Chapter One

"Freedom Under God": Corporations and Christianity

In the eyes of many business leaders, the Great Depression and the New Deal amounted to a vicious one-two punch. The stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing economic ruin had shattered Americans' faith in the essential goodness of big business. In the aftermath, President Franklin Roosevelt convinced vast majorities of Americans that unfettered capitalism had crippled the nation and that government needed to play an important new role in regulating its excesses and redistributing its rewards. Naturally, business leaders fiercely resisted these developments and worked hard to reclaim their rightful place. In 1934, for instance, an aggressive new generation of conservative industrialists took over the leadership of the powerful National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) in order "serve the purposes of business salvation." "The public does not understand industry," one of them argued, "because industry itself has made no effort to tell its story; to show the people of this country that our high living standards have risen almost altogether from the civilization which industrial activity has set up." Accordingly, NAM dedicated itself to spreading the gospel of free enterprise, hiring a director of public relations and vastly expanding its expenditures in the field. As late as 1934, NAM spent a paltry $36,000 to its public relations efforts. Three years later, it devoted a massive budget of $793,043 to the cause, a sum that represented more than half of the organization's total income that year. Seeking to repair the public image of industrialists, NAM promoted the values of free enterprise through a wide array of films, radio programs, paid advertisements, direct mail, a speakers' bureau, and a press service

that provided ready-made editorials and news stories for 7500 local newspapers. Ultimately, however, the industrial organization's efforts at self-promotion were seen as precisely that. As one observer later noted, "throughout the thirties, enough of the corporate campaign was marred by extremist, overt attacks on the unions and the New Deal that it was easy for critics to dismiss the entire effort as mere propaganda."[1]

While traditional business lobbies like NAM were unable to sell free enterprise effectively, neither were the many new advocacy organizations created specifically for that purpose. The most prominent of these, the American Liberty League, had formed in 1934 in order to "teach the necessity of respect for the rights of persons and property" and "the duty of government to encourage and protect individual and group initiative and enterprise." The organization benefitted from the financial backing of a number of major corporate figures, particularly from Du Pont and General Motors; but their prominent role in the group essentially crippled its effectiveness, as the Liberty League was rather easily dismissed as a collection of tycoons looking out for their own self-interest. James A. Farley, the chairman of the Democratic Party, joked that it really ought to be called the "American Cellophane League" because "first, it's a Du Pont product and second, you can see right through it." Even the president took his shots. Shortly after the League's formation, he told reporters it sounded like an organization intent on upholding just two of the Ten Commandments, while ignoring the other eight. "It has been said that there are two great Commandments – one is to love God, and the other to love your neighbor," the president said. "The two particular tenets of this new organization say you shall love

[1] Wendy Wall, Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 53-54; Kim Phillips-Fein, Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan (New York: Norton, 2009): 13-14; Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994): 25-26.

God and then forget your neighbor." Off the record, he joked with reporters that the name of the god they worshipped was apparently "Property."[2]

Realizing they could never make the case for big business on their own, the nation's industrialists searched for more effective ways to convince the American people. When NAM held its annual conference at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City in December 1940, its leaders addressed the problem directly. More than five thousand manufacturers had come to the posh hotel from all over the country, eager to hear an impressive slate of speakers featuring business titans from leading companies like General Motors, General Electric, and Sears, Roebuck; popular lecturers like the historian-philosopher Will Durant; and even government men like J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Before any of those speeches, however, NAM President H.W. Prentis, Jr., delivered a major address that was promoted in the *Wall Street Journal* and broadcast over ABC and CBS radio. In this presidential address, Prentis urged the assembled industrialists to reconsider their public relations campaigns. "We must give attention to those things more cherished than material wealth and physical security," he urged. "We must give more attention to intellectual leadership and a strengthening of the spiritual concept that underlies our American way of life."[3]

The Reverend James W. Fifield, Jr., was more than happy to answer this call. Handsome, tall and somewhat gangly, the Congregationalist minister bore more than a passing resemblance to Jimmy Stewart. His politics, however, resembled not those of the

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[2] Frederick Rudolph, "The American Liberty League, 1934-1940," American Historical Review (October 1950): 20; New York Times, 25 August 1934; William E. Leuchtenburg, The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 124; Transcript, Press Conference #137, Executive Offices of the White House, 24 August 1934, in Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. 4 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972): 17-18.
[3] Christian Science Monitor, 7 December 1940; New York Times, 8 December 1940; Wall Street Journal, 9, 10 December 1940.

actor's famous character George Bailey, a crusading populist, but rather those of his nemesis, the reactionary banker Henry Potter. Speaking to the assembled industrialists at the Waldorf-Astoria, Reverend Fifield offered a passionate defense of the American system of free enterprise and a withering assault on its enemies in government. Decrying the New Deal's "encroachment upon our American freedoms," the minister listed a litany of sins committed by the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, ranging from its devaluation of the currency to its disrespect for the Supreme Court and the Constitution. Fifield denounced the "rising costs of government and the multitude of federal agencies attached to the executive branch" and warned ominously of "the menace of autocracy approaching through bureaucracy." His audience of executives was stunned. Over the preceding decade, these titans of industry had been told, time and time again, that they were to blame for the nation's downfall. Fifield, in contrast, insisted instead that they were the source of its salvation. "When he had finished," a journalist noted with only slight hyperbole, "rumors report that the N.A.M. applause could be heard in Hoboken."[4]

Reverend Fifield, and other religious leaders like him, offered these industrialists a way to regain the upper hand in their war with Roosevelt. As men of God, they could give voice to the same conservative complaints as business leaders, but without the suspicion that they were motivated solely by self-interest. In doing so, they could serve as a crucial counterpoint to the arguments of liberal ministers and priests whose advocacy of the "Social Gospel" had offered important religious justifications for the welfare state. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, proponents of the Social Gospel significantly reframed Christianity as being concerned less with personal salvation and more with public service and the common good. Their efforts had rallied popular support for

[4] Ann Fields, "Apostle to Millionaires," Coronet (August 1944): 84-85.

Progressive Era reforms in the early twentieth century, before fading from public prominence during the conservative heyday of the 1920s. The economic crash and the widespread suffering of the Great Depression brought them back into vogue, however. When Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, an array of liberal clergymen championed his proposal for a vast welfare state as the Christian thing to do. His administration's efforts to intervene in the economy and address the excesses of corporate America were praised in particular. Catholic and Protestant leaders hailed the "ethical and human significance" of New Deal measures, which they said merely "incorporated into law some of the social ideas and principles for which our religious organizations have stood for many years." The head of the Federal Council of Churches went so far as to claim that the New Deal embodied Christian economic principles such as the "significance of daily bread, shelter, and security."[5]

For his own part, Roosevelt did much to encourage association of his progressive policies with traditional religious values. A practicing Episcopalian and a shrewd politician, he placed great emphasis on religious themes and imagery throughout his career.[6] Indeed, in the judgment of James MacGregor Burns, "probably no American politician has given so many speeches that were essentially sermons rather than statements of policy."[7] During his two terms as governor of New York, for instance,

[5] James A. Morone, Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2003): 350-377; New York Times, 13 July 1933; Jonathan P. Herzog, The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 33.

[6] Roosevelt's repeated use of religious rhetoric was inescapable, but critics dismissed it as purely cynical. A popular story held that the president once instructed his speechwriter to be sure to tack on some of "the God stuff" to a particular address, but its origins remain unclear. All of the extant citations do not extend to an original source, but rather repeat second-hand observations – most originating in the 1950s – as fact. See, for instance, Martin E. Marty, Under God, Indivisible: Modern American Religion, Volume 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 303.

[7] James MacGregor Burns, The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956): 476.

Roosevelt frequently framed his earthly agenda in heavenly terms, as when he introduced an otherwise dry speech outlining his opposition to Republican efforts to privatize the state's public utilities by saying, "This is a history and a sermon on the subject of water power, and I preach from the Old Testament. The text is 'Thou shalt not steal.'"[8] His use of religious language was even more pronounced over his four presidential terms, especially when he sought to condemn the elites who embodied his political enemies. In his speech accepting his party's nomination at the 1932 Democratic National Convention, Roosevelt placed blame for the Great Depression on the "many amongst us [who] have made obeisance to Mammon." In the same spirit, his first inaugural address – a speech so laden with references to scripture that the National Bible Press published a chart linking his text with the "Corresponding Biblical Quotations" – reassured the nation that "the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore the temple to the ancient truths."[9]

For industrialists and corporate leaders, Reverend Fifield and his associates thus offered a chance to push back against claims that business had somehow sinned and the welfare state was essentially doing God's work. While President Roosevelt had joked that the Liberty League was concerned only with the commandments against coveting and stealing, these conservative clergymen used their ministerial authority to argue, quite explicitly, that the New Dealers were the ones violating the Ten Commandments. In countless sermons, speeches and articles, these ministers claimed that the Democratic

[8] Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952): 23.
[9] Transcript, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address Accepting Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, 2 July 1932, and Transcript, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, 4 March 1933, located in John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, American Presidency Project (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws); Alison Collis Greene, "No Depression in Heaven: Religion and Economic Crisis in Memphis and the Delta, 1929-1941" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University 2010): 138.

administration had made a "false idol" of the federal government, leading Americans to worship it rather than the Almighty; that it caused Americans to covet what the wealthy possessed and sought to steal from them; and that, ultimately, it bore false witness in making wild claims about what it could never truly accomplish. Above all, they insisted that the welfare state was not a means to implement Christ's teachings about caring for the poor and the needy, but rather a perversion of his doctrine. In a forceful rejection of the public service themes of the Social Gospel, they argued that the central tenet of Christianity remained the salvation of the individual. And if any political and economic system fit with the religious teachings of Christ, it would have to be a system rooted in a similarly individualistic ethos. Nothing better exemplified such values, they insisted, than the capitalist system of free enterprise.

Thus, throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, Fifield and like-minded religious leaders advanced a new blend of conservative religion, economics and politics that one observer aptly anointed "Christian libertarianism."[10] A critic in the mid-1950s noted with sarcasm that "these groups do as much proselytizing for Adam Smith and the National Association of Manufacturers as they do for Christianity," but these figures would have welcomed the jibe as a fair description of their work, even a compliment.[11] For they saw Christianity and capitalism as inextricably intertwined. They argued that spreading the gospel of one required spreading the gospel of the other. "I hold," Reverend Fifield stated with confidence in his book *The Single Path*, "that the blessings of capitalism come from God. A system that provides so much for the common good and happiness

[10] Ralph Lord Roy, Apostles of Discord: A Study of Organized Bigotry and Disruption on the Fringes of Protestantism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953).
[11] Chadwick Hall, "America's Conservative Revolution," The Antioch Review (Summer 1955): 207.

must flourish under the favor of the Almighty."[12] Accordingly, he and his colleagues devoted themselves to fighting back against the government forces that they believed were stunting the spread of capitalism and, by extension, stifling Christianity. In the early postwar era, their activities would do much to reshape the national debate about the proper functions of the federal government, the contributions of corporate leaders, and the presence of religion in national life. They built a foundation for a new vision of America in which businessmen would no longer suffer under the rule of Roosevelt, but in which they would thrive – in a phrase they popularized – in a nation "under God."

Spiritual Mobilization

Reverend James Fifield's ministry to the rich and powerful began in 1935, when he was recruited to Los Angeles to lead the First Congregational Church. Located on a palm-shaded drive in the heart of the residential section, the church had an imposing physical structure: a massive cathedral of concrete with a 176-foot-tall gothic tower, a full-sized stage, a wedding chapel, a modern gymnasium, three auditoriums, and fifty-six classrooms. The church also possessed an equally imposing debt of $750,000. As the deacons fretted about finances, their new minister launched a massive spending spree. Fifield divided the church into four new divisions, hiring an ordained assistant minister to run each on a full-time salary with their own complete staffs of secretaries, clerks and organists, as well as five fully vested choirs shared between them. He recruited an instructor from Yale University to start a new drama club, while a new adult education series christened the College of Life started classes with a staff of fourteen university professors. Seeking to expand the church's reach across the city, Fifield took to the radio

[12] James W. Fifield, Jr., The Single Path (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957): 87.

with five programs. Then, in 1938, he launched the Sunday Evening Club, a speakers' series that featured popular figures like the author Will Durant, with nearly 2,000 in attendance and a radio following of an estimated 100,000 more.[13]

The massive expansion of the First Congregational Church led to enormous growth. The College of Life soon had 28,000 paying participants, while the Sunday Evening Club reported an average attendance of 900 people each week, with the collection plates bringing in twice as much as was spent on the expensive programs. By 1942, the church had climbed out of debt and was turning a tidy profit. More important, official membership in the church nearly quadrupled, with the city's elite prominently included in the rolls. "Pushing four thousand," a reporter later marveled, "its roster read like the *Wall Street Journal*." The advisory board alone included prominent Angelinos like Harry Chandler, a wealthy real-estate speculator and conservative publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*; Dr. Robert A. Millikan, a Nobel Prize winning chemist who had graced the cover of *Time* magazine before becoming president of Cal Tech; Harvey Seeley Mudd, a mining magnate and president of the Southern California Symphony Association; Alexander Nesbitt Kemp, president of the mammoth Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Co.; and Albert W. Hawkes, a chemical industry executive who would soon assume prominent roles as president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and then as a Republican U.S. Senator from New Jersey. Chronicling the storied achievements of

[13] Los Angeles Times, 14 December 1934, 17 September 1938; Ann Fields, "Apostle to Millionaires," Coronet (August 1944): 85-87; Program, Sunday Evening Club, [n.d., 1946], Box 914, Cecil B. DeMille Papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as "CBD").

Fifield and his distinguished congregation, a friendly writer anointed him an "Apostle to Millionaires."[14]

To be sure, the minister was well matched to the millionaires in his pews. In the apt words of one observer, Reverend Fifield stood as "one of the most theologically liberal and at the same time politically conservative ministers" of his era. He had no patience for fundamentalists who insisted upon the literal reading of Scripture. "The men who chronicled and canonized the Bible were subject to human error and limitation," he argued, and therefore the text needed to be sifted and interpreted. Reading the holy book, he reasoned, should be "like eating fish—we take the bones out to enjoy the meat. All parts are not of equal value."[15] The minister took a loose approach to the Bible, but was a strict constructionist with the Constitution. The federal government had grown in ungainly and unconstitutional ways in recent years, he warned, with dire consequences. In December 1939, for instance, Fifield used a full-page ad in the *Los Angeles Times*, prominently placed on the second page of the paper, to argue that America had strayed from the designs of the Founding Fathers. "From the beginning," it noted, "America has built on the ideal of government which provides that the state is the servant of its citizens, that all just powers of government arise from consent of the governed, and that government's function is to provide maximum responsibility and maximum freedom to individual citizens. The opposite philosophy has been unwelcome in America until recently." But "unsound fiscal policies, confused thinking, [and] dangerous ideologies" now combined to pose a dire threat to the American way of life. "The church must come to grips with freedom," the ad warned, "and the sooner, the better." In its crusade against

[14] Ann Fields, "Apostle to Millionaires," Coronet (August 1944): 87; Los Angeles Times, 18 May 1934, 31 October 1934, 25 April 1941; Time, 25 April 1927; New York Times, 22 November 1942.
[15] Brooks R. Walker, The Christian Fright Peddlers (New York: Doubleday, 1964): 137.

the "restricting trends" of government, the church would find natural allies in corporate America because "[b]usiness, like the church, is naturally interested in [the] preservation of basic freedom in this nation. Goodness and Christian ideals run proportionately high among business men. They need no defense, for with all their faults, they have given America within the last decade a new world-high in general economic well-being."[16]

To lead this crusade of the church and the corporations in defense of freedom, Reverend Fifield offered the services of Spiritual Mobilization. Fifield founded the organization in the spring of 1935 with a pair of like-minded intellectuals, President Donald J. Cowling of Carleton College, a doctrinally liberal graduate of Yale Divinity, and Professor William Hocking of Harvard University, a libertarian-minded philosopher. The goal of the group, they said, was "to arouse the ministers of all denominations in America to check the trends toward pagan stateism [sic], which would destroy our basic freedom and spiritual ideals."[17] Fifield soon took sole control. During its early years, he ran the organization from his offices in Los Angeles, but in late 1938, the First Congregational Church officially adopted the program of Spiritual Mobilization and claimed responsibility for its budget.[18] Its early credo reflected the common politics of the minister and the millionaires in his congregation: "Man, being created free as a child of God, has certain inalienable rights and responsibilities; the state must not be permitted to usurp them; it is the duty of the church to help protect them." Specifically, these rights

[16] Los Angeles Times, 23 December 1939.
[17] Ralph Lord Roy, Apostles of Discord: A Study of Organized Bigotry and Disruption on the Fringes of Protestantism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953): 286.
[18] Tenth Fall Bulletin, Spiritual Mobilization, [n.d., 1944], 2, copy in Box 20, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin (hereafter cited as "BB").

included "the liberty and dignity of the individual, in which freedom of choice, of enterprise and of property is inherent."[19]

With the First Congregational Church firmly behind it, Spiritual Mobilization moved to win over the nation as a whole. Through a series of newspaper advertisements, for instance, the organization convinced nearly two million Christians to sign its pledge. As originally written in June 1940, the pledge amounted to little more than a statement of concern about the threat that "rising tides of paganism and apostasy" posed to "freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of worship" in America. But by 1944, the Spiritual Mobilization pledge had crystallized into a more identifiably conservative form: "Recognizing the anti-Christian and anti-American trends toward pagan stateism in America, I covenant to oppose them in all my areas of influence. I will use every opportunity to champion basic freedoms [of the] free pulpit, free speech, free enterprise, free press, and free assembly."[20] Not surprisingly, the advisory committee for the national organization behind this pledge looked, in the words of one observer, "like a who's who of the conservative establishment."[21] In 1945, its twenty-four members boasted three men who had served as president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, including the immediate past-president, U.S. Senator Albert Hawkes, and the current president, Eric Johnston. They were joined by a noted Wall Street stock analyst, a leading economist from the American Banking Association, the founder of the National Small Businessmen's Association, a U.S. congressman and future mayor of Los Angeles,

[19] Ralph Lord Roy, Apostles of Discord: A Study of Organized Bigotry and Disruption on the Fringes of Protestantism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953): 286.
[20] Los Angeles Times, 15 June 1940, 17 June 1940; Tenth Fall Bulletin, Spiritual Mobilization, [n.d., 1944], 6, 16, copy in Box 20, BB.
[21] Eckhard V. Toy, Jr., "Spiritual Mobilization: The Failure of an Ultraconservative Ideal in the 1950's," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 61:2 (April 1970): 78.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, a few notable authors and lecturers, and the presidents of the California Institute of Technology, Stanford University, the University of California, the University of Florida, and Princeton Theological Seminary.[22]

In Spiritual Mobilization's publications, corporate leaders and other conservative figures joined Fifield in his crusade to convince clergymen of the need to reject the Social Gospel and oppose the welfare state. Its annual bulletin was specially designed with ministers in mind, both as the target audience and the means of marketing. "It will have a very wide circulation," Fifield reported in a letter to a supporter in September 1944. "Probably a quarter of a million copies will be sent out through 70,000 carefully selected ministers of all denominations."[23] That year, articles in the annual bulletin repeatedly warned religious leaders about the dangers of unchecked government power at home and abroad. In particular, they challenged Roosevelt's assertion that Americans all valued an essential set of "Four Freedoms," which he had articulated as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These values, the contributors to Spiritual Mobilization argued, were nothing more than propaganda for the Social Gospel. "Within ever-narrowing limits, we still have freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly and worship," author Channing Pollock noted, "but freedom of enterprise, of labor, and of the smallest concerns of our daily lives are gone with the wind from Washington. Instead we are offered the preposterous and impossible 'Four Freedoms' of slaves and convicts." Chrysler executive B. E. Hutchinson likewise complained about how "irresponsible starry-eyed reformers" and "ambitious self-serving scoundrels" had forced "the advent and the adoption of the totalitarian conceptions of our New Deal" on the

[22] James W. Fifield, Jr., to Bruce Barton, 8 September 1945, Box 20, BB.
[23] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 14 September 1944, Box 6, J. Howard Pew Papers, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware (hereafter cited as "JHP").

country and now the world. The consequences of runaway government were apparent all around them. The Second World War "was directly due to organized state wickedness," argued poet Alfred Noyes, and therefore "the first problem, after the war, should be to devise a system of checks which will make it impossible for any criminal to so misuse the state machinery." The omens of domestic dictatorship were clear, Senator Hawkes asserted. "After careful examination of the records during the past ten years, one can only conclude that there is the objective of the assumption of greater power and control by the government over individual life. If these policies continue," he warned, "they will lead to state direction and control of all the lives of our citizens. That is the goal of Federal planners. That is NOT the desire of the American people!" "The number one question post war," an editorial echoed, "is whether the democratic process will have been preserved in America so that those to whom America's future belongs, those who have gone to the ends of the earth for it, can have a part in shaping that future in the American Way. And what a question! The clergymen of America have a real responsibility in finding the answer."[24]

Funding the Cause

As Spiritual Mobilization directed its outward message to ministers, internally it looked more and more to business leaders for its inspiration and support. The national ambitions of the organization stretched its budget beyond even the ample resources of First Congregational Church. As the Second World War came to a close, Fifield was frantically searching for new sponsors in the corporate world. In December 1944, his longtime ally Senator Hawkes arranged a meeting with an elite group of industrialists at

[24] Tenth Fall Bulletin, Spiritual Mobilization, [n.d., 1944], 2, 3, 5, 11-12, 15, copy in Box 20, BB.

the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.[25] Fifield found the audience to be just as receptive as the one he had addressed there four years earlier at the conference of the National Association of Manufacturers. The corporate giants in the room dedicated themselves to raising funds for Spiritual Mobilization, through corporate donations, personal checks, and solicitations from their friends in their industries and their home communities. For instance, Harvey Firestone secured a donation at "the suggested maximum level" of $5,000 from his firm and promised to "work out a studied approach to two other rubber companies in Akron."[26] H.W. Prentis, Jr., head of the Armstrong Cork Company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, sent Fifield the names of "twenty or twenty-five industrialists in this part of the country" from whom he would be able to solicit funds. After Fifield wrote the leaders on his list, the former NAM president followed up with unsubtle messages of his own. Prentis told them that he personally had funded Spiritual Mobilization to support its work "in behalf of sound American Christian principles" and asked that they too might "give the movement some financial assistance."[27]

Reverend Fifield won a number of powerful new patrons that year, but none was more important – not simply in terms of supporting Spiritual Mobilization financially, but in shaping its growth and effectiveness – than J. Howard Pew, the president of Sun Oil. Tall and stiff, with bushy eyebrows, Pew cut a stern appearance that was closely matched by a stern attitude. As a U.S. Senator once quipped, "He not only talks like an affidavit, he looks like one."[28] In religious terms, the doctrinally conservative Presbyterian had

[25] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 17 March 1944, Box 6, JHP.
[26] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 16 January 1945, Box 8, JHP.
[27] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 15 December 1944, Box 8, JHP; Pew to H.W. Prentis, Jr., 13 January 1945, Box 8, JHP; Prentis to Pew, 15 January 1945, Box 8, JHP; and Prentis to John Ballantyne, 15 January 1945, Box 8, JHP.
[28] Philadelphia Inquirer, 27 April 1992.

little in common with the liberal Congregationalist Fifield.[29] "He is far more modernistic in his religious views than I like," Pew confided to a friend, "and I am not sure his views on the divinity of Christ are sound."[30] Politically, however, the two were in complete agreement. During the 1930s, Pew emerged as a leading voice of conservatism in corporate America, holding prominent positions in industrial organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers and, more famously, serving as one of the driving forces behind the American Liberty League.[31] In his letter appealing for Pew's support, Fifield offered words of flattery that had the added benefit of being true. "During the last decade I have been pretty active in connection with the fight to perpetuate our American way of doing things and have had contacts with most of the individuals and groups throughout the country who are working upon that same problem," he noted. "I just want to put in writing the fact that I have found no more steadfast, trustworthy, competent champion of our basic freedoms and spiritual ideals than J. Howard Pew."[32]

As the Second World War drew to a close, Pew and Fifield saw the beginnings of a new struggle for the soul of the nation. After Franklin Roosevelt's election to an unprecedented fourth term as president in November 1944, Pew sadly noted in a letter to Fifield that "the New Deal is in a much stronger position than it has been for the last several years. It is my judgment that within the next two years America will determine whether our children are to live in a Republic or under National Socialism; and the present Administration are definitely committed to the latter course." With the stakes at

[29] Pew would spend much of his energy in the postwar era working within the Presbyterian Church and the National Council of Churches to reverse their trend toward liberalism. See E.V. Toy, Jr., "The National Lay Committee and the National Council of Churches: A Case Study of Protestants in Conflict," American Quarterly 21 (Summer 1969): 190-209.
[30] J. Howard Pew to Alfred P. Haake, 6 April 1948, Box 235, JHP.
[31] Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, Right Face: Organizing the American Conservative Movement, 1945-1965 (Denmark: Narayana Press, 2002): 105.
[32] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 28 September 1944, Box 6, JHP.

their highest stage yet, Pew promised to stay involved, but in a different way than before. The Liberty League, he reflected, had been ultimately unsuccessful because its public leaders had been unfairly painted as selfish plutocrats looking out for their own interests rather than those of the country. The charges were baseless, Pew protested. "My attack on the New Deal has not been prompted by materialistic considerations," he noted, "but rather by a desire to preserve in America an opportunity for coming generations." Still, perceptions mattered in politics. "I have not quit yet," he insisted, "although I feel this job could have been much better done by others toward whom the New Deal has not been so active in their attempt at character assassination." Spiritual Mobilization, with ministers as its public face instead of industrialists, could be a much more effective advocate for the causes of corporate America than corporate leaders themselves.[33]

A flyer Fifield sent to Pew showed that the organization shared his understanding of what was wrong with the nation and what needed to be done, in general terms. According to the tract, Spiritual Mobilization "stands for the Christian concepts: (a) Sacredness of the individual, (b) The state as servant, not master. It stands for the inter-related freedoms – free pulpit, free enterprise, free press, free speech, and free assembly. It stands for constitutional government, states rights, and protection of the democratic process – for building government from the bottom up instead of from the top down." To put these values into action, Spiritual Mobilization "proposes to make the clergy aware of the great crisis which will come post-war, when, unless it is better buttressed, our American tradition will be destroyed, the democratic process abrogated, and pagan stateism established." This was all fine for Pew. But to his dismay, the flyer concluded without any clear agenda for action whatsoever, merely noting vaguely that Spiritual

[33] J. Howard Pew to James W. Fifield, Jr., 10 November 1944, Box 6, JHP.

Mobilization would print its annual bulletins and place some advertisements, but "leave details" of what to do next "to individual ministers."[34] Pew felt this was no way to run a successful organization. "I am frank to confess," he wrote a confidant, "that if Dr. Fifield has developed a concrete program and knows exactly where he is going and what he expects to accomplish, that conception has never become clearly defined in my mind."[35]

If Fifield's touch with the ministers had been too light, Pew knew that a more forceful approach would also fail. The National Association of Manufacturers had been making direct appeals to ministers for years, but with little success. In February 1945, the economist and industrial consultant Alfred Haake wrote Pew, a longtime friend, to explain why NAM's efforts had failed. "Of the approximately thirty preachers to whom I have thus far talked, I have yet to find one who is unqualifiedly impressed by the very excellent material sent out," Haake reported. "One of the men put it almost typically for the rest when he said: 'The careful preparation and framework for the meetings to which we are brought is too apparent. We cannot help but see that it is expertly designed propaganda and that there must be big money behind it. We easily become suspicious.'"[36] If industrialists wanted to convince clergymen to side with them, they would need to take a subtler approach, one that involved ministers more directly.

Rather than simply treating ministers as a passive audience to be persuaded, Haake argued, they should involve them more actively in the cause as participants. The first step in this would be making ministers realize that they too had something to fear from the growth of government. "The religious leaders must be helped to discover that their callings are threatened," Haake argued, by realizing that the "collectivism" of the

[34] Flyer, "Spiritual Mobilization," [n.d., 1944], Box 6, JHP.
[35] J. Howard Pew to Alfred P. Haake, 13 July 1945, Box 235, JHP.
[36] Alfred P. Haake to J. Howard Pew, 5 February 1945, and Pew to Haake, 8 February 1945, Box 235, JHP.

New Deal, "with the glorification of the state, is really a denial of God."[37] If they were thus alarmed, they would readily join Spiritual Mobilization as its representatives, and could then be organized more effectively into a force that would be able to effect change at both the local and national levels. Haake was so optimistic about the possibilities of creating a mass movement of ministers through Spiritual Mobilization that he signed on to become the director of the Chicago office, with the entire Midwest Region as his domain. Together, Haake and Fifield resolved to build a real organization in the ranks of the clergy. "The goal," Haake stated that August, "should be at least one active and strong ministerial representative for every city in the United States, and even into the villages and towns."[38]

With this new sense of direction and determination transforming it into a truly national organization, Spiritual Mobilization now required even greater levels of funding. In May 1946, Senator Hawkes arranged for Fifield to meet with a prominent group of businessmen in New York. Along with Hawkes and Pew, the hosts were Donaldson Brown, the vice chairman of General Motors; Jasper Crane, a former executive with DuPont; Harry L. Derby, president of the massive American Cyanamid and Chemical Corporation; and Leonard Read, a former head of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (and another powerful member of Fifield's First Congregational Church) who had recently launched the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), a pro-business think tank. "The purpose of the meeting is to receive a report from Dr. Fifield on the work he has been doing, and what he believes is accomplished by it," Senator Hawkes told them. "It will be up to us to decide if the progress justifies continued support. That

[37] Alfred P. Haake, "Outline for Spiritual Mobilization," 13 January 1945, Box 235, JHP.
[38] Alfred P. Haake to James W. Fifield, Jr., 13 August 1945, Box 235, JHP.

will be another question."[39] Fifield made his case ably, pointing to past accomplishments and noting the rapid growth of the organization at the grassroots. "We have," he reported, "3,517 committed representatives of our program in all the major cities and communities of the United States and we expect before Easter 1947 to have 10,000. The program is gaining favor."[40] Duly impressed, the assembled businessmen formed a new Businessmen's Advisory Committee for Spiritual Mobilization, taking charge of its fundraising efforts in New York and promising to support an "expanded program and budget of $170,000" from then on.[41]

With the new financial support and sense of direction, Fifield began a massive overhaul of Spiritual Mobilization. Its staff greatly expanded, with office leases signed through the end of 1948. Most important, by February 1947, Fifield reported to Pew that he had already reached their goal for "the signing of ten thousand ministers as representatives."[42] This national network of clergymen would be the primary channel through which the work and writings of Spiritual Mobilization would flow. In its new monthly publication, Fifield wrote a column – complete with the business-like heading, "Director to Representatives" – devoted to marshaling these ministerial representatives toward their common goal of stemming the tide of liberalism. "The so-called liberal influence in government during the last decade has accomplished good," Fifield conceded in one column, "but it has undermined the sense of individual responsibility, imperiled the democratic process, pushed pagan stateism toward the totalitarian level and led the

[39] Albert W. Hawkes to J. Howard Pew, 18 March 1946, Box 10, JHP; Darren Dochuk, From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism (New York: Norton, 2010): 116-117; Kim Philips-Fein, Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan (New York: Norton, 2009): 53-56.
[40] James W. Fifield, Jr., "Looking Towards a Better World," 7 May 1946, 5, copy in Box 10, JHP.
[41] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 7 January 1947, Box 15, JHP.
[42] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 27 February 1947, Box 15, JHP.

government into practices which have, by example, hurt the moral fiber of our people." "It is time to exalt the dignity of individual man as a child of God, to exalt Jesus' concept of man's sacredness and to rebuild a moral fabric based on such irreducibles as the Ten Commandments," he urged the ministers. "Let's redouble our efforts."[43]

The minister representatives answered the call. Many wrote to the Los Angeles office to request free advertised copies of Friedrich Hayek's market libertarian treatise *The Road to Serfdom*, as well as anti-New Deal tracts by former President Herbert Hoover and libertarian author Garet Garrett. Some sought reprints of the bulletin itself. "I found your last issue of Spiritual Mobilization excellent," a Connecticut clergyman reported. "Could you send me 100 copies to distribute to key people in my parish? I am quite anxious to get my people thinking along this line."[44] Other ministers took a more indirect route in passing along the views of Spiritual Mobilization to their congregations. "Occasionally I preach a sermon directly on your theme song," a minister wrote from the Midwest in April 1947, "but equally important, it is in the background of my thought as I prepare all my sermons, meet various groups and individuals." Moreover, he said the organization had let him find common cause with like-minded ministers in his region. "Being a representative," he wrote, "developed a real sense of fellowship and understanding between me and some other ministers in our community who share Mobilization's convictions and concerns."[45]

As local bonds between these ministers strengthened, national ones did as well. In October 1947, Spiritual Mobilization held a sermon competition on the theme of

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[43] James W. Fifield, Jr., "Director to Representatives," Spiritual Mobilization, [n.d., 1946], 1, in Box 10, JHP.
[44] Letter from Rev. E. Ray Burchell, Chester, Connecticut, Spiritual Mobilization, [n.d., 1946], 4, in Box 10, JHP.
[45] "What Can I Do About It?", Spiritual Mobilization, 15 April 1947, 3, in Box 15, JHP.

"Perils to Freedom." $5,000 in prize money would be awarded to the best sermons, as judged by Dr. Edgar Goodspeed, a respected biblical scholar; Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul, president of the University of California; and Dr. Alfred Noyes, a noted poet. The organization had a membership of more than 12,000 minister representatives at that point, but found twice as many clergymen taking part in the competition. A total of 25,066 participated, roughly fifteen percent of the entire country's clergymen.[46] "I have profited from the materials you are sending," noted the minister of University Park Methodist Church in Dallas, "and am glad to add my bit to help the people of America recognize and accept the responsibilities of freedom as well as its privileges." The pastor at Pittsburgh's Trinity Lutheran Church agreed, calling the sermon competition "a concentrated and remarkable contribution to the cause of freedom." From Providence, Rhode Island, the minister of French Town Baptist Church echoed these feelings, writing, "I hope that this plan of Spiritual Mobilization, to have a great block of ministers in all parts of our great country in a concerted movement preaching upon the one subject, Perils [to] Freedom, will attract attention and cause a great awakening."[47]

As Fifield demonstrated his effectiveness in mobilizing ministers to the cause, his financial backers redoubled their efforts. At its first meeting in 1946, the Businessmen's Advisory Committee committed itself to guaranteeing an annual budget of $170,000 for Fifield's work; just a year later they decided to increase that amount to $270,000.[48] To raise these funds, Pew and the other members of the Advisory Committee secured sizable donations from their own companies and personal accounts and, more important, reached

[46] Los Angeles Times, 15 July 1947; Chicago Tribune, 16 August 1947; Norfolk Journal and Guide, 11 October 1947; Boston Globe, 11 October 1947; Table 1, U.S. Census of Population, 1950, Part IV, Volume I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951).
[47] "About National Preaching Program," Spiritual Mobilization, 28 November 1947, 3, in Box 15, JHP.
[48] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 4 September 1947, Box 15, JHP.

out to colleagues across the corporate world to secure their donations as well. For his part, Pew drew up a list of 158 major corporations whom he would personally solicit for donations. "A large percentage of ministers in this country are completely ignorant of economic matters and have used their pulpits for the purpose of disseminating socialistic and totalitarian doctrines," he wrote in his appeal. "Dr. Fifield through this organization is regularly preparing and disseminating hundreds of thousands of pamphlets to the ministers. Much has already been accomplished in the education of these ministers, but a great deal more is left to be done."[49] Many of the companies he contacted – General Motors, Chrysler, Republic Steel, National Steel, International Harvester, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Sun Oil, Gulf Oil, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Colgate-Palmolive-Peet – were already contributing the maximum allowable donation of $5,000 a year. Other leading corporations, from U.S. Steel to the National Cash Register Company, had donated to Spiritual Mobilization in the past, but Pew now hoped to get them to commit the maximum amount as well.[50] Aware that there were a number of worthy conservative causes "fighting for our American way of life," Pew assured a friend in the oil industry that Spiritual Mobilization deserved to be "at the top of the list" when it came time to donate, "because recent polls indicated that of all the groups in America, the ministers had more to do with molding public opinion."[51] "I am certain that that which has already been accomplished by Spiritual Mobilization is worth to business and industry many, many times what it has cost," he insisted in a letter to the president of Monsanto

[49] J. Howard Pew, Form Letter Draft, [n.d., September 1947], Box 15, JHP; James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 24 September 1947, Box 15, JHP.
[50] Spiritual Mobilization Contributors List, [n.d., September 1947], Box 15, JHP; James W. Fifield, Jr., to Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., 16 March 1949, Box 54, James C. Ingebretsen Papers, Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon (hereafter cited as "JCI").
[51] J. Howard Pew to Otto D. Donnell, 22 October 1947, Box 15, JHP.

Chemical. "If they could get a wider support, they could strengthen up their organization and do a much better job."[52]

The higher profile of the organization secured the increased funding for its work, but it came at the price of added scrutiny, and scorn, from progressives. In February 1948, Carey McWilliams wrote a withering cover story about Spiritual Mobilization for *The Nation*. "With the 'Save Christianity' and the 'Save Western Capitalism' chants becoming almost indistinguishable, a major battle for the minds of the clergy, particularly those of the Protestant persuasion, is now being waged in America," he began. "For the most part the battle lines are honestly drawn and represent a sharp clash in ideologies, but now and then the reactionary side tries to fudge a bit by backing movements which mask their true character and real sponsors. Such a movement is Spiritual Mobilization of Los Angeles." McWilliams explained the scope of its operations, noting that it now had nine paid organizers working out of high-rent offices in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles and had distributed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets by pro-business authors for free. No one knew precisely who was funding the operation, McWilliams warned. There had only been vague statements from Fifield that "non-ministers who have a common stake in the American and Christian traditions cannot contribute service" and therefore it was "only natural that they give substance instead." In McWilliams' withering prose, Fifield came off as a charlatan who had relied upon the "apostles of rugged individualism" to secure his own fame and financial gain and, in return, had prostituted himself for their needs.[53]

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[52] J. Howard Pew to William M. Rand, 22 October 1947, Box 15, JHP.
[53] Carey McWilliams, "Battle for the Clergy: The Story of 'Spiritual Mobilization,' a Growing Protestant Movement," The Nation, 7 February 1948, 150-152.

McWilliams must have hoped that shining a light on Spiritual Mobilization's finances would discourage donors. Instead, the article had the opposite effect as its backers redoubled their efforts. Charles M. White, president of the Republic Steel Corporation in Cleveland, distributed a form-letter response to the article in which he defended Fifield as "one of my personal friends." "Our company has supported his Crusade, generously, for some years," White wrote, "and we believe in it deeply – the more so since I have read this irresponsible article and see how 'the opposition' feels about Spiritual Mobilization." The group "ought to have more support," he noted, adding that donations were tax exempt and allowed in amounts up to $5,000 a year. "Why don't you send a cheque at once," he all but ordered. "I consider this very important and suggest prompt and generous action on your part."[54] By all appearances, the unsubtle appeal worked. In May 1948, Spiritual Mobilization had $86,000 in hand from 39 of its corporate donors, with expectations of nearly $39,000 more in donations from another 19 businesses.[55] In August, the board of directors decided to accept even greater levels of corporate giving, doubling the maximum allowable donation to $10,000 a year.[56]

As the corporate backers renewed their faith in Spiritual Mobilization, however, Reverend Fifield found his own flagging. The minister still believed in the dire need for the organization, but after his personal life and politics were ridiculed in *The Nation*, Fifield began to worry that he was a liability and should step aside for the greater good.

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[54] Charles M. White to "Dear Friend," 31 March 1948, Box 19, JHP. In addition to these individual corporate solicitations, Spiritual Mobilization very nearly secured a massive donation of $200,000. Harold Luthnow, head of the conservative Volker Foundation, offered Fifield a donation of $100,000, spread out over four years, on the condition that he secure a matching donation. Fifield secured an agreement from White to furnish half of the needed total, $50,000 over four years, but he was unable to convince Alfred Sloan of General Motors to make an equally large contribution. See James W. Fifield, Jr., to Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., 16 March 1949, and James W. Fifield, Jr., to Arnold J. Zurchner, 19 September 1949, Box 54, JCI.

[55] Patsy Peppers to J. Howard Pew, 24 May 1948, Box 19, JHP.

[56] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 2 August 1948, Box 19, JHP.

"Spiritual Mobilization has bucked the line without any compromise," he reasoned. "The crowd that have stood back of it and me are an anathema in some quarters and a fresh team will score some immediate gains by reason of being a fresh team."[57] Pew was sorry to hear of Fifield's desire to leave, but in light of his own past concerns about the costs of "character assassination" on the conservative movement, he understood. In any event, Pew had for years kept his eye on a minister whom he considered a promising possibility for Fifield's replacement – Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.

During the Depression, Peale had emerged as a notable critic of the New Deal, one with a light but highly effective touch. In a 1942 profile, the New York *Sun* described him as "the decidedly urban type of cleric, handsome and impressive, filling his church with his weekly anti-New Deal philippics." From his prominent pulpit at Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue in Midtown Manhattan, the paper continued, Reverend Peale

> has been a vigorous assailant of the New Deal, preaching eloquent sermons against bureaucracy, official bungling, muddling and meddling, invasion of individual rights, wrecking of American traditions, coddling the unemployed, providing relief for the undeserving, knuckling to union labor, the menace of a third term, in fact, the entire category of New Deal sins as he sees them.[58]

In language strikingly similar to Fifield's, Peale argued that the New Deal had wrongfully usurped the authority of Almighty God. "In the old days people flocked to the church to pray to God that the evidences of his displeasure might pass," he complained. "Today they pray to the government to write another code."[59] While Peale's politics impressed Pew, the industrialist was even more taken with the minister's ability to persuade skeptics

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[57] James W. Fifield, Jr., to Norman Vincent Peale, 21 March 1949, Box 54, JCI.
[58] New York Sun, 22 November 1942, cited in Carol V.R. George, God's Salesman: Norman Vincent Peale & The Power of Positive Thinking (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 167-168.
[59] Jonathan P. Herzog, The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle against Communism in the Early Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 34.

and silence the opposition. "I think he is the greatest minister in America," Pew noted in 1948, "because he ties our American way of life into our Christian concepts, and does it in a way which gets the ear of the liberals." Based on his past experiences with Peale, Pew believed he would be perfectly suited to the tasks of Spiritual Mobilization, particularly its drive to win over clergymen to conservatism. "I first met him about four years ago when he came to Philadelphia to address a group of ministers," Pew told a fellow industrialist. "He started out by talking to them on a subject on which everyone was in agreement, and then gradually developed his theme until he was expounding the philosophy which you and I believe in. The amazing thing," Pew marveled, "was that when he finished the audience got up and cheered him, although I am sure a large percentage of his audience came there believing in a philosophy quite different from that which Dr. Peale expounded." If any minister could lead clergymen to conservatism, it would be Peale.[60]

Peale had long been involved with Spiritual Mobilization, as both a member of its advisory committee and its primary minister representative in New York. When Pew and Fifield met with him in April 1948 to offer him the directorship of the organization, Peale indicated his willingness to accept, if a few conditions were met. First, he wanted to continue both his pastoral duties at Marble Collegiate Church and his increasingly profitable work on the lecture circuit. Second, he sought guarantees of financial support for an annual budget of at least $250,000. And third, he wanted to be surrounded and supported by a committee of prominent clergymen. (The last condition likely stemmed from Peale's lingering embarrassment over his role in the Committee for Constitutional Government, an anti-New Deal organization of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Peale had

[60] J. Howard Pew to Herbert Stockman, 9 September 1948, Box 19, JHP.

served as the sole ministerial representative for the organization, and when its efforts to influence clergymen came under congressional scrutiny in the 1940 presidential campaign, Peale found himself facing the inquiry alone.) The first two conditions were easily met. Fifield assured Peale that, with Pew's support, he "could have an income from Spiritual Mobilization which would justify your giving up the productive lecture program you have so splendidly developed;" but as one who had hung on to his own pastorate while leading the organization, Fifield understood the impulse. In terms of raising those funds, Pew quickly convened a new committee of businessmen, reaching out to a younger group of industrialists that included top figures at Sylvania Electric, General Foods, and General Motors. As always, money would not be a problem for Spiritual Mobilization.[61]

The catch – ironically enough, in light of the movement's main goal – came in securing a committee of clergymen to stand with Peale. At a strategy session at the end of September 1948, Pew and Peale met with Jasper Crane, then an official with FEE, and Fred Crawford, a past president of NAM. "The four of us," Pew wrote to an ally, "felt that the best way to set up an organization was to have a committee composed entirely of ministers, all of whom would undertake to make themselves available to talk to groups of ministers from time to time throughout the country." Peale would serve as their chairman and be assisted by "a high-class executive secretary" who would coordinate the ministers' speeches as well as the fund-raising meeting of the businessmen behind the group. "It was thought that there should be no formal organization for those of us who would assist the ministers," Pew continued, "but rather that each one of us would be interested as a

[61] Fifield to Pew, 13 April 1948; Pew to Fifield, 17 April 1948; Fifield to Peale, 26 April 1948; Pew to James D. Francis, 3 May 1948; Pew to Ira Mosher, 21 June 1948; Peale to Pew, 23 September 1948, all in Box 19, JHP.

supporter" and work quietly behind the scenes.[62] Although the businessmen were willing to fade into the background, the clergymen refused to move to the fore. Nearly a month later, Pew noted that Peale was still "having some difficulty in getting his committee together. He has no difficulty in finding ministers who are sympathetic, but he has a problem in getting men who are willing to stand up and take the responsibility."[63] After another two weeks of entreaties, Peale finally found the first minister who was willing even to *discuss* taking a leadership role in the group, but he too shied away from the spotlight, asking that their meeting "not be too widely publicized."[64] Peale became despondent. "The consensus seems to be that the swing to the left among ministers is too wide to be easily counteracted," he reported to Pew, "and the conversation usually ends up by saying, 'I don't want to get mixed up in it.'"[65] Unable to secure a committee of ministers for Peale, the forces behind Spiritual Mobilization decided to take a different approach: they would cut the group in two. Rather than take over the entire organization, Peale would work out of the New York office, using the mailing lists and staffers of Spiritual Mobilization in an effort to start a new group of his own. Meanwhile, now in better health, Fifield agreed to continue running the old operation from Los Angeles.[66]

Evangelizing Free Enterprise: *The Freedom Story* and *Faith and Freedom*

Fifield recommitted himself to Spiritual Mobilization in the late 1940s because he believed there was a fast-expanding totalitarian threat endangered the nation. Although these were the early years of the Cold War panic, Fifield and his allies were concerned

[62] J. Howard Pew to James D. Francis, 1 October 1948, Box 19, JHP.
[63] J. Howard Pew to James W. Fifield, Jr., 29 October 1948, Box 19, JHP.
[64] George H. Talbott to Norman Vincent Peale, 13 November 1948, Box 19, JHP.
[65] Norman Vincent Peale to J. Howard Pew, 15 November 1948, Box 19, JHP.
[66] James W. Fifield, Jr., to Norman Vincent Peale, 13 December 1948, Box 19, JHP.

less by the foreign threat of the Soviet Union and more by the domestic menace of liberalism, now reinvigorated by President Harry Truman's re-election in 1948. To be sure, the public appeals of Spiritual Mobilization now occasionally mentioned the danger of ideologies from abroad, linked to their manifestations at home. "Freedom in America is in peril!" one of their ads noted. "Communists and other unworthy collectivists seek to abolish free enterprise. They plan to sweep away our God-given and American-won Freedoms, destroy Christianity."[67] But in their private correspondence, Fifield and his funders made it clear that the main threat to the American way of life, as they saw it, came from Washington, not Moscow. "There is a very much accelerated response to the efforts of Spiritual Mobilization," Fifield confided, "because it is so obvious that the battle to collectivize America is really on, and on in earnest since the announcement of President Truman's legislative program."[68] Pew agreed. "According to my book there are five principal issues before the country: The socialization of industry, the socialization of medicine, the socialization of education, the socialization of labor, and the socialization of security," he wrote in 1950. "If we lose on any one of these five fronts, it is only a question of time until we have lost them all. Only through education and the pressure which the people exert on their politicians can we hope to prevent this country from becoming a totalitarian state."[69]

To inform the American public, Spiritual Mobilization took a much more aggressive approach to public relations in 1949. First, it launched a new radio program, called *The Freedom Story*. The free, fifteen-minute program was fairly simple, a short

[67] Chicago Tribune, 28 May 1949.
[68] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 21 March 1949, Box 24, JHP. For similar statements about Fifield's belief that they were engaged in a "fight to prevent the collectivization of America" see Fifield to Martin H. Hannum, 20 January 1950, and Fifield to Edward B. Smith, 24 January 1950, Box 54, JCI.
[69] J. Howard Pew to James W. Fifield, Jr., 22 November 1950, Box 27, JHP.

dramatic presentation followed by a brief commentary by Fifield. Importantly, the broadcasts were marketed to stations as a way to fulfill their public service requirements in a way that would attract listeners.[70] This decision allowed the organization to secure free airtime for the program, but it also dictated changes in its content. In the original scripts, Fifield offered rather blunt commentaries on the state of domestic politics, but his legal counsel warned of the dangers of his being "too plain spoken." "I admire your determination not to side-step the issues," he wrote, but "you can only go so far with respect to currently controversial and specific issues without disqualifying the program as a public service feature. I don't think that means you can't occasionally speak your mind pretty bluntly, but I think it does mean that as a general rule you should give thought to a rather restrained approach." As a solution, his counsel suggested that Fifield use "from time to time a horrible example from current experience in the socialist and communist countries of Europe and Asia. We could go as far as we want in that field in the dramatic part of the program," he continued, "and your speech could be developed in such a way as to make it plain enough to your radio audience that we are heading for the same kind of situation here."[71]

Accordingly, the topics dramatized and discussed on *The Freedom Story* varied considerably, even as the underlying message about the dangers of "creeping socialism" remained a constant. Heeding the advice of his legal counsel, Fifield regularly relied on foreign examples to illustrate the issue, moving around the globe to detail variously "China Under Communism," "Yugoslavia Falls to Communism," and "Life Under Communism" in the Soviet Union. But the minister found ways to use domestic subjects

[70] Pamphlet, "The Freedom Story," [n.d., 1949], Box 27, JHP.
[71] James C. Ingebretsen to James W. Fifield, Jr., 31 January 1950, Box 54, JCI.

as well. One week, the program related its history of Reconstruction, noting the ways in which the southern states thrived without federal policies or subsidies interfering in their affairs after the Civil War; in the next, it celebrated the history of the Boy Scouts of America, claiming that the private organization's success stemmed directly from a lack of federal interference.[72] Fifield's financial backers helped secure free airtime for these programs on stations across the nation.[73] "Republic Steel is taking steps to get them on radio stations in every town where they have a factory or office," Fifield noted in March 1949. "We are expecting to be on one hundred fifty radio stations by June."[74] A year later, *The Freedom Story* was broadcasting on a weekly network of over 500 stations.[75]

At the same time, Spiritual Mobilization launched a new monthly magazine, titled *Faith and Freedom*. With Fifield seeking to reduce his administrative responsibilities in the organization, oversight duties for the publication fell to his new vice president, James Ingebretsen, a leading attorney in Los Angeles who had previously served as chief legal counsel for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.[76] William Johnson, a veteran journalist with numerous contacts in libertarian and conservative circles, took over as editor for the new journal. Under their direction, *Faith and Freedom* printed and promoted the work of an expanding network of libertarian and conservative authors, including Ludwig von Mises, famed leader of the Austrian School of economics; Leonard Read, founder of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE); Henry Hazlitt, an accomplished economic journalist who popularized the Austrian School and served as a founding member of the

[72] See episode list and specific summaries for "The South Comes Back" (episode #39B) and "Boy Scouts of America" (episode #40B) available at Radio Gold Index (http://radiogoldindex.com/cgi-local/p2.cgi?ProgramName=The+Freedom+Story; site accessed 7 March 2011).
[73] James W. Fifield, Jr., to Bruce Barton, 8 November 1949, Box 20, BB.
[74] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 30 March 1949, Box 24, JHP.
[75] "Memorandum from Dr. Fifield," 2 September 1949, Box 24, JHP; Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 14.
[76] James W. Fifield, Jr., to James C. Ingebretsen, 1 May 1950, Box 54, JCI.

board of the American Enterprise Association (later renamed the American Enterprise Institute); Clarence Manion, former Dean of Notre Dame's College of Law who would become a noted right-wing radio host in the 1950s; Felix Morley, a Pulitzer Prize winning editor of the *Washington Post* who left the newspaper to found the far-right journal *Human Events*; Frank Chodorov, later an editor at *Human Events* and author of libertarian books like *The Income Tax: Root of All Evil*; Karl Hess, a conservative speechwriter who would gain fame writing for Barry Goldwater; and Rose Wilder Lane, who co-wrote the "Little House on the Prairie" series with her mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder, before attacking the "creeping socialism" of the New Deal in her own work.[77]

While libertarian and conservative political thinkers would dominate the pages of *Faith and Freedom*, the journal purposefully presented itself as a magazine created *by* ministers *for* ministers. Spiritual Mobilization had long operated on the principle that clergymen – educated, independent, and skeptical – could not be swayed through crude propaganda. "The articulation should be worked out before-hand, of course, and we should be ready to help the thinking of the ministers on it," Alfred Haake noted in one of his early musings on Spiritual Mobilization, "but it should be so done as to enable them to discover it for themselves, as something which they really had believed but not realized fully until our questions brought it out so clearly. I am sure we may not TELL them: not as laymen, or even as fellow clergymen. We must help them to discover it

[77] Eckard V. Toy, "*Faith and Freedom*, 1949-1960," in The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America, ed. by Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999): 154-156; Philips-Fein, Invisible Hands, 81-83; Donald T. Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005): 25-26; Frank Chodorov, The Income Tax: Root of All Evil (New York: Devin-Adair, 1954); Rick Perlstein, Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001): 314-316; Judith Thurman, "Wilder Women," New Yorker (10 August 2009): **pp?**; Rose Wilder Lane, Give Me Liberty (n.p.: Liberty Library, 1945): 56.

themselves."[78] The new monthly magazine embraced this approach wholeheartedly. In the first issue, the editor announced the staff's intention "to publish a concise monthly magazine which will interest some of the most influential persons in America—the ministers." "We know there are countless questions unanswered about individual liberty," he continued. "We want a magazine which will serve the ministers who will shape the answers to these questions, a magazine which will stimulate them, a magazine which will challenge them, a magazine which will earn a place in their busy schedules." The magazine sought input from its subscribers, not simply printing their letters to the editors, but also soliciting sermons expounding on the issue of "the moral and spiritual significance of individual liberty" for publication in a monthly feature called "The Pulpit and Liberty." Ultimately, Johnson noted, the publication would receive a great deal of its direction from the clergymen who read it. "We shall," he concluded, "depend heavily on ministerial guidance and criticism in developing a useful periodical for you."[79]

Faith and Freedom presented itself as an open forum in which ministers could debate a wide variety of issues, and disagree freely. There was a catch, however. "Clergymen may differ about politics, economics, sociology, and such," Fifield noted, "but I would expect that in matters of morality all followers of Jesus speak in one voice."[80] Because Fifield and his associates insisted that morality directly informed politics and economics, they were able to cast those who disagreed with their political and economic perspectives as essentially immoral. For his part, Fifield claimed he approached all issues with an open mind and a desire to follow the will of God. "There have been many solutions suggested for meeting today's and tomorrow's problems, and

[78] Alfred P. Haake to J. Howard Pew, 5 February 1945, Box 235, JHP.
[79] "The Editor Comments," Faith and Freedom 1 (December 1949): 1-3.
[80] "The Director's Page," Faith and Freedom (September 1951): 12.

there will be more," he noted in his very first column. "Man is never wanting in the field of ideas. But regardless of the source of the idea, and regardless of our prejudice, before we accept any proposal or remedy, we have the obligation to measure it, not only as to its probable effectiveness, but as to whether the proposal does not conflict with Christian principle and the spiritual values of liberty and personal responsibility."[81] Not surprisingly, whenever Fifield held liberal proposals to this standard, they inevitably fell short. Time and time again, he condemned a variety of "socialistic laws" such as the ones supporting minimum wages, price controls, Social Security pensions for the elderly, unemployment insurance, veterans' benefits and the like, as well as a wide range of federal taxation which he deemed to be "tyrannical" in nature. In the end, he judged that such laws violated "the natural law which inheres in the nature of the universe and is the will of God."[82]

Indeed, for all of its claims to encourage debate, *Faith and Freedom* made little secret of its contempt for liberal clergymen who adhered to the Social Gospel. The magazine repeatedly denounced it and, just as important, the clergy who used it to advocate for the establishment and expansion of welfare state measures. Editor William Johnson even devoted an entire issue to the subject. "The movement is directed by a small, unusually articulate minorities who feel political power is the way to save the world," he warned in his opening comments. "Unclothed, their gospel is pure socialism — they wish to employ the compulsion of the state to force others to act as the social gospelers think they should act."[83] Irving Howard, a Congregationalist minister, darkly noted the "pagan origin of the Social Gospel" in late-nineteenth-century Unitarianism and

[81] "The Director's Page," Faith and Freedom (December 1949): 4.
[82] Roy, Apostles of Discord, 292; "The Director's Page," Faith and Freedom (September 1951): 12.
[83] "The Editor Comments," Faith and Freedom (May 1952): 2

Transcendentalism, claiming it was part of a larger "impetus to a shift in faith from God to man, from eternity to time, from the individual to the group, [from] individual conversion to social coercion, and from the church to the state."[84] Other contributors drew similarities between the Social Gospel and other suspect ideologies. "Communism aims to destroy the capitalist minority no matter what killing, stealing, lying, and covetousness are required," argued one. "The Social Gospel calls for the destruction of this minority by the more peaceful means of the popular vote, to put it bluntly, by *socialized* covetousness, stealing, and the bearing of false witness." Through the "subterfuge of a holy crusade," he concluded, advocates of the Social Gospel "have raised the scapegoat technique of Marx and Hitler to its ultimate refinement."[85]

Backed by this steady drumbeat of libertarianism, contributors to *Faith and Freedom* varied only in terms of style and sophistication. The June 1950 issue, for instance, featured four articles, each of them advancing virtually the same message from different angles. For the first piece, George S. Benson, president of conservative Harding College and an outspoken critic of the New Deal, offered a folksy parable about a group of seabirds who let themselves be fed by shrimp boats for a while and soon forgot how to take care of themselves. "The moral," the author noted for those who somehow missed it: "A welfare state, for gull or man, always first destroys the priceless attribute of self-reliance."[86] The next piece came from the Austrian School economist Ludwig von Mises, who advanced a sophisticated argument intended to disprove "the passionate tirades of Marx, Keynes and a host of less well-known authors" who bemoaned "The

[84] Irving E. Howard, "The Origins of the Social Gospel," Faith and Freedom (May 1952): 3-7.
[85] Henry C. Link, "A Plea for Religious Intolerance," Faith and Freedom (October 1950): 3-5.
[86] George S. Benson, "The Conch Island Disaster," Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 3-4. For a brief study of Benson and Harding College, see Bethany Moreton, To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 164-168.

Alleged Injustice of Capitalism" of his title.[87] Next, missionary R. J. Rushdoony explained how the "noncompetitive life" on a Native American reservation, which he called "the prime example in America today of a functioning welfare society," inevitably reduced its residents to a state of "social and personal irresponsibility." Again, the lesson was clear, but spelled out for readers nevertheless. "Clerical exponents of the welfare economy," he asserted, "fail to realize that what they actually sponsor is not a more moral order but an immoral one which places a premium on security and which represents an immature and childish fear of the real world and its demands."[88] The fourth and final article in the issue, "Human Rights and Property Rights" by industrial relations author Allen W. Rucker, asserted that any effort to take control of private property was "in direct violation of the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.' That Commandment is not limited in the slightest degree; it is an adjuration laid upon all men, whether acting as individuals, as an organization, or as a state."[89] The remainder of the issue was devoted to even more variations on the theme, from the editor's opening note of approval about a Pittsburgh church group meeting monthly to discuss current events "from the standpoint of individual liberty and Christian ethics" to the final piece, an enthusiastic review of a book ominously titled *Compulsory Medical Care and the Welfare State*.[90]

The Christian Freedom Foundation and *Christian Economics*

While Spiritual Mobilization might have seemed to be a sufficient enough source of Christian libertarian thought and opinion, it was joined in 1950 by a new organization

[87] Ludwig von Mises, "The Alleged Injustice of Capitalism," Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 5-8.
[88] R. J. Rushdoony, "Noncompetitive Life," Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 9-10.
[89] Allen W. Rucker, "Human Rights and Property Rights," Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 12-13.
[90] Faith and Freedom 1 (June 1950): 1, 15.

called the Christian Freedom Foundation, Inc. (CFF). This group was the belated result of the collaboration between J. Howard Pew and Norman Vincent Peale. In early 1950, Peale sent letters to nearly one hundred prominent clergymen, hoping again to enlist them as members of the advisory committee that would both broaden the organization's reach and insulate him from attacks. The letter noted that "a group of interested clergymen" had been meeting in order to craft a plan of action for "making some progress against the totalitarian tendency which we believe is threatening free government right here in our own country."[91] Of the hundred solicited, thirty agreed to serve.[92] Accordingly, Pew and Peale invited them to an organizational luncheon at the Wellington Hotel in New York on April 17, 1950 to mark the official launch of the group. "It was," Pew reflected a few days later, "the most encouraging meeting that I have ever attended."[93]

Despite the early enthusiasm, the Christian Freedom Foundation began with a rocky start. After serving only three weeks as chairman, Peale abruptly announced his decision to step down. Citing the "increasing responsibilities" of his young family and his ever-growing ministry, he abdicated the role with a promise to remain active as a member of the advisory committee.[94] Leadership of the Christian Freedom Foundation effectively fell to its president, Howard E. Kershner. Nearly sixty at the time, he had spent his previous years working a variety of jobs, ranging from stints as a manufacturer of leather goods and a prosperous realtor to service in various food relief efforts during the Second World War. Kershner had also been, not surprisingly, an outspoken critic of the New Deal. In 1936, he published *The Menace of Roosevelt and His Policies*, in

[91] Howard E. Kershner to J. Howard Pew, with draft letter attached, 10 January 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[92] Report of the Annual Meeting of the Christian Freedom Foundation, 5 April 1951, Box 181, JHP.
[93] J. Howard Pew to James W. Fifield, Jr., 20 April 1950, Box 27, JHP.
[94] Howard E. Kershner to the Members of the Board of Directors, 9 May 1950, Box 180, JHP; George, God's Salesman, 173.

which he likened the New Deal to socialist collectivism. In forcing his policies on the nation, Kershner charged, "Mr. Roosevelt has endangered our entire heritage of political and economic freedom."[95] (As the years passed, his view of the New Deal only grew darker. "At that time I gave Mr. Roosevelt credit for being sincere," he reflected in 1952. "I have long ceased to believe that.")[96]

To many observers, the Christian Freedom Foundation seemed to be nothing more than a carbon copy of Spiritual Mobilization. Months after its founding, Jasper Crane of the Foundation for Economic Education wrote Pew to confess he was "still confused as to the overlapping of Spiritual Mobilization with the work of the Kershner group."[97] To be sure, the two organizations had a great deal in common. CFF's founding statement, for instance, stressed the same themes and same goals as its predecessor. "We emphasize the interdependence of freedom and Christianity," it noted. "When the First Commandment 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me' is violated and the state is exalted to take the place of God as the highest authority over the actions of man, freedom is suppressed. Conversely, Christianity can thrive only where human beings live under a system of free institutions and government by the people." Its approach also echoed that of Spiritual Mobilization, noting frankly the impact ministers had on public affairs and announcing an agenda to utilize it. "Recent polls indicate that America's clergymen are a powerful influence in determining the thinking and acting of the people in the economic realm," the memo observed. Accordingly, the organization sought "to enlist large numbers of clergymen" to "act as minutemen, carrying the message upon all proper occasions

[95] Eckard V. Toy, "*Christian Economics*, 1950-1972," in The Conservative Press in Twentieth-Century America, ed. by Ronald Lora and William Henry Longton (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999): 163-164.
[96] Roy, Apostles of Discord, 295.
[97] Jasper Crane to J. Howard Pew, 12 June 1950, Box 27, JHP.

throughout their several communities. We would also like to develop committees of correspondence which would be alert and active in propagating economic truths, always with emphasis on the spiritual teachings of great religion."[98]

In another echo of Spiritual Mobilization, the Christian Freedom Foundation spread the gospel of Christian libertarianism through a publication of its own. After considering a number of more fanciful names – *Liberty Messenger, Let Freedom Ring, Clergyman's Clipsheet* – the organization settled on the fairly straightforward choice of *Christian Economics*.[99] In preparing the publication, Kershner was incredibly deliberate. First, he compiled a massive mailing list, securing contact information for leading businessmen and professionals from the American Economic Foundation and soliciting lists of ministers and seminarians as well. With those names in hand, he then produced seven trial issues of *Christian Economics* over the course of the spring and summer of 1950.[100] Copies were mailed to a test audience of five thousand ministers to gauge their reaction and encourage their subscription if they believed, "as we do, that freedom and Christianity are interdependent, that freedom is in dire jeopardy in our own country."[101] In September, regular production began in earnest, with *Christian Economics* coming out every two weeks in a simple, four-page newspaper format.[102] Its contents resembled the articles of *Faith and Freedom*, but the new publication distinguished itself from its predecessor in terms of its ambition and scale. While Spiritual Mobilization's monthly

[98] Memorandum, "Organizing Conference of Group Interested in Christian Economic Education," 17 April 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[99] Howard E. Kershner to Directors, 21 April 1950, Box 180, JHP; Howard E. Kershner to the Members of the Board of Directors, 25 May 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[100] Toy, "*Christian Economics*," 164-165.
[101] Howard E. Kershner to "Dear and Reverend Sir," 26 May 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[102] Toy, "*Christian Economics*," 165.

circulation rarely rose above 20,000,[103] within its first month of publication *Christian Economics* had already expanded to a circulation of 90,000 clergymen, a number that represented nearly two thirds of all the nation's ministers.[104]

Production for the publication was expensive, with the cost of printing and mailing each issue estimated at $5,000. Income, meanwhile, was low. The newspaper could run no advertisements due to CFF's tax-exempt status. Despite a wide circulation, paid subscriptions rarely ran more than a thousand in number, even at a low annual rate of a dollar. As a result, the publication was sustained almost entirely by donations from J. Howard Pew. The Christian Freedom Foundation received $433,000 in gifts and loans in its first year of operations, the vast bulk from stock transfers and cash contributions from Pew family trusts. (Annual contributions from the Pew family would average more than $300,000 for the next twenty-five years.) The majority of this funding, in turn, went to support the production and distribution of *Christian Economics*.[105] Pew was such an overwhelming presence in the organization that James Fifield worried that his longtime benefactor was perhaps becoming too deeply invested in the cause. "I think you are very vulnerable to attack," he warned. "Some of the unscrupulous leftist elements in the country could make capital out of the fact that you are so largely supporting the enterprise, and as you know from the old Liberty League experience that kind of thing sweeps with emotional enthusiasm and there is no stopping it once it starts."[106] Pew ignored the warnings, devoting much of his fortune and attention to the new endeavor.[107]

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[103] Toy, "*Faith and Freedom*," 156.
[104] Howard E. Kershner to the Members of the Board of Directors, 12 October 1950, Box 180, JHP; Table 1, U.S. Census of Population, 1950, Part IV, Volume I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951).
[105] Toy, "*Christian Economics*," 165.
[106] James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 10 August 1950, Box 27, JHP. Fifield's concerns seemed genuine, but were doubtlessly colored by Pew's repeated warnings that his massive support for the

For Pew, *Christian Economics* offered a chance to improve upon Spiritual Mobilization, combining its conservative political and economic messages with a more doctrinally conservative religion. While one observer's description of *Christian Economics* as a "bimonthly newspaper of fundamentalist Protestantism" was imprecise, the publication did seek to take the message of the Bible seriously.[108] "The real purpose, as I see it, of the Christian Freedom Foundation," Pew explained, "is to urge upon the world that people should live by the Ten Commandments."[109] And, to be sure, countless articles in its pages used the Decalogue as their main authority in advancing libertarian arguments. The welfare state, one argued, "dethrones God and enthrones the state. It violates the first and great Commandment and makes the state arbiter of the affairs of men rather than God." At the same time, it assaulted the eighth and tenth commandments as well, arousing feelings of class envy and "forcibly taking the wealth of the more enterprising citizens for distribution to others." And because it spread scurrilous rumors about the rich and made extravagant promises to the poor that it could never deliver, the welfare state also violated the ninth commandment's injunction against bearing false witness.[110]

Christian Economics advanced more of a religiously-themed argument largely because ministers made up a significant proportion of its leadership. With Spiritual

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Christian Freedom Foundation would prevent him from making his traditional contributions to Spiritual Mobilization.

[107] Questions about the founding and financing of the Christian Freedom Foundation persisted, however, ultimately forcing the organization to issue a statement in which it claimed – falsely – that the CFF originated in independent discussions of "a group of pastors" who later reached out to Kershner and then, even later, to Pew, whose influence on the organization was downplayed considerably. "Mr. J. Howard Pew," the report asserted, "placed no limitations or restrictions on the board of directors of this foundation in the conduct of its work." See Stewart M. Robinson, "Concerning the Origin and Finances of Christian Freedom Foundation, Inc.," 12 March 1951, Box 181, JHP.

[108] Toy, "*Christian Economics*," 165.

[109] J. Howard Pew to Howard E. Kershner, 11 October 1951, Box 181, JHP.

[110] Roy, Apostles of Discord, 297.

Mobilization, Reverend Fifield had worked for the most part with laymen in the composition and production of *Faith and Freedom*, even though he sought to reach an audience solely made of ministers. In many ways, the magazine reflected the composition of the movement's advisory board, where the number of clergymen and theologians never accounted for even a quarter of the total membership.[111] In contrast, as Pew stressed, "the entire board" of the Christian Freedom Foundation was "composed of ministers."[112] Although *Christian Economics* drew regularly on the writings of in-house economists like Percy Greaves and George Koethner, its editor actively solicited the ministers for contributions too. "To point up the religious character of our bi-monthly publication," Kershner wrote the fifty-odd members of the advisory committee, "I should be grateful if each of you who has the inspiration to do so would write a 300- to 400-word editorial, showing the Christian basis of freedom" and demonstrating "that socialism, communism, or any form of collectivism is against the teachings of the Bible."[113] Ministers responded to the request, using their clerical authority to bless capitalism and condemn collectivism. In an article titled "Christianity and the Profit Motive," for instance, Reverend Calvin Franz concluded that profit-seeking was "neither wrong nor harmful to society" and was "in fact taught in God's Word as good Christian ethics." "One might well reflect that the Ten Commandments were written with reference to private property and would have little meaning in a dispensation with no profit," the minister asserted. "While God in his revelation denounced cheating, stealing

[111] The membership of the advisory committee for Spiritual Mobilization remained fluid throughout its existence, but the ministerial representation was always a small minority. See, for instance, the advisory committee listing in Faith and Freedom (March 1950): 16.
[112] J. Howard Pew to Barclay Acheson, 28 August 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[113] Howard E. Kershner to the Members of the Board of Directors, 9 May 1950, Box 180, JHP.

and greed He nevertheless expected his subjects of the Old and New dispensation to multiply their earnings, invest them wisely for gain, and prosper."[114]

The steady insistence of contributors to *Christian Economics* that free market capitalism was wholly indistinguishable from Christianity led to passionate rebuttals. Just two months after it began its regular production, Robert McAfee Brown of Union Theological Seminary took the newspaper to task in an article rhetorically titled, "Is It 'Christian Economics'?" "It is all right for a group of men to stand for a certain economic position," the theologian noted. "But it is quite another thing to assume on every page, and to argue on every other page, that there is an unambiguous identification between the Christian faith and that economic position."[115] Brown remained engaged in criticism of *Christian Economics*, welcoming Kershner and his staff for a three-hour lecture and discussion session with seminarians in early 1951 and then offering a second critique in the pages of the seminary's quarterly review that summer. [116] In that article, he delved more deeply into the theology behind the Christian Freedom Foundation and pronounced it to be wholly lacking in substance and consistency. Remarking on the newspaper's frequent habit of invoking the authority of "God's economic laws," Brown concluded that the ministers and laymen who made such claims were only able to do so "by a method of Biblical exegesis which approaches isolated proof texts with preconceived notions of what they are to mean and proceeds to read into them the content of the revelation vouchsafed to Adam Smith and Ludwig von Mises."[117] Kershner

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[114] Rev. Calvin W. Franz, "Christianity and the Profit Motive," Christian Economics (13 March 1951): 1, 3.
[115] Robert McAfee Brown, "Is It 'Christian Economics'?," Christianity and Crisis (27 November 1950): 158.
[116] Report of the Annual Meeting of the Christian Freedom Foundation, 5 April 1951, Box 181, JHP.
[117] Robert McAfee Brown, "'Christian Economics' and Theology," Union Seminary Quarterly Review (June 1951): 9.

responded to the two articles with alarm. After the first, he dashed off a letter to the board of directors, assuring them that "about 60 percent of all the fan mail that reaches us strongly approves of what we are saying" and promising that four different rebuttals would be running in upcoming issues.[118] After the second, he offered an even more expansive defense of the newspaper in an open letter of eighteen pages of small print.[119]

Many other ministers were just as dismissive of *Christian Economics*' theology as Brown. In an angry letter to the editor in the May 1951 issue, a Vermont minister denounced the "hypocritical 'drool'" of the paper. "There's nothing Christian about it except your distortion of scriptural texts and your economics are a poor apology for a corrupt and rotten system of monopolistic control," he noted. "Your paper would be more honest at least, and not deceive so many gullible clergymen, if you rightfully called it 'Big Business Propaganda.'"[120] That September, the newspaper asked readers to offer their feedback in an opinion poll included inside regular issues. Kershner recognized that the poll would be biased in favor of those who actually read and enjoyed the paper, and that "we would not hear from the man who turned up his nose and threw his copy of *Christian Economics* into the wastebasket along, of course, with our questionnaire." Even then, the replies included a large number of critical reactions. A number dismissed the newspaper as "patently a propaganda sheet" and "a defense of capitalism – sponsored by capitalists."[121] Seeking to get a more accurate sense of the reaction of its readers, *Christian Economics* commissioned a special survey by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, N.J. The polling outfit conducted personal interviews with 311

[118] Howard E. Kershner to the Members of the Board of Directors, 20 December 1950, Box 180, JHP.
[119] Howard Kershner, "Christian Economics' Editor Discusses Recent Criticism," [n.d., October 1951] typewritten manuscript in Box 181, JHP.
[120] Joseph L. Sullivan, Letter to the Editor, Christian Economics, 22 May 1951.
[121] Report, "Results from Opinion Poll: September 1951," [n.d., October 1951], Box 181, JHP.

clergymen in Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia who were already on its mailing list. The survey showed that two-thirds of the ministers who received *Christian Economics* read it regularly or occasionally, with 58 percent of those who did so indicating that they found the paper to be "helpful" to their work. 15 percent of the entire survey, meanwhile, claimed that in forming their "thinking on social, political, and economic problems" they relied on *Christian Economics* "most heavily" of all publications. Of the ministers interviewed, only a minority expressed their disapproval for the newspaper, but with a clear sense of the reasons why. The publication was, in their words, "definitely biased in favor of the upper class," "too biased toward the Republican Party," "like the *Wall Street Journal*," and "a definite ultra-conservative Republican viewpoint of the McKinley era or earlier." "It seems to be seeking religious sanction for the reactionary side of free enterprise," one minister noted dismissively. "It's sort of a NAM publication."[122]

In the end, the criticisms of *Christian Economics* echoed those leveled earlier at the public relations efforts of NAM, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other industrial and corporate organizations who tried to win over the clergy. For many ministers, the bold declaration that Christianity and capitalism stood on an even plain was too much to accept. Furthermore, many had the sneaking suspicion that those behind the magazine were much more interested in the economics than they were in Christianity. A subtler approach was needed, and Spiritual Mobilization once again led the way.

[122] Report, "Clergymen Appraise 'Christian Economics,'" Opinion Research Corporation, April 1953, copy in Box 181, JHP.

"Freedom Under God": The Committee to Proclaim Liberty

For conservatives concerned about the "creeping socialism" of the federal government under the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, the midterm elections of 1950 offered incredible hope. The Republican Party picked up 28 seats in the House and five seats in the Senate, knocking off Democratic Majority Leader Scott Lucas of Illinois and electing new conservatives like Richard Nixon of California. In an upbeat letter to Alfred Sloan, the longtime president and chairman of General Motors who was an ardent supporter of his work, James Fifield reflected on the recent returns. "We are having quite a deluge of letters from across the country, indicating the feeling that Spiritual Mobilization has had some part in the awakening which was evidenced by the elections," he wrote. "Of course, we are a little proud and very happy for whatever good we have been able to do in waking people up to the peril of collectivism and the importance of Freedom under God." But the battle was far from won. "I do not consider that we can relax our efforts in any way or at any point," Fifield noted. "It is still a long road back to what was and, please God, will again be America."[123]

For Fifield and his associates, the phrase "freedom under God" – as contrasted with what they saw as oppression under the federal government – became an effective new rallying cry in the early 1950s. The minister pressed the theme repeatedly in the pages of *Faith and Freedom* and in his radio broadcasts of *The Freedom Story*, but also sought to find a more prominent means of spreading the message to the American people.[124] In the spring of 1951, Spiritual Mobilization's leaders struck upon an idea that they believed would advance their cause considerably. To mark that summer's 175th

[123] James W. Fifield, Jr., to Alfred P. Sloan [Jr.], 29 November 1950, Box 54, JCI.
[124] See, for instance, James W. Fifield, Jr., "The Director's Page," Faith and Freedom (March 1951): 14.

anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, they proposed arranging a massive series of events for the week surrounding the Fourth of July on the theme of "Freedom under God." According to Fifield's longtime ally William C. Mullendore, president of the Southern California Edison Company, the idea originated from the belief that the "root cause of the disintegration of freedom here, and of big government, is the disintegration of the nation's spiritual foundations, as found in the Declaration of Independence. We want to revive that basic American credo, which is the spiritual basis of our Constitution."[125]

To that end, in June 1951, the leaders of Spiritual Mobilization announced the formation of a new "Committee to Proclaim Liberty" to coordinate their Fourth of July "Freedom under God" celebrations. The committee's name, they explained to a crowd of reporters, came from the 10th verse of the 25th chapter of the Book of Leviticus, in which God instructed Moses that the Israelites should celebrate the anniversary of their arrival in the Promised Land and "proclaim liberty throughout all the land and to the inhabitants thereof." This piece of scripture, organizers noted, was also inscribed on the crown of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. Its ranks soon expanded, but the committee originally included just 56 members, in an effort to mimic the number of signers of the Declaration. Although it claimed to seek a spiritual emphasis for the upcoming holiday, very few religious leaders actually served in its ranks. Aside from Reverends Fifield and Peale, the founding ministerial members of the committee included only a liberal Methodist bishop, the Catholic bishop of the Oklahoma City-Tulsa diocese, and a rabbi from Kansas City.

[125] Los Angeles Examiner, 8 June 1951.

The editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* and the head of the Anti-Defamation League also served, but due to their secular rather than sacred roles.[126]

The main thrust of the Committee to Proclaim Liberty was to advance modern conservatism. The members whose presence on the committee was emphasized the most were two prominent opponents of Democratic administrations: former President Herbert Hoover, who had been driven from the White House two decades earlier by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and General Douglas MacArthur, who had been removed from his command in the Korean War less than two months before by Harry Truman. They were joined by military leaders, like General Mark Clark and Lieutenant-General A.C. Wedemeyer; the heads of patriotic groups such as the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary; right-wing media luminaries like newspaper columnist George Sokolsky, radio broadcaster Fulton Lewis, Jr., and *Human Events* founder Felix Morley; leading conservative voices in the realm of law such as former deans Clarence Manion of Notre Dame and Roscoe Pound of Harvard; and noted conservatives from the realm of entertainment like Bing Crosby, Cecil B. DeMille, Walt Disney, and Ronald Reagan.[127]

The most prominent presence on the Committee to Proclaim Liberty, however, came from the corporate world. J. Howard Pew, whose family had donated a tenth of the committee's $100,000 operating budget, served as a founding member.[128] He was joined by a number of other corporate giants, such as Conrad Hilton of Hilton Hotels, B. E. Hutchinson of Chrysler, James L. Kraft of Kraft Foods, Hughston McBain of Marshall Field, Admiral Ben Morreel of Jones & Laughlin Steel, Eddie Rickenbacker of Eastern Airlines, and Charles E. Wilson of General Motors. The interest of leading businessmen

[126] Committee to Proclaim Liberty, Press Release, 11 June 1951, Box 69, JCI.
[127] Committee to Proclaim Liberty, Press Release, 11 June 1951, Box 69, JCI.
[128] J. Howard Pew to James W. Fifield, Jr., 22 May 1951, Box 28, JHP.

in the endeavor was so strong that the committee was forced to expand its ranks to make room for the others clamoring for a spot, including notables like Harvey Firestone, E. F. Hutton, Fred Maytag, Henry Luce, and J. C. Penney, as well as the heads of U.S. Steel, Republic Steel, Gulf Oil, Hughes Aircraft, and United Airlines. These corporate leaders were reinforced by the presidents of both the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, as well as free enterprise advocacy organizations like the Foundation for Economic Education and the Freedoms Foundation. As a token counterweight to this massive corporate presence, the Committee to Proclaim Liberty included a single "labor leader": Matthew Woll, a vice president of the American Federation of Labor and a lifelong Republican who was well known for his outspoken opposition to industrial unions, government regulations, and New Deal labor legislation like the Wagner Act and Fair Labor Standards Act.[129]

As the Fourth of July drew near, the Committee to Proclaim Liberty focused its attention on encouraging Americans to mark the holiday with public readings of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence. The decision to focus solely on the preamble was in some ways a natural one, as its passages were certainly the most famous and the most lyrical ones in the document. But doing so also allowed organizers to reframe the Declaration as a purely libertarian manifesto, dedicated to the removal of an oppressive government. Those who read the entire document would have discovered, to the consternation of the committee, that the founding fathers followed the high-flown prose of the preamble with a long list of grievances about the *absence* of government and

[129] Committee to Proclaim Liberty, Press Release, 11 June 1951, Box 69, JCI; Los Angeles Times, 1 July 1951; Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Coming of the New Deal, 1933-1935 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton-Mifflin, 1958): 411; Charles K. McFarland, Roosevelt, Lewis and the New Deal (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1970): 37.

the rule of law in the colonial era. Among other things, they lambasted King George III for refusing "his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good," for forbidding his governors from passing "Laws of immediate and pressing importance," for dissolving the legislative bodies in the colonies, and for generally enabling a state of anarchy that exposed the colonists to "all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within." In the end, the Declaration was not a rejection of government power in general, but rather a condemnation of the ways in which the British crown had deprived the colonists of the government they so desperately needed. In order to reframe the Declaration as something rather different, the Committee to Proclaim Liberty had to edit out much of the document they claimed to champion. In truth, even their version of the preamble was truncated. They excised the final line about the specific plight of the colonists, and ended instead on one that better resonated with their contemporary political aims: "When a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."[130]

Indeed, the committee offered its own interpretation of the Declaration, spelled out clearly by its corporate sponsors in full-page newspaper ads. The San Diego Gas & Electric Company, for instance, encouraged its customers to re-read the preamble, which it presented with its editorial commentary running alongside:

> These words are the stones upon which man has built history's greatest work – the United States of America. Remember them well!

[130] "The Preface to the Declaration of Independence," Faith and Freedom (June 1951): 3.

> **"…all men are created equal…"** That means you are as important in the eyes of God as any man brought into this world. You are made in his image and likeness. There is no 'superior' man anywhere.
>
> **"…they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights…"** Here is your birthright – the freedom to live, work, worship, and vote as you choose. These are rights no government on earth may take from you.
>
> **"…That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men…"** Here is the reason for and the purpose of government. Government is but a servant – not a master – not a giver of anything.
>
> **"…deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed…"** In America, the government may assume only the powers you allow it to have. It may assume no others.

The ad urged readers to make their own Declaration of Independence in 1951. "Declare that government is responsible TO you – rather than FOR you," it continued. "Declare that freedom is more important to you than 'security' or 'survival.' Declare that the rights God gave you may not be taken away by any government on any pretense." Other utility companies offered similar advertisements, with their own spin. The Detroit Edison Company, for instance, quoted at length from an article by Clarence Manion, originally published by the Heritage Foundation. "Despotism never advertises itself as such," he warned. "By its own sly self-definition it may label itself 'democratic,' 'progressive,' 'liberal,' 'humanitarian,' or 'fraternal.' Those who oppose it will be called reactionaries, fascists, and other 'bad names.'" The Utah Power & Light Company, meanwhile, cut right to the chase, in a full-age ad with the alarmist headline: "How many 'Independence Days' have we left?" The utility company implored readers to "pray for help in maintaining man's closeness to God, in preserving man's God-given rights and

responsibilities against those who would make you dependent upon a socialistic, all-powerful government."[131]

The Committee to Proclaim Liberty also enlisted the nation's ministers to promote the "Freedom under God" festivities. Those on the Spiritual Mobilization mailing list received a suggested press release that required clergymen simply to fill in the blanks with their personal information. ("'The purpose of the Committee,' the Reverend _____ declared, 'is to revive a custom long forgotten in America – spiritual emphasis on the 4th of July.'") More important, the group established a sermon contest, modeled on the wildly successful "Perils to Freedom" competition that Spiritual Mobilization held in 1947. The 17,000 minister representatives of the organization were encouraged to compete for cash prizes and other rewards by writing an original sermon on the theme of "Freedom under God" and delivering it to their congregations on "Independence Sunday," July 1, 1951. They could also order, at the cost of a penny each, special worship calendars prepared by the group, adorned with illustrations and messages supporting the festivities' theme. The interior was intentionally left blank, so that the minister could mimeograph the details of his particular service and then literally wrap the Committee to Proclaim Liberty's product around it.[132]

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[131] Committee to Proclaim Liberty, Booklet, Box 737, Official Files, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Records as President, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum, Abilene, Kansas (hereafter cited as "OF-DDE"). Other corporate sponsors offered their own interpretations of the preamble. The Pennsylvania Transformer Company, for instance, ran advertisements titled "Footnotes to the Declaration of Independence" in five Pittsburgh-area newspapers. See "Proclaim Liberty" packet, [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI.

[132] Faith and Freedom (September 1951): 6; "Proclaim Liberty" packet, [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI. The worship calendars were available on short notice, but Spiritual Mobilization still claimed it answered requests for over 70,000 within a few days' time. See "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI.

On "Independence Sunday," the organization claimed that "tens of thousands" of clergymen offered sermons on the theme.[133] Because the contest was limited to ministers who were official representatives of Spiritual Mobilization, the sermons invariably sounded the themes near and dear to that movement. "The effort to establish socialism in our country has probably progressed farther than most of us fully realize," asserted a Lutheran minister in Kansas. "It would be well to remember that every act or law passed by which the government promises to 'give' us something is a step in the direction of socialism." A clergyman from Brooklyn agreed. "Today our homes are built for us, financed for us, and the church is provided for us. Our many services are in danger of robbing us of that which is most important," he warned, "the right to our own kingdom of self." "The growing acceptance of the philosophy of the Welfare State is a graver peril to freedom in America today that the threat of military aggression," warned a Missouri Baptist. A Congregationalist minister in Illinois advanced the same argument: "People have been encouraged to believe that a benevolent government exists for the sole purpose of ministering to the selfish interest of the individual. We have achieved the four freedoms: Freedom to ask; freedom to receive; freedom to be a leech; and freedom to loaf."[134]

First place in the sermon competition went to Reverend Kenneth W. Sollitt, minister of the First Baptist Church of Mendota, Illinois. Published in the September issue of *Faith and Freedom*, his sermon bore the title "Freedom Under God: We Can Go on Making a God of Government, or We Can Return Again to the Government of God." The reasons it was given top honors in the competition are clear, as it represented an

[133] "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI.
[134] "Proclaim Liberty throughout All the Land" pamphlet, [n.d., 1952], Box 69, JCI; Faith and Freedom (September 1951): 6-7.

extended jeremiad on the sins of the welfare state. Reverend Sollitt took time to decry the national debt, growing federal payrolls, corporate taxation, government bureaucracy in general and Social Security in particular, while still finding time to use the parable of the Good Samaritan as grounds for a diatribe about the evils of "socialized medicine." "For 175 years we have focused our attention so much on 'the enjoyment of *our* liberty' that we have been perfectly willing to pass all kinds of legislation limiting the other fellow's liberty for our benefit," he argued. "'Government of the people, by the people, for the people' has become government of the people by pressure groups for the benefit of minorities. 'Give me liberty or give me death' has been shortened to just plain 'Give me.'" With the dire tones of an Old Testament prophet, he warned that "America stands at the cross roads." "The one road leads to the slavery which has always been the lot of those who have chosen collectivism in any of its forms," he said, be it "communism, socialism, the Welfare State – they are all cut from the same pattern. The other road leads to the only freedom there is."[135]

The individual sermons delivered on "Independence Sunday" were then linked together and amplified by a program broadcast that same evening over CBS's national radio network. The committee had originally hoped to schedule the broadcast for the Fourth of July itself, but missed its chance by organizing at a late date, after all air time on the holiday had been reserved. As organizer James Ingebretsen noted, "even if we had the Lord Himself making a return appearance, we couldn't get the time." He quickly warmed to the idea of holding a special program on Sunday instead, both to highlight the spiritual emphasis of the festivities and to build on the momentum of the day's sermons. The national advertising agency of J. Walter Thompson handled the promotion for the

[135] Kenneth W. Sollitt, "Freedom Under God," Faith and Freedom (September 1951): 8-11.

program, but organizers believed that a less professional word-of-mouth campaign from the pulpit would be even more effective. "There will be a couple of hundred thousand ministers across the country who will have had direct word about this program and many of them will definitely be cooperative," an organizer noted in a telephone conversation with the head of public affairs at CBS. "There will be thirty to forty million people in church that Sunday as usual … and we will pick them up just a few hours afterwards instead of three days later."[136]

The program itself lived up to the organizers' expectations. Cecil B. DeMille met with Fifield to plan the production, in order to give the event a professional tone and stock it with an impressive array of Hollywood stars. Jimmy Stewart served as the on-air master of ceremonies, while Bing Crosby and Gloria Swanson each offered short messages of their own. The preamble to the Declaration of Independence was read by Lionel Barrymore, who had posed for promotional photos holding a giant quill and looking at a large piece of parchment inscribed with the words "Freedom Under God Will Save Our Country." The program featured choral performances of "America" as well as "Heritage," an epic poem composed by a former leader of the United States Chamber of Commerce. The song, later reprised as the program's finale, stressed the centrality of individual initiative in American history: "My fathers had been well content / As they subdued a continent (2x) / With axe and plow and gun and knife (3x) / To see the labor they had spent / Bear fruit in such a way of life (3x)." The keynote came from General Matthew Ridgway, who interrupted his duties leading American forces in Korea to offer a live address from Tokyo. In keeping with the theme of the program, the general

[136] Donald Hayne to Cecil B. DeMille, Telegram, 24 May 1951, Box 945, CBD; Transcript, "Mr. Ingebretsen's telephone conversation with Mr. Merle Jones and Mr. S. M. Nicholson of Columbia Broadcasting System," 8 June 1951, Box 69, JCI.

insisted that the founding fathers had been motivated, in large part, by their religious faith. "For them there was no confusion of thought, no uncertainty of objectives, no doubt as to the road they should follow to their goals," he said. "Theirs was a deep and abiding faith in God, a faith which is still the great reservoir of strength of the American people in this day of great responsibility for their future and the future of the world."[137]

The "Freedom under God" festivities reached their natural conclusion with local celebrations on the Fourth of July. The Committee to Proclaim Liberty coordinated the ringing of church bells across the nation, timed to start precisely at noon and last for ten full minutes. Cities and small towns across the country scheduled their own events around the bell ringing. In Los Angeles, for instance, the city's civil defense agency tested the city's air raid sirens, for the first time since their installation, just before noon, in what one newspaper described as "a scream as wild and proud as that of the American eagle." As the bells chimed across the city, residents were encouraged "to open their doors, sound horns and blow whistles and ring bells, as individual salutes to Freedom." After ten minutes of ringing, groups gathered in churches and homes to read the preamble to the Declaration together.[138] Both Mayor Fletcher Bowron and Governor Earl Warren, like their counterparts in many other cities and states, issued official proclamations at the request of the Committee to Proclaim Liberty urging citizens, in the governor's words, to spend the day reflecting upon "the blessings we enjoy through Freedom under God."[139]

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[137] Memorandum and Handwritten Note, Box 945, CBD; Transcript, "Telephone Conversation Between Mr. McCray and Mr. Ingebretsen," 12 June 1951, Box 69, JCI; "Proclaim Liberty" packet, [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI; "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI; Transcript, General Matthew B. Ridgway, "Freedom Under God," 1 July 1951, Box 69, JCI.
[138] Newsclippings, Box 69, JCI.
[139] Similar "Freedom under God" proclamations were issued by the governors of the states of Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and the territory of Hawaii, and also by the mayors of Birmingham, Charlotte, Cheyenne, Chicago, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New

That night, 50,000 residents attended a massive rally at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Organized under the theme "Freedom Under God Needs You," the night featured eight circus acts, a jet plane demonstration, and a fireworks display that the local chapter of the American Legion promised would be the largest in the entire country. Reverend Fifield had the honor of offering the invocation for the evening's ceremonies, while Gregory Peck delivered a dramatic reading of the preamble of the Declaration of Independence.[140]

In the end, the Committee to Proclaim Liberty believed, rightfully, that its work had made a lasting impression on the nation. "The very words 'Freedom Under God' [have] added to the vocabulary of freedom a new term," the organizers concluded. "It is a significant phrase to people who know that everybody from Stalin on down is paying lip service to freedom until its root meaning is no longer apparent. The term 'Freedom Under God' provides a means of identifying and separating conditions which indicate pseudo-freedom, or actual slavery, from those of true freedom." Citing an outpouring of support for the festivities, the committee resolved to make it a new annual tradition and, more important, work to keep the spirit of its central message alive in American life. The entire nation, they hoped, would soon think of itself as "under God."[141]

York City, Norfolk, Phoenix, Providence, St. Louis, Seattle and Wilmington. See "Proclaim Liberty" packet, [n.d., 1951]; "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951]; and Transcript, "Telephone Call to Mr. Ingebretsen from Mr. Gamble," 12 June 1951, all in Box 69, JCI.

[140] Newsclippings and "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI.

[141] "The Story Behind the Committee to Proclaim Liberty," [n.d., 1951], Box 69, JCI; James W. Fifield, Jr., to J. Howard Pew, 9 November 1951, Box 30, JHP.