

Social Justice, August 14, 1939, p. 6:

My Position Towards Organizations

Permit Me to clarify my position in connection with the broadcast of Sunday, July 30th, relative to the Christian Front.

First and foremost, let all those who are interested in either organizing the Christian Front or joining it understand that I am neither the organizer nor the sponsor of the Christian Front; and moreover, that it is not becoming for me to identify myself with this organization or any other organization.

From time to time, fine, zealous persons have approached me to associate myself with various organizations. To protect any usefulness that I may have as a public speaker, I resolved, following the experience of the National Union in 1936, to hold absolutely aloof from all organizations. I must not depart from this policy even in the case of the Christian Front.

However, if Christians as individuals or as groups desire to establish a Christian Front with the objective in mind of incorporating the spirit and the doctrines of Christianity into our social life, that is commendable. Nevertheless, as a clergyman, I do not find it compatible to identify myself with any movement in any way whatsoever. I prefer to remain entirely outside all organizations.

As a clergyman, I do not find it irregular to support labor unions in general, even though labor unions, in some instances, have been responsible through some of their members and leaders for seizure of property and contempt of law. However, I do not belong to any of them; I do not attempt, except as an outsider, to sustain or direct them.

Thus, as I support labor unions, so can I support a Christian Front whose advertised principles and whose officers propose to defend Christianity against the unjust aggressions of anti-Christian forces, even though some members of the Christian Front will be deserving, by reason of their ill-advised actions, of just criticism.

Therefore, gentlemen of the Christian Front, and those of you who are contemplating establishing units of it, please understand my position. I must hold myself disengaged from your organization; I must act in no other capacity toward you than as a friend and counsellor, whose privilege it is to address you in your homes each Sunday. But I am determined to be independent of your group, and therefore must refuse to undertake to advise you how to organize, whom to select as to your officers and what to do in specific instances.

To depart from this program would destroy any usefulness I may have; for I would be assuming both an authority and a position altogether impractical.

While I earnestly encourage the establishment of a Christian Front along the general lines which I indicated in my radio address, Sunday, July 30th, I hope I have clarified my position towards it and have satisfied you as to its reasonableness.

Therefore, while I encourage you to carry on in the spirit of Christ and in the spirit of America, I am sure that I can be of more service to the cause by refraining from participating in it either as an active member, an active officer, or an active organizer, and by continuing to be a voice that is friendly to your cause and to every other good cause without participating in their activities.

What I have said relative to myself also holds good for Social Justice magazine.

Chas. E. Coughlin