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# Religion in education

Adele Eames Franks

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**RELIGION IN EDUCATION**

**BY**

**ADELE EAMES PRANKS**

**A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
IN CANDIDACY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to review one of the pressing problems of education - its relation to religion - in the light of the cultural changes in our democratic society, and in the light of the scientific study of religion. Studies in religion during the last fifty years have shown with increasing clarity that religion is not an isolated and specialized experience in and of itself, but a potential quality that inheres in any and every experience of normal living, operating in the realm of appreciation and values.

Studies of our changing culture of the last fifty years have shown a disturbed culture, weakened authority of custom, social perplexity, undigested social change and a callous selfishness which cannot support a lasting civilization. Over against this spiritual unrest, and the perplexity of the world, the public school should upbuild in the young the spiritual values necessary for a just and lasting civilization. The findings of this study indicate some ways in which this may be done.

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Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SETTING  
FOR THE OLD PROBLEM

## Chapter 1

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SETTING FOR THE OLD PROBLEM

The place of religion in education was not settled forever when sectarian instruction was taken out of the public schools. There is a new awareness of the problem that is expressed in the contemporary speeches and writings of public officials<sup>1</sup> of school authorities<sup>2</sup> as well as church men. There is an evaluation of the results of the school controversy which shows that momentary peace was bought at a high cost. "The Catholics lost their subsidies and henceforth were forced wholly to support their schools. The Protestant denominations lost the teaching of their religion in the public schools which henceforth were confined to purely secular subjects. The public schools lost a large part of the moral restraint which religion alone can impart. The churches lost many who should have become faithful members and the state finds its burdens vastly

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<sup>1</sup> "Conference on Children in a Democracy: Papers and Discussions at the Initial Session". (Washington, D. C., U. S. Department of Labor, 1939) pp. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> "The Public Schools and Spiritual Values" edited by John S. Brubacher, N. Y. Harper & Bros., 1944, p. 3.

increased and its citizenship degenerating. The consequences of a godless education can be studied today at close hand in any penitentiary, house of correction, or reform school. They are vitally felt by every teacher from the kindergarten to the university and by every business man from the corner grocer to the president of the most powerful bank. They fill the courts with litigation, the jails with inmates, and the graves with corpses."<sup>3</sup>

There is a new awareness of the problem which was created by the recognition of religion, as defined in the introduction, as a function of democracy. The source of this awareness is in the concern of the community for the needs of the nation and the needs of its youth.<sup>4</sup> In contemporary thinking on this problem there has been a shift from the ecclesiastical, sectarian, church and state point of view to that arising in the area of community welfare and public policy. In order to understand this shift we must review the cultural changes in our country in the fields of democracy education and religion and their relationships.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Zollmann "The Relation of Church and State", Chapter XVIII, "Studies in Religious Education", Tenn. Cokesbury Press, 1931. Carl Zollmann is Professor of Law at Marquette University.

<sup>4</sup> Bronsislav Malinowski "Freedom and Civilization", N. Y., Ray Publishers, 1944, p. 208.

Charles and Mary Beard "The Making of American Civilization", N. Y., McMillan, 1940, p. 868.



## The Changing Concept of Democracy

The growth of this country has been accompanied by changes in the biological and ethnic character of the people. The early settlers came from Great Britain with small groups from Holland, Germany, France, and the Scandinavian countries. At this time the people were comparatively homogenous in language and race. By 1850 the source of population had shifted to central, eastern, and southern Europe, and great changes in our national economy and our way of life had taken place. The American society which began as predominantly agricultural<sup>5</sup> is now predominantly industrial and a way of life, rooted in the soil and productive of self-sufficiency and independence, has given way to a dependence upon wages and a mechanized existence in cities.<sup>6</sup> The early struggle with nature on the frontier called forth all the initiative and resourcefulness a man could muster and rewarded him with a feeling of independence that became a characteristic of the American mind. Out of the experiences of the frontier came a philosophy of pragmatism, experimentalism, and rugged individualism that colored the outlook of the 19th century.<sup>7</sup>

But the closing of the frontier and the technological development of communication, production, and transportation brought

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5 Ibid., p. 26.

6 Ibid., p. 196.

7 Ibid., p. 361.

about a new national economy that demanded social planning to meet national needs.<sup>8</sup> Social planning in its turn needed a new corporate attitude to meet the social problems of health, nutrition, housing, and education.<sup>9</sup>

So we see our concept of democracy changing as our needs change in a growing and developing country. Our early need was for a non-interfering government because the individual had to be free to tame the wilderness and to satisfy the longings which had brought him to this country. So our early government was political only. But there was a growing need of something besides personal liberty, which was felt even before the frontier was closed. The necessity of co-operation and responsibility extended the influence of government to industry, education, and the rights of minority groups. In the twentieth century we found ourselves precipitated into a developing planetary society which has forced us as a nation and as individuals to face a new responsibility in the world.<sup>10</sup>

In the early days of our democratic experiment enlightened leaders felt that the people needed knowledge and understanding to conduct their government. But today democracy demands more

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>9</sup> Charles and Mary Beard "America in Midpassage", N. Y., The MacMillan Co., 1939, p. 868.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Benes "Democracy Today and Tomorrow", N. Y., The MacMillan Co., 1939, pp. 213, 218.

than knowledge and understanding on the part of the people.

"It requires an active and creative attitude, a living and heroic spirit, a positive sense of social obligation, an eagerness to improve society, a faith in both the ends and means of democracy, above all a great and ennobling goal toward which to strive."<sup>11</sup> The plans for our new planetary world outrun our intellectual habits and our emotional patterns. Economic and political statesmanship is not enough.<sup>12</sup> Henry Wallace has reminded us that we need a new heart.

Education is the chief social instrument through which the children of the new world will be instructed<sup>13</sup> in the values and ideals that are necessary to citizenship.<sup>14</sup> Our changing concept of democracy demands that education rethink its nature and social function, "especially at the point of its greatest weakness, - values, ideals, and motivation."<sup>15</sup>

11 George Counts "The Schools Can Teach Democracy", N. Y., The John Day Co., 1939, p. 31.

12 Wallace Brett Donham "Education for Responsible Living", Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944, p. 138.

13 Ellwood P. Cubberly "The History of Education", Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1920, p. 835.

14 John Brubacher, editor "The Public Schools and Spiritual Values", N. Y., Harper & Bros., 1944, p. 1.

15 William G. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 20.

## The Changing Concept of Religious Place in Education

Religion was the first concern of life for most of the early settlers and consequently, education in the early period of our development was to and for a religious end.<sup>16</sup> The settlers of the northern and middle states had suffered persecution and hardship for their religion and around their religious principles they had centered their life. Among the Calvinistic Puritans the Church and the State were united and the schools were religious in content and spirit.<sup>17</sup> The middle Colonies were heterogeneous and there could be no union of Church and State in the matter of education that was sectarian in purpose. Each church assumed the responsibility of educating its own and education assumed the parochial pattern.<sup>18</sup>

The southern settlers came to this country for economic reasons more frequently than for religious reasons, and though they brought their Anglican heritage with them, it was economic status, neither church nor state that determined opportunities for education.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ellwood Cubberly "The History of Education" Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920, p. 839.

<sup>17</sup> Ellwood Cubberly "The History of Education" Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920, p. 360.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

"As the country grew there was a noticeable shifting from the older religious view toward a newer conception of education as a preparation for life in the world here,"<sup>20</sup> and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the place of religion in education was waning.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the thought of the world had changed from a mediaeval to a modern point of view. Everywhere the school was taken over from the church, and education was made a constructive instrument of the state. The most immediate factor in the secularization of education in the United States was the disagreement between the various sects as to which should have the preference in the schools. Sectarianism was removed from public education by the impetus of Horace Mann and also President Grant in 1875, who, identifying religion with sectarianism, said, "Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and the state forever separate."<sup>21</sup>

There were other factors, however, that led the people to accept a public school system entirely divorced from religion. The religious subjects of the church schools were too limited to meet the demands of a growing government for intelligent

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 438.

<sup>21</sup> P. Henry Latz "Studies in Religious Education", Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1931, p. 421.

citizenship. There was an "emphasis on public education as a promise for the fulfillment of the democratic ideal, as an instrument for making democratic government adequate to the exigencies of society, and as a corrective for the evils of the wider democracy brought about by the extension of suffrage."<sup>22</sup> The cost of education grew rapidly and, "though they were loath to relinquish in any way their former hold on the young,"<sup>23</sup> the churches had to relinquish education to the state. The school districts of the frontier towns were civil rather than religious units,<sup>24</sup> and administered the functions of government as well as education to a citizenry that was becoming less homogeneous through a great increase in immigration.

To these factors must be added a growing secularization of American culture.<sup>25</sup> There has been a phenomenal development in science, technology, and production, and a corresponding lag in morals, religion, and art.<sup>26</sup> There has been a tendency away

<sup>22</sup> "The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy", edited by Educational Policies Commission, Washington, National Education Association, p. 44.

<sup>23</sup> Ellwood Cubberley "The History of Education", Boston, Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1920, p. 658.

<sup>24</sup> William C. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Horace L. Friess and Herbert W. Schneider, "Religion in Various Cultures", N. Y. Henry Holt & Co., 1932.

<sup>26</sup> W. T. Ogburn "Recent Social Trends", N. Y., McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1933, p. 17.

from spiritual ideals and toward monetary gain.<sup>27</sup> There has been a progressive secularization of American life with a tendency to fall apart in highly specialized and unrelated interests. The resulting unbalance is a strain on the social group and since there is an upper limit to the load of strain that any civilization can carry<sup>28</sup> "for us in America, the present is an age of reckoning. We are being summoned before the bar of history to prove that we are the true sons and daughters of those countless men and women of diverse race, creed, and nationality, who through the centuries have painfully and hopefully built the great human heritage of popular justice and freedom."<sup>29</sup>

Much that happens in our present society dehumanizes, and man lacks a scale of comparison by which to evaluate himself.<sup>30</sup> The unbalance of highly specialized and unrelated interests must be redressed by restoring ends and values to their proper place of pre-eminence. If the past progress of humanity can be defined as the process of transforming society so as to make our highest ideals increasingly practical for its individual members,<sup>31</sup> then the contemporary picture with regard to values and ideals

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27 Harold Rugg "Democracy and the Curriculum", N. Y., D. Appleton Century Co., 1939.

28 Ibid., p. 328.

29 George Counts "The Schools Can Teach Democracy", N. Y., The John Day Co., 1939, p. 5.

30 Mark Van Doren "Liberal Education", N. Y., H. Holt & Co., 1943, pp. 18, 20.

31 Alfred N. Whitehead "Adventures of Ideas", N. Y., MacMillan, 1933, p. 18.

cannot be accepted as adequate for an education of young people who desire to play and who must play a significant role in the making of a future upon which our civilization depends.<sup>32</sup>

Hilaire Belloc vividly contrasts the picture of his ancestors held by the youth of the past few generations who were influenced by Milton's "Paradise Lost", with that held by the youth of today "who are stamped by a new mythology" which is called "scientific. In place of Paradise with a God-like Adam and a delicious Eve" the youth of today "sees a wild, peopled by cretins uncouth and hairy - inarticulate as well. There is no Eden for the youth of today - not even a Hell - there is only a sort of nasty fog from which he doubts whether he shall ever escape."<sup>33</sup>

As a people we face the future with more than our highly developed techniques, we face it with a cultural heritage of values. Our heritage is spiritual as well as material. Our enemy, the totalitarian state, has recognized religion as a necessary factor in achieving unity of personality and purpose. We cannot continue to fail to achieve synthesis and unity in our democracy by allowing old and dead ideas of religion to keep our heritage of spiritual values from its proper place "as an essential element in modern education and general culture."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Daniel Prescott, Chairman "Emotion and the Educative Process", Washington, American Council on Education, 1938, pp. 105, 106.

<sup>33</sup> Hilaire Belloc "Milton", Philadelphia, J. B. Hippincott Co., 1935, pp. 260, 261.

<sup>34</sup> Edwin O. James "The Social Function of Religion", Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1940, p. 305.



In the process of the secularization of education in the United States the state assumed control of the cultural scientific and technological education of the citizens and the church assumed control of the religious education of its members under limitations it had not had before. The results for good were definite. The rights of minority groups were not infringed upon and religious tolerance grew to an amazing degree. The church was completely separated from the state and was free to develop in a free society.

But in excluding sectarian religion from the schools all religion was excluded, and without intending it, the school is placed in a position of exerting a negative influence against religion. Its exclusion dismembers our cultural inheritance and thereby dismembers the child.<sup>35</sup> We fail to deal with the deeper valuations of our culture,<sup>36</sup> and we fail to orient the child's whole self to reality.<sup>37</sup> These results were not intended. "In a day when a considerable amount of religious instruction, and with it character training, could be expected to come from the home and church, its lack in the public school system was less serious. Now, with the disappearance of religion from many homes

<sup>35</sup> Alexander Meiklejohn "Education Between Two Worlds", N. Y., Harper and Bros., 1942, pp. 5, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Harold Laski "Faith, Reason and Civilization", N. Y., Viking Press, 1944, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> Hartshorne, Stearns, and Uphams "Standards and Trends in Religious Education", New Haven, Yale University Press, 1933, p. 192.

and the almost complete break between these homes and the church, nothing in the way of religious instruction is left for the child. The result is that they are growing up young pagans."<sup>38</sup> Now when psychiatrists like O. G. Jung<sup>39</sup> and Fritz Kunkel<sup>40</sup> recognize the necessity of a religious outlook for mental health, even the possibility of using the resources of religion are denied to half of our young people, because "less than half of the young people from five to seventeen are receiving any systematic religious training."<sup>41</sup>

The very cohesion of democracy demands loyalty to a common body of ideals and purpose which is based on the Hebrew-Christian tradition of the worth of persons, the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man.<sup>42</sup> "Democracy is the heir of religion and the only existing agent of its educational function."<sup>43</sup> If democracy depends upon values which are religious in their nature, then the success of the new planetary society depends upon a common

<sup>38</sup> Georgia Harkness "The Recovery of Ideals", N. Y., Charles Scribner Sons, 1937, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> O. G. Jung "Modern Man in Search of a Soul", N. Y., Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1933, p. 254.

<sup>40</sup> Fritz Kunkel "In Search of Maturity", N. Y., Charles Scribner Sons, 1943, p. 192.

<sup>41</sup> William O. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> Mrs. Fahs "Religion in the Public Schools", Childhood Education, Feb., 1942, Association for Childhood Education, 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, D. C. Also Encyclopedia of Modern Education, opus cited, p. 677.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Van Doren "Liberal Education", N. Y., H. Holt & Co., 1943, p. 35.

aspiration of all nations toward these fundamental and comprehending values of the good life which we hold in common,<sup>44</sup> which are the cohesive force of our new state and its dynamics.

### The Reorientation of the Relation of Religion to Education

At the same time that our need for the re-establishment of spiritual values in education is most compelling, the social conditions that fostered the sectarianism that made it impossible to keep religion in the schools is gone. The problem was insoluble except through exclusion when religion was identified with sectarian theology. Now the sharp differences in our people are decaying and the public and the denominations are less interested in the differences which are anachronistic and unrealistic, than in common convictions and common responsibilities.<sup>45</sup> Denominationalism, like democracy, is passing from an individualistic to a social stage. The scientific study of religion has resulted in a functional concept of religion. Religion has become the reevaluation of all values<sup>46</sup> - intellectual, economic, social, political, aesthetic, and moral - into a total meaning and worth of life. Religion has come to mean a quality of life that

<sup>44</sup> At the opening of the United Nations Conference at San Francisco, President Truman and Secretary of State Stettinius used our "common high ideals which benefit mankind" as the force that brought the nations together.

<sup>45</sup> Frank Stewart "Protestant Youth Maps Pattern for Postwar Church", The Witness, July 13, 1944, 135 Liberty St., N. Y.

<sup>46</sup> William C. Bower "Character Through Creative Experience", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1930, p. 229.

integrates all personal and social experience. Religious education is an education in values in fundamental points of view, in ways of looking at life and society and the universe. It is much bigger than any program of formalized religious instruction. It becomes that enormously significant process which gives individuals and groups their standards and their frames of reference. "But the question is whether these choices are the illiterate selections of persons who have never had an opportunity to know the best that men have thought and said about human destiny. In any aspect of culture, men who start out ignoring the heritage of the past will behave in a way that is unenlightened, uncritical, and inconsistent. In the field of religion it is a popular American superstition that all one needs to do is to go out in the woods and commune with nature. Without religious education we can expect all sorts of magic, theosophy, and astrology."<sup>47</sup>

The identification of religion with sectarianism is a survival that lags behind the social forces of American culture and the growing insights of informed religious thinking. "So the policy of secular education is a lamentable legacy from the denominational controversies of the last century and the obscurantism which was largely responsible for the feud between science and religion."<sup>48</sup> Education cannot afford to rest its theory on popular

<sup>47</sup> Paul Williams "The New Education and Religion", N. Y., Association Press, 1945, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> Edwin O. James "The Social Function of Religion", Nashville Cokesbury Press, 1940, p. 304.

survivals and prejudice - neither can religion. And it, like education, must make use of the results of research, insight, and experimentation. When it does so, real religion becomes an achievement of maturity,<sup>49</sup> a necessary part of education.<sup>50</sup> "The role of religion in maintaining personal integration cannot be denied successfully even by those who want none of it, and, therefore, it hardly seems justifiable to discuss the curricula of educational institutions without mentioning the possibility of attempting to help young people crystallize their assumptions and establish their faiths by curricular means. At any rate, we feel it desirable here to call attention to the fact that late adolescence is a period when many young people are wrestling with the problem of the meaning of life, of finding out and crystallizing the basic assumptions which underlie their codes of ethics and are their basis of faith."<sup>51</sup>

Changing social need and a changing concept of religion call for a new place for religion in the education for a new democracy.

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49 Mary Ross Hall "First the Blade, Then the Ear", Childhood Education, Feb., 1942, Association for Childhood Education, 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

50 Wallace Brett Donham "Education for Responsible Living", Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944, p. 111.

51 Daniel Alfred Prescott, Chairman "Emotion and the Educative Process", Washington, D. C., American Council on Education, 1938, p. 229.

**Chapter 2**

**THE EXAMINATION OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**

## Chapter 2

### THE EXAMINATION OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In order to understand this new relationship between education, religion, and the state, we must examine the nature and function of education, the nature and function of religion and the real relationship between the church and state. Only then can we attempt to solve the problem of the place of the new concept of religion in education.

#### The Nature and Function of Education

In no aspect of our common life have there been greater changes than in the way we have come to think of the nature and ends of education. The growing complexity of life with the specialization of activities and the vast increase of human knowledge are not the only influences that have made us re-examine education. The special demands made by a democracy on a wide diversity of people have focused our attention on action as the end of education. Our dissatisfaction with the action of our people and our insight into the action necessary if our democracy is to change to meet the demand of the times has made us look into the means of education. When we look, we find many traditional

notions of education influencing our curriculum. We also find that the assumptions of the traditional notions are not analyzed and their synthesis is in appearance only.

Perhaps the oldest conception of education is that of social discipline. Education is thought of as "something done to children."<sup>1</sup> "From the most primitive life to the present day, the restless and reckless and terrifying activity of children has always held adults breathless; and they, in deep concern have always striven to quell this dangerous activity, and to place a premium upon docility, receptivity, and plasticity."<sup>2</sup> "Therefore, the purpose of education has always tended to be thought of in terms of the repression of the spontaneous behavior of the young and the molding of them into the thought forms, institutions, and habits of society."<sup>3</sup> This notion of education received great impulse through the writings and influence of John Locke and actually resulted in an education that was divided. "Locke has one scheme of teaching for young gentlemen of property and another, quite different, for the children of the working poor,"<sup>4</sup> because they were to be molded into different classes of persons.

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1 Issac Doughton "Modern Public Education", N. Y., D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935, p. 101.

2 Ibid., p. 102.

3 William C. Bower "Character Through Creative Experience", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1930, p. 47.

4 Alexander Meiklejohn "Education Between Two Worlds", N. Y., Harper Bros., p. 26.



Another notion of education that has persisted in our society is to view it as the transmission of knowledge. This view is largely "the product of societies that assumed the future would be much like the past, and yet it is used as educational food in a society where change is the rule, not the exception."<sup>5</sup> As it has become impossible for any one person to master more than a segment of existing knowledge, this conception of education is inadequate and misleading.

Another notion of education that is inadequate and misleading is to define it in terms of mental discipline. "By this is meant that the intrinsic social value of subject matter is of minor importance; what is important is the discipline, or training of the mind by the study of the subject matter."<sup>6</sup> In spite of the new discoveries made in the psychology of education that show that learning is not automatically transferred, this idea of education has persisted because it seems to appeal to common sense.<sup>7</sup>

These ideas of education are adult-centered and when their basic assumptions are clearly analyzed, they are seen as lagging behind the new knowledge that man has of himself. When the implications of our growing knowledge and our changing social environment have been faced, a child-centered philosophy of education has developed.

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5 John Dewey "Experience and Education", N. Y., The Macmillan Co., 1939, p. 5.

6 Issac Doughton "Modern Public Education", N. Y., D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935, p. 109.

7 Gates, Jersild, McConnell, Challman "Educational Psychology", N. Y., Macmillan Co., 1942, p. 537.

The child-centered point of view that began with Comenius in the seventeenth century and continued through Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel<sup>8</sup> into the nineteenth century was constantly creating tension and dissatisfaction with the old traditional ideas of education. At the beginning of the twentieth century these tensions were expressed in the writings of Dewey and his pioneering released a flood of response from those who saw the philosophical, psychological, and social inconsistencies in the then existing American education.

Great changes have taken place in the point of view of many educators and where the implications of our new knowledge and new social environment have been faced definite ideas as to the function of education have developed. "It now becomes clear that the function of education as a social responsibility in democracy is not merely to transmit the end products of historical culture as such, or to mold the young into inherited thought forms and institutions or even to unfold the innate characteristics of individual persons. Instead it becomes clear that the function of education in a democracy is to assist the young in dealing intelligently and effectively with the issues of contemporary life with the aid of the resources of the experience of the past."<sup>9</sup> It is the function

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<sup>8</sup> Issac Doughton "Modern Public Education", N. Y., D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935, pp. 72-88.

<sup>9</sup> Henry C. Morrison "American Schools", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943, p. 7.

of education in a democracy to assist its future citizens in acquiring those methods of thought and those attitudes of co-operation and self-discipline upon which responsible participation in a democracy rests.<sup>10</sup> Education for a democracy must develop initiative and competence in dealing with the issues of the common life through critical analysis of factors and outcomes and ability to make decisions and carry them through into action.<sup>11</sup>

Translated into practice this means that education begins with the actual experience of living persons where they are in their interaction with their world.<sup>12</sup> Its content consists of units of experience, as these experiences arise out of the manifold relations of personal and social living. The subject matter of science, history, literature, and arts is relevant to these experiences as resources for interpreting, analyzing, judging, and bringing them through in the completed act.<sup>13</sup> "Education so conceived is creative and the burden of education shifts from teaching to learning and from passive assimilation of tradition to inquiry, commitment, and constructive action. It overruns the boundaries of any institution - even the school - and the focus of attention shifts

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10 William C. Bower "Character Through Creative Experience", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1930, p. 26.

11 Henry C. Morrison, opus cited, p. 10.

12 Gates, Jersild, McConnell, Challman "Educational Psychology", N. Y., Macmillan Co., 1942, p. 17.

13 Gates, Jersild, McConnell, Challman "Educational Psychology", N. Y., Macmillan, 1942, Chapter XII, Principles of Guidance in Learning, Especially, p. 389.

from any one institution to the whole community. The base of education of the whole person is in the whole community."<sup>14</sup>

### The Nature and Function of Religion

In the early period of our country's development and still - all too often - religion was understood in terms of theology, ceremonial and ecclesiastical institution. The theology was supernaturally revealed in the Bible, the ceremonials were the sacraments which were considered the exclusive channels of divine grace and the ecclesiastical institution soon became separated from and frequently opposed to the secular society around it. The religion that developed from these points of emphasis was sectarian and divisive in its nature. It was this sectarianism, not religion as such, that was excluded from the schools.

But the educator cannot turn to traditional and popular notions about religion as a basis for an adequate understanding of religion and its meaning in his field. The last fifty years have been a time when thinking men have had to reconsider current and inherited beliefs in the light of the scientific studies in anthropology, history, sociology, and psychology. Religious leaders and theologians could not ignore "the rapid progress of scientific knowledge and thought; the deeper intellectual interest in the subject; the widespread tendencies in all parts of the world to reform or reconstruct

<sup>14</sup> William C. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 45.

religion; and the effect of social, political, and international events of a sort which in the past have both influenced and been influenced by religion."<sup>15</sup>

Out of this rethinking has come a functional concept of religion. "From this point of view religion is seen to be not an isolated and unique specialized experience in and of itself, but a potential quality that inheres in any and every experience of normal living - in the family, in vocation, in civic life, in recreational life, and in the intellectual life. Any experience whatsoever becomes religious when it is perceived in its relation to God, when it is judged in the light of that relationship and when it is brought under the spiritualizing control of that relationship. Thus, religion is not something to be added to the experiences of day by day living, but a quality that diffuses itself through the entire range of personal and social experience."<sup>16</sup>

When religious beliefs are subjected to the methods used in the study of human behavior in sociology, history, anthropology, and psychology, they appear as a phase of people's total culture.<sup>17</sup> They are found to differ in form of expression from one culture to another. They differ from one country to another, and they even differ in different sections of one country.<sup>18</sup> The denominations

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<sup>15</sup> Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1925, p. 662.

<sup>16</sup> P. Henry Latz, Editor "Studies in Religious Education", Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1931, p. 181.

<sup>17</sup> Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, N. Y., Scribner's Sons, 1925, p. 660

<sup>18</sup> Joachim Wach "Sociology of Religion", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, Chapter VI, Religion and Society, p. 205.

or sects are seen to stem from economic and cultural differences as well as theological and the religious beliefs are seen to change as the culture of social groups change.<sup>19</sup> All religious beliefs are seen as so completely blended with social factors that they cannot be separately considered, and religion became a historical and social process in which continuity and change are united.<sup>20</sup> The change in religion is due to its functional relation to the evolving experience of the common life. Religion is therefore a phase of people's total interaction with the objective world of nature, organized society, and past traditions and is therefore diffused throughout every dimension of a people's practical interests and activities.<sup>21</sup> Religion is essentially a socially-shared experience having at the same time profound personal implication. Consequently, it appears when all specific interests, economic, intellectual, political, esthetic, and moral are integrated in terms of fundamental values, and at the same time its distinctive quality lies in the personal realm, in the revaluation of all other values in relation to ultimate reality.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Ibid., p. 56.

20 Ibid., pp. 107, 108; also the point of view expressed by W. Schmidt "The Origin and Growth of Religion", London Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1931.

21 Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, N. Y., Scribner's Sons, 1925, pp. 662-663; also Shailer Mathews "Atonement and the Social Process", N. Y., Macmillan Co., 1931.

22 Philip Latz, editor "Studies in Religious Education", Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1931, p. 178.

We recognize the tendency in our highly specialized culture for each activity to become dissociated from the whole, and we feel our need for an integrating factor in our whole fabric.<sup>23</sup> In view of our great need and in view of the lessened hold of religion on our society, there "is an educational job to be done."<sup>24</sup> The modern mind can better distinguish between the function and the instruments in which this function finds expression. On the functional level religion is unitive; it is only on the structural level of theology, ritual and ecclesiastical institution that it is sectarian and divisive.

#### The Relationship of Church and State

It was a matter of vital importance to our Democracy that the church as an institution have no power in our government and that individuals have the right to worship or not to worship as they please. The first amendment to the Constitution gave to religious liberty the character of a political right.<sup>25</sup> But this separation was on a structural level. The church and the state are the structures through which the religion and the government of a people are expressed. However, on the functional level religion and government are each part of the whole community life.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Carr "Conditions of Peace", New York, The Macmillan Co., 1942, p. 105.

<sup>24</sup> Wallace B. Donham "Education for Responsible Living", Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1944, p. lll.

<sup>25</sup> Encyclopedia of Modern Education, N. Y., Philosophical Library, Inc., 1943, p. 678.

On the structural level there is conflict and competition, on the functional level each supports and complements the other. Any solution to the problem of the place of religion in education must be found on the functional level. The needs of people are not for food, shelter, and justice only, but for spiritual values and convictions that lend meaning to life and give them a common national ideal.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time we must realize that the relationship of the church and state has not remained static. The Christian church has preached a social gospel which has related it to government in a new way, and the growth of a secular law and morality has given the state a rival spiritual authority.<sup>27</sup> As far as the schools are concerned the present arrangement of eliminating all religious as well as sectarian instruction stacks the cards heavily in favor of the religion of the secularists - those who favor a mechanistic philosophy of life.<sup>28</sup> President Nicholas Murray Butler, giving his annual report to the Board of Trustees of Columbia University in 1954, says, "So far as tax supported schools are concerned, an odd situation has been permitted to arise. The separation of church and state is fundamental to our political order, but so far as religion is concerned, this principle has been so far departed from as to put

<sup>26</sup> Henry Morrison "American Schools", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943, p. 108.

<sup>27</sup> Horace Friess and Herbert W. Schneider "Religion in Various Cultures", N. Y., Henry Holt & Co., 1932, p. 491.

<sup>28</sup> J. Paul Williams "The New Education and Religion", N. Y., Association Press, 1945, p. 119.



the whole force and influence of the tax supported school on the side of one element in the population - namely, that which is pagan and believes in no religion whatsoever. The government's indifference to religion must not be allowed to become opposition to religion."

Actually the term non-sectarian in the school laws has been confused with secular and the term religious freedom has come to mean absence of religion or unimportance of religion. In reality the temporal and the spiritual domains of life are so intertwined that all attempts to completely separate them are doomed to failure.

**Chapter 3**  
**POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

## Chapter 3

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The implications of the foregoing study indicate that the solution of the problem of how to provide for the religious education of our children, that was worked out a century ago, is inadequate for today. At that time knowledge of educational techniques were scant, religious education was confused with sectarian education, and the solution which was evolved came as a result of political compromise. The secular school was not the result of lack of concern for religion - rather it resulted because men could see no other way of preserving freedom than to make religious education the responsibility of the home and the church and to throw religion as well as sectarianism out of the public schools. But today we see religion as a quality of life and an education that separates religion from life as unrealistic and anachronistic.

When the state gave the teaching of religion to the home and the church, the home was a close unit with an accepted authority that enabled it to pass on to the young the culture of the group. But the secularization of the Western civilization deprived the family of many of its functions and so depleted its authority that it has failed to carry on its religious function.<sup>1</sup> The new under-

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<sup>1</sup> Joachim Wach "Sociology of Religion", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 69.

standing of personality that realizes the extreme importance of the experiences of our early years<sup>2</sup> and the new understanding of the adult's ability to learn and, therefore, to improve in the handling of his child through a study of his child's needs may help the home find a new place of authority in our present world. By means of adult education in religion parents can be brought to understand the importance of religious training in early childhood and can learn the best methods of teaching religion and character in the home.

The changes in our civilization have had their effect on the traditional role of the church, and today religious instruction cannot be given to all by the church because only half of the young people of our country attend church. The churches lack the equipment for such a large scale educational responsibility. The sectarian emphasis of many churches make them unable to stress the church in its ecumenical and historic role as the concrete embodiment of religious attitudes in human life.

But there are some aspects of a vital religious life which are the function of the church. The church can make explicit, clarify, and bring to fullness of meaning religious values involved in the experience of people with the natural, social, and cosmic world.<sup>3</sup> No man, after making a conscious effort to choose the best way of life, can live out his ideals with confidence and poise unless he

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<sup>2</sup> Frankwood Williams "Adolescence", N. Y., Farrar & Rinehart, 1930, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> William C. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 81.

comes recurrently into their presence.

The church can set life in its universal context where it can be intellectually understood and emotionally felt in its wholeness.<sup>4</sup> Our times demand a new morality to meet the needs of a planetary society.<sup>5</sup> The church provides a fellowship which has a universal association which transcends all human differences and covers all time. In this respect it can provide the pattern for our new society.

The church in its function of bringing the searching criticism of spiritual values to bear upon every process, every institution and every way of life operative in society calls for devotion to causes and gives us a moral imperative.

The new role of the school in the relationship of religion to education in a democracy is important. We have seen that a division of education into secular and religious is not based on sound educational philosophy or the modern functional concept of religion. Yet we are handicapped in finding the place of religion in education by two factors. The first one is the persistence of the outworn idea that religious liberty in our country demands no religion in our schools. Before the present European catastrophe

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<sup>4</sup> William C. Bower "Church and State in Education", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> William E. Hacking "Living Religions and a World Faith", N. Y., Macmillan Co., 1940, p. 19.

public support of religious education was not incompatible with religious liberty in other Occidental countries - excepting France, Republican Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Australia, England, and Canada had all maintained freedom of religion and at the same time recognized the spiritual needs of their pupils.<sup>6</sup> We might find in their solutions suggestions that would be valuable.

The other factor that handicaps us in a solution of our problem is the fact that practically no research has been done on the technique of teaching religion. What is suggested here must come from our knowledge of human personality from educational psychology in general and from our new appreciation of religious values in our personal and communal life.

"Despite the persistent delusion of many who ought to know better, education is not limited to things of the intellect."<sup>7</sup>

"From the earliest times the school as an institution has existed because boys and girls had to be provided with something that would guide their minds when they had passed beyond parental and scholastic tutelage and guide their acts when they were beyond the reach of the police. That something moreover must be what is right in itself rather than what is decreed by authority or inculcated by

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<sup>6</sup> J. Paul Williams "The New Education and Religion", N. Y., Association Press, 1945, pp. 81-91.

<sup>7</sup> Henry C. Morrison "American Schools", Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943, p. 7.

propaganda. In short, what is transmitted must be the elements of civilization in the arts and sciences and moral attitudes which constitute civilized existence."<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, in order to fulfill its function the school should:

include religion as a field of knowledge, objectively dealt with, not ignored or moralistically treated;

include as a part of the professional training of teachers a religion that is non-sectarian and functional, based on the discoveries of leaders in all fields of knowledge;

use religion as a principle to integrate the whole system of education;

use the resources of religion in the program of personal counseling.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

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