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## *Religious Group Attitudes and Pressure*

THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING Bible reading, and the larger issue of religious education in the public schools, has grown in importance as evidenced by its increased airing in newspapers and popular magazines. The magnitude of the issues has moved the debate outside the arena of religious and educational journals. But though an attempt to crystallize public opinion on one side or the other has been made, it is doubtful that the basic elements have been much clarified by the mass media's increased scrutiny.

In 1952, two Wisconsin newspapers commented editorially on the practice of Bible reading in the public schools. The Milwaukee *Journal* noted that the National Council of Churches of Christ (a Protestant organization) had publicly stated that it hoped to find a constitutional way to promulgate Bible reading in the public schools.<sup>1</sup> The paper felt that "The sincerity of purpose — to make pupils aware of the American 'heritage of faith' — is beyond question. But the thinking is fuzzy." It went on to stress the differences in the various versions of the Bible, and noted the impossibility of choosing one version agreeable to all sects. The editors

felt such practices would result in sectarian controversies and law suits; these would result in pitting faith against faith and intensifying bigotry. The decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court in the Weiss case was applauded for preventing such sectarian conflagrations by prohibiting Bible reading in the schools of Wisconsin.

Nor did the editors share the concern of the Council of Churches that "our culture is in danger of becoming pagan." They pointed out that American churches claimed to have grown to nearly 90,000,000 members in the prior year. This meant that they were gaining members faster than the population was growing, which raised the question:

Aren't those thousands of churches and millions of homes and the religious schools the places to give children a knowledge of religion and an inclination toward its great moral concepts? Is religion wise to seek to lean upon the state as a crutch? What strange parent, himself neglecting the religious education of his children, would nevertheless expect the public school to attend to it?<sup>2</sup>

These sentiments were substantially reiterated by the Madison *Capital Times*<sup>3</sup> which shortly afterward commented upon the Milwaukee *Journal* editorial. As an example of the intensity of feeling generated by the difference in Bible versions, the Madison paper noted the case of a minister in North Carolina who presided over the burning of copies of the new revised version of the Bible which he considered to be heretical. It explained:

The simple and lamentable fact is that there is far more prejudice and bigotry about religious matters than most of us want to admit. If sectarian doctrine is introduced into our schools we run the risk of transmitting the prejudices of adults to our children who fortunately, are comparatively free of it. The differences which divide adults might well become a part of the life of school children and do serious damage to public education.<sup>4</sup>

The conclusion here is that religion is a matter between man and his God. "The lesson of history is that whenever another individual or a state attempts to intervene, you had better watch out. There is going to be trouble."

The churches of the United States are, of course, greatly concerned with furthering the moral education of the young. There is little agreement, however, among the sects, or within the sects for that matter, on how this is to be accomplished. This debate centers mainly around the public schools, and their role in propagating ethical and religious ideals. Churchmen are definitely divided regarding the place of religion in the public schools.

*Life* magazine, in an editorial, gave a rather thorough sketch of the elements present in the contemporary debate.<sup>5</sup> It noted that the Catholic hierarchy's annual statement on religion in America paid special attention to the public schools, and expressed the belief that our materialism had produced a greater danger than materialism itself — secularism. The hierarchy felt the growth of secularism could be traced to the reluctance of the Supreme Court, liberals, and educators to permit religious instruction at public expense.

*Life* reported that the Catholic statement immediately drew a reproof from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which declared that any government aid to church institutions is unconstitutional. "They politely called the Catholics un-American." According to the editorial, two elements are at the core of this dispute. The first is that American Protestants are concerned over some of the extreme pronouncements of the Catholic church, which seems "unable to renounce the goal of a clerical monopoly of all worship and education, even where, as in the United States, most Catholic laymen have no such ambitions." Since the Protestants have adopted sectarian tolerance as an absolute

principle, they are suspicious of any new Catholic proposal whether it is good or not. The second element is more fundamental. "It is the conflict between those who care whether God lives in American life and those who do not."

*Life* is convinced that our founding fathers aimed at a system of church-state cooperation. Then, clearly becoming partisan in the debate, it stated:

This suggestion of a monopoly of truth is what gives non-Catholics ground for reasonable objection. But they register their objection at a different and unreasonable point. The Baptists actually defend secularism and accuse the Catholics (who explicitly deny it) of using the word as a smokescreen with which to kill the public schools! And they duck the much more serious issue that the religious 'neutrality' of the public school has become in fact a form of irreligion.

A great many educators and a number of religious leaders would object to this statement, as will be pointed out later in this chapter.

Finally, the editorial praised an article by Will Herberg,<sup>6</sup> "a religious Jew," for sorting out the issues in this controversy. Herberg felt that the authors of the Constitution did not intend to erect a wall of separation between church and state. He explained that the public schools, like most democratic institutions, are Protestant creations, but they were never intended by their founders to be completely devoid of religious influence. This has resulted from a shaky alliance between the followers of John Dewey (who wished to set up democracy itself as the main purpose of schooling), and Protestant groups who fear the growing power and influence of the Catholic church.

*Life* reported that Herberg thought Protestants surrendered intellectual leadership to nonreligious forces, with

the result that they have been "maneuvered into an unreal, contradictory and panicky position." While the editorial noted some "honorable exceptions" to this charge,<sup>7</sup> it believed that if the present alliance continued, "it threatens to make democracy itself the established religion of the schools, and eventually, of the nation." The editorial concludes by explaining:

The temptation of Protestantism is that when it succeeds in solving a social problem, as it did by creating American democracy and the public school, the solution attracts devotion that belongs to God who sponsored it. The glory of Protestantism is that its problems are the hardest, since they are addressed to innumerable free consciences.<sup>8</sup>

With this general preview of some contemporary attitudes, let us now turn to the views of the major sects. Several points should be noted at the outset: Though a denomination may feel that it is important for schools to impart religious and moral values, this does not necessarily mean that it favors Bible reading and religious exercises within the schools. Also, since many of the sects in the United States are established along congregational lines, the pronouncement of one individual or organization does not, of necessity, imply that this is the official stand for the entire denomination. Even in sects organized along hierachial lines, it cannot always be taken for granted that a statement by a member of the hierarchy or by an important layman reflects official and doctrinaire pronouncements of the policy-formulating body. An attempt has been made here to present representative views of the major sects. In some cases they may be seen to form a consensus while in others a wide diversity exists which may reflect the congregational nature of the group, or a lack of an established policy.

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POSITION ON BIBLE READING

Before getting into a discussion of Roman Catholic views, some mention should be made of Catholic attitudes toward Bible reading in general. Considerable confusion surrounds this point since some Protestants believe Bible reading by Catholic laymen to be frowned upon by the church hierarchy. This is stoutly denied by the Catholics. Space does not permit a full investigation of this problem. But the contention will be presented and some of the more contemporary evidence bearing on it.

Stokes points out that the:

Roman Catholic Church has been cautious about commanding the reading of the Bible by laymen, without authoritative notes giving the Catholic point of view, except when it can be interpreted by a priest or other authorized representative.<sup>9</sup>

He admits, however, that there are many examples of Catholic pupils attending public schools where the King James Version of the Bible is read and where the local priests have raised no objections.

Paul Blanshard, after studying Canon 1399 of the Catholic Church, concludes that, "It is a grave sin for a Catholic under ordinary circumstances knowingly to own or use a Protestant Bible."<sup>10</sup> It might be stressed that this refers only to the Protestant Bible. He goes on to explain that Father Francis W. Connell, Associate Professor of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America, has outlined a whole code for Catholic teachers in public schools in his book *Morals in Politics and Professions*, published in 1946. The Catholic teacher, he writes,

. . . should avoid the Protestant Bible if possible and bring her own Bible to class and read it to the pupils, when custom calls for the reading of the Bible in the public school. When the recitation of the Lord's Prayer is called for, neither the Catholic teacher nor the Catholic pupil should recite the phrase, 'For thine is the Kingdom, etc.' because, 'in practice these words have taken on a Protestant connotation, so their use would constitute an implicit approval of heresy.'<sup>11</sup>

The mere mention of Blanshard's name stimulates the Catholic's olfactory perception so that he detects burning crosses and the resurrection of the *Menace*. Therefore, it is not surprising that James O'Neill, a leading Catholic layman, who has taken up the cudgels against most of Blanshard's conclusions about the Catholic church, should object to the above statements regarding the Bible. O'Neill believes that when Blanshard states " 'Catholics are forbidden to read the Bible,' one should be understood to mean exactly that."<sup>12</sup> He then states:

The truth is that Catholics are taught and urged to read the Bible. The only documentation that Mr. Blanshard offers for his untrue statement is Canon 1399. If anyone will take the trouble to read Canon 1399, he will find that Mr. Blanshard's [statement] will need a good many qualifications put in order to make it even partially true. Canon 1399 is a long and complicated treatment of books, of interest chiefly to the clergy (as is all canon law) and contains nothing to substantiate Mr. Blanshard's criticism. . . .<sup>13</sup>

In the interests of accuracy it should be pointed out that Blanshard referred only to a prohibition against Catholics reading the Protestant Bible. Mr. O'Neill has a tendency to confuse this with a categorical prohibition against reading any of the several versions extant.

### *The Bible's Role in Life*

Other Catholics have followed a more positive approach in discussing the Bible's role in their life. Writing in *Commonweal* several years ago, Alban Baer stressed the importance to the lay Catholic of reading the Scriptures and the Holy Writers.<sup>14</sup> He thought a person should not always distrust his own judgment when he feels one of the pious books is dull. However, prudence and caution should be exercised in arriving at such conclusions. Next to the Holy Scriptures, Baer believed, the most valuable spiritual reading is found in the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, for they aid and guide Catholics in interpreting the scriptures.\* He suggested following St. Augustine's advice, "Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk or discourse; but to weigh and consider." He points out to the laity that they should not be so awestruck by the greatness of these writings that they never read them. For:

To know anything is to love it: to know God's word spoken directly through His inspired writers and indirectly through all whom He, through His church has commissioned and encouraged to speak or write of Him — to know God's word is to love its author.<sup>15</sup>

A 1953 article in *America*, the Jesuit weekly magazine, made a frontal attack upon the contention that Catholics are discouraged by church officials from reading the Bible.<sup>16</sup> It commented on the celebrations marking the publication of the new version of the Catholic Bible in September, 1952. (This was, incidentally, the same month that the newly

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\*Fathers of the Church are those teachers of the first twelve, and especially of the first six, centuries whose teaching had great authority; Doctors of the Church are ecclesiastics noted for the greatness of their learning and the holiness of their lives; often declared Saints by the Church.

revised Protestant Bible issued from the presses.) The Catholic Bible resulted from the work of United States biblical scholars under sponsorship of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, with the approval of the American hierarchy. These celebrations took various forms.

On the school level, the Bible, at least for a week, had a place of honor in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Thousands of assemblies featured 'spelldowns,' pantomimes and playlets. The *Catholic Boy*, *Catholic School Journal*, the *Messengers*, and *Treasure Chest* supplied teachers with 'how to do' materials.

This activity was apparently restricted to Roman Catholic parochial schools. However, the article went on to point out:

Typical of community participation was that of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, who produced two original plays to be presented in 53 grade schools, 11 high schools, and 14 schools of nursing. . . . The Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart, experts in the catechetics field, prepared 8 lessons on the Bible for the more than 3.5 million Catholic pupils in public elementary schools. Public high school students in Hartford and San Francisco had a four week course on the scriptures.

In addition to this, historic and ancient Bibles were displayed in the vestibules of several Catholic churches. All of these are examples of the Catholic Church's endeavors "to keep the Good Book *for*, not *from* the people," *America* explained. It felt that Catholic efforts in 1952 let the United States citizenry know that the Bible is a Catholic Book, and that the "Church which in the past preserved the Bible, gave it to the world and lost whole peoples rather than compromise on its teachings, still honors and cherishes it."

The article concluded: "Unquestionably, love of the Bible and a closer acquaintance with it would be a potent factor in the moral 'revision' our times need."

While these are not necessarily official pronouncements of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, *America* and *Commonweal* are two of the most widely read Catholic periodicals.

### ***The Bible in the Public Schools***

When examining the attitudes of Roman Catholics regarding Bible-reading practices in the public schools, one fact in particular stands out: Most of the litigation seeking to enjoin such exercises has been brought by Catholic and Jewish citizens. They have objected to the use of the King James Version of the Bible in these programs.<sup>17</sup> Professor Howard Beale of the University of Wisconsin has explained that Catholics objected to Bible reading and religious instruction in the public schools, because such programs were a direct reflection of Protestantism.<sup>18</sup> He pointed out that in their fight to exclude the Bible from the schools, the Catholics and Jews were joined in 1870 by a "so called liberal movement." This movement "fanatically attacked all vestiges of religion in American life and tried to exclude from public places not only the Bible, but all reference to deity." In addition to this group the Catholics and Jews picked up support from a group of ministers whose dogmatism had been shaken by the disproving of many tenets which the authoritarian religion of their youth told them must be accepted without question. They concluded that nothing could be gained by forcing religion upon pupils and teachers, for required exercises did not best serve the interests of religion itself.

The dilemma facing the Catholics in regard to their

stand on Bible reading has been expertly summarized by Beale. He explained:

The Catholics were torn between a desire to keep their own children in parochial schools and a concern to free their children and their teachers in the public schools from using the Protestant Bible. They never would admit that they wished religion or the Bible excluded from the schools, for the whole argument in favor of parochial schools was that religion formed a major part of education.

The major objection was, of course, not to Bible reading itself, but the version read, and the person doing the reading. This is an important distinction to keep in mind when encountering some later, seemingly paradoxical, views relating to religious instruction and Bible reading.

The Church tends toward the opinion that the way to impart religious education is through recognized members of the clergy. Religious education by public school teachers would be at best inadequate. It is for this reason, plus its opposition to Protestant influence in the public schools, that the Catholic hierarchy, early in the history of the United States, sought to create parochial schools.

Some of the clearest enunciations of this view came from Bishop John B. Purcell, later archbishop of Cincinnati. In 1837 he objected to Protestant Bibles being placed in the hands of Roman Catholic pupils, and sought provisions that would prohibit teachers from injecting sectarian bias in their instruction. In addition to this, he advocated a program which would permit public school pupils to be instructed by their own pastor once or twice a week.<sup>19</sup>

This attitude of the Roman Catholics, which Purcell had aided in developing, was given expression in the

pastoral letter of the Third Provincial Council of Cincinnati to the laity and clergy in 1861. The arguments against the public schools and reasons for public support of parochial schools are much the same as those heard today. The letter said in part:

As this religious training is not possible in the public schools as at present organized and conducted, our children are necessarily excluded from them, as effectively as they would be by locks and bolts. . . . After paying our due proportion of common taxes for the support of schools which are thus virtually closed against us, we feel constrained to erect others, at enormous expense for the Christian education of our own children. . . . In a country so divided in sentiment as ours is on the subject of Religion, the only system which would be fair and equitable to all, would be that which would make education like religion, and all other important pursuits, *entirely free*; and if taxes are collected from all for its encouragement and support, to apportion the amount of these taxes fairly among the scholars taught, certain branches up to a certain standard, no matter under what religious or other auspices. This system would elicit educational industry and talent by stimulating competition; and we have not a doubt that it would lessen the cost of education, greatly extend its blessings, and render it both sounder and more widely diffused. It would satisfy all classes, and it would render the schools really public and common which they certainly are not at present except in name.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Some Roman Catholic Attitudes Toward Public Schools*

In recent years Catholics have been particularly sensitive to the charge (occasionally heard) that they are opposed to public schools. This has been vehemently denied by high Catholic sources.<sup>21</sup> Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt, Secretary General of the National Catholic Educational Association, undertook to answer the question of how Catholics stand on public education. He pointed out:

- (1) Catholics believe in the public schools! (2) Catholics believe that as citizens, like all other citizens, they have

an obligation to pay taxes for the adequate support of the public schools in their community. (3) Catholics have not nor will not interfere with the justifiable expansion of the public schools in their community. (4) Catholics have a civic duty to take an active interest in the welfare of the public school system.<sup>22</sup>

Stokes asserts that even if the Douay Version was substituted for the King James Version, the Catholics frankly conceded they would not discontinue their efforts to build up parochial schools. "Indeed the Douay version is permitted in some places without substantially altering the church's position."<sup>23</sup> These objections are based on the view that Bible reading alone, if considered from the standpoint of religious instruction, is entirely inadequate.

The magazine *America* summed up these contentions. Additionally, it objected to the weakness of Bible-reading programs because the Bible was read without note or comment. (This is an attempt to avoid the charge that such reading constitutes sectarian instruction.) It pointed out:

No child is taught anything by listening to the reading of a book without note or comment. They [public school teachers] cannot teach religion in that manner with any greater success than they could teach grammar or arithmetic. In fact, the very custom of Bible reading may harm religion. If the Bible is God's work, it should be heard with reverence and a docile heart. If it is merely a human document, containing more or less well authenticated facts of history together with a tribal code of morals, it has no more claim to respect than the works of Herodotus or Confucius, and the attempt to enforce reverence is rank superstition.<sup>24</sup>

Cardinal Gibbon was one Catholic leader who favored Bible reading in the public schools. He believed such exercises had definite advantages, and should receive Catholic support when no other form of religious instruction could

be provided. In a letter addressed to the president of the Chicago Women's Education Union, he explained:

The men and women of our day who are educated in our public schools will, I am sure, be much better themselves, and will also be able to transmit to their children an inheritance of truth, virtue and deep morality, if at school they are brought to a knowledge of Biblical facts and teachings. A judicious selection of Scripture readings; appropriate presentation of the various Scripture incidents, born of reflection on the passages read and scenes presented, cannot but contribute, in my opinion, to the better education of the children in our public schools, and thus exercise a healthy influence on society at large, since the principles of morality and religion will be silently instilled while instruction is imparted in branches of human knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Problems of Secularism***

While many Catholics have been critical of Bible reading in public schools, they have been even more outspoken in their opposition to what they call "secularism" in these schools. There appears to be a consensus among Catholic writers and journals in recent years that the problems of youth could be solved in a great measure by having some type of general religious training in the public schools. What these basic and nonsectarian dogmas are is not made clear.

As early as 1926 an editorial in *America* complained of a lack of character development in the youth.<sup>26</sup> It contended that the church and home did not have control of the children long enough to inculcate in them moral and ethical values. "Further to relegate religious instruction to an hour on Sunday morning, or to assign it to an after-class period, tends to lessen its importance in the mind of the child, and

may even arouse his antagonism."<sup>27</sup> This fact then leads the editors to conclude:

Since the home and the Sunday school are insufficient, we must get back the old American traditions of education and restore religion to its place in the schools. The Fathers of the Republic considered that the diffusion of religion and morality among the people was necessary for the continuance of our free institutions. If their acquiescence in the custom of their day, and their language in the Northwest Ordinance and the Farewell Address report them truly, they thought that the school would ever be an active and effective instrument for the teaching of religion and morality. Some eighty years ago these hopes were blasted by the introduction of a secular system whose first father was Julian the Apostate and whose modern apostles were the French and German secularists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The typical American school is the religious school. The secular school is an importation from abroad.

In an earlier editorial, *America* had viewed the growing crime wave in the United States and observed that evidence appears to show that mere training in intellect is not sufficient to raise a law-abiding, God-fearing generation.<sup>28</sup> It explained that when religion is excluded from the school or merely tolerated as a task for leisure moments, the pupil cannot help but conclude that it is not a concern of compelling importance. "The result is . . . that the secular school becomes a fosterer of atheism." From this the conclusion is drawn that "after fifty years of secular school control, about six out of every ten Americans have no connection with any religious creed, and 'we are the most lawless people in the world.'"

In the last few years a rash of articles has issued from Catholic sources attacking the lack of religion in public life and in the tax-supported schools. Some have attacked

the secular nature of the schools.<sup>29</sup> Others discuss the schools.<sup>30</sup> Several of these have been critical of what they believe to be Protestant tolerance of secularism.<sup>31</sup> Bishop Oxnam, the controversial and much publicized Methodist, is singled out for a scorching attack because of his statement that the Catholics do not believe in a separation of church and state.<sup>32</sup> This is denied by an editorial in *Commonweal*, which gives statements by Cardinal Gibbons and Bishop John Carroll to bear out its contention. However, it is explained that Catholics also believe in the sentiments contained in the Northwest Ordinance — particularly those which state, "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good citizenship and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall ever be encouraged." The editors conclude that Bishop Oxnam is cutting off his nose to spite his face. For if a complete separation of church and state were instituted in the United States, it would prohibit Protestant influences in the public schools as well as Catholic.

#### ***Roman Catholic Reactions to the McCollum Case***

The Supreme Court of the United States has come in for its share of criticism by Catholics, particularly because of its decision in the McCollum case, which, many Catholics felt, gave secularism a victory in the public schools.<sup>33</sup> The more recent actions of the Court, particularly in the *Doremus* and *Zorach* cases, have been approved by a number of Catholic writers.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly enough, the *Commonweal* even applauded the Court's decision in "The Miracle" case,<sup>35</sup> which disapproved of censorship of motion pictures on the ground of blasphemy.

The majority of these points have been summed up

in the Catholic hierarchy's statement on the condition of religion in America, issued at the conclusion of the Roman Catholic Bishops' annual meeting in New York City, November 15, 1952.<sup>36</sup> Here they explain that religion is our most vital national asset. Not only does man as an individual need religion to "rise above that pessimism, that sense of despair which threatens to engulf the whole of our civilization," but religion is a fundamental need of society as a whole. It is the tie that keeps the family together, and teaches the principles of morals and ethics essential for citizenship. They assert that religious influences have been of great importance in the formation and development of the American tradition. The Bishops are convinced that the founders of this country were deeply conscious of a debt to religion. The long debates over the First Amendment are cited as examples of the deep concern over religion felt by the First Congress. They deny that it was the purpose of these men to eliminate religion's influence on public life. Rather their purpose was "to guarantee to religion its essential freedom."

For these reasons the hierarchy is particularly critical of the growing secularism in the schools, for it ignores the importance of religion in education. The Bishops stress the impossibility of teaching moral and spiritual values divorced from religion, for "without religion, morality becomes simply a matter of individual taste, of public opinion or majority vote." They deny that because they criticize the secular trend of public education they are enemies of public schools. But they point out that since religion is necessary for good citizenship the state should recognize its importance in public education. When the state fails to do this, it is making the task of parents much more difficult.

They were particularly alarmed because some leading educators have criticized nonpublic schools for being divisive. Their statement tartly explained, "Not all differences are divisive, and not all divisions are harmful." They noted that the religious instruction imparted in parochial schools is a "unifying rather than a dividing force." It is for these reasons that the Bishops felt public support should be extended to parochial schools; for secularism has led to materialism, and materialism is closely associated with totalitarianism, and religion is the only effective weapon to counteract this tendency.

Several factors, then, are reasonably clear regarding the attitudes of Roman Catholics toward Bible reading, though there is no single, uniform policy of the hierarchy on the subject. Traditionally they have opposed it because it has usually been associated with Protestant dominance in the public schools. They object first to the fact that the King James Version is the one generally singled out to be read in such programs. Secondly, they have been critical of Bible reading, because they feel public school teachers are not equipped to give instructions on the Bible adequately, and, since the majority of such readings must be done without comment, Catholics feel the effectiveness of the exercises are destroyed. They would appear to prefer a system of tax-supported parochial schools, where religion can be taught by religious leaders of the pupil's denomination. This would provide for instruction in religious ideals and ethical values without offending the religious sensibilities of pupils belonging to different sects. Through such techniques they would overcome the big drawback to religious instruction in public schools.

## JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARD BIBLE READING

A discussion of Jewish attitudes toward Bible reading is made difficult by the essentially congregational nature of their religion. Thus, while it would be incorrect to speak of a Jewish attitude, an attempt will be made to give representative attitudes of Jewish organizations and influential individuals. In general it may be said that Jews have objected to Bible reading because the King James Version is usually chosen for such exercises. Their arguments are similar to those the Catholics use, and frequently, as noted before, the litigation brought seeking to enjoin such programs is instituted jointly by Jews and Catholics.

An example of such cooperation was reported by the *New York Times* some time ago. Here an application by Roman Catholic and Jewish parents for a permanent injunction to prevent distribution of the King James Version of the New Testament in the Rutherford, New Jersey, public schools was denied by a Superior Court judge.<sup>37</sup> The judge ruled that nobody's constitutional rights would be violated since the pupils' acceptance of the Bibles would be voluntary. The Board of Education had stipulated that Bibles would only be given to students who presented slips of approval signed by the parents or guardians. The article notes that Dr. Joachin Prinz, Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Abraham in Newark, and Dr. Isadore Sheim, former Director of the Commission of Community Interrelations and now Professor of Education at New York University, appeared in court supporting the appeal for the injunction.

Since most of the points raised against Bible reading by non-Protestants have already been discussed at length in

connection with Roman Catholic objections, they will not be listed here in detail because of their essential similarity. Stokes, however, feels that Jews "on the whole have been less active in their opposition to the reading of the King James Version than the Roman Catholics."<sup>38</sup>

### ***General Reactions***

It would appear that Jewish objections to Bible reading in the schools are based on two points. The first is their desire to keep church and state separate, and they feel that Bible reading violates this principle. Secondly, they fear that the Bible's Christological ideas, with which they do not agree, will be taught to their children in the public schools. These sentiments are summed up on pp. 4 ff. in the pamphlet, *Why the Bible Should Not Be Read in the Public Schools*, which was adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis from the report of its Committee on Church and State. Though this was issued in 1922, it would still appear to reflect contemporary Jewish sentiment. The pamphlet states:

No matter which version of the Bible is used, there will always be dissatisfaction. The translation generally used is the King James, or its improved form, the Revised version. But while acceptable to Protestants, this translation is objected to by the Catholics who believe in none but the Douay version. The differences in these two translations reflect some of the vital differences in belief of the faiths that use them. But neither version is altogether acceptable to the Jew. He prefers the Lessar translation with all its imperfections because it is done from a Jewish point of view, and is limited to the Old Testament. While the individual who belongs to no denomination, or is wanting altogether in religious belief, objects to all three versions, on the ground that his views are given absolutely no consideration.

The pamphlet denied that this position is irreligious or unpatriotic and points to a statement of James Madison who said, "Religion is not in the purview of human government. Religion is essentially distinct from government and exempt from its cognizance. A connection between them is injurious to both." It noted there is a great difference between private and public schools, for public schools must insure equal privileges and recognition to all.

Religious instruction of any sort makes such equality difficult or impossible. This prompts the rabbis to state, "Religious exercises in our public schools may please the majority, but they wrong the minority. In plain language they discriminate. . . ." Such exercises might permit teachers to give sectarian instruction, as in the case of a Christian teacher reading selections of specifically Christian truth. Furthermore, since such reading exercises are usually perfunctory and hurried, they hurt rather than help the cause of religious culture.

Rabbi Louis Wolsey has noted how it might be perfectly possible for a teacher to impart sectarian ideals even when reading the Bible without comment to a class. He explained:

I can well understand how the reading of the Bible without oral comment or exposition, but with the more impressive comment of tonal inflections, postures of the body, gesticulations, the deliberate rising and falling of the voice, and the upraising of eyebrows, might easily help the fundamentalist Christian in the teacher's chair to utilize the public school system for the evangelizing of all the children who do not belong to his particular school of religious thought.<sup>39</sup>

### *Jewish Groups' Reactions*

The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith issued a joint memorandum

commenting upon the proposal before the California Legislature seeking to authorize Bible reading in the public schools of California.<sup>40</sup> After studying the text of the bill, the organizations concluded it was "ineptly drafted and, if passed, is likely to cause additional controversy when it will have to be applied and interpreted." They explained that the inclusion of authority in the bill for reading the New Testament makes it objectionable to those who believe only in the Old Testament. They pointed out that the "authorization that the reading be from 'any recognized translation thereof' puts the public school authorities, an arm of the state, in the position of determining which translations of the Bible are 'recognized.' Hence, in a sense the state is required to determine what is and what is not orthodox."<sup>41</sup>

This memorandum notes that merely because the bill states in part that such reading is to be carried on "without sectarian application," sectarian controversies and debates are not likely to be eliminated. The bill also says that the State Department of Education has to "publish a syllabus of graded Bible reading" and to make it "available to all public schools." These organizations wonder what "competence or constitutional authority" the State Department of Education has which will permit such action. The memorandum goes on to state:

Granting unlimited discretion to local school boards to 'supervise all arrangements for Bible reading in their districts' and for 'exemption of pupils from such readings' opens a Pandora's box. In many communities the result will probably be to sharpen competition among religious groups to obtain arrangements which favor their sect. Much harm can also result from careless or improper handling of requests for exemption of pupils from Bible reading and the manner of treating such exemptions in the classroom.

The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League conclude this statement on Bible reading by noting, "The proposed statute highlights the problems raised by any kind of Bible-reading legislation for the public schools."

From conversations with representatives of various Jewish organizations the following views were reflected concerning their attitudes toward religious instruction and Bible reading in the public schools. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations opposes any connection of church and state. It desires complete separation since it considers religion a private matter between man and his God. (Exactly what specific practices were to be included in its conception of "complete separation" was not made clear.) The Rabbinical Council of America (representing the Orthodox position) is also opposed to Bible reading. The Rabbinical Assembly of America (representing the Conservative position) does not consider this problem one it has to face. However, it recommended the view of the New York Board of Rabbis, which also is composed of the Conservative segment. This latter organization has recently adopted a resolution on the subject. It states:

The New York Board of Rabbis has noted the recent attacks made against public education, particularly in its relation to the moral and spiritual training of our youth.

We have often affirmed that religious training is indispensable to a complete education experience, and that, without it, life is devoid of true meaning or worth. We believe, too, that the American democratic system is founded upon ethical and moral concepts derived from the great religions of mankind, the preservation of which is essential to the fullest realization of the American ideal.

We maintain that the teaching of religion is the proper responsibility of the church, synagogue and home and *not*

of the public school. We strongly approve of the inculcation of ethical and moral values by public school teachers in the course of their teaching of all subjects and in all pupil activities. But we deprecate the introduction of studies or exercises that would involve *formal religion* in any way, as a move that must lead inevitably to sectarian strife and to the deprivation of the protection of youthful pupils from seduction from their parental beliefs.

For these reasons we look with strong disapproval on such divisive practices as daily prayer in the public school classrooms and assemblies, released time, and sectarian religious holiday observances. These threaten the non-sectarian character of our public schools. We urge that all possible avenues be explored by church and synagogue as well as civic, school, parent and other community bodies to effectuate the elimination of such programs where they exist.

In 1925, the Commission on Jewish Education, which is composed of some of the leading Reformed rabbis in the United States, unanimously passed a resolution which, while dealing particularly with suggested programs of "released" and "dismissed time" gives some indication of its general view of religious instruction. It explained:

The Commission on Jewish Education endorses the efforts which are being made to procure more time for week-day religious instruction, and we recommend that for such purposes the public schools reduce their time schedule, schools be closed, and that the time thus put at the disposal of the children be used by the parent for their children as they desire.

Furthermore, we are opposed to any form of religious instruction in the American public school system of education or in public buildings, or to any form of classification of children according to their religious affiliation.<sup>42</sup>

In 1947, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (representing the Reformed position) took essentially the

same view in opposing religious instruction in the public schools. But they also objected to any "released time" program. They announced their antagonism to "religious inroads in the public school system," and rededicated themselves to "this struggle for the maintenance of the wall of separation between church and state."<sup>43</sup>

The consistency of the Jewish position was demonstrated when again in 1962, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the National Community Relations Advisory Council took firm positions against "released time" and "shared time" plans for religious studies in the public schools.<sup>44</sup>

In cautioning against the shared time plan for the joint use of parochial and public schools of tax-supported educational facilities, the Reformed Rabbis warned that such a plan would relieve denominational schools of building their own physical education and manual training facilities. Lewis H. Weinstein, President of the National Community Relations Advisory Council, charged that the shared time program would "impair and vitiate our public school system" and that it would be a "tragic betrayal of our public schools."<sup>45</sup>

#### *Lay Group Views*

Leo Pfeffer, an officer of the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress, concluded an investigation of this field by explaining that the disadvantages and dangers far outweigh the benefits.<sup>46</sup> He believes there are four major objections to such practices: the amount of religious education that can possibly be given is negligible; public school authorities often put pressure upon the pupils to attend such courses; occasionally Jewish

children attend Christian classes consistently for fear of disclosing their religious difference; finally, the whole theory of these programs is a threat to the principle of the separation of church and state.

Mr. M. R. Konvitz, onetime Secretary of the American Association of Jewish Education, has also been critical of Bible-reading exercises, since he felt they constitute sectarian instruction. He explained:

There is no such thing as a non-sectarian Bible. The Catholics use the Douay version; the Jews use the Jewish Publications Society's or some other translation of the Old Testament; the Protestants ordinarily use the King James version. These versions vary sharply. . . . To the non-believer, the differences may seem unimportant, but to the adherents of the various faiths the differences are of great significance. The attack on Bible reading, therefore comes not so much from the Godless groups, but from religious groups who justifiably identify Bible reading with Protestantism.<sup>47</sup>

He went on to explain that it was the multiplicity of sects in the United States that led to the principle of church-state separation. He criticized Protestant attempts to dominate the public schools by explaining, "When Protestants argue that the trend today is away from sectarianism toward unity, they mean intra-Protestant sectarianism." This would in effect, "convert the public schools to Protestant parochial schools." He concluded that if the Protestants succeed in capturing the public schools, other religions will withdraw their children from these schools and set up parochial schools. Then, by consolidating their voting powers, they will pass legislation giving public aid to all parochial schools.

This problem has been thoroughly discussed by another well-known Jewish layman. Will Herberg has pointed out that while the public schools are primarily a Protestant

creation, the spirit of the public schools today has changed — it is no longer religious but secular.<sup>48</sup> The schools, in other words, have become neutral in matters of religion. Many people, he noted, believe that this is not a true neutrality but is, in fact, a pro-secularist bias. He felt that the opinions of many churchmen and educators were summed up by President Henry Van Dusen of Union Theological Seminary when he said, "Unless religious instruction can be included in the program of the public school, church leaders will be driven increasingly to the expedient of the church sponsored school."

Religion, Herberg stressed, is always one of the prime objects of public education. Furthermore, he did not think that the "high impregnable wall of separation" between church and state ever existed in the United States. To back this, he cited tax exemptions granted to church groups, chaplains in the armed services as well as in the national legislature, and other examples of indirect governmental aid to religion.

Herberg was deeply concerned over the Jewish position toward religious instruction in the public schools. It was in some ways more secular than the Protestants', he felt. The Jews have frequently objected to any religious programs in the schools, even where a common core of religious precepts has been agreed upon by a great majority of the diverse denominations. He disagreed with the Jewish leaders who have maintained that the place for such exercises is in the home. Since the children spend more time in the schools than in the home, he stated, this institution should also have the responsibility of teaching religious values.

Jewish leaders, he feared, are "out-Blansharding Paul Blanshard" when they hold that American democracy should be made the vehicle of a "common American faith."

The insistence upon the secularization of the public schools by Jewish and Protestant groups, Herberg felt, results from their fear of Roman Catholic domination. As far as the Jews are concerned, he believed, this is a shortsighted view since in the long run "Jewish survival is ultimately conceivable only in religious terms." He went on to stress that "a thoroughly 'de-religionized' society would make Jewish existence impossible." The major reason Jews fear Bible-reading exercises in the public schools is that they believe it will be the Christian Bible that will be read. But Herberg himself believes such programs are ineffectual. He stated, "On the question of teaching religion in the public schools, I have yet to see a plan that seems to me wise or practicable, and perhaps there is none." He concluded with a plea for more understanding and tolerance between the various religious denominations, and a curtailment of the stress placed on fear and hysteria in the discussion of such problems.

### **PROTESTANT ATTITUDES TOWARD BIBLE READING**

Any discussion of Protestant views of a point such as this is extremely difficult because of the great variety of sects involved and the congregational organization of many of these denominations. It would be unwise and misleading to speak of a Protestant view, or a view of one particular sect of Protestants for that matter. Their very individualism makes generalization impossible. We can present characteristic attitudes enunciated by leading individuals and periodicals representing various Protestant groups. The fact that one important clergyman or Protestant organization expresses an opinion on Bible reading should not necessarily be seen as implying that this is the official dogma of the denomination.

Historically, Protestant groups generally have favored Bible-reading programs and have supported actively the introduction of such exercises in the public schools.<sup>49</sup> This was due primarily to the great stress early Protestant denominations in the United States placed on the Bible as a guide for day-to-day living. But while Protestants in general have favored the practice, at least several Protestant sects have been critical of such programs.

Stokes feels that the Universalists, the Unitarians, and occasionally the Lutherans and Baptists are the only large Protestant groups in which opposition to Bible reading has been noted. The Baptists, in particular, are inclined to make a sharp separation between the sacred and secular.<sup>50</sup> But, as we shall see later, individual clergymen and important lay officials of other Protestant congregations have also been critical of Bible-reading programs and religious instruction in the public schools.

A number of years ago, William Thomas Manning, later Bishop of New York, and one of the leading spokesmen for the Episcopal faith in the United States, summed up what might well be the representative attitude of the Protestants who favor Bible-reading exercises. He explained:

It is idle to say that religion and morality can be taught in Sunday schools or by parents at home. A religion once a week is not the religion of Christians; neither can men be formed and trained by talk on a Sunday afternoon. It needs the constant and continuous action and influence of parents and teachers, from infancy to the age of reason and from the age of reason to the riper years of youth to form the mind, heart, conscience, will, that is the character of a nation.<sup>51</sup>

One of the most extreme enunciations along this line was uttered almost a century ago by the Reverend Julius H. Seelye, Pastor of the First Reformed Church in Schenec-

tady, New York, and Professor of Moral and Mental Philosophy at Amherst College. He stated:

We come now to notice the objection from conscience to the use of the Bible in schools. It runs in this way; You may not require that the Bible should be read because the Papist, the Jew, the Mohammedan, the infidel, has conscientious scruples against it. The objection may be very summarily answered. The authority of the state may never be subordinated to the individual conscience.<sup>52</sup>

Deets Pickett, noted for his activities on behalf of the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, explained a point of view apparently held by a number of influential individuals in the Methodist Church.<sup>53</sup> He believed it was impossible to produce a fully rounded American citizen without instruction in the principles of the Bible. He could see no reason why a book that is used in all courts of the land should not be permitted in the schools. He went on to explain:

The Bible should be studied in our public schools as the life, laws, and literature of an ancient people, as we study the life, laws, and literature of Greece and Rome. Where shall we find more inspiring ideals than in the Old Testament from which our own political ideals have been largely derived? Where a commonwealth better worth our study than the Hebraic Commonwealth, which forbade all caste and class distinctions, required that all people should be equal before the law, provided against an ecclesiastical aristocracy by making the priesthood dependent for their subsistence upon the contributions of the people; surrounded the monarchy with carefully framed constitutional safeguards; organized the government in three departments, legislative, executive and judicial. . . . Where shall we find a simpler and more compact statement of the spirit which should animate and the principles which should control organized society than will be found in the Ten Commandments. . . . Where shall we find nobler spiritual ideals. Where characters,

thoroughly human in their complexity, more worthy of discriminating a study than Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah in the Old Testament, and Paul in the New Testament?

Pickett continues by showing the paradoxical policy which permits public school pupils to study the pagan religions of Greece and Rome as well as allowing them to study those which worship power and are grounded on fear, but refuses them the opportunity to study that of the Christians and Jews. Students may study the lives of other great men but are prohibited from studying the life of Him, "whom those who are not His disciples call the greatest of the sons of men." He concludes by stating:

We should all look forward to and work for the day when ecclesiastical prejudices on the one side and the skeptical prejudices on the other give way and the Bible, the most inspiring book of all literature, ancient or modern, is taught in our public schools as the life, literature, and laws of a great people to whom and through whom has come the great moral and spiritual message of the world's redemption.

In 1953, three widely known Lutheran theologians spoke out against "absolute" separation of church and state. This view appears to have some important applications to the subject at hand, and might carry an implied approval of Bible reading. They felt that life cannot be divided into two neatly separated spheres, one ruled by the church into which the state dare not enter, and one ruled by the state where the church may not trespass.<sup>54</sup> Dr. Herman A. Preus of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan of Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and Dr. George W. Forell of Gustavus Adolphus College were the speakers. The schools are affiliated respectively with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Augustana Lutheran Church. They believed that absolute double-standard type spheres of influence will create a double standard of morality and thus, "rob the state of the saving influence of Christian citizens."

#### *Representative Attitudes of Clergymen*

While the very structure of the United Church of Christ does not lend itself to any official pronouncements regarding such practices as Bible reading, one influential and well-known clergyman of this faith looks with favor on such programs. The Reverend Albert W. Swan, Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Madison, Wisconsin, when interviewed, stated that in his opinion some of the general elements of the Bible should be included in at least the elementary public schools. He felt that the aesthetic and literary beauties of this book should be a part of every child's education, and every child should be acquainted with the fundamentals of the Judean-Christian religion.<sup>55</sup>

Customs in different sections of the country vary, he noted, for while such exercises are commonly accepted in the eastern part of the United States, the practice never has become as prevalent in the Middle West. As a result of this, he explained, custom and opinion vary also in the United Church of Christ denomination. Reverend Swan admitted that administration of such programs is difficult since the mere choice of a Bible version denotes sectarianism to some people, but he did not feel such difficulties were insurmountable.

Charles Perrin, Educational Director of Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wisconsin, when interviewed,

stated that the Presbyterian Church had taken no official stand regarding Bible-reading exercises.<sup>56</sup> He explained that while important churchmen in this denomination wished for some way in which the public schools might impart religious and moral values, they take a dim view of the manner in which Bible-reading religious programs are frequently conducted in the public schools where programs of this nature are legal. Teachers who are indifferent or opposed to such exercises may, when directing them, do more harm than good, and actually subvert the beauty and importance of the Bible in the pupil's eyes. This may be accomplished by using apathetic or sarcastic mannerisms, as well as deliberately choosing controversial passages with an eye toward stirring up sectarian debates.

The consensus among leading Presbyterians, according to Mr. Perrin, seems to favor a type of "dismissed" or "released time" program. This would enable students to learn of the Bible's significance and beauty under tutelage of trained personnel who are members of their own faith. This would not only be a more effective program of religious instruction, but would also avoid injuring any student's religious sensibilities, as general programs of Bible reading and religious instruction in the public schools are wont to do.

C. P. Taft, onetime President of the Federated Council of Churches of Christ, has formulated a series of proposals to meet what he conceives to be a lack of religious instruction in the public schools.<sup>57</sup> He suggests, first, that we pick and train teachers with a personal religion. They would be, in effect, a type of nondenominational chaplain. Secondly, he feels the schools should teach all three of the world's

great religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All have as their central dogma the belief in one God. The schools should include in their nonreligious courses a maximum of religious material of a noncontroversial nature. This would be done only after reaching an agreement among the major faiths regarding the subject matter.<sup>58</sup>

He goes on to voice his opposition to parochial schools for their divisive influence, and suggests programs of "dismissed time" religious instruction to meet the religious needs of pupils in the public schools. He concludes by stating that there is a great need for a real process of religious education in the church school, for he believes they have not been successful in imparting the importance and beauty of the scriptures.<sup>59</sup>

In 1949, the meeting of the International Council of Religious Education had as its major problem for discussion the question of religion and the public schools. While it was primarily concerned with the consequences of the McCollum case, some interesting views on religious instruction were also enunciated. The report that emerged from the conference started out by stressing, "Religion and education are inseparably related and any attempt to separate them does violence to both."<sup>60</sup> A hope was expressed that some public educational program could be evolved that would have at its core an emphasis on the belief in God as the source of all spiritual values and material goods. The report concluded by stating that the public schools should teach ". . . the common religious tradition as the only adequate basis for the life of the school and the personal lives of the teachers, students and citizens in a free and responsible democracy."

*The National Council of Churches' Statements*

One of the most important Protestant pronouncements regarding religion and public education was made by the National Council of Churches on December 13, 1952. In a "Letter to the Christian People of America" the National Council warned that unless religion is restored to its rightful place in the social and educational areas of American life, the United States will eventually become a secular state capable of committing "satanic crimes."<sup>61</sup> The Council represents nearly 35,000,000 churchgoers affiliated with thirty Protestant groups and Eastern Orthodox bodies. This message was drafted by the Reverend John A. Mackay, head of the Princeton Theological Seminary. The *New York Times* reports that the message was viewed by many church leaders as similar to the Roman Catholic hierarchy's statement made a month earlier.<sup>62</sup>

A secular state, defined by the "Letter," is one that depreciates religion and exalts irreligion. To prevent this, the Council of Churches suggested that religion play an ever-widening role in education. It was suggested that Christian institutions and teachers should be "challenged to make their contribution toward the formulation of a Christian philosophy of life." Of particular interest to this study was the suggestion that a "reverent reading" of biblical passages in the public schools would go a long way toward deepening the awareness of God in the public schools:

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the Bible in human history and the decisive influence which the popular knowledge of the Book has had on the cultural life of mankind. The decisive difference between religions, as between cultures, is the place which a given religion or culture has accorded the Bible. . . . It is,

moreover, an inspiring fact that the book from which we receive our religious faith is also the chief cultural monument in English letters.

The "Letter" sought a way to make pupils aware of the "heritage of faith upon which the nation was established and which has been the most transforming influence in western culture." The hope was expressed that a constitutional way will be found for the inculcation of the principles of religion either on or off the school precincts. At one point, however, the message took issue with the Roman Catholic Statement of November, 1952. Where the Catholics found the public schools dangerously secularized, this body stated, "It is unfair to say that where religion is not taught in a public school, the school is secular or Godless." It goes on to explain, "The moral and cultural atmosphere in a school and the attitudes, the viewpoints, and the character of the teachers can be religious and exert a religious influence without religion being necessarily taught as a subject." (There are those who might feel that this attitude conflicts with the one mentioned above regarding Bible reading.)

Finally the message emphasized that the state should continue to allow religious bodies freedom to carry on their own schools, but went on to state:

Those who promote parochial schools should accept the responsibility to provide full support for those schools, and not expect to receive subsidies or special privileges from public authorities. . . . The subsidization of education carried on under religious auspices would both violate the principle of separation of church and state and be a devastating blow to the public school system, which must at all costs be maintained.

The solution to the problem, the "Letter" concluded, lies in loyal support of our public schools and increasing their

awareness of God, rather than in state support of parochial schools.

On May 20, 1953, the National Council of Churches issued an official Pronouncement on *Church-State Issues in Religion and Public Education*. A Pronouncement is defined by the National Council of Churches as: "a statement of policy, or an affirmation of conviction formally approved by the General Board or General Assembly. It expresses a substantial preponderance of the General Board opinion that there is a strong weight of ethical, moral, or religious principles in support of the views expressed."

At the outset, the Pronouncement noted with appreciation the organization's general declaration of faith in the public schools. It went on to stress that the home and the school must bear primary responsibility as teachers of religion. It next expressed the conviction that no agency of the state, including the school, "can safely or wisely be entrusted to the task of being a teacher of religion."

Nonetheless, the Pronouncement went on to explain, the public schools have a responsibility with respect to the religious foundations of our national culture. It was emphasized that the nation subsists "under the governance of God and that it is not morally autonomous." The schools, it argued, "can do much in teaching about religion, in adequately affirming that religion has been and is an essential function in our cultural heritage."

The Pronouncement denied that such an approach would violate the separation of church and state, or that it impaired the responsibility of the church and the home in this area. It voiced the belief that as "committed persons teach in or administer the public schools, they can exert religious influence by their character and behavior." Im-

partial observers might conclude that under this approach, the unbelievers' lot would be an unhappy one.

Some eight years later in its Pronouncement on Public Funds for Public Schools issued on February 22, 1962, the National Council of Churches again offered its heartiest endorsement to the nation's public schools. But it went on to say that: "We stand for the right of all parents, all citizens, and all churches to establish and maintain nonpublic schools whose ethos and curriculum differ from that of the community as a whole."

But, as if to compound the confusion, the next paragraph in the Pronouncement noted: "But we believe that to encourage such a general development (i.e., where the public school system has become inimical to the Christian education of children) would be tragic in its results to the American people."

Understanding of the organization's stand on specific programs is not notably enhanced when the Pronouncement concluded:

We do not, however, ask for public funds for elementary or secondary education under church control. If private schools were to be supported in the United States by tax funds, the practical effect would be that the American people would lose their actual control of the use of the taxes paid by all people for the purposes common to the whole society. We therefore do not consider it just or lawful that public funds should be assigned to support the elementary or secondary schools of any church.

The Pronouncement suggested that if public funds are used to support elementary and secondary education, other religious groups would be encouraged to establish parochial schools. If this occurred, it would result in the further fragmentation of general education in the United States, the

Council of Churches felt. And this would gravely weaken or even destroy the public school system in the United States.

Some observers might conclude that if the foregoing is a sample of the consensus of a widely based clerical organization toward programs of religious exercises in the public schools, it is small wonder that the Supreme Court of the United States has shied away from putting its stamp of approval on specific programs involving allegedly religious or moral programs in the public schools.

Nonetheless, the organization went on record in this Pronouncement as opposing governmental grants to non-public schools. It further opposed payment of public funds for the tuition of children attending private or parochial schools, and opposed tax credits and exemptions from school taxes for those parents whose children attended nonpublic schools.

#### **OTHER PROTESTANT VIEWS TOWARD CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS**

In the past there have been, and there are now, influential Protestant clergymen and laymen who disagree with the general Protestant policy which endorses Bible-reading programs. Their views are not necessarily official pronouncements for their Church as a whole, but in most cases are expressions of personal opinions by men with a great deal of prestige in their field. Thus, while such influence is difficult to evaluate, it cannot be ignored.

Ten years after the Civil War, the Reverend Samuel T. Spear, Pastor of South Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, and a member of the editorial staff of the liberal religious journal, *The Independent*, explained what he conceived to be the role of the public schools.

The public school, like the state under whose authority it exists, and by whose taxing power it is supported, should be simply a civil institution, absolutely secular and not at all religious in its purposes, and all practical questions involving this principle should be settled in accordance therewith.<sup>63</sup>

It should be noted that this was written at a period of time when there was a bitter controversy raging in the United States over Roman Catholic attacks upon the public schools.<sup>64</sup>

A number of years later, the Reverend Shailer Mathews looked unfavorably upon the general practice of Bible reading in public schools. Reverend Mathews was an educator and clergyman, heading the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (1912-1916), the Northern Baptist Convention (1915), as well as being the Dean of the University of Chicago's Divinity School until 1933, and Editor of the *Biblical World* (1913-1920). He felt that while everyone wishes his children to learn ethics and morals, it does not follow that a school teaching Bible reading will achieve this end.<sup>65</sup> Most schools, Reverend Mathews believed, are incapable of doing a decent job of Bible study. He explained:

I can imagine a school in which such instruction could be imparted, but I am equally convinced that such a school would be exceptional and, as a rule, impossible. Something more than a perfunctory reading of certain selected passages is implied by such an ideal state of affairs. Such a school would be taught by a teacher thoroughly in sympathy with the spirit of revelation, and one further possessed of at least the rudiments of training in the study and teaching of the Bible.

He went on to point out that teaching the Bible is quite different from using the Bible for devotional studies. In the latter case, a reasonably reverent attitude would have to be adopted by the teacher. To have the Bible taught uni-

versally, he thinks, is to put a premium upon its misuse and would aid in creating false ideas as to its significance. The reasons for this are that some public school teachers do not believe in the Bible. Others have ideas of the Bible that are very crude and their instructions might create a prejudice against the Bible. Finally, the mere choice of one version of the Bible would cause disagreement among citizens of different sects.

Teaching the Bible for literary reasons, according to Reverend Mathews, was worse than not teaching it at all — even though it may be good literature. He thought it was prostituting the Bible to use it to understand Milton or Ruskin. Finally, he demonstrated that in the experience of the countries that have tried Bible reading, such programs were unsatisfactory to all concerned. He concluded by stating that elementary morals may be taught without the use of the Bible. Thus, all of these objections would be avoided, and instruction in the Bible could best be left to the church and the parents.

Herman H. Horne, also writing in the *Biblical World*, opposed Bible-reading exercises in our public schools because they violated the principle of absolute respect for freedom of religious conscience, which is a fundamental doctrine in the United States.<sup>66</sup> The Bible cannot help but be regarded as a sectarian book, Horne believed. To teach sectarian religion in our schools is fatal to the freedom of conscience which our government cherishes. He is forced to conclude:

Any attempt to formulate a non-sectarian religion of essentials upon which the sects would agree as suitable to teach is impossible; at least, it is what the human ages have been unable to do. Since, therefore, any academic use of the Bible involves religious teaching, and religious

teaching has no place in American public schools, we must conclude that the academic use of the Bible has no place in these schools. Such an academic use is proper, indeed necessary, in all the non-state social organizations, like home and church, and this present widespread interest in Bible reading in the public schools will result in great good, if only to serve to shift the same demand to these other really liable organizations.

### *Baptist Views*

A most significant objection from an organized religious group was issued several years ago by the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Retired Governor John Garland Pollard drafted the memorial, which was duly adopted and presented to the Virginia legislature. Some credit it with defeating proposed legislation which would have compelled public school teachers to read the Bible in school.<sup>67</sup> The statement pointed out that the "Bible is distinctly a religious book, and when properly read is an act of worship which cannot rightfully be enforced by law."<sup>68</sup> It went on to note significant differences between the various versions of the Bible, and explained that the bill tacitly accepted the sectarian nature of the Bible by providing that it must be read without comment and that pupils may be excused from such reading by presenting a written excuse from their parents. "Some argue," the memorial pointed out,

. . . that the law should compel the reading of the Bible, not as a religious book, but simply as literature. But this is evidently not the view-point of the proponents of the bill for, as if to minimize the wrong done sects who do not accept our Bible, they limit the reading to five verses, prohibit comment, and excuse pupils from attendance upon the reading. . . .

The statement made it clear that the Baptists were in accord with proponents of the bill in their belief in the im-

portance of training our children in the great religious truths taught in the Bible. The only difference was one of method. But it explained, "[T]hat method involves a great underlying principle which is part of our religious as well as our political faith. . . ." It also pointed out that Baptists would suffer no direct injury if the bill were passed, but Baptists knew from history what discrimination against their religion was, and were not anxious to extend discrimination against other sects today. The memorial closed with an exhortation to the legislature to keep intact the historic wall of separation between church and state.<sup>69</sup>

It was noted previously that the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs criticized the Roman Catholic hierarchy's statement of November, 1952, which urged an increase in religious instruction in the public schools. The Baptist group believed that such practices would violate the Constitutional mandate for the separation of church and state. In a discussion with this writer, the Reverend George L. Collins, of the Baptist Student Center of the University of Wisconsin, also agreed that Baptists generally are opposed to the practice of Bible reading and religious instruction in the public schools.<sup>70</sup> He did not feel, however, that criticizing such programs as sectarian was justified by the facts. Nor did he believe that a given version of the Bible is necessarily sectarian when read to public school students belonging to a variety of denominations.

His objection to such exercises was directed to the type of teacher who frequently is called upon to conduct these programs. A teacher who is opposed or apathetic toward such instruction may create in the students a dislike or a thorough misunderstanding regarding the truths and literary beauty of the Bible.

In June of 1962, C. Emanuel Carlson, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, made public the fact that this organization had placed the problem of proper religious expression in the public schools on the agenda for its October, 1962, meeting.<sup>71</sup> In the meantime, while making it clear he spoke only for himself, Mr. Carlson felt constrained to make some general comments on the subject. At the outset he observed that the true friends of "genuine prayer experience must obviously be cautious about the devising of prayers by governmental agencies." He thought it unfortunate that all too frequently the issue emerging out of discussion over the Supreme Court's decision in the Engel case was mistakenly the question of whether one is for prayer or against it.

"When one thinks of prayer as a sincere outreach of a human soul to the Creator," Mr. Carlson explained, "'required prayer' becomes an absurdity." He felt that all too frequently those who insist that prayer recitation is "morally uplifting," fail to recognize that "hypocrisy is the worst of moral corrosion." Moreover, he replied to those who feel our national heritage is in danger, they fail to realize that the distinctive quality of our heritage is not legislated prayer, but rather a people praying in freedom under the guidance of their church and of the Spirit of God.

Mr. Carlson called attention to the paradoxes in the present debate, when many of the people who are crying for "less government" are the same ones who publicly defend a governmentally formulated prayer. He is emphatic in his hope that the Supreme Court will continue to defend both the "Establishment of Religion" and the "Free Exercise of Religion" clauses of the First Amendment. In conclusion he said: "The issues of our day, including the problems of Com-

munism and secularization, will not be solved by the prayer formulas set up by official agencies. As Americans we must go deeper than legislation and conformity in order to meet the call of God upon us in our day.”<sup>72</sup>

It seems fair to conclude that the Baptists, more than any other Protestant group, have a reasonably definite program of opposition to Bible reading and religious exercises in the public schools.

#### *Presbyterian Views*

During the last decade the Presbyterians have manifested a considerable interest in church-state relations especially as they affect the public schools. During this period, this denomination has revealed a notably consistent point of view on the subject and has produced several noteworthy documents dealing with the problem.

In 1957, the 169th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church issued an official statement called “The Church and the Public Schools.” In the portion dealing with “Religion in the School Curriculum,” the statement objected vigorously to the “unwarranted criticism” heaped on the schools because some people allege they are Godless.<sup>73</sup> Such criticism resulted from an inadequate understanding of the position of public schools in our society, it was thought. Furthermore, the statement insisted, we must remember that “the inclusion of an overt religious observance of religion does not necessarily provide any institution with a dynamic religious character.”

It goes on to express doubt as to whether the public schools can really do a proper job of teaching religion, because of the fundamentally sectarian nature of religion. Thus, “the Presbyterian Church along with those of other

persuasions must supply their own instruction in the areas of revelation and grace." It goes on to warn that "Protestants must always be on guard against what might happen if sectarian teaching were imposed upon the schools of America." It cautions Presbyterians not to betray the "genius of the public schools, nor yet be mesmerized by the fatal assumption that the church can delegate its responsibility to any institution in order to make up for the prevalence of religious illiteracy."

Moreover, in a comment which might be applied to general prayer programs in the schools similar to those that the Supreme Court held unconstitutional in New York State, the Presbyterian statement noted: "While we neither expect nor desire any teacher to indoctrinate any form of sectarianism, neither do we countenance the teaching of a devitalized 'common faith' as a proper substitute for highly specific religious belief." On the other hand, the statement makes it clear that the church is not suggesting eliminating references to the religious backgrounds of our heritage.

An especially noteworthy and thoughtful report was submitted in 1962 to the 174th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church by its special committee on Church and State. Entitled "Relations Between Church and State," its section dealing with suggested ground rules for members of the church to follow when becoming involved in discussions or debates over church-state relations might well serve as a guide-book for all persons concerned with the field of human relations. While not purporting to be an authoritative statement of the church's position, the report suggests that its major purpose is "to indicate a sense of direction for further study by United Presbyterians and others, and to provide

certain guidelines for study and action on issues of urgent import to our church and society.”<sup>74</sup>

Although dealing with a great variety of subjects, the Report has some specific recommendations on the subject of Bible reading in the public schools. It recognized that the public schools can justify their existences solely in terms of their usefulness to the whole society. Moreover, it is pointed out that the public schools should neither be hostile to religious beliefs nor act in any manner which tends to favor one religion or church over another. On this basis the Report goes on to recommend:

Religious observances should never be held in a public school or introduced in the program of the public school. Bible reading (except in connection with courses in literature, history, or related subjects) and public prayers tend toward indoctrination or meaningless ritual and should be omitted for both reasons.<sup>75</sup>

### ***Methodist Reactions***

The position of Methodists toward Bible reading and related exercises in the school is not completely clear. The most authoritative statement of their views on the general area of religion and the public schools is found in Paragraph 2028 of the *Doctrines and Disciplines of the Methodist Church* (1960).

This section provides that the church is committed to the public schools as the “most effective means of providing common education” for all children. And, while recognizing the public schools as essential to democracy, it is also noted that “our public schools are hard pressed.” The paragraph then explains why: “Public tax funds, in increasing sums, are diverted to sectarian schools. Opponents of the

public schools call the schools 'Godless' while at the same time legal restrictions are placed upon the recognition of religion in the schools."<sup>76</sup>

This section suggests that there is no ambivalence in this church's position toward the parochial school: "We are unalterably opposed to the diversion of tax funds to the support of private and sectarian schools. In a short time, this scattering process can destroy our American public school system and weaken the foundations of national unity."

Undoubtedly, some people will view the next section of this paragraph as somewhat paradoxical when compared to the above statement concerning sectarian schools. It announces:

We believe that religion has a rightful place in the public school program, and that it is possible for public school teachers, without violating the traditional American principle of separation of church and state, to teach moral principles and spiritual values. We hold that it is possible, within this same principle of separation of church and state, to integrate religious instruction with the regular curriculum — for example, teaching religious classics in courses in literature, and in social studies showing the influence of religion upon our society.<sup>77</sup>

While agreeing that the home and church must bear the chief responsibility for nurturing faith, this paragraph insists that the home and church need the support of the school. It is up to our society, it is concluded, to discover the techniques within the principle of separation between church and state by which this support can be accomplished.

From this provision, one would have difficulty concluding, with any degree of definiteness, whether the Methodist Church actually supports programs of Bible reading in the schools.

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the Methodist Church, when discussing the role of religion in the public schools, has been particularly critical of the Roman Catholic attitudes on the subject. He believes the Catholics, through the use of the term "secularism," have created a smokescreen behind which they operate in their endeavors to destroy the American principle of separation of church and state.<sup>78</sup> It is in this manner, he explains, that the Catholics seek to draw off public funds for parochial schools and thus weaken and destroy the public schools which they vehemently oppose. He quotes Paul L. Blakely, S. J., as saying a Catholic's first duty to the public schools is not to pay taxes to them. Bishop Oxnam stresses that the public schools are the bulwark of democracy, for people of all faiths may attend. Furthermore, he denies the Catholic contention that tax-supported schools have banned religion. He points out that there is:

. . . no constitutional prohibition of the study of religion in the public schools. The difficulty stems rather from denominational differences and insistences upon a particular emphasis. The place of religion, of all religion in history, sociology, art, music, literature must be known by all educated men and women. To rear youth without knowledge of the place of religion in life is to educate but partially. But church and synagogue do more than study religion as a subject; they seek commitment to it as a faith. This is not the function of the school.

Bishop Oxnam views with favor the American Council of Education's report on "The Relation of Religion to Public Education" which states that the school should seek to teach the importance of the role of religion in our history and culture. He concludes by stressing that the place

of religion in the public schools could be worked out democratically without difficulty if it were not for sectarian strife.<sup>79</sup>

Methodist Bishop Corson, however, in an address to the Biennial Christian Education Convention of the Methodist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in December of 1949, stated that the public school had ceased to be an ally of the church.<sup>80</sup> He felt that the present educational system was actually an obstacle to adequate religious education, whereas until recently the public school was an important factor in the communication of religious knowledge.

#### ***The Christian Century's Viewpoint***

For these sentiments, Reverend Corson was taken to task by an editorial in the *Christian Century*.<sup>81</sup> The editors felt the Bishop was in error at every point. They explained:

In the first place the free public school is an ally of the church, even though it is rightly prevented from becoming the tool of any church. Its objective of helping the child to know the truth is essentially religious. Its cultivation of the free intellect and its program of character education are strong counterparts of what the church in its own sphere should try to do. The 'exclusion and separation' which the Bishop regards as an 'obstacle' to Christian education were forced on the public schools by the differences between the churches. In spite of this, the schools are still capable of communicating and are communicating the factual basis about religion in literature, history and other fields. An obstacle to Christian education much bigger than these fancied failings of the public schools is an attitude on the part of Protestant church leaders which refuses to recognize how great a stake Protestantism has in the preservation and extension of the public school system.

In 1952, the *Christian Century* was also critical of the New York State Board of Regents' proposed nonsectarian prayer to be used in the New York public schools (See Engel

case).<sup>82</sup> The editorial noted that the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Jewish Congress had voiced opposition to such a plan. These organizations felt this program would be ineffective in practice, wrong in principle, and dangerous in its implications. Furthermore, they believed, it would infringe on religious liberty and the historic American principle of the separation of church and state. The editors of the *Christian Century* did not share the fears of the previously mentioned groups that such a program would violate the United States Constitution. But they agreed with the American Jewish Congress,

. . . observance of this sort is likely to deteriorate quickly into an empty formality with little if any significance. Prescribed forms of this sort, as many colleges have concluded after years of compulsory chapel attendance, can actually work against the inculcation of vital religion. This is one of the reasons (among others) why this paper has never had any sympathy for attempts to reproduce in American schools classes in religious education patterned after European models. . . . There are few places where it is more true than in school religious exercises that 'the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.'

A later editorial devoted to this same proposal in New York noted the problems religious groups encountered when attempting to agree upon a type of prayer acceptable to all.<sup>83</sup> Since these organizations were unanimously opposed to the prayer suggested by the regents, a compromise was finally reached whereby it was agreed to have students recite the last stanza of "America."

Our Father's God to Thee  
Author of Liberty,  
To Thee we sing:  
Long May our Land be bright  
With Freedom's Holy Light:  
Protect us by Thy Might,  
Great God our King.

The editors objected to this proposal, wondering, "But when youngsters are induced to pray to God on the assumption that they are sharing in a patriotic exercise, what is the religion that is being exalted? Nationalism?"<sup>84</sup>

Finally, the attitudes of one more group of Protestants who take an unfavorable view toward the inculcation of religion in the public schools should be noted. The Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State have not only bitterly assailed Catholics for suggesting there is no historical basis to the theory of church-state separation, but they also objected to Protestant groups who attempted to violate the principle by favoring "released time" and other religious programs in the public schools.<sup>85</sup> This organization feels that when the Protestant denominations engage in these activities, they are simply following a mistaken notion of their theological dogmas. But the Catholics, they believe, are serious and consistent in their desire to have the public schools teach religion. It is this group's sincere belief that the churches must stay out of the schools. They are "opposed to a union of church and state wherever it appears and by whomever it is sponsored, whether by Protestants, Catholics or Jews."

From the foregoing survey, it is clear that while Protestants historically have been primarily concerned with sponsoring Bible reading and other programs of religious instruction in the public schools, today there is no clear-cut consensus in their attitudes on such programs. All agree that the imparting of religious and moral values is important, but there is no agreement on how this is to be done and whether or not the public school is the proper vehicle for such instruction.

**CLERGY'S RESPONSE TO THE SCHEMPP CASE**

The reactions of religious leaders to the Schempp decision were, as might be expected, mixed. The responses of a majority of spokesmen for religious groups, the *New York Times* found, were in favor of the decision.<sup>86</sup> Again it is well to recall that most often the comments of an important clergyman on matters of this sort cannot necessarily be construed to constitute the official position of his church. In some instances the church, in fact, may have no official position. In general, however, it can be said that Protestants and Jews tended to support the court's position while Roman Catholic spokesmen deplored it.

For the most part, Roman Catholic leaders tended to view the Schempp ruling with alarm. Three of the five American Roman Catholic Cardinals, in a statement from Rome where they were attending the Ecumenical Council, vigorously opposed the Supreme Court's position. In a joint statement, Cardinal Spellman of New York, Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston, and James Francis Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles took the court sharply to task for the Schempp ruling.<sup>87</sup> Also in Rome, at the same time, and in an interview for the *New York Times*, Albert Gregory Cardinal Meyer of Chicago had "no immediate comment," and Joseph Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis was not available for comment.

Msgr. John J. Voight, Secretary for Education of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, observed that the ruling came as no surprise and asserted: "I deeply regret the court action. I say this for two reasons: one, because it will bring about the complete secularization of public education in America, which to me represents a radical de-

parture from our traditional and historical religious heritage, and, two, because it completely disregards parental rights in education and the wishes of a large segment of America's parents who want their children to participate in these practices in the public schools.”<sup>88</sup>

The Archbishop of Washington, D.C., the Most Reverend Patrick O'Boyle said: “The Supreme Court's decision is disappointing. It is obvious that little by little it is discarding religious traditions hallowed by a century and a half of American practice.”<sup>89</sup> In the Middle West, however, Msgr. Edmund J. Goebel, Superintendent of Schools of the Milwaukee Roman Catholic Archdiocese described his position as “not outright critical, but fearful of the results it might have.” He said: “Every effort should be made to retain the teaching of God in all our schools, public and private. This decision of the Court might interfere with that. If God is completely ignored, we will go into complete secularism. That would have its effect on our growing youth.”<sup>90</sup>

Although a preponderance of Protestant spokesmen and groups tended to support the Supreme Court's position, some were sharply critical. The *New York Times* concluded that “conservative Protestants, members of small fundamentalist bodies or minority groups in the large denominations, deplored the Court action.”<sup>91</sup> In what the *Times* called a surprising reaction, Methodist Bishop Fred Pierce Corson, President of the World Methodist Council, took issue with the Schempp ruling. He declared that it “penalized” the “religious people who are very definitely in the majority in the United States.” Bishop Corson went on to predict that the decision would mark the beginning of a “new movement among Protestants and Catholics for parochial educa-

tion simply to protect their children from a growing secularism which now seems to have invaded the courts.”<sup>92</sup>

Another example of a representative of a major Protestant group who was critical of the court's stand was Bishop Donald H. V. Hallock of the Milwaukee Episcopal Diocese. He said of the Schempp decision: “I don't agree with it and I don't like it, but it cannot be denied that this is the next logical step in the direction the Court has been going.” He concluded with the observation, “one of these days, no doubt, ‘In God We Trust’ will go off our coinage.”<sup>93</sup>

Representatives of the mainstream of Protestant thinking, however, hailed the Schempp ruling. The National Council of Churches, which reflects this consensus, asserted that the decision served as a reminder to all citizens that “teaching for religious commitment is the responsibility of the home and the community of faith (such as church or synagogue) rather than the public school.” The council also noted that “neither the church nor state should use the public school to compel acceptance of any creed or conformity to any specific religious practice.”<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the Council of Churches had noted somewhat earlier that “neither true religion nor good education is dependent upon the devotional use of the Bible in public school programs.”<sup>95</sup>

Another point of view in the Methodist Church is reflected by the position taken by the Board of Christian Social Concerns of the New York East Conference of the Methodist Church which is diametrically opposed to the position of Bishop Corson, noted earlier. In supporting the court ruling the Board's statement said: “Increasingly in the section of the country where we serve, there are no public schools which are homogeneous in respect to religion to the degree

that religious observance of any sort would not offend the taste or violate the conscience of some individual.”<sup>96</sup>

A high-level statement of the Episcopal Church was given by the Right Reverend Arthur Lichtenberger, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. He emphasized: “it should be understood that the Court’s action is not hostile to religion.” He went on to note that the decision reflects “the Court’s sense of responsibility to assure freedom and equality to all groups of believers and non-believers as expressed in the First Amendment of the Constitution.”<sup>97</sup>

In an action consistent with their church’s position outlined several years earlier, two leaders of the United Presbyterian Church strongly supported the Schempp decision. The Reverend Doctor Eugene Carson Blake and the Reverend Doctor Silas G. Kessler, moderator, in a joint statement noted that the court’s ruling had “underscored our firm belief that religious instruction is the sacred responsibility of the family and the Churches.”<sup>98</sup> In the Middle West, the Reverend Edgar G. Bletcher, minister of the West Granville Presbyterian Church and stated clerk of the Presbytery of Milwaukee of the United Presbyterian Church, read a statement of the General Assembly of that denomination which said: “Bible reading and prayers as devotional acts tend toward indoctrination of meaningless ritual and should be omitted for both reasons.” Reverend Bletcher concluded, “. . . whenever the same prayer is offered every morning in a school, it tends toward meaningless ritual, and where there are students of non-Christian religions present, it can be considered an affront to their beliefs.”<sup>99</sup>

Lutheran spokesmen tended to be consistent in support of the court’s action. The Reverend Oscar J. Nauman, President of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which

maintains an extensive parochial school system of its own, strongly endorsed the court ruling. He said, "It has long been our position as a synod that the exercise of any religious function — and prayer and Bible reading are to us a religious function — falls within the province of the family and church and is not the concern of the state as such."

A representative of another Lutheran body, The Lutheran Church of America, the Reverend Doctor Theodore E. Matson, President of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod expressed similar sentiments. "Personally," he observed, "I cannot get excited about prohibiting the reading of the Bible or praying the Lord's Prayer in public schools." Although expressing his concern about the "increasing climate of secularism," Dr. Matson noted that the court decision "serves as a reminder to the churches to take seriously their responsibility in regard to solid Christian education." He went on to make a most interesting observation. "Schools," he said, "must also make sure that they do not impose upon the time of children and youth with the result that the churches are placed at a real disadvantage." He concluded, "The time may come when the Supreme Court may have to rule on how much of the time of the children and youth the schools can command."<sup>100</sup>

The opinion of Jewish religious leaders was overwhelmingly favorable to the Schempp ruling. The Synagogue Council of America, representing Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative Judaism, through its president, Rabbi Uri Miller, said: "We fervently believe that prayers, Bible reading and sectarian practices should be fostered in the home, church and synagogue, that public institutions such as the public school should be free of such practices."<sup>101</sup> The New York *Times* reported that a host of other Jewish groups

hailed the decision. These included: The Rabbinical Council of America, the American Jewish Committee, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the American Jewish Congress, and the United Synagogue of America.