

BAPTIST FEATURES

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Note to editors: The following Baptist Press feature is distributed because of the keen interest in religion and the Presidency. A Baptist minister is running for the Presidency. Gary Farley, director of public relations at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, offers some information on the candidate, his views, and the platform of his party.--Baptist Press.

Baptist Minister Heads
Prohibitionist Slate

By Gary Farley

KANSAS CITY, Mo.--(BP)--Rutherford L. Decker, the Prohibition Party's nominee, has no delusions about being the next President of the United States. He realizes that to most Americans "the real issues of the campaign" lie only with the two major parties.

His avowed purpose, therefore, is to show that "hypocrisy, insincerity, and immorality which typify this generation can lead only to our ultimate ruin."

Many Americans, if they have ever heard of the Prohibition Party, conceive of its being comprised of "hatchet-carrying busy bodies.". This description does not fit Decker.

For the past 17 years pastor of Temple Baptist Church, he has had a self-giving ministry among the underprivileged of Kansas City. A tall, erect man of 55 years, Decker makes a striking appearance with a neatly-kept mustache, "Teddy Roosevelt" glasses pinched upon his nose, and rich brown hair, greying at the temples. His life has been one of dedicated opposition to sin.

Following a recent appearance in the chapel services at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Decker was asked these three questions of vital importance in this election year.

1. "Why are you, a minister of the gospel, campaigning for the Presidency under the Prohibition Party's standard?"

"The fact that I am a minister, a Baptist minister, is simply incidental. I am running as a private citizen. I represent neither Baptists nor Protestants. I do hope, however, to represent those sincere Christians who are vitally concerned about the moral decay of our nation.

"I was nominated Sept. 1, 1959, by the Prohibition Party at its regular convention held at Winona Lake, Ind., because I have been a life long Prohibitionist. The high calibre of the Party's leadership, and its determined efforts to make our national government Christian, led me, after much prayer, to accept the nomination."

2. "Would you care to make a statement on the much-publicized Roman Catholic in the Presidency question?"

"Yes, indeed. The issue involved in a Roman Catholic's election to high public office in America is simply whether or not he can be trusted to be loyal to the American ideal of freedom of worship. His church teaches him that it is the only true church, and that his loyalty to God and truth can be adequately expressed solely in his loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church.

"With such a background, will he stand for religious freedom, separation of church and state, and recognition of all religions and churches as having equal rights in a free society?"

"Senator John F. Kennedy has publicly avowed that his religion will not influence his decisions as president. If this is true, his position as a candidate should be greatly weakened in the eyes of sincere Christians. Can America risk its future in the hands of a President whose religion has no influence on his life?"

"I feel that if the American people will use Kennedy's attempt to win the nomination as the occasion for a frank and factual discussion of the issues involved, it could do nothing but good. The actual differences between the authoritarian type of Christianity of which Romanism is the supreme example and the voluntary type of which the Baptists are at least a typical example would be graphically brought out by such a public discussion as we ought to have."