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Certificate from National Association of Evangelicals

Costituzione e Regolamente dell' Assemblea Generale delle Chiese Evangeliche Cristiane Pentecostali Degli Stati Uniti d' America e Dell' Estero

Affidavit of Rev. J. Roswell Flower, Secretary of the General Council of the Assemblies of God

"Il Faro"

"La Voce nel Deserto"

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

IN ITALY

August, 1946

Dr. Frank B. Gigliotti
La Mesa, California

C O P Y

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August 27, 1946

Hon. Alberto Tarchiani
Italian Embassy
Washington D. C.

My dear Ambassador Tarchiani:

Having taken the appropriate time to gather the information which you requested of me in connection with the Pentecostal movement and its workings in the United States and how it functions, I now have sufficient material to hand over to you for transmittal to the Italian government.

You will remember that I called your attention at the very beginning of our discussion on this matter of religious liberty for Italy that I am not a Pentecostal, but that I have been for more than twenty-five years a Minister of the Presbyterian Church. My interest in this matter is based purely upon the consideration that, I feel, it will be to the greatest interest of the Italian nation to have absolute freedom of religion and conscience, without any interference whatsoever with the individual's right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

I have been asked by the American Committee for Religious Freedom in Italy of which Dr. Charles W. Fama is National President, by the National Committee of Americans for Religious Emancipation of which United States Senator Olin D. Johnston is President, and by the Pentecostal group headed by the Reverend Dominick Lisciandrello, (this latter group being known as the Evangelical Christian Pentecostal Churches of the United States and Foreign Lands) to take the responsibility for preparing this brief and making proper petitions to the Italian government and to the government of the United States on this matter.

I am giving you this preparatory statement so that you may not be under the misapprehension that I represent one group or another — in reality I am only working with the three above mentioned Committees, receiving no compensation or remuneration for my labors.

Respectfully submitted,

FBG:rm

Frank B. Gigliotti, D.D.

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITALY

In the matter of the statement of the Pentecostal faith in Italy, there may exist the impression that this group is an importation from the United States and that someone is advancing money and material resources for its propagation. Let me state frankly from the beginning that this is not according to fact, as I have gone into this matter from the roots up.

From the information that I am able to gather, the movement seems to have started spontaneously in Italy and the United States at approximately the same time which came about as follows:

Many of the Italian Evangelicals both in the United States and in Italy, feeling very zealous towards God and with the thought that men and women should dedicate and consecrate themselves more fully to lives of service to their fellow men in the spirit of Christian piety and charity, began to have a deep conviction within the established Evangelical churches themselves that there was something of a "do-nothing" attitude on the part of many of the local congregations and they were not receiving the blessing which was due and available to them.

For this reason it seems that in various regions of Italy, including Piedmont, Abruzzi, Rome, Genoa, Naples, Calabria, Sicily and others, there began to rise up leaders, each without knowledge of the others, preaching and teaching a more fully consecrated and victorious life in Christ. People in small congregations in the mountains of the Abruzzi's were having the same experience as people in small congregations in Sicily. They did not know of each other's existence. They had no correspondence or physical contact.

Coincidentally, the same thing was taking place in the United States among the hundreds of Italian Evangelical congregations of the various denominations such as the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, etc., into which thousands of Italians had gone because on the one hand they had been terribly neglected by the Roman Catholic church, and on the other hand the Evangelical churches were the only ones that had shown any interest in their behalf by establishing classes for the teaching of reading and writing and for their social and material betterment. Consequently, when many of these people returned to Italy, they told of the phenomenal manifestation and the spiritual blessings they had received and found that in Italy there had been a similar spiritual regeneration among many of their friends and relatives.

In deliberating on these facts, many Italian Protestant leaders, including myself and Dr. Fama, have come to the conclusion that this is a true and definite manifestation of God, just as he manifested himself in Italy through Peter Waldo in 1170, St. Francis of Assisi in 1227, Savonarola and Giacomo Da Fiore (il profeta Calabrese) and many others down through the centuries.

Now, naturally, as these people came in contact with each other, they shared their religious experiences and found that they had had an overwhelming outpouring of the Holy Spirit which caused a deep, religious emotional manifestation which some of us believed for a long time to be an uncontrolled religious fanaticism, but we have now come to realize and to know and to respect as a definite manifestation of God in and through our people. I have seen people from all social stratas here in the United States, both Italians and Americans, who used to lie and cheat and steal and some who were the most desperate characters turn to the most beautiful, consecrated, serviceable Christian life through their contact and sharing of this experience with the

people of the Pentecostal faith.

My dear Ambassador Tarchiani, as you know, I am pretty much of a hard-headed analyst and because of my training and education and years of experience in dealing with religious and world problems, I have studied this whole picture quite thoroughly before accepting it as a manifestation of God, and now I have come to the very definite conclusion that the people of the Pentecostal groups are acting as a torch, making light for even some of the larger denominations. To quote Bishop Paul Garber of the European Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church and former President of Duke University, "If the large, established Evangelical denominations do not catch the fire of our Pentecostal brethren, it will not be long before they are history and the Pentecostal will be the living church." I would also like to quote the statement made to me by the Honorable Jonathan Daniels, former secretary to President Roosevelt, last November in his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. We had spent a whole evening discussing the Pentecostal movement as it has now grown through the South and Southwest and also throughout the United States which he concluded with these words, "Frank, in my judgment, the Pentecostals are becoming the foremost Evangelicals in the United States in carrying the torch of freedom and courageously taking up where the old established churches have been prone to let down because of their formality and their great wealth."

THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

1. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Pentecostal churches have grown throughout the United States to where they have more than 6,000 churches mostly united under the name of "Assembly of God" and are part of the National Association of Evangelicals. Amongst these there are more than 300 churches and 200 missions where the services are conducted mostly in the Italian language with bi-lingual services for the young people. Some of these Italian churches have as many as 1,000 to 1,500 members.

(see Exhibit 1 - Certificate from National Association of Evangelicals.)

(see Exhibit 2 - Costituzione e Regolamento dell' Assemblea Generale delle Chiese Evangeliche Cristiane Pentecostali Degli Stati Uniti d' America e Dell'Estero.)

(see Exhibit 3 - Affidavit of Rev. J. Roswell Flower, Secretary of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, showing in Paragraph 7 that Rev. Dominick Lisciandrello is a Minister in good standing of this denomination.)

2. The United States Government, in recognizing their importance throughout the war, gave them an assignment of 35 chaplains.

3. There are over 5,106 ordained ministers, 3,406 licentiates and exhorters.

4. This movement has been growing and spreading rapidly and at this time it is impossible to ascertain the actual membership. The only thing we can say on this matter is that they have thousands of growing and progressing churches and missions. I have attended services in large, prosperous churches where there were more than from 1,000 to 2,000 members present.

At the Italian Pentecostal Church in Camden, New Jersey where a

rally was held for Italian relief and which was attended by Baron Quinto Quintieri while in this country and where a large sum of money was raised for relief and tons of clothing promised, Baron Quintieri told me that he estimated over a thousand people being present. All of these were Italians of the Camden, New Jersey area.

5. As to their social classification, the movement originally started with the more humble folk, but today I know a number of former government officials and ministers of the established denominations who have gone into the ministry of the Pentecostal Church. For instance, the Pastor of the Assembly of God Pentecostal Church of Dallas, Texas (i.e., the largest one there) has a tabernacle that holds more than 3,000 people and it is usually filled. This man is a former secret service executive of the United States government of the higher echelon and he is one of the most able and consecrated ministers that I know.

I could go on and enumerate such instances, but I feel that their almost phenomenal growth is more indicative of their importance and again quote Jonathan Daniels in his statement to me by saying he believed that "within the next ten years they (the Pentecostals) would possibly lead in number of the Evangelical churches in the United States." After visiting many of their churches - and they are American, Hungarian, Polish, Swedish, Italian and every nationality - one is impressed by the fact that their meetings are filled with men and women and young people in all walks of life. In these groups there actually is no social caste or line of demarkation. They actually practice Christianity very much on the same basis as the early Apostolic church and in my judgment they do it simply, honestly and industriously.

6. There was a time when they were not given much importance

amongst the Evangelical denominations, but today they are considered one of the most fervent and active of the Evangelical churches of the United States and they are highly respected for their zeal and consecration and their piety by other Evangelicals.

7. Regarding selection and nomination of Pastors, this is done on the same basis upon which it is done in the larger Evangelical denominations in the United States - the Baptists, the Congregationalists and other denominations. The Pastors are selected first as deacons, and after serving as deacons, they serve as elders and then, as elders, they may be ordained by the local congregation exactly in the same form as it is done in the Baptist Church. This ordination is then recognized by the Presbyters that form the various Presbyterys and Regional Jurisdictions in about the same way the Presbyterians of the United States, of Great Britain and Scotland function. (see Exhibit 2)

8. The services are conducted in about the same way in which the early Christian church conducted theirs. They begin with the singing of hymns and then have prayer. They then have testimonies of their religious experiences and this is conducted in the simplest and most sincere of Christian manner. At this time various individuals request prayer for their problems both spiritual and material. This is followed by preaching of the Gospel and the sermon is brought by the ordained Minister, or in his absence, one of the elders of the church. After the sermon there is a time of prayer, the singing of another hymn and the service is concluded with the benediction.

The prayers are pretty much spontaneous on the part of individuals who feel they want to pray audibly and it is to be noted here that during the prayer services many of these people show a religious ardor and fervor which to the person who is not antagonistic will exemplify the Psalmist's exhortation

to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" and will soon make itself manifest that it is truly of God. They are very fervent and ardorous and do cry out to God but not nearly in the way that I have seen the people of Southern Italy cry out at religious manifestations of the Roman Catholic Church. I have never seen them abuse their bodies or lick floors with their tongues or beat their backs with pieces of wooden staves as I have seen the excited people at Roman Catholic services in Italy and in Mexico and in other Latin American countries. They do at times speak in tongues that to the average person who is unwilling to listen, seems rather strange, but as manifested in the early church, it is the fulfillment of the manifestation promised in the Bible, Book of Acts of the Apostles:

Acts 2:1-4 "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 10:44-48 "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. They answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Acts 19:6 "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

You undoubtedly remember that my father-in-law, Dr. Agide Pirazzini, was possibly one of the greatest philologists in America ha ing taught Hebrew, Greek and the Oriental languages at the Bibical Seminary in New York for thirty

years. He told me on more than one occasion he had heard these people actually speaking Aramaic, the language which Jesus spoke and I, personally, believe this to be so after having heard them myself and seen them with my own eyes. I am giving you this lengthy explanation on this subject because as far as I am personally concerned, this was my great stumbling block in understanding the Pentecostal people. I did not believe or could not intellectually conceive how this phenomena was possible; I now believe it with all my heart.

Altar Call

At certain times there is a call to dedication and consecration to a fuller Christian life which is called an "altar call". The members of the congregation, as well as new converts, kneel in prayer at their seats or gather at the altar and pray for individual problems or problems of the congregation or the church as a whole.

Water Baptism

Water baptism is administered to those who have confessed and accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour and as their leader. The water baptism is held to be a seal of external consecration to those who have believed that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and their personal Redeemer. This baptism is performed by immersion.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Pentecostal people, as well as all Evangelical Churches, believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is sent of God as a gift upon those who have fully consecrated their lives to Christ. It is a Heavenly manifestation showing Divine approval and a gift that proceeds from God to those who are true believers in the full teaching of the complete Gospel. The Pentecostal church

teaches that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not poured out on everyone unless specifically sought for or that God, for some particular reason of His own, desires to baptize with this special sign which is used by the recipients as a testimony and as a guide in their walk after Christ. This special benediction is poured out by God, in His wisdom, upon those who are worthy to receive this gift. This is substantiated by the teachings of the Holy Scriptures:

> John 1:33 "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."
>
> John 14:15-18 "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever. Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you."
>
> John 14:25, 26 "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

9. The Italian Pentecostal Church of the United States known as the Evangelical Christian Pentecostal Churches of the United States and Foreign Lands is under the leadership of the Reverend Quirino Grilli, President, Reverend Dominick Lisciandrello, Secretary and Reverend Joseph Beretta, Treasurer. These brethren, together with Reverend Mario DiBello and others, conduct radio programs both on the East and West Coasts over a number of radio stations, every Sunday, out of Albany, N. Y., Syracuse, N. Y., New York City, and on the West Coast from San Diego, California which reaches the Pacific West on a 50,000 watt station. The comments that I have heard from the American and the Italian listeners to these programs has been very, very favorable. They are doing an excellent work with song and worship and education. This has a tremendous cultural value because there are thousands of our people who have no other means

of listening to the Italian language than on this radio program and use this means of furthering their religious, primarily, and also their cultural and social advancement.

10. You will also find that the Italian Pentecostal Church publishes two Periodicals - "Il Faro", published on the East Coast and "La Voce nel Deserto" published on the West Coast.

(see Exhibit 4 (a) - "Il Faro")

(see Exhibit 4 (b) - "La Voce nel Deserto")

Let me go back just one moment and say that I believe very definitely that their physical or psychological manifestations are not the most important points to be considered in this case. Now, as to the objection that the Pentecostals praise God and pray with a loud voice, this was a common practice among early Christians and the disciples themselves as exemplified in the Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 19, verses 37 through 40:

> "And as he was now drawing nigh, even at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen: saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

The important thing is that the people who have become associated with the Pentecostal church of our own people, i.e., the Italo-Americans, have become better citizens. They have become more industrious and many of them ceased to be drunkards and thieves and liars - they have become good fathers and good husbands and good neighbors. they have adopted a personal cleanliness which was not commonly practiced amongst the people of the humbler groups and they have given of themselves to helping others with a piety and a charity that would make many a person humbly proud to be able to follow their example.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

I would like to call to your attention the clause of the United Nations Charter which guarantees religious liberty to all members of the United Nations. The Charter states, in part, that no country shall be admitted to membership in the United Nations unless it guarantees the freedom of religious worship to its nationals and to minority groups living within its borders. (This was written into the United Nations Charter at the instigation of the American Committee for Religious Liberty in Italy.)

You will further note that Part II - Political Clauses, Section I - General Clauses, Article XIV of the Peace Treaty with Italy states very definitely as follows:

> "Italy shall take all measures necessary to secure to all persons under Italian jurisdiction without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and of the fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression, of the press and publication, of religious worship, of political opinion and of public meeting."

This definitely was written to include the Pentecostals and all other religious groups attempting to exercise freedom of conscience, worship and religion in Italy.

I would like to assert here that toleration is not acceptable to us. We do not want the word toleration to appear in the Italian Constitution as it refers to those of the Protestant faith, for toleration signifies that a superior force is condescending to those of minority groups or to others in allowing them certain privileges. It is not privilege or license that we are requesting, but co-equality. Amongst free men there is co-equality and not mere toleration!

The Protestant forces of the United States want to do everything possible to cooperate with the people of Italy, but we shall insist upon the fulfillment on the part of the Italian government of these sections of both

the United Nations Charter and the Peace Treaty. If it becomes necessary, we are ready to use every means at our disposal to bring about its enforcement.

We consider absolute religious freedom definitely one of the cardinal principles for which the second World War was fought as stated specifically in the Atlantic Charter and both its subsequent declarations of Yalta and Potsdam. These guaranteed to the people of Italy and of the world the freedom of religious exercise, the principle which we hold to be the sacred and inalienable right of every human being, i.e., to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience without any interference or coercion on the part of any organized group, be it ecclesiastical or lay.