

July 1940

## Why a Federation?

Ignatius W. Cox

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Cox, Ignatius W. (1940) "Why a Federation?," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 8 : No. 3 , Article 2.  
Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol8/iss3/2>

## WHY A FEDERATION?

By REV. IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.\*

Are we dreaming right in our dream of a Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds in this country today? We can see the answer written large in the American panorama and in the streamlined, mechanized world parade of today. In that world man has become a slave to economic, financial, political, materialistic forces which control him as relentlessly as the slave-driver's whip in our former southern plantations. Man was formed and fashioned free and master of the world about him. Man lost that freedom because for liberty under law which is freedom he substituted license, which is the revolt of free will against the natural and positive restraints and laws which guide free will along right ways. Man was propagandized to make that substitution and he has been propagandized by false slogans and by subtle advertisement whenever in the course of history he renews that substitution. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree in paradise? And the woman answered him saying: of the fruits of the trees that are in paradise we do eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in

the midst of paradise, God has commanded us that we should not eat: and that we should not touch it lest we die. And the serpent said to the woman: no, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave to her husband and he did eat." Genesis c. 3. 1-7.

And so man, deceived by lying propaganda and false promises, substituted true freedom for license and plucked that forbidden fruit which brought death into this world and all our woe.

License is reducible to the principle that man is an independent, autonomous, without master, either individual man or the social man organized in the modern god, the state. License is founded on the conviction that man himself makes truth and makes what is right and wrong, good and bad; that what man wants or desires or finds useful either as a unit or as united in the social organism that is good and right.

Just before the rise of dictatorships and the totalitarian idea in our day man was again bartering his liberty and his essential freedom for a cheap imitation, a license which called itself liberalism

\* The address delivered at the Federation Banquet, June 12, 1940, by the National Moderator.

but which because it was license brought about the economic, political, financial, international disintegration and debacle which prepared the way for the strong arm of the totalitarian regime. And so in the economic order license reigned under the name of liberalism and in the place of true liberty which is freedom under law. Wealth was accumulated in the hands of the few and men decayed, whether those few were individuals or those few controlled a few states so that other states prevented from access to raw materials became the *have-nots* and the *pariahs* among nations while the *have* states propagated with the unctuous slogans the name of democracy.

Liberalism abused the very notion of freedom of speech, freedom of teaching, freedom of science, freedom of art and literature. All these became license under the fascinating name of liberalism so that man lost his integrity and his virtue and his strength and his manhood and tried to conceal his nakedness by clothing himself and his sinfulness in the lying, deceitful clothing of propaganda, the so-called scientific slogan.

And all this false liberalism working in our atheistic and evolutionary colleges, in our organs of public expression, the press, the magazine, the book, the radio and the movie, has so weakened the very foundations of our American way of life that I for one would not be surprised to see it tottering to its fall. The founders and

framers of our American way of life were dreamers too. They dreamed of a political system where true liberty, not license, would rule and gave it flesh and blood in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution now one hundred and fifty years old. That philosophy was the political philosophy of the Jesuit theologian Suarez and the Jesuit Cardinal St. Robert Bellarmine of the 17th century and they derived it from St. Thomas of the 13th century and the age of scholasticism. So absolutely untrue it is that real freedom and political democracy are products of our own time! It was from Suarez and Bellarmine that the American political philosophers of the 18th century learned that the right to govern is transferred by the consent of the governed to their governors. What our modern American leaders of thought and life have not understood is that you cannot have real freedom by merely enshrining your ideas in paper documents. To have real freedom you must have free men. And no man is really free who claims that he is autonomous, not dependent upon any one but himself; that freedom of man is based on man's freedom from God and the natural law, the supreme law-giver and the supreme law, under which alone man can gain liberty which is freedom under God and law. God and the natural law are alone the guarantees of human freedom and their only safeguard. When man rejects these he soon

falls into license and slavery to himself, to his economic and political overlords, and to the devil by whom he is propagandized.

Our fathers understood these basic truths upon which all freedom must rest. Man must be free in himself before he can have and hold freedom and only the truth of God can make men free. Hence they wrote in imperishable letters in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that amongst these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Destroy man's dependence on God and the natural law, and you hand over man's true freedom which is liberty under God, to license, and man becomes the slave to himself and after that to the state. That is what Americans have forgotten today as they have stood idly by and allowed fifth columnists in our colleges, in our schools, in our press, in our government, in our radio contacts, everywhere slowly and insidiously to urge man to revolt against God and become his own master in order the more surely to become the devil's slaves through the false leaders intellectual, economic, social, political, medical which he sets up for his own purposes.

Now, if you want to know what has brought about this mechanized, streamlined, cruel, brutal, slavish, and enslaved, materialistic world today, you have not far to

seek. It has been brought about by propaganda which had told men that by rejecting God and his law that man would become as god and through that propaganda has made man less than the brute. Brutes could not do to each other the insane things that man is doing to man today. The revolt against God has led to man's revolt against man. It is the anti-Christian and anti-God propaganda that has done this thing in every line of human activity, in art and literature, in finance, in economics, by every means of propaganda which man has developed. All this has gone on for years abroad and in America under the fallacious and abused slogans of freedom of speech, academic freedom, freedom of science, freedom of medicine, freedom of sociology and freedom for health. Art for art's sake, and business for business' sake, and one's nation's sovereignty for that nation's sole advantage even though it attack the rights of other nations: As if man were supreme in his activities, as if they there were not a subordination to be maintained! Man has lost an obvious truth that in human life, all is integrated, nothing stands alone. As Aristotle puts it, "Every art and every science had its own proper end but these are for something higher; the end of the science of medicine is health, that of the art of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory; that of domestic economy wealth; if therefore among the aims at which our actions aim there be one which we wish for its

own sake, while we wish all others for the sake of this—it is clear that this one ultimate end must be the good and the supreme good.”

Once you propagandize an ideology such as I have described with regard to man, you leave every individual a prospective slave to the force and power of economic, financial, political dictators. The only thing that balks the totalitarian is religion and its teaching about the dignity of the individual soul and personality. Liberalism destroyed the influence of Catholic Christianity and thus paved the way for totalitarianism. It has and is paving the way for it here in the states. Religion alone balks the dictator and that is the reason why the fight of liberalism on religion prepared the way for the dictator as well as the reason why the dictator must fight religion. Under the influence of liberalism and its sequel the totalitarian and collectivistic state there are popular today just two ideas of man and both lead to the same dead end. There is the *man* of the liberals, conceived as autonomous free from dependence on God or his law or on anything but self, the perverted individualist who has made a wreck of morals, a wreck of a sound economic order, a wreck of a system of sound finance, a wreck of international harmony and good will. Against this view of man and because of it is the collectivistic view, of the Nazi and the Communist. Man is for the state, man is for the race, individ-

ual man has no autonomy. He is a cog in the machinery of man united in the state. Man has no individual end in himself or in God; he is the creature of the state, the slave of the state; the state is the be all and end all here. That doctrine is the dead end of the liberalism which is still being preached from the house tops in this country and which because it divorces men from God makes him first the slave of self and then the slave of state or race. In these theories there is no supreme good except the good of the autonomous man either individual or social. Hence everything was advocated in literature, art, science and medicine which seemed to improve the state of man in himself without any regard to man's dependence on God and God's will.

Against these two ideas of man is the only real idea of man which can save man both from himself and the state, the idea that teaches the dignity of human personality as arising from the fact that man, every individual man, is the son of God and destined for eternal happiness with God. Add to this the dignity of human nature born of the fact that God became man in Christ to elevate human nature to the divinity, that Christ is come that we may have life and have it more abundantly, and that that life is a participation in the Divine nature by grace and fed and nourished by a divine food which is the body of Christ. The supreme good in life therefore is the development of this divine life, “This is eternal

life to know the one true God and Him whom He has sent." Art, literature, science, government, health, medicine are all subordinate or should be to this supreme good. Men rise to the highest peaks of perfection and happiness as they preserve this subordination or sink to the lowest depths of degradation as they reject it. The dignity, happiness and freedom of human nature depends on man, individual and social, preserving this subordination of all his activities to the supreme good. The evidence for all this lies about us in the pathetic condition of the world because of an attempt to break that subordination of man to his supreme good which is God through Christ. The practical effects of the doctrines of the atheistic, autonomous man, the man of license, have made progress in American medicine and that progress is gaining progressive momentum.

Here then is our dream of the function in American medicine of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. We are organized to keep before our own eyes the truth that will make us free, that medicine is not a final end in itself, that it can be used for the good of man; and even under its slogan health can be used for his temporal and eternal perdition. Medicine needs a direction of a sound moral code as well as economics and politics need it. It is our privilege to point out to our fellow physicians this eternal verity, that medicine is for man, the whole man, not only his body, and that

the whole man is for God, and that when medicine or medical practitioners claim that they are autonomous, not dependent upon God in their aims and purposes, this in the long run is doing not only an injury to man but also to medicine and preparing the way for medicine's enslavement to political rulers. Medicine must hold fast to the doctrine that man and medicine are dependent upon God if medicine itself is to survive free and independent. Take God out of medicine, let medicine defy the law of God, let medicine substitute, under propaganda, license for the liberty which is its own and its dignity under God, let medicine give itself up to the practices to which it is urged because it can do them, birth control, euthanasia, sterilization, therapeutic abortion, and medicine will become the slave of the collectivistic state, as property and economic processes and the whole citizenry have become abroad and are likely to become here.

This means that for the love of medicine, lest she become a harlot in the hands of the fifth columnists within her ranks, who would debauch her and divorce her from God, for the love of mankind which looks upon the forbidden fruits as fair to behold but which will bring death, for the love of God whose truth alone will make men free, Catholic physicians must organize and organize speedily through Catholic Action to fight vigorously that medicine may follow the Code

of Conduct given to the Jews on Mt. Sinai and to Christians through Christ, elevated by His teaching on the mount. That is the dream and vision of those who

are working for the establishment and the federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds throughout the United States. Let us make this dream come true.

## REPORT OF THE CONVENTION

### FEDERATION OF THE CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS' GUILDS

New York, June 12, 1940

The meeting of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds convened in the Catholic Club, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, Wednesday morning, June 12, 1940, at eleven o'clock, Dr. Thomas M. Brennan, Brooklyn, New York, President of the Federation, presiding.

**PRESIDENT BRENNAN:** Father COX, will you open the meeting?

**REVEREND IGNATIUS W. COX:** Direct, O Lord, all our actions by Thy Holy inspirations and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance so that every prayer and action of ours may begin from Thee, and through Thee be happily ended. Amen!

**PRESIDENT BRENNAN:** Since the last session of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds we have sustained a serious loss in the death of the President who was elected at that meeting, Dr. Joseph A. Dillon. He gave to this organization everything that was in his power, of his ability, of his time and his material aid.

I ask at this time that the members rise for a short space to show respect to his memory.

The membership arose, and

prayers were offered by His Excellency, Archbishop Spellman.

**PRESIDENT BRENNAN:** YOUR EXCELLENCY, Very Reverend Monsignor, Reverend Clergy, Members of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds: At this time we will depart a little from the usual order of business. His Excellency, the Archbishop, has favored us by coming here today. He has been most generous and most gracious toward us. He did not hesitate a moment when we called upon him and asked if we might have Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. He said anything the doctors wanted, he was willing and anxious to do. He has done that very thing.

He graciously said that Mass for us this morning. He is here now to greet us and to give us his approval, his blessing and his encouragement.

I take great pleasure in presenting to you at this time, His Excellency, Archbishop Spellman, of New York.

The membership arose. (Applause.)

**HIS EXCELLENCY, ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS J. SPELLMAN:** Dr. Brennan and Members of the Catholic