

## Death of Psychiana

In 1929, Frank B. Robinson took a magazine advertisement which announced that "I talked with God—yes I did—actually and literally." The drugstore clerk soon began sending out from Moscow, Idaho, lessons by mail in his new religion, Psychiana. Dr. Robinson's message was simple: The God-Power is present in each person, waiting to be tapped; all that is necessary is to call on it with the spoken word, and all things are possible. The mail-order religion flourished both financially and in volume of students, who paid up to \$35 for sets of twenty lessons. United States graduates today number about 600,000. Literature from Psychiana found its way into between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 homes annually and went to 67 foreign countries. Dr. Robinson wrote 23 books, and his staff at one time numbered more than 40 persons.

After "Doc" Robinson's death in 1948, his wife and their son Alfred continued the mailings (the postage bill in 23 years was more than \$750,000). A few weeks ago, the blow fell. The Robinsons announced that after Jan. 1 the mailings would be discontinued because, they explained, "increasing costs of materials and the additional operating expenses brought on by high taxes and inflation no longer can be overcome."

Last week Alfred Robinson, who served as a Navy bomber pilot in the second world war, expressed the hope that Psychiana as a religion would continue. He himself was planning to be a printing salesman for *The Daily Idahoonian*, in which the family owns an interest. But without the dynamic personality of the founder or the continuing spreading of his word by mail, Psychiana seemed to be doomed to death.

## The Bishops Speak

"Man ... needs religion ... because, apart from God, man is lonely and he can never find in himself or in the institutions which bear his image the means to fill up that void of loneliness which is in the human heart. Man needs religion because he is weak, and in his weakness he must have access to the source of all strength. Man needs religion because without the hope that religion alone can give, he cannot rise above that pessimism, that sense of despair, which threatens to engulf the whole of our civilization."

Thus the Roman Catholic bishops, archbishops, and cardinals of the United States defined "Religion, Our Most Vital National Asset" in their annual message this week. Signed and approved in Washington, D.C., by an administrative board of thirteen under the chairmanship of Archbishop Francis P. Keough of Balti-

more, the statement warned that without religion, "the city of man is gradually overrun by a Mayan-like jungle of human passions, in whose rank undergrowth of greed and cruelty and every other vice man lives his life in terror—and in the end perishes."

Today, the national temptation, the bishops state, is to turn away from God and become immersed in secularism. Nowhere is this more evident than in edu-



Associated Press

### Archbishop Keough: Religion needed

cation with a concentrated effort to "secularize completely the public school and then to claim for it a total monopoly of education." The bishops added that they are not "enemies of public education. We recognize that the state has a legitimate and even necessary concern with education." However, they say that "to one who cherishes the American tradition, it is alarming to hear all nonpublic education denounced as divisive."\* The real danger, the bishops felt, "comes not from religious divisiveness but from irreligious social decay."

"Our best religious traditions," the bishops contended, "are not fulfilled by mere theoretical acknowledgment of religion as a possible aid in solving our problems, or by a perfunctory attendance at Sunday devotions, or even by a stiff bow on the part of government in the general direction of God. If our country is truly religious, the influence of religion will permeate every part of our national life."

\*In April, President James Bryant Conant of Harvard told the American Association of School Administrators in Boston that "the greater the proportion of our youth who attend independent schools, the greater the threat to our democratic unity."