

WASHINGTON DATELINE

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Bible & J. Edgar Hoover



J. EDGAR HOOVER TALKS ABOUT RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN A RARE--AND HIS LAST INTERVIEW WITH TRUDE B. FELDMAN AT THE MAYFLOWER HOTEL'S CARVERY RESTAURANT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

John Edgar Hoover said that he spent a few hours each day in meditation and prayer. Religion and the Bible were important influences on his life and actions in guiding the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the last 48 years.

He would like to be remembered for bringing renewed citizen respect for law and enforcement as a profession over the last generation.

These points among others, emerged in a recent interview--the last before his death.

Mr. Hoover shied from interviews with the press. He granted this one after numerous chats with him at his favorite lunch table in the Mayflower Hotel's Carvery Restaurant in Washington, D.C.

Following are some of the questions, with Mr. Hoover's replies:

Q: In the Jewish tradition, reverence for law is a prime value. Do you see it in the make-up of religion generally?

A: I most certainly do. A belief in God means respect for the divine law. This is fundamental. Respect for law in our society is what gives significance to our lives. If we didn't have law, we would have complete anarchy and chaos. This would result in tyranny and an end of freedom for all.

Q: Do you believe that respect for law and authority and institutions like the FBI is connected with the religious attitude? If so, in what way?

A: Yes, I do. The man who is motivated by religious ideas realizes the vital significance of obedience to law. To him, the law is the principle which holds society together. Take away the law--through disrespect of actual disobedience--and the whole keystone of society crumbles and with it the dignity of man as a child of God.

Q: Do you have a quiet time each day to meditate and seek guidance or inspiration?

A: Yes, I find a few minutes each day--at home, at the office, while traveling--to meditate and pray. These minutes enable me to gain a perspective about the problems and decisions which each hour come across my desk. I always ask myself: "Have I made the best decision possible?" A man who closes himself off from divine inspiration is a small, narrow man whose decisions will be petty and vindictive.

Q: How has the Bible influenced your life, your career and your work?

A: The Bible has been my lifelong companion and the book most influential in my life. I have read the Bible all my life. Over the years, the teachings of the Bible have been the guide to my daily life.

Q: What Biblical statement influenced you the most? Which one has meant the most to you?

A: I have many favorite Bible verses. However, over the years, Micah 6:8 has meant much to me... ("He has showed you, O man, what is

good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you God..?')

"Here, the ancient prophet is setting standards of judgment for our lives. As I read and ponder this verse, I think of the power of God, His demands for righteousness, and the absolute need for all of us to be ever humble and obedient to Him.."

Q: Have the principles of your religion guided you in the organization and operation of the FBI? If so, how?

A: Yes, I have administered the FBI on the principle of honesty, integrity and fair play. We in the FBI work hard to protect both individual rights and the safety of the community. Religion, if it is to be meaningful, must be an integral part of everyday life.

Q: The members of the Jewish Defense League assume they are fighting lawlessness. What do you think is the effect of their activities upon lawlessness?

A: Any group in America which takes the law into its own hands through force and violence is doing our Nation a grave injustice. Violence begets violence, disrespect for the law, and often encourages other groups to do likewise.

Q: What is the role of religion in society?

How can it be made more effective:

A: Religion gives men strength to face the vicissitudes of everyday living. It helps mold character and personality. It enables the individual to make decisions which are fair and honest. All too frequently, we find evidence--through crime, subversion and corruption--that the principles of religion do not really influence the lives of some people. There is a great need today for a revival of religious values in our society. A Nation without respect for GOD is a Nation which has lost its moral competence for living and vision for the future.

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