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DORRIS, C. E. W.
LETTERS
1942-1945

(THS)

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INTRODUCTION

This finding aid is for letters written by C. E. W. Dorris, spanning the years 1942-1945. The letters were written to fellow preachers telling them his opinion of what their “Christian duty” should be during World War II.

Charles Elias Webb Dorris was born April 17, 1871, in Portland, Tennessee. His wife Lula Kerr and he had one child. Dorris was baptized in 1889 and began preaching near Portland in 1890. He attended the Nashville Bible School, and studied the Bible under David Lipscomb and James A. Harding. He wrote for the Gospel Advocate, did radio work on WLAC, Nashville, and in Gallatin, Tennessee, and wrote commentaries on Matthew and Mark. Dorris died in 1964 and is interred in Woodlawn Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee.

There are no restrictions on the use of the letters, and copies of the letters may be made for individual or scholarly purposes.

Source: Baxter, B. B., Ed., and Young, M. Norvel. *Preachers of Today*, The Christian Press, Tennessee, ca. 1952, p. 102.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The C. E. W. Dorris Letters, 1942-1945, consisting of 23 letters, most of which have multiple pages, were written to fellow preachers during World War II in response to articles that were published in the *Bible Banner*, a Christian newsletter. The letters are sometimes humorous and sometimes redundant.

They are mostly about Dorris' view of what "Christina duty" during World War II meant. While other preachers seemed to encourage men to volunteer for the armed services, Dorris was of the opinion that Christians should stay out of the fight. He directly called these preachers hypocrites, because while they encouraged others to serve, they did not volunteer to serve as chaplains, although the need was great. Dorris did not believe that Christians should fight in the war because no where in the Bible did it state that it was okay to kill men and leave widows and orphans. Dorris believed this so strongly that he offered the others preachers a sum of money, that increased from letter to letter, if they could find a scripture in the Bible that said it was okay to enter into "carnal warfare." Evidently, no preacher took him up on his offer. Dorris also attacked the preachers' morals. For example, two of the preachers' young boys died from neglect, and Dorris spoke often about these boys in his letters. The preachers fought back by publishing excerpts of Dorris' letters in the *Bible Banner*, and they called Dorris' letters "abusive and vulgar." (See letter, April 17, 1943, Folder 3.)

A document titled "Preface" in the folder of letters for 1942, seems to indicate that Dorris was intending to later publish the letters, or their contents, as a booklet. A search of the OCLC database could not locate a publication by Dorris that would seem to indicate that they were indeed published, or if they were, there may not be any surviving copies.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Preface, n. d.
2. Letters, 1942 (3 letters: Sept. 9, 1942; Oct. 10, 1942; Dec. 19, 1942)
3. Letters, 1943 (8 letters: Jan. 19, 1943; Feb. 24, 1943; Mar. 20, 1943; Apr. 17, 1943; May 29, 1943; Sept. 20, 1943; Nov. 26, 1943; Dec. 15, 1943)
4. Letters, 1944 (8 letters: Feb. 16, 1944; Apr. 7, 1944; Nov. 9, 1944; Nov. 11, 1944; Nov. 16, 1944)
5. Letters, 1945 (4 letters: Jan. 20, 1945; Feb. 22, 1945; Apr. 12, 1945; June 7, 1945)