

Issued on behalf of signers by
Dr. Paul E. Scherer
3 West 65th Street
New York 23, New York

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY
August 20th, 1945

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERS ISSUE

STATEMENT ON THE ATOMIC BOMB

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An appeal to President Truman to immediately discontinue production of the atomic bomb and to press for "commitments by all nations outlawing the atomic bomb and also war, which has developed the technology of mass destruction", was issued today by thirty-four religious and educational leaders. In a joint statement, signed by George A. Buttrick, Paul E. Scherer, John Haynes Holmes, E. McNeill Poteat, E. Stanley Jones, Robert L. Calhoun, Ernest Fremont Tittle, Abraham Cronbach, and twenty-six others, the signatories condemn America's use of the atomic bomb against Japan which they call "an atrocity of a new magnitude". The unleashing of this "cosmic disturbance" over Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, is said to mark "a new low of inhumanity". The new missile "was not used to save ourselves in an extremity of desperation. We cannot believe it was even essential to the defeat of Japan", say those leaders, and they continue by saying: "Its reckless and irresponsible employment against an already virtually beaten foe will have to receive judgment before God and the conscience of humankind. It has our unmitigated condemnation."

The statement points out that "our own future fate is involved in the wartime use of the atomic bomb," that if it clinched victory in the Pacific it "sowed the whirlwind", which we may have to reap. Doubt is cast upon the President's power to keep "the new demon" under control. If it is thought, "that no one else will ever obtain the formula or another effective one, or will ever obtain a specimen bomb, or will ever be able to visit our shores with one in some future conflict, we must disagree", say the signers.

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Expressing gratitude "for the scientific achievement that lies behind this weapon", the signers of the statement assert their wish "to see the new power reserved for constructive civilian uses".

Following are the text of the statement and list of signatories, all of whom have signed as individuals and not representing organizations.

THE USE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

We have at last achieved the Atomic Bomb. In the lethal race against Germany, we got there first. It was too late to try out our bomb on the Germans but there was still time to test it in the centers of two Japanese cities. It did its work thoroughly and the heart of each city is atomized and the "dead are too numerous to count".

Our nations' leaders announced this with satisfaction. We do not share this sentiment. We believe we have committed an atrocity of a new magnitude; and though technically it may not contravene the recognized rules of "civilized" warfare, in essence it violates every instinct of humanity. If it is covered by no accepted regulation that is because it is outside the entire code of human relationships.

We have repeatedly voiced our condemnation of obliteration aerial bombing. Japan was universally and rightly condemned for the bombing of Chinese cities with their civilian populations. We have descended step by step to an equally low level of moral culpability by the systematic wiping out of half a hundred Japanese cities, most of which have offered no serious defense.

But this new weapon opens new areas for our moral judgment. While we were ostentatiously announcing in advance the doom of one after another of the smaller enemy cities, and calling it mercy, we suddenly unleashed by

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parachute over the large city of Hiroshima, and then of Nagasaki, this "cosmic disturbance" which has dragged the war and all of us with it, to a new low of inhumanity. This new missile of two thousand times the magnitude of our attacks hitherto, was not used to save ourselves in an extremity of desperation. We cannot believe it was even essential to the defeat of Japan. Its reckless and irresponsible employment against an already virtually beaten foe will have to receive judgment before God and the conscience of humankind. It has our unmitigated condemnation.

Our own future fate is involved in this wartime use of the atomic bomb. We agree with Hanson Baldwin's comment, that "we clinched victory in the Pacific, but we sowed the whirlwind". We may have to reap not only the whirlwind of revenge and retaliation at so colossal a crime as we ~~have~~ committed against other human beings by its indiscriminate use; this very missile may be the instrument of our own destruction as a nation. Our President gravely assures us that the new demon will be carefully kept in control. If this means that no one else will ever obtain the formula or another effective one, or will ever obtain a specimen bomb, or will ever be able to visit our shores with one in some future conflict, we must disagree. We have now brought forth the new weapon that the world has been seeking and yet dreading. Now we shall have to take the consequences. We are grateful for the scientific achievement that lies behind this weapon, and we wish to see the new power reserved for constructive, civilian uses. The spiritual nature of man is challenged to achieve this. But, if once we legitimatize use of the Atomic Bomb for enemy destruction, no power can again bring this new death-energy within bounds.

We, therefore, with a sense of the utmost urgency protest against all further use of the atomic bomb and we respectfully ask the President to take

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immediate steps to discontinue its production; and, to press for commitments by all nations outlawing the atomic bomb and a lso war which has developed the technology of mass destruction.

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LIST OF SIGNERS ----- STATEMENT ON THE ATOMIC BOMB
 (Signing as individuals only; ~~or~~ organizations named only for identification)

Prof. Roland H. Bainton	Yale Divinity School
Rev. A.D. Beittel, D.D.	President, Talladega College, Ala.
Rev. George A. Buttrick, D.D.	Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church
Prof. Robert F. Calhoun, D.D.	Yale Divinity School
Rev. J. Henry Carpenter, D.D.	Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation
Franklin D. Cogswell	Secretary, Missionary Education Movement
Rabbi Abraham Cronbach, D.D.	Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio
Prof. Walter F. Davison	Union Theological Seminary, New York
Rev. Phillips P. Elliott, D.D.	First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Mary Farquharson	Former member, Washington State Senate
Rev. John Haynes Holman, D.D.	Community Church, New York
Prof. Charles Iglehart	Union Theological Seminary, New York
Rev. E. Stanley Jones, D.D.	Missionary and evangelist
Rev. John Paul Jones	Union Church of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Prof. Rufus M. Jones	Quaker author and leader
Rev. John Howland Lathrop, D.D.	Church of Our Savior, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Rev. Samuel W. Marble, D.D.	Trinity Methodist Church, Denver, Colorado
Alfred D. Moore	Foreign Missions Conference of North America
Rev. A. J. Muste	Co-secretary, Fellowship of Reconciliation
Rev. James Myers	Federal Council of Churches Industrial Dept.
Kirby Page	Author and lecturer, La Habra, California
Mrs. Henry Hill Pierce	Secretary, Episcopal Pacifist Fellowship
Clarence Pickett	Executive Secretary, American Friends Ser. Com.

Rev. Edwin McNeill Poteat, D.D.	President, Colgate-Rochester Divinity School
Dorothy M. Roberts	Formerly missionary in China
Rev. John Nevin Sayre	Co-secretary, Fellowship of Reconciliation
Rev. Paul E. Scherer, D.D.	Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, N.Y.
Prof. Walter W. Sikes	Verea College, Kentucky
Prof. Arthur L. Swift, Jr., D.D.	Union Theological Seminary, New York
Rev. Winburn T. Thomas, D.D.	Student Volunteer Movement, New York
Rev. Ernest Fremont Tittle, D.D.	First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois
Oswald Garrison Villard	Author and journalist
Rev. Theodore D. Walser, D.D.	Secretary, N.Y. Fellowship of Reconciliation
E. Raymond Wilson	Friends Committee on National Legislation