

----- Through The Years -----

I came across a quote in the Plain Dealer recently that I thought was very profound. It read "The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority." The quote is from Ralph W. Sockman. I decided to try and learn more about this man who authored such a profound quote.

It turns out Rev. Ralph Washington Sockman was a Methodist Episcopal preacher born in Ohio! I also learned that there is much, much more to his life than a single quote. He was born on a farm near Mount Vernon, Ohio on October 1, 1889. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1911. Rev. Sockman also achieved masters and doctorate degrees from Columbia University. He studied for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He married Zellah Endly, the daughter of a Methodist minister, in 1916.

Rev. Sockman became assistant minister at the Madison Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Manhattan (New York City) in 1916. A year later, he became the senior minister. Following World War I, he became an advocate for world peace and opposed excessive military spending. He was against censorship believing that one should learn self control rather than have restraints forced upon the individual. A new Methodist Episcopal church in New York, Christ Church, was built in 1931 at the northwest corner of Park Avenue and 60th street. Rev. Sockman became the senior pastor of this new church after the Madison Avenue church was closed. He continued in this role until 1961.

He was best known and gained prominence as the featured speaker on the NBC radio program National Radio Pulpit which ran from 1928-1962. Time magazine in 1946 called him the number one Protestant radio pastor in the U. S. based upon fan mail (he received 4,000 letters per week). In 1961, Time said he was "generally acknowledged as the best Protestant preacher in the U. S.". Rev. Sockman wrote many books including: Live for Tomorrow, Date with Destiny; A Preamble to Christian Culture and How to Believe, Answering the Questions that Challenge Man's Faith. Two other of his quotes are: "The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder" and "Our growth depends not on how many experiences we devour, but how many we digest".

Rev. Sockman died on August 29, 1970. He leaves behind a powerful legacy of Christian thought and strong faith. Generations of the faithful heard him both in church and on the radio. He impacted the lives of many, and through his writings continues to today.

Do you have any MUMC history you would like to share with the congregation? Please send it to:

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