INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

"For the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev 1:9

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(Photographed as evidence)

October 24, 1972

President Richard M. Nixon
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Nixon:

You were in Philadelphia, at Independence Hall, last Friday, and so was Congressman John Schmitz of the American Party, who was at a dinner that evening. Here in Philadelphia, the radio station which carries many of our religious and Christian programs has been ordered off the air. A group of liberals in our area, headed by the Greater Philadelphia Council of Churches, which includes the various church groups with which we have had an issue through these years, complained to the Federal Communications Commission against the station. My own church here in Collingswood, the Bible Presbyterian Church, separated from these groups years ago. Here, on the religious level, these other groups have virtual monopoly of all the radio time made available to religion, and no stations in the area were willing to carry our type of programs. Faith Theological Seminary, of which I am the chairman of the Board, purchased WXUR so that these programs could be aired and the public could hear that which they were currently denied. These groups, therefore, then objected, and at the time of the station's renewal they alleged that the station was not keeping the Fairness Doctrine and asked that its license not be renewed. The Boardcast Bureau of the FCC joined them in this request. A hearing was held and an Examiner, provided by the FCC, spent 14 months on the case. His 116-page decision gave the decision to the station.

Then the FCC in a unanimous action headed by Dean Birch, whom you had earlier appointed, reversed the entire decision. The station then appealed to the District Court, which on the 25th of September sustained the FCC. Already our religious groups have spent more than $200,000 on the case, and we have been seeking to raise the funds necessary to get the case on up to the Supreme Court. It has been a very difficult task, but our people do love to hear the Gospel and have made tremendous sacrifices.

What is so serious, Mr. President, is that the Fairness Doctrine has become a formula whereby a man's opponents in the religious field can make accusations against him before the Federal Communications Commission, get the station involved in all manner of litigation, which no station of a small nature can afford. The result is that in order to stay clear of the Federal Communications Commission, stations simply will not carry 'objectionable' programs. This is a form of repression and suppression of religion and speech. The FCC, to which Bureau you appoint members, makes these regulations,administers them, enforces them, becomes the prosecutor and the judge, and we find ourselves under the rule of men and not the rule of law.

The recent decision in the Circuit Court makes it clear that every three years the station will have to give a full account of its observing of what is called the Fairness Doctrine; and also that in the matter of questions of a controversial nature there has to be balanced programming. And since the programs that WXUR has been carrying of a religious nature are now by the Court included in the area of controversial questions of public importance, contrary programs have to be carried, and that free, so there will be very few religious programs left on the air from now on. A formula has been devised whereby, through pressures, station managers will simply drop any responsibilities in areas where there may be questions or troubles with the Federal Communications Commission. This situation already exists.

Last Friday night, Congressman Schmitz electrified his audience when he announced that, if he were President, he would see that religious programs, the Christian Gospel, would not be eliminated from the air in the United States, and that WXUR would remain on the air. The audience responded with an electric enthusiasm. These religious questions go very deep. It is my view, Mr. President, that when a religious minority is suffering repression and the Government is responsible for these restrictions of speech, that the first man in the country who should note it, rebuke it, and promise remedy for it should be our First Citizen, the President. Already I can tell you that there are people who were intending to vote for you just to keep McGovern from being elected but they are switching to Schmitz. I call upon you to make some statement before Election Day. The Fairness Doctrine is so complicated, so involved, with so many subjective and unknown factors, that it is impossible for radio station operators to know what the FCC will do, or what may be the mind of the FCC. Here is a case where their own Examiner, after 14 months, gave the decision to the station, yet the FCC unanimously reversed it. This difference was within the FCC itself. The Examiner turned out to be in favor of the station; the Broadcast Bureau was a prosecutor of the station; and the FCC itself reversed it all. The consequences are that religion is being restricted and suppressed, freedom of speech is being denied. I am enclosing the last three issues of our own paper, which give more of the details as they have been reported to our people.

You have our earnest prayers. The burdens you bear are more than any human can stand. But I do appeal to you as our President to make a clear and plain statement to the whole country. Our Christian people are sacrificing. Many of them have been weeping. They do not want to see the Gospel put off the air and programs which they love to hear denied them because there are elements in the community that do not like them and have an instrument which they can use to silence a station.

Very truly yours,

Carl McIntire

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