

VATICAN RELATIONS

A Social Document of the
ULCA



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A Series of Statements of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1940, 1946, 1950

1940: Minutes, 12th Biennial Convention, ULCA, p. 34.

The plan announced by President Roosevelt on the eve of Christmas was designed in the interest of world peace and of righteous government in the world. It was devised also in the consciousness that these ends can be attained only on spiritual paths; mankind must have God's peace and a government that recognizes Him. It was planned furthermore in a desire to unite all American spiritual energies for these ends.

God forbid that anything should interfere with such highly conceived purposes. The plan however threatens itself by combining this unity of America's spiritual and civil authority with a single foreign spiritual and civil authority, the Vatican State.

The President is the servant of God for the nation. He is also the servant of all the people for the nation. God and the people want peace, want it to be a spiritual peace, but do not want American spiritual principles undermined. The Pope is God's servant, but he is not God's servant for American national life. Even many American Roman Catholics do not so regard him, and certainly the great majority of Americans do not.

The inclusion of the one false element in the plan is:

(1) *Unnecessary*, since a representative American Roman Catholic might have been named who, with the other two individuals named, would see the President "from time to time."

(2) *Un-American*, since it gives official recognition to a combination of Church and State (the Vatican) which is contrary to American principles; since also it undemocratically gives pre-eminence to a minority of the American people -- the one individual would be at Rome for constant consultation, the two individuals would see the President "from time to time."

(3) *Disruptive* of American unity and therefore not in harmony with the purpose of peace. recent temporary relationships to the Vatican aroused widespread opposition, and the present plan has been hailed from authoritative sources as another step towards a permanent relationship. Rome reports the relationship as needed also for reconstruction after peace. Increasing opposition to such relationship will increasingly threaten America's unity.

(4) *A cause for suspicion* that political influences from religious sources are being exerted upon American national life.

1940: *Ibid.*, pp. 564, 565.

The Convention resolved.

That we register our approval of the action president Knubel has taken in this important matter,⁷

That we adopt the 'Protest Against Vatican Relationship,' as a proper statement of the position of the United Lutheran Church in America.

1940: *Ibid.*, p. 565.

That we hereby go on record as being unalterably opposed to the establishment or maintenance of any relationship to the Vatican by the United States Government or its chief executive, which might in any sense be construed as diplomatic or official.

1946: *Minutes, 15TH Biennial Convention, ULCA, p. 258.*

The Convention resolved:

That we express our gratification to the President of the United States for the assurance which he has given to a group of representative church leaders that the appointment of a special representative to the Vatican was a temporary expedient so as to give the President the fullest opportunity to make his contribution to peace, and that it might terminate at an early date but would certainly terminate with the signing of the peace treaties.

We further recommend that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President.

1950: *Minutes, 17TH Biennial Convention, ULCA, pp. 877, 920.*

The Convention resolved:

That The United Lutheran Church in America in convention assembled emphatically reaffirm its belief in the absolute separation of Church and State and record its unalterable opposition to the establishment of any kind of diplomatic relations, or resemblance thereto, between the United States Government and the Vatican or any other religious group.