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A Survey of Opinion Concerning the Teaching of Religion in the Public Schools

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A SURVEY OF OPINION CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF
RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis

Presented to
the Graduate Division
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Jacob Elvin Till, Jr.

June 1956

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PREFACE

The study herein presented has been based upon a long-time interest in two fields, that of religion and education. Having taught in the public schools, in a church college, worked with church youth groups, and being a minister, I have realized more and more how closely related religion and education actually are in their purpose, scope and aim. That purpose may briefly be stated as the endeavor to assist in the development of individuals to the fullest extent of their moral, mental, spiritual and physical potential, in order for them to be the greatest possible asset to God, society and themselves.

Too often these two of the greatest individual influences of mankind have gone their separate ways, and have at times actually worked against each other. Many individuals have faced the problem and have offered solutions. Before a workable answer is found, countless numbers more will tackle the situation.

Is there any way to legally place religion in public school education? Is there any way that the schools and churches, educational experts and religious leaders, can cooperate more fully without damaging the concept of separation of church and state? These are questions still seeking answers and getting plenty of proposed

solutions. However, the very fact that many are studying the problem adds to the fact of its importance.

In this study an effort has been made to look at the historical trend that has led to the divorce of religion and education. I have tried to analyze the problem and to make a survey of the work that has been done in this field. Being a Chaplain in the Air Force, I have been quite an enthusiast of the armed forces Character Guidance program, and firmly convinced that the principles in it should be presented to young people before they reach military age. They should permeate a child's entire public school career. With this in mind, suggestions are made concerning a character guidance program for the public schools. A proposed curriculum has been added in the Appendix.

Appreciation is acknowledged to the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Georgia, and to Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, for the use of their libraries, and to the extension service of the University of Omaha Library, for their aid in securing related books and pamphlets for this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE	1
II. HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND EDUCATION	9
III. THE PUBLIC SCHOOL - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTROVERSY	15
IV. THE RISE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MOVEMENT	22
V. RELIGIOUS VALUES IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT	27
VI. THE CHARACTER GUIDANCE PROGRAM OF THE ARMED FORCES	32
VII. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	37
Various Suggestions Considered	37
Religious Morals and our National Heritage	41
Teacher Qualities	43
Teacher Training Courses	45
Character Guidance Committees	47
The School Guidance Program	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	50
APPENDIX A (Excerpts from Horace Mann)	56
APPENDIX B (A Proposed High School Religious Values Curriculum)	59

with it. Community after community has struggled with its problems. The American Council on Education has appointed a committee to study it. Church and inter-church agencies have spoken out about it. Meanwhile, the situation remains a problem, while tensions mount not only between the Catholics and Protestants, but even more so between religious groups and secularists.

The argument in support of religion in public education is the wide-spread and popular belief that moral behavior requires a religious underpinning, which is the opinion expressed in this thesis.

(Moral education is one of the primary aims of the schools and can be taught apart from religious dogma.)

This is being done in schools across America. Our standards of morals and ethics are religious values. An inquiry into the moral concepts of our nation reveal that their origin was in religion. The tendency in recent years to conceive of democracy in moral as well as political terms causes many to argue that democracy as well as morality must be grounded in conventional religion. As Smith has well said:

Here are two interrelated and fundamental needs of children that schools should meet-- education for character, and, "if democracy is to survive, they must bring up the oncoming generation so that it responds to the moral principles implicit in democracy. But to

undertake this assignment and at the same time to exclude religion from the schools is to engage in an impossible undertaking." Moreover, since moral character is essential for good government, it is a matter of public concern that religion return to the schools.¹

(The United States was not the first nation that faced the problem. Along with many others, England faced the situation and through many battles of words and ideas has succeeded in keeping religious training in the schools. This was somewhat of an easier task in England because of the State Church, yet there was much of the same type of thinking on the problem as found in America.) Mr. Balfour of England, in speaking on the subject, echoes the sentiment of the British leaders who succeeded in insuring religious training in public education. He said:

I hold it to be an evil age, the greatest of all evils, to permit children to be brought up in schools in which no provision was made for religious formation. And I solemnly express, today, my hope that England will never accept the responsibility of public instruction without religion.²

It has been said that the responsibility of religious instruction belongs to the home and to the

¹Payson Smith, Religion and Education (Harvard University Press, 1927), pp. 76-77.

²William C. O'Donnell, Jr., Creed and Curriculum (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1914), p. 27.

church. While this is true, it might also be said that the home is responsible for guiding the growth and education of the child in all fields. But how can parents who acknowledge no God, not even in a simple blessing at meals: who never enter a house of worship except for marriages, funerals or the traditional Easter or Christmas visit, how can such parents impart anything of reverence, inner peace and spiritual truths that are the heritage of Christian America? It was Gaebelain who said, "Let America face the fact that if public education is secularized, it is first of all because parents have become secularized."

...public principle of freedom of conscience and of worship, which forbids the teaching of any particular religious doctrine of Ultimate Reality in public education, applies with like force against the teaching of the anti-religious doctrine of secularism, which denies Ultimate Reality.⁴

In view of the degree to which religion in recent years has been banished from public education the following words from one of the last of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler's reports as President of Columbia University are prophetic:

So far as tax-supported schools are concerned, An odd situation has been permitted to arise. The separation of church and state is fundamental in our American political order, but so far as religious instruction is concerned, this principle has been so far departed from as to put the whole force and influence of the tax-supported school

⁴Ibid.

that can never be attained without religion, and that no community will ever be religious without a religious education.) Both these propositions I regard as eternal and immutable truths. Devoid of religious principles and religious affections, the race can never fall so low but that it may sink still lower; animated and sanctified by them, it can never rise so high but that it may ascend still higher. And is it not at least as presumptuous to expect that mankind will attain to the knowledge of truth without being instructed in truth, and without that general expansion and development of faculty which will enable them to recognize and comprehend truth in any other department of human interest as in the department of religion.⁶

Horace Mann's opinions concerning religion and education are quoted more fully in the Appendix, and have always had great weight in the questions and problems concerning religion and education.

There is no easy solution to the problem but of its tremendous importance no thinking person can deny.

Gaebelein says:

So we come to an issue on which some straight thinking must be done if our country is not to lose its character, to say nothing of its soul. Too long has America been living on the spiritual capital of the past. But even spiritual capital is expendable. And it is a momentous question whether the nation has not already dissipated the priceless heritage bequeathed it by forebears who knew that

⁶ Horace Mann, "Religious Education" (From the Twelfth Annual Report for 1848 of the Secretary of the Board of Education of Mass.)

fear of the Lord which alone is the beginning of wisdom.⁷

⁷Gaebelein, op. cit. pp. 84-85.

religion a place in public education.⁸

It requires only a brief glimpse into the early beginnings of America to remind us that the colonial pioneers and founders of our nation were convinced of the importance of religion in education. For them religion was a major concern and education a means of guarding and promoting it. The saying, "the early schools of America were the children of the church," is very true. The evidence of the strong factor in early American education abounds in early school charters and school laws, and even in constitutional enactments that give religious reasons for educational provisions. As time passed many problems arose, some of which have reached the courts and one of which has been before the United States Supreme Court. That high tribunal, in what became famous as the McCollum Case, in March, 1948, ruled against the released-time plan as conducted at Champaign, Illinois. The plaintiff, Mrs. Vashti McCollum, herself an avowed atheist, had charged that her young son, as the only member of his fourth grade class not participating in religious instruction, was subjected to embarrassing discrimination by the plan. She also charged that the plan violated the state constitution

⁸Ibid., pp. 73-74.

and school code by devoting public funds to sectarian purposes through the use of public school buildings and administrative services of school officials.

The Court's ruling should not be interpreted as meaning more than it says. Actually it does not invalidate released-time religious instruction in general, for it applies only when released-time instruction is conducted under conditions similar to those in the Champaign program. These included use of public-school buildings for religious instruction, close integration of public school administration with the church councils' program of religious instruction, and use of compulsory public school time for voluntary religious instruction.

The McCollum Case is one of the latest events in the battle over religion in public schools. From Hartshorne, Stearns and Uphaus' study of the question there seems to be a marked trend toward religious instruction in tax-supported schools of higher education. Most of the controversy over religion in schools has only been in the grammar and secondary schools. The above mentioned report says:

Turning to the question of growth, there are evidences of remarkable changes in the attention devoted to religion in tax-supported schools, including state universities, teachers' colleges, and municipal colleges. Two studies offer fairly

comparable data. The first, made by Kent and Burrows, for the year 1922-23 included 181 institutions. (Kent and Burrows, "The Undergraduate Courses in Religion at the Tax-supported Colleges and Universities," Bulletin IV of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education.) The second was for the year 1931-32 and included 100 of the 109 publicly controlled colleges listed in the 1931 directory published by the office of Education.

In the number of courses offered there was also a marked change in the nine years. Only about half the tax-supported schools offered work in religion in 1922-23, and they averaged 2.5 courses per institution. By 1931-32, 80 per cent of the institutions of this character offered courses, and these amounted to an average of about 5 per school, or an increase of 100 per cent in nine years.⁹

So, in viewing history, we see the early co-operation between religion and education. In later years there was a great separation between the two. In more recent years, even though rebuffed by court decisions, there has been a swing toward placing instruction in religious values to some extent, in tax-supported institutions as long as the instruction is not of a doctrinal nature.

In thinking of the historical background of religion and education, it might be well to keep in mind a statement of George Washington:

Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that

⁹Ibid. p. 176.

national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.¹⁰

¹⁰ O'Donnell, op. cit., p 27.

CHAPTER III

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTROVERSY

The beginnings of public education in America are directly attributable to the spirit of the Protestant Reformation.¹¹ Throughout the early history of our country the public schools, as well as private and parochial schools, gave full place to religious faith. In the nineteenth century, a gradual secularization of education began to take place. This was not proposed, but incidental; it was not founded in principle, but occasioned by circumstances. It was largely due to the sectarianism of religious organizations. Not infidels or atheists or free thinkers have done most to take religion out of the public schools, but people who spoke in the name of religion. Whenever a group, or even an individual, has chosen to object to some religious element in the program or curriculum of the public schools, that element has forthwith been eliminated, and no other religious element has taken its place. The movement has been almost wholly negative; there has been no coming together of the different religious groups for a positive reconsideration of its total trend and inevitable results.

¹¹Vergilius Ferm, An Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 649.

cluded under the term "sectarian.")

Surveys by Grimshaw and by Smith, McElhinney, and Steele show that there are four main points of view concerning the responsible agency for giving religious instruction:

1. It is appropriate for the state to provide both secular and religious education for all youth. (Held by some Protestants.)

2. All education, both secular and religious lies within the province of the church. (Held by Roman Catholics.)

3. It is the function of the state to provide a secular education for all its youth; the state should not concern itself with religious instruction but should leave this to the home and church to be given or not as these see fit. (Generally held by the Jews.)

4. The State should cooperate with the home and church in furnishing religious instruction. This plan has been growing in popularity as week-day church schools have developed. (Held by many Protestants.)¹³

The ~~third~~ viewpoint which is held by the Jews, seems to be the position which more perfectly fits in with the legal aspects as stated in the Constitution. However, there is a growing belief that it is possible to provide instruction in religious values without the "establishment of religion, or prohibiting of the free exercise thereof." This type of instruction may become sectarian, and violate the principle of the separation of church and state; perhaps this is the reason why there have been a great number of proposals for attaining the goal without violating the spirit of the constitution.

¹³Ibid.

instruction to the churches but would encourage the schools to teach a knowledge of religions.¹⁶

Bishop John Lancaster Spaulding, the Catholic Educator, once wrote:

When a state refuses to use its schools to develop religious virtues, it fatally, though possibly unconsciously and negatively, commits itself to an irreligious and infidel propaganda; since to ignore religious doctrines while striving to develop the intellectual and moral faculties must result in gradual extinction of faith.¹⁷

The most widely accepted view of the Protestants in America is given by the Committee on Religion and Education of the American Council of Religious Education who states that "we must find a way to give due recognition in public education to the place of religion in the culture and in the convictions of our people while at the same time safe-guarding the separation of church and state."¹⁸

The legal status of religious instruction varies from state to state throughout the country. A large majority of states either require or permit the reading of the Bible, but do not allow religious instruction

¹⁶A. B. Moehlman, op. cit.

¹⁷Harry N. Rivlin, Encyclopedia of Modern Education, (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1943), pp. 676-7.

¹⁸American Council on Education, Series I, Reports of Committees and Conferences, Vol. XI, No. 26 (1947) p. 54.

which may be sectarian in nature. Recent trends show that the majority of states now permit schools to cooperate with churches in giving religious instruction during time released from the school day.

In only one state, Kansas, is religious instruction definitely prohibited. Nowhere is religious instruction a part of the regular state curriculum. In one state only, Virginia, is such instruction expressly permitted.¹⁹

The status of Bible reading varies greatly in different states. In 36 out of the 48 states, or in 3 out of 4, there is no law or ruling which prohibits Bible reading in the public schools. In the remaining 12 states it is quite generally known that, where there is not serious local objection, many teachers continue to use the Bible in the schools. It may be stated definitely also that no legislative body in the U. S. has ever plainly shut the Bible out of the public schools.²⁰

Dr. Wilber G. Katz, Professor of Law at the University of Chicago, summarizes the various points of view of religious education in the public schools with three policies. He states:

Some religious leaders have supported a policy of government favorable toward religion

¹⁹W. S. Monroe, op. cit.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 1028-1029.

with impartiality among religious groups. Others have insisted upon strict separation of church and state. A third policy is that of government neutrality. Under this view the sole function of government with respect to religion is that of protecting its freedom. . . . Government neutrality, government insulation and government favor.²¹

Thomas Jefferson, as Rector of the University of Virginia, presented a plan for the establishment of "sectarian schools of divinity on the confines of the University." He wrote that the "want of instruction in the various creeds of religious faith" is a "chasm in a general institution of the useful sciences."²² And he presented his plan as one which would "fill the chasm now existing, on principles which leave inviolate the constitutional freedom of religion."²²

²¹W.G. Katz, "The Freedom to Believe," Atlantic Monthly (October, 1953), p. 66.

²²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MOVEMENT

Religious Education is as old as religion itself. It is a characteristic tendency in mankind to endeavor to extend his most cherished beliefs and acts to others. From generation to generation they are handed down. Firmly convinced in his beliefs he tries to convert his fellow man. Even if he did not consciously teach them to others he would pass them on to those who are closely related with him by the influence which comes by close association.

The emphasis upon teaching was especially manifest in Christianity as Jesus Christ was known as the "Master Teacher." In Paul's instruction to Timothy, he gives the real key to the rapid spread of Christianity. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."²⁷

The Christian church has always shown zeal for nurturing its children in the faith as well as for winning adult converts. This concern can be noted in the catechetical instruction of the ancient church, in books and treatises, in liturgy and sermons. It appears in the monastic schools

²⁷II Timothy 2:2

of the middle ages. With the Reformation there came a new interest in and need for Christian education for all the people.

In early America, the church was the primary influence of the community. Early education was centered around the church. With the divergent religious background of European immigrants, friction arose concerning the type of education to be administered to children. As discussions mounted, the breach between religion and education grew greater and greater. Finally religious education was divorced from public school education and relegated to church owned institutions.

Church leaders realizing the religious educational problems, tried to work at adequate solutions. One of the primary answers to the situation was found in the Sunday school. It was the first of the church's present agencies for Christian education to get under way.

While there were earlier attempts at teaching religion on Sunday in connection with regular services of the church, the date of the origin of the Sunday school is usually fixed at 1780. A Christian layman in England, Robert Raikes, who was Printer and Publisher of the "Gloucester Journal" is credited with beginning the first Sunday School. It did not begin as a religious

school but as a means of educating children who could only go to school on Sundays. Raikes became impressed with the sad condition of the children of his native city. They were dirty, ignorant, delinquent and under-privileged. He decided on the method of education as the way of bettering their condition. Many worked during the week and Sundays were their only free day. Their education included reading, writing and the catechism of the Anglican Church.

Raikes' idea was quite different from that of the modern Sunday school. He had in mind a charitable venture for the purpose of reform. For many years it was vigorously opposed by the clergy because it was not under the auspices of the church. Later the church accepted it as one of the primary tools for the religious training of children.

In 1786, six years after Robert Raikes founded the first Sunday School, we hear of the first Sunday School in America. It was organized in the Virginia home of William Elliott, who arranged to have "white boys and girls instructed in the Bible every Sabbath afternoon."²⁴ His Negro slaves were similarly taught at another hour.

²⁴J. D. Murch, Christian Education and the Local Church (Cincinnati, The Standard Publishing Co., 1954), p. 75.

After this beginning, Sunday schools sprang up all over America. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the movement was in full swing. Unions were organized in New York (1816), Boston (1816), Philadelphia (1817), and in 1824 they became the nucleus of the American Sunday School Union. Then individual denominations established their own religious education departments. This phase of the church work, emphasizing Sunday schools in every church and many times beginning Sunday schools in communities where a local church could eventually be started, grew very rapidly.

The Sunday school was later supplemented by vacation Bible schools, Summer Bible school camps, youth training institutes, youth societies in the local churches, and released-time Bible classes.

All of these methods were the result of an effort to provide adequate religious training. The scope of influence of all these methods was necessarily limited because of the number of the unchurched. The Sunday school which is the primary agency of the church for religious education touches comparatively few. Gaebelein says, "It is estimated that three-fourths of American children from five to seventeen are not regular attendants in Sunday school."²⁵

²⁵Gaebelein, op. cit. p. 94

Also the effectiveness of religious education has been limited by the lack of trained teachers which will be dealt with in the next chapter.

In spite of all of these efforts toward spiritual guidance, adequate moral, ethical and spiritual training cannot be achieved without reaching the masses, and at the present time, the only solution to reaching the total population is through the public school system.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS VALUES IN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

There seems to be a wide area of belief concerning the merits of religious instruction in the character building process. Some feel that it is necessary in producing meritorious character, others feel it neither hurts nor helps. Some believe it to be the method of applying knowledge that is learned to be the primary concern instead of the actual religious knowledge acquired.

The main problem of method concerns the guidance of such personal phases of a child's reactions as sentiments and purposes. It is not enough that the pupil should learn "the things" that a Christian ought to know," or in addition become habituated to any given set of acts either of worship or of conduct. Without proper guidance in the transfer of knowledge to practice, desired actions will never result. Within the Christian religion, at least, though not to the same extent in the non-christian faiths, the "heart," which means both sentiment and will, is central. At this point the theory of religious education has much in common with the theory of public education.

It might be interesting to observe some of the opinions and the studies made of the relation of religious

education to character building.

Bartlett concluded that while pupils' knowledge and comprehension of the Bible were enlarged by religious instruction, there was little success in motivating individual conduct by such classes.²⁶

Hightower found that religious knowledge, e.g. of the Bible, does not carry over automatically into improved conduct. There must be guidance in the application of knowledge to practice.²⁷

Franzblau discovered that the acceptance of traditional beliefs and doctrines does not correlate positively with superior traits of character.²⁸

A recent study of religious instruction in Pennsylvania made by Pennsylvania State College indicated that where released-time religious instruction is given it is frequently considered ineffective in terms of desired outcomes by school administrators and religious leaders.²⁹

²⁶E. R. Bartlett, "Measurable Moral and Religious Outcomes of Weekday Religious Instruction," Religious Education (29: 25-34; 1934).

²⁷P. R. Hightower, Biblical Information in Relation to Character and Conduct, Univ. of Iowa Studies, Vol.3, No. 2.1930.

²⁸A. N. Franzblau, "Religious Belief and Character among Jewish Adolescents," Contributions to Education, No. 634, Teachers' College, (1934).

²⁹Pennsylvania State College, Department of Education, Released-Time Week-day Religious Education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1947).

Hook gives the summation of these negative studies concerning the ineffective carry-over of religious teaching to daily actions. He believes this situation could be corrected by "accompanying the instruction with a vast program of reform and reconstruction in the home, the church and the community."³⁰

The studies cited were made concerning religious instruction as it is taught in released-time religious classes and Sunday schools. The results of these studies substantiate the thesis that the present methods are ineffective because of the lack of supervision and teaching by properly trained and qualified personnel. The majority of teaching in religious education is done by volunteers regardless of their training and ability. In a study made by Vietch³¹ concerning the present methods in religious education, ineffectiveness was admitted and the reasons given centered around the above mentioned staff problems. In an oral survey made of a local Sunday School with 28 teachers and an enrollment of 445 pupils, approximately 60% thought they were effective if they kept the children quiet during the class hour. Approximately 70% thought

³⁰Sidney Hook, "Moral Values and/or Religion in our Schools," Progressive Education, 23:256-56 (1946).

³¹Paul H. Vieth, The Church and Christian Education (St. Louis, The Bethany Press, 1947), p. 132.

their primary job was the familiarization of the child with Bible stories. Only about 10% of the teachers were endeavoring to relate Biblical truths to everyday life situations.

All of these studies lend support to the thesis that religious education can only bring adequate results when it is taught by competent personnel. The logical place to find this type personnel will be in the public schools. In addition to teaching, guidance is of utmost importance in the transfer of knowledge to practice.

It would naturally be the same as any phase of the learning process, that knowledge becomes invalid unless actively used. It might be said that ample character building materials are found in religion, but the structure will never be complete unless a builder incorporates those materials into his structure of life. It is one thing to present the material, another thing to assist in the construction. This is where proper guidance in education comes in. The religious and moral teaching is great, but the guidance of the individual is necessary when it comes to the actual everyday building and overcoming of the problems of life. Proper spiritual guidance is a must in a well-rounded life. In a subsequent chapter special attention is given to the subject of spiritual guidance

in education.

Showing how closely related moral values and religion really are, it is stated in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. IV:

. . . A certain degree of independence of religion must be allowed the moral life, since morality draws its material in great part from the manifold relations of human life, which result from the natural, moral, and spiritual nature of the individual, as well as from his relations to his fellowmen and to nature. Nevertheless, theoretical and practical attempts to establish a non-religious morality must be rejected. Here the source of the moral law is sought in external experience, with the result that pleasure is necessarily made the sole motive of conduct. But, since each individual must decide for himself the measure of his pleasure or pain, all objective ethical norms vanish and the moral law loses its essential characteristic of unconditional validity.³²

Hence, it must be concluded, that while religion does not build character itself, the application of Christian principles will build character and any degree of attainment to the type of character that Americans have set as ideal will be found as Christian principles whether credit is actually given to it or not.

³²The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. IV, p. 185.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHARACTER GUIDANCE PROGRAM OF THE ARMED FORCES

It has been argued that religion in public schools violates the American principle of separation of church and state. In legal cases previously cited this supposition has seemingly been substantiated. However, the armed forces of the nation are in the same category as that of the public schools when it comes to tax-supported institutions.

All branches of the armed forces have Character Guidance programs, many points of which could successfully be inaugurated into the public school system. The Army and the Navy have similar programs to that of the Air Force, however, since being more familiar with the latter, its functions shall primarily be dealt with in the further part of this chapter.

For many years the military was blamed for "bad influence" on boys. Many parents feared their sons going into the armed forces, thinking they might "be led astray." This sentiment was recently expressed in California when Chaplain (Colonel) William Clasby, from the Inspector General's Office of the Air Force, met with a group of school officials and parents. Chaplain Clasby made the statement to the group that the military did not

do very much to change a person one way or the other, that they were what they were trained to be at home and at school.

Even though the primary training of individuals is accomplished before they reach military age, the leaders of the Armed Forces recognize their responsibility in providing moral and mental training as well as technical training. In an age of machinery and highly technical, expensive machinery, the necessity for having well-rounded individuals, mentally, physically and spiritually, becomes even greater. The operation which seeks to accomplish this endeavor is called, "the Character Guidance Program."

In Air Force Regulation 35-31, it states:

Both spiritual and material factors are important in developing character. Character Guidance, then must include a wide variety of specific programs that interest, inspire, and help Air Force personnel and their families.³³

Typical subject areas of the Character Guidance program include leadership, religious opportunities, off-duty activities, personal counseling, disciplinary policy, job satisfaction, internal information, character guidance, integration into community life, health and safety education, AWOL prevention, off-duty education, dependents' welfare, dependents' youth activities and improvement of the

³³Department of the Air Force Regulation, 35-31, par. 5.

physical surroundings.

One of the most active parts of this program is the Character Guidance lectures. Both officers and enlisted personnel are required to attend one lecture per month. These lectures are given by base chaplains and supervised by staff chaplains in all echelons of command. The subjects change each month and are supposed to be the same Air Force wide. The individual chaplain prepares a lecture, using his own ideas but around a given theme, the outline of which is prepared by a central committee from the Chief of Chaplains' Office in Washington. The chaplain giving the lecture may use the straight lecture method or employ any number of teaching devices, such as audio-visual aids.

In addition to these methods of character training, personal interest in each other is encouraged. Personnel are given the opportunity to counsel men working under them in various life situations. This is one of the vital aspects of the program of "on the job training."

In the Department of the Air Force Pamphlet, Series 165-1, which gives Character Guidance discussion topics, it is stated:

Although these (Character Guidance) programs differ in detail from service to service, they have one common purpose. That purpose is to instill into

all the men and women of our armed forces, leaders and led alike, a sense of individual moral responsibility. To achieve this purpose, the character development programs stress directly and indirectly through every available means, the moral principles that sustain the philosophy of American freedom, particularly as it is set forth in the opening paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. That philosophy regards man as a creature of God. As such, each individual in the armed services is accountable and responsible to his Creator for the way he performs his civic and his military duty, for the maintenance of his own and the Nation's honor, and for the quality of the service he renders to his country as a member of the honorable profession of arms.³⁴

Topics that are given are centered around "Duty, Honor and Country," with an underlying theme of our obligations and duties to God. Typical subjects are "Self Discipline," "Worship in Life," "Our Moral Defenses," "What I Owe Myself," and many others.

Through participants understanding the program and the necessity of refraining from doctrinal issues, the program has been rated by commanders and inspectors as highly successful in helping to achieve better morale and prevention of court martials, AWOL rates and immorality rates.

It is also interesting to note that even as varied religious backgrounds as is found in the armed forces,

³⁴Department of the Air Force Pamphlet, No. 165-1 Series, Character Guidance Discussion Topics (1951) p. iii.

leaders of all faiths are enthusiastically behind the Character Guidance Program. This fact seems quite significant in a study of the possibilities of setting up a similar program in the public schools. The elements are the same, namely, tax-supported institutions with individuals from varied religious backgrounds but the advantage of teaching them when they are more easily trained.

CHAPTER VII

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study of religious values in the public school curriculum, there appears to be little agreement with respect to the place of religious instruction in the education of children in the public schools.

I. VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS CONSIDERED

Doughton expresses a supersectarian point of view to which many others subscribe. He would provide a type of religious instruction that transcends sectarian tenets and issues which have no place in the program of the public schools.

This we can do through what is in essence a religious interpretation of the universe and of man's place within it, one that is consistent with modern science and the best historic, vital religion.³⁵

He further suggests that we should encourage our youth to believe and confess that the glory and wisdom and power manifested in the laboratory, the observatory, the classroom and concert hall are really the glory and wis-

³⁵ Isaac Doughton, Religion for Public Education (Pennsylvania State College, 1947.)

dom and power of God. He calls cowardly the fear of secularists and sectarians who insist that for God we substitute "Nature" and that we write it with a capital "N". It can't be overlooked that this recommendation holds merit and deserves repetition.

William Charles O'Donnell gives the following idea concerning religious materials for classroom use:

It might at least be possible to conceive of a series of acceptable text-books and supplementary readers adapted to various grades dealing with the following subjects under appropriate titles:

1. Belief in an unseen God as a fact in human history.
2. Rational grounds for the acceptance of a belief in God.
3. Personal obligations and social benefits arising from this belief.

This will outline a general course in Religion, Ethics, Morals, Behavior, Character, Conduct, or whatever other words may be chosen to fit the case. Such a course without offending any particular race or creed would deal with the fundamentals of individual happiness, racial progress, social reconstruction, and human uplift.³⁶

O'Donnell feels that in this way it might be possible to train a generation away from the misconception of religion as a matter of the Sunday Schools, to be neglected or subordinated on six days of the week, and toward the proper conception of religion as a mighty, over-operating factor in that superb process of which the schools are the

³⁶ O'Donnell, op. cit., pp. 116-117

exponents - the preparation of the individual for his supreme mission upon earth, namely, the construction of a noble character expressing itself in terms of a useful life.

Hartshorne, Sterns, and Uphaus give the thesis that teachers of the Bible may make their work the occasion for stressing the development of religious personality in our world, the import of the Christian religion for international relations, and the value of knowing the religions of other peoples.³⁷

Professor H. H. Horne of New York University, thought he saw in the religious teacher the solution of the problem of religious instruction. This is how he put it:

The gist of the argument may be stated thus: religious teaching in state schools usually ends in secularizing religion; the religious teacher in state schools would tend to make all things sacredWhere life thus gives life the religious touch, it will not be necessary that lips teach the religious truth.³⁸

The present policy in most states of banning religion from public school activity has a tendency to ostracize

³⁷Gaebelein, op. cit., p. 175.

³⁸H. H. Horne, Psychological Principles of Education (New York, New York University, 1906), p. 387.

good manners, and kindness to animals are also subjects to be met with in curricula.³⁹

This has been one direction in which the moral training of students has advanced. However, it is found too infrequently today. There are still frontiers to be conquered in this great realm of education.

The qualities listed above are in essence, some of the many religious truths and values. Religion is not merely doctrinal beliefs, it is at its best a way of life and the Christian concept embodying the above mentioned attributes, together with many others, is a religion at its best, which makes life worth living.

These suggestions which have been considered are only a few of the many from men of education and religion. While all of them have merit, they are only steps in the right direction toward an adequate solution to the problem.

II. RELIGIOUS MORALS AND OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE

Religion and morals are closely related. This part of religion is not objectional in public school education.

³⁹James Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, (New York, The Philosophical Library), p. 220

It is the teaching of controversial religious doctrine that raises protests.

Too many people think of dogma and sectarian controversies as synonymous with religion. This is primarily caused by the large number of denominations and sects in America. When religion is mentioned usually it is discussed with specific conflicting beliefs taking the fore of the conversation, quickly developing into arguments.

Too often it is overlooked or forgotten that there are basic religious truths on which our country was founded. On our coins our national motto, "In God we Trust," is an everyday living monument to our national belief in God. Our great documents of government give due respect to God and continuously the leaders of our Nation have called for days of prayer in the time of crisis. It seems to be a strange paradox that the American people have accepted God in every aspect of life but exclude Him from the schools. Our mores, standard of living, moral code, ethical practices and dealings with our fellowmen are all based upon our religious concepts and beginnings. To endeavor to convey these principles to children and deny them their religious settings is to speak half-truths - something which strikes at the very heart of the educa-

tional principle "to seek for truth." Moreover the success of moral training is very questionable without the undergirding principles of religion and the obligations to a Supreme Being.

The research trying to determine the effect of religious teaching upon the moral actions and character of individuals does not evaluate the carry over of application to knowledge. Educational training does not imply success in a particular field, but only when the learned principles are applied. Hence, as is concluded by Willis E. Pratt, Thomas E. Kendig, H. L. Smith and R. S. McElhinney in their study as reported in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, that "there should be a comprehensive study of methods of facilitating the transfer of religious training into improved moral and ethical character."⁴⁰

Religious teaching and moral education may be likened to soap on a dirty boy, it is only effective when applied.

III. TEACHER QUALITIES

In order to train, guide and develop the character of students, moral training of the young must be under-

⁴⁰W. S. Monroe, op. cit.

taken by efficient teachers. Moral education demands therefore, that the teaching profession should be sufficiently respected and remunerated to attract men and women of character and ability, and that prospective teachers should be thoroughly prepared in training colleges and otherwise. This preparation should include special training and teaching in morals, in order that teachers should be familiar with the meaning and the task of moral education.

Just as every teacher is at all times expected to watch over the pronunciation of his pupils, and to make sure that they express themselves clearly, intelligently, fluently, and concisely, so the ethical purpose of the school demands that at least the following moral qualities be kept constantly and consciously in view by the teachers: courtesy, love of truth, broad-mindedness, strenuousness, courage, frugality, orderliness, kindness, uprightness, and simplicity of living.

It might be further argued that ethics should not be treated as a special subject, but should permeate the whole of education. To this the reply is that these two means are non-exclusive. Just as the teacher in every class promotes the physical education of the children by insisting on proper postures and movements, and by touch-

ligious training, usually offer courses on religion. Especially is this found in teacher training institutions. However, instead of training teachers in the moral values of religion and techniques of teaching these values to children, usually a course or two are presented in an introduction to the Old or New Testament or some other modern critical approach to religion. Most of these types of courses are negative in nature and concerned more in tearing down preconceived and traditional ideas than with presenting positive values that are tangible and useable. These type of courses are not sufficiently long enough to acquaint the student with more than a mere passing acquaintance with why their long-held concepts are considered not valid and how the Bible came into being. The study of the modern critical analysis of the scriptures usually helps in tearing down the faith of casual religious adherents without offering anything in its place. As a result, no practical good is accomplished by this brief but critical study of religion. There is less to hold on to than before the course is taken. What is really needed is concise clear methods of instruction into the principles and practices of moral and ethical values as found in religion.

V. CHARACTER GUIDANCE COMMITTEES

On a national planning scale, leaders of the major religious faiths could meet with educational leaders and devise courses of study which embrace fundamental religious principles that embody the moral and ethical principles Americans in general uphold. This national committee could be called a Character Guidance Committee for Public School Education, or any other suitable name. The outline of study could be submitted to the various states for their adoption and then to the communities. Then every school system should have character guidance committees, chosen from men of reputable character and leaders of the community, preferably to include among its number men of the various faiths, together with members of the faculty. This committee should meet once a month, survey the elements of the school that contribute to good character and make plans for the implementation of new ideas for character building elements in the school.

The board of education could select qualified men at the recommendation of the character guidance committee to lecture or teach the approved courses.

A semblance of the idea of a committee or a commission for the purpose of examining the courses of study and make recommendations was set forth by Professor

Hollister of the University of Illinois, who once wrote:

There are certain fundamental religious conceptions practically common to all mankind, especially of those types represented in any numbers in our national life. Let a non-sectarian commission carefully enunciate these principles and let them be taught in the schools.⁴²

By adoption the committee system the principles and values that religion advocates can be disseminated and those who would criticize could have a sounding board before the character guidance committees. Not only could these committees be an asset in effectively getting religious values into the public schools, but they could be of inestimable worth in bringing the church, community and school closer together.

VI. THE SCHOOL GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Since the controversy of religion in education will continue to exist for some time to come, the real answer to the struggle between good and evil and the problem of incorporating moral principles into the lives of young people for the immediate future and one of the greatest assets in the final answer to the religious education problem, will be found in the school guidance program.

Many of the problems of youth are spiritual problems.

⁴² Gaebeline, op. cit., pp. 79-80

A guidance specialist should be trained in helping to resolve these problems as well as the academic and vocational problems of the students' life. Teachers should also be trained in furnishing this type of guidance.

Religious morals are the basic materials by which character develops. Many inexperienced builders will need advise in helping to construct their life. If there is a dearth of materials or supervisors of construction, the finished product will not be able to weather the storms of life. Proper guidance at the critical time of need is the real answer to the present situation, and it will insure a stronger America with a more abundant future for the individual American. The acquisition of religious and moral knowledge is decisively needed, but guidance will assist in putting that knowledge into practice.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM THE TWELFTH ANNUAL
REPORT FOR 1848 OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

By

Horace Mann

(Note: The following statements of the great Educator, Horace Mann, are herein appended in substantiation of the opinions expressed in this thesis.)

. . . . Indeed, the whole frame and constitution of the human soul show, that if a man be not a religious being, he is among the most deformed and monstrous of all possible existences. His propensities and passions need the fear of God as a restraint from evil; and his sentiments and affections need the love of God as a condition and preliminary to everything worthy of the name of happiness. Without a capability of knowing and reverencing his Maker and Preserver, his whole nature is a contradiction and a solecism: it is a moral absurdity, as strictly so as a triangle with but two sides, or a circle without a circumference, is a mathematical absurdity. The man, indeed, of whatever denomination or kindred or tongue he may be, who believes that the human race, or any nation,

or any individual in it, can attain to happiness, or avoid misery, without religious principles and religious affections, must be ignorant of the capacities of the human soul, and of the highest attributes in the nature of man.

. . . . The universe, grand, glorious, and beautiful as it is, can be truly enjoyed only through the worship as well as the knowledge of the great Being that created it. Among people where there is no true knowledge of God, the errors, superstitions, and sufferings of a false religion always rush in to fill the vacuum.

There is not a faculty nor a susceptibility in the nature of man, from the lightning-like intuitions that make him akin to the cherubim, or the fire and fervor of affection that assimilate him to seraphic beings, down to the lowest appetites and desires by which he holds brotherhood with beast and reptile and worm, -- there is not one of them all that will ever be governed by its proper law, or enjoy a full measure of the gratification it was adapted to feel, without a knowledge of the true God, without a sense of acting in harmony with his will, and without spontaneous effusions of gratitude for his goodness. Convictions and sentiments such as these can alone supply the vacuity in the soul of

man, and fill with significance and loveliness what would otherwise be a blank and hollow universe.

I here place the argument in favor of a religious education for the young upon the most broad and general grounds, purposely leaving it to every individual to add for himself those auxiliary arguments which may result from his own peculiar views of religious truth. But such is the force of the conviction to which my own mind is brought by these general considerations, that I could not avoid regarding the man who should oppose the religious education of the young as an insane man; and, were it proposed to debate the question between us, I should desire to restore him to his reason before entering upon the discussion. If, suddenly summoned to eternity, I were able to give but one parting word of advice to my own children, or to the children of others; if I were sinking beneath the wave, and had time to utter but one articulate breath; or were wasting away upon the death-bed, and had strength to make but one exhortation more, -- that dying legacy should be, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

*Excerpts taken from Horace Mann's report in 1848 as recorded in Cornerstones of Religious Freedom in America, Edited by Joseph L. Blau (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950) pp. 163 ff.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED HIGH SCHOOL RELIGIOUS VALUES

CURRICULUM

This proposed curriculum is designed to cover the general areas of character building. It is based on a similar plan as that of the Character Guidance program of the armed forces.

In order for a high school curriculum such as this to be effective, it will need the type of foundation inherent in most grammar schools, such as learning to get along with others, sharing with others, fair-play, honesty and truthfulness. Most grammar schools emphasize these virtues in class room activities, play-time supervision, and teacher example.

THE NINTH GRADE

Theme: Knowing Ourselves

Chapter 1: The Development of Character
(a) What is character?
(b) How does character grow?
(c) Character and habit

Chapter 2: Self-Reliance
(a) The roots of self-reliance
(b) The expression of self-reliance
(c) The limits of self-reliance

Chapter 3: What Makes a Man a Man
(a) A wholesome person
(b) Principles to live by
(c) Effort and moral courage

- Chapter 4: The Complete Person
 (a) Your body
 (b) Your soul
- Chapter 5: Self-Discipline
 (a) The technique of self-discipline
 (b) The scope of self-discipline
- Chapter 6: Self-Control
 (a) A man reaps what he sows
 (b) Reasons for self-control
- Chapter 7: The Shaping of Personality
 (a) Looks may deceive
 (b) A jig-saw puzzle and an arch
 (c) Whom shall we serve
- Chapter 8: In Training
 (a) A definition of self-discipline
 (b) As if the future already exists
 (c) What's in it?
 (d) Preparation for success in life
- Chapter 9: A Sense of Humor
 (a) For purposes of self-evaluation
 (b) In dealing with other people
 (c) In the face of danger
- Chapter 10: The Hardest Victory
 (a) The meaning of self-control
 (b) Where self-control is needed
- Chapter 11: Personal Integrity
 (a) The genuine life
 (b) The complete life
 (c) Conclusion

THE TENTH GRADE

Theme: Our Obligations to God and Man

- Chapter 1: Religion in Our Way of Life
 (a) Freedom of religion
 (b) The moral and spiritual climate
 (c) Our religious inheritance

- Chapter 2: Worship in Life
- (a) What is worship?
 - (b) The rule on worship
 - (c) Adoration in worship
 - (d) Worship and our emotional needs
 - (e) Worship and freedom
- Chapter 3: What is Right?
- (a) Uses of right
 - (b) Testing of right
 - (c) Growing in the right
 - (d) Consequences of the right
- Chapter 4: Life, Reputation, and Property
- (a) Life
 - (b) The inalienable right to life
 - (c) Reputation
 - (d) The right to own property
- Chapter 5: As You Would Be Done By
- (a) Our heritage
 - (b) Our practice
 - (c) Our contribution
- Chapter 6: Prejudice
- (a) The meaning of prejudice
 - (b) The sources of prejudice
 - (c) The techniques of prejudice
 - (d) The scope of prejudice
 - (e) The dangers of prejudice
 - (f) The cure of prejudice
- Chapter 7: Above and Beyond
- (a) More than asked
 - (b) Duty has moral foundations
 - (c) Duty calls for sacrifice
 - (d) Duty brings personal satisfaction
 - (e) Beyond the call of duty
- Chapter 8: What is My Best?
- (a) Character is primary
 - (b) A willing heart
 - (c) Effort plus
 - (d) Right direction
 - (e) Handicaps overcome
- Chapter 9: "The Greatest of These"

- (a) What is charity?
- (b) In a group
- (c) Personal charity
- (d) "Three gates"

Chapter 10: Humility

- (a) Right proportions
- (b) Consideration for others
- (c) Dependence upon God
- (d) Great examples of humble men

Chapter 11: My Example

- (a) The source of example
- (b) The influence of example
- (c) Spheres of influence

THE ELEVENTH GRADE

Theme: The Moral Code

Chapter 1: Our Moral Defenses

- (a) The "idea" of communism
- (b) The consequences of communism
- (c) The freedom "idea"
- (d) The consequences of freedom

Chapter 2: Natural Law

- (a) Laws of nature and natural law
- (b) Right as opposed might
- (c) Natural law and nature of man
- (d) Natural rights and moral duty
- (e) Universally binding

Chapter 3: Our Right to the Truth

- (a) Truth is a moral right
- (b) Threats to right of truth
- (c) Defending the right to truth

Chapter 4: Basic Morality

- (a) There are three basic moral rules
- (b) Harmony between persons
- (c) Harmony within persons
- (d) The importance of correct goals

- Chapter 5: Honesty
- (a) Honesty in using words
 - (b) Honesty in keeping one's word
 - (c) Honesty in deed
 - (d) Honesty as a habit
- Chapter 6: Clean Thinking and Living
- (a) Machines and the mind
 - (b) The soil
 - (c) The seed
 - (d) The harvest
- Chapter 7: Sincerity
- (a) Derivation of the word
 - (b) Ingredients of sincerity
 - (c) Sincerity in action
 - (d) Consequences
- Chapter 8: Chastity
- (a) Sex
 - (b) Wrong thinking
 - (c) The answer to loose talk
 - (d) Practical suggestions
- Chapter 9: Clean Speech
- (a) Smut and profanity
 - (b) Cursing and swearing
 - (c) God's name as a front
 - (d) The right use of God's name
- Chapter 10: The Need for Wholesome Thinking
- (a) The shape of thoughts
 - (b) The size of thoughts
 - (c) The color of thoughts
- Chapter 11: A Review of the Moral Code
- (a) What is our moral code?
 - (b) Where did we get our moral code?
 - (c) Why have a moral code?

THE TWELVTH GRADE

Theme: Duty - Honor - Country

- Chapter 1: A Sense of Duty
- (a) The meaning of duty
 - (b) Moral background
 - (c) Duty and sacrifice
 - (d) Duty and hardship
 - (e) Duty and routine
- Chapter 2: Honor
- (a) The significance of honor
 - (b) The ingredients of honor
 - (c) The contribution of honor
- Chapter 3: Our Nation
- (a) The meaning of nation
 - (b) Three types of nations
 - (c) The American nation
 - (d) Our nation's duty to us
 - (e) Our duty to our nation
- Chapter 4: Our Citizenship
- (a) The essence and purpose of state
 - (b) Without the state
 - (c) Government
 - (d) The origin of political authority
 - (e) The rights of citizenship
 - (f) Responsibilities of citizenship
- Chapter 5: Freedom
- (a) The nature of freedom
 - (b) The three faces of freedom
 - (c) The roots of freedom
 - (d) The limits of freedom
- Chapter 6: My Job
- (a) Work is necessary and desirable
 - (b) Work is personal and social
 - (c) Integrity of work
 - (d) Choosing my life's work
- Chapter 7: Our Profession
- (a) Living at the frontier
 - (b) Perpetually pioneering
 - (c) Standing by
 - (d) Protecting the weak
- Chapter 8: Ambition
- (a) The significance of ambition
 - (b) The roots of ambition

- (c) The methods of ambition
- (d) The scope of ambition

Chapter 9: The Concept of Authority

- (a) The significance of authority
- (b) The source of authority
- (c) Scope of authority
- (d) The application of authority

Chapter 10: How Free Am I?

- (a) Limited by law
- (b) Limited by moral principles
- (c) Limited by our own choices
- (d) Limited by life's situations

Chapter 11: "Our Sacred Honor"

- (a) Fledge backed by character
- (b) Honor's three ingredients
- (c) Needed: Men and women of honor