

WHO PAYS?

Sp File  
Sunday School Speech  
MC E. O. 47  
4-11-47

The reason I am talking to you today is because I have been asked to participate in a great American movement, a much needed movement, a movement in which every right-thinking citizen should be interested.

What I have to say will particularly appeal to every parent, mother or father, within the range of my voice. It is a message the younger generation can well ponder. But, I particularly want to have a heart to heart talk with you parents.

Today, a deadly plague is racing throughout our country. It is a plague that thinking people watch spreading with fears and misgivings. Every law enforcement officer, every public servant is worried. The mere thought of it entering the home of decent, respectable parents makes the heart turn cold. That plague, my dear people is what is called Juvenile Delinquency.

It lurks at every corner in every city, hamlet and village. Its slimy, grasping hand reaches into over one thousand homes each day. Homes inhabited by decent, respectable, but unfortunately careless or indifferent parents. I say careless, indifferent parents advisedly. The plague of Juvenile Delinquency could be stamped out tomorrow if American parents would recognize its dangers and determine to conduct themselves as God ordained they should.

I think this story will interest you.

A frail, little gray haired lady sat in the dimly lighted parlor of her little cottage. She had spent all her married days in that cottage. Looking out the window she could see a majestic apple tree that she and her husband had planted in the first month of their married life. Well she remembered the words he had used when he planted it: "I dedicate this tree to you, sweetheart. May it always bear good fruit for you!" Nearby was a beautiful bed of hollyhocks she herself had planted with seeds a neighbor gave her. How proud she had been when the first blossoms appeared. In the center of the lawn stood a graceful maple. It had been a young tree when they moved there. One of its sturdy boughs had supported a swing. Her husband had swung her in that swing as a bride. Later, both of them had taken turns in swinging the children God gave them. His body, carried by neighbors, passed under the swaying branches of that tree three days before their own Tom reached his Third Birthday.

A chilly shudder passed through her as she thought how tragic it would be if he were here now. "God spared him this", she whispered inwardly. He had been a good man, a devoted husband and father. He had been thoughtful and considerate enough to leave her comfortably fixed for the rest of her life. Many times she had remonstrated with him for burdening himself with such heavy insurance premiums but he would always say, "Insurance is the cheapest thing one can buy--it gives me peace of mind to know that I am providing for my loved ones". Often he would say, "Nothing is too good for you and our children". "What would he think if he were here today?"----The thought made her whole body tremble.

Others sat with her. Her daughter and her husband. Her eldest son and his wife. The minister of her church. All sat quietly, waiting. The porcelain clock on the mantle showed a quarter of six. The big grandfather's clock had just finished its chiming. Everyone sat motionless and silent. There was really nothing to say-- everything had been said that could be said. It was only a matter of waiting, now -- waiting for the agonizing minutes to pass. In fifteen minutes up in a

cold, grey prison, her youngest son would pay his final debt to society. In fifteen minutes he would be carried lifeless out of the death chamber.

Yesterday, she had seen him for the last time. Now, somehow, she wished she hadn't. But, she had had to go. She was his mother. With a trembling hand she had offered him a little book, the Bible of her girlhood. But he had shaken his head, "No Mom, it's too late for that. I never called on Him before for help. It just wouldn't be cricket to do it now". She left him staring at the white-washed wall.

The little clock on the mantle kept up its sprightly, terrible ticking. Her eldest son shifted himself with a stifled groan. Her son-in-law squeezed her daughter's hand so hard, you could see the whites of his knuckles.

The little clock on the mantle struck once. The deep throated chimes of the big clock on the wall joined in. They were merciless hammers beating out the awful seconds of doom. Everything went black before her. Her boy was gone. Now, all she had was his memory.

The chiming ended. For a moment she existed in a soundless vacuum. Then she heard the soft, sad voice of the minister: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." When he was done, he rose and laid his hand gently on her shoulder: "Martha, your cup holds only dregs of bitterness and sorrow now. But, you did everything you could for Tom--you gave him everything".

She was surprised to hear her own voice say: "Yes Pastor, I gave him everything. Often-times at the expense of his brother and sister. But, now I know the things I gave him were only material things. Things that satisfied his whims and fancies. I see now that I never gave him the one thing he needed more than anything else--a knowledge---a consciousness of his God. I sent his sister and his brother to Church and Sunday School. How proud I was when they started out Sunday mornings, all washed and starched. Then, when Tom was old enough, I took him to Sunday School. When he came home I asked him how he liked it. He said, "Didn't like it. Don't want to go any more". I let it go. I hoped he might think better about it. The following Sunday I started to help him get dressed for Sunday School. He made so much fuss that I gave it up. After that I tried again at times. But, I must admit my efforts were feeble. I resigned myself to the belief that he would grow into it. Now he is lying on a marble slab.

"Yes, I gave him everything but the one real thing in life. The one thing that builds stability and character: a knowledge of God. He paid his penalty this morning: and I am paying it too. How well I know today that the wages of sin is death".

She rose and half-stumbled toward the stairs, her face working. They heard her bedroom door closing, then the muffled sound of her sobbing. "I would leave her alone", said the minister. "Let her give vent to her feelings---God will comfort her. He always comforts those who acknowledge the need of Him".

My friends, in this story there is a message for every parent. A message we can all well ponder.

As your Chief Magistrate, I can assure you of police and fire protection. Your city provides you, pure drinking water, sewers, clean streets, good schools, and recreation centers. But, my dear friends, your city cannot provide you with the one thing mankind craves---peace of mind.

We can strive to make you civic-minded, but all of the employees on your city's payroll cannot provide you with a conscience.

Today Juvenile Delinquency is becoming the deadliest plague this country has ever faced. It has reached the point that it effects us all: every citizen, every taxpayer, every corporation---every home. There is a reason for that---a plain, simple, obvious reason that everyone can understand. While the population of our country has increased. Sunday School attendance has decreased.

You can't expect to find much character where there is no knowledge of God. Prison records and records of crime convictions prove that in most instances the criminal's religious education was sadly neglected. The laws of God are far more important to mankind than the laws of physics or mathematics. The sooner we take on a sober realization of that simple truth, the sooner we will see Juvenile Delinquency decrease.

This week, it is our privilege to cooperate with a great American movement. It is non-sectarian, but all inclusive in character and meaning---National Sunday School Week. And, how can we cooperate? By not only resolving to send our children to Sunday School regularly, but put forth some effort--if necessary make some sacrifice to point out to some neighbor, friend or acquaintance what knowledge of God means to a child. The basic part it plays in his or her life.

Sunday Schools, like Public Schools, are conveniently located. You passed laws compelling your children to attend public schools to insure them a worldly education. But, unfortunately, statistics prove that we do not consider it important to acquaint our children with God's Laws or with The God who created this earth and all those who live on it.

It has been rightly said that the Bible is the Law Book of Civilization. Since that is the case, how can we expect to see civilization survive if less than one-half of our children never open its pages?

We claim to love our children, but do we? Do we love them when we permit them to develop in mind and body without a knowledge of God? The Master said, "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me". There is a command that every parent, irrespective of class, creed or color must respect---if civilization is to be maintained.

Let us begin National Sunday School Week with a determination to insure to our children a knowledge of God. Let us be thankful that in our country there is a group of individuals who, without any hope of reward of glory are willing to make sacrifices, willing to spend their time and their money to remind us all each year of the important part religion must play in our everyday lives if Liberty and Justice under God are not to perish from the earth.

It is a privilege for me to cooperate in this. I know that Station WCCO which has generously accorded the use of its facilities also considers it a privilege to participate. Let us all join in this great American movement---N A T I O N A L S U N D A Y S C H O O L W E E K.



File  
speech

RADIO ADDRESS  
For  
NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL WEEK  
April 14 - 20

Sponsored by the Laymen's National Committee  
Vanderbilt Hotel, New York 16, N.Y.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

RADIO ANNOUNCER:

H. H. H. You are about to hear a talk by the Honorable  
Mayor of MPLES. The title of  
(Name of City)  
the Mayor's address is:

WHO PAYS?

Mayor H. is speaking under the auspices of and at the request of  
the Laymen's National Committee of New York City, founders of National  
Sunday School Week, a non-sectarian, non-profit organization, whose sole  
object is to bring about a more sober appreciation of Spiritual Values.

Mayor H.

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CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT

MPLES. You have heard a talk by Mayor H. of  
entitled:  
(Name of City)

WHO PAYS?

Mayor H. spoke under the auspices of and at the request of  
the Laymen's National Committee. Copies of Mayor H.'s  
talk can be obtained free by writing to this Station, the Mayor's office,  
or to the Laymen's National Committee, Vanderbilt Hotel, New York 16, N.Y.

This comes to you as a public service presentation of Station WCCO  
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