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A COMPARISON OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
AND SELECTED PROTESTANT ORIENTATIONS
TOWARD RELIGION
IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
IN AMERICA

by
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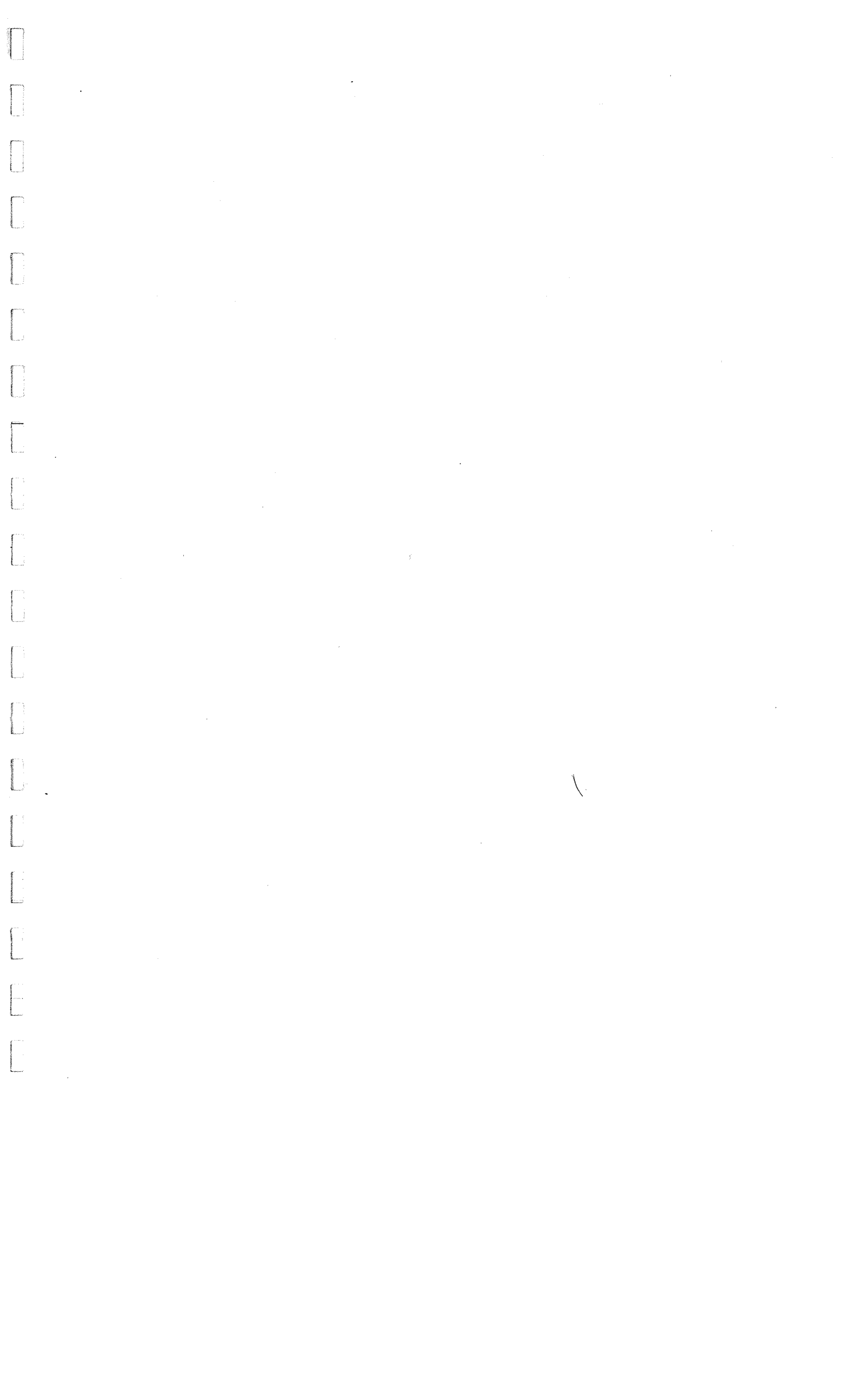


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INTRODUCTION

A COMPARISON OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND SELECTED
PROTESTANT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD RELIGION
IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

The relation of religion to education within the context of American culture has been a real concern since shortly after the Revolutionary War. The problem of relationship has re-occurred through the years in many forms and guises. Recently, however, it has assumed "new aspects and a new and insistent urgency."¹ There are significant signs that it is becoming a crucial concern in American education.²

Serious questions are being asked concerning the significance of the widespread religious indifference throughout a nation founded on religious principles.³

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1. William C. Bower, Church and State in Education, The University of Chicago Press, Illinois, 1944, p. iii.
2. Ibid.
3. Cf. William K. Dunn, What Happened to Religious Education?, The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1958.

America is a nation whose departments of civil government traditionally follow religious practices, whose courts persistently have held it to be "a Christian nation",¹ and yet in publicly supported education, educators have been reticent concerning the religious factor in our culture and the teaching of religion has been almost eliminated.

Religious leaders of all faiths recognize the omission of the religious element as a serious defect in American education. Therefore, it follows that they should deem it expedient to formulate theories in relation to religion and education in order to work toward finding a solution to the dilemma in which American Christianity finds itself with respect to education.

2. The Subject Justified

The form and content of education must always be conditioned by the educator's view concerning the proper end of man. It is neither the arts nor the sciences but religion which is able to say what this end should be. The most important element in any educational system is its religious element, for whether the system expressly includes or excludes the teaching of religion or

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1. Cf. William W. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1942, Chapter 1.

religious ideas, its effect will be determined by whatever answer to the religious question is implied.

The Church, therefore, concerns itself with the force or forces working upon its members and adherents, molding and influencing them in all aspects of development.

Today American education is undergoing a top-to-toe reappraisal. The uneasiness over schools that had been mounting during the past war period has erupted, and an aroused American people are belatedly demanding to know what has happened to its schools.¹

The Methodist Church, in a recent publication expressed concern for "...the increasing interest in and ...means by which...pupils may have opportunity to become aware of the basic importance of religion in American culture."²

The Church is making judgments and asking questions particularly concerning the education of its own children. One key question is in essence: Are the public schools, organized and operated as state socialized agencies of education, able to afford their pupils a complete and effective education? Answers to this question and other pertinent ones current in public discussion

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1. Neil G. McCluskey, "The Catholic Obligation to Educate," America, March 21, 1959, p. 5.
2. Church and Public School Relations, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, Tennessee, June, 1958.

give evidence of a need to investigate the statements setting forth the position of the various Churches in relation to the public schools and in relation to their concern for the education of the children of its families.

3. The Subject Delimited

It is recognized that such an undertaking involves a wide range of complex issues and groups. The necessity for limiting the scope of this consideration is evident. Since Protestants and Catholics constitute by far the two most influential religious groups in contemporary American life,¹ the limitations of this study begin here. Of the more than two hundred Protestant denominations, most Protestants are concentrated in a few of them. The major denominations, in relation to size, are the Episcopalian,² Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian. Within these major Protestant classifications further limitations have been made.

In February 1960 a study document, "Relation of Religion to Public Education," was prepared by the Committee on Religion and Public Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. This

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1. Walter R. Clyde, Interpreting Protestantism to Catholics, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1959, p. 11.
2. Ibid.

council representing a membership of more than thirty denominations raised a number of profound and broad questions for Christian citizens to face.¹ In this council there are individual church bodies within the five major denominations which have made official statements on the relation of religion and education. The Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. are two such church groups who have made official pronouncements and, therefore, have been included in this consideration. In addition the writer has chosen the United Presbyterian Church in an effort to understand better the position of her own church.

Of all the various Christian denominations only four Protestant Churches still try to implement the traditional claim of the Christian Church to control elementary education.² The Lutheran Synodical Conference (Missouri Synod) is the only major Protestant Church with a system of parochial schools. This Synod "throughout its history has been most active and most consistent in the establishment and maintenance of the Lutheran elementary school"³ and, therefore, has been selected as the

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1. International Journal of Religious Education, April, 1960.
2. Edwin Rian, Christianity and American Education, The Naylor Company, San Antonio, Texas, 1949, p. 202 ff.
3. Walter H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1959, p. iii.

third group for consideration within the Protestant denominations.

The problem of tracing the thinking of Catholicism is somewhat simplified in comparison to Protestantism. The close-knit organization of the Catholic Church under the leadership of its Bishops makes it possible to gather an overall view of the trend of Catholic opinion from the proclamation of these leaders.

This study has been limited further to a consideration of elementary education. These years are the formative ones, not only for children, but also for future policies that will affect education to the university level.

It is therefore the purpose of this thesis to discover and compare what these separately organized church bodies have set forth as proposals which they feel constitute the best solution to the problem of effectively relating religion and elementary education in the complicated structure that is the American culture.

B. The Method of Procedure

The first chapter will set forth the Roman Catholic position toward religion in elementary education in America. It will consider the nature of religion by defining it and evaluating it in relation to life and

to education. Then the nature of elementary education as seen by Roman Catholicism will be presented. Finally the implications these outlooks have upon their attitudes toward the role of elementary education will be given.

Chapter two will be devoted to a consideration of the position of Protestant Christianity toward religion in elementary education in America. The approaches of three churches, the Methodist, the Missouri Synod Lutheran, and the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., will be analyzed in turn. Involved in each will be a consideration of their idea of the nature of religion and the nature of education and the resultant attitude toward elementary education. On this basis, dominant emphases as a group may be discovered.

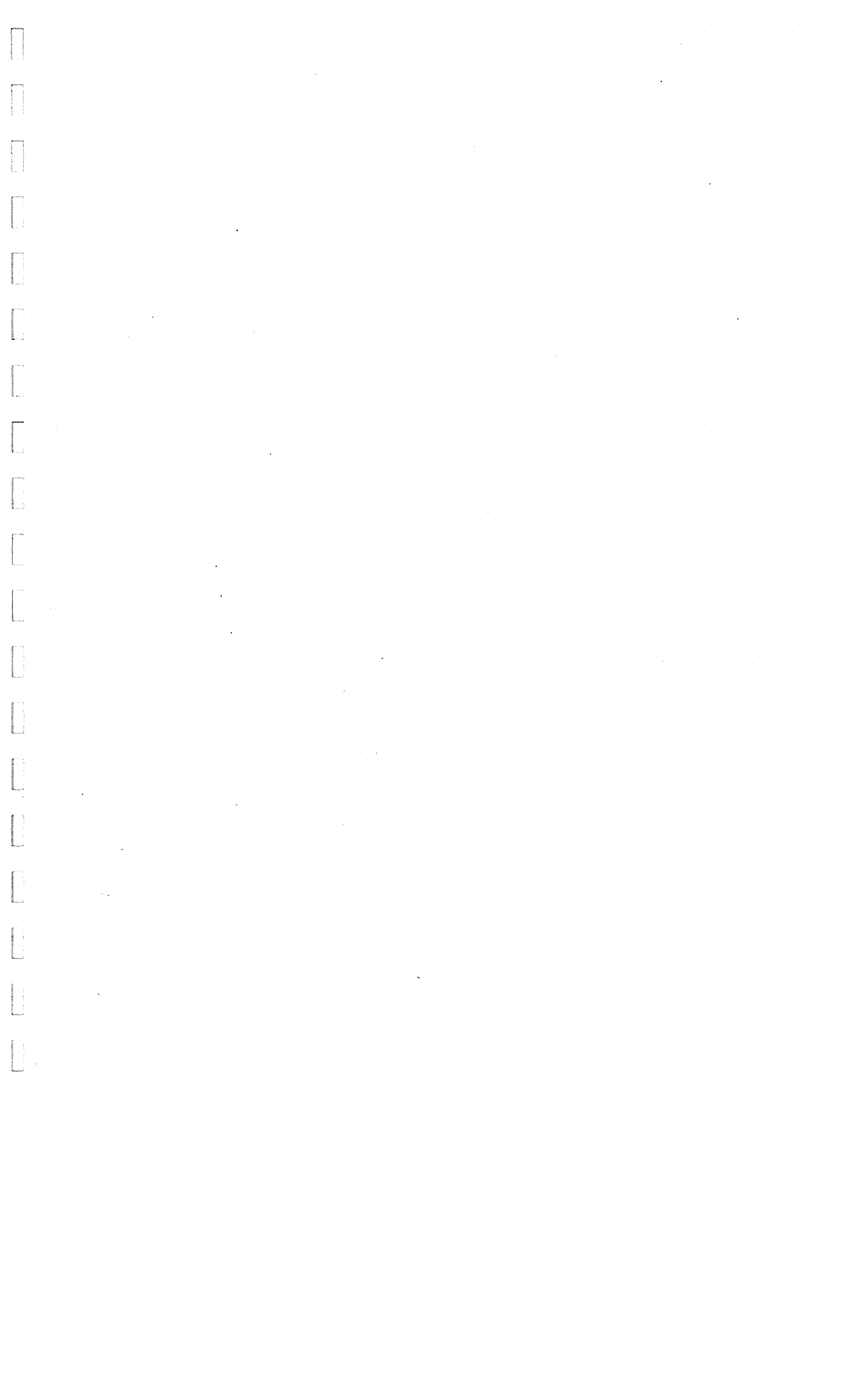
Finally chapter three will bring together the varying philosophical viewpoints, the contrasting approaches to the educational task, and the divergent attitudes toward public elementary education to give the picture of a comparison of the Roman Catholic and Protestant orientations toward religion in elementary education in America.

C. The Sources of the Study

For primary sources books and publications were sought that were, or contained, authoritative statements

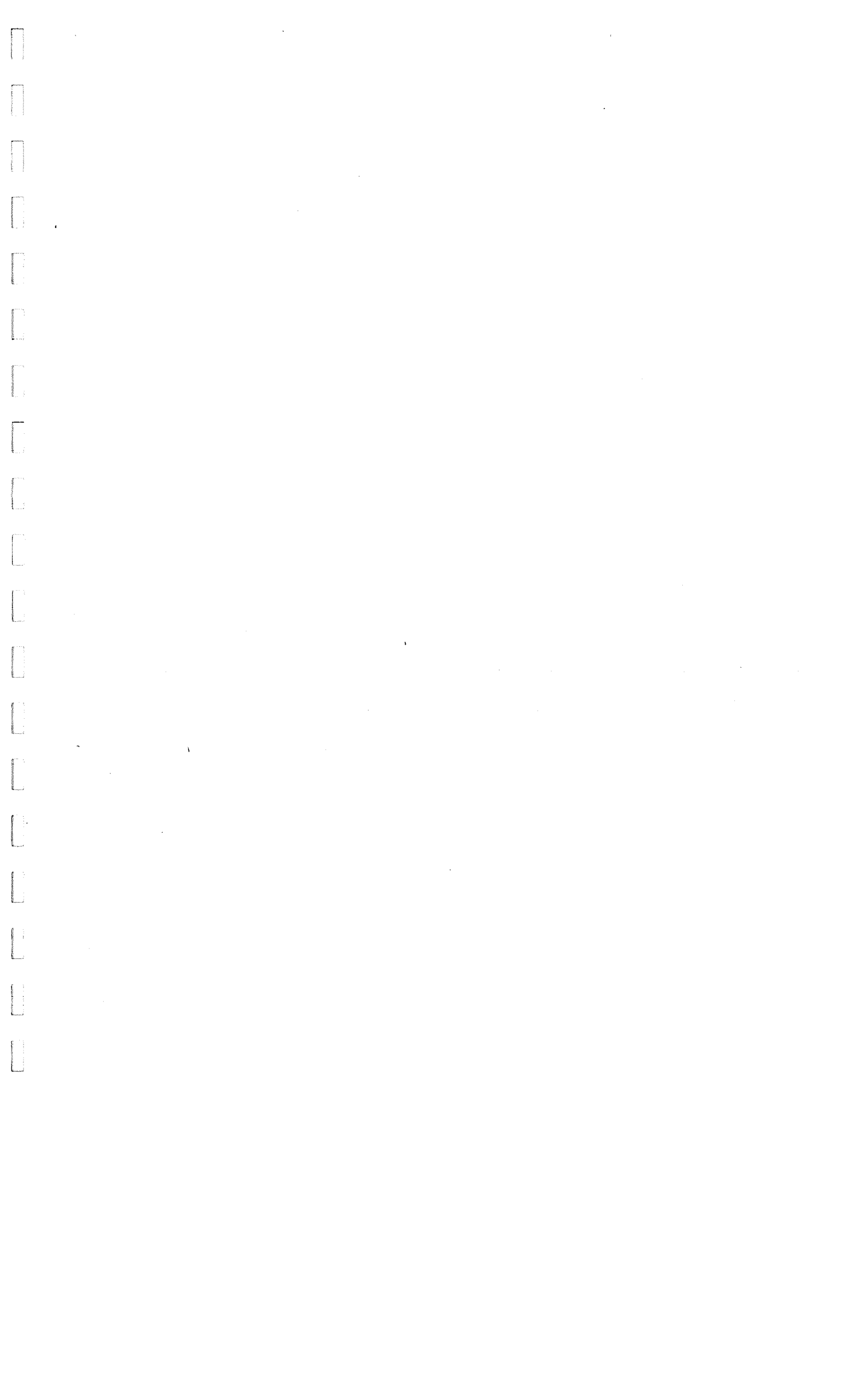
of the church group concerned. Sources for information on Roman Catholicism used were those which were marked with the "nihil obstat" and "imprimatur", the official Catholic declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error.

Secondary resources consisted of reports, articles, pamphlets and books of a philosophical or historical nature dealing with the problems of Church and State, and religion and education.



CHAPTER I

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POSITION TOWARD RELIGION
IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA



CHAPTER I

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POSITION TOWARD RELIGION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA

A. Introduction

Roman Catholics are firmly determined to make adequate provision for what they openly profess as their motto: "Catholic education in Catholic schools for all the Catholic youth."¹ This chapter will seek to present the factors and underlying motivations based on a conception of religion and education that result in the particular orientation of Roman Catholicism toward religion in elementary education. A further consideration will be made concerning their attitude toward the role of elementary education as seen in the relationships between public education and the church-sponsored or private educational system.

In detail the nature of religion will involve its function in relation to life and its value in relation to education. The nature of education will include a

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1. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth, The America Press, New York, 1958, p. 27.

consideration of the right to educate, the subject and environment of education, the end and object of education, and the provisions for educating. The third section will deal with the attitudes of Roman Catholicism toward the role of elementary education. From these considerations will arise the basic beliefs and conceptions that undergird the Roman Catholic position toward religion in elementary education in America.

B. The Nature of Religion

1. The Definition of Religion

Religion, in a broad sense, is that which men hold as ultimate or supreme in life.¹ For the Catholic, the supernatural is the cornerstone. A personal God, whose existence is proved by human reason, is this ultimate or supreme in life. He is an absolute, eternal, transcendent, and triune Being. He is the First Cause, who has created man, upon whom man is dependent and to whom, therefore, man has certain duties and obligations.² These duties and obligations are worked out in the forms of religion called sacraments. It derives its validity from

.

1. Samuel W. Barnum, Romanism As It Is: An Exposition of the Roman Catholic System, Louis Lloyd and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1879, p. 39.
2. Wm. J. McGucken, Catholic Education, The American Press, 1956, p. 3.

the authority of reason, tradition, and revelation as expressed by the Church.¹

The nature of religion is such that it can be learned in much the same way as one learns a language. There are certain essential truths, such as the being of God, the revelation of the divine will in the Bible, the voice of conscience, and a future life, that are the bed-rock of religion and must be taught systematically.

"Acquaintance with the object of belief and an awareness of one's motives for belief are the ordinary prerequisites for firm assent."²

2. The Function of Religion in Relation to Life

Religion is the central concern of human existence. It answers the questions: What is man? What is his chief end? From where did he come? Where is he going? These answers give a Catholic his purpose in life: "to learn to live in such a way as to prepare himself for an immortal supernatural destiny."³ As the key to Catholic religion is the supernatural, so it is also the key to Catholic practice and attitude toward life.

The Church holds that she is divinely commissioned by Christ to carry on His work, to do what He did. "I

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1. Barnum, op. cit., p. 46.
2. Neil G. McCluskey, Catholic Viewpoint on Education, Hanover House, Garden City, New York, 1959, p. 90.
3. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 70.

am come that you may have life, that you may have it more abundantly." The Church continues that work, bringing this supernatural life to men who have not yet received it, surrounding it with safeguards that it may not be lost, restoring it once more to those who perversely cast it aside.¹

The Catholic does not renounce the activities of this life and stunt his natural faculties. Rather he develops and perfects them by coordinating them with the supernatural. In this way he ennobles what is merely natural in life and secures for it new strength in the material and temporal order as well as in the spiritual and eternal. Philosophy and science give only partial answers to the world riddle. Religion is needed to secure a complete view of life.

3. The Value of Religion in Relation to Education

If religion supplies man with the purpose for living and the motivation to prepare himself for attaining "an eternal objective which transcends this world,"² then religion must be the "starting point and essence of true education."³ Religion must permeate all Catholic education just as, ideally, it impregnates all of Catholic life and living. There can be no true education that is not wholly directed to man's last end and since

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1. McGucken, op. cit., p. 15.
2. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 71.
3. Ibid.

God has revealed Himself to us in the person of His Son, who alone is "the way, the truth and the life," there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.¹ Without God, the Catholic maintains there is no ultimate purpose in education. For education deals with the formation of the whole man, body and soul, intellect and will.² Therefore the Catholic would hold that any character-training or educational program that leaves God, and the Catholic conception of God, especially, out of consideration would be not merely inadequate but utterly false.

C. The Nature of Education

1. The Division of Rights in Education - Who Has the Right to Educate?

The process of education is essentially a social activity involving the three societies into which man is born. These societies, distinct, yet harmoniously combined by God, are the family, the state, and the church. The first two belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.³

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1. McGucken, op. cit., pp. 6, 7.
2. Ibid., p. 6, citing T. Corcoran, S. J., Private Notes, Dublin, n.d.
3. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 80.

a. Education Belongs to the Church

First of all, education belongs pre-eminently to the Church because of the express mission and supreme authority given her by her Divine Founder to "teach ye all nations...to observe all things..."¹ Secondly, the Church by virtue of her nature, "nurtures and educates souls in the divine life of grace with her sacraments and her doctrine."² Lastly, since education is necessarily related to man's ultimate destiny, it must also conform to the dictates of the divine law, of which the Church is infallible guardian, interpreter and teacher.³

b. The Rights of Parents

The family receives directly from the Creator the right to educate the offspring. This right precedes any right of the state and is inviolable by any power on earth. In the words of Leo XIII, "the father's power is of such a nature that it cannot be destroyed or absorbed by the state; for it has the same origin as human life itself."⁴ Further, the rights of the parents are protected by the Church.⁵

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1. Ibid., p. 89.
2. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth, The American Press, New York, 1958, p. 5.
3. John Laux, A Complete History of the Catholic Church to the Present Day, Benziger Brothers, New York, 1940, p. 17.
4. Cited by Pope Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth, American Press, New York, 1958, p. 40.
5. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 81.

However, this parental right to educate is not an absolute and despotic one, but as Pope Pius XI declares, "is dependent on the natural and divine law, and therefore subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the Church."¹

c. The Rights of the State

The purpose of the state is to help promote the common welfare in the temporal order.² Family rights take priority over state rights. Yet, at the same time, the state has certain rights in the field of education, emanating from its purpose. The Catholic understanding of state rights has been clearly stated by Pope Pius XI who declared,

...the state can exact, and take measures to secure, that all its citizens have the necessary knowledge of their civic and political duties, and a certain degree of physical, intellectual and moral culture, which, considering the conditions of our times, is really necessary for the common good.³

The ideal is that the rights of these three societies work in harmony for the benefit of the educand. The right of the Church which is supernatural, does not annihilate the right of parents and the state, "but elevates the natural and perfects it, each affording mutual aid to the other,"⁴ and completes it.

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1. Loc. cit., p. 13.
2. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 81.
3. Loc. cit., p. 14.
4. Ibid., pp. 8f.

2. The Subject and Environment of Education

The subject of Catholic education is man "whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature."¹ Man is fallen from his original state, but is redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, yet still bearing the effects of original sin. Therefore the evil in man must be rooted out and "the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and with the assistance of grace."²

By environment is meant all those conditions which surround the child during the period of his formation. To obtain perfect education this combination of circumstances must be in accord with the aim proposed.³

The Christian family is the first natural and necessary element in this environment. A home that is well-ordered and well-disciplined and where a clear and constant good example is set, will have a more effective and lasting impact on the Christian education of the child.

The Church is the educational environment most intimately and harmoniously associated with the Christian family. It embraces the sacraments which are the

.

1. Ibid. pp. 18f.

2. James Burns and B. Kohlbrenner, A History of Catholic Education in the United States, Benziger Brothers, New York, 1937, p. 19.

3. Supra. p. 3.

"divinely efficacious means of grace" and the sacred¹
ritual which is instructive by nature.

Since the family is unequal to the task of providing a complete education with training in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of the state, it was necessary to create a social institution - the school. The school then, by its very nature, is an institution "subsidiary and complementary to the family and to the Church."²

The final area of education is the world. The influences of books, movies, radio, and the theatre are equally occasions for good or for evil. In whatever environment the child is, it is necessary to remove occasions for evil and to provide occasions for good in all his recreations and social intercourse.³

3. The End and Object of Education

The end of education is to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism, thus perfecting the true Christian. He is "the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts ... consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by ... the example and teaching

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1. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Pope Pius XI, op. cit., p. 24.
3. McGucken, op. cit., pp. 17f.

of Christ."¹ A true Christian will also be the best of citizens, fulfilling his responsibility for the prosperity of all.²

4. The Provisions for Educating

a. The Religious School

Although it is commonly believed that in a pluralistic society such as America's, the interests of all groups are best served through public education for all, Roman Catholics feel a strong compulsion to reject this position. Underlying the assumption the public school can lay a foundation for character is a theory of religion and religious commitment which denies the supernatural and is, therefore, incompatible with the Catholic understanding of these things as stated above.³ In the language of the U. S. Supreme Court, "the child is not the mere creature of the state" and "those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional duties."⁴

Catholic parents are not satisfied that the present system of state-supported public schools can adequately prepare their children for additional duties and obligations that transcend the realm of Caesar, and so have built their own schools.⁵

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1. Pope Pius XI, op. cit., p. 31.
2. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 81.
3. Supra. pp. 2ff.
4. Cited by McCluskey, op. cit., p. 40.
5. Ibid.

Therefore the Church has established schools so that her children may acquire the supreme integrating principle of supernatural wisdom in ordering the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they are to learn.

b. The Place of the Religious School in American Elementary Education

The privately sponsored, religiously oriented schools are the oldest schools in the nation.¹ A recent U.S. Office of Education publication stated that the non-public schools of the nation have played "an enormous role in transmitting our cultural heritage and enriching it" and have exerted "a tremendous influence in fashioning the American way of life."² The role of the religious school is established both in the past and in the present.

It is felt by Roman Catholicism that the greatest interests of cultural freedom are preserved by preventing a government monopoly of education. Rather than being "undemocratic" and "un-American", the Church claims that in engaging in the struggle to preserve its own educational system, it is resisting "the trend toward a state monopoly," and is leading the fight for "democratic freedom of education."³

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1. Cf. Francis X. Curran, The Church and The Schools, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1954.
2. "The State and Nonpublic Schools," misc. no. 28, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1958, p. 1, cited by McCluskey, op. cit., p. 42.
3. "The Place of the Private and Church-related Schools in American Education," American Hierarchy, Catholic Mind, February, 1956.

The aim of the Catholic elementary school is to provide the child with those experiences which are calculated to develop in him such knowledge, appreciation and habits as will yield a character equal to the contingencies of fundamental Christian living in American democratic society.¹

D. The Roman Catholic Attitudes Toward The Role of Elementary Education

1. The Place of Public Education in the Scheme

Roman Catholicism has accepted the idea that by its very nature the public school is completely secular and hence incompetent to deal with religious education.² The means for preserving religious peace and freedom through secularization has become a method of propagating a particular dogmatic faith, namely, naturalistic humanism. Moral sanctions then which are limited to the secular order and are not related to traditional religious values necessarily limit character education in the public schools to the purely secular order.

In a Catholic analysis, the public school is not really neutral as it claims in its position toward religion. In reality it facilitates a naturalist religion of democracy in which the supreme and ultimate aim of life

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1. George Johnson, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, XXII, Nov. 1925, pp. 458f, cited by Wm. McGucken, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
2. John Redden and Francis A. Ryan, A Catholic Philosophy of Education, The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1955, p. 170.

is the perfection of the temporal social order. The primary goal, then, of public school education is to produce good citizens. Hence, only the child from a secularist home can feel perfectly at home in the public school.¹

2. The Principles of Civil Order

In the area of education we find a place where a whole complexity of rights and duties meets. Parents have the right and duty to educate their children according to the dictates of their conscience. The Church has the divinely conferred right to require its adherents to send their children to schools run under its auspices. The state, in turn, has a right to require parents provide their children with instruction so they will become literate, responsible, and useful citizens. However, the state also requires a tax to provide a treasury for the support of a public system of education. Since the educational basis of such schools is contrary to the principles of Roman Catholicism, Catholic parents can not be satisfied with this provision. Hence, they have sought to establish a system of education that is compatible with their ideals. This has necessitated their being forced to make a double payment for the education of their children.²

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1. Wm. McGucken, The Jesuits and Education, The Bruce Publishing Company, New York, 1932, pp. 70ff.
2. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 167.

3. Claims for Support of the Church-Sponsored Educational System

Distributive justice requires, in the eyes of Catholics, that financial aid be given from the state to all education.¹ Their claim to support is basically a question of civil rights.

The principle of child welfare has been applied to this crucial claim because it too concerns civil rights. "Catholics do not look upon the claim to share in general welfare benefits - including education itself - as a raid on the public treasury..."² As citizens these parents have the right to agitate by legal means in order to lighten the burden of paying twice for their children's education in schools of their choice.

It is their belief that there is no historical support for the absolute separation of church and state. In accord with the First Amendment federal or state aid for church-related education is not a violation of church and state separation!³

The American courts have consistently upheld the rights of parents to share in the state's general welfare benefits at least in regard to transportation, non-religious text books, and health services.⁴ A legitimate fundamental liberty is thwarted when the family right to educate is interfered with by any civil authority, and

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1. Pope Pius XI, op. cit., p. 27.
2. McCluskey, op. cit., p. 177.
3. Ibid., Chapter 7.
4. Ibid., p. 181

until they succeed in achieving full financial support for Catholic schools, they will not have felt they have done enough for the defense of their schools and for securing laws that will do them justice.¹

E. Summary

We see from this study that certain inescapable postulates are behind the firmly held position of Roman Catholicism in regard to religion in elementary education. The nature of religion is such that it is the crux of human existence. It is indispensable for right living here and for eternal life hereafter and therefore is an essential part of education. Catholics give a supernatural dimension to life and education which alone makes both complete.

Education belongs to the Church, the family, and the state, though in different ways. Each must work in harmony according to their respective natures. The fact of the mission of the church gives her pre-eminence in the field of education. The rights of family and of the state regarding the liberty to pursue a knowledge of science and culture are in complete harmony with the work of the Church. The supernatural order and the natural order are completely compatible.

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1. Pope Pius XI, op. cit., p. 27.

Every theory of education hinges on the precise nature of man. Man, because of the scars of original sin, is in need of the redeeming and restoring work of Christ. The whole educational work of the Church then is to restore the sons of Adam to their high position as children of God. Therefore, the environment of education includes all conditions and circumstances which surround the child, and Christian education necessarily takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social, not to reduce the natural, but to elevate and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.

Only the proper atmosphere and training based on the Catholic philosophy of religion and theory of education can secure the Catholic goal in education. Hence, Roman Catholicism has established its own system of schools. Their existence is traditionally in accord with American history and in agreement with the American educational ideal of producing good citizens. Indeed, Catholicism sees no conflict between the two ideals of dedicated citizenry and religious allegiance.

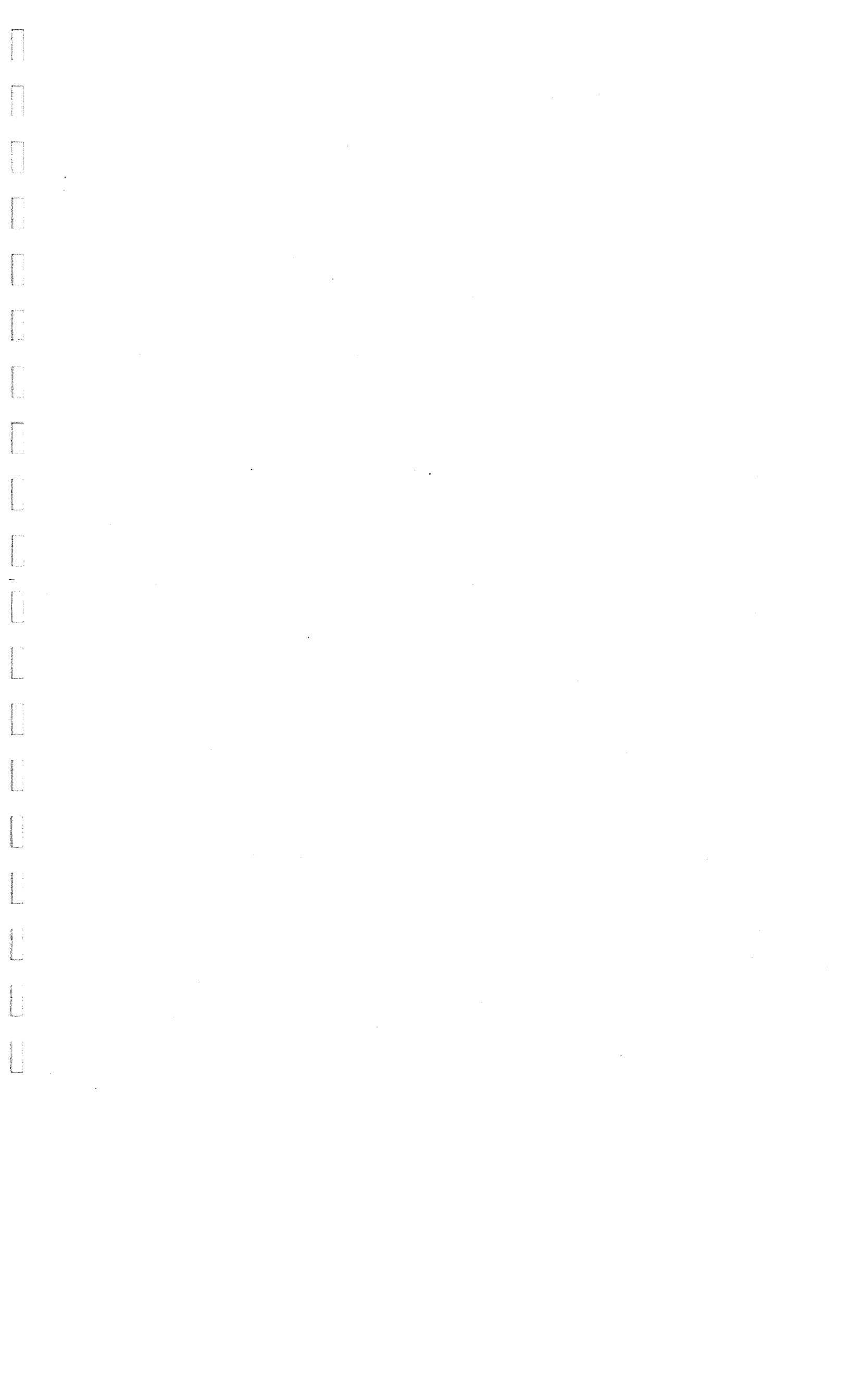
It is a reversal of American tradition to assume that Catholics have a primary allegiance to state schools. The state school is founded on a secularistic basis making it the instrument of those who make an interpretation of the school's responsibility the production of good

citizens. The rights of the Church and of the Catholic family make it necessary that the teaching and organization of the school be regulated by Catholic Spirit, under the direction of the Church. In this way religion is not a "trimming", but in truth the very foundation and crown of youth's entire training.

As conceived by Roman Catholicism, its educational system is an integral part of the democratic freedom to educate. It, therefore, deserves acceptance and acknowledgement as such, and consequently is entitled to receive a just share in the financial aid granted by the state for schools.

CHAPTER II

THE POSITIONS OF SELECTED PROTESTANT GROUPS
TOWARD RELIGION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA



CHAPTER II

THE POSITIONS OF SELECTED PROTESTANT GROUPS TOWARD RELIGION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA

A. Introduction

Protestantism with its many denominations does not have a hierarchy through which policies are passed down to the individual churches. Nor is there one "spokesman" who is endowed with the authority to establish the positions to which those of the Protestant faith must adhere. However, there are denominational organizations and councils through which a denomination within Protestant Christianity may make official pronouncements for its own particular church group. It is only by studying each group separately that we can begin to make any statements about the orientation toward religion in elementary education within Protestantism in America.

The purpose of chapter two is to investigate the attitude toward religion in elementary education expressed by three particular Protestant denominations, selected on the basis explained in the initial introduction.¹ Thus it

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1. Supra. pp. ix-xi.

may be possible to discover basic convictions and concerns held in common by these churches comprising Protestantism.

It is written into the nature of things that some force is always at work, bringing togetherness out of separateness and unity out of contentions. God has willed it so.¹

The investigation of this orientation toward religion in elementary education will include a consideration of the nature of religion, how it functions in relation to life, its value in relation to education, and the particular church's viewpoint toward elementary education. Finally the attitude toward the role of elementary education, public and private, will be considered. The general implications of the conceptions of religion and education will be summarized at the end.

B. The Methodist Approach

1. The Nature of Religion

a. The Definition of Religion

Religion is "the response of a person's whole being to God in Christ."² This response of the whole person to God is many sided and has a complex nature.

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1. William Clayton Bower and Percy Roy Hayward, Protestantism Faces Its Educational Task Together, C. C. Nelson Publishing Company, Appleton, Wisconsin, 1950, p. ix.
2. Educational Principles in the Curriculum, General Board of Education, The Methodist Church, Nashville, 1952, p. 5.

It is understanding God as revealed in Christ; it is loving God in response to God's love offered to us in Christ; it is affirming God's will as exemplified in Christ; it is doing God's will by the power given us through Christ; it is the development, through a life of faith, love, and service, of a character like Christ.¹

These aspects of religion include interpretation, appreciation, purpose, action, fellowship, and growth.

b. The Function of Religion in Relation to Life

In Methodism a fundamental fact about man is "the interrelatedness of body, mind, and spirit in his total nature".² He is made "for life on earth, for fellowship with God, and for life eternal".³ The natural and social sciences cannot settle the central issue about man's nature. The Christian faith affirms that man cannot understand himself apart from his relationship to God.

He can find the true meaning of his existence only in that relationship, even as he is an inhabitant of earth; ... he can achieve victory over the profound evils of his life and fulfill God's purposes for him only through the power of God's grace.⁴

Methodist theology thus focuses attention on man and his situation. Religion functioning at its best involves the acceptance of values with the intention of seeking the realization of such values in the activities of everyday life.

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1. Ibid.
2. Foundations of Christian Teaching in Methodist Churches, General Board of Education, The Methodist Church, Nashville, 1960, p. 21.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

c. The Value of Religion in Relation to Education

The interpretation of the nature of religion must define the objectives of education. As the church goes about its task of teaching, it must aim at the commitment of the whole self - heart, mind, soul and strength - to the whole will of God. Such complete and comprehensive commitment is the only way to the integration of the Christian's life in a completely worthy cause.¹ Since the Christian religion is more than a momentary response, the Christian must "continuously examine, clarify, and expand his beliefs, ... deepen his love toward God and fellow men, ... and strengthen his Christian purposes ... Education, therefore, is "a lifelong adventure of living and learning ... (continuing) ever to press on toward the fulfillment of (the) high calling through Christ."²

2. The Nature of Education

a. The Right to Educate

The relationship between the church and the home in education must be one of sympathy and cooperation. Each should understand and give support to the other, though the ultimate responsibility of general education

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1. Ibid., p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 9.

rests upon parents.¹ However, in religious education, the influence of the family may lead away from Christian standards and loyalties; therefore, it is necessary for the church to go beyond its committed home-church constituency in an effort to win every family to Christ.²

b. The Subject and Environment of Education

The subject of education is the child of God. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers requires an informed and educated laity as well as clergy.³ Therefore, education centers in individual persons, with particular emphasis upon "what they may become as God's life flows in their lives, and what they may do for the world as God's life flows through them into the life of the world."⁴ Education, general or Christian, is possible because of what God has done and continues to do. It is based on his action in creation, the relationship he sustains with the world, and the nature of the persons he has created. Man can know God in his ongoing life experiences. He can learn because God made him "free, intelligent, and capable of change and of self directed development".⁵

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1. Francis J. McConnell, The Essentials of Methodism, The Methodist Book Concern, New York, 1916, p. 64.
2. Ibid., p. 79.
3. Foundations of Christian Teaching in Methodist Churches, p. 15.
4. Educational Principles in the Curriculum, p. 15.
5. Foundations of Christian Teaching in Methodist Churches, p. 31.

c. The End and Object of Education

Through education the church seeks to help persons become aware of God's seeking love as shown especially in Jesus Christ and to respond in faith and love to the end that they may develop self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-fulfillment under God; increasingly identify themselves as sons of God and members of the Christian community; live as Christian disciples in all relations in human society; and abide in the Christian hope.¹

Man is sinful and in need of repentance and saving grace. His true basic needs are met only in the good news of God's redemptive love and his purpose for the world. Secular education participates in part of the task, but Christian education must supply the principles that are not "out of harmony with or contradictory to the Christian interpretation of reality and human life".² Thus its general objective is mature Christian living.

3. Attitude Toward Public Elementary Education

a. The Place of the Public School

The Board of Education of The Methodist Church believes in the public school system. It recognizes that the public school performs an enormously important function in the development of the national life of America. Its vital role is in educating children to

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1. Ibid.

2. Education Principles in the Curriculum, p. 5.

"become worthy, competent members of society, informed by the best of American culture, and spiritually sensitive in developing their God-given capacities".¹

b. Separation of Church and State

To the Methodist separation of Church and State is an "institutional invention designed to safeguard religious freedom".² In order to perform this function the individual's religious convictions are treated as a private and personal matter. Religious institutions are unique in that they are considered to be "in the state but not under it".³ The Church and State operate independently. "Neither contributes direct financial support to the other, so that deprivation of support may not be used as an instrument of coercion".⁴ Yet, though the roles of each are separate, Church and State have always been mutually helpful in the exchange of protection and services that do not involve the church usurping the functions or status of the State, or that do not favor one religion above others or discriminate against religion by depriving it of a share in public benefits.⁵

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1. Church and Public School Relations, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, Nashville, June, 1958, p. 1.
2. Dean M. Kelley, "Separation of Church and State", Research Consultation on Church and State, The Board of Social and Economic Relations of the Methodist Church, 1958-1960, p. B2.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. B4.

c. Religion in the Public School Curriculum

The Methodist Church pledges itself to support the increasing interest in and serious study of legal means by which public school pupils may have the opportunity to become aware of the basic importance of religion in American culture.

We are concerned that the education of our children include recognition of the reality stated by the Supreme Court that we are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being, and that this be done honestly, sympathetically, and without sectarian divisiveness.¹

Even though the Methodist Church strongly acknowledges its primary role in the teaching of religion, it believes equally that the public schools have a responsibility with respect to the religious foundations of our national culture. The school, it asserts, can do a great deal by acknowledging that ethical and moral values have their basis and sanction in God, and by affirming that religion has been and is an essential factor in our cultural heritage.²

d. The Relation Between Public and Parochial Education

The Methodist Church, in affirming its faith and loyalty to public education, does not deny the primary

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1. Church and Public School Relations, General Board of Education of the Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, June 1958, p. 3.
2. William H. Bernhardt, "Religious Freedom in American Society," Research Consultation on the Church and State, The Methodist Church, 1960, p. 5f.

right of parent to choose the kind of education that shall be given their children. It, therefore, maintains the right of churches or private enterprises to operate, within proper standards, schools for religious or for general education.¹ However, since the church-sponsored school is established with the conviction that a particular religion must be the core of education, these schools, no matter what other functions they have, are sectarian institutions, and as such have no legitimate claim to public funds.²

e. Involvement of Church in Public School Affairs

It is the feeling of the Methodist Church that certain factors, such as the status of teachers, overcrowded and inadequate facilities, and maneuvers to resist desegregation, and certain practices involving pressures from sectarian groups to divert public taxes for the support of schools maintained under sectarian auspices combine to "create an atmosphere of threat, fear, and suspicion".³ Therefore all pastors and members of the Methodist Church are called upon to support the public

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1. C. Stanley Lowell, "Separation and Religion," Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, Washington, 1957, p. 13.
2. Ibid. p. 14.
3. Church and Public School Relations, The Methodist Church, Nashville, 1958, pp. 1-2.

schools of their communities. The means of support suggested are as follows:

1. Working through pulpit ministry, the commission on education, study groups, and other appropriate means to keep alert to matters affecting the public schools.
2. Encouraging the most qualified people in the community to be available for membership on school boards and committees.
3. Raising adequate budgets.
4. Securing the best available teachers, facilities, and curricula.
5. Participating in PTA organizations, citizens advisory groups, and other agencies seeking school betterment.
6. Maintaining such relationships with local school boards and committees that they will know they are being given strong support in behalf of a better school program.¹

4. Provisions for Elementary Education

a. The Church School

In the local church the church school has become an officially recognized and increasingly effective agency for carrying forward the educational program.² Its function as expressed by the Methodists is

to carry the Christian Gospel to the younger generation; to guide and nurture children so as to make surer their reaching a maturity that not only will be sound and healthful but also devoutly Christian.³

In its unique capacity the church school seeks to lead

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1. Ibid., p. 3.
2. Foundations of Christian Teaching in Methodist Churches, p. 15.
3. Guidebook for Workers with Youth, General Board of Education, The Methodist Church, Nashville, 1955, p. 7.

persons to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and his way of life; thereby, to develop his highest possibilities, serve his fellowmen, and share in "creating a more Christian civilization."¹

b. Weekday Religious Education

Methodist are sensitive to the importance of using "through-the-week opportunities" for Christian teaching to supplement the work of the church school.²

Further they recognize that more than half of America's children are unrelated to church, synagogue, or other religious institution and accept a share of responsibility for providing religious education for them.³ The plan for outreach involves working with like-minded groups wherever possible in developing and strengthening a system of weekday religious education adequate to its great opportunities.⁴

5. Summary

To the Methodist religion is a response to God that is very complex and involves the whole being of an individual. But in spite of its complexity, religion may be separated into various aspects such as interpretation,

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1. Ibid., p. 25.
2. Church and Public School Relations, The Methodist Church, Nashville, 1958, p. 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

purpose, fellowship and action or ethics. Yet all of these aspects make up the composite of religion which alone gives to man his understanding of the true meaning of life and its responsibilities and opportunities. This concept of religion, in turn, determines the nature of education. It can be defined as a continuous process of study and learning that leads to an ever deepening fellowship with God and a fuller understanding and response to Him in service to fellow men.

In the matters of education the rights and responsibilities belong primarily to parents. However, where religious education is at stake and the family may be negligent, the church assumes the right to educate. The individual, as God's creature, capable of learning and reasoning, is the subject of education who must be placed in an environment where he may become what God has purposed through his creative powers. The end result will be the individual's increased awareness of God's love in Jesus Christ and a deepening response that leads to a well rounded "self" development. Secular education can only begin the task. Religious education must supply the principles for interpreting life and reality.

Because religion may be dealt with separately in its various aspects and the task of education can be shared by Church and State, the Methodist Church believes that the

public school system has a vital function to perform by providing an education for children that contains the best of American culture and develops able members of society sensitive to their spiritual capacities. In order to protect religious freedom, Church and State must remain separated, but this separation does not exclude the possibility of the exchange of protection and services unless the exchange involves jeopardizing the functions or status of one of them.

In keeping with its concept of the nature of religion and without infringing on the primary role of the Church in the teaching of religion, the State through the public schools can have an important part in teaching some aspects of religion by stressing moral and spiritual values and the religious factors in our cultural history.

The Church acknowledges the right of churches or private groups to set up schools under proper standards. It further acknowledges the right of parents to decide within these standards the means by which their children shall be educated. However, since the primary function of the church sponsored school is the inculcation of religion, they are not entitled to support from public funds without violating Church and State separation.

In public school affairs today there exist certain factors which have created a threatening and fearful

atmosphere making it all the more imperative that church people support and work for the public schools of their community by all possible legal means.

The task of educating is shared by home, school and church. The Church has become increasingly aware of its obligations and potentialities, not only through the church school, which alone has the responsibility of commitment, worship, and fellowship, but also through weekday religious education which is becoming more and more a valuable supplement to the work of the church school.

C. The Missouri Synod Lutheran Approach

1. The Nature of Religion

a. The Definition of Religion

Religion for the Lutheran is based on a firm foundation of faith in God who "has reconciled the whole world unto Himself through the vicarious life and death of His Son."¹ Furthermore, religion and life are a unit and cannot be divided into secular and spiritual compartments.² What a man believes concerning God determines his viewpoint on life and his basic social and moral character.

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1. Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1932, p. 11.
2. Arthur Brunn, The Church and the Christian Education of Children, Concordia, St. Louis, 1930, p. 2.

Religion requires interpretation and is a personal matter between God and man, involving a living faith based on individual understanding and commitment.¹

b. The Function of Religion in Relation to Life

Religion to Lutherans is not a factor in life that can be effectively separated in various aspects, compartmentalized and isolated for use by one educational agency to develop. The religious objectives of education must provide a sound and workable basis for civic and vocational ends as well as spiritual.

The development of personal character through the inculcation of the Christian faith and its high personal virtues is the best guarantee of personal as well as civic righteousness, of respect for authority, of patriotism and loyalty, of high regard for the stability of the home and other social institutions, for the Christian ideal of "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty".²

c. The Value of Religion in Relation to Education

The Reformation had an inevitable influence upon the development of educational principles. The fundamental principles of salvation only by faith in Christ, without the mediation of priest or Church and of the supreme authority of the Bible make the individual accountable for his own salvation. Intelligent

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1. Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, p. 12.
2. Walter H. Beck, Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1939, p. 415.

understanding is therefore essential to belief and the ability to read the Scriptures becomes a "necessity for the development of a Christian consciousness and life".¹

Thus it is necessary that as early as possible in life persons must be educated to read, study, and think.

"Without education the new element of individual liberty projected into human society could not have maintained itself".²

2. The Nature of Education

a. The Right to Educate

With the same "resistless energy" as Luther, Lutherans impress upon "parents, ministers, and civil officers their obligation to educate the young".³ The official statement of the Missouri Synod reads as follows: "By the law of nature as well as by divine command parents are entitled and in duty bound to provide for the education of their children".⁴ It is also their right and duty to "select such schools...as they are convinced will best promote the welfare of their children".⁵ However, if

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1. Beck, op. cit., p. 5
2. H. H. Horne, The Philosophy of Education, p. 153, quoted in Beck, op. cit., p. 5.
3. Beck, op. cit., p. 7, quoting from one of Luther's principal educational treatises.
4. Brunn, op. cit., p. 3.
5. Ibid., p. 4.

parents neglect their duty, the State is "justified in compelling them by appropriate legislation to the discharge of their duty"¹. But if the State assumes the right to educate for any other reason, it is "an infringement of the natural rights of parents"².

b. The Subject and Environment of Education

Luther held, as did the Lutheran Church after him, that "if the kingdom of God is to come in power, we must begin with children and teach them from the cradle..."³

Therefore the synod has adopted the resolution that it keep in constant view the necessity of "the early implantation of the seed of God's Word at the time when children are most receptive to it in their hearts"⁴. Such an educational program for children must be conducted in an atmosphere that combines the most worth-while elements of the modern elementary curriculum and the "vital spirituo-religious factors, which alone can effect a well rounded personality and stable character"⁵. Thus the ideal of education is the Christian man, fitted through instruction and discipline to discharge the duties of every relation of life.

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1. Beck, op. cit., p. 232.
2. Ibid.
3. Quoted in Beck, op. cit., p. 6.
4. Beck, op. cit., p. 93.
5. A. C. Stellhorn, The Meaning of a Lutheran Education, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1928, p. 8.

c. The End and Object of Education

The primary objective of education is the "inculcation of Christian doctrines and principles of life and their co-ordination with the entire curriculum of the school"¹. The Lutheran conception of religion is expressed in terms of the total life and of education as guiding the growth of the whole personality. The two must go hand in hand. It is the Lutheran conviction that "a nation cannot make the right kind of citizens by a godless education and bring in religion afterward"². The purpose of establishing schools is to develop a consecrated and intelligent man, imbued with the spirit of the Christian religion.³ For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and supreme above all else that parades as education.⁴

3. Provisions for Elementary Education

a. The Religious School

It is the policy of the Missouri Synod to maintain schools of their own rather than to have their children go to public schools. These congregational schools are considered "the nurseries of the church, from which the young trees, when they have grown older, are transplanted

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1. Ibid.
2. Beck, op. cit., p. 408.
3. Ibid., p. 415.
4. Ibid., p. 262.

into the fruit orchard of the Church".¹ Thus these schools are considered the foundation of the Church - an agency for ideal Christian training, a bulwark for Church, home, and state, and a necessity to preserve true orthodoxy. If the Church intends to educate its children in spiritual matters, it can do so only by undertaking also their general education and development. Religion is not a subject to be added to the others, but must pervade and permeate all. Thus the teaching of all subjects has devolved upon the Church and made the religious school a vital part of the program of the church.²

b. The Place of the Religious School in American Elementary Education

The history of the system of common schools set up all over the United States reveals the tremendous influence of the German school system on American public schools,³ but "their influence was even more pronounced upon the German Lutheran schools established in this country by the very people who helped to set them up abroad".⁴ Yet the Lutheran system is often looked upon as being "un-American" in concept, undemocratic in principles and objectives, and unworthy of both Church and State.⁵ The facts speak to the

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1. Ibid., p. 110.
2. Stellhorn, op. cit., p. 5.
3. Cf. E. P. Cubberley, Readings in the History of Education, Harper Brothers, New York, 1920.
4. Beck, op. cit., p. 97.
5. Ibid.

contrary. There is a distinctive place for parochial schools in a democracy.

The integration of the populace does not demand absolute uniformity, and the preservation of the nation is better guaranteed by a free expression of high aspiration and endeavors than by their suppressions, as indicated in Supreme Court opinions upholding the rights and need of such schools... as long as (parochial education) helps to achieve the objectives of education for the individual as well as for society, it is worthy of public recognition and approval...the Lutheran schools are seeking to maintain a high standard in all functions and to be outstanding in their specific aims; they fulfill distinctive social needs and do a type of work which the public-school under existing conditions cannot do. They consciously and intelligently attempt to render a valuable spiritual and social service and strive for the development of high standards of life in a democratic society.¹

4. Attitude Toward Public Elementary Education

a. The Place of the Public School

On one hand the Lutherans believe that there can be no true education without religion and therefore for their own youngsters provide schools founded on their educational philosophy. Yet on the other hand, they fully recognize the nature and needs of a democratic society. Consequently they equally acknowledge that we must have public schools open to all children without regard to creed.²

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1. Ibid., p. 416.
2. Stellhorn, op. cit., p. 29.

b. Separation of Church and State

The Missouri Synod has clearly and consistently applied its understanding of the separation of Church and State. This separation is to be acknowledged in accordance with the Word of God, for Christ has said "My kingdom is not of this world," and, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." They therefore disapprove of any legislation which tends toward a confusion of spiritual and secular affairs and endangers religious liberty. Church and State are ordinances of God, but have entirely different aims and one must not be employed in the interests of the other.¹

c. Religion in the Public School Curriculum

Lutherans strongly insist that "public schools in a democracy based upon the principle of religious freedom can not and must not teach religion in its schools".² The nature of religion is such that it must be given interpretation and as such is sectarian. Any program of religious education, rites, or Bible reading in the public schools is a violation not only of the principle of separation of Church and State, but also of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.³ The Missouri Synod, standing for complete

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1. Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1932, p. 31.
2. Beck, op. cit., p. 349.
3. Ibid., p. 350.

separation of Church and State, feel that in the matter of education it is the duty of the Church to provide all the necessities of spiritual life. Furthermore, no church group "worthy of the name Christian has the right to call upon the State for assistance in carrying out the mission of the Church."¹

d. The Relation Between Public and Parochial Education

Lutheran schools were not established in the spirit of opposition and hostility to the public schools.² As parochial schools serve the needs of the Church and are a "bulwark against corruption and decay", so public elementary education is the safeguard of public institution.³ It is vitally necessary for the State to maintain its schools. Since the Missouri Synod recognizes compulsory education on the part of the State as essential for the welfare of the State, it is not disgruntled because they must also pay the public school tax.⁴ Furthermore, on the question of public support for parochial schools, the Lutherans consistently apply the principle of the separation of Church and State. "No attempt has ever been made by Lutheran schools to secure public funds."⁵ It has been the

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 255.
3. Ibid., p. 178.
4. Ibid., p. 256.
5. Ibid., p. 411.

consistent position of the Missouri Synod that parochial education is solely a function of the Church; therefore the principle of separation must be maintained and no public funds may be used for private purposes.¹

e. Involvement of Church in Public School Affairs

As far as acknowledging state schools to be an absolutely necessary political institution for a democratic society and being willing to pay taxes to the State for the support of public school, the Missouri Synod states "we are willing to support it in the future as we have done in the past..."

5. Summary

For the Lutheran religion and education are inseparable. Neither can exist without the other. Nor can life itself in all of its aspects, civic, social, personal, as well as spiritual, be understood properly and fully apart from religious faith. A personal, living faith in Christ as Savior requires that the individual must know how to read and reason for himself. Without education the fundamental doctrines of religion and religious liberty could not be maintained.

With the understanding of the nature of religion and of education such that they form a unit in life, it

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1. Ibid.

necessarily follows that the church would assume a high degree of responsibility for the general education of children. The church recognizes the primary right of parents to see to the education of their children, but it also maintains the right to exhort parents to remember the divine command of God and to have their children educated in their own religious school or to select a school that will best promote their child's welfare. The State may assume the right to educate only if parents neglect their obligation. For the State to assume the right to educate under any other circumstances is a violation of parents' rights.

The Lutheran educational program must be conducted under circumstances which combine the best of modern educational psychology based on religious principles to insure that the individual will be thoroughly developed into a well rounded personality and fit to carry out the duties of life. The end result should be a spiritually consecrated man whose wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord and whose life is imbued with the spirit of the Christian religion.

Since religion is the foundation of education, the Lutherans find it necessary to provide schools for general education which are an essential part of the Church program. These schools are in no way considered inferior or divisive

in nature, but are operated according to the highest standards and are completely American in concept and objective.

While Lutherans maintain their own schools rather than have their children go to public school, they recognize the necessity of public education. A democratic society serving all creeds requires a system in which no one creed is given preference. Furthermore it holds to a very clear distinction between the work of the Church and that of the State. There must be separation between the two so that there is no confusion of functions or using of one for the accomplishments of the aims of the other.

This concept of separation leads to the conviction that public schools can not teach religion without violating this principle as well as the principle of individual religious freedom. Therefore the two school systems, -public and parochial, must be maintained as separate enterprises - one of the State, the other of the Church. Under this conviction, no claim may be made upon public funds to support education that is solely a function of the Church. Involvement of the Church in public school affairs may be extended only in so far as public education is a necessary political institution in a democratic society and the Church as a member of the same society owes its support to the institution.

D. The United Presbyterian Church
in the U.S.A. Approach

1. The Nature of Religion

a. The Definition of Religion

Religion is the service and adoration of God as expressed in worship and obedience to divine commands.

Nature reveals that

there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and does good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might.¹

The true God has revealed to man the acceptable way of worshiping himself. The Reformed understanding of faith in God is not that it is primarily the acceptance of the truth of certain doctrinal statements but that it is faith in and commitment to God as revealed in Christ.²

b. The Function of Religion in Relation to Life

Religion is recognized as a part of every day life. It seeks to interpret life as a whole, to give a philosophy of life and to secure allegiance to that philosophy as related to a divine person, Jesus Christ. The Christian religion makes Jesus Christ the center of life, so that

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1. The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Philadelphia, 1959, Chapter XXI, Section 1.
2. The Church and the Public Schools, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Philadelphia, 1957. p. 7.

"in all things he might have the preëminence."¹ For through true religion a man understands the meaning of his nature, his purpose in life, and his expected end. In this life he may "enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of Glory."²

The function of religion then is to bring a - philosophy of life onto the human scene of strife and conflict, with no less heroic a purpose than to have Christ control human life. It presses on to the ideal state where the individual is to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," and where social living is a Christlike living.³

c. The Value of Religion in Relation to Education

The initial educational task in religion is that persons be confronted with the knowledge of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. This teaching, however, is the "task of the church and the church home."⁴ Education provides the information, stimulation, and freedom in the search for truth that is essential to the growth of the individual. Reformed Christianity has consistently pioneered in universal education on the ground that "true freedom is attained only in conscious devotion to the

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1. Ibid. p. 6.
2. The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Philadelphia, 1959, The Larger Catechism, Answer 83.
3. Lewis J. Sherrill, Presbyterian Parochial Schools, Yale University Press, 1932, p. 193f.
4. The Church and the Public Schools, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Philadelphia, 1957, p. 7.

service of God."¹ The church has therefore sought to assure every man "the education requisites to access to the Bible and the Christian heritage."² The worship of God can best be practiced by a free people whose freedom is secured by an educated populace.

2. The Nature of Education.

a. The Right to Educate

In the Presbyterian Church it has become customary to think of two kinds of education: "general" (a more acceptable term for "secular") and "religious". The state has been given the authority to supervise "general" education,³ but is in no way to be expected to assume complete responsibility for the development of the total life of the pupil. Religious education is in the hands of the home and the church. "Our culture offers and demands educations instead of education."⁴

Yet education can not be so sharply departmentalized for the "whole" task of education is primarily the responsibility of family and church who hold the dominant place in shaping the personality of the child.⁵ Ultimately the right to educate is vested in the family. The parental

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Sherrill, p. 128.

4. Ibid. p. 193.

5. The Church and the Public School, p. 11.

vows taken at the baptism of a child obligate the parents to the sincere effort to provide a Christian education at home. Such vows are taken with the understanding and conviction that parents undertake the rearing of children in cooperation with God.¹ The right to choose the kind of formal education, public or private, puts the responsibility² of general education on parents as well.

b. The Subject and Environment of Education

The Presbyterian Church in recent years has been consistent in its expression of faith in the public schools. Its zeal for education grows out of its concern for persons, the subject of education, and its realization of the intrinsic worth of the individual. Involved also is the conviction that the basic values of free people can best be maintained through allegiance to a free public-school system. The church acknowledges that all truth can withstand questioning and can only be shown to be true when questioned, and thus insists that the search for truth must be undertaken and be unhindered.

Adherents of the Reformed tradition believe that "cloistered living", implying a withdrawal from direct participation in the social milieu, is incompatible with the Calvinistic tradition and intent, and that distinct advantage accrues

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1. Sherrill, p. 199.
2. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 17.

from educational experiences encountered through group living and the interplay of divergent ideas, always amenable of subjection, however, to the transcendent purposes of God.¹

c. The End and Object of Education

The purpose of God for man is that he "glorify God and enjoy him forever."² This purpose has a very close relationship to the orderly growth of a human being. Psychology teaches us that the nature of this growth is such that it requires an atmosphere of Christian understanding and compassion. Love and respect for persons imply for the educative process that there must be freedom of inquiry and latitude for growth in widening human appreciations.

Learning, therefore, which is conceived as purely transmissive, and learning which is restricted by authoritarian control, both assume that the learner should not be free to believe and know for himself; such theories cannot be a full expression of Christian love.... Public education unfettered by restrictive theological positions or secular ideologies is consonant with the nature of Christian growth.³

In the atmosphere of freedom and appreciation for the worth of persons, education provides adequate opportunity for youth to "develop in the complex disciplines of organized human knowledge" and to grow "in making moral choices and discerning ethical distinctions."⁴ Throughout there should

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1. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 7.
2. The Larger Catechism, Answer 1.
3. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 8.
4. Ibid., p. 9.

be latitude "to seek, to test, and to understand, through free inquiry and study."¹ The resultant will be the moral and spiritual maturity of the individual.

3. Attitude Toward Public Elementary Education

a. The Place of the Public School

Holding the convictions regarding religion and education stated above, "we as a church, accept as our ethical obligation the responsibility of carrying our share of the burden undergirding the principle of the public school."² The position is based on the assumption that the school will continue to provide the atmosphere in which children can grow into moral and spiritual maturity and is derived in part from religious heritage and in part from an estimate of the political, cultural, and religious situation. It is the earnest conviction of the church that faith in the living God is discovered and deepened amid real choices, rather than artificially protected situations. Furthermore, the church acknowledges a Christian responsibility to the whole community, even to those who do not share its faith.

The public schools...are shaped by the deliberate effort to respect the integrity of every child and to encourage the widest freedom and discussion in

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.

the child's search for truth...they are an unrivaled agency for meeting the needs of all our people individually and our national society as a whole.¹

b. Separation of Church and State

The principle of separation of Church and State lies at the foundation of religious freedom,² and is an important issue to consider when questions of church and public school relationship arise. The first Amendment to the Constitution of the United States makes provision for Church and State relationships which has been interpreted by the Presbyterian Church as consisting of certain significant propositions. First, that each individual is to have full freedom in deciding religious convictions. This right is his as a citizen and as a creature of God. Secondly, there is to be no one church established as "state church"; nor is there to be support of a church or church school fully or partially by public funds. Thirdly, separation means that there is to be no interrelation between the jurisdiction of the church and that of the state. Since neither is to invade the domain of the other, the legal structure of each must remain separate and each must finance its own program. Yet this separation does not require that in public education the religious

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1. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 10.
2. Sherrill, p. 91.

backgrounds of our heritage be eliminated. Nor does it in any sense bar the way to cooperation in education where no attempt is made by either church or state to coerce the other in the content of the teaching that will be given.¹

c. Religion in the Public School Curriculum

1. Moral and Spiritual Values

As has been expressed above,² the nature of religion may be thought of as comprising the elements of worship, commitment, particular beliefs, and a functional outworking of beliefs through ethical conduct. The first three elements are essentially sectarian and therefore must be solely the work of the church and the home. However, an ethical code is functional and not sectarian. Therefore, developing acceptable moral and spiritual values is the united concern of the home, church, public school and community. Yet this admission "sharpens the obligation of the church to teach its children that all values stem from God, revealed through Christ."³ If the church fails to instruct its youth in the divine origin of all values,

we foresee the danger of a drift toward a pseudo-religious position in which the values of human relationships implementing our religious beliefs become the central core of belief to the exclusion

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1. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 14.
2. Supra., p.43ff.
3. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 12f.

of reverence for God as known in Jesus Christ the source of all human values....the schools cannot supply this central core, (therefore) we maintain that the Presbyterian Church along with those of other persuasions must supply their own instruction in the areas of revelation and grace.¹

2. "The Common Core"

It is the firm conviction of the Presbyterian Church that a "common core" agreeable to all faiths as a basis for teaching is "insufficient and misleading" because religious commitment arises in a "specific and concrete religious community, highly articulate, and never abstracted into common elements."² The beliefs and convictions derived from this position are incompatible with a "faith of synthesis."³

3. Our Religious Heritage and Concepts

The Presbyterian Church believes that "religious illiteracy is not congenial to the philosophy of general education."⁴ Therefore, it holds that it is the responsibility of educators to recognize the place of religion in American culture as imparted through knowledge in academic subjects, while guaranteeing that no attempt be made at indoctrination. However, although they encourage

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1. Ibid., p. 13
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 14.

emphasizing religious heritage, they reject the assumption that such an emphasis can be the answer to their quest for adequate religious education for their youth.¹

d. The Relation Between Public and Parochial Education

A century ago the promotion of parochial schools was a live issue, but the movement was short lived.² It is the conviction today that the policy of withdrawal was inconsistent with the church's obligation to share directly in all phases of civic responsibility, including support of the enlarging public-school program.³

However, the fundamental right of parents to choose either public or parochial schools for their children's education is upheld. But the church feels that the decision to educate children privately in no way removes these parents from the responsibility for helping to provide a sound education for all other children in the community.⁴

Furthermore, since parochial schools are avowedly sectarian, they are not a part of public education and as such have no claim to public education funds secured from taxation. The Presbyterian Church considers a claim to a

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1. Ibid.
2. Lewis J. Sherrill, Presbyterian Parochial Schools, Yale University Press, 1932, Chapter IX.
3. Sherrill, p. 68.
4. The Church and the Public Schools, p. 17.

share in tax funds by parochial schools as a prime step in violation of constitutional guarantees against government support of sectarianism.¹

e. Involvement of Church in Public School Affairs

The Presbyterian Church is not only determined to work for better schools but also to press for better communication between church and school. To achieve their goal, the church makes a plea to its people to "face the true issues objectively."² "Intelligent interaction and mutual support between church and school must stem from an informed and interested church leadership which knows educations and...the schools."³

More direct involvement is greatly needed. In view of the educational crisis today, the Presbyterian Church is "summoned to move...young people...to become teachers of integrity and competence in the schools of this country."⁴ It is also imperative that Presbyterians exercise their privilege of service as members on boards of education, which are vital as agencies that formulate the policies, select the teachers, and administer the program of the public-school system. The church calls

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1. Ibid., p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 23.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 24.

upon its members to give vigorous support to the financial needs of the schools and to the importance of adequate salaries for teachers.¹

4. Provisions for Elementary Education

a. The Church School

Since the public school can only serve to assist the home in the functional aspect of religion, it must rely upon the coöperation of the church in its educational task. "The church school is the organization through which ...the educational work of the church is chiefly conducted."² It functions primarily through the Sunday church school and youth organizations, but also the weekday church school and the vacation church school.

b. Weekday Religious Education

Large numbers of children of school ages are participating to some degree in "released" or "dismissed" time programs of religious education.³ Opinions vary greatly as to the educative possibilities within "released time", but the Presbyterian Church approves this program as one which has positive and far-reaching values when

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1. Ibid., p. 25.
2. The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., General Assembly, Philadelphia, 1960, p. 108.
3. Our Church and Weekday Religious Education, United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Philadelphia, 1958, p. 2.

effectively administered. It makes the unique contribution of placing religious instruction in a position as an integral part of the total learning process and emphasizes the importance which religion should have in our weekday life as well as on Sunday.¹

5. Summary

For the Presbyterian, the substance of religion is personal faith and commitment to God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Religion is not an isolated interest but a part of every day activity interpreting life as a whole and giving meaning to man's existence as a child of God. Universal education provides the framework within which the search for truth essential to individual growth is carried on and is a requisite to access to the Bible and an understanding of our Christian heritage.

The task of educating is principally in the hands of parents. However, in our complex society different agencies have been given the responsibility of various aspects. The State has been given authority to supervise general education, while religious education is provided by the home and the church.

Education is best carried on in an atmosphere of

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1. Ibid., p. 6.

freedom where persons are valued as individuals and truth may be sought through encounter and the interplay of divergent ideas. The object of such freedom in education is to allow for development in the complex disciplines of human knowledge and growth in making moral distinctions.

The Presbyterian Church looks upon the public school with great favor and assuming that they will continue to provide education in this atmosphere of freedom in which children can develop moral and spiritual maturity, it gives its support to them as a part of its responsibility to the community as a whole. Furthermore, religious freedom requires maintaining the separation of church and state. This principle insures a man the right to choose his own church. No church is the established church and no public funds may be used to support a function of the church. However, while there is to be no interrelation between the jurisdiction of these two institutions, this does not eliminate the possibility for cooperation in education provided there is no attempt on either side to coerce.

There exist various approaches whereby it has been suggested to include religion in the public school curriculum. Ethics is a functional outworking or non-sectarian aspect of religion expressed through moral and spiritual values. As such it is the concern of the public

school and community as well as the home and church. Yet the church must be faithful in supplying the central core of belief in God through Christ or there will be danger of drifting toward a pseudoreligious position in which the values of human relationship become the core of belief. A second possibility, the "common core" approach, is not acceptable to Presbyterians. This basis for religious teaching is deceptive. Real beliefs are derived not in abstract common elements, but in a concrete religious community. It is the responsibility of public educators to recognize the place of religion in American culture and heritage, but this emphasis in no way relieves the church of its continued quest to provide adequate religious education for its youth.

A hundred years ago the Presbyterian Church was actively interested in establishing a parochial school system. This policy, however, meant withdrawal from the support of public education which the church soon found was inconsistent with its obligations to share in civic responsibilities. Although the church does not foster parochial education, it does not oppose the operation of such school and the right of parents to choose a parochial education for their children. However, such a choice does not release these parents from responsibilities in seeing that all other children in a community are provided with a

sound education. Parochial education is also considered a function of the church, not a part of public education, and therefore has no claim to public funds for support.

The primary organization through which the church carries on its tremendous educational task is the Sunday church school. However, in more recent years other educative possibilities have been explored and found to be highly successful. "Released" or "dismissed" time classes have been among those which have proved to make a unique contribution to religious education. When properly administered, these programs have succeeded in emphasizing the important place of religion as a factor in the total educative process.

E. Summary

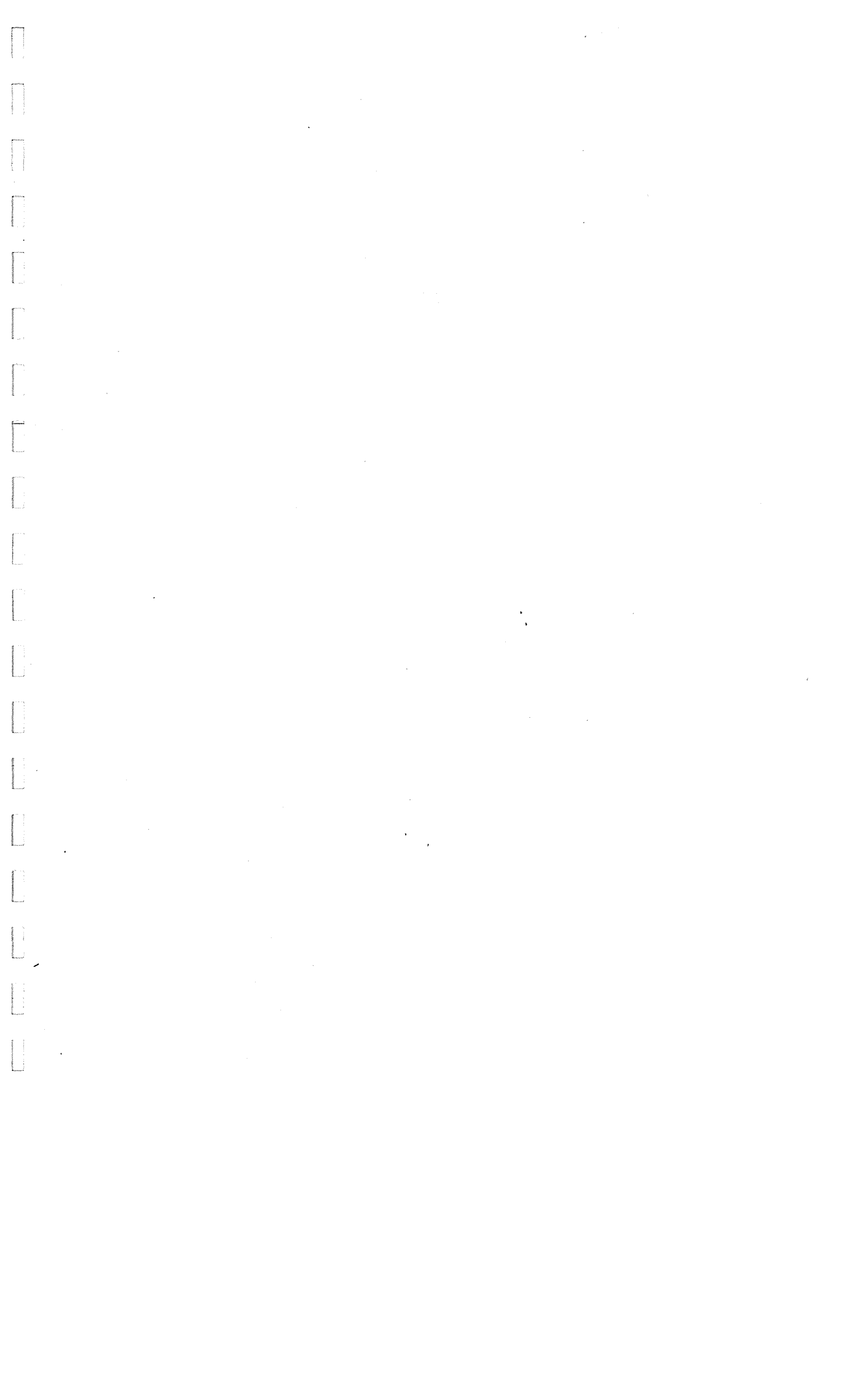
It is evident from this chapter that there are certain important similarities in the various positions of the three church groups. But there are also enough differences which make it impossible to speak of a "Protestant" orientation.

Each of these churches speaks of religion in terms of personal commitment, but the Lutherans place considerable emphasis upon the transmission of the fundamental teachings of religion in order to "preserve" the church. This emphasis leads to the conviction that religion and

education must go together. The Lutheran Church, therefore, has undertaken the support and control of its own elementary school system. It recognizes the necessity of having the state maintain a free public system and the church's responsibility to support the state schools as well as its own, but firmly believes that religion is solely the responsibility of the church and the home.

The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have a very similar conception of the nature of religion and the nature of education. Each concept has different aspects, thus making it feasible for the various institutions - church, home and state - to share in the responsibilities. Primarily the church and home must have the dominant position in shaping the personality of children. But it is the conviction of these churches that education must be carried on in an atmosphere of freedom where truth will best survive, rather than under the authoritarian control of the church. A man must be free to believe and know for himself. Therefore, these churches feel that the public school system is ideal for carrying out the program of general education. In regard to religion, these churches believe the schools may assist by respecting the religious heritage of its people and the God given basis for ethical conduct. This leaves the church with the major responsibilities of its educational task to be carried on through

Sunday church schools and weekday religious instruction. In this manner, the church aims to provide the necessary bond between religion and life needed in elementary education in America.



CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
AND SELECTED PROTESTANT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD RELIGION
IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA



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A COMPARISON OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND SELECTED PROTESTANT ORIENTATIONS TOWARD RELIGION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA

A. Introduction

Religion in elementary education continues daily to be one of the most controversial questions in American education. No issue is more hotly debated; none carries more explosive implications. It touches cherished principles such as religious liberty, freedom of worship, and separation of church and state. Meanwhile tensions are mounting not only between religious and secular groups, but also between religious groups themselves. The situation has become both confused and confusing. The purpose of chapter three is to bring together the philosophical conceptions of religion and education held by Roman Catholicism and the selected Protestant groups in order to compare their viewpoints. Then further comparison will be made of their respective approaches to the educational task. Finally, there will be a consideration of how each of these churches looks upon the public school system and

involves itself in the affairs of public elementary education. Such involvement will be viewed and contrasted in the light of the church's interpretation of the principle of the separation of church and state and its thinking concerning the kind of religion to be included in the public school curriculum. When differences and agreements are laid side by side, they may shed some light on a path of understanding through this seemingly confusing maze of ideas.

B. The Philosophical Viewpoints Compared

1. The Conceptions of Religion

Generally speaking, it is agreed by these churches that God exists and that He is the ultimate reality in the universe and the source of truth and values. But each church says more about religion and emphasizes what it believes in a different way.

The foundation of religion for the Methodist is the continuous response of one's entire being to God in Christ, involving constant examination, clarification, and expansion of belief and resulting in an ever deepening love toward God and fellowmen. The Presbyterian, too, while realizing the importance of belief in certain doctrinal statements, understands faith in God as primarily a commitment to Him as revealed in Christ. To

both of these church groups religion as a living, personal reality, is a recognized part of every day life. Man cannot fully and rightly understand himself and the purpose of life apart from his relationship to God. Furthermore, their conception of religion is such that it may be considered as being comprised of various aspects. The elements of worship, doctrine, and commitment are sectarian and, thereby, must be the responsibility of the home and the church. However, the functional outworking of beliefs through ethical conduct is considered a nonsectarian aspect of religion and as such, becomes the concern of not only the home and the church, but also the public school and community as well. This view of the nature of religion not only influences the objectives of education, but also defines the agencies of education.

The Lutheran,¹ as well, interprets religion as a personal relationship with God based on living faith and individual understanding. But, unlike the Methodist and Presbyterian, he does not look upon religion as just a part of every day life or as only necessary to understanding life, but as life itself. Religion cannot be effectively separated into various aspects. This conception of the nature of religion has far-reaching implications upon education. The life of the church is dependent upon education; therefore, it is imperative that the church bear

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 1. When the term "Lutheran" is used in this thesis, it is limited to Missouri Synod section of the Lutheran Church.

a major responsibility for education in general.

Roman Catholicism shares this important emphasis of the permeation of religion in all education. Education apart from a concern of man's eternal destiny cannot exist, since religion is not a factor or influence, but impregnates all of Catholic life and living. However, unlike the Protestant groups, religion is not so personal. The emphasis is not placed upon an intimate relationship between God and man, but upon duties and obligations which must be worked out in the sacraments. The conception of religion is such that it can be learned in very much the same way that one learns a language. Certain essential spiritual truths are the bedrock of religion and must be taught systematically as prerequisites for firm belief. Hence, it follows from this viewpoint of religion that it is inseparable from education in general and both religion and general education must be the work of the church.

2. The Nature of Education

All of the churches in this consideration recognize that the process of education is essentially a social activity involving primarily three agencies - church, home and school - but there is considerable difference of opinion as to whether the state, the church or parents hold the position of final authority. The Methodist Church states that in matters of education there should be a spirit of

sympathy and co-operation between the church and the home. However, it does specify areas of responsibility. Upon parents rests the final responsibility for general education, and upon the church the ultimate responsibility for religious education.

To the Presbyterian it is also customary to speak in terms of general and religious education, and of parents being vested with the primary right to educate. The state has been delegated the authority to supervise general education, but is in no way expected to assume complete responsibility for all education. Education is also the task of the home and the church which ultimately hold the dominant place in shaping the personality of the child.

The Lutherans, too, recognize that parents are bound by divine command to provide for the education of their children. But the church assists the parents by providing the kind of schooling that will best promote the welfare of their children. The state is looked upon as having rights in education only in so far as it may compel negligent parents to fulfill their obligations.

The Catholics, while recognizing a division of rights in education and the rights of parents over children as offspring from God, do not leave the final authority with parents. Although parental rights take priority over the state whose responsibilities emanate from its purpose to

promote the common welfare in the temporal order, parents are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the church.

Among each of these groups there is agreement that the subject of education is man, interrelated in body, soul and spirit and in need of the redeeming grace of Christ and the power of God's life flowing through his life. In order to fulfill his needs, it is further agreed that education must take place in an environment where the principles involved are in harmony with the Christian interpretation of reality and human life.

Disagreement arises in stating where this environment is best maintained. For the Lutheran the educational program must combine the most worthwhile elements of the modern curriculum with spiritual factors in order to effect a well rounded personality. This can only be secured through church-sponsored schools. The Catholic stresses the influences of all the surroundings of a child - the home, the church, the school, and the world. Each must provide the right conditions for a Christian education. The school then must be subsidiary and complementary to the home and the church. To fulfill this function their schools, like the Lutherans', must be church-sponsored.

On the other hand, the Methodists and Presbyterians hold to the conviction that man should not withdraw from direct participation in the social environment. Truth can

only be shown to be true when subjected to questioning and sought for unhindered. A free public school system open to those of all creeds, therefore, best provides the environment of general education for these groups.

This atmosphere of freedom fosters the opportunities through which the objectives of education as conceived by the Methodist and the Presbyterian are achieved. Education is progressive. It is a growing response to God's love and an increasing development in the complex disciplines of organized human knowledge. It leads to moral, spiritual, and intellectual maturity through self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-fulfillment under God.

The Lutheran, in contrast, believes that the primary objective of education is the inculcation of Christian doctrines and principles of life. In this manner, there will be developed a consecrated, intelligent man, saturated with the spirit of the Christian religion. Likewise, the Roman Catholic looks upon the objective of education as the transmission of facts regarding the example and teaching of Christ. The end result will be to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism, thus perfecting the true Christian.

It is agreed by all four churches that the final result of education should be the mature Christian individual, but there is considerable difference as to the nature of education in bringing about the desired end.

The Lutheran and Roman Catholic viewpoint of education is that it is conceived as purely transmissive and must be restricted by authoritarian control. This conception is diametrically opposed to the view held by the Methodist and the Presbyterian because it assumes that the individual should not be free to believe and know for himself. To these latter church groups education must be unfettered by restrictive theological positions or secular ideologies in order to be congruous with the nature of Christian growth.

C. Contrasting Approaches to the Educational Task

Since it is recognized by both the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches that the public school in its function as one of major educational agencies, is fulfilling an important operation in providing an atmosphere in which children can grow morally and spiritually mature, these churches do not feel that they must undertake for their children the total responsibility for general education. Furthermore, these two churches are in agreement with the idea that a free public education for all develops the national life of America. In its vital role it leads children to become worthy, competent members of society, instructed in the best of American culture, and thus spiritually sensitive to

develop their God-given capacities. Therefore, these churches limit their educational task to the field of religion and especially to those aspects of religion involving worship, doctrine, and commitment, but they also fully defend the rights of parents to choose a church-sponsored school for their child's education. Furthermore, the Presbyterian Church, particularly, recognizes that its admission that the public school plays a part in developing acceptable moral and spiritual values, heightens the obligation of the church to teach that all values stem from God.

The chief organization through which these two churches carry on their educational program is through the Sunday church school. In addition, opportunities are taken during the week to give religious instruction to children. These churches have found that weekday religious education makes the unique contribution of placing religion in a position as an integral part of the total learning process, thereby stressing the significance that religion should have in everyday life as well as on Sunday.

The religious and educational philosophies of the Lutheran Church require that their educational task assume much larger proportions than either the Methodist or Presbyterian Church. The religious instruction of children is to them, like any other Christian church, the life-line

of preserving true orthodoxy. But religion is not conceived of by it, as with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, as a subject to be added to the others, but as the foundation permeating all education. If the church intends to educate children in spiritual matters, it can do so only by establishing its own school system. Thus its educational task involves the religious weekday school as a vital part of its program.

Unlike the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, the Roman Catholic Church believes that the theory of religion underlying the assumption that the public school can assist in character development is incompatible with their understanding of the nature of religion. The public school leaves out the supernatural. There can be no true education that is not based on the Catholic concept of religion. This supernatural dimension is what gives completeness to life and to education. With this understanding as a basis, it is necessary for the Catholic Church to maintain its own schools. Only then can their children acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes permeated with this supreme integrating principle of supernatural wisdom. Therefore, like the Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church has undertaken, as its task, the total educational program of its children.

D. Involvement in Public Elementary Education

1. Attitudes Toward the Role of the Public School System

Basically each of the three Protestant groups recognizes that a society such as America's, made up of many different religious and cultural groups, needs to have a free public system of education in which the rights and interests of all are preserved. The Methodist Church and the Presbyterian go a step beyond by stating with sincere conviction that the public schools fulfill the needs of their children in regard to general education. They express faith in and pledge support of state supervision of education. However, the Lutherans, while they acknowledge that a democratic society requires a public system of education, hold to the conviction that their own youngsters need an education founded upon the philosophy adhered to by Lutherans. Therefore, they maintain their own schools apart from what they accept as the main system of education in America. Furthermore they pledge their responsibility for and financial support of the public school. Moreover, they concede that, since the Lutheran school is established on a sectarian basis, they must be supported by the church. They recognize that their school is for the purpose of giving instruction in the doctrines and practices of their own church, and as such they are not part of the public and not entitled to public support.

On the other hand, the Catholic church disagrees with both of these positions. It feels that in a pluralistic society the interests of all groups are not best served through public education for all, but rather by having private groups maintaining several different systems, each fulfilling the needs of its own group. This practice will prevent a state monopoly and will preserve the democratic freedom of education. The Catholics further believe that the philosophical basis for the public school is completely secular. As such it only serves those parents who want their children to have an education based on a philosophy of naturalistic humanism. Hence, the public school is looked upon as inadequate for the Catholic, but serving one particular group of society. The Catholic school serves another group of the community. Other school systems serve still other groups. Research has been cited by the Catholic Church showing that non-public schools have exerted a tremendous influence in shaping the American way of life. All of these different enterprises, public and private, comprise to the Catholic, the American educational system. Since they believe that their schools are serving a portion of the community and are a contribution to the total educational program of children in America, they feel very strongly that their school system is entitled to a share in the public tax funds for education. Their

difference of opinion concerning the place of their school in the scheme of education makes their position on tax funds the reverse of the Lutheran Church.

2. Interpretations of the Principle of the Separation of Church and State

Generally speaking each church believes that the principle of separation of church and state is designed to safeguard religious liberty. Differences of opinion arise when citing how that liberty is preserved or endangered. It is agreed by the Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches that this principle involves a very clear distinction between the realm of the spiritual and the realm of the material. There must not be an intermingling of the primary functions of one with the other. The legal structure of each must be maintained apart from the other and each must see to the financial support of all aspects of its own program.

Of the four groups, the Lutherans alone have a very clearly defined and strictly held interpretation of this principle. Separation is conceived of as involving absolutely no connection between the state and the church regarding the teaching of religion or the financial support of a religious function. Both are solely and completely the work of the church.

The Methodist Church believes also that church and

state must function primarily independently, especially financially, but that there may be an exchange of protection or services. These institutions may be mutually helpful as long as the operation does not involve usurping the functions or status of each other and favoring one religion above others or discriminating against religion. The Presbyterian church gives a very similar wording to its interpretation of the principle. It in no way prevents co-operation, except financially, in education when the liberties of each institution are preserved. Both the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches hold that the separation of church and state does not require the elimination of the religious backgrounds of culture from public education.

The Catholic Church does not agree with the positions taken by these Protestant churches. However, it does agree with the Lutherans that the nature of the public school is such that it can not teach religious instruction as a particular church would want for its children. But, concerning the matter of public financial support for private or church-sponsored schools on which these Protestant groups agree, the Catholic Church has taken the opposite stand. It does not adhere to a principle of absolute separation of church and state. Its interpretation of this principle, as based on the First Amendment, is that its purpose is to preserve religious freedom by preventing

concert, union, or dependency one on the other, not that in every and all respects there shall be complete separation. Therefore the Catholic Church feels that, on the basis of non-discrimination, its schools have a rightful claim to support from public tax funds.

3. Attitudes Toward the Place of Religion in the Public School Curriculum

The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches share a common out-look toward the place of religion in the public school curriculum. Both believe that the public schools have a responsibility to respect the religious foundations of America's national culture. Therefore religion has a place in the curriculum as an essential factor in our cultural heritage and as the true basis for moral and spiritual values.

On the other hand, the Lutheran Church feels that the nature of religion is such that to make it a part of the curriculum it must be interpreted and is therefore sectarian. As such, the inclusion of any program of religious education is a violation not only of the separation of church and state, but also of religious liberty. The Catholic agrees that the inclusion of religion is a violation of religious liberty because it is either a Protestant "brand" or it is one that really facilitates a naturalist religion of democracy rather than

Christian religion. The public school cannot be neutral in its position toward religion. Hence, both the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic Churches hold to the conviction that religion has no place in the public school curriculum.

E. Summary

The basic tenets of belief in the existence of God and his being the ultimate reality and source of truth are held by all the churches in this study. There is further agreement between the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches that religion, though it involves belief in certain doctrines, is primarily a personal response to God and commitment to him in Christ. There is further agreement between these churches that religion can be spoken of as having various aspects. The responsibilities of some aspects may be shared with other educational agencies besides the church.

In contrast the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches emphasize the doctrinal truths and sacramental duties and obligations as the basis for religion. Their conception of the nature of religion is that it is a unity and its teachings can be the responsibility only of the church and home, and can not be shared with some other agency. Religion and education are therefore considered inseparable and solely the mission of the church.

The churches in this study recognize the social aspect of the educational process and emphasize parental rights in the choice of the type of education wanted for their children. The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches divide the aspects of education into general and religious and the responsibilities among the church, the home, and the state school. It is not felt by these two churches to be wise to withdraw from society by maintaining a separate school system. Education thrives best in an atmosphere where the interests of truth are dependent upon freedom of thought. The end result of education is believed to be the mature Christian, free to believe and know for himself.

In contrast the Lutherans and Catholics regard the nature of education as such that its principles are based on a philosophy of religion. There is no education apart from a consideration of man's eternal destiny, determined by belief in the basic teachings of the church. These churches are further agreed that education is transmitted in an atmosphere of stricted authoritarian control. Under the church's direction the end result will be the forming of Christ-like character in the regenerated man.

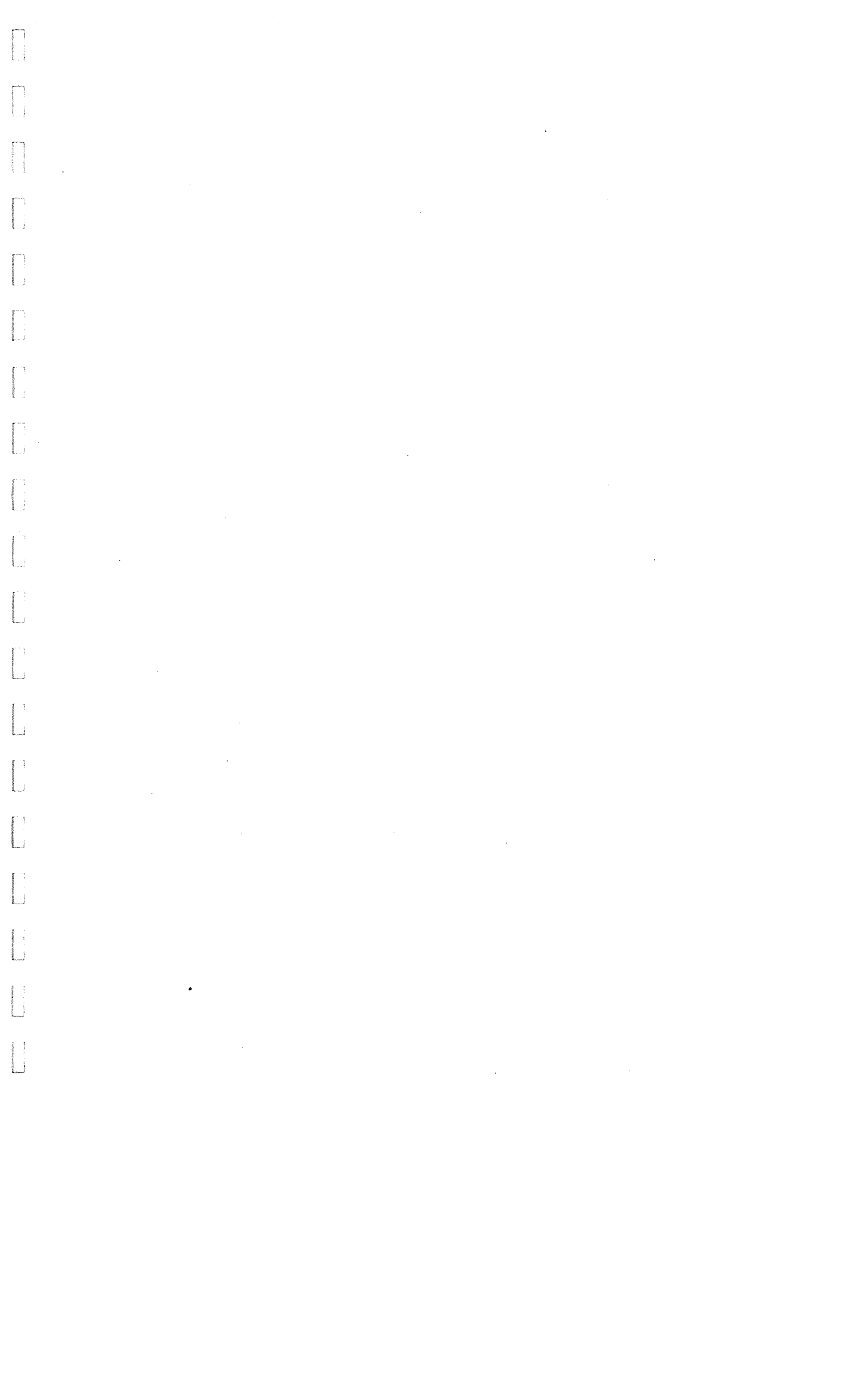
Further contrast is discovered in the approaches to the educational task. The Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches agree that the public school plays a vital and necessary function in the education program in

America. However, the Lutheran church does not feel that the general education provided by these schools meets their need for a Lutheran education. Like the Roman Catholic, who completely rejects the theory of the necessity of public education in a democracy, they have established their own system of education. These two latter churches maintain schools in order to provide their children with a complete education involving both the general and religious subjects. In comparison, the Methodists and Presbyterians choose to undergird the principle of public education and to work in co-operation with the public schools in matters pertaining to religious heritage and character building. In addition they use the Sunday church school and weekday religious instruction as their means of making religion a vital factor in everyday life.

On the interpretation of the principle of the separation of church and state, all four churches agree that it involves the preservation of religious liberty. The Lutherans alone hold to absolute separation including the elimination of co-operation in religious teaching and financial aid for church functions. The Methodists and Presbyterians hold a looser view which allows an exchange of protection or services, but not financial aid. The Catholic church, on the other hand, does not agree to the position of allowing co-operation in religious matters,

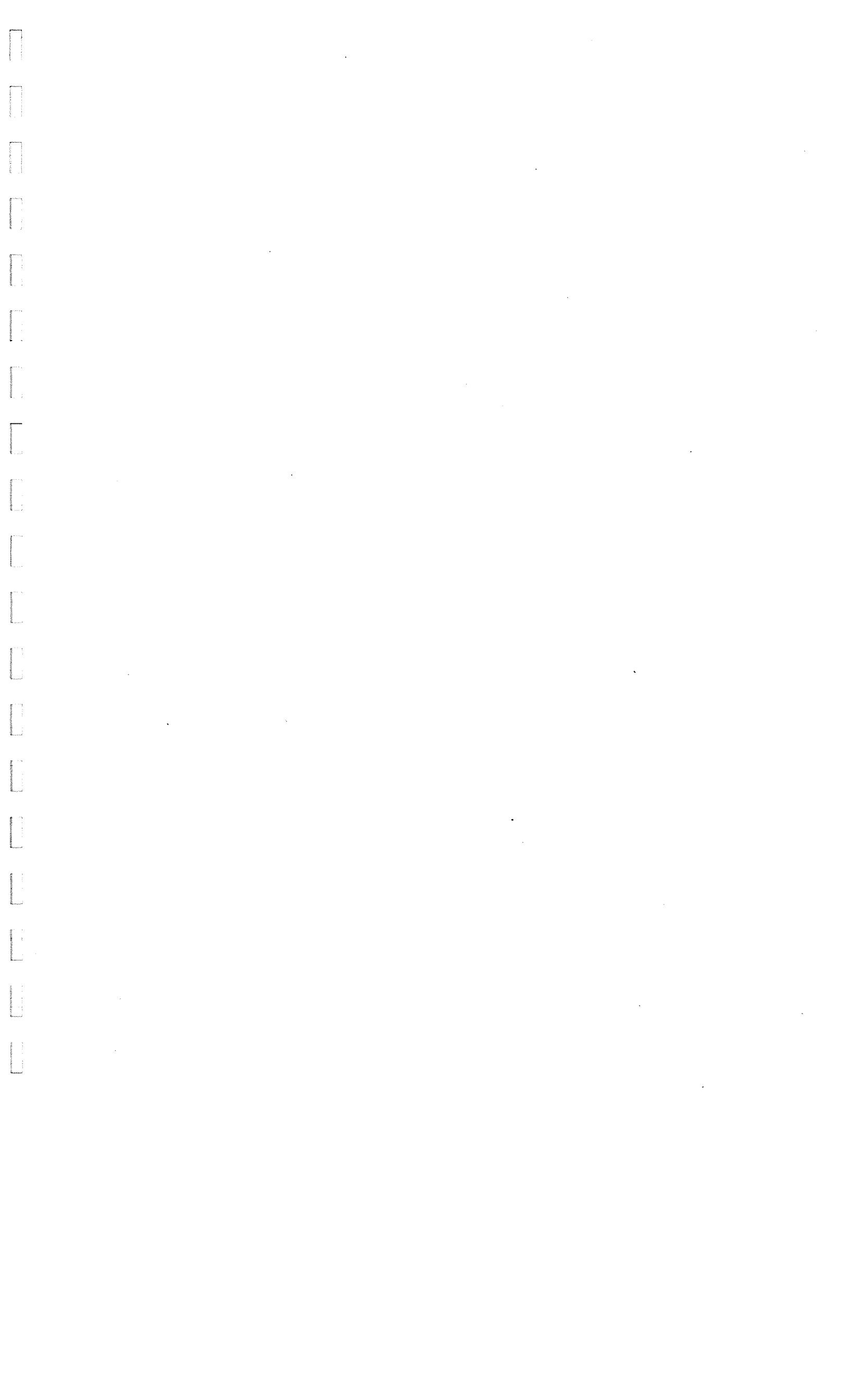
since it views this as a violation of religious freedom, but it does not see any conflict between this principle of separation and receiving public tax funds for church-sponsored education.

The attitudes of these churches toward the place of religion in the public school curriculum follows naturally from the interpretation of "separation". The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches feel that the separation policy does not eliminate the necessity for including in general education the importance of the religious element in American heritage and character education. In opposition the Lutherans and Catholics hold strongly to the conviction that religion must not be taught in public education, if religious liberties are to be preserved.



CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



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A. General Summary

The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches hold to similar positions regarding the nature of religion and the nature of education. The more personal and intangible aspects of religion are stressed making it possible for them to conceive of co-operative religious teaching. Education, too, is looked upon as a responsibility shared by the church, the home, and the state school. Therefore, it is felt that without violating the principle of separation of church and state, religion in elementary education in America may be realized in two aspects. The public school can recognize the important function of religion in American life, culturally and ethically; while the church carries out the major responsibility of religious teaching by means of its own organizations.

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The Lutheran Church views religion and education as an inseparable unit. The personal response to God in Christ is not only stressed, but also the doctrines of the church. These teachings are necessary for maintaining true orthodoxy

1. The author reminds the reader that "Lutheran" refers to Missouri Synod only.

in the church. It follows then that education must be controlled and conducted by the church. However, the Lutheran church believes in the political necessity of state controlled education without regard to any specific creed. The teaching of religion can not be done in free public education. Church and state functions must be kept separated. Thus, the Lutheran church holds to the conviction that the only place for religion in elementary education in America is in the church-sponsored school system.

In some aspects, the Roman Catholic viewpoints are similar to those of the Lutherans. Although their doctrinal beliefs are different, both stress the importance of church teachings in religion. This emphasis necessarily makes education in general a major concern of the Church. Furthermore, since religion is viewed as a sectarian matter, it can not be taught in the public school. The secular nature of the state school makes it the servant of only a segment of the population and not of an entire democratic society. Hence, the Catholics consider that many different school systems are needed in a democracy. It looks upon its own schools as a system that serves the needs of a major group in America and therefore, should be recognized as a part of the country's total educational program. Consequently, like the position of the Lutherans, the Roman Catholic church believes that the only place for

religion in elementary education in America is in the church religious school.

B. Conclusions

A superficial grouping of churches according to belief in the existence of God does not automatically lead to unity in religion. The implications of religious belief can run to every shade of the spectrum. When coupled with educational philosophies, the implications are further complicated. Although this study has been limited to four church groups, the difficulties involved in arriving at a common orientation toward religion in elementary education in America are evident. Furthermore, when points of agreement and disagreement in attitudes and positions are brought together, it is significant that they not only cut across lines between Protestants and Catholics, but also across lines within Protestantism.

The positions and attitudes reveal two different orientations toward religion in elementary education. One position is that religion is best taught under circumstances of unrestricted freedom. The public school, operating under the principle of freedom, provides the opportunity to stress the cultural, ethical and spiritual values of religion. In addition the church, through its educational facilities, supplies the foundation for religious belief and the factors

integrating religion with life. The second position holds that the usual educational facilities of the church, such as the Sunday school, are inadequate to fulfill the church's educational task. Religion, education, and life are bound together in an inseparable union. Therefore, the only way in which religion can be included in elementary education is through the establishment of a church sponsored school system. The former position is held by two Protestant churches; the latter, by a Protestant church and the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, it can not be said that there is a single Protestant orientation, or a particular orientation held by the Catholics alone. In this study only four churches were used; in further study of more than two hundred denominations, still greater differences would undoubtedly be found.

Furthermore, it is evident from this study that neither of these approaches is the answer to the dilemma in which American Christianity finds itself. It is neither desirable nor practical for each religious group to set up its own general educational system. In a real sense one would be in competition with the other. Neither is it feasible to include religion in any aspect in the public school. For in the final analysis even moral and spiritual values are based upon what man holds as ultimate or supreme in life. Obviously it is only in an ideal society,

wherein men agree freely and completely about ultimate values, that there can be a common approach to the moral side of education. To insist on this approach under any other circumstances is a denial of religious liberty.

In addition, if religion as the ground of morals and of life's ultimate meaning in a transcendent, personal God cannot be taught in public schools, it is equally clear that secularism as a philosophy denying such a God must likewise be forbidden. Yet there remains to be discovered a philosophical basis for public education that is compatible with American democracy and with Christian standards of faith.

Moreover, since these current approaches to the problem of religion in elementary education have not provided a solution, the answer must lie in some other direction rather than withdrawal from society or additions to the public school curriculum. As the concept of public education has grown, so also have its educational responsibilities until it is assumed today that the school, public or private, must take over the functions of both the church and the home. The perspective is faulty. There needs to be a complete re-evaluation of outlook on life and the function of each institution.

Under God, the home is the foundation of all institutions, and meant to be the basic unit for the

nurture of children. The family is recognized as the seedbed of personality. It is the major vehicle by which Christian values are developed, internalized, and realized. No social institution has ever or will ever prove to be an adequate substitute for the home in matters of this nature. Inasmuch as the church is the expression of the gospel within which is found the source of these values, upon the home and the church is placed the responsibility for religious education.

Herein lies the urgent spiritual problem: to weld home and church into one co-operative teaching force which will result in integrating individual life around the Christian center and ideal. In a very real sense home and church have new problems in education within a complex society for which there is no precedent. One major purpose must be kept in view, that of integrating the child's whole experience and character in the midst of distracting, competing forces which threaten to divide persons into many discordant selves rather than one unified Christian self.



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