Catholic Democrats, Ray J. Madden of Indiana and Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts, voted in favor of the measure.

²New York Times, July 19, 1961, p. 1.

Lawrence O'Brien]. "I wish he had." The more Delaney was attacked by editorials and Protestant spokesmen, the more he was applauded by his Catholic constituents and colleagues.¹

Immediately after the vote, Adam Clayton Powell was quoted as saying, "I don't think it's hopeless. There's plenty of time left in this Congress."² Powell's disclaimers to the contrary, Federal aid to education was, for all practical purposes, dead for 1961. "Congressman James J. Delaney," in the words of America, "played Sparrow to the Federal aid Cock Robin."³

On August 30, the coup de grace was applied to the President's Federal aid program for the year when Powell introduced a motion to consider the bill. The motion was defeated, 242-169.

John F. Kennedy as a Senator and as a Presidential aspirant had taken a strong stand against Federal aid to parochial schools. Further, Kennedy had pledged to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association that he would, if elected, act according to his own views, "*in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictate.*"

In the first months of the New Frontier, the President had kept his promise to the Texas clergymen. The nation's first Roman Catholic Chief Executive had been decisive and adamant in opposing severe pressure from the hierarchy of his own Church. Because he acted in accordance with

¹Sorensen, p. 361.

²New York Times, July 19, 1961, p. 1.

³"Where Do We Go from Here?" America, Aug. 26, 1961, p. 652.

his own views, President Kennedy saw his Federal aid to education bill go down to defeat in the Congress.

Kennedy summed up his views on possible clerical pressure and the Presidency in what was to become the most controversial paragraphs of the entire address:¹

But if the time should come -- and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible -- when my office would require me to either violate my conscience, or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office, and I hope any other conscientious public servant would do likewise.

The Bostonian himself, however, seemed unable to comprehend why such a statement should engender critical comment. The first time the Senator had expressed such a view of conscience, oath, and public service was in the Look magazine interview with Fletcher Knebel. On that occasion Kennedy said:

*Whatever one's religion in his private life may be, for the officeholder, nothing takes precedence over his oath to uphold the Constitution and all its parts -- including the First Amendment and the strict separation of church and state.*²

When the Catholic press criticized Senator Kennedy's position on religion and public office after the appearance of the Look article and accused the Bostonian of over-accommodating fearful Protestants, the Senator called the entire storm of reaction "academic toe dancing. They ask me whether I really mean that my oath of office comes above my

¹Chapter VIII is devoted largely to critical reaction to the speech, including comment on this particular paragraph.

²Look, Mar. 3, 1959, p. 17.

conscience," he lamented. "Well, of course there's no conflict. It's part of your conscience to meet your oath."¹

Senator Kennedy's second excursion into the future concerned the Presidential election less than two months away. Expressing again his hope that the nation might choose its new leader on the "real issues," the Democratic aspirant uttered what was, perhaps, the most memorable sentence of the address:

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40,000,000 Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, and in the eyes of our own people.

In the spring of 1960, Kennedy had expressed similar sentiments to the nation's newspaper editors. In that discussion of the religious issue he said, "Are we to admit to the world -- worse still, are we to admit to ourselves -- that one third of our population is forever barred from the White House?"²

Despite this final appeal that election issues take precedence over the ecclesiastical, John Kennedy's Roman Catholicism was, of course, a very real and important factor in the outcome of the 1960 Presidential race. In the days and months that followed November 8, the politicians, statisticians, and behavioral scientists would digest and redigest the election returns in order to determine how the young Senator from Massachusetts had been able to ascend to a position never before reached by a member of his communion.

¹ Burns, p. 245.

² U.S. News & World Report, May 2, 1960, p. 92.

The statistical results of the closest Presidential election in American history show that John F. Kennedy polled 34,221,389 popular votes to Richard M. Nixon's 34,108,151. A percentage breakdown shows 50.08 percent of the major party vote in the Democratic column. Kennedy garnered 303 electoral votes and Nixon, 219. (Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia polled the remaining fifteen tallies in the Electoral College.) It has been observed that a shift of 9,000 votes in Illinois and 10,000 in Missouri would have been sufficient to throw the election into the House of Representatives, where the Byrd electors would have determined the outcome.

One of the earliest assessments of religious voting in the 1960 election was made by Cabell Phillips of the New York Times:

There appears to be a narrow consensus among the experts that it [religion] helped Mr. Kennedy a little more than it hurt him -- that he gained more from the massing of Catholic strength where it is concentrated, than he lost through Protestant defections elsewhere.¹

For support, Phillips points out that Kennedy carried seven of the eleven states in which Roman Catholics constitute thirty or more percent of the population: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Louisiana. The Senator also piled up large majorities in Catholic urban centers that allowed him to claim victory in several states by narrow margins. Among these cities and states were New York City, 62.9 percent and New York, 52.8 percent; Philadelphia, 57.2 percent and Pennsylvania, 51.3 percent; Chicago, 63.7 percent and Illinois, 50.6 percent.

¹ New York Times, Nov. 20, 1961, p. B-5.

Phillips concedes that religion may have cost the Democrats the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma, but concludes that Democratic losses in the South were not so great as originally feared because of the solid bloc of Negro voters casting Democratic ballots.

The Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan analyzed the 1956 national election, using a sample, chosen by strict probability methods, of 1763 voters. In 1960, the same sample, now reduced by about ten percent with death as the principal cause of reduction, was again studied. Table 2 shows the vote change in the electorate in the 1956 and 1960 elections.

TABLE 2
VOTE CHANGE IN THE 1956 AND 1960 ELECTIONS¹

1960 vote. for	1956 vote for		Total
	Stevenson %	Eisenhower %	
Kennedy	33	17	50
Nixon	6	44	50
	<u>39</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>100</u>

The religious significance of the cross-over ballots in the 1956 and 1960 elections is as follows:

Vote change between 1956 and 1960 follows religious lines very closely. Within the 6 percent who followed a Stevenson-Nixon path (Table 2), 90 percent are Protestant and only 8 percent are Catholic. Among the larger group of Eisenhower-Kennedy changers, how-

¹Philip Converse et al., "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election," American Political Science Review, LV (June, 1961), 272.

ever, only 40 percent are Protestant and close to 60 percent are Catholic.¹

Overall, Eisenhower and Nixon were essentially even in attracting the Protestant vote: Protestants voted sixty-four percent Republican in 1956 and sixty-three percent G.O.P. in 1960. John F. Kennedy succeeded, however, in recapturing the Catholic vote as he piled up eighty percent of the ballots of Roman Catholics as compared to Stevenson's total of fifty-one percent in 1956.

The 1956 election, it should be pointed out, represents an extremely poor statistical baseline because of the great personal popularity of General Eisenhower. The Survey Research Center solved this measurement problem by analyzing data from several elections. They concluded:

We would expect a Democratic proportion of the two-party popular vote to fall in the vicinity of 53-54 percent. Outside of the South, such a vote would fall short of a 50-50 split with the Republicans; within the South there would be a strong Democratic majority exceeding a 2-to-1 division.²

In analyzing the Catholic vote, the researchers offer the opinion that "normal" Democratic strength among Roman Catholics (assuming the absence of short-term issues) amounts to sixty-three percent of the total. Kennedy, in attracting eighty percent of the votes from members of his faith, picked up a seventeen percent surplus over the "normal" vote. "On such grounds," the authors conclude, "it appears that Kennedy won a vote bonus from Catholics amounting to about four percent of the national two-party vote."³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 274.

³Ibid., p. 275.

John F. Kennedy, however, more than lost these gains in the defections of Protestant Democratic and independent voters who cast their ballots for Richard Nixon. Above a normal defection rate of six percent, the Survey Research Center staff found that the Democrats lost 3.6 percent of the Northern Protestant vote and 17.2 percent of the same vote in the South. The overall findings of the University of Michigan group are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3

OFFSETTING EFFECTS OF THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE¹

Area	% of 2-party vote
<hr/>	
Outside the South, Kennedy's "unexpected" . . .	
Gains from Catholics	5.2%
Losses from Protestant Democrats and Independents.	<u>-3.6%</u>
NET	1.6%
Inside the South, Kennedy's "unexpected" . . .	
Gains from Catholics	0.7%
Losses from Protestant Democrats and Independents.	<u>-17.2%</u>
NET	-16.5%
For the nation as a whole, Kennedy's "unexpected" . . .	
Gains from Catholics	4.3%
Losses from Protestant Democrats and Independents.	<u>-6.5%</u>
NET	-2.2%

¹Ibid., p. 278.

Concerning their conclusion that Kennedy lost 2.2% of the national vote because of his religion, the authors caution that, "There is every reason to believe that these preliminary estimates under-estimate the importance of religion in the 1960 vote and, in particular, under-estimate the magnitude of the anti-Catholic vote."¹

A major weakness of the Converse et al. study is that it fails to convert its findings from the popular vote to the Electoral College vote, and it is the latter vote that elects Presidents. The only breakdown made in the national tally discriminates between South and non-South. Paul T. David challenges this dichotomy by asking, "whether any conceivable Presidential nominee of the Democratic party could reasonably have been expected to poll a normal Democratic vote in all parts of the country at the same time."²

The study would be more comprehensive if it presented a more detailed breakdown of the data relating to the religious vote in the 1960 election. Even the terms, Protestant and Catholic, have been questioned. Davidowicz and Goldstein, observing that Germans, Scandinavians, and Irish--all groups of the "Old Immigration"--supported Kennedy, while Tennessee fundamentalists--"Old Stock Americans"--did not

¹Ibid.

²The failure of Lyndon B. Johnson in the South in 1964, while piling up the greatest majority in American history, exemplifies the difficulty of appealing to all segments of the Democratic spectrum. Paul T. David, "The Political Changes of 1960-1961," in The Presidential Election and Transition, 1960-1961, ed. by Paul T. David (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1961), p. 323.

suggest that new labels may be in order. "Old Immigrant and Old Stock American may be more relevant political categories than Protestant and Catholic," they conclude.¹

V. O. Key, Jr., raised a pertinent point when he suggested "the existence of some type of regional differentiation" between Roman Catholics of the Northeast and those of the Far West regions of our country. "It seems probable," he observes, "that Northeastern Catholics behave differently from those of the Far West."²

Even the Catholic candidate himself was aware of the differences of those within his own Church. When both Presidential aspirants appeared at Cardinal Spellman's Al Smith Dinner in 1960, Kennedy mentioned to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that the wealthy Catholics present obviously preferred a conservative Quaker to a liberal of their own communion. "It all goes to show," he said, "that, when the chips are down, money counts more than religion."³

In view of the strength of the data compiled by the Survey Research Center and other quantitative scholars, it would be very difficult to argue that John Kennedy did not lose popular votes because of his faith. Electoral votes may be another matter, however.

A reading of the results of the balloting in the fourteen swing states set forth in the Bailey Memorandum is most interesting. Table 4 lists these key states in descending order of the Democratic percentage of the 1960 Presidential vote.

¹Lucy S. Dawidowicz and Leon J. Goldstein, Politics in a Pluralist Democracy (New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, 1963), p. 96.

²V. O. Key, Jr., "Interpreting the Election Results," in David, p. 175.

³Schlesinger, p. 72.

TABLE 4

FOURTEEN KEY STATES WITH ELECTORAL VOTES AND
DEMOCRATIC PERCENTAGE OF 1960 POPULAR VOTE

State	Electoral Vote	% Democratic
Rhode Island	4	63.6
Massachusetts	16	60.4
Connecticut	8	53.7
Maryland	9	53.6
New York	45	52.6
Pennsylvania	32	51.2
Michigan	20	51.0
Minnesota	11	50.7
New Jersey	16	50.4
Illinois	27	50.1
DEMOCRATIC TOTAL	188	
California	32	49.7
Montana	4	48.7
Wisconsin	12	48.1
Ohio	25	46.7
REPUBLICAN TOTAL	73	

Senator Kennedy captured ten of the fourteen states and thereby gained sixty-two percent of his actual electoral votes (188 out of 303) or seventy percent of the total needed for election (188 out of 269). Thus, while holding Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas—with a total of eighty-nine electoral votes—in the South, Kennedy was able to take ten of the fourteen swing states with large Catholic populations and, with them, win the election. In eight of those states with total electoral delegates numbering 168, Kennedy's margin ranged from 0.1 percent to 3.7 percent. Given the Survey Research Center's figure that the Democratic nominee gained 1.6 percent of the popular vote on the religious issue in the non-Southern states, the Catholic populations in these states may well have comprised

the margin of victory. Indeed, in five of the states, holding 106 of the electoral votes, the winning Democratic percentage was less than the 1.6 figure.

Bernard C. Hennessy cites the work of Converse et al. and concludes:

Though various motivations and vote influences have not and cannot be fully explained, the most careful analysis seems to show that Senator Kennedy, had he not been a Catholic, would have been elected by a two-party majority considerably greater than the 50.1 percent he received.¹

Hennessy, however, falls into the same error as does the Survey Research Center. Presidents of the United States are not elected by popular vote. Had the religious issue been removed from the 1960 election, John F. Kennedy may very well have taken the popular vote while Richard M. Nixon might have won the election.

Senator Kennedy concluded his address by quoting the Presidential oath of office—observing, as he did so, that it is nearly identical to the oath administered to Congressmen and Senators. The recitation of this oath is, as previously mentioned, the only direct quotation to be found in the entire speech. The oath was also a favorite Kennedy theme in remarks on the religious issue in the West Virginia Primary. On a television broadcast from Charleston on May 8, the candidate invoked both the laws of man and the laws of God:

So when any man stands on the steps of the Capitol and takes the oath of office of President, he is swearing to support the separation of church and state, he puts one hand on the Bible and raises the other hand to God as he takes the oath. And if he breaks his oath, he is not only committing a crime against the Constitution,

¹Bernard C. Hennessy, Public Opinion (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1965), p. 206.

for which Congress can impeach him-- and should impeach him-- but he is committing a sin against God. A sin against God, for he has sworn on the Bible.¹

In another campaign address that included many of the thoughts expressed at Houston, the Massachusetts Senator stated that his purpose in campaigning in West Virginia was to express his ideas concerning his his faith and the Presidency to a populace that was overwhelmingly Protestant.

I am sure that here in this state of West Virginia that no one believes that I'd be a candidate for the Presidency if I didn't think I could keep my oath of office. Now, you cannot tell me that on the day I was born, it was said I could never run for President because I wouldn't meet my oath of office. I came to the state of West Virginia which has fewer numbers of my co-religionists than any state in the Union. I could not have come here if I didn't feel that I was going to get complete opportunity to run for office as a fellow American in this state. I would not run for it, if in any way, I didn't feel I could do the job.²

John F. Kennedy appeared before the gathering of clergy in Houston for reasons that were similar to his rationale for entering the Democratic primary in West Virginia. He accepted the invitation of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association to demonstrate to those of non-Catholic faith that, as a Roman Catholic, he could indeed "*solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, so help me God.*"

¹Settel, p. 107.

²John F. Kennedy: Self-Portrait (New York: Caedmon Records, 1964), Side 1, Band 3.

CHAPTER VII

ANY CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE, I THINK, SHOULD SUBMIT
HIMSELF TO THE QUESTIONS OF ANY REASONABLE MAN

Immediately following the reading of the prepared text, the candidate submitted himself to the questions of the reasonable men assembled before him. That the Senator had been able to complete his address was a source of relief to his aides.

Kennedy's voice had been a matter of concern to the Democratic campaign staff in the weeks that preceded the Houston appearance. The candidate had contracted a virus during the Convention in Los Angeles in July, and a resulting throat infection had lingered through a period of rest at Hyannis Port. Kennedy left Cape Cod on August 7 to return to Washington for a special session of Congress. On the Senate floor, the nominee communicated with his colleagues by writing notes as he tried to avoid using his voice. At a press conference on August 20, Kennedy answered, "I have recovered," to a reporter's question concerning his throat.¹

Nevertheless, a speech therapist was retained as a member of the campaign party. Professor David Blair McClosky of the Boston University School of Fine and Applied Arts, described the Senator's problem as

¹New York Times, July 21, 1960, p. 52.

"a matter of breathing." The instructor said Kennedy needed to learn "breathing from the diaphragm and taking care with his timing."¹

A strained quality was noticed in the candidate's voice in the California whistle-stop swing in early September. In reporting on the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium rally that concluded the tour, Time magazine wrote: "Jack Kennedy was visibly weary, with deep circles under his eyes and an ominous hoarseness creeping into his voice."² Professor McClosky assessed his pupil's progress on September 10:

Our problem comes down to this -- anyone who has to talk for ten-and-a-half hours, as the Senator did the day before yesterday -- and yesterday was just about as bad -- is subject to great strain on his voice.

Also, as on the whistle-stop train, when you keep going from the cold air of the air-conditioned car to 90 degrees outside and back again, you are bound to have some fatigue. There is absolutely nothing wrong pathologically. A doctor examined Sen. Kennedy this morning, and he is in A-1 condition.

If you don't use your diaphragmatic breathing, your voice gets stuffed up in the throat, and there is pinching. It is all a matter of training, like a singer or actor. Sen. Kennedy will be in good shape again Monday. It's just a case of being tired, and next week won't be so rough. There won't be any whistle-stopping.³

John Kennedy, however, was taking no chances. As the Democratic campaign staff flew to Texas on Sunday night, work continued on the address to be delivered to the Houston ministers. Kennedy's contributions and questions were written on a tablet as he again tried to spare his voice.

¹Demore, p. 204.

²Time, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 23.

³New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 11, 1960.

In the Lone Star State, true to Professor McClosky's word, the candidate was in fine voice. Despite a full day of travel and speech-making across Texas, Kennedy, as he faced the Houston ministers, gave no evidence of the fatigue or stridency that had been noted the week before. He read his prepared text without noticeable strain, and his voice remained clear and strong as he answered questions from the floor.

Despite the opinion of Rabbi Robert I. Kahn of the Temple Emanu El of Houston that "After Senator Kennedy read his statement, there were no questions to be asked,"¹ seven of Kahn's brother clergymen chose to address queries to the Democratic nominee.² According to the ground rules of the occasion, those who wished to ask questions were to raise their hands and be recognized by Herbert Meza. They would then go to one of three microphones that had been set up in the aisles of the Crystal Ballroom and direct their questions to the Senator himself. The questioners were to identify themselves by name and city. Only ministers were permitted to ask questions.³

In his description of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association meeting of September 12, 1960, Theodore Sorensen writes, "After the speech came a barrage of questions, none of them wholly friendly."⁴ A reading of the give-and-take between the politician and the parsons supports Sorensen's judgment.

¹ Houston Chronicle, Sept. 15, 1960.

² For a complete text of the question-and-answer period, see Appendix B.

³ Meza interview.

⁴ Sorensen, p. 191.

The seven clergymen who interrogated Kennedy in the forty-minute session addressed questions on five subjects. Two ministers inquired about the Poling incident, and two others asked questions relating to the separation of church and state. One pastor was concerned about persecution of Protestants in Spain and Latin American nations. Another cleric questioned Kennedy regarding Catholic teaching on mental reservation.¹ Finally, one minister who seemed to have forgotten the purpose of the gathering, chose to probe the candidate's views on right to work laws.

As was previously mentioned, John Kennedy seemed to anticipate certain questions; and he presented at least partial answers in the text of his address. The candidate's statement that he believed in a President *"who can attend any ceremony, service or dinner his office may appropriately require him to fulfill,"* and his cogent and complete answers to questions regarding the Poling incident (see Chapter IV) indicate careful briefing and preparation on this subject. When the Rev. Glenn Norman of Corpus Christi sought information about pressure from Cardinal Dougherty in Kennedy's rejection of Poling's invitation, however, it might well be assumed that the Senator spoke with more courtesy than conviction when he prefaced his answer with the words, "I will be delighted to explain."

Similarly, the candidate had at least touched on the subject of the question asked by Max Gaulke regarding protection of Protestant

¹Mental reservation is the term usually employed to describe the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that communicants may knowingly lie to those individuals who have no right to the truth.

missionaries in Catholic countries when he proclaimed his opposition to religious coercion in other lands. Kennedy had, in fact, strengthened his original assertion by adding the sentence, *"And that goes for any persecution at any time, by anyone, in any country"* (see Chapter VI). In addition, the Democratic nominee supplied a direct answer to Gaulke's question pledging to use his "influence as President of the United States to permit, to encourage the development of freedom all over the world." Among the freedoms Kennedy deemed important was "the right of free religious practice."

Throughout his preliminary remarks, Senator Kennedy had affirmed his belief in the separation of church and state as well as his support for the First Amendment and its guarantees of religious freedom. In the interrogation period, two queries, from different angles, were addressed to the Catholic candidate regarding church-state relations. E. E. Westmoreland, a figure well known in Houston as the pastor of the South Main Baptist Church, read a copy of a resolution passed by a Baptist group in St. Louis:

With deep sincerity and in Christian grace, we plead with Senator John F. Kennedy as the person presently concerned in this matter to appeal to Cardinal Cushing, Mr. Kennedy's own hierarchical superior of Boston, to present to the Vatican Senator Kennedy's statement relative to the separation of church and state in the United States and religious freedom as separated in the Constitution of the United States, in order that the Vatican may officially authorize such a belief for all Roman Catholics in the United States.

Westmoreland's recitation was followed by applause from the audience. Kennedy, however, was not swayed by the audience's response and answered frankly:

May I just say that as I do not accept the right of any, as I said, ecclesiastical official, to tell me what I shall do in the sphere of my public responsibility as an elected official, I do not propose to also to ask [sic] Cardinal Cushing to ask the Vatican to take some action.

The candidate's reply also drew applause and was consistent with his earlier remark, *"I do not speak for my church on public matters -- and the church does not speak for me."*

The second questioner on the subject of church-state relations instructed the future President in Roman Catholic law. Robert McLaren,¹ a Presbyterian, cited the Syllabus of Errors, which he specified to be still binding on all Catholics according to the Catholic Encyclopedia. He then launched a three-part question on the relationship of the Catholic Church and the state, at one point citing "Point forty-six" on the freedom of intellect and science.

Kennedy, wisely, refused to be drawn onto unfamiliar ground and declined to argue the meanings of obscure ecclesiastical writings. He stood, instead, on the statement of the National Catholic Welfare Committee of 1948. "That in my judgment," he asserted, "is the view held by Catholics in this country. They support the Constitutional separation of church and state and are not in error in that regard."

President John C. Bennett of Union Theological Seminary of New York commented on the type of question raised by McLaren in an editorial in

¹Mr. McLaren's knowledge of Catholic theology was no better than Mr. Kennedy's. The Syllabus of Errors, which he identified as the work of Pope Leo XIX, was composed of the pronouncements of Pope Pius IX and was issued in December of 1864. In addition, history knows no Leo XIX. The last Pontiff bearing that name was Leo XIII. Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), pp. 1099-1101.

Christianity and Crisis. In the Protestant theologian's view, the Church was, in a sense, bringing these reactions on itself.

Let it be said that the Roman Church has itself to thank for many of these attitudes. It still gives an outsider the impression of a monolithic body that is burdened with an accumulation of "infallible" statements that are a threat to non-Catholics. Also, the absence of enough public debate among its clerical leaders prevents the world from recognizing how much they differ on major issues. Nor is there a clear repudiation by the more enlightened and religiously morally healthier parts of the Church of those parts that are either decadent or rigid in their civil as well as ecclesiastical intolerance.¹

By far the most antagonistic interrogator was B. E. Howard, a minister of the Church of Christ. Seeking to question the Senator on the issue of mental reservation, Howard began his remarks with a quotation from the Catholic Encyclopedia: "So that a false statement knowingly made to one who has not a right to the truth will not be a lie." The minister then added three more quotations from the Catholic Encyclopedia, one from the Osservatore Romano, and a statement from Pope John XXIII from the St. Louis Review before he was cut short by a voice from the audience, which complained, "I object to this. The time is running out." Howard finally got to the point of his question and asked, simply, "Do you subscribe to the doctrine of mental reservation which I have quoted from the Catholic authorities?"

Once again the Senator answered as a layman. He admitted to not having read the Catholic Encyclopedia, but added, "I don't agree with the statement. I find no difficulty in saying so." The opinions expressed in the Osservatore Romano, the candidate explained, were not

¹John C. Bennett, "The Roman Catholic 'Issue' Again," Christianity and Crisis, Sept. 19, 1960, p. 125.

binding on him. Kennedy then asked his inquisitor to repeat his quotation of Pope John, and Howard replied:

Pope John XXIII only recently stated according to the St. Louis Review, date of December 12, 1958, "Catholics must unite their strength toward the common aid and the Catholic hierarchy has the right and duty of guiding them." Do you subscribe to that?

Kennedy began his answer to the cleric's "have-you-stopped-beating your-wife?" question by expressing his belief that the Pope was speaking about faith and morals. "I would think," he rejoined, "any Baptist minister or Congregational minister has the right and duty to guide his flock." After explaining the difficulty of commenting on a statement without knowing the context in which it was used, Senator Kennedy concluded his answer that he saw nothing in the quotation that meant the Pontiff "could guide me or anyone could direct me in fulfilling my public duty."

Apparently dissatisfied at not receiving a "yes" or "no" answer, the Rev. Mr. Howard uttered a tactless reply: "Thank you, sir. Then you do not agree with the Pope in that statement?"

Kennedy still would not be badgered and again explained that he would not hazard an interpretation of the papal statement without reading it in its entirety. The candidate then affirmed:

I would be glad to state to you that no one can direct me in the fulfillment of my duties as a public official under the United States Constitution. That I am directed to serve the people of the United States, sworn to do so, took an oath to God. That is my flat statement. I would not want to go into details on a sentence which you read to me which I may not understand completely.

The argumentative questions put to the Catholic candidate by the ministers assembled in the Rice Hotel displayed a single-minded view of

the Roman Catholic Church as a monolithic body demanding total submission on the part of its communicants in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs. The day before Kennedy addressed the Houston clergy, the very Rev. Mr. Francis B. Sayre, Dean of Washington Cathedral, discussed this mentality in his sermon to his congregation.

When my friend Dr. Peale cites the awful precedent of what happens in Spain or Colombia today, he misses the point about America. We are not Spain, or Colombia; not bound by a history and tradition that binds us moribundly to the Middle Ages; but we are a new nation, ennobled by a new experiment in a new world, by which we have sought to reflect the fact that God made us all, not just some, in his own image, and that therefore we can trust one another in equality and liberty.¹

A few days later, after the Democratic nominee appeared in the Crystal Ballroom, columnist Walter Lippman applauded Kennedy's stand on church and state, especially his assertion that his position was shared by "the American Catholic Church in the United States with whom I am associated." Lippman commented:

It is not the position of the Spanish Catholic Church in Spain, or the Colombian Catholic Church in Colombia. It is the position not of all American Catholics but of "the overwhelming majority" of them. These are the answers of a brave and truthful man.²

By far, the most surprising and least relevant query put to Senator Kennedy in the interrogation session was that of Canon Howard C. Rutenbar, who questioned the anti-right to work law plank in the 1960

¹Francis B. Sayre, sermon preached in Washington Cathedral, Washington, D.C., Sept. 17, 1960.

²Walter Lippman, "Today and Tomorrow," Washington Post, Sept. 20, 1960, p. A-12.

Democratic platform.¹ (A reading of Kennedy's address reveals absolutely no anticipation of questions regarding closed shops.) The candidate hardly seemed unprepared to discuss labor, however, as he provided a cogent, one-paragraph defense citing Taft-Hartley, the advantages of uniform laws in interstate commerce, and the fact that the anti-right to work provision "has been in the last three platforms."

When the interrogation period ended, there were still ministers in line at the floor microphones waiting to quiz the candidate. Before the meeting began, however, the Rev. George Reck was not sure what the response of the clergymen would be when given the opportunity to ask questions. Reck, therefore, fearful of the possibility of the television cameras transmitting stony silence into thousands of Texas living rooms, planted questions with certain ministers to be read if the session bogged down. "I had a number of questions sent into me," he explains. "I distributed them to the audience in case things fell off. We thought there would be a dull thud, or general resentment."² None of Reck's planted queries, however, was read.

Herbert Meza was the recipient of several long-distance telephone calls from people wanting their questions put to Senator Kennedy. A

¹When questioned eight years after the event about Senator Kennedy's appearance before the Houston clergy, Harris County Democratic official Robert Kilgarlin said, "The one thing that sticks out in my mind about that night was that after Kennedy's great speech on the religious issue, this one minister got up and asked a question about right to work laws."

²Reck interview.

lady from Washington, D.C., requested Meza to "Ask Mr. Kennedy what those nuns are doing that I see walking up and down the corridors of the Pentagon." Another woman called and asked the minister:

'Do you know what's happening in Spain?'

'I said, "Madam, I just happen to have come from four years of missionary service in Spain and Portugal."'

'Oh, then you do know?'

'I know very well.' She hung up on me.

Immediately after the Greater Houston Ministerial Association meeting of September 12, 1960, dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the hostile nature of the questions and the questioners. The New York Times reported:

Association leaders complained bitterly afterward that the questioning of Senator Kennedy had been monopolized in an unduly acrimonious vein, by "extremist" ministers who ordinarily shunned the association meetings.¹

The passage of eight years has done little to change this assessment of the question-and-answer session in the minds of George Reck and Herbert Meza. The Rev. Mr. Meza offers the opinion that "The Baptists"² came in and monopolized the questions immediately. They were not so much interested in answers as making statements." Meza hastens to add that this was just about what he had anticipated. "I expected exactly

¹New York Times, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 32.

²Only three of the seven ministers raising questions at the meeting were, in actuality, Baptists. In Texas parlance, however, the word "Baptist" is virtually synonymous with "fundamentalist." Thus, members of the Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, or other conservative groups are commonly identified with the mammoth Southern Baptist Convention, which has some 2,000,000 members in Texas. Interestingly, non-Baptists in Texas complain of the great influence of the Baptists in local and state affairs much as Protestants in Massachusetts decry the power of Roman Catholics.

what we got—" he adds, "some belligerent questions with an attempt to communicate and indict rather than seek."¹

George Reck says frankly, "I was disappointed in the question-and-answer. I felt that it was very unintelligent." According to Reck, the Baptists came to defend the faith, rather than to gain insight. Reck also thought Herbert Meza's permissive leadership of the question-and-answer period contributed to the problem. "We set up our rules to ask a question-- no statements-- I think Meza was a little too tolerant in that respect. So we had long quotes that wasted a lot of time."²

Through it all--the long quotations, the inflammatory questions, and the hostile attitude of the interrogators--John F. Kennedy handled himself with skill and restraint. He answered even the most prejudicial questions thoroughly and courteously without any display of annoyance. One reporter noted that the only display of irritation to mar the entire evening was not directed by or at the Senator but was exhibited by the audience toward the Rev. Mr. B. E. Howard when he carried several open books to a floor microphone and badgered the candidate with quotations from Catholic writers.

The Senator, in concluding his appearance before the ministers, repeated his gratitude at being invited to address the body. He assured his hearers that he bore no resentment toward those who questioned him regarding his faith. "I don't want anyone to think because they interrogate me on this very important question," said Kennedy, "that I regard that as unfair questioning." He ended the rather tense occasion

¹Meza interview.

²Reck interview.

with a light touch when he drew laughter with the observation: "I am sure I have made no converts to my church." Sustained applause greeted Kennedy's last remarks, and a small crowd of well-wishing clerics surrounded the Democratic candidate as he left the platform.

A few weeks after the event, one Houston clergyman recorded his impressions of the Crystal Ballroom confrontation. In the Rev. John W. Turnbull's introspective comparison of the conduct of the preachers and that of the politician, the preachers definitely came off second best. Turnbull asked:

Was it really the young Senator from Massachusetts who was on trial or was it we? Might not the world see with alarming clarity the contrast between his un-failing patience, dignity, honesty, intelligence, and courtesy, and our own bumbling, strident, and often hopelessly irrelevant interrogation? The grace and gentility which we like to think of as typical of the American, yes even of the Christian spirit -- might the world not see a good deal more of that in his face than in ours, as these faces passed across the television screen? And then what of us who represent ourselves as men of God? Most shattering of all, perhaps, whose loyalty to the Constitution which separates church and state and forbids religious tests to public office was really open to question in these proceedings -- his or ours?¹

¹Turnbull, pp. 33-34.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFTERMATH

In his book The Making of the President 1960, Theodore H. White writes that a Presidential candidate, in making campaign speeches, addresses three distinct audiences. Those audiences are, in ascending order according to size, the personal (or physical) audience, the "strategically calculated audience," and the national audience.

The physical audience, despite its being the smallest of the three, is, according to White, the most important of the bodies reached by the Presidential aspirant. Its importance lies in its ability to provide immediate response to the speaker.

For the candidate, whoever he is, sits at the center of a web of affairs so complex as to be dehumanized; his ideas, his phrases, his finances, his schedules are all prepared for him by others; wherever he pauses to consult with staff, he must already make the detached executive decisions of a President. Thus only the personal audience, below the level of strategic calculation, can give him the one thing he needs most: the response of warmth or frost, of applause or indifference.¹

The middle audience, in White's scheme, is the "strategically calculated audience." This body is essentially comprised of the local populace of the area in which the candidate appears. The residents of

¹White, 305-06.

a state or even a group of states follow the office-seeker's movement by radio, television, and newspapers as he campaigns in their region. The nominee makes use of this exposure to discuss regional issues, support local candidates running on his ticket, and encourage volunteer party workers.

The last and largest of the three audiences is the nation. In an election year, the American people keep track of the candidates by reading newspaper accounts of campaign speeches and seeing film clips on television. The news coverage of speeches is, by and large, a routine affair. "Not for days or weeks," says White, "will the candidate know the effect of any speech or statement on the national mood or on the minority group to which it is specifically addressed."¹

John F. Kennedy, as he stood before the clergymen, reporters, television cameras, and microphones in the Rice Hotel on the evening of September 12, 1960, was addressing all three of these audiences in what may have been the single most important speech of the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. This analysis of the effects of, and reaction to, the address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association will focus on each of the three audiences described by Theodore H. White.

Many reporters who described the confrontation of preacher and politician in the Rice Hotel Crystal Ballroom seemed bent on writing a fairy-tale type story in which the dashing young Senator faced a band of hostile, antagonistic, anti-Catholic bigots and, slowly but surely, won them over until the clergymen, by the end of the evening, had become

¹Ibid., p. 305.

fast friends with the Democratic nominee. Scripps-Howard writer Charles Lucy, for example, was somehow able to discern clergymen from laymen when Kennedy was applauded by the gathering. "Several times his answers drew applause from the crowd fringe -- not ministers -- crowded into the hotel ballroom where he spoke," chronicled Lucey.¹ Theodore White's record states:

He had addressed a sullen, almost hostile audience when he began. He had won the applause of many and the personal sympathies of more; the meeting had closed in respect and friendship.²

It may be that the writers were judging all the ministers present by the demeanor of those who addressed questions to the candidate. Not all of the clerics in attendance, however, were "fighting fundamentalists," opposed to the prospect of a Roman Catholic's taking up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Several Catholic priests, for example, had telephoned officers of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association to ask if they might attend the gathering. They were invited, and many of them came. In addition, in Houston, which is "gut Democratic territory," it is hard to believe that the Rev. Herbert Meza was the only Protestant minister in town who favored the election of the Massachusetts Senator.

Voices raised by clergymen who were present that evening in the Rice Hotel offer a different view than that of the journalists. Both organization-president, George Reck, and vice-president Herbert Meza strongly believe that "the Baptists," by their performance during the

¹ Houston Press, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 4.

² White, p. 313.

meeting and their statements to the press afterwards, gave the Ministerial Association "a bad name." In their reckoning, most of the ministers present were sincerely and respectfully interested in the issues and in hearing what Senator Kennedy had to say.¹

John W. Turnbull writes that a reporter asked him if he did not believe the audience had been rather "cool" in its response to Kennedy. Turnbull could not agree:

It had not seemed so to me; on the contrary, I felt that Mr. Kennedy had evoked a remarkably friendly, sympathetic, even enthusiastic response. His arrival in the room was greeted by standing applause; his answers to several questions were warmly applauded and even cheered not only by the gallery but also by the brethren; when he had finished, he received something approaching an ovation and could hardly get out of the room for the swarm of ministers who crowded around him eager to see him up close, to shake his hand, to speak a word of encouragement.²

The audience, then, which was tense and expectant as described in Chapter I, was also, for the most part, courteous and respectful. Most observers of the occasion, however, were aware only of the seven pastors who arose to ask questions in the interrogation session and not the several hundred who listened in silence.

Sidney Hopkins of the Rice Hotel staff offers a layman's view of the proceedings. "Senator Kennedy's speech in the Crystal Ballroom," he says, "will go down in history as 'Kennedy's debate with the Baptist preachers.'"³ As a summary statement of the speaker's relationship with a small, but vocal portion of his audience, Hopkins' assessment

¹Reck and Meza interviews.

²Turnbull, p. 32.

³Hopkins interview.

is not far from the truth. John F. Kennedy's appearance before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association was, in fact, a mutually exploitative situation.

The Democrats, firstly, sought to exploit the meeting for political gain. The timing of the acceptance of the original invitation, the hiring of the Crystal Ballroom, the attempt to shove the leaders of the Ministerial Association aside to allow Lyndon Johnson to introduce the candidate, and the arranging of television coverage over more than twenty Texas television stations gives ample testimony to the lesser regard the Kennedy staff had for the personal audience. In the Democratic view, seemingly, the physical audience was important only as it provided a background for the television cameras and because from its ranks came those who addressed questions to the candidate.

No less exploitative, however, were those men of the cloth who came bearing questions that sought to editorialize, rather than to inquire. Their attempted exploitation was not political, but ecclesiastical. It was their hope that with their labyrinthine questions, asked in the presence of reporters and television lenses, they could force Kennedy into a conflict between his church and his oath of office. Such a conflict, they believed, might be sufficient to save the White House for Protestantism.

Two of the ministers who questioned the nominee spoke with reporters after the meeting had adjourned. Baptist E. H. Westmoreland said, "I doubt that he changed the views of any ministers present at the meeting."¹

¹New York Times, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 32.

K. Owen White,¹ also a Baptist, who had denounced Kennedy's candidacy from his pulpit, stated, "The issue will continue with the same intensity as before."² Several ministers expressed agreement with their Baptist brethren, while others stated their belief that Kennedy's appearance would serve to alleviate the tensions surrounding the religious issue.

In the absence of any pre- and post-Kennedy in-depth study of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association membership, any attempted assessment of the effect of John F. Kennedy's statements and answers on the opinions of the city's clergy would be hazardous, if not foolhardy. President George Reck, however, offers an interesting personal evaluation of the impact of Senator Kennedy on the clerical body.

In the South we're used to big mouths and a lot of promises. L.B.J. and Sam Rayburn are typical Texas politicians. Kennedy was different because he was intelligent in his approach, direct, and honest, and very sincere, . . . He wasn't just a smart rich boy from the East. I think many of the ministers were disappointed because Kennedy handled himself too well.³

The most conspicuous unit in Kennedy's "strategically calculated" audience was, of course, the State of Texas, which was addressed "live" by television. In 1960, the Lone Star State was allotted twenty-four electoral votes. In a state in which the combined membership of congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Church of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ exceeded the number of Presidential voters

¹A few days before the gathering took place, Dr. White told George Reck that he would attend although he did not believe "any good could be accomplished." Reck interview.

²Houston Chronicle, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 8.

³Reck interview.

(2,588,000 to 2,312,000), the importance of the Catholic Senator's appeal is difficult to overestimate.

The primary responsibility for keeping Texas in the Democratic column in November was not that of the Presidential candidate, but of his running mate, Lyndon B. Johnson. Although there are as many accounts of the selection of the Senate Majority Leader to the second spot on the Democratic ticket as there are writers who reported on the event, all observers agree that Senator Johnson was selected for the balance he could bring the ticket as a Southerner. In September, in the heat of the campaign, the bitterness that marred the relations of the Texas Democrats and the Kennedy forces at the Los Angeles Convention was forgotten. House Speaker Sam Rayburn lauded John Kennedy and blasted the Houston clergy. Identifying himself as a "hard-shell Baptist," Rayburn said of the ministers, "They only asked silly questions. As we say in my part of Texas, he ate 'em blood raw."¹

Senator Johnson, the second Texan to occupy the second spot on a Democratic ticket headed by a Harvard graduate in the twentieth century (John Nance Garner, who ran with Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 was the first), took the liberty of speaking for the entire Lone Star State:

I think he has settled the religious question once and for all. His answers can leave no doubt in Texans' minds how John Kennedy stands on the separation of church and state.²

While Kennedy's statement of his views may not have ended the doubts of all Texans, a New York Times survey indicated there was some impact

¹Houston Chronicle, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 8.

²Houston Press, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 1.

on "borderline" skeptics. Citing the results of a "state-wide canvass of opinion" (the methodology of which, unfortunately, was not described), the Times summarized:

Salient indications of the survey were:

1. Senator Kennedy helped his cause rather than hurting it by his ticklish appearance before a Protestant clerical forum studded with militant anti-Catholics.
2. While eliciting wide-spread approval of his personal good faith, he did little to convince "hard shell" sectarians that Catholic church influences and policies can be excluded from the realm of government.
3. He disturbed some conservative ministers by his rejection of religious influence on public office.
4. The occasion produced little indication of diminishing the sectarian controversy which has been seething throughout predominantly Protestant Texas, ever since the Massachusetts Senator's nomination.¹

The man who is, perhaps, the most influential clergyman in all of Texas remained unimpressed by Kennedy's words to the Houston clergy. The Rev. Dr. Wally A. Criswell of the First Baptist Church of Dallas² said of the Bostonian, "The more I listen to him the more I 'Ha-ha.'"³

Criswell was later interviewed for a special "religion and politics" edition of the weekly Texas Observer. He gave the two reporters an interesting description of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association meeting of September 12. Admitting that he had not been present, Dr. Criswell said he had talked with a friend who did attend.

He told me that it was the biggest farce he ever saw in his life. On the right side was the press, and on the left side a bunch of labor toughs and priests

¹ New York Times, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 32.

² On June 5, 1968, Dr. Criswell was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

³ Dallas Morning News, Sept. 14, 1960, Sec. 4, p. 2.

in ordinary clothes -- anyway to get him elected!¹

Describing himself as a Democrat who had voted against Roosevelt, Truman, and Stevenson, the pastor of the world's largest Baptist Church declared that no Roman Catholic should be able to hold public office. When asked his reaction to Senator Kennedy's promise that *"No power or threat of punishment"* could cause him to violate his conscience, Criswell said flatly, "He's lyin' about that."²

It may well be that the eloquence and thoroughness of John F. Kennedy's defense of his faith and his candidacy before the clergymen of Houston was paid no greater tribute than this accusation by the closed-minded preacher of the First Baptist Church of Dallas. Criswell, evidently, was able to find no flaw in the arguments of the young Senator. His only recourse, therefore, was to brand Kennedy a liar.

Much of the religious-based opposition to the Democratic ticket continued after September 12, much as it had before. Democratic National Committee Chairman Henry M. Jackson charged that "an organization of 'Texans for Nixon' are spending \$1,000 a day on twenty-four radio stations to appeal for religious intolerance."³ Carr P. Collins, named by Jackson as the head of the group sponsoring the broadcast, refused to comment on Jackson's charges, except to say that the broadcasts would continue.

The Texas Observer also commented on Carr Collins' "Texans for Nixon" association. A phrase heard repeatedly on the broadcasts was,

¹ Texas Observer, Sept. 30, 1960, p. 2.

² Ibid.

³ New York Times, Sept. 17, 1960, p. 14.

"Do not be misled by Kennedy and his Catholic friends."¹

While the anti-Catholic extremists continued their activities, the Catholic candidate drew record crowds as he completed his brief campaign tour of the Lone Star State. Political writers and columnists saw Kennedy's televised Houston appearance as a primary factor in the enthusiastic crowds that greeted him in Fort Worth, Dallas, and Texarkana. Houston columnist Bo Byers noted that crowds estimated by police at 100,000 and 150,000 assembled to see and hear Kennedy and concluded:

A great many people are saying Sen. John Kennedy's two-day sweep across Texas turned the tide in favor of a Democratic presidential victory in this state come Nov. 8.

They base this opinion primarily on two points; one, an apparently very favorable public reaction to Kennedy's Houston statement concerning the religious issue; two, the tremendous crowds that swarmed to see him.²

Perhaps the best assessment of the Texas political scene in the wake of Senator Kennedy's address to the Houston ministers was by James Reston. The New York Times columnist reported, "Kennedy is picking up the anti-preacher vote, which is very large."³

Whether the 1960 vote was anti-preacher or pro-Kennedy-Johnson, Texas voted Democratic in a national election for the first time since 1948. By the narrow margin of 46,233 out of 2,311,670 ballots cast, the Democrats captured the twenty-four Texan electoral votes.

¹ Texas Observer, Sept. 30, 1960, p. 9.

² Houston Chronicle, Sept. 18, 1960.

³ New York Times, Sept. 16, 1960, p. 30.

Texas clergyman, however, certainly had no monopoly on generating a possible "anti-preacher" vote. Most of the nation had never heard of W. A. Criswell, but the names of Norman Vincent Peale and Daniel Poling were known all over America. If John F. Kennedy's "strategically calculated audience" embraced 2,300,000 Texas voters, then it also included a small group of East Coast Protestant clergymen. Kennedy accepted the invitation of Herbert Meza to address the Houston ministers not primarily because of anti-Catholic issues raised on the Gulf Coast, but in response to the statement of the National Conference for Religious Freedom. The candidate knew that Peale, Poling, and other spokesmen and officials of the N.C.R.F. and the P.O.A.U. would not be able to escape the words he spoke in the Crystal Ballroom. He could rest assured that, in a ritual that is as predictable as the rotation of the earth, newsmen with their probing pencils and microphones would greet these reverend clergymen with copies of his statement and record their comments for the afternoon editions and the six o'clock news.

Dr. Peale, however, was not to be immediately available for comment. On September 9, the day after the publication of the Peale Group statement, the pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church tested the weather of current events and observed that a high pressure ecclesiastical system (the National Conference for Religious Freedom) was about to collide with an even higher pressure political system (the Democratic Party). Realizing that the coming storm bore him nothing but ill, the author of The Power of Positive Thinking left word with his secretary that he was going on a "religious retreat" where, hopefully, the weather would be calmer.

The Peale Group, however, lauded Senator Kennedy's address to the Houston clergy. The Rev. Donald Gill, on leave of absence to serve as executive director of the National Conference for Religious Freedom, released a statement calling the speech "the most complete, unequivocal and reassuring statement which could be expected of any person in his position."¹ Gill told reporters that Dr. Peale had nothing to do with the drafting of the statement "because he was on a religious retreat and could not be reached."²

Daniel Poling described Kennedy's stand as "courageous." While expressing reservations about the nature and power of the Roman Catholic Church, the editor of the Christian Herald said he was of the opinion that the Democratic candidate was completely sincere in his remarks on church and state. He would not, however, express his beliefs as to whether the Catholic nominee would be able to withstand hierarchical pressure if elected. Poling concluded: "I'm in favor of dropping the issue as of today."³

Three days after the Houston address on the religious issue, a statement by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was released by the National Conference for Religious Freedom. Because the minister himself was still on his religious retreat, his views were made public by Donald H. Gill. Peale's statement announced his resignation from the N.C.R.F. as well as his attempt at resigning his post at Marble Collegiate Church. The elders and deacons of the congregation, however, refused to accept the pastor's resignation.

¹Ibid., Sept. 14, 1960, p. 33.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 34.

Peale's press release contained a rather curious version of the minister's involvement in the group that bore his name as well as an astounding statement of his views on religion and politics. "I am strongly opposed," Peale had written (presumably with a straight face), to any admixture of religious discussion and political partisanship." The cleric explained that he had attended the Conference as an invited guest "innocently, like a babe in the woods." He minimized his role as a session leader and official spokesman for the body and decried the fact that it had been dubbed the "Peale Group." "I was not duped," said the minister-author, "I was just stupid."¹

Thus, in a performance that did something less than cover himself with glory, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale retreated from the religious fray with a proclamation of his own innocence and stupidity.

John Kennedy made no public reference to Dr. Peale or the Peale Group except for an applause and laughter-producing line in an address to the New York Liberal Party in which he characterized the Republican platform as "The Power of Positive Thinking."² Democratic Chairman Henry Jackson, however, was not willing to let the issue die. Senator Jackson repeatedly called on Richard Nixon to repudiate the namesake of the Peale Group, saying that the Republican nominee had "no honorable alternative" but to state his opposition to the support of Dr. Peale and "any other person who would violate the Bill of Rights of the Constitution by proposing to make a man's religion a test of political office."³

¹ New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 16, 1960.

² New York Times, Sept. 15, 1960, p. 29.

³ Boston Globe, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 13.

The Vice President had appeared on the NBC television program, "Meet the Press" on September 11, but had refused to comment on Dr. Peale. In the days following the Houston speech by his rival, Nixon still refused to comment on the issue.

In his book Six Crises, Richard Nixon broke his silence on the Peale affair and presented his reasons for not refuting the minister.

I had my staff look into the circumstances of the meeting - which had taken place in Washington on September 7 - and discovered that Dr. Peale had attended it immediately upon his return from a European trip, that he had in fact presided only at one brief session rather than the entire meeting, and that he had not personally participated in the drafting of the controversial statement of opinion. He had signed it as a member of the group, doubtless sharing the general opinion expressed but not realizing the full political implications. Under all these circumstances, I decided it would be unfair for me to attack him personally for the statement and that the proper course of action was for me to use my next public appearance -- I was scheduled to be on "Meet the Press" that coming Sunday, September 11 -- to disassociate myself from the position Dr. Peale and his colleagues had taken in the statement. I knew that he was heartbroken over the incident and I felt that while his judgment had been bad, his motives were above question. He had been punished enough and I refused to add to his embarrassment for what would have been purely political purposes on my part.¹

Thus, the antagonist of Helen Gehagen Douglas, the prosecutor of Alger Hiss, and the debater of Nikita Khrushchev refused to repudiate Norman Vincent Peale and "add to his embarrassment."

The "strategically calculated audience addressed by John F. Kennedy on September 12, 1960, had been as large as all of Texas and as small as a band of Protestant clergymen. While a meaningful indicator of the

¹Richard M. Nixon, Six Crises (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1962), p. 328.

Democrat's impact on the voting populace of Texas is lacking, the fact remains that when the returns were in, the Lone Star State had voted for a Democrat for President for the first time in twelve years. The effects of Kennedy's message on the more select portion of this middle audience was easier to determine. These "respectable" Protestant sources whose raising of the religious issue had aroused great concern in the Democratic campaign staff had now either praised the Senator's statement on church and state (Daniel Poling and the Peale Group), or abdicated their positions as self-appointed critics of the Roman Catholic nominee and his Church (Daniel Poling, the Peale Group, and Norman Vincent Peale).¹ Kennedy's impact on this portion of his "strategically calculated audience" had been considerable.

The largest of the three audiences described by Theodore White is the nation itself. In most cases, he opines, it is "days or weeks"² before the candidate himself can determine the effects of his words on the general populace. The Democratic nominee's address to the clergy of Houston, however, was no ordinary campaign speech. Kennedy's confrontation with the ministers in the Gulf Coast City had been widely anticipated by the press. On September 13 the story of the meeting in the Crystal Ballroom was page one copy, and scores of newspapers printed the texts of both the address and the question-and-answer session.

¹The National Conference for Religious Freedom, to be sure, continued to function throughout the campaign. Its activities after September 12, however, were far less conspicuous than they had been earlier.

²White, p. 305.

Reaction was not long in coming to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. Literally hundreds of letters¹ were addressed to the clerical body from points all over the United States with a sprinkling of messages from foreign countries. Many people wrote in relating accounts of dishonest practices by Roman Catholic politicians in their own local areas. Numerous writers enclosed anti-Catholic tracts and articles, while others parroted the words of various polemical publications. Although the tenor of the majority of the letters was anti-Catholic and anti-Kennedy, there were several Catholics who decried the religious issue in the election. More than one writer encouraged the Ministerial Association to publish his letter so that all of the public could read his views. One rabid Kennedy supporter of unknown religious persuasion from Santa Monica, California, wrote every day for four days—his messages were postmarked September 13, 14, 15, and 16. Another man sent two telegrams.

The bulk of the letters were from people who acknowledged seeing the program on television. A reading of the communiques supports the oft-repeated truism that people hear what they want to hear. A number of anti-Catholic letters lauded the Greater Houston Ministerial Association for their forthright opposition to Senator Kennedy, while others of the same religious viewpoint castigated the clerical body for aiding and abetting the Presidential aspirations of a Roman Catholic. Similarly, pro-Kennedy writers condemned the Association for bigotry in their handling of the meeting, while a few—a very few—complimented the

¹Collections of letters received by Rev. Mr. Maza and Rev. Mr. Reck on behalf of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.

Houston clergy for setting up a session at which the religious issue could be discussed.

Virtually the entire range of human emotions is displayed in the correspondence addressed to the Houston clergy. More than one writer declined to sign his name for fear of Catholic recrimination if Kennedy should win the election. One especially pathetic letter was received from a lady who opposed Senator Kennedy because of her experience with a Roman Catholic physician who had treated her for a fractured skull and "injected brain waves" which had caused her to "develop poisoning." When she pleaded with the doctor to hospitalize her, he retaliated by striking her with his fist. She concluded that she had spent her life savings on doctor bills and wanted to die. A woman from New Orleans who was rabidly anti-Catholic vented her spleen on Herbert Meza with the ultimate in Southern insult, "If you have a daughter, I hope she marries a nigger."

Many of the letter writers as well as the editorial writers were concerned about the repeated showing of the film of the Houston ministers' meeting on television. It was the opinion of great numbers of the American people that the Democrats were exploiting the religious issue for political advantage.

During his nationally televised appearance on "Meet the Press" the day before Kennedy faced the cameras in Houston, Richard M. Nixon proposed a "cut-off date" for the end of the discussion on the religious issue. The Vice President acknowledged, however, that he saw no way that his rival could refrain from commenting on charges such as those

raised by the Peale Group.¹ Nixon expressed his belief that religion could best be kept out of the election by the refusal of the candidates to discuss it. Senator Kennedy expressed his agreement with the position taken by Mr. Nixon and proposed that the two candidates cease discussing religion "right now."²

The Republican candidate's proposal drew a mixed reaction from the nation's press. The Chicago Tribune, not surprisingly, absolved Mr. Nixon of all blame in keeping religion a live issue while firing an editorial broadside at Kennedy for his statements on church and state.³ The Nashville Tennessean, which supported the Democratic ticket, scoffed at Nixon's cut-off proposal:

That Mr. Nixon could stop entirely the operations of the motley army which marches under his flag, as it were, is beyond expectation. But he will never get anywhere by washing his hands of the controversy, as he is seemingly anxious to do.⁴

Perhaps the viewpoint of the majority of the nation's editors was that although the Vice President's proposed termination of religious discussion was desirable, it was, unfortunately, unworkable. In the words of the Washington Evening Star:

It is not Mr. Nixon or Mr. Kennedy who raised the issue in the first place. It is not they who will keep it alive. And as the new questions are raised by others, which call for some response from them, they will be hard put as candidates to evade them through silence. It is unfortunate that this is true, but we fear that it is true.⁵

¹ New York Times, Sept. 12, 1960, pp. 1-19.

² Ibid., p. 19.

³ Chicago Tribune, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 16.

⁴ Nashville Tennessean, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 8.

⁵ Washington Evening Star, Sept. 13, 1960, p. A-10.

Both major candidates were clearly caught in a "damned-if-he-does-or-damned-if-he-doesn't" situation. If John F. Kennedy were to ignore his Roman Catholicism completely in his public utterances, he would be at the mercy of those who raised the issue against him and could very well lose the election on religious grounds. If, however, he were to speak out on the issue (as he did at Houston), he left himself open to criticism that he was playing politics with his faith. Richard M. Nixon, similarly, could hardly speak openly about his opponent's faith without drawing charges that he was exploiting bigotry. But if the Vice President were to remain silent in the face of anti-Catholic campaign activity on his behalf, he would then be accused of condoning prejudice for personal gain.

It was in this spirit of "resigned necessity" that the press of the United States accepted Kennedy's Houston statement on religion. The Nashville Tennessean approved of the time, place, and manner in which the Senator addressed the issue. "Sen. John F. Kennedy is wise in dealing forthrightly with the religious issue in Texas, where it appears to be the dominant campaign issue."¹ In an editorial reaffirming support of the candidacy of Richard M. Nixon, the Augusta Chronicle (Georgia) agreed with the Democratic nominee's Houston statements that the real issues had been obscured. The editors praised Kennedy's stand on the question of his faith. "We are glad," they wrote, "that Sen. Kennedy has had the courage to face up to the issue, and admire the position he expressed in his appearance before the Greater Houston Ministerial

¹ Nashville Tennessean, Sept. 13, 1960, p. 8.

Association."¹ The Wall Street Journal, which is not known for Democratic propensities, combined praise for the Senator's stand on religion with a call for answers on "other questions."

Since we are to elect a President of the United States this November, it is proper for people to ask all questions about a candidate. But it seems to us now Senator Kennedy has answered this one as well as any man could; and, for our part, we think it time to get on to other questions. Indeed, we would like to see evidence of equal independence from the influence of the labor unions and the radical A.D.A.²

An almost lone voice raised against Kennedy's discussion of his faith was that of columnist David Lawrence. In view of the volume of scurrilous anti-Catholic literature distributed throughout the campaign and the wide circulation given the attack by the Peale Group, Lawrence's pronouncement on the Houston confrontation seems to border on the naive.

Vice President Nixon was right the other day when he urged that a halt be called to the discussion of the religious issue. Mr. Kennedy would have been better advised not to argue it at all. For that kind of issue is not likely ever to be decisive in a Presidential election.³

Lawrence was particularly disturbed by the candidate's promise to resign the Presidency rather than compromise his conscience. The American people, he suggested, do not approve of the idea of a Chief Executive's abdicating for any reason at all with the possible exception of ill health. The columnist offered only mild criticism of the Senator, however, attributing this "ambiguous" paragraph to the misguided efforts of bumbling advisors who had failed to assess the ramifications of the statement.

¹The Augusta Chronicle (Georgia), Sept. 14, 1960, p. 4.

²Wall Street Journal, Sept. 14, 1960, p. 16.

³New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 15, 1960.

According to Kennedy's top advisor, however, Lawrence's conjectures were far from the truth. The nominee was very much aware, records Theodore Sorensen, of the possible reaction to the heavily qualified paragraph concerning resignation in the face of possible conflict.

In the most controversial paragraph of the speech, Kennedy said he would resign his office rather than violate the national interest in order to avoid violating his conscience. That passage, which the Senator had long deliberated and which he rightly predicted would be criticized, was based on my talk months earlier with Bishop Wright. Although Kennedy did *"not concede any conflict to be even remotely possible,"* the single sentence was designed to still those Protestant critics who were certain he would stifle his faith. *"I hope,"* he added, that *"any conscientious public servant would do the same."*¹

Critical reaction to the Catholic nominee's defense of his candidacy and his faith had been, in the main, quite favorable. September 12, however, was still nearly two months from election day, and there was no guarantee that John Kennedy had eliminated religion as a viable campaign issue with a single rhetorical stroke. Long after the last minister had filed out of the Crystal Ballroom, in fact, pollsters and political writers were feeling the religious pulse of the national electorate.

In mid-October, Democratic strategists believed that the center of anti-Catholic feeling was in the farm belt states of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana.² The Kennedy staff's diagnosis was confirmed by Joseph Alsop, who reported similar findings after traveling

¹Sorensen, p. 191.

²Des Moines Register, Oct. 13, 1960, pp. 1, 8.

through the Middle West. Alsop concluded: "There is no part of the country, in truth, where anti-Catholicism is not deciding countless votes except perhaps in the Northeast and in the State of California."¹

George Gallup sniffed the religious-political winds less than two weeks before election and stated that the religious issue was alive and well. In offering his assessment of the salience of the Catholic question, Gallup reasoned:

In the final analysis, the full impact of the religious issue may not be felt until the closing days of the campaign. Those Protestants now in the Kennedy camp who do not feel very strongly about their choice may well decide to vote for Mr. Nixon. At best, they are now "in conflict." And the same may be the case with Catholics who are now supporting Mr. Nixon, but who are doing so with some misgivings.²

The Democrats, clearly, could ill afford to ignore political realities and let religion takes its toll. A Sidlinger survey showed that religion was the number one issue in the minds of 21,000,000 voters.³ Only a campaign effort managed by fools would ignore an issue that was dominant in the thinking of so many millions of people; and Robert Kennedy, Larry O'Brien, John Bailey, and Kenny O'Donnell could hardly be described as political fools.

Because of the very real dilemma that open discussion on the religious question posed for the candidates themselves, it would not have been expedient for John Kennedy to continue to address the matter. The obvious solution to the problem, in the eyes of the Democratic cam-

¹Washington Post, Oct. 26, 1960.

²New York Herald Tribune, Oct. 30, 1960.

³Houston Post, Oct. 21, 1960.

paign strategists, was to replay the filmed record of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association meeting on television. Accordingly, the Senator's brother planned "to show a film of Jack Kennedy's session with the Houston clergy in every state."¹

The Republicans, seemingly, had no quarrel with the broadcast of the film of the Houston confrontation in the South. But when the program was beamed into living rooms in Northern cities, Representative William E. Miller, chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee and himself a Roman Catholic, cried foul. Miller charged that the motion picture record was being used to "inflare the religious issue."² It was the Congressman's belief that the Democrats were attempting to unify Roman Catholics behind Kennedy by projecting a martyr image of their candidate in his inquisition before the Texas fundamentalists. Other G.O.P. spokesmen castigated the Kennedy forces for televising the film in Northern urban centers with large Catholic populations, such as New York, San Francisco, and Chicago. Those who issued such partisan blasts at the Democrats, however, were blind to very important political and demographic realities.

In order to hold the view that Kennedy's Houston appearance should be aired only in the South and not in the North, those who voiced critical comments would have to ignore the findings of Gallup, Alsop, Sidlinger, and others who had found the religious issue salient in virtually every corner of the United States.

¹"Democrats," Time, Oct. 10, 1960, p. 26.

²"Two-Sided Religious Issue," Life, Oct. 31, 1960, p. 27.

When Life magazine editorialized against the showing of the film in Northern cities,¹ and when Time accused the Democratic committee of using the record to keep the religious issue alive by beaming it at prime time on television stations in California, Washington, Colorado, Michigan, and Minnesota,² the editors of Luce publications were seemingly ignorant of the fact that the medium of television is no respecter of religions. The transmission system that beams its message to sets owned only by Roman Catholics has not yet been developed.

San Francisco, for example, has a total population of 750,000 people, twenty-five percent of which are Catholic. The surrounding counties of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Mateo, which are included in the broadcast patterns of the San Francisco television channels, have a combined population of more than three times that of the city and are overwhelmingly Protestant. Chicago, similarly, with a large Roman Catholic citizenry, is ringed with suburban and rural communities that are decidedly non-Catholic in religious composition. And who would argue that all or even most of the New York City metropolitan area's residents are communicants in the Church of Rome? Showings of the Kennedy speech to the Houston ministers on Northern urban television outlets would produce potential audiences in which Protestant viewers far outnumber Roman Catholics.

This is not to say, however, that Kennedy campaign leaders did not use films of the Houston address to appeal to Catholic voters. Such an appeal was certainly a key part of Democratic strategy. The over-

¹Ibid.

²"Democrats," Time, Oct. 24, 1960, p. 28.

simplified assumptions on the part of editorial writers and Republican critics, however, that a Southern showing of the Houston film was beamed at Protestants while a Northern showing was beamed at Catholics is patently absurd. In view of nation-wide voter doubt on the religious question as well as the activities of anti-Catholic polemicists in every part of the land, the supporters of the candidacy of John F. Kennedy were more than justified in showing and reshewing the motion picture record of the confrontation with the Houston clergy.

One extremely unfortunate and unethical use of Kennedy's Houston statements (and a use that was publicly discovered by the Senator) was the publication of the transcript of the occasion of the United Auto Workers under the title, "Which Do You Choose? Liberty or Bigotry?" Printed in pamphlet form with an illustration showing the Statue of Liberty and a hooded Ku Klux Klansman on the cover, the message was distributed to automobile workers in the Detroit area.¹

The leaflet was condemned by the Michigan Fair Election Practices Commission and by President Eisenhower.² Walter Reuther issued a hasty

¹Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Oct. 17, 1960.

²The President was, in turn, denounced by the New York Post: President Eisenhower has vigorously denounced an Automobile Workers Union leaflet saying the great issue is between "liberty" and "bigotry" and implying, in Ike's view, that a vote for Nixon is a vote for bigotry.

Certainly this sounds like an objectionable statement of the issue. But it is characteristic of the President's irrepressible partisanship that he blew his top on this point while maintaining comparative calm during the era of the Norman Vincent Peale folly and other frenetic anti-Catholic episodes. It might almost be said that he retains his extraordinary capacity for putting second things first. New York Post, Oct. 18, 1960, p. 38.

apology and added that he had not seen the leaflet before it was published. Solidarity, the weekly paper of the U.A.W., echoed the sentiments of Brother Reuther and apologized for any "misinterpretation."¹

This "reverse-bigotry" appeal seems to be the only such use made of the address presented to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. The voting populace of the United States, by and large, gained a knowledge of the arguments advanced by Senator Kennedy on the religious issue by reading newspaper accounts and seeing the film record on television.

When John F. Kennedy stood behind the rostrum in the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel in Houston, Texas on the evening of September 12, 1960, he addressed three audiences. The first of these, the personal audience, was important only for the background it provided for the occasion. The second audience had two parts: The State of Texas, which was reached by television, and the clergymen who had attacked the Senator on religious grounds in the days and months before the address. This small group of Protestant ministers, which learned of the Senator's statements from the press, was probably the single most important body the candidate sought to reach with his views on religion and politics. The Catholic nominee, finally, sought to relate his opinions to the entire nation. This dissemination was accomplished by journalistic accounts and by the showing of the filmed record of the proceedings.

From the first audience, Kennedy received a fair and courteous hearing. The bifurcated "strategic" audience gave the Senator twenty-four electoral votes; but, perhaps more important than the votes from Texas

¹"Issues," Time, Oct. 31, 1960, p. 11.

was the cessation of the attacks from the prestigious anti-Catholic clergymen on the East Coast. The electorate of the United States gave John F. Kennedy the Presidency in the closest national election in the history of the country. In a contest in which the margin of victory was less than one vote per precinct, there are, undoubtedly, many individual factors that contributed in some measure to the election outcome.

It cannot be said that the confrontation of the first successful Roman Catholic aspirant for the Presidency with the Protestant clergy of the city of Houston was responsible for the margin of victory. But in a Presidential year in which the winning candidate's religion was, perhaps, the greatest election issue, neither can it be denied.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

During the summer of 1960, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the second major party nominee of Roman Catholic faith for the office of President of the United States, was invited to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on issues relating to religion and politics. While it had been the policy of the Democratic nominee to speak frankly on religious matters, he carefully chose both the times and the places when he would do so. Accordingly, the invitation tendered by the Houston clerical group was filed away, and the Democrats allowed the course of events to dictate how they would handle the Roman Catholic question.

On September 7, just five days before Kennedy was scheduled to appear at a campaign rally in the Houston Coliseum, Democratic campaign strategy was dictated by a statement released by the National Conference for Religious Freedom, an ad hoc group of 150 Protestant ministers whose official spokesman was Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. The Peale Group, as the body was quickly nicknamed by the press, questioned the ability of a Roman Catholic President to withstand pressures from the hierarchy of his Church.

In the Kennedy campaign entourage traveling through California, news of the Peale Group position paper hit like a bombshell. The candidate then decided to address the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and to answer questions put to him by the clergymen in a subsequent open forum.

At nine o'clock on the evening of September 12, 1960, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts read a 1600-word, carefully prepared address to a crowd of nearly 1000 ministers, newsmen, and spectators in the Crystal Ballroom of the Rice Hotel in downtown Houston. He spoke to additional thousands over a network of more than twenty Texas television stations. There were three major parts in Kennedy's address: an Introduction, a Body containing two parallel main points; and a Peroration that was the longest portion of the speech. In addition, there was an extremely important two-paragraph transition between the body and the closing appeal.

Standing before an audience that was tense, if not hostile, the Democratic candidate shunned the usual opening pleasantries, save for a one-sentence expression of gratitude for the invitation to appear before the body. He acknowledged the propriety of a meeting concerned with the religious issue, but went on to cite eight issues which he regarded as being of far greater significance. Then, acknowledging, too, that he was of Catholic faith and that no member of his communion had occupied the mansion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kennedy made reference to those who spread malicious propaganda regarding his Church in an effort to conceal the important issues in the Presidential campaign. Having earlier lightly criticized his audience for their preoccupation with religion, he now complimented his hearers for not throwing up an ecclesiastical smokescreen as had those who were less responsible.

The religious dogma which he believed, said the Senator in leading into the body of his remarks, was not important except to himself. What was important was the kind of nation he believed in.

In the first major point in the body of the speech, Kennedy set forth his views on the relationship of church and state in America. Advocating a nation in which the separation of church and state is absolute, the candidate spoke out frankly against special privileges for any religious group and against the practice of ecclesiastical bodies' imposing their will on the government. Both of these issues had been raised by critics of the Roman Catholic Church who pointed to examples of Catholic privilege and pressure in local government.

It was not the intent of the future President, however, to take a defensive stance before the clergymen. In this section, as well as in other portions of the speech, the candidate coupled mention of Catholic and Protestant. Thus, in mentioning dictation by Catholic prelates to communicants, he also cited instructions by Protestant ministers to members. Just as no Catholic public servant should be manipulated by the Pope, so no Protestant should be swayed by the National Council of Churches.

The famous Kennedy sense of history is seen in this section as he cited Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, a document designed to protect Baptist ministers, as an example of early American protection of Protestant religious minorities.

The second, and final, division of the body of the address spelled out Kennedy's opinions on religion and the Presidency. The Presidency, according to the Senator, is too great a position to be degraded by making it the fief of one ecclesiastical body or by withholding it from another.

Senator Kennedy supported his views of the nation's highest office by appealing to the Constitution. No President should seek to abridge the freedom of belief specified in the First Amendment, Kennedy stated in obvious reference to those who feared such an abridgment if a Catholic were elected President. Similarly, however, no group should seek to abridge Article VI by imposing any kind of religious test on election nominees, said the speaker in equally obvious reference to those who worked against the candidacy of a Roman Catholic on religious grounds. In one of the strongest statements to be found in the address, Kennedy said that those whose opinions differ with the guarantees of Article VI should expend their efforts to repeal that statute.

The Senator anticipated questions on the politically embarrassing Poling incident by affirming his belief that the President should be able to attend any function demanded by his official position.

Between this indication of the candidate's views of America and the Presidency and the final appeal, Kennedy read a transition which supported these views with arguments from his own experience and from history. The first argument made the observation that neither the candidate's loyalty, nor that of his brother, was questioned when they defended America in World War II.

Historically, the speaker mentioned, but did not quote, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the previously cited Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom and their guarantees of religious liberty. In a masterful piece of audience adaptation, the Democratic nominee pointed out to the assembled Texans that there was no test of religion at the Alamo.

The conclusion of the address to the Houston clergy was opened with an appeal to the candidate's record. Without bombast or bravado, the Presidential aspirant challenged his hearers to judge him on his performance in the Congress and his publicly stated stands on the issues, instead of by the criteria set up by the anti-Catholic polemicists. In his only mention of an ecclesiastical source, Kennedy asked his audience to consider the American Catholic Church in the light of the statement reaffirming support of the separation of church and state made by the National Catholic Welfare Council in 1948.

Citing de Gaulle and Adenauer as examples of enlightened Catholic leaders, and France and Ireland as examples of enlightened Catholic nations, Kennedy affirmed his belief that a Catholic President could withstand pressure from his church. In the most controversial portion of the address, Kennedy vowed to resign the Presidency rather than act against his conscience or the national interest.

A final appeal for fair play ended the Senator's prepared remarks. Kennedy observed that American prestige abroad and at home would suffer if 40,000,000 people were relegated to status as second-class citizens because of their Roman Catholic faith. With absolutely no reservation whatsoever, the candidate concluded, he could, indeed, swear the oath of office of the President of the United States.

In the open forum after the reading of the prepared text, the Catholic nominee provided frank and cogent answers to questions addressed to him by seven Protestant ministers. He continued to base his stands on his record and on the Constitution. He refused to be drawn into

theological debate, even when confronted with quotations from Catholic sources. At one point, he expressed his disagreement with a paragraph read from the Catholic Encyclopedia but declined to comment on others without seeing the context from which they were presented.

In the face of argumentative and hostile questions that often sought to "lecture" rather than to inquire, Kennedy remained unruffled and articulate. He frequently reminded the ministers that he spoke only for himself and not for his Church. Conversely, he added, the Church could not speak for him.

John F. Kennedy addressed his comments to an audience that included those in the Rice Hotel and thousands of others who saw the program on television. In the days and weeks that followed, the nation learned of Kennedy's stand on the religious issue through newspaper accounts and the showings of a film of the event on television channels throughout the United States.

Immediately after Kennedy's Houston address, he was greeted by large and enthusiastic crowds as he campaigned in Texas. Two of the Senator's most vocal critics on the religious issue, Dr. Daniel Poling and the National Conference for Religious Freedom, announced their approval of Kennedy's statements on the question. A third critic, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, was put to flight as he dissociated himself from the group bearing his name.

The religious issue continued to occupy the mind of the nation until election day. Because of the salience of the issue in all areas of the United States, the Democrats, despite objections from the G.O.P.,

continued to televise the Houston appearance of John Kennedy as a means of counteracting attacks on the candidate and his Church.

Conclusions

Historian James MacGregor Burns has identified three "peaks" of the religious issue in the 1960 Presidential campaign. The first peak was precipitated by Senator Kennedy himself when Look printed his answers to questions put to him on church and state in early 1959.

The second time the religious issue boiled to the surface was during the West Virginia primary in April of 1960. On that occasion the Bostonian addressed the American Society of Newspaper Editors, where he refuted attacks made upon him and his religion. He then bluntly asked the nation's press to show a greater interest in the "real" issues of the campaign and less preoccupation with religion.

After describing these events, Burns observed:

In both these previous flare-ups of religion in the campaign, the issue quickly died down. Why? In large part, I think, because Kennedy met it quickly and squarely, in prepared speeches and in answers to questions raised after talks.¹

The third and final peak described by the historian was Kennedy's speaking and interrogation appearance before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association where, once again, he squarely faced the questions engendered by his Roman Catholic faith.

It would be an overstatement to say that the religious issue died a dishonorable death after September 12, 1960. Anti-Catholic campaign activity continued until election day. The twelfth day of September did,

¹ Burns, "The Religious Issue," p. 21.

however, mark the demise of the Catholic question as a respectable campaign issue. While the bigoted voices of the far right persisted in their descriptions of the Pope's holding audience in the Oval office, no such eminent leaders as Daniel Poling or Norman Vincent Peale chose to join the fray. Richard Nixon, in fact, vetoed a written endorsement by Evangelist Billy Graham that was to appear in Life magazine. Although Graham's support was carefully devoid of religious considerations, the Vice President was afraid of exacerbating the religious question.¹

The Houston confrontation was, by far, the most important discussion of the religious issue during the 1960 election campaign. The political necessity of Senator Kennedy's offering a sound defense of his candidacy cannot be overemphasized. Research conducted by the Simulmatics Corporation had challenged the age-old political saw that the voter who experiences cross-pressure stays at home on election day.

Protestant bigoted Democrats and Catholic Republicans were under cross pressure. But the pressures they felt suggested purposeful action. The bigot who felt that the country would be endangered by having a Catholic in the White House was much more politically motivated than the man who just lacked respect for Dewey or Truman. If the bigot was to achieve his clear purpose he had to vote.²

Under such circumstances it can be readily seen that the religiously motivated vote was a doubly-important issue. The positive attractions of preserving the White House as a Protestant sanctuary or of voting for a fellow Roman Catholic produced cross-over votes and not stay-at-homes.

The defense articulated by Senator Kennedy in his own behalf was, by way of contrast to the objections raised to his candidacy, reasoned

¹Nixon, p. 365.

²Pool et al., p. 77.

and dispassionate. The Catholic nominee in 1960 did not level charges of anti-Catholic prejudice at all those who raised religious questions, as had the Catholic nominee in 1928. Nor did he attempt to educate the nation as to the real nature of his Church. Kennedy, wrote Sorensen, "cared not a whit for theology."¹

As a religious man in a secular calling, Kennedy chose to apply the guarantees of tolerance and freedom of the secular realm (the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) to his religion, rather than to attempt to defend the position of his Church in secular society. At Houston, therefore, he wisely refused to argue dogma and stood, instead, on the Constitution and historical precedent. In this way, if his critics were to continue their indictments, they would have to attack the long-established American tradition of religious freedom as well as the Roman Catholic Church.

The Senator's encounter with the Houston clergy amply demonstrated the wisdom of his position. Questioners cited canon law and read long quotations from Catholic works to force the candidate onto the horns of a dilemma, but the defendant countered with the guarantees of freedom of belief and freedom from religious tests for office as specified in the highest law of the land. The result was that the tables were turned; and it was the questioners, rather than the respondent, who, seemingly, were on trial. Certainly, as Herbert Meza assessed, the trivial character and bigoted nature of many of the arguments raised by those who questioned Senator Kennedy's candidacy were amply displayed. Meza summarized his views of the meeting as follows:

¹Sorensen, p. 19.

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¹Sorensen, p. 19.

I am convinced that one of the results was that it showed prejudice to be so ugly by the questions and the way they were asked. . . . There's no doubt in my mind that many people were repelled by this kind of religious dogmatism. Religious prejudice became ugly and, therefore, lost much of its compulsion.¹

John Fitzgerald Kennedy himself seemed well-satisfied with his confrontation with the Houston ministers in the Rice Hotel. Evelyn Lincoln, Mr. Kennedy's personal secretary, has written:

The Senator felt that the meeting with the Houston ministers was the most important of the campaign. He hoped he had finally erased the doubts many Protestants had about voting for a Catholic for President. . . . That speech and the question and answer period following were filmed and shown repeatedly all over the country throughout the rest of the campaign, and the Senator seemed to regard it as an early turning point in the campaign. Thereafter, he seemed much surer of the course the campaign would take.²

Historical Postscript

On October 29, 1884, as the Presidential campaign that pitted Republican James G. Blaine against the Democratic Grover Cleveland drew to a close, Senator Blaine was scheduled to address a gathering of clergymen in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in Jersey City, New Jersey. By an ill-fated turn of events, the Baptist minister who was to introduce Mr. Blaine could not be present. A Presbyterian, Samuel D. Burchard, was then chosen to present the speaker. Burchard, speaking on behalf of his assembled brethren of the cloth, said:

We are your friends, Mr. Blaine, and notwithstanding all the calumnies that have been urged in the papers

¹Meza interview.

²Evelyn Lincoln, My Twelve Years with John F. Kennedy (New York: David McKay Company, 1965), p. 176.

against you, we stand by your side. We expect to vote for you next Tuesday. . . . We are Republicans, and don't propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion. We are loyal to our flag. We are loyal to you.¹

Either Blaine failed to hear Burchard's intemperate blast, or he failed to assess its potency. At any rate, he did not disavow himself from the minister's statement. A sharp-eared reporter heard, however, and ran to the local Democratic headquarters with the quotation. Handbills were hastily printed and distributed the following Sunday morning outside Catholic churches. On Saturday night, in New Haven, Senator Blaine had issued the rebuttal that should have been made in Jersey City. By then it was too late.

How many Catholic votes Blaine lost in New York alone by Burchard's bigoted blunder it is impossible to say, but no one can doubt that it was many times the number of Cleveland's eventual plurality in the State.²

With New York's electoral votes, Blaine, who referred to Burchard as "an ass in the shape of a preacher," would have been elected President.³

In 1960, history was to repeat itself. On September 7, speaking in behalf of a group of Protestant clergymen, a New York minister issued an anti-Catholic statement that would, hopefully, benefit a Republican candidate. Although the viewpoint read by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was couched in more intelligent terms than Burchard's crude alliteration,

¹David S. Muzzey, James G. Blaine: A Political Idol of Other Days (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., 1934), p. 317.

²Ibid., p. 318.

³Ibid., p. 316.

its effect was the same. And, once again, the Republican candidate did not repudiate his bigoted support.

The Peale Group statement gave the Kennedy forces a perfect opportunity to speak out on the smoldering religious issue. "The Democratic politicians knew they had an opening," wrote Richard Nixon with grudging admiration, "and they attacked savagely and effectively."¹ The resulting appearance of John F. Kennedy before the Greater Houston Ministerial Association and the dissemination of his remarks on his Roman Catholic faith and the Presidency, could not help but have contributed to the defeat of the Republican ticket on November 8.

It may well be that future historians will judge that Peale was to Nixon what Burchard was to Blaine.

¹Nixon, p. 327.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

REMARKS OF SENATOR JOHN F. KENNEDY ON CHURCH AND STATE; DELIVERED TO GREATER HOUSTON MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION, HOUSTON, TEXAS, SEPT. 12, 1960.¹

I am grateful for your generous invitation to state my views.

While the so-called religious issue is necessarily and properly the chief topic here tonight, I want to emphasize from the outset that I believe that we have far more critical issues in the 1960 election: The spread of Communist influence, until it now festers only ninety miles off the coast of Florida--the humiliating treatment of our President and Vice-President by those who no longer respect our power--the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctor's bills, the families forced to give up their farms--an America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space.

These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues--for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier.

But because I am a Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President, the real issues in this campaign have been obscured--perhaps deliberately in some quarters less responsible than this. So it is apparently necessary for me to state once again--not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me, but what kind of America I believe in.

I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute--where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be a Catholic) how to act and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote--where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference--and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.

I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish--where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source--where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials--and where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all.

¹Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York: Atheneum House, 1961), pp. 391-93.

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew—or a Quaker—or a Unitarian—or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that led to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today, I may be the victim—but tomorrow it may be you—until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart at a time of great national peril.

Finally, I believe in an America where religious intolerance will someday end—where all men and all churches are treated as equal—where every man has the same right to attend or not attend the church of his choice—where there is no Catholic vote, no antiCatholic vote, no bloc voting of any kind—and where Catholics, Protestants and Jews, both the lay and the pastoral level, will refrain from those attitudes of disdain and division which have so often marred their works in the past, and promote instead the American ideal of brotherhood.

That is the kind of America in which I believe. And it represents the kind of Presidency in which I believe—a great office that must be neither humbled by making it the instrument of any religious group, nor tarnished by arbitrarily withholding it, its occupancy, from the members of any religious group. I believe in a President whose views on religion are his own private affair, neither imposed upon him by the nation or imposed by the nation upon him as a condition to holding that office.

I would not look with favor upon a President working to subvert the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty (nor would our system of checks and balances permit him to do so). And neither do I look with favor upon those who would work to subvert Article VI of the Constitution by requiring a religious test—even by indirection—for if they disagree with that safeguard, they should be openly working to repeal it.

I want a Chief Executive whose public acts are responsible to all and obligated to none—who can attend any ceremony, service or dinner his office may appropriately require him to fulfill—and whose fulfillment of his Presidential office is not limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual or obligation.

This is the kind of America I believe in—and this is the kind of America I fought for in the South Pacific and the kind my brother died for in Europe. No one suggested then that we might have a "divided loyalty," that we did "not believe in liberty" or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened "the freedoms for which our forefathers died."

And in fact this is the kind of America for which our forefathers did die when they fled here to escape religious test oaths, that denied office to members of less favored churches, when they fought for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom—and when they fought at the shrine I visited today—the Alamo. For side by side with Bowie and Crockett died Fuentes and McCafferty and Bailey and Bedillio and Carey—but no one knows whether they were Catholics or not. For there was no religious test there.

I ask you tonight to follow in that tradition, to judge me on the basis of fourteen years in the congress—on my declared stands against an ambassador to the Vatican, against unconstitutional aid to parochial schools, and against any boycott of the public schools (which I attended myself)—instead of judging me on the basis of these pamphlets and

publications we have all seen that carefully select quotations out of context from the statements of Catholic Church leaders, usually in other countries, frequently in other centuries, and rarely relevant to any situation here--and always omitting, of course, that statement of the American bishops in 1948 which strongly endorsed church-state separation.

I do not consider these other quotations binding upon my public acts--why should you? But let me say, with respect to other countries, that I am wholly opposed to the state being used by any religious group, Catholic or Protestant, to compel, prohibit or persecute the free exercise of any other religion. And that goes for any persecution at any time, by anyone, in any country.

And I hope that you and I condemn with equal fervor those nations which deny their Presidency to Protestants and those which deny it to Catholics. And rather than cite the misdeeds of those who differ, I would also cite the record of the Catholic Church in such nations as France and Ireland--and the independence of such statesmen as de Gaulle and Adenauer.

But let me stress again that these are my views--for, contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic.

I do not speak for my church on public matters--and the church does not speak for me.

Whatever issue may come before me as President, if I should be elected--on birth control, divorce, censorship, gambling, or any other subject--I will make my decision in accordance with these views, in accordance with what my conscience tells me to be in the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressure or dictate. And no power or threat of punishment could cause me to decide otherwise.

But if the time should ever come--and I do not concede any conflict to be remotely possible--when my office would require me to either violate my conscience, or violate the national interest, then I would resign the office, and I hope any other conscientious public servant would do likewise.

But I do not intend to apologize for these views to my critics of either Catholic or Protestant faith, nor do I intend to disavow either my views or my church in order to win this election. If I should lose on the real issues, I shall return to my seat in the Senate, satisfied that I tried my best and was fairly judged.

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40,000,000 Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of our own people.

But if, on the other hand, I should win this election, I shall devote every effort of mind and spirit to fulfilling the oath of the Presidency--practically identical, I might add, with the oath I have taken for fourteen years in the Congress. For, without reservation, I can, and I quote, "solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, so help me God."

APPENDIX B

REMARKS OF SENATOR JOHN F. KENNEDY, QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD,
MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER HOUSTON, SEPTEMBER 12, 1960¹

Mr. Mesa: Due to the press of time we should begin immediately with the question and answer period. You know the ground rules; are there any questions?

Question: Senator Kennedy, I am Glenn Norman, Pastor of Second Baptist Church in Corpus Christi. I think I speak for many that do not in any sense discount your loyalty and your love to this nation, or your position, which is in accord with our position, in regard to the separation of Church and State. But can I bring it down to where we stand tonight, as two men nearly equal in age, facing each other. If this meeting tonight were held in the sanctuary of my church, it is the policy of the Catholic leadership of my city, which has many fine Catholics in it, it is the policy to forbid them to attend a Protestant service. If we tonight were in the sanctuary of my Church, as we are, could you and would you attend, as you have here?

Senator Kennedy: Yes, I could. As I said in my statement, I would attend any service in the interest--that has any connection with my public office, or in the case of a private ceremony, weddings, funerals, and so on, of course I would participate and have participated. I think the only question would be whether I could participate as participant, a believer in your faith, and maintain my membership in my Church. That, it seems to me, comes within the private beliefs that a Catholic might have. But as far as whether I could attend this sort of a function in your Church, whether I as Senator or President could attend a function in your service connected with my position of office, then I could attend and would attend.

Question: Closely allied to this was the position with regard to the Chapel of the Chaplains that was dedicated and which I believe you once had accepted the invitation to attend, and then the press said, I believe, that Cardinal Dougherty brought pressure and you refused to attend.

Senator Kennedy: I will be delighted to explain. That seems to be a matter of great interest. I was invited in 1947 after my election to the Congress, by Dr. Poling, to attend a dinner to raise funds for an inter-faith chapel in honor of the four Chaplains that went down on the Dorchester, 14 years ago. I was delighted to accept, because I thought it was a useful and worthwhile cause. A few days before I was due to accept, I learned through my administrative assistant, who had friends

¹Democratic National Committee, Sept. 13, 1960

in Philadelphia -- well, first, two things, first that I was listed, and this is in Dr. Poling's book in which he describes the incident, as the spokesman for the Catholic faith at the dinner. Charles Taft, Senator Taft's brother, was to be the spokesman for the Protestant faith and Senator Lehman for the Jewish faith. The second thing I learned was that the chapel instead of being located as I thought it was, as an inter-faith chapel, was located in the basement of another church. It was not in that sense an inter-faith chapel, and for the 14 years since that chapel was built there has never been a service of my church because of the physical location.

I therefore informed Dr. Poling that while I would be glad to come as a citizen, in fact many Catholics did go to the dinner, I did not feel I had very good credentials to attend as the spokesman for the Catholic faith at the dinner to raise funds when the whole Catholic church group in Philadelphia were not participating and because the chapel has never been blessed or consecrated.

I want to make it clear that my grounds for not going were private. I had no credentials to speak for the Catholic faith at a dinner for a chapel in which no Catholic service has ever been held. To this day unfortunately, no service has been held there. But I think if I may separate this, if this were a public matter, I would be glad to go as an individual but I could not go as a spokesman.

Question: I am Canon Rutenbahr of Christ Church, Houston. I have read the Platform and the planks in it with great interest, especially in the realms of freedom, and I note that in the educational section the right of education for each person is guaranteed or offered for a guarantee, and it also says that there shall be equal opportunity for employment, and in another section it says there shall be equal rights to housing and recreation. All of these speak, I think, in a wonderful sense to the freedom that we want to keep here in America. Yet, on the other hand, there is another place in the Platform these words; "we will repeal the authorization for right to work laws."

Now, it seems to me that in this aspect here, and I feel that these are much more important than any religious issue, here you are abolishing an open shop, you are taking away the freedom of the individual worker, whether he wants to work and wants to belong to this union or not. Isn't this double talk, guaranteeing freedom on one hand and taking away on the other?

Senator Kennedy: No, I don't agree with that. That provision has been in the Platform since 1948, and I am sure there is a difference of opinion between us on that matter. But I think that it is a decision which goes to the economic and political views. I don't think it involves a constitutional guarantee of freedom. In other words, under the provisions of the Taft-Hartley law a state was permitted to prohibit a union shop. But it was not permitted to guarantee a closed shop. My own judgment is that uniformity in interstate commerce is valuable, and, therefore, I hold with the view that it is better to have uniform laws and not a law which is in interstate commerce, and this is not intra-but interstate commerce, which permits one condition in one state and another in another. This is not a new provision. It has been in for the last three platforms.

Question: I am Max Delcke, President of the Gulf Coast Bible College, and Pastor of the First Church of God here in Houston, and I am a member of the Houston Association of Ministers.

Mr. Kennedy, you very clearly stated your position tonight in regard to the propagation of the Gospel by all religious groups in other countries. I appreciated that very much because we Protestants are a missionary people. However, the question I have to ask is this: If you are elected President, will you use your influence to get the Roman Catholic countries of South America and Spain to stop persecuting Protestant missionaries and to propagate their faith as the United States gives to the Roman Catholics or any other group?

Senator Kennedy: I would use my influence as President of the United States to permit, to encourage the development of freedom all over the world. One of the rights which I consider to be important is the right of free speech, the right of assembly, the right of free religious practice, and I would hope that the United States and the President would stand for those rights all around the globe without regard to geography, religion or--(applause).

Question: Senator Kennedy, this is E. E. Westmoreland, President of the South Bay Baptist Church, Houston, I have received today a copy of a Resolution passed by the Baptist Pastors Conference of St. Louis, and they are going to confront you with this tomorrow night. I would like you to answer to the Houston crowd before you get to St. Louis; this is the Resolution:

"With deep sincerity and in Christian Grace, we plead with Senator John F. Kennedy as the person presently concerned in this matter to appeal to Cardinal Cushing, Mr. Kennedy's own hierarchical superior of Boston, to present to the Vatican Senator Kennedy's statement relative to the separation of church and state in the United States and religious freedom as separated in the Constitution of the United States, in order that the Vatican may officially authorize such a belief for all Roman Catholics in the United States." (applause)

Senator Kennedy: May I just say that as I do not accept the right of any, as I said, ecclesiastical official, to tell me what I shall do in the sphere of my public responsibility as an elected official, I do not propose also to ask Cardinal Cushing to ask the Vatican to take some action. I do not propose to interfere with their free right to do exactly what they want. There is not a doubt in my mind that the viewpoints that I have expressed--(applause)-- There is no doubt in my mind that the viewpoint that I have expressed tonight publicly represents the opinion of the overwhelming majority of American Catholics, and I think that my view I have no doubt is known to Catholics around the world. So I am just hopeful that by my stating it quite precisely, and I believe I stated it in the tradition of the American Catholics, away back all the way to Bishop John Carroll, I hope this will clarify it without my having to take the rather circuitous route. This is the position I take with the American Catholic Church in the United States with which I am associated.

From Floor: There will be many Catholics who will be appointed if you are elected President, we would like to know that they, too, are free to make such statements as you have been so courageous to make. (applause)

Senator Kennedy: Let me say that anyone that I would appoint to my office as a Senator or as a President, would, I hope, hold the same view, of necessity, of their living up to not only the letter of the Constitution, but the spirit. If I may say so, I am a Catholic. I have stated my view very clearly. I don't find any difficulty in stating that view. In my judgment, it is the view of American Catholics from one end of the country to the other. Because I can state it in a way which I hope is satisfactory to you, why do you possibly doubt that I think that I represent a viewpoint which is hostile to the Catholic Church in the United States? I believe I am stating the viewpoint that Catholics in this country hold to the happy relationship which exists between church and state.

Question: Do you state it with the approval of the Vatican?

Senator Kennedy: I don't have to have approval in that sense. (applause) I have not submitted my statement before I read it to the Vatican. I did not submit it to Cardinal Cushing. But my judgment is that Cardinal Cushing, who is the Cardinal of the Diocese of which I am a member, would approve of this statement, in the same way that he approved of the 1948 statement of the Bishops. In my judgment, and I am not a student of theology, I am stating what I believe to be the position of the great majority of Catholics across the United States. I hope that other countries may some day enjoy the same happy relationship of a separation of church and state, whether they are Catholic countries or non-Catholic countries. It seems to me that I am the one that is running for the office of the Presidency and not Cardinal Cushing and not any one else. (applause)

Question: Senator Kennedy, I am K. O. White, Pastor of Houston's downtown First Baptist Church and former Pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, D. C. Let me return for a moment to the matter of the Chaplain's Chapel because there will be some questions raised, I am sure, and we would like to have just a little further statement from you. Today I had a telephone conversation with Dr. Poling and received this telegram from him. I am sure you would like to clear this matter up. Let me read briefly from his telegram:

"The memorandum on religion as an election issue prepared by Senator Kennedy's associates has a section on the Poling incident. This section contains serious factual errors. I believe the Senator will wish to correct the errors or he will wish to withdraw that section. The original draft of the program on the Interfaith Dinner held in the Belleview Stratford Hotel on December 15, 1947, identified Mr. Kennedy, then Congressman from Massachusetts, as Honorable John F. Kennedy, Congressman from Massachusetts. Mr. Kennedy was never invited as an official representative of a religious organization nor indeed as the spokesman for the Catholic faith. No speaker on that occasion, Catholic, Jew or Protestant, was identified by his faith. Then two days before the dinner occasion Mr. Kennedy cancelled his engagement, expressed his

regret and grief but stated that since His Eminence, the Cardinal, requested him not to come, he as a loyal son of the Church had no other alternative. Therefore, it was necessary to destroy this first program and reprint it."

Senator Kennedy: I will state again that the words I used are a quotation from the Rev. Poling's book, "spokesman for the Catholic Faith," a book produced about a year ago which first discussed this incident.

Secondly, my memory of the incident is quite clear in fact as good as Rev. Poling's. When the matter was first discussed he stated it took place in 1950 and it is only in the last two months that it came forward that the incident took place in 1947. I never discussed the matter with the Cardinal in my life. I first learned of this through Mr. Reardon, my administrative assistant, through Mr. Doyle of the Catholic Welfare Council, who stated that there was a good deal of concern among many of the Church people in Philadelphia, because of the location of the Chapel and because no service would ever be held in it because it was located in the basement of another Church. It was an entirely different situation than the one I had confronted when I first happily accepted. There were three speakers. Kennedy was one of them, Taft was the second, and Senator Lehman was the third. I don't think I misstated that one was supposed to speak for the Catholic faith, as a spokesman, Mr. Poling, one for the Protestant faith, and one for the Catholic faith, and one for the Jewish faith. I was glad to accept the invitation. I did not clear the invitation with anyone. I was then informed that I was speaking, and I was invited obviously as a serviceman because I came from a prominent Catholic family, that I was informed that I was there really in a sense without any credentials. The Chapel as I said has never had a Catholic service. It is not an inter-faith Chapel. Therefore, for me to participate as a spokesman in that sense for the Catholic faith I think would have given an erroneous impression. I have been in Congress 14 years. This took place in 1947. I had been in politics probably two months and was relatively inexperienced. I should have inquired before getting into the incident. Is this the best that can be done after 14 years? Is this the only incident that can be charged? (applause)

This was a private dinner, not a public dinner, which did not involve my responsibilities as a public official. My judgment was bad only in accepting it without having all the facts, which I would not have done at a later date. But I do want to say I have been in Congress for 14 years. I have voted on hundreds of matters, probably thousands of matters, which involve all kinds of public questions, some of which border on the relationship between Church and State. Quite obviously that record must be reasonably good or we wouldn't keep hearing about the Poling incident.

I don't mean to be disrespectful to Reverend Poling. I have a high regard for Dr. Poling. I don't mean to be in a debate about it. But I must say in looking back I think it was imprudent of me in accepting it, but I don't think it shows unfitness for holding public office.

Question: The reason we are concerned is the fact that your Church has stated that it has the right, the privilege and responsibility to direct its members in various areas of life, including the political realm. We believe that history and observation indicate that it has done so. We raise the question because we would like to know if you are elected President and your Church elects to use that privilege and obligation, what your response will be under those circumstances.

Senator Kennedy: If my Church attempted to influence me in a way which was improper or which affected adversely my responsibilities as a public servant, sworn to uphold the Constitution, then I would reply to them that this was an improper action on their part, that it was one to which I could not subscribe, that I was opposed to it, and that it would be an unfortunate breach--an interference, with the American political system.

I am confident that there would be no such interference. We have had two chief Justices of the Supreme Court who were Catholics. We have had two Prime Ministers of Canada who were Catholics. I mentioned DeGaulle and Adenauer. I have already mentioned that (inaudible) as exposed to the pressures which whirl around us, that he will be extremely diligent in his protection of the Constitutional separation.

Question: We would be most happy to have such a statement from the Vatican.

Mr. Meza: Because of the briefness of the time, let's cut out the applause.

Question: B. E. Howard, Minister of the Church of Christ. First of all I should like to quote some authoritative quotations from Catholic sources and then propose a question.

"So that a false statement knowingly made to one who has not a right to the truth will not be a lie," Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 10, P. 696. "However, we are also under an obligation to keep secrets faithfully, and sometimes the easiest way of fulfilling that duty is to say what is false or tell a lie." P. 195.

"When mental reservation is permissible, it is lawful to corroborate one's utterances by an oath if there be an adequate cause." Article on perjury, Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume II, Page 696. "The truth we proclaim under oath is relative and not absolute." Explanation of Catholic Morals, P. 130.

Just recently from the Vatican in Rome, this news release was given from the official Vatican newspaper, and I am quoting that of May 19, 1960, Tuesday. It stated that the Roman Catholic hierarchy had the right and duty to intervene in the political field to guide its philosophy. The newspaper rejected what it termed the absurd split of conscience between the believer and the citizen. However, Osservatore Romano made it clear that its stern pronouncement was valid for Roman Catholic laymen everywhere. It deplored the great confusion of ideas that is spreading especially between Catholic doctrine and social and political activities and between the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the late faithful in the civil field. John recently gave this statement according to the St. Louis Review, dated December 12, 1958: "Catholics may unite their strength toward the common aid of the Catholic. . ."

From the floor: I object to this. The time is running out.

Question: This is the question: Do you subscribe to the doctrine of mental reservation which I have quoted from the Catholic authorities? Could you submit to the authority of the present Pope which I have quoted from in these quotations?

Senator Kennedy: Let me say in the first place I have not read the Catholic Encyclopedia and I don't know all the quotation you are giving me. I don't agree with the statement. I find no difficulty in saying so. But I do think probably I could make a better comment if I had the entire quotation before me.

But in any case I have not read it before. If the quotation is meant to imply that when you take an oath you don't mean it, or it is proper for you to make oaths and then break them, it is proper for you to lie, if that is what this states, and I don't know whether that is what it states unless I read it all in context, then, of course, I would not agree with it.

Secondly, on the question of the Osservatore Romano article, once again I don't have that in full. I read the statement of last December which was directed to a situation in Sicily where one of the Catholics were active in the Communist Party. But I am not familiar with the one of May 1960 which you mentioned. In any case the Osservatore Romano has no standing, so far as binding me. Thirdly, the quotation of Pope John of 1958, I didn't catch all of that, and if you will read that again I will tell you whether I support that or not.

Question: Pope John XXIII only recently stated according to the St. Louis Review, date of December 12, 1958, "Catholics must unite their strength toward the common aid and the Catholic hierarchy has the right and duty of guiding them." Do you subscribe to that?

Senator Kennedy: You are talking about the area of faith and morals, in the constructions of the church. I would think any Baptist minister or Congregational minister has the right and duty to try and guide his flock. If you mean by that statement that the Pope or anyone else could bind me in the fulfillment of my public duties, I'd say no. If that statement is intended to mean, and it is very difficult to comment on a sentence taken out of an article which I have not read, but if that is intended to imply that the hierarchy has some obligation or has an obligation to attempt to guide the members of the Catholic church, then that may be proper. But it all depends on the previous language of what you mean by "guide". If you mean direct or instruct on matters dealing with the organization of the faith, the details of faith, then, of course, they have that obligation. If you mean under that he could guide me or anyone could guide or direct me in fulfilling my public duty, then I do not agree.

Question: Thank you, sir. Then you do not agree with the Pope in that statement?

Senator Kennedy: You see, that is why I wanted to be careful, because that statement, it seems to me, is taking out of context what you just said to me. I could not tell you what the Pope meant unless I had the entire article. I would be glad to state to you that no one

can direct me in the fulfillment of my duties as a public official under the United States Constitution. That I am directed to serve the people of the United States, sworn to do so, took an oath to God. That is my flat statement. I would not want to go into details on a sentence which you read to me which I may not understand completely.

Mr. Mesa: Gentlemen, we have time for one more question, if it can be handled briefly.

Question: I am Robert McLaren, from the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Houston. You have been quite clear and I think laudably so on the matter of separation of church and state and have answered any questions that have come up around it. There is one question, it seems to me, that is quite relevant. This relates to your statement that if you found by some remote possibility a real conflict between your office as President, that you would resign that office if it were in conflict with your church.

Senator Kennedy: No, I said with my conscience.

Question: In the Syllabus of Errors of Pope Leo XIX, which the Catholic Encyclopedia states is still binding, although from a different century, still binding on all Catholics, there are three specific things which are denounced including the separation of state and church, the freedom of religions other than Catholic to propagate themselves, and the freedom of conscience. Do you still feel these being binding on you, that you hold your oath of office above your allegiance to the Pope on these issues.

Senator Kennedy: Well, let us go through the issues because I don't think there is a conflict on these three issues. The first issue as I understand it was on the relationship between the Catholics and the state and other faiths.

Question: No, the separation of church and state, explicitly, . . .

Senator Kennedy: I support that, and in my judgment that American Bishop's statement of 1948 clearly supported it. That in my judgment is the view held by Catholics in this country. They support the constitutional separation of church and state and are not in error in that regard.

Question: The second was the right of religions other than the Roman Catholic to propagate themselves.

Senator Kennedy: I think they should be permitted to propagate themselves, any faith, without any limitation by the power of the state, or encouragement by the power of the state. What is the third one?

Question: The third was the freedom of conscience in matters of religion, and also in Point 46, I believe it is, it extends to freedom of the mind in the realms of science.

Senator Kennedy: Well, I believe in freedom of conscience. Let me just—I guess our time is coming to an end, but let me say finally that I am delighted to come here today. I don't want anyone to think because they interrogate me on this very important question, that I regard that as unfair questioning or unreasonable or somebody who is concerned about the matter is prejudiced or bigoted. I think this fight for religious

freedom is basic in the establishment of the American system, and therefore any candidate for the office, I think, should submit himself to the questions of any reasonable man. (applause)

My only objection would be -- my only limit to that would be if somebody said regardless of Senator Kennedy's position, regardless of how much evidence he has given that what he says he means, I still would not vote for him because he is a member of that Church -- I would consider that unreasonable. What I would consider to be reasonable in an exercise of free will and free choice is to ask the candidate to state his views as broadly as possible, investigate his record to see whether he states what he believes and then to make an independent, rational judgment, as to whether he could be entrusted with this highly important position. I want you to know that I am grateful to you for inviting me tonight. I am sure I have made no converts to my Church. (laughter) But I do hope that at least my view, which I believe to be the view of my fellow Catholics who hold office, I hope it may be of some value in at least assisting you to make a careful judgment. Thank you. (applause)

APPENDIX C

TEXT OF STATEMENT BY NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CITIZENS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM¹

Despite efforts to ignore or to stifle it, the religious issue remains a major factor in the current political campaign. Indeed, it has become one of the most significant issues. We of this conference, ministers and laymen in Protestant churches of thirty-seven denominations, realize that the candidacy of a Roman Catholic for President of the United States has aroused questions which must be faced frankly by the American people.

We believe that this religious issue should be handled with utmost discretion; that it should be discussed only in a spirit of truth, tolerance and fairness, and that no persons should engage in hate mongering, bigotry, prejudice or unfounded charges. We further believe that persons who are of the Roman Catholic faith can be just as honest, patriotic and public spirited as those of any other faith. We believe in the same freedom of religion for Roman Catholics as for ourselves and all other people.

The key question is whether it is in the best interest of our society for any church organization to attempt to exercise control over its members in political and civic affairs. While the current Roman Catholic contender for the Presidency states specifically that he would not be so influenced, his church insists that he is duty-bound to admit to its direction. This unresolved conflict leaves doubt in the minds of millions of our citizens.

[1]

The Roman Catholic Church is a political as well as a religious organization. Traditionally, its hierarchy has assumed and exercised temporal power, unless and until that power has been successfully checked by the instruments of representative government. Today the Vatican in Rome, representing the seat of Catholic religious and temporal power maintains diplomatic relations with the Governments of forty-two countries, exchanging Ambassadors who have official status. Spokesmen for the Vatican in the United States have repeatedly urged establishment of diplomatic relations with the Roman Catholic Church, including appointment by the President of an official representative.

The President has the responsibility in our Government for conducting foreign relations, including receiving and appointing ambassadors. It is inconceivable that a Roman Catholic President would not be under extreme pressure by the hierarchy of his church to accede to its policies with respect to foreign relations in matters, including representation to the Vatican.

¹New York Times, Sept. 8, 1960, p. 25.

[2]

The Roman Catholic Church has specifically repudiated on many occasions the principle sacred to us that every man shall be free to follow the dictates of his conscience in religious matters. Such pronouncements are, furthermore, set forth as required beliefs for every Roman Catholic, including the Democratic nominee. Binding upon him, as well as upon all members of that church, is the belief that Protestant faiths are heretical and counterfeit and that they have no theoretical right to exist.

[3]

The record of the Roman Catholic Church in many countries where it is predominant is one of denial of equal rights for all of other faiths. The constitutions of a number of countries prohibit any person except Roman Catholics from serving as president or chief of state.

The laws of most predominantly Catholic countries extend to Catholics privileges not permitted to those of other faiths.

In countries such as Spain and Colombia, Protestant ministers and religious workers have been arrested, imprisoned and otherwise persecuted because of their religion. No Protestant church or Jewish synagogue can be marked as such on its exterior.

[4]

We realize that many American Catholics would disagree with the policies of their church in other countries and would not want to introduce them here under any circumstances. But this does not altogether reassure us.

The Roman Catholic Church in the United States has repeatedly attempted to break down the wall of separation of church and state by a continuous campaign to secure public funds for the support of its schools and other institutions. In various areas where they predominate, Catholics have seized control of the public schools, staffed them with nun teachers wearing their church garb, and introduced the catechism and practices of their church. In Ohio today (a state with a Roman Catholic Governor), according to an Attorney General's ruling, Roman Catholic nuns and sisters may be placed on the public payroll as schoolteachers.

The record shows that one of the bills introduced by John F. Kennedy (HR 5838, Eighty-first Congress), now a nominee for the Presidency, as a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts, had as its purpose Federal aid to education which included private and parochial schools. Representative Kennedy also sought to amend the Barden bill in the Eighty-first Congress in such a way as to provide funds for parochial schools. He was, however, the only Senator of Roman Catholic faith who voted against the Morse amendment to the Aid-to-Education Act in the Eighty-sixth Congress in 1960. The Morse amendment would have provided partial grants and partial loans for the construction of parochial schools. We are hopeful that the newer phase of Senator Kennedy's thinking on this issue will prevail, but we can only measure the new against the old.

By recommendation, persuasion and veto power, the President can and must shape the course of legislation in this country. Is it reasonable to assume that a Roman Catholic President would be able to withstand

altogether the determined efforts of the hierarchy of his church to gain further funds and favors for its schools and institutions, and otherwise breach the wall of separation of church and state?

[5]

Under the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church, a President of this faith would not be allowed to participate in interfaith meetings; he could not worship in a Protestant church without securing the permission of an ecclesiastic. Would not a Roman Catholic President thus be gravely handicapped in offering to the American people and to the world an example of the religious liberty our people cherish?

Brotherhood in a pluralistic society like ours depends on a firm wall of separation between church and state. We feel that the American hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church can only increase religious tensions and political-religious problems by attempting to break down this wall. Much depends upon strong support for this well tested wall of separation by Americans of all faiths.

Finally, that there is a "religious issue" in the present political campaign is not the fault of any candidate. It is created by the nature of the Roman Catholic Church which is, in a very real sense, both a church and also a temporal state.

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