

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE VIRGINIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

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Preface

During a White House Conference in 1940
President Roosevelt said, ⁽¹⁾ "Religion especial-
ly helps children to appreciate life in its
wholeness, and to develop a deep sense of the
sacredness of human personality It is im-
portant to consider how provision can best be
made for religious training. In this we must
keep in mind both the wisdom of maintaining the
separation of church and state, and the great
importance of religion in personal and social
living."

(1) "Religious Education and the Public School"

Speech by Dr. Emanuel Gamoran Page 1.
Files of S. M. Lefkowitz, Richmond, Virginia.

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Chapter I
Constitutional Basis

This nation was settled by a large number of different religious sects, and this number has continued to increase. The Colonies were predominantly Protestant; these Protestants differed greatly among themselves. When the Revolutionary War broke out the Episcopal faith had been declared the established religion of the seven English colonies, and the Congregational was the established religion in three of the New England colonies, while but three colonies (Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Maryland) had declared for religious freedom and had refused to give a state preference to any religion. Catholics were not allowed to vote or hold religious services except in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The religious problem was well handled by the Constitutional Convention. It incorporated into the Constitution provision

which guaranteed the free exercise of religion to all and forbade the establishment by Congress of any religious test or oath as a prerequisite for holding any office under control of the Federal Government.⁽¹⁾

About 1850 the Catholics in America were becoming numerous, and began to petition states for their share of public school funds. Immediately the demand everywhere met with intense opposition. State legislatures were petitioned. Candidates for office were forced to declare their position on the question. Anti-Catholic riots occurred in a number of cities. Legislatures now began to amend constitutions forbidding a division of the school funds among the churches.

In 1875 President Grant, in his message to Congress, urged the submission of an amendment to the Federal Constitution making it the duty of the States to support free public schools, free from religious teaching, and forbidding the di-

(1) Cubberley, E. P., Public Education in the United States. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston, Mass. 1934

version of school funds to church or sectarian purposes. Later he renewed the recommendation, but Congress took no action because it considered such action unnecessary. The people of the states had already decided that school funds must not be used for religious purposes, for no state was admitted to the union after 1858, except West Virginia, which failed to insert such a provision in its first state constitution. The American people mean to keep the public school system united as one state school system, well realizing that religious implications could only lead to inefficiency and educational chaos. (1)

Article IV, section 58 of the present constitution of Virginia says: "No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry, whatsoever, nor shall he be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account

(1) Cubberley, E. P., Public Education in the United States. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston, Mass. 1934

of his religious opinions of belief; but all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect, their civil capacities. And the General Assembly shall not prescribe any religious test whatever, or confer any peculiar privileges or advantages on any sect or denomination, or pass any law requiring or authorizing any religious society, or the people of any district within the State, to levy on themselves, or others any tax for the erection or repair of any house of public worship, or for the support of any church or ministry; but it shall be left free to every person to select his religious instructor, and to make for his support such private contract as he shall please."

The Virginia Constitution says that every man shall have religious freedom and that public religion shall not be forced upon him. There is nothing in the Constitution pertaining to religion

in the public schools. However, the above quoted section states that individuals cannot be taxed for a public religion. According to the present constitution the public schools should not sponsor a religious education, nor use their influence in religious education, as long as there are religious sects or denominations, for the constitution says that no sect or denomination shall be conferred any peculiar privileges or advantages.

(1)
Frank Moore, Lexington attorney and member of the House of Delegates of Virginia from 1924 to 1943, said that there was no issue in the legislature on the question of religious education in the public schools during his term of public service.
(2)

(1) Deceased in 1943.
(2) Interview May 3, 1942.

Chapter II
Present Practices

In many of the public schools of Virginia there is a daily devotion period. What is done during this period varies from Bible reading and repeating the "Lord's Prayer" to the singing of "Old Black Joe". The average time for this period is about ten minutes. Less than half of the public schools have such a period designated as the devo-
(1)
tional period.

Bible is being taught according to the State Syllabus in some public schools. On the
(2)
"Daily Schedule" report of September, 1941, only about twenty of the near six hundred high schools in Virginia reported teaching Bible accor-
(3)
ding to the State Syllabus. On February 2, 1913, The State Board of Education appointed a committee of

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- (1) Files of Dr. Fred Alexander, Supervisor of Secondary Education and Negro Education, Richmond, Virginia.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Official Syllabus of Bible Study, Division of Purchase and Printing 1933, page 1, Richmond, Virginia.

(1)
seven men, educational and religious leaders, who were actively connected with the Jewish, Roman Catholic and Protestant Church, to prepare suitable outlines of courses in Bible Study for school pupils.

On February 15th the appointed committee met and outlined its work. By August 8th of that same year the committee had completed the outline and on that date it was signed by each of the members, and the chairman was appointed to present the Syllabuses to the State Board of Education for its approval. It was approved.

In the early part of 1943 the State Board of Education approved a new course in Religious Education, "The Bible in our American Life", prepared by a committee headed by Dr. S. Vernon McCasland, professor of Biblical Literature at the University of Virginia. This course may be sub-

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- (1) Professor W. M. Forrest, Chairman, University of Va.
President R. E. Blackwell, Secretary, Randolph Macon College.
Honorable R. C. Stearnes, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Dean J. G. Metcalf, Richmond College.
Rev. Father James, Benedictine Military College
Mr. Charles Hutzler, formerly of the Richmond School Board
Rev. George P. Mayo, Blue Ridge Industrial School.

stituted for any one of the three Syllabuses.

The Syllabuses are only outlines of Bible courses and are not intended to be made a required part of the public school courses. Public school funds are not to be used to provide the Bible teaching. The parents and religious leaders have all the responsibility of inducing pupils to take the classes and also the responsibility of providing and paying the Bible teacher. The Research Department of the State Board of Education says (1) there are no funds for religious education.

The Jefferson High School for the white and the Lucy Addison High School for the colored in the city of Roanoke both teach Bible according to the State Syllabuses, and the School Board pays the teachers. The teachers are paid by the school Board from the Public School fund just as other public teachers are. (2)

(1) Office of Statistician and Recording Secretary, Richmond, Va.

(2) Stated in a letter from Mr. D. E. McQuilkin, Superintendent of Roanoke city schools.
See page 58 of Appendix.

The Bible teaching had its origin in 1919. The first teacher was a Rev. Wood, who went into World War 1 as a Y. M. C. A. worker. Miss Cora Board then took up the work by teaching the classes in the Y. M. C. A. Building. Soon the classes were changed and conducted in a school room. The St. John's Episcopal Church of the city raised the money to pay the teachers.

About 1930, in Roanoke, a cooperative movement began which permitted the pupils to be excused from school rooms to go to Churchse where ministers taught Bible classes. After a year's trial this plan was abandoned. However the work at the schools continued uninterrupted. About this time an English teacher taught the Bible classes in a school room. This practice still continues.

During the fall term Mrs. C. W. Cooke teaches some English and some Bible. Her entire time is devoted to Bible teaching during the spring term. The classes are entirely elective. At the Jefferson High School five classes were taught the second semester in 1942. Principal John D. Riddick says the classes have been very satisfactory. He is highly pleased and really enthusiastic about the set up. ⁽¹⁾ Mrs. Cook handles the classes with extreme care so as not to offend any sect, individual, or non-religious pupil.

Mr. D. E. McQuilkin, Superintendent of Roanoke City Schools, says, "the class is one of the most valuable classes in the school. We would as soon give up chemistry or any other class in the school as Bible, for it serves a real need of the community." ⁽²⁾

(1) J. D. Riddick interviewed February 10, 1943.

(2) Mr. D. E. McQuilkin, - interviewed February 10, 1943.

At the Lucy Addison colored school a minister who is a member of the regular faculty teaches the Bible Classes. He devotes part of his time to Bible Classes. Mr. McQuilkin says that if it was needful his full time would be given to Bible teaching. So far as can be found this is the only city in Virginia with such a system.

Chapter III

Released Time Method and its Implications

The fastest growing method of teaching Bible in the public schools is the "Released Time" method. By "released time" is meant that the pupils are allowed a leave of absence for about one hour a week for religious instruction by persons other than the regular teachers engaged by the School Board. Regular classes are dismissed to allow a Bible teacher to take over the class and teach Bible to the children whose parents request it of the principal of the school. There are only a very few High Schools teaching according to this method. The Virginia Council of Religious Education is very desirous of teaching by this method in the High Schools, but has not had sufficient material to offer the courses. Next year much more emphasis will be given to High School work.

The Released Time for religious education began in 1913 under the leadership of Dr. William Wirt, Superintendent of Schools of Gary, Indiana. He authorized the releasing of time for religious instruction.⁽¹⁾ This movement spread very rapidly: at first in the surrounding area.⁽²⁾ On September 21, 1925, Hon. Harris Hart, State Superintendent of Public Instructions, wrote a letter to Rev. Minor C. Miller, who was at that time secretary of the Virginia Sunday School Association, stating that he believed religion should be taught in the Virginia Schools on a basis of Released Time system. In December of that same year a meeting was held at Staunton, Virginia, for the purpose of working out a system for religious education in Virginia. About two dozen people attended this meeting from Augusta and Rockingham counties. A committee was appointed to study ways and means of beginning this week-day religious education in the represented counties. For the following three years the Council centered its work in

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- (1) "Released Time for Religious Study"
Contemporary Jewish Record - Feb. 1941, Vol. IV No. 1
- (2) Miller, M. C. A Decade Of Progress, Virginia Council of Religious Education, Bridgewater, Virginia, 1936.

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Fairfax, Rockingham and Arlington Counties and in the city of Harrisonburg.

The Virginia Council of Religious Education was organized on January 18, 1928, ⁽¹⁾ and incorporated according to the Virginia State Laws May 1, 1930. The council is an inter-denominational organization of the Protestant Churches, whose purpose is to advance the teaching of Christian religion among the children, young people, and adults in Virginia.

The purpose of the Council is to promote religious education in harmony with Protestant Churches, by means of Sunday Schools, vacation and week day schools, and conventions, or other methods or purposes which the cooperating denominations may agree upon. Each denomination is invited to elect official representatives; fourteen have elected representatives.

(1) Miller, M. C.
The Church in Cooperation
Virginia Council of Religious Education:
Bridgewater, Virginia, 1931

The plan provides that each denomination in Virginia may have an official voice in the management of the Council affairs.

The charter of the Virginia Council of Religious Education provides that denominational representatives shall be elected as follows:

One member selected by each Protestant denominational body for the first 10,000 communicant church membership or any portion thereof; a second member for the next 15,000 or major portion thereof; one member for each additional 25,000 or major portion thereof up to the first 100,000 and one member additional for each 50,000 or major portion thereof above the first 100,000. Each denominational body its representative or representatives in its own way. (1)

(1) Miller, M. C. "Religious Education in the Community" The Old Dominion Beacon Vol. XIV, No. 3, (August 15, 1940)

How week-day classes in Religious Education are formed.

The Council has formulated three definite steps of procedure. (1) The first step is to educate the people of the community as to the present religious status and as to what should be done. This consists of revealing the facts about the per cent of the children in Sunday School and the responsibility resting upon the community in reaching these who have no church connections; a study of the local Sunday Schools and their efficiency in their work; and the organization of discussion groups to discuss the history and development of the week-day religious education, including organization, participation, curriculum, teachers, finance, and results which might be achieved. The second step is to se-

(1) Miller, M. C. "Ecumenicity in Action"
Virginia Council of Religious Education:
Bridgewater, Virginia.

cure cooperation of the Public School authorities. The school authorities in Virginia have usually been friendly in their attitude toward the church program. The question is (1)

"Will the public school authorities permit children to be released from public school duties for about one hour each week to enable them to receive religious instruction by the churches, on condition that the churches employ teachers who are as well trained as the teachers in the public schools and on condition that parents request the privilege by signing the application blank on the pupils enrollment card"? The third step is to secure funds and select teachers. The teachers receive approximately the same salary as public school teachers in the same county. A budget is adopted and solicitors are sent out to canvass funds from all who are interested in this community

(1) Miller, M. C. "Ecumenicity in Action"
Virginia Council of Religious Education:
Bridgewater, Virginia

program. When sufficient funds are assured them a competent teacher is secured.

Teachers:

The regular method of securing teachers is through the Virginia Council of Religious Education. When a community desires a Bible teacher the local group, taking the initiative, which is usually a cooperating religious group, asks the Virginia Council to recommend a teacher. This the organization is glad to do. Teacher applications are filed with the general council. * This council recommends an applicant to the local group. The local sponsoring group approves the suggested teacher and employs at its own discretion. During the School session 1942-43 there were fifty-six full time teachers and four part time teachers employed. Of these fifty-six employed full time twenty-six have a Master's

* See Appendix for teacher Application blank.

Degree majoring in Religious Education and all of the others have received a minimum of four years of College training, with religious education as their major field of study.

Finance:

In 1930 the cost of this work was \$3,600.00; in 1942-43 the total budget exceeded \$50,000.00. (1) This money is used for teachers' salaries, their travel, supplies and general supervision. About ninety-five per cent of the total budget is used as teachers' salaries. The teacher's salary usually parallels that of the elementary teachers employed by the school board. This pay ranges from \$65.00 to \$110.00 per month. They receive an additional amount for necessary traveling. In Rockbridge County, for example, the religious leaders and those interested form an organization which has for its specific purpose the sponsoring of a Bible teacher in the local schools.

(1) Office of Minor C. Miller:
Bridgewater, Va.

This group appoints a committee to direct a campaign for raising finances for this purpose. In some communities a canvass from door to door is made. In other school areas each local church is assessed a certain amount by the finance committee. The entire county has one full time and one part time teacher. The full time teacher teaches a day or a half day each week in each school which participates in the religious educational program.

As will be noticed, there has been a very rapid progress in this week-day religious education in the State of Virginia since its beginning. During the years of depression it suffered a loss as other things did, but since 1936 it has made almost unbelievable progress. In 1930, as will be seen from table no. 1, there were less than 1500 pupils enrolled in these classes. In 1942 ⁽¹⁾ thirty-eight counties of Virginia were teaching Bible

(1) Miller, M. C. The Old Dominion Beacon
Virginia Council of Religious Education:
Bridgewater, Virginia. Vol. XVI, No. 3, Sept 1, 1942.

in the elementary public schools on the released time plan. There were 38,772 pupils in 1190 classes in 314 different schools. About ninety-eight per cent of the pupils who have had the opportunity of taking Bible are doing so.

Below is a table showing the growth of week day religious education in Virginia. (1)

<u>Year</u>	<u>School Division</u>	<u>Number Teachers</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1930	4	2	1400	\$ 3,600.00
1931	4	2	1600	3,600.00
1932	6	4	2800	3,000.00
1933	4	3	1750	2,500.00
1934	4	3	2000	2,500.00
1935	11	18	2750	8,500.00
1936	11	18	6209	8,500.00
1937	15	22	9000	13,500.00
1938	19	28	14004	15,777.00
1939	23	34	18895	21,389.00
1940	26	37	23963	25,091.00
1941	30	42	28627	30,032.00
1942	38	54	38772	46,161.84

Table no. 1

(1) Miller, M. C. The Old Dominion Beacon. Virginia Council of Religious Education. Bridgewater, Virginia Vol. XVI, No. 3, September 1, 1942.

Considering the released time method of teaching religion in the public schools, there are certain results and implications which inevitably follow.

The released time method certainly tends toward such intimate relationship between the school and the religious organizations as would be in opposition to the spirit and the principles of the separation of the state and the church. This separation is an integral part of American democracy. This has been a cherished tradition since the establishment of the Republic. We believe with our fore-fathers that civil power should never "intermeddle" in religious matters, nor should religious creed or sect try to inject its doctrines into civil affairs and public institutions. It seems that those are not far from truth, who believe that it is the responsibility of the church to teach religion.

There will be public distinction between those who want religious education and those who do not; if the public and the school officials favor the released plan, then by implication, the child who does attend religious school will be favored. The child who is not released will be in an unfavorable light which will cause him anguish and humiliation.

This method will accentuate religious differences between children. A plan that will meet the technical requirements of the school system and the wishes of religious groups will lead to the classification of children as Protestants, Catholics, Jews, etc. The protection in school from religious discrimination would be destroyed. An Attorney General of Illinois in 1926 ⁽¹⁾ held that it was unlawful to excuse some pupils at the request of their parents and to keep the remainder in class; that this was a

(1) Fine, Morris. "Released Time For Religious Study", Contemporary Jewish Record, The American Jewish Committee; New York, Vol. 1V, No. 1. (February 1941) 17

form of religious segregation and discrimination in that some were not released from school because they were hostile to the religious principles being taught.

"New Jersey's Commissioner of Education, Charles Herbert Elliott, forbade Milltown to give denominational teaching in its only grammar school during school hours. His decision that such teaching would be unconstitutional was buttressed by one parent who wrote: "I don't want (my daughter) to go to school to be taught to be a Roman Catholic or Protestant, but I do expect her to receive character education every hour of every day she is in school."

"New York City's School Superintendent, John E. Wade, mulled over a Public Education Association report on the working of "released time" for religious education. The surveyors decided to continue opposing this system, as they had since it was begun

in 1941. They found that many released children (more than 80% of whom are Roman Catholic, in the 89 New York City schools surveyed) did not turn up at their chosen religious schools. Teachers had difficulty in checking, since they were ordered not to comment in school on whether or not a child took religious instructions." (1)

The released time method may be an entering wedge of the church into the schools. The public schools, in effect, are the attendance agents for religious schools. The regular teachers of the public school keep order and check the attendance. We see the public school teacher playing an important part in the cooperation with religious schools. School buildings are being used in teaching religion.

This plan works against the minority groups. There is a great possibility that the small groups will be ostracised. Religions must have fundamental bases and without these they are "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

(1) Time, July 19, 1943

Many denominations have basic differences, and the leading denominations of the local community are going to have their fundamentals taught while those belonging to the smaller groups will not be included. The teacher is likely to be selected from one of the leading denominations of the locality. Therefore, sectarianism is a great probability even in the beginning of the set-up, which will be more noticeable as the thing continues.

Chapter IV

Reactions to Religious Education

Released Time - The reactions to this type of Bible teaching have been varied more than the reaction to the other types of religious instructions. Many Protestant churches believe this plan to be the solution to the present religious educational need. They believe this a satisfactory method, if not ideal, of providing children with moral and religious training. They believe the week-day schools are superior to Sunday Schools in that they are more closely related to the child's everyday life. Since there are many who do not have any church affiliations, or would not be reached by any church, the public schools must provide this religious instruction. The cooperation of the public schools also assures the pupil's regular attendance. The sponsors think one of the greatest achievements is the introduction of religions into the American school

without introducing sectarian instruction into the public schools.

Reactions of Jewish Churches;

The Jews have united themselves against this released time plan,⁽¹⁾ and openly oppose the movement.⁽²⁾ Dr. Edward N. Calish, Rabbi, Congregation of Beth Ahab ah, Richmond, Virginia, who is a Jewish leader, states that the Jews are anxious for religious education, but introducing religious education into the public schools is dangerous. The first question is the state and church relationship. The public schools are the cradles of American democracy, and the strongest influence in shaping the child's life during its formative period. This release of time is a violation of the American principle of the separation of the church and public schools. Even though the majority of the American people are Protestant either by church relationship or in belief,

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- (1) See Appendix for a full reading of resolutions adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in June 1941 at Atlantic City.
- (2) "Religious Education and Public Schools," Virginia Journal of Education, Richmond, Virginia Vol. XXXV No. 2 [October 1941]

yet this does not justify the teaching of Protestantism in the public schools. In our democracy the smallest minority sect has its right to be protected. This, says he, is a fundamental issue.

Dr. Calish further states that the movement will not prove successful in its objective, but will actually do more harm than good to religion. The home and the church will be even more neglectful of their great responsibility. The homes and the church are the fountain heads of religious devotion and sentiments. If we were to study the history of state controlled churches and follow our clear senses we would see that this present movement tends toward disaster.

The Jews also believe that released time represents a sectarian intrusion into the public schools. Such practices as the public school teachers checking and recording attendance and supervising the organization of Bible classes are contrary to the American principle of State and Church separation.

The use of public school buildings for religious instruction is direct infringement upon the public schools by the church. Public school authorities stating what qualifications Bible teachers must have to teach Bible in the public schools is infringement upon the church by the public schools. Moreover, this movement will prove to be the forerunner of introducing sectarianism into state schools. The released time plan will prove to be the entering wedge for procedures endangering the existences of our non-sectarian public schools by violating the principle of the separation of the church and the state. But if America is to remain a democracy, the public schools must remain disentangled from every church; and the churches must remain rigidly disentangled from all politics.

This plan has not really solved the problem of teaching children the ways of righteous living and the social value of religion. Some even advocate introducing religion directly into

the public school curriculum. It is claimed that children will be taught religion in the proper environment. Of course they say that teaching religion does not mean teaching sectarian dogmas, but the broad spiritual truth common to all faiths. Many Protestants, all Catholics, and most Jews believe that there can be no such thing as teaching "Religion". It must be a specific religion, or it becomes simply principles of right conduct and ethics which are properly the right sphere of the public schools. When we try to get a religious teaching which is comprehensive enough to embrace all sects and be offensive to none, then there isn't enough left to teach.

In seeking to prepare youth for life in a democracy, the public schools are making a real contribution to moral education. Our democratic way of life strives toward the same end as religion. Both seek to instill a love towards one's fellow-men, a respect for human differences and

- a recognition of the freedom of man. They also seek to develop the ability to live with one's self and with others with the greatest amount of ease and happiness, and a capacity for mental and spiritual growth. We must remember that even in religion our freedom ends where our neighbor's begins. The public schools are already doing a good job of teaching ethics and character training: A comprehensive religion is nothing more than this. Therefore the churches should not begin to meddle with affairs of the state.

Dr. Emanuel Gamoran says that, for the first time, atheism will be given an opportunity to raise its cause to a level with religion. Atheists can truthfully say that religious forces are destroying freedom and democratic principles in America. This is a real danger connected with the church and state cooperation in religious education which the religious forces should not overlook.⁽¹⁾

(1) Gamoran, Emanuel. "Religious Education and the Public Schools," (Unpublished) files of Sidney M. Lefkowitz, Richmond, Virginia.

Catholic Church:

The Catholics have never expressed a united opinion on this released time question. However, we may say that generally speaking the Catholics do oppose the released time plan for education. Father Vincent S. Waters, secretary to Bishop Ireton, Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, says that he expresses the Catholic Bishop's view when he says that released time is not the thing that religious education needs. Religious education is an essential part of American democracy, but the release of time plan is not the solution to this problem. There can be no education without religion, but the Catholics are opposed to any kind of Bible teachings or even the reading of Bibles such as the Protestants use. (1) Rev. Francis J. Byrne, superintendent of Catholic schools, Diocese of Richmond, says (2) that outside the religious school he believes that the released time plan is best.

(1) Interview on May 12, 1942.

(2) Byrne, F. J. "Religious Education and the Public Schools", Virginia Journal of Education, Richmond, Virginia, Vol. XXXV No. 2, October 1941.

The Catholics in recent years have not voiced much opposition to this movement. It is not a quietness because of approval or even sympathy, but they see a faint hope of getting state aid for their own schools. They feel that the State does them an injustice in compelling them to pay taxes for schools while they are maintaining their own schools at their own expense.

In the United States in 1940 they had 2,244 high schools and 7,957 elementary schools with a total enrollment of 2,440,389 pupils, and 78,521 teachers. ⁽¹⁾ The Catholics who bore the expense of the high school system also assumed their share for the support of the public school system. But they think that it would be just for them to receive state aid in giving civic education to over two million children.

We see the old question of state aid presenting itself again. In the early schools of

(1) Byrne, F. J. "Religious Education and the Public Schools", Virginia Journal of Education, Richmond, Virginia, Vol. XXXV No. 2, October 1941

America it was common to aid church schools on the same basis as the state schools, and sometimes the state aided existing church schools without establishing any public schools. Hebrews, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Dutch Reformers and Catholics were all demanding their part of school funds from the state.

In 1842 the state legislature of New York City in settling a dispute concerning state funds, led the way in establishing public schools free from religious sectarianism. (1)

Thirty-eight counties teach Religious Education according to the released time method. Mr. M. C. Miller asked the Superintendents of each of these counties to express himself relative to the religious work. Without failure every superintendent gave a favorable report to this work. We quote some of these testimonies from Superintendents. (2)

(1) Cubberley, E. P.: Public Education in the U. S. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston, Mass. 1934

(2) Inspiring Testimony, Virginia Council of Religious Education, Bridgewater, Va. 1942.

Harrisonburg City

"We have had Weed Day Religious Education in our schools for a good many years and in every way it has been eminently satisfactory. We have carried it along principally in the grades, from the fourth to the seventh. The teachers have been of a very high Christian type and have done a splendid piece of work all along. The children enjoy the time for this class and are anxious for it to come. So far as I know, we have not had a single complaint. The principals of the schools all say it is a fine piece of work and they hope it will not be discontinued. The association of our pupils with these fine teachers is very excellent indeed. We would not want to be without this teaching in our school system and wish it could be extended into the high school."

W. H. Keister
Division Superintendent

Princess Anne

"The program of Week Day Religious Education in the Princess Anne County Schools had its inception six years ago. From the very outset the program was received widely and enthusiastically and now reaches approximately ninety-eight per cent of the pupils enrolled in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. The County Council on Week Day Religious Education, which administers the program, includes in its membership many of the leading and substantial citizens of this County who give generously of their time and ener-

gies to provide for the instruction. Many favorable comments concerning the instruction and the consecrated worker in charge have reached the school officials and teachers. School officials have not received an unfavorable or adverse comment concerning the instruction. It is my considered opinion that this instruction is of untold value in our schools and I cannot visualize a lack of it and the many character values which accrue from this offering."

F. W. Cox
Division Superintendent

Prince William

"I am very much interested in Week Day Religious Education, and feel that it affords this type of training to many children who otherwise would have no such contact. Some of them would not have the contact because of remoteness from any Church or Sunday School, others because of the fact that they are not reached through any existing Sunday School or Church, and are therefore going without the training.

"I am sure that all of our teachers feel that it is making an important contribution to the children in the County. I believe the record shows that Sunday School membership in the County has increased materially during the period that Week Day Religious Education has been carried on in the public schools".

R. C. Haydon
Division Superintendent

There is some opposition to this system by public school officials. Mr. G. L. H. Johnson, Superintendent of Danville City Schools, is very much opposed to this released time system. He sent out inquiry sheets to city superintendents regarding religious education. (1) We quote from a letter he wrote to Mr. M. C. Miller, December 26, 1941:

"Speaking for myself, and out of a deep interest in true religion, I am more and more inclined to the belief that the churches and the homes must take full responsibility, as institutions, for religious training. It seems to me increasingly perilous, despite the increasing terrors of a world seemingly without predominant Christian motives, to undertake to put into our public schools, directly or indirectly, a program of religious education. The lessons of history, both ancient and modern, seem to me to warn us against even slight departure from the American conception of separation of Church and State. As we deny the right of government to interfere with our religious practices to any extent, so it seems to me we must not ask any concessions or privileges or even cooperative services from any government agency in matters religious.

(1) See page 55 of the Appendix for a report of this.

On the positive side, it seems to me that we must perform our supreme task of religious education through the home and the church institutions which the government protects, but in the operation of which it does not give direction. We must guard more zealously than ever our precious democratic doctrines in order that religion itself may be free. It would pain me if anyone should construe my position to be in opposition to a far more earnest effort to make of us a truly Christian nation. I give only two illustrations which show unmistakably that the historic issue is still very much alive. They are these:

(1) Only last Sunday night I heard a good Catholic priest in a radio address from Washington strongly advocate our acceptance of the traditional Catholic doctrine of the Church over all - positively, actively accept it. I believe he was deeply sincere, out of a deep awareness of extraordinary spiritual need.

(2) In the November issue of "Friends of the Public Schools", edited by Major General Amos A. Fries, there appears this paragraph taken from a set of resolutions adopted by the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masons - 'We commend the action of those States which have remained steadfast in the fundamental principle which maintains complete separation of Church and State; which have insisted that moneys appropriated for school purposes

be spent on tax-supported, free Public Schools only; that religion in any guise shall not be taught in the Public Schools. We reprehend as unamerican the plan of setting aside school hours for religious instruction, a function which should be left to the home and the Church.'

In the light of what we know about the bitterness and the unchristian outcomes of this issue in the past, and since true religion is the freest and most voluntary thing in the world, it is my more reasoned belief that we ought as church people to find a way to have the church and the home cooperate directly and more effectively in religious training. In essence religion is volitional. It is free. It does not desire to use power methods. When taught it must be taught in its completeness. And I am convinced that the Public School is not the place for such teaching - not the place in any official or formal sense. I think we must try to indoctrinate more deeply with the teachings of Christ, but in the divinely appointed centers and with the highest hope that life in all of its relations will manifest a gentler, more kindly, truly Christian attitude. For, when all is said, religion is attitude; not intellectual achievement.

The State Department, according to Dr. Fred Alexander, has expressed no view toward this movement. On January 26, 1939,⁽¹⁾ the State Board of Education appointed a committee of three to study the implications of this movement. The committee consisted of Mr. Blake T. Newton, Hague, Dr. Joseph H. Saunders, Newport News, and Dr. Sidney B. Hall. This committee has never reported. In my correspondence with Dr. Saunders, who was appointed as chairman of this committee, he states that he has never received any information as to the appointment of such a committee.⁽²⁾ Therefore, the State has never expressed an opinion on this release of time system.

(1) Letter from Dr. Dabney S. Lancaster Superintendent Public Instruction. See appendix for a copy of the letter.

(2) See appendix for a copy of the letter.

Chapter V.

Conclusions

Considering that the control and support of the schools are becoming more and more centralized and that the local community is fast losing control and responsibility for the support and administration of the local school, this makes the question of religious education more serious. In a small community there might not be any serious objection to the Protestants teaching the Bible in the public school, if the local community was solely responsible for the local school, and there were no Jews or Catholics in the community. But today with the state greatly gaining in power over the local school and funds from rich areas being sent to poor ones to bring education up to a standard, then we must realize that more than one religious sect will be involved. It seems that the danger is not for the

state at present but for the church. The Protestant churches through cooperation will be placing their own individual freedom in the hands of a majority. In all forms of religious education in the public schools - the devotional period, the state Syllabus, and the Released time method - the question of the separation of the State and the Church arises. In view of what our forefathers suffered because of State and Church relationship, we do not believe that the American people wish a union of the State and the Church. Yet in our zeal for the cause of religion, which is so dear to us American people, we tread on ground which leads very close to the outer realm of that which is ideal religious freedom. We are setting our own religious trap. No teacher of any religious sect or denomination, who has anything basically worth while to say, can serve satisfactorily as common denominator for all.

If the public schools give an adequate education to the children they are fulfilling religious ends. They cannot teach religions, but in a democracy they will teach religion, if by religion we understand a devotion to some of our highest ideals and aspirations.

The Jews offer the "Dismissed" time as alternate to the present practices of religious education in the public schools. This would require the public schools to dismiss all the children some one afternoon during the week, so as to allow churches to give religious instruction to the children of their faith, without checking their attendance or requiring those who do not go to religious school to remain in the public school. This, carried to its final conclusion, would only be the school dropping the matter of religious education entirely, allowing churches to teach religion whenever they choose. This

is probably the best method, in view of the im-
plications of the other system.

APPENDIX

General Outline

Adventures in Christian Living

GRADE 1 GOD'S LOVING CARE

- Unit 1 - God cares for us through our grown-up school friends
- Unit 2 - God cares for us through Jesus (Christmas)
- Unit 3 - God cares for our health
- Unit 4 - God shows His loving care through us to our school friends
- Unit 5 - God cares for us through nature
- Unit 6 - God cares for us through our homes

GRADE 2 GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS HELPERS

- Unit 1 - God's helpers in the community
- Unit 2 - Christmas and Jesus as God's greatest helper
- Unit 3 - God's helpers in health
- Unit 4 - God's helpers in the Church
- Unit 5 - God's helpers in nature
- Unit 6 - God's helpers in the home

GRADE 3 AT HOME IN GOD'S WORLD

- Unit 1 - At home in God's out-of-door world
- Unit 2 - God's children around the world celebrate Christmas
- Unit 3 - Jesus at home in God's world
- Unit 4 - God's children in other lands

GRADE 4 WORSHIPING GOD AT HOME AND AT CHURCH

- Unit 1 - We worship Our Heavenly Father at home and church
- Unit 2 - Christmas worship at home and church
- Unit 3 - Hebrew home life and worship
- Unit 4 - New Testament home life and worship

GRADE 5 THE BIBLE, OUR GUIDE BOOK FOR HAPPY LIVING

- Unit 1 - How did our Bible come to be?
- Unit 2 - The life of Jesus
- Unit 3 - The Bible and our everyday problem of living

GRADE 6 AT SCHOOL WITH GOD

- Unit 1 - The early Hebrews learn to know and live with God
- Unit 2 - The Prophets, spokesmen for God
- Unit 3 - How may I know God better?

GRADE 7 THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- Unit 1 - The beginning of the Christian Church
- Unit 2 - The church yesterday and today
- Unit 3 - How can we build the kingdom of God in our world? (1)

(1) Secured from Virginia Council of Religious Education, Bridgewater, Virginia.

APPENDIX

APPLICATION FORM

All applicants for position as teacher in Virginia Week Day Church Schools should fill out this application form and return it to the Virginia Council of Religious Education, Inc., Bridgewater, Virginia. Photograph necessary.

Name _____

Address _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Physical Condition _____

Single or Married _____ Age _____ Denomination _____

Present Occupation _____

GENERAL EDUCATION:

	Name	No. Yrs.	Yr. Grad.
(a) High School	_____	_____	_____
(b) Normal	_____	_____	_____
	Name Degree Major	No. Yrs.	Yr. Grad.
(c) College	_____	_____	_____
Seminary or	Name Degree Major	No. Yrs.	Yr. Grad.
Graduate	_____	_____	_____
(d) School	_____	_____	_____

TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN GENERAL EDUCATION: (Indicate subject, grade, and date)

Have you been certified to teach in Public Schools? _____
Date _____

SPECIAL TRAINING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Be Specific)

Bible Courses	Semester Hours	Where Taken	When Taken
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Courses in Church Work

Psychology & Principles of Education

Methods of Teaching

Other Courses

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: (If spaces below are left blank, it will be assumed that the applicant has had no leadership experience in the field indicated)

(a) Present relationship to the Church School _____

(b) Experience in Divisions of the Church:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Yrs.</u>		<u>No.</u>	<u>Yrs.</u>
Children's Division	_____	_____	Adult Division	_____	_____
Young People's Division	_____	_____			

(c) Experience in other phases of Church Work _____

(d) Other experience in Christian work _____

GENERAL:

1. Do you lead singing? _____ Play piano or other instrument? _____
2. Are you vigorous and aggressive in your manner and speech, or are you timid and somewhat slow? _____
3. Would you describe yourself as conservative or liberal in your general religious faith? _____ (It would be of distinct advantage if you would file brief statement on separate sheet which would give your views about personality of God, Deity of Jesus, Immortality of the Soul, etc.)
4. Do you smoke? _____ Do you drink beer or any kind of liquor? _____

Do you dance? _____

5. Any hobbies or special accomplishments? _____
6. If elected to position, will you endeavor to follow in general the plan of the Virginia Council Curriculum Guide and cooperate loyally with the local committee and with the State Council of Religious Education?

7. If elected, do you pledge to remain in this position for the full school term, unless prevented by illness or other non-preventable causes? _____
8. If elected, will you be able to remain in this position for a second term, if so requested by the local organization? _____
9. Give references as follows: _____
 - (a) Names and addresses of three people who can testify concerning your character, attitude, religious faith, etc:

 - (b) Names and addresses of three people who can testify or give estimate concerning your ability as a teacher:

APPENDIXRESOLUTION ON RELEASE AND DISMISSAL TIME

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, in Common with fellow citizens of all religious faiths, has ever recognized the imperative need to promote and intensify religious education in the interest of the individual and democracy; and has regarded the challenge of this need as confronting not the State, but the Church and Synagogue and the home.

To this end, the Conference, through its Committee on Church and State, has stood on guard against any encroachment upon the American principle of separation of Church and State, and through its Committee on Jewish Education has succeeded in steadily increasing the effectiveness of religious education without the backing of the State.

It is with this aim of eternal vigilance as a safeguard to democracy, and with this background both of positive religious conviction and of achieved constructive service in religious education, that the Conference registers its opposition to the release time plan, now in effect in some communities and under consideration in others.

We believe that the present program of the public schools can well be used for character building and training in citizenship, but we do not believe that it be charged in any way with responsibilities which belong to the Church and the Synagogue, and even more, to the home.

We disapprove of any procedure by which this program is made to sponsor denominational activities, and by which American children within the public schools are classified and divided along sectarian lines.

We are proud of the progress which has been made, in no small way through the Commission on Jewish Education, bringing about a condition in which more time is being devoted to religious instruction, teachers are better trained, and improved text books and curricula are being utilized.

We will see that this work goes on with increasing results, and, as a means to this end, we recommend that the public school day be shortened to make available a greater interval in time in which, independent of the school and school authorities, parents and religious leaders may give an enlarging place to religion in the total education of the child.

APPENDIX

Religious Education Summary Va. Cities,
Aug. 1941

Alexandria: No cooperative program on religious education. Supt. does not favor even though the instructors be paid by a local church council

Bristol: Planning to launch such a program this session. Not certain.

Buena Vista: Has cooperative religious education program, with 45 minute period per week in each fourth and fifth grade section. Supervised by Supt. Teacher paid by church council. Course optional. All fourth and fifth grade pupils take program.

Clifton Forge: No program. Former Supt. (Mr. Blankinship) stated he did not favor program of religious education in public schools even where the instructors are paid by local church council.

Charlottesville: No program. Superintendent does not favor such a program.

Danville: No program. Supt. does not favor any program that would in any manner make the public school authorities responsible or imply union of church and State. Nor does he believe the proposed plan would accomplish purpose.

Fredericksburg: No program. Supt. not in favor of such a program.

Hampton: No program. Supt. not in favor of such a program.

Hopewell: No program. Supt. not in favor of such a program.

Harrisonburg: Has such a program. Meets in classroom generally twice a week. Community selects and pays teacher, but does not pay any building costs. Given in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Supt. approves and states effect is noticeably good.

Lynchburg: No program. Supt, very doubtful and "intuitively afraid of it".

Martinsville: No program. Superintendent's attitude "would depend upon circumstances".

Newport News: No program. Did have one once. Discontinued because local church council failed to pay the salary of teacher.

Norfolk: No program. Supt, would not favor the plan suggested.

Petersburg: No program. Supt. would not favor program of the type anticipated - the type supported mainly by community church council, presumably.

Portsmouth: No program. Supt. would not favor such a program.

Richmond: No program. "Board refused about two years ago to put in the cooperative religious education plan".

Roanoke: No program. Supt. receptive to plan "conducted by church in a cooperative manner". Had such a program for a while, but "discontinued because of lack of dynamic leadership on the part of the church group". (1)

(1)
 This cooperative program which Mr. Johnson speaks of is that which is mentioned on page eleven as work of the ministers and religious leaders in 1930, and not the school program for Bible teaching.

South Norfolk: No program. Some thought is being given the idea, sponsored by P. T. A. Nothing definite being done.

Staunton: Limited program, consisting of Old Testament or New Testament history. Teacher paid through ministerial association. Classes scheduled like others, but no control of teacher. Approximately sixty per cent of students take Bible history course. "Various estimates of its effectiveness, criticism having to do more with personalities than with policy." Supt. favors present practice.

Suffolk: Has cooperative program for grades 3-6 in white schools three times per week. Supervision by regular school authorities. Teacher not paid by School Board. No payment for building costs. Supt. seems to favor, but adds, "We have had several 'headaches' over it". Not taught in high school. Most children take it.

Williamsburg: No program. Supt. does not favor plan.

Winchester: No program. Supt. does not favor plan.

Note: All cities have devotionals in one form or another.
All want religious education by proper method, it seems clear.

G. L. H. Johnson, Superintendent
of Schools, Danville, Virginia

APPENDIX

"Mr. W. J. Green
Natural Bridge Station
Virginia

"Dear Mr. Green:

"We have two teachers of Bible in the Roanoke Schools, one in Jefferson Senior High School (White) and one in Lucy Addison High School (Colored). These teachers are carried on our regular School Board payroll, along with teachers of all other subjects. A teacher of Bible has the same classification as teachers of any other subject. We use the Bible Course Outline as furnished by the State Department."

Very truly yours,

D. E. McQuilkin

Superintendent
Roanoke City Public Schools
Roanoke, Virginia

APPENDIX

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RICHMOND

April 23, 1943

"Mr. W. J. Green
Natural Bridge Station
Virginia

"My dear Mr. Green:

"In reply to your letter to Mr. Harry Foster, I have referred to the minutes of the State Board of Education and find that at the meeting held on January 26, 1939, a committee was appointed consisting of Mr. Blake T. Newton, Hague, Dr. Joseph H. Saunders, New Port News, and my predecessor as Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Sidney B. Hall. This committee was to formulate a report to be presented to the Board at a later date. There seems to be no further reference to the work of the committee.

"I may say that several months ago the State Board of Education approved a new course in religious education, "The Bible in our American Life", prepared by a committee headed by Dr. S. Vernon McCasland, Professor of Biblical Literature at the University of Virginia. This course may be substituted for any one of the three outlined courses that were approved some years ago by the State Board of Education, to be used in courses in religious education.

"If I can be of further service, please call
on me."

"Sincerely yours,

Dabney S. Lancaster

Superintendent Public
Instruction"

APPENDIX

NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Newport News, Va.

August 11, 1943

"Mr. W. J. Green
Natural Bridge Station
Virginia

Dear Mr. Green:

"Replying to yours of July 30, I have no information of the appointment of the committee by the State Department of Education to investigate and report on the Virginia Religious Education in the Public Schools."

Yours truly,

Joseph H. Saunders

Superintendent

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