

## *Educator Attitudes*

THE VIEWS OF EDUCATORS are as widely divergent as those presented by religious spokesmen. It would be impossible, without the benefit of a super-poll, to obtain exact statistics on the percentage of American educators who favor or oppose such practices. An attempt is made here simply to present a representative sampling of the various attitudes expressed in a variety of journals and periodicals. Prior to the 1840's and the rapid influx of Catholic immigrants, few public school teachers could object to reading the King James Version of the Bible for reasons of conscience, since the majority were Protestants.<sup>1</sup>

Characteristic of the attitude of early teachers' organizations was that of the Western Literary Institute and College of Professional Teachers. This group, which had great influence in the Midwest, favored from the beginning (1829) religious education in the public schools, with the Bible as a reading book "from the infant school to the University." It was this group's policies and proposals that Bishop Purcell objected to in 1873. From approximately this time on there were increased efforts by legislatures and school boards to

eliminate sectarian instruction, although many did not consider Bible reading and related religious exercises as sectarian. It is, of course, because many people do not regard Bible reading as sectarian instruction that so much controversy has arisen over this point.

### VIEWES OF UNITED STATES COMMISSIONERS OF EDUCATION

It was in the last decade of the nineteenth century that debate among educators on the efficacy of Bible reading and religious instruction in the public schools really began. This has since become one of the major points of discussion at teachers' conventions and educational association meetings.<sup>2</sup> The United States Commissioners of Education allowed themselves to get drawn into this controversy during this period. In 1889, Austin Bierbower pointed out that it is unnecessary to teach religion in the public schools because there are abundant opportunities elsewhere for such instruction.<sup>3</sup> The Sunday school, church, and home were the places to instill religious instruction. If the schools attempted to teach religious principles, such practices would invariably lead to sectarian disputes. The Commissioner explained:

There is no occasion for even using the Bible in the schools. While it might be used without any influence whatever, good or bad, it can be read elsewhere abundantly, and is read in the family, in the Sunday schools, and in the churches almost daily, and is constantly discussed and quoted, so that people are not left in ignorance of it. With an open Bible everywhere the Protestants ought not to insist on forcing it into the schools to the irritation of Catholics, Jews and unbelievers. . . . The fact that some regard it as a revelation from God does not justify them in forcing it on others who do not so regard it, or who believe it can not be safely read by the people. Protestants who think the Bible is not sufficiently read can

teach it more at home, and in church. . . . There is not enough to be gained from Bible reading to justify the quarrel that has been raised over it.

Finally he believed that the influence of the Bible would not be diminished if it were excluded from the school. He flatly denied that this would make the school Godless, for it was not the duty of public schools to teach religion. "One might as well call insurance companies or banks 'Godless' because they have nothing to do with religion, or to speak of 'Godless' kite-flying or musical festivals." He concluded by stressing that since all religions teach the same virtues — truth, honesty, purity, etc. — and since all men agree on these, it logically followed that schools could effectively teach moral and ethical values without engaging in religious instruction and exercises.

A number of years later, William P. Harris, who was then United States Commissioner of Education, agreed that it was inadvisable to attempt to have religious instruction in the public schools.<sup>4</sup> The techniques necessary for this instruction were inconsistent with those used in the public schools. He stated:

The principle of religious instruction is authority; that of secular instruction is demonstration and verification. It is obvious that these two principles should not be brought into the same school, but separated as widely as possible . . . . Even the attitude of a mind cultivated in secular instruction is unfitted for the approach to religious truth. Religious instruction should be surrounded with solemnity. It should be approached with ceremonial preparations so as to lift up the mind to the dignity of the lesson received.

Harris also believed that almost every type of religious instruction was a form of sectarian instruction. "Even the doctrine of the existence of God implies a specific concep-

tion of Him, and the conception of the divine varies from that of the finite deities of animism to the infinite deity of East Indian pantheism and the Holy Bible." He finished by explaining that only the church has learned the proper method of religious instruction, and this was accomplished only after long ages. It is able to elevate the sense-perception through solemn music addressed to the ear and works of art which represent to the eye the divine self-sacrifice for the salvation of man. "It clothes its doctrines in the language of the Bible, a book sacredly kept apart from other literature, and held in such exceptional reverence that it is taken entirely out of the natural order of experience."

At least one United States Commissioner of Education took a more favorable view of religious exercises, and Bible reading in particular. A. P. Peabody felt that asking the American people to exclude the Bible from public schools would be "garbling and truncating history."<sup>5</sup> He believed that the Bible is very important in teaching not only Jewish history but general history. Since he felt that "Christianity is the most important factor in the history of mankind" and "Jesus Christ . . . is so far the most influential personage that ever appeared in the history of the world," omitting Bible study would in effect omit these things from the schools. It would be as bad to omit Christ as it would be to ignore Washington, Franklin, and Adams.

Peabody noted that in other departments of education the Bible is no less essential than in history. "If moral philosophy is to be taught at all, I suppose that none would deny that it is distinctly Christian ethics in which our children are to be trained." (This is, of course, the main reason non-Christians object to Bible reading and religious instruction.) The best place to obtain Christian ethics is not from

modern theorists who may distort or misrepresent them, Peabody believed, but from the Bible which is the inspired work of the Divine Teacher. In addition to this, he stressed that the Bible is of great literary worth, and should also be studied for that reason. He concluded rhetorically:

We are by profession a Christian people. We recognize the great principles of religion, of Christianity in the devotional services in our legislatures and our courts of justice, and in the use of oaths in every department of public administration. Shall our children be trained as citizens without the inculcation of those fundamental religious ideas which will impress upon them the significance of prayer and the dread solemnity of an oath?<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, Dr. Sterling M. McCurrin, United States Commissioner of Education in 1962, when commenting on the Supreme Court's decision declaring unconstitutional programs of prayer in the public schools (the Engel case), said, "I believe it is no loss to religion but may be a gain in clarifying matters. Prayer that is essentially a ceremonial classroom function has not much religious value."<sup>7</sup>

### TEACHING RELIGION FOR THE SAKE OF RELIGION

There is, however, a considerable group of educators, as well as religious leaders, who feel the schools should impart religious values, because by themselves these are important.<sup>8</sup> It is true most of these writers do not suggest the teaching of sectarian religion in the schools. Rather they feel there is some central core of general religious ideals that the schools should impart. Some think Bible reading without comment is admirably suited for this task since the Bible can speak for itself.<sup>9</sup> Others feel that if the school does not impart religious instruction many children will

never learn of these values at home. This was explained by E. J. Goodwin.<sup>10</sup> He pointed out:

The number of irreligious and unreligious homes in this broad land is as countless as the trees of the forest. . . . The appalling fact is that those classes of our population which most need religious instruction and training do not attend church and do not come within the influences of church organizations. . . . If we affirm that religious instruction is an essential part of true education and assume that under present conditions the home and church can not or do not encompass and accomplish it, why is it that the American people do not seriously protest against the exclusion of religious teaching from the public school, which is the only place where all the children can be taught?

These views are heatedly attacked by a host of other writers on the subject.<sup>11</sup> Some point out that our public schools are not to blame for, and should not be charged with, the responsibility for correcting the present world-wide religious crises.<sup>12</sup> Others think that what advocates of such programs want is not religious education but religious indoctrination.<sup>13</sup> Several writers believe that religious instruction would breed prejudice and intolerance.<sup>14</sup> The *New York Times*, commenting editorially on this point stated:

A state giving welcome to all creeds cannot in its public schools, which it taxes all to support and which it wishes the children of all to enter, impose any religious teaching without contravening the very principle of freedom that is at the foundation of this republic. Even if such teaching could be given without doing violence to this principle, there would be danger in many communities of engendering hatreds which might outweigh or defeat all the good sought by the compulsory reading of the Bible.<sup>15</sup>

This led the editors to conclude, "It was through the teachings of the homes and Sunday schools that the Bible came

into its dominant place in early American life. Everything was not left to the public schools. It need not be now."<sup>16</sup>

Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, has commented on some of the negative influences of religion on the schools.<sup>17</sup> He objected to a decision by the New York State Board of Regents to omit from high school examinations questions relating to the germ theory of disease. This was done to avoid offense to believers in Christian Science, although it should be noted that the Christian Science Church carefully avoided any pressure to impose its views on education. The question he raised, while not specifically aimed at Bible-reading programs, might well be used by those who oppose such exercises.

But if religion becomes the yardstick for other courses of study what happens when the yardsticks clash? Isn't it likely that the moment the school doors give way to outside pressures the strongest pressure will prevail? Isn't there danger that the religion of the majority would become dominant in education over the minorities? Our constitutional guarantees of freedom of worship are based not so much upon the need to protect religion from non-believers in or out of government, as upon the need to protect religions from one another.

### THE BIBLE AS HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Controversy among educators over studying the Bible for its historical and literary qualities is strong. Several of the typical opinions on both sides of this debate will be noted here.

Lyman Abbot, the noted clergyman and editor, explained he would not advocate Bible reading and the use of prayer in the public schools if anyone objected, because this is "worship, and it is not the function of the state to conduct worship, certainly not to conduct compulsory wor-

ship, whether the worshippers are little children or grown men."<sup>18</sup> However, he went on to state:

I do advocate the use of the Bible in the public schools as a means of acquainting our pupils with the laws, the literature, and the life of the ancient Hebrews, because the genius of the Hebrew people pervading their laws and their life and their literature was a spiritual genius. The United States is more intimately connected with the Hebrew people than with any other ancient people. Our literature abounds with references to the literature of the ancient Hebrews; they are probably more frequent than the references to the literature either of Greeks or Romans. No man can read the great English or American poets or authors understandingly unless he knows something of his English Bible. Historically we are more closely connected with the Hebrew people than with the Greeks. Our free institutions are all rooted in the institutions of the Hebrew people, have grown out of them as the result of the long conflict between their political principles and those of pagan imperialism. A man is not a truly educated man who knows nothing of the sources and foundations of our national life, and they are found in the Bible.

Professor William Lyon Phelps of Yale particularly lauded the literary quality of the Bible.<sup>19</sup> He explained that if he were appointed a "committee of one" to regulate the much-debated question of college entrance examinations in English he would,

. . . erase every list of books that has been thus far suggested, and I should confine the examination wholly to the authorized version of the Bible. The Bible has within its pages every single kind of literature that any proposed list of English classics contains. It has narrative, descriptive, poetical, dramatic, and oratorical passages. . . . Priests, atheists, skeptics, devotees, agnostics and evangelists are all agreed that the Bible is the best example of English composition that the world has ever seen. It contains the noblest prose and poetry with the utmost simplicity of diction.<sup>20</sup>



Nicholas Murray Butler, then President of Columbia University, was concerned because he felt a knowledge of the Bible was passing out of the life of the younger generation.<sup>21</sup> This would result in a disappearance of any acquaintance with the religious element which has shaped our civilization from the beginning. He explained:

The neglect of the English Bible incapacitates the rising generation to read and appreciate the masterpieces of English literature, from Chaucer to Browning, and it strikes out of their consciousness one element, and for centuries the controlling element in the production of your civilization. . . . My own feeling is that what has come to pass can only be described by one word, shameful!

He did make one important qualification that must be noted. He stressed:

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not talking about religious teaching in school, that I am not talking about theological influence in education, but that I am only protesting against sacrificing a knowledge of our civilization to theological differences.

He did not, however, clarify how it would be possible to read the Bible in schools without getting involved in sectarian disputes.

### ***Reactions to President Butler's Views***

Shortly after this, an editorial in the *Independent* took Dr. Butler to task for these sentiments.<sup>22</sup> It explained that not as literature, but for religious purposes, is the Bible wanted in schools by those who favor its restoration. It went on to state:

Indeed, President Butler laments that the decay of the religious sentiment has followed the giving up of Bible

reading, and it is to recover this religious spirit that he wants it restored. But this is not the business of the public school.

Continuing on this theme, a later editorial praised the Supreme Court of Nebraska for prohibiting Bible reading.<sup>23</sup> It stressed that it is the business of the church, not the state, to teach religion. "[F]or the church to confess its incompetence, and to ask the state, through such miscellaneous teachers as we have, to supplement its lack of service, is humiliating and shameful."<sup>24</sup> In keeping with these views, the editors objected to public schools' requiring Jewish children to sing Christmas carols.<sup>25</sup> They went on to claim that those who wish to use the Bible only as a literary work use this argument only as a pretense to get the Book's religious views across to the students. If it is really literature these people are concerned with, the editors wondered, why has no one suggested exercises in which *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* are read? They concluded:

But it is not as literature that we chiefly value the Bible. It is degrading to it to lower it to that level and make it a lesson of style or story. It is not the Beautiful Bible, but the Holy Bible. It is impossible to put it on any other basis. Call it literature, if you will, but it will be considered and treated as a religious book, and that will be the real reason for introducing and teaching it. We do not want to smuggle the Bible into the public schools under a false pretense. It is our one great book of religion, and as such let it be treated, the Churches' sacred Book.<sup>26</sup>

H. W. Horwill, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, noted some of the inadequacies and difficulties inherent in any scheme to study the Bible as literature or history. He explained:

Owing to the religious implication of the Bible it is impossible to teach it even as literature or history without

becoming involved in questions of acute controversy. It is a thin and ineffectual criticism which concerns itself only about an author's manner to the neglect of his matter, and any teaching of literature which limits itself in the same way is equally unprofitable. But the moment the matter of the Bible is seriously considered, strife is inevitable. Nay, in these days it is more difficult than ever before to treat even the manner of the sacred writer without provoking an acrimonious religious discussion.<sup>27</sup>

He also explained that the religious advocates of Bible study in the schools will not be happy with the type of teaching that satisfies its literary advocates. He saw little purpose of a religious nature served by research into now obsolete Biblical words and expressions, or by comments in the Psalms on natural phenomena. "So far from promoting religious culture, it is to be expected that an exclusively literary and historical treatment of the Bible will actually impair its moral impressions on the young."<sup>28</sup>

Essentially the same sentiments were expressed by H. H. Horne, speaking before the annual convention of the Religious Education Association.<sup>29</sup> He said:

To ask that the Bible be used as a text book in morals or even literature would be good for morals and literature no doubt, but not for religion, whose interest it is the prime function of the Bible to serve. The teaching in the public school, under any guise, of the book upon which all the religious sects are founded would end inevitably in sectarian interpretations. It would also tend to reduce to the level of an ordinary text book that volume of the Christian religion whose sacredness is regularly held to be essential.

Others have pointed out the impossibility of studying the Bible as literature because of the way it has become entangled in the religious emotions of the people. This is particularly true in the case of young and immature minds.<sup>30</sup> J. H. Blackhurst, in an article in the magazine *Education*,

agreed with these sentiments and presented an additional argument of importance. He explained:

As in the case of its literary merits, it is here also to be regretted that the Bible cannot be used more freely in moral training. I believe, however, that the loss is not as great as we are at first inclined to think: for those moral principles have been so diffused through literature and moral philosophy that they are the common property of all and can be taught with little or no reference to their origin. Then, too, modern psychology is beginning to point out that successful moral instruction is not so much a matter of directing the child's reading and thinking about moral principles as it is a matter of guiding the child's activities along lines which are in keeping with those principles.<sup>31</sup>

### BIBLE READING AND CRIME

We now turn to a major point, made by its advocates, that Bible reading and religious instruction will cut down on crime and juvenile delinquency because they develop good citizenship.<sup>32</sup> One of the most outspoken proponents of this view was W. S. Fleming. Writing in *Nation's Schools* he contended that when Cincinnati shut the Bible out of her schools in 1869, she lit the flame that "soon burned to death the character building function of our public education."<sup>33</sup> This he felt, was one of the major explanations for the increased crime rate in the United States.

To prove this he quoted statistics revealing that there were a higher number of arrests than eighty years ago when Bible reading was a generally recognized function of the schools.<sup>34</sup> He believed that true religious liberty would allow giving religious instruction in the schools, with each child permitted to accept or reject that which he chose.<sup>35</sup> Using Cincinnati as an example of a city which has erred, he concluded that if the town fathers had allowed the Bible to be

read in the schools, "her crime rate would be far less today."

A number of years before, Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Professor of Religious Education at Yale, eloquently announced that the absence of religious education in the public schools accounted for the "pagan lustfulness of a world that is drifting away from God and good."<sup>36</sup> Speaking before the final session of the Forty-Ninth Annual Convention of the Kings County Sunday Schools, he explained:

The desire of folk to do what they please, when they please, and where they please finds supposedly scientific backing, and sanction in the behavioristic psychology of John B. Watson, the psychoanalytic mythology of Sigmund Freud, and the free love philosophy of Bertrand Russell. This pseudo-scientific materialism and pagan ethics find fit expression in the sex fiction and shady verse, the indecent shows and raucous jazz, which have so largely taken the place once occupied by literature, art and music. And then we blink our eyes and shake our heads and ask despairingly, 'What ails our youth? What is the matter with our young people of today?' We forget that youth holds a mirror to middle age. There is nothing the matter with young people today except that they are reacting in perfectly natural ways to the stimuli offered them by the pagan lustfulness of a world that is drifting away from God and good.

(If John Dewey and his disciples had been included in the above-mentioned triumvirate, even effusive William E. Buckley, Jr., who has been critical of the secularist tendencies of Yale,<sup>37</sup> might find himself in agreement with at least a onetime professor at his alma mater.) Dr. Weigle pointed out that the movement to remove religion from the schools was not the work of infidels and atheists, but of "folk who spoke and acted in the name of religion." He concluded that if the schools continue to ignore religion, the perpetuity of those moral and religious institutions which are most charac-

teristic of American life would be endangered. "It imperils the future of the nation itself."

There is substantial disagreement, however, on whether religious instruction really aids in the development of better citizens.<sup>38</sup> After analyzing prison records, and finding that prisoners claiming some religious affiliation far outnumber those who are unaffiliated, Lamar T. Beman, in his book, *Religious Teaching in the Public Schools*, concluded:

The claim that absence of religious instruction and worship from the public schools is the cause of the crime conditions in this country, fails to consider certain painful realities. In every school some pupils do not make progress; some of them can not, or will not, or at least do not learn so as to measure up to the standards of the school. Many cities have a special school for unruly or disorderly boys. . . . Most of our crime is committed by young people, much of it by boys. That any school or any system of instruction fails to interest or to educate one hundred per cent of its pupils is not a reproach, for no school and no system has as yet done so. This is true even of those schools which have the best possible system of religious instruction and worship. . . . Criminals, as a rule, are not bright or intelligent people. Many, perhaps most, of them are the kind that could not have been changed by any system of education, or made better by any instruction in religion.<sup>39</sup>

Joseph Lewis, in an article in *Teachers College Journal* objecting to statements that religious instruction and Bible reading will reduce crime, told of the results of a survey conducted by Professor Hightower of Butler University.<sup>40</sup> Professor Hightower concluded, after administering examinations of various kinds to 3,300 children, that the students who participated in Bible-reading exercises were found to be less honest than those who did not take part. This led Lewis to conclude that the "mere knowledge of the Bible itself is not sufficient to insure the proper character atti-

*tudes."* He thought the crowning irony of religious instruction was that its supporters feel that it is all right to teach children principles and theories which later in their life they may find to be incorrect. He suggested this is analogous to teaching a child the wrong principles of grammar under the assumption that as he grows older he will realize the inaccuracies and correct them himself.

### STUDIES TESTING THE EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

A number of surveys have been made which attempt to test the efficacy of Bible reading and religious instruction. While it might be perfectly possible to quarrel with the testing techniques, as well as the results, several of them should be noted here. Franzblau found in a study of 701 Jewish children that "character responses manifest a slight tendency to be higher among children who affirm the foregoing beliefs than among those who deny them."<sup>41</sup> Bartlett studied the beliefs and action patterns of 1056 pupils in grades six through eight.<sup>42</sup> Nearly 600 of the students averaged five semester hours of weekday religious instruction in church schools. The remaining pupils were without such teachings. Bartlett concluded after measuring all of them by a variety of tests that the former knew considerably more about the Bible than the latter, but showed no greater degree of Christian motivation in conduct.

Hartshorne and May have done some of the major studies in the field of character education.<sup>43</sup> They have concluded that religious education as then conducted did not result in improvement of character, nor did the indoctrination of children in a religious ideology result in a significant increase in approved behavior. They explain that a moral

trait such as honesty or truthfulness is not a unified trait of character. On the contrary, it is "a series of specific responses to specific situations."<sup>44</sup>

Thus, if a social situation appears to make honesty easy, or evokes honesty as an appropriate response, the child tends to be honest. If the opposite is true, the child will be dishonest. These authors see no carry-over from one situation to another, or from religious teachings to tested behavior unless the two situations are essentially similar. It is the common elements which appear to facilitate transfer. Cook, commenting on these findings, stated:

The authors do not contend that honesty as a generalized trait cannot be developed, they show that, for the children tested, religious idealism has not been taught so as to carry over into conduct. In view of this conclusion, the value of the church's traditional work with children is a debatable question.<sup>45</sup>

Critics of religious instruction in the school might ask how a public school teacher, untrained in the art of religious instruction, might succeed in an area where there is an indication that even churches have failed.

### POLLS OF TEACHER ATTITUDES

Several surveys of teacher attitudes toward the advisability and effectiveness of Bible reading and related exercises have been undertaken. These are presented merely as indications of the various views held, rather than as a final answer. The magazine *Nation's Schools* conducted such a study in 1945.<sup>46</sup> In a questionnaire sent to 500 school administrators, 220, or about 44 per cent of them answered. On the question, "Do you believe that public schools can give religious instruction which is wholly nonsectarian in nature," 49.1 per cent replied in the affirmative and 40 per cent



answered negatively. Finally, in answer to the query, "Whose responsibility is it to train children in religion?" 1.4 per cent thought it was a job solely for the church, 54.5 per cent felt it was the duty of the church and the home, while 44.1 per cent believed such training was up to the church, home, and school.

Two studies of a similar nature have more recently been completed by California educators. The inquiries were related to a proposed bill before the California legislature which would require daily reading of the Bible in public schools "without comment." It is noted that:

Both studies concluded that the controversy likely to be generated by the practice would create disturbances out of proportion to the values which such a program could secure. The California Curriculum Commission, which made one of the studies, found that reading the Bible, without comment, 'does not represent the recommendations of the general public,' and that, 'religious groups and religious leaders do not reveal common faith in and support of,' the proposed legislation. Both reports reveal the existence of serious and widespread doubts as to whether Bible reading without comment has any educational value or would contribute importantly to the teaching of moral and spiritual values.<sup>47</sup>

The study done by the California State Curriculum Commission was requested by the California State Board of Education which was seeking to determine potential results of the proposed Bible-reading bill. The other study was made by a Committee of Moral and Spiritual Values in Education, appointed by Dr. H. M. McPherson, Superintendent of Schools of Napa, California. It was asked to "analyze opinions on how the local school system could transmit moral and spiritual values, and to give special attention to Bible reading as a device to attain this goal."<sup>48</sup>

The Curriculum Commission, whose hearings were held

in Los Angeles, in what it called an "atmosphere of controversy," left these hearings, "with a deeper appreciation of the wide divergence and points of view, and of the deep and sincere convictions of their proponents." Its inquiry was limited to the educational value and psychological soundness of Bible-reading exercises and it sought information from educators as to how such practices would fit into the curriculum and affect local administration.

Its investigations disclosed the following factors. Because of overcrowding, the handling of those pupils who would be dismissed from such exercises for reasons of conscience would prove a serious administrative problem. Forty-two per cent of those who replied felt that the reading would be "ineffective without explanation or comment," while an additional 40 per cent thought a "refusal to answer pupil questions regarding any curricular activity is not educationally sound." Twenty-five of the 348 school districts that replied felt that by denying teachers the opportunity to explain, pupils would get the idea that something is "hidden or wrong." Twenty-six more said that such an arrangement made it impossible to motivate pupils to learn anything from the Bible. Still others felt it was a "major contradiction of accepted pedagogy" to require the same textbook for children in kindergarten through junior college. This was particularly true since no comment could be made on the portions of the Bible read.

The Commission drew the following conclusions: (1) The Bible-reading proposal is controversial and includes unreconciled difficulties. (2) Administration of the bill would be difficult because of inadequate facilities and insufficient teachers. (3) The method of instruction is pedagogically unsound. (4) The vocabulary and concept difficulty is above the general level of the elementary school. (5) The

bill might result in the church's and home's shifting the burden of religious instruction to the school. (6) Some teachers would be required to read selections that conflict with their personal convictions. (7) The State Board of Education would be faced by an enormous problem in having to classify, evaluate, and select Bible content for the program. (8) Conflict would result, not only among parents, but also among children over excusing children whose parents requested it. (9) Present programs of teaching moral and ethical values are much more effective than is the proposed plan. (10) Additional work can be done along these lines which would not involve the schools in religious controversies or in the use of "educationally unsound techniques."<sup>49</sup>

The Napa study included teachers from elementary schools through college, thus viewing the problem on all school levels. Fifty-three elementary teachers, 27 high school teachers and 34 college teachers were included in the survey. Ninety-eight per cent of the teachers questioned thought the school ought to transmit moral values, while 93 per cent felt the school should transmit spiritual values. Seventy-eight per cent believed the school should be responsible for transmitting these values, and 95 per cent thought there should be greater emphasis on these values in the curriculum. Interestingly enough, the highest proportion of the 22 per cent who took a negative view of the school's transmitting of religious instruction were elementary teachers, and the lowest proportion was among the college teachers.<sup>50</sup>

Fifty per cent of the teachers stated they had made efforts to include moral and spiritual values, while only 10 per cent said they had not. Twenty-five per cent said this was a goal in all their work and was integrated in all activi-

ties. Nine per cent of these said they taught such values by teaching about religion. One per cent said they did so by encouraging Sunday school attendance. It is significant that "65 per cent of the teachers were not certain that they could deal with the facts about religion in an unbiased manner." On the proposed Bible-reading bill, only 15 per cent felt that no unfavorable results would flow from it, while 49 per cent believed conflicts would develop. Forty-seven per cent thought the negative effects of Bible reading would outweigh the positive, while only 26 per cent believed the positive results would be greater. From this the Napa Committee concluded that "Bible reading does not have the endorsement of religious education, it creates the danger that animosities will develop, and there are probably better educational ways of teaching moral and spiritual values than through Bible reading."<sup>51</sup>

Following the completion of these studies, the California State Board of Education issued its recommendations on the California Bible-reading proposal. It suggested that if any legislation of this nature were adopted it should leave the question of beginning each school day by reading the Bible for each school district to decide.<sup>52</sup>

### EFFECTS OF THE SCHEMPPE CASE

There is no doubt that the Supreme Court's decision in the Schempp case had a profound impact on educational practices throughout the nation. For example, Fred M. Hechinger, writing in the *New York Times*, noted that the court decision would require a change in a majority of state educational systems.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, his analysis concluded that the Schempp ruling would materially affect practices in 41 per cent of the nation's school districts. This finding,

of course, is predicated on the assumption that states and their local school districts would comply with the court's decree.

In point of fact, however, early evidence in 1963 suggested a substantial reluctance on the part of top state educational administrative agencies to alter practices involving Bible reading and related exercises in the public schools. In August of 1963, some two months following the Schempp decisions, Louis Cassels surveyed the national scene for United Press International and concluded that prayer and Bible reading would continue in many public schools.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, he found only a few states which previously had religious exercises in their schools which had issued explicit orders for their discontinuation. Many state educational officials said they were still "studying" the matter.

At that time the survey found only two states — Pennsylvania and California — which were taking positive action on the court's suggestion that it is perfectly acceptable for public schools to engage in "objective" study of the Bible as history or literature. This fact alone would seem to underline the high level of public misunderstanding and emotionalism which followed the court's ruling.

As might be expected, the greatest amount of opposition and even open defiance of the Schempp ruling occurred in southern states. In the South, and in other parts of our country, no politician stands to lose many votes by attacking the Supreme Court while at the same time defending the Bible.

In Alabama, on August 6, 1963, the State Board of Education openly defied the court and made Bible reading part of the required curriculum of the public schools. The state board's resolution denounced the decision as a "calculated

effort to take God out of the public affairs of the nation."<sup>55</sup> Governor Wallace, who has had other disagreements with the Federal Government, introduced the resolution before the State Board of Education and said if the courts ruled out the practice in a specific Alabama school, "I'm going to that school and read it myself." Alabama law already required daily Bible reading in state-supported schools, but the resolution went a step further in making it part of the course of study.

The reactions of other southern states were somewhat similar though less volcanic. South Carolina's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jesse Anderson, publicly notified teachers in his state that they may "feel free" to continue classroom religious exercises.<sup>56</sup> In Kentucky, the State Board of Education issued a directive to local school boards to "continue present practices" with regard to devotional exercises. Kentucky's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wendell P. Butler, advised school officials to "Continue to read the Bible and pray until someone stops you."

In Florida the state legislature passed with only one dissenting vote a measure which allows each county school board to decide what it will do about religion in public schools. The bill's sponsor pointed out that since Florida has sixty-seven counties it would take sixty-seven different court suits to eliminate religious practices in the state's schools. On June 2, 1964, the United States Supreme Court reversed the Florida high court's decision which had defied the ruling of the *Schempp* case by upholding Bible reading and prayer programs in the Miami public schools.<sup>57</sup>

A much more mixed reaction was found in northern states in the period immediately following the *Schempp* decision. In New Jersey, the State Department of Education

acting on the advice of State Attorney General Arthur J. Sills, officially notified all local school boards that religious exercises must be discontinued. Nonetheless the school board of Mahwah, New Jersey, voted 5-4 to continue Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer.<sup>58</sup>

In Delaware, the Attorney General on August 15, 1963, ruled that Bible reading and related exercises would continue in Delaware's public schools.<sup>59</sup> He took the position that the *Schempp* decision applied only to Pennsylvania and Maryland — the states involved in the litigation. The state law requiring Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer in Delaware's public schools, he said, "is still the law in Delaware and will remain so until repealed by the General Assembly or declared by a court to be violative of the state or federal constitution."

In Massachusetts, shortly after the court's ruling in *Schempp*, the State Commission of Education formally advised all school districts that the Supreme Court ruling clearly means that "the Lord's Prayer may not be recited, nor may there be a reading of the Bible for devotional or religious purposes."<sup>60</sup> However, the superintendent of at least one town — Montague — spurned this notice and recommended that religious exercises be continued in the schools of his district. But on May 28, 1964, the Massachusetts Supreme Court noted that such practices were unconstitutional in the state's public schools and counsel for the school board indicated the board would not continue the legal battle.<sup>61</sup>

In Iowa, which has a law permitting, but not requiring Bible reading, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in a general way urged compliance with the decisions of the Supreme Court. A survey of school districts of that state compiled by the Iowa Civil Liberties Union in the spring of

1964 indicated that the state superintendent's advice was not followed universally in that state. With 72 per cent of the local school superintendents replying to the questionnaire, it was found that 15 per cent admitted that organized prayers were said during school hours, but the great bulk of this activity occurred in only a few rather than a majority of the classes in each of these schools. There was no reported instance where students were required to participate in programs of organized prayer.

In many cases, the Iowa study indicated that where prayers were being said, only a few teachers — usually in the lower grades or in kindergarten — were responsible, and this was not school policy. One Iowa superintendent indicated that no prayers were authorized, but added that he could not be sure that “no prayers are bootlegged into the school.”

The Iowa survey also revealed that Bible reading during school hours occurred in 10 per cent of the schools, with slightly over half this number indicating that the Bible was studied as literature. About 30 per cent of the superintendents indicated that hymn singing occurred during school hours, but in almost all instances this was noted as constituting part of the vocal training program of the school. Of particular interest, in light of the Supreme Court's decision in the *McCormack* case banning such practices, is the response indicating that approximately 5 per cent of the schools have released-time programs of religious instruction which take place inside the school building.

### THE AASA COMMISSION REPORT

In 1964, a commission appointed by the American Association of School Administrators released a published study supporting the Supreme Court's decision on prayers and



Bible reading in the public schools.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the commission sought to provide a set of guidelines for those who frame local school policy and those who administer and teach within such policy when confronted with problems arising from practices involving religion and the schools. This group emphasized, however, that such guidelines were not intended to be infallible. On the contrary, some may be subject to constitutional challenge in the future.

In voicing their support of the Supreme Court decisions on prayers and Bible reading the educators said:

Along with government and all its agencies, the schools must be neutral in respect to the religious beliefs of its citizens. There is no threat to the individual, to religion, or to the common good in the removal of religious exercises from the schools.

On the other hand, the study called for better public school instruction in the literary and historic aspects of religion. The commission pointed out that the history of western civilization cannot be understood "without some understanding of the great religious and church influences reaching back to the earliest of recorded times." The commission also recognized religion "as one of the greatest influences in man's history." Moreover, the report recommended that school calendars, personnel policies, and extra-curricular activities all should be adapted to accommodate a diversity of religious backgrounds and practices.

In a related area, however, this study urged that high school baccalaureate services be left to individual churches and synagogues. The public schools should not require attendance at such programs, the commission recommended.

The report also dealt with Christmas programs in the public schools and suggested methods of handling exercises

of this nature. The schools should eliminate the religious emphasis in their observances of Christmas, it noted. Christmas should be presented as one of many contributions to the American heritage which has been created by many religions. "A public school, whatever the feeling of its constituents, may not observe Christmas as though it were a church or combinations of churches," the report said.

"The non-Christian is not a guest in a Christian school — he is a fellow citizen in a public school which includes a good many Christian members," the report emphasized. The basic law seems clear, the commission noted. It is that "under the Constitution, the public schools may not sponsor a religious service . . . whether it be for a single or multi-denominational group. Neither may public schools support the Christian religions, Christian churches, nor distinctively Christian doctrines."

Concerning such Christmas programs, the study recommended a "policy that encourages reasonable recognition of Christmas in the public schools in the spirit of exposition of the differing rites and customs of families, cultures and creeds — each with deep meaning for its adherents and in sum revealing that many different religions, philosophical and cultural practices and beliefs are held by Americans."

The report concluded with a good statement of the role of the public schools and the position of religion in this relationship:

The power of the public school is in the opportunity it provides for the creative engagement of differences — differences in physical and mental capacities and characteristics, differences in background and culture, differences in the creeds men live by. This is a power not always understood, not uniformly supported, nor invariably exercised effectively. Concern over the role of religion in the

public school that leads to a lessening of that power weakens the very institution that serves a diverse society so faithfully. Concern that leads to improvement in the methods, materials and competence with which the school deals with the role of religion is constructive. The Commission has earnestly tried to respond to this latter concern.

### PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND THE BIBLE

Observers of practicing politicians might conclude that the Bible occupies as haloed a place in their speeches as does motherhood and democracy. It is of interest to note here expressions by several public officials; but they must be regarded simply as illustrative and not as a comprehensive survey.

One governor's conscience compelled him to veto a compulsory Bible-reading bill. A. V. Donahey, Governor of Ohio, explained this action in his veto message of April 30, 1925. He stated:

It is my belief that religious teaching in our homes, Sunday schools, churches, by the good mothers, fathers, and ministers of Ohio is far preferable to compulsory teaching of religion by the state. The spirit of our federal and state constitutions from the beginning have [*sic*] been to leave religious instruction to the discretion of parents. Under existing Ohio law, as upheld by our supreme court, when the people of local communities desire or demand it, boards of education in their discretion may require the reading of the Holy Bible in the schools. In other words, we now have home rule in this respect and there is no necessity for this bill establishing state dictation in the matter of religion.<sup>63</sup>

The idea of a "Bible Week," somewhat related to this study, has been commended by several governors in recent years.<sup>64</sup> An example of this is the rather interesting proclamation issued in 1942 by the then Governor of Massachusetts Leverett Saltonstall. He encouraged daily Bible

reading by the citizens "as a patriotic religious exercise." He noted that in the present world crisis, "We need to be reminded not only that the deepest needs of our day remain spiritual, but also that the best things in American life are traceable to the Scriptures."<sup>65</sup>

Today the Bible is not usually read at the opening of Congress, since a prayer is generally used. Government officials, however, have frequently urged the public to engage in more Bible reading.<sup>66</sup> President Wilson, for example, made a public appeal for funds to give the Scriptures to all servicemen during World War I. In his message in behalf of Universal Bible Sunday, President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "We know that the ancient truths of the Bible will prevail over all error because they constitute the teachings of God."<sup>67</sup> The reticent President Coolidge remarked in a letter to E. E. Thompson in March, 1927, that:

The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings should cease to be practically universal in our country.<sup>68</sup>

These are, of course, general sentiments and it cannot necessarily be deduced from them that these men would favor Bible reading in the public schools.

President Theodore Roosevelt, for one, specifically opposed such exercises. In a letter to a New York legislator in 1915 he noted:

I see you appeared against the bill making compulsory the reading of the Bible in the public schools. If I were in the legislature or governor, I should vote against or veto that bill, because I believe in absolutely non-sectarian public schools. It is not our business to have the Protestant Bible or the Catholic Vulgate or the Talmud read in

those schools. There is no objection whatever, where the local sentiment favors it, for the teacher to read a few verses of the ethical or moral parts of the Bible, so long as this causes no offense to anyone. But it is entirely wrong for the law to make this reading compulsory, and the Protestant fanatics who attempt to force this through are playing into the hands of the Catholic fanatics who want to break down the public school system and introduce a system of sectarian schools. . . .<sup>69</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing that substantially no more agreement exists among public officials regarding questions of Bible reading and religious instructions than exists among educators or religious groups.