

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS & JEWS

For Justice, Amity, Understanding and Co-operation among Protestants, Catholics and Jews

300 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

February 15, 1939.

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Miss Ida Tarbell
 New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

At the suggestion of the Co-chairmen I am sending you a statement on "Democracy and Religion" which the local Round Tables of the National Conference across the country are using in connection with the observance of Brotherhood Week, February 19 - 26, to challenge our people to give attention in this critical time to the vital importance of religion to the maintenance of democratic ideals. Leading lay people of the three faiths in each community will be invited to give their names to this statement and it will be published in local newspapers on Monday morning, February 27th.

The New York Round Table is sending the statement to a selected list of lay people, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, in the New York area requesting their signatures. It will be published in the New York papers with the New York signatures, simultaneously with its publication in other parts of the country.

If you approve this statement and are willing that your signature should be attached we shall be pleased if you would so inform us at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Reginald T. Kennedy

Reginald T. Kennedy,
 Executive Secretary
 New York Round Table

RTK:WMP

DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION

In the darkness and confusion of our age we can discern but one gleam of hope, that which comes to us from God. Faced with the peril of a common doom, we may either turn to it for guidance and be spared; or, neglecting its teachings, perish together in a fearful struggle to destroy one another. Never in recorded history has each individual borne so grave a responsibility for the welfare of all humanity. We must choose between the advancement of selfish material interests and the real and permanent good of society. The life and the happiness of our children, as well as the ideals for which thousands have suffered willing martyrdom are at stake today. Either democracy and religion will survive in our day and the world will remain civilized and happy, or they will be destroyed and humanity will be thrust back to the jungle and barbarism.

The struggle for religion is not one which can be fought on the field of battle, but in our hearts; for we cannot win others to God unless we ourselves are devoted to Him. Any taint of hatred, injustice or paganism in us may be fatal not only to our own spiritual life, but to the future of civilization. It is not enough to denounce barbarism; we, ourselves, must practice justice and mercy.

The realization of these facts has moved us -- American Catholics, Protestants and Jews -- to appeal to our fellow countrymen to join us in an effort to strengthen religious conviction in this land, to foster the ideals of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, to free ourselves of all forms of bigotry, and to overcome the tendencies toward race, class, religious and individual hatred which are threatening the future of our nation, as well as the world.

We must reaffirm our opposition to the divisive influences abroad and our adherence to our common purpose in this land. We can continually rededicate ourselves to the preservation of our institutions and the religious ideals on which they are founded. And above all, we should constantly turn to the religious teachings of our faith as they interpret the will of God for new inspiration, and guidance, as well as solace and comfort.

We are confident that joined in this common purpose, the American people may serve the world in an unprecedented manner. Led by the teachings of the prophets, we have it in our power, under God, to transform disaster into blessing and the world's darkest moment into the beginning of a new dawn.