

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Should Government Grant Aid To Church Schools?

WASHINGTON--(BP)--A Baptist and a Catholic scholar debated the question, "Should the government grant financial aid to parochial schools?"

In reply to the question, "Should the government subsidize the education of children who attend parochial schools?", C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, said, "This is not the way to solve America's educational problems." He then proposed a nation-wide restudy of the values guarded by the State and Federal constitutions.

Virgil C. Blum, assistant professor of political science at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis., defended governmental subsidies for the education of all children, regardless of the school attended, on the grounds that to confine such aid to public school pupils only is to show discrimination against those who choose other schools, and that enforced conformity to the public school pattern is a violation of the freedom of thought and belief.

The exchange of ideas took place at the request of the United Press International and was distributed through the Sunday edition of the UPI News-features. Both men are nationally recognized in the field of education--Carlson as a champion of American public school education and Blum as an advocate of Roman Catholic parochialism.

Blum is an advocate of the government school certificate plan or the tax credit plan of assistance to education. The former would make direct money grants to parents of students for the school of their choice, and the latter plan would allow income tax deductions for tuition or fees paid to the school of their choice.

As the basis of his defense of the public school system Carlson proposed a reexamination of the values in the American way of life that led to the development of the nation's educational system. He listed some of these values as the democratic control of general education, education as a public right rather than a welfare dole, freedom of the conscience of the taxpayer, and the freedom of the churches from political and economic control.

Blum based his appeal for public funds for parochial schooling on the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of mind and religion and on the assumption that to provide public funds for public schools only means "enforced conformity in the things of the mind and spirit" and that this policy "destroys the freedom of the individual and society."

One of the rights of children, Blum said the Supreme Court has ruled, "is the right to attend the school of their choice." He then claimed that to force a child to attend public school in order to get the benefit of governmentally subsidized education deprives many children of their right in educational benefits.

In order to escape the charge of violating separation of church and state Blum advocated direct educational subsidies to the parents or to the children. He cited the G. I. Bill that subsidized the education of veterans in the

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schools of their choice as adequate precedent for extending this principle to all education. He said that no one had objected to the G. I. Bill and that some veterans used the tax money to pay tuition at New York Baptist Bible Seminary.

Enunciating the principle of democratic control in general education Carlson said, "The public schools must not be permitted to become tools in the hands of special interests. Institutional interests, whether economic, political, religious or racial, ought not to control the general education of the nation."

Hitting hard at the concept of education as a "welfare dole," Carlson said, "It would be small help to our nation if churches, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, political parties and fraternal organizations were to be encouraged to recruit the children for their own special schools."

The use of tax money for religious education is a violation of the conscience of the taxpayer, according to Carlson, and "obviously all education which is formulated for the attainment of religious objectives must be classified as religious education."

The American public would be outraged at the use of coercive political powers to enforce prayers, church attendance and creeds, Carlson claimed. "Our reactions should be the same if the tax collector were to go after funds for religious education."

In considering a change in the American policy of education Carlson pointed out that the freedom of the churches must be safeguarded. "Dependence on public funds exposes them to control by political authorities and to jeopardy by the shifting movements of politics."

Acceptance of public funds for sectarian education would work obvious advantages to certain religious groups, Carlson continued, and likewise to the disadvantage of other religious groups. This would be an enforced inequality that would produce deterioration of education in many instances and ineffective use of buildings, teachers, equipment and transportation.

The end result, Carlson concluded, would be that "our government would have no choice left but to impose strict controls on all schools."

"Fundamental insights of American democracy" need to be pointed up in study groups throughout the country, Carlson said, in calling for a restudy of the nation's educational system. The church contribution can be made by giving "more and better religious education without interfering with the improvement of the general education of our people."

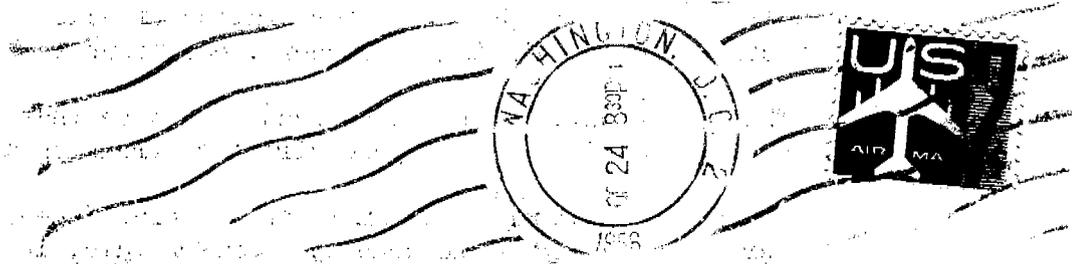
Dear Sirs:

Enclosed for you are two copies of the report of the Baptist Press, Inc. for the year 1958. The report is a summary of the work of the press during the year and is a valuable document for all those who are interested in the work of the press.

The report is divided into two parts: a general report and a financial report. The general report gives a detailed account of the work of the press during the year, and the financial report gives a detailed account of the financial operations of the press during the year.

I am sure that you will find the report very interesting and informative. It is a valuable document for all those who are interested in the work of the press.

Very truly yours,
 W. Barry Garrett, Regional Editor



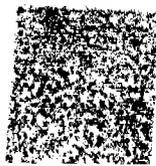
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NEWS FEATURES

United Press International

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Pros and Cons: Should Government Grant \$ Aid to Parochial Schools?

(Should the government subsidize the education of children who attend parochial schools? Two prominent clergymen debate this sharply controversial question in the following signed dispatches, written for United Press International.)

(The case for government subsidies is presented by a Roman Catholic scholar, the Rev. Virgil C. Blum, S. J., assistant professor of political science at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis. The case against subsidies is presented by Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.)

By THE REV. VIRGIL C. BLUM, S.J.

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Marquette University
(Written for United Press International)

The First Amendment guarantees freedom of mind and freedom of religion. These freedoms command the states to distribute educational benefits equally to all children and students regardless of the school attended. Enforced conformity to the philosophical and theological orientation of state schools as a condition for sharing in educational benefits is a serious violation of freedom of thought and belief.

In a free society the individual person must be supreme and central. His value, dignity, and worth, his other-world destiny, his sonship of God, demand personal freedom in the things of the mind and spirit. These freedoms our forefathers wisely guaranteed to every individual in the First Amendment. Enforced conformity in the things of the mind and spirit, they knew, destroys the freedom of the individual and of society.

In the distribution of its benefits government must respect the constitutional rights of the individual. It cannot, for example, demand that the needy aged surrender their constitutional right to vote as a condition for sharing in old age assistance benefits.

In the distribution of its educational benefits government must recognize children and students clothed in all their constitutional rights. One of these rights, says the Supreme Court, is the right, based on freedom of mind and religion, to attend the school of their choice. Children and students can not be forced to surrender their right as a condition for sharing in educational benefits. Such a condition is in violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

These constitutional guarantees of freedom of mind and religion in the choice of school were incorporated in the G.I. Bill. Veterans were not forced to attend state colleges as a condition for sharing in public educational benefits. With subsidy in hand, they were free to attend the 474 Protestant, the 265 Catholic, the five Jewish institutions of higher education.

Liberal Americans in increasing numbers are saying that government cannot demand the surrender of freedom of mind and religion in the choice of school as the condition for sharing in educational benefits. Such a condition, like a condition on the right to vote, they say, violates the Bill of Rights.

"It is inconceivable," said the U.S. Supreme Court in denouncing imposed conditions, "that guarantees embedded in the Constitution of the United States may thus be manipulated out of existence." Liberals are disturbed, moreover, by the realization that, as the Court warned, "if the state may compel the surrender of one constitutional right as a condition of its favor, it may, in like manner, compel the surrender of all."

Freedom-conscious citizens, further, reject the idea that a child or student can be forced to conform to the philosophical and theological orientation of public education as a condition for

sharing in government educational benefits. It makes no difference whether this orientation is Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, secularist or agnostic. The state cannot force a child or student to conform to it. Enforced conformity violates freedom of mind and freedom of religion. These liberals reject the philosophy of the conformitarians.

In order to protect the constitutional rights of nonconformist children and students, these citizens urge that government subsidize their education directly. This can be done by the certificate or tax credit method. The former entails a direct money grant to parents or students to help them pay tuition at the school of their choice. The latter entails a partial tax credit on amounts paid in tuition or fees at the school of their choice. This credit is subtracted from income tax.

A plan of direct subsidies for children and students who attend independent schools has a distinct advantage: it establishes only a government-student (or parent) relationship. It establishes no government-school relationship. This has two important consequences. First, it creates no new basis for government control of independent schools. Secondly, the confused issue of separation of church and state cannot properly be raised.

The certificate or tax credit plan does not give the aid to independent or church-related schools. It aids only the students, children and their parents.

The college-going G.I. was subsidized, not the school he attended. The President's Committee on Education Beyond High School said: "The Committee does not believe that this assistance to veterans was designed to help, even indirectly, the institutions. Actually, it imposed an enormous burden on them . . ."

Wilber G. Katz, Chicago University professor of law, declared that "Congress left veterans free as to their choice of school and profession." And he noted pointedly that "not even the most enthusiastic 'separationists' criticized this policy or questioned its constitutionality." Veterans used tax money to pay tuition at New York's Baptist Bible Seminary.

Besides liberals, taxpayers also are giving sober consideration to the certificate and tax credit plans. They are discovering that the adoption of either of these plans would, in a short span of years, save the taxpayer many hundreds of millions of dollars yearly for the education of American youth.

By THE REV. C. EMANUEL CARLSON, D.D.

Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
(Written for United Press International)

An educational crisis exists throughout the world these days. New nations are emerging, old nations are seeking renewal, strong nations are seeking to be stronger, and education is involved for all of them.

If America is to develop the strength which represents our heritage we must take care to conserve the fundamental values and insights which have been distinctively ours. In this end I propose a nation-wide aggressive re-study of the values which our Federal and State Constitutions are designed to guard. Many of these values are closely related to our educational system.

Democratic control of general education is one of these values. Dictators have made the schools a major target for their control. General education, democratically controlled by elected leaders, and carried forward by competent professional educators, gives strength to democracy. The public schools must not be permitted to become tools in the hands of special interests. Institutional interests, whether economic, political, religious or racial, ought not to control the general education of the nation.

The Federal and the State governments provide public funds for public education. This is in no sense a welfare dole. On the contrary, public schools are part of the public facilities in a community, in the same way that roads, parks or libraries are. They exist for the community in defense of the civic and personal competence of all people. It would be small help to our nation if churches, labor organizations, chambers of commerce, political parties and fraternal organizations were to be encouraged to recruit the children for their own special schools.

Freedom of the conscience is another value guarded by our American tradition and constitutions. Religious participation must be voluntary. Conformity is not religion.

The use of coercive political powers to enforce prayers, church attendance and creeds would outrage the American public. Our reactions should be the same if the tax collector were to go after funds for religious education. Obviously, all instruction which is formulated for the attainment of religious objectives must be classified as religious education.

Care has been taken not to impose on the conscience of the child or the parents in the public schools. We must also be careful not to coerce taxpayers into a religious participation. Money represents their time and energy.

Freedom of the churches must also be understood and protected. They must be free of political control and of economic dependence. Relying on the commitment and the stewardship of their own people, the churches must have their own sources of income if they are to proclaim freely their highest ideals and

prophetic insights. Dependence on public funds exposes them to control by political authorities and to jeopardy by the shifting movements of politics. Most countries which have ignored this principle are now known for low church attendance, anti-clericalism and even communism.

If public funds were available for sectarian education they would, of course, be equally available to all groups. Many groups would feel that in self-defense they must open schools. Communities that are now served by one good public school could soon find themselves with a dozen church schools, which are high in cost but low in quality. Buildings, teachers, equipment, transportation would all be ineffectively used.

Such deterioration of general education in America just at the time when the Russians have startled the world with the technical power of a government monopolized educational system would drastically influence the whole future of freedom. Our government would have no choice left but to impose strict controls on all schools. The public might demand the end of special interest efforts at general education.

In an enduring competitive situation those groups which find cooperation most difficult would be the hardest hit. In some states the Baptists could be predominant. In several cities the Roman Catholics could predominate. In some areas Protestant alignments would produce cooperative schools. In such areas struggling minorities would be forced to compromise or to travel great distances to acceptable schools.

This is not the way to solve America's educational problems. On the contrary, I propose a nation-wide re-study of the values guarded by our Constitutions.

America's educational needs are great. Not only are the Russians making tremendous strides, but a new age with new needs for our people has opened before us. As an American people we must attain new educational levels in all fields. Study groups are in order in every community all over the nation seeking the best answers to the conservation and the spreading of the fundamental insights of American democracy.

In this task the churches may well participate. Giving an adequate spiritual understanding is the responsibility of the church and the home. These can give more and better religious education without interfering with the improvement of the general education of our people.