

REPORT TO THE BRITISH-CANADIAN BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR RELIGIOUS CULTURE.

The Society For Religious Culture is a new organization established in January 1945 at the Union Theological Seminary, New York City, after several years of planning by Mr. George Y. Rusk and others. The object of the Society is to aid its members in their making of limited, yet influential, contributions to the exploration, development and application: (1) of the means which philosophy, science and historical and literary scholarship can provide for the subjective valuation and the objective confirmation of religious doctrines; for their definition, restraint, measurement, and adjustments of every sort; and for the consequent mitigation of religious conflicts and of limitations upon religious freedom; (2) of the means by which religious doctrines can be empowered by art; and (3) of the means by which religious doctrines can be applied to the lives of individuals, to person-to-person relationships, and to the larger social units.

The membership consists primarily of protestant ministers, theological school professors, and educators. There are a few social scientists in the Society. The Society welcomes participation of natural scientists, even though their comments might tear down the beliefs of some of the theologians. (Note: Reinhold Niebuhr declines to be associated with the Society.)

The work of the society consists of circulation by mail of papers, comments, and criticisms between members on various projects; local discussion meetings; annual national meeting, and publication of The Periodical Review of the Society For Religious Culture (latest issue is Vol. 1, No. 6, April 1946).

The seven projects initiated to date are: (1) A Diagnostic Religious Vocabulary, (2) Religion in the Public Schools, (3) Soviet Culture and the Hebrew-Christian Tradition, (4) Theology and Mental Hygiene, (5) The Meaning of Love, (6) The Nature and Source of Value, and (7) The Common Convictions of Liberals and Catholics. Project (3) is the only project that is adequately staffed to date. Preliminary material assembled for this project indicates that generally speaking Soviet ethics are identical in ideals with those of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, except that Soviet ethics regard these ideals as mandatory because

they are established by human reason, not because they are given by God, and hold that these ideals require for achievement a social order which socializes the means of production and thus eliminates economic insecurity, provides (in peace time) free education at all levels, provides medical service in all forms,

and eliminates race, color, sex and religious discrimination.

Officers as of January 1946:

- Honorary President: Walter M. Horton
- President: William A. Irwin
- Vice-President: Oliver Martin
- Secretary: George Yeisley Rusk, 110 Elmwood Rd., Baltimore 10, Md.
- Treasurer: Fritz Marti

- Executive Committee: Charles Morris; Harold S. Tuttle;
- John M. Moore; Dwight J. Bradley; Henry A. Wieman;
- John T. McNeill.

June 1, 1946

Frederick B. Wood

P.S. The following abstract may be easier to understand:

The Society For Religious Culture conducts investigations of the means of: (1) testing religious doctrines by philosophical, scientific, and other means; (2) strengthening religious doctrine through art; and (3) applying religious doctrines to practical individual and social problems. Although their membership consists primarily of ministers, theologians, etc., they welcome scientific criticism. A project on "Soviet Culture and the Hebrew-Christian tradition" is in progress. Preliminary material assembled for this project indicates that generally speaking Soviet ethics are identical in ideals with those of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, except that Soviet ethics regard these ideals as mandatory because they are established by human reason, not because they are given by God, and hold that these ideals require for their achievement a social order which socializes the means of production.

F. B. W.