

Fair Enough

By Westbrook Pegler

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 14.—There appeared in Los Angeles on election day, when the queeries of the town were in their most susceptible mood, a page advertisement of 1200 words by Dr. Frank



B. Robinson of Moscow, Idaho, who claimed that he has talked with God and, for a price, is willing to reveal the secret of a new religion which he calls Psychiana. Some papers in some cities might reject such copy, but in Los Angeles the notice of a new revelation is no less ethical than a routine bargain in boss-fix powders, angel down or yogi's bath water. The faithful hunger

and clamor for Ham an' Eggs but never stint their holy men.

In Cleveland, where I saw him lately, the Great I Am, also of Los Angeles, had four new, expensive cars for himself and staff, time on the air and an archepiscopal suite at the best hotel in town. The Great I Am was just out calling on the trade, for Los Angeles is his seat and the California mountains are the scene of his occasional conferences with the Sacred Three Times Three, the great ascended spirits and a militant, gaseous God-force identified as K-17.

As I recall his route the Great I Am, known in private life as G. W. Ballard, would still be on the road, so I didn't bother to call but did mention him to Mr. Buron Fitts, the district attorney, and was surprised to learn that this well-informed local official, whose detective bureau combines the best elements of the Gestapo and the FBI, never had heard of his eminent fellow citizen.

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'Is He New in the Racket?'

"The Great I Am?" Mr. Fitts said. "Is he new in the racket? Make a note of him, Klein. He may be someone we would like to know."

"But surely you know the Great I Am!" I wheedled. "He has access to a lake of gold on Mt. Shasta, and this friend of his, the Sacred Three Times Three, recently destroyed a number of hostile submarines, hither bound, with a sword of purple flame."

"I never heard of the guy," Mr. Fitts said. "He is not a big shot."

"He can't be a big shot," Mr. Klein nodded.

Mr. Fitts and Mr. Klein are blasé about God men. Occasionally they have to bust up a flock for the sake of the lambs, which is a fine commentary on religious freedom, but that's the way it goes, nevertheless. I attempted no comparison between the Great I Am faith and Psychiana beyond an observation that the Prophet Ballard never prays to his gods but orders them about like flunkies, whereas Dr. Robinson of Moscow, Idaho, follows convention and gets excellent results, too.

Masters of the I Am religion can make themselves invisible, a knack to tempt burglars and varsity backs, and there is said to be no limit to the material gifts which they command, including money. However, Mr. Ballard was not invisible in Cleveland, unless it be that I have second sight, for I vow I saw the prophet plainly. Dr. Robinson gets his without recourse to sorcery and is proud, not to say a shade vulgar, on the subject of his cash receipts.

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Started as Boxcar Stray

A boxcar stray his writing says he was, a beggar, and, if I may suggest a word, a bum, who worked only when forced to and that seldom, until one day he struck up a conversation with God. Today he owns the largest office building in Moscow, Idaho, has a beautiful home with a magnificent pipe organ and drives a Cadillac limousine, while his wife drives a new Buick and his son a Ford V-8. His little girl isn't old enough to drive her own, but just you wait.

Dr. Robinson doesn't mention his degree but speaks of a little drug store which he had to abandon owing to the press of religious business, and country druggists commonly are called "Doc." For all his wealth he doesn't want money from his converts beyond enough to pay expenses—and grow. For growth he requires an unspecified proportion of the grow, but he extends a money-back offer to those who try Psychiana and don't get rich like him, with cars for all hands 'round, a pipe organ and all like that.

This seems a very attractive offer, and here he is working the Prophet Ballard's beat by mail while the Great I Am drags around the East where the skeptics roost high.

The prophet better git for home. Somebody is messin' around his chicken coop.