

PRAYERS IN CLASSROOMS

"No one will ever convince me that a moment of voluntary prayer will harm a child or threaten a school or state." With this resounding declaration, President Reagan announced at a recent White House Garden ceremony his support for a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary prayer in public schools. Such an amendment would override the 1962 Supreme Court decision that declared classroom prayer unconstitutional.

The announcement is a discouraging development for those who support the constitutional separation of church and state and for those who believe in freedom of religious pluralism in this country, both of which such an amendment could directly infringe upon.

By fulfilling an earlier campaign pledge, Reagan's announcement was immediately met with a fusillade of opposition from Jewish and Christian organizations, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union. These groups maintain, among other points, that prayers cannot be voluntary when mandated by a school system since a child who did not want to participate would be subjected to ridicule from classmates or forced by peer pressure to take part in whatever ceremony was being held.

One critic from the American Jewish Congress said: "The Jewish Community, in particular, is acutely aware of government imposed religion...It is for this reason that many of our ancestors fled Europe." An official from a Baptist organization termed the President's announcement as "the politicizing" of prayer and said that "involving government in prayer would trivialize and secularize prayer."

From a political standpoint, Reagan's announcement was ideally timed to grasp back his disenchanted moral right conservative constituency who can use this as ammunition in the 1982 elections. As in the past, the moral right groups will be able to "target" a candidate and make his support or opposition to this amendment an issue come election time.

For whatever his reasoning, the President is a difficult man to convince otherwise once he has put his stamp on an issue. It is interesting, however, to question whether a man of the President's stature and knowledge sincerely believes that the imposition of voluntary school prayers would not pose a type of emotional threat to eight and nine-year-old students and whether he truly believes that such an amendment would not affect the religious diversity of this country.

WOMEN ENJOY HIGH STATUS

It is often the man who has a lesser status than the woman in Jewish Law, says Rebbetzin Ayala Glikberg in a study on the status of women in Judaism for the M.A. degree is Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University.

According to Mrs. Glikberg, other religions, especially Christianity, accord the woman a lower status than the man. In contrast, there are many statements in Judaism attesting to the positive position of the woman in building family life and in arranging the education of the children.

In Judaism men and women are equal and different - equal as human beings, different as regards their duties in society and the family. Thus, for example, Judaism differs radically in this respect from ancient Greek culture. According to Plato, women are the source of evil in the world.

Judaism does not view the individual on his own but as part of the family unit, and accords each one of the couple equal status, each in his own sphere. The home is not built on competition between the sexes or the individuals but on a scale according to their functions.

There has been advancement in the status of women in Judaism during the past few generations. One example is in professional education. Already 200 years ago, a rabbinic ruling was given that a father should provide his daughter with professional education.

It is not easy for the Jewish woman to compete in the world outside the home, and even more so for the educated religious woman, as she must keep a traditional home. She must be stronger spiritually than the non-religious Israeli woman to maintain her feminine modesty.

Mrs. Glikberg points out that the striving of men and women to be equal is unnatural, and may even be a distortion of society. However, there is need for freedom of choice, as well as equal opportunities, for both sexes. One of the more pressing problems of the present generation is how to help women integrate successfully into the economic society by way of participating in public activities and developing careers.

There are various approaches to this topic. The first is the approach which negates outside activities and states that woman's place is in the home. This really means she has a full-time job, yet is not allowed public appearances. The next approach is that the "working woman" must be accepted as a temporary must. The third approach does not encourage a career, but allows the woman to work voluntarily in different frameworks.

Mrs. Glikberg states that she has often been called on to defend the woman's cause. "When I checked out the different sources of information, I discovered to my great surprise, that it is the man who is the disadvantaged."

HELLDORADO AT TOP OF MAXIM

One of the greatest bronc riders of all times, Casey Tibbs, will be host at the Maxim Hotel's Helledorado Jamboree, through June 6.

Tibbs won his first saddle bronc championship in 1949 when he was only 20, was the world's champion all-around cowboy in 1955 for which he won more than \$40,000.00.

A native of South Dakota, by the time he was 25, Casey was a superstar of rodeo

holding much the same position that Mickey Mantle did at the time in baseball.

Now at 53, Casey is still a good looking man, active and can work a horse better than most men of any age. He is the king of the Hollywood cowboys, just one among many, but he works regularly. He is probably the most talented man ever to ride a bucking horse.

You can meet Casey at the Maxim all during Helledorado.

PARIS (WNS) -- The Brussels Conference for Soviet Jewry will meet here next October, Claude Kelman, vice president of the Brussels Conference presidium announced. He said the conference will be held "as a matter of urgency" in view of the constantly deteriorating situation of Soviet Jews. The first two sessions of the Brussels Conference took place in the Belgian capital in June 1970, and February, 1979.

OTTAWA (WNS) -- Egypt and Canada signed an agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation, paving the way for future sales of Canadian nuclear reactors to Egypt. The 30-year accord was signed by Energy Ministers Maher Abaza of Egypt and Marc Lalonde of Canada, who also agreed to set up a committee to discuss the implementation of the agreement.

TWO ACCUSED NAZIS GO TO TRIAL

CHICAGO (WNS) -- A man accused of having served as company commander of seven SS units in concentration camps and training SS recruits for concentration camp guard duty goes on trial this week in U.S. District Court on charges that he lied about his Nazi past to secure U.S. citizenship.

Conrad Schellong, a 72-year-old retired machinist is among 22 alleged ex-Nazis being prosecuted by the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI). According to OSI director Allan Tyan, investigators found that Schellong was an SS Commander at Dachau and served as a major and lieutenant colonel in the Waffen SS. He came to the U.S. in 1957 and obtained citizenship in 1962, the OSI reported. It filed its complaint against

Schellong in May, 1981. Another alleged ex-Nazi, Liudas Kairys, is to go on trial June 14th.

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