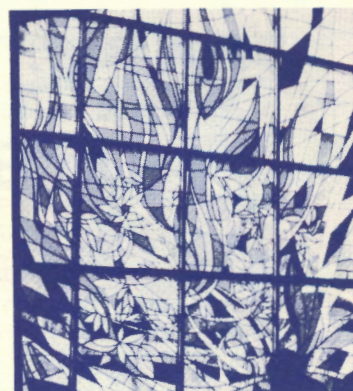


RELIGION

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Twenty Past Schempp/Murray 1963-1983

Pivotal in public education religion study was the announcement twenty years ago by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Abington v. Schempp* and *Murray v. Curlett* cases. June 17, 1963 the Court held that devotional reading of the Bible and school-sponsored prayer are violations of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The resulting new era in religion-public school relations has staged much activity since that historic decision. Because of its highly significant bearing on church-state relations, the *Schempp/Murray* day is examined here by three leaders in the field.

David Barr is Professor of Public Education Religion Studies in the Religious Studies Department at Wright State University. He was co-author of *Religion Goes to School*, 1968, one of the early books in the field. He was then with the Religious Instruction Association.

Thayer S. Warshaw taught for several years in the Indiana Institute on Teaching the Bible. His many publications include *Religion, Public Education and the Supreme Court* and *Handbook for Teaching the Bible in Literature Classes*. He has taught in the public schools of Boston and has edited the *National Council on Religion and Public Education Bulletin*.

Charles R. Kniker is Professor of Education in Iowa State University and is editor of the *National Council on Religion and Public Education Bulletin*. A leader in the Iowa Council on Religious Study in Schools as well as secretary of NCRPE, he has various publications including *You and Values Education*.

David Barr:

On Being Thankful for Schempp

Abington Township, just north of Philadelphia, was not different from most other small towns in Pennsylvania in the early 1960s. Like most of them it had a reasonable variety of people. Like most of them its schools followed the state practice of beginning the school day by reading:

At least ten verses from the Holy Bible . . . without comment, at the opening of each public school on each school day.

Unlike other places, however, Abington had the Schempp family. The Schempps were Unitarians and objected to their children—Roger, Ellory, and Donna—participating in these religious exercises. They were unable to convince the local officials to change their practice and so brought the matter to court. The case worked its way through the system: the District Court twice ruled in favor of the Schempps, but the decision was appealed to the Supreme Court, where it was joined to a similar case from Maryland. The Maryland case had been brought by a vocal atheist, Madalyn Murray, on behalf of her son William (lately become an evangelical sort of Christian). One of the functions of the high court is illustrated by the fact that these two cases (*Abington v. Schempp* and *Murray v. Curlett*) came to the Supreme Court with opposite lower court rulings: practices that were deemed illegal in Pennsylvania had been ruled to be legal in Maryland. The Supreme Court would reconcile these divergent lower court rulings.

The reconciliation was made on June 17, 1963. By an 8 to 1 majority (the one dissenting on procedural grounds) the Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in both cases: the Bible had been banned from the public schools . . . or so one would have thought if one read the newspapers on June 17th. Or 18th. Or nearly any other day. In fact this ruling has been called the most misreported decision of the high Court, no meager accomplishment. So dismayed was Mr. Justice Clark, the author of the majority opinion, that he abandoned the usual strategy of the Justices and publicly commented on his own case. (The usual strategy was epitomized by Mr. Justice Holmes years before. When asked what he meant in a certain decision, he is said to have replied: Read it. I meant just what I said.) Yet Clark, speaking in California a few days after the decision, endeavored to eliminate some of the confusion which had followed in the wake of the ruling.

Why the Confusion?

Part of the answer has to be located in our naive habit of relying on the popular media for our understanding of important and complicated issues.

Most reporters simply are not competent to deal with technical issues. Nor does the nature of their work help: where constant and pressing deadlines must override any desire to fully investigate. The “popular” in popular media is often taken in its worst sense, with a mandate to communicate on the lowest level of understanding and to produce stories with the most dramatic appeal (“Bible Banned from Public Schools”); the consuming interest in what happened today, with little interest in what happened yesterday (“as worthless as yesterday’s newspaper”).

There were other factors too technical to be analyzed here: sociological (There was a good deal of ambiguity about the rights of minorities in the early 60s.), political (The activism and power of the Warren Court was resented in many quarters.), and symbolic (the authority of the Bible in our public and private lives). Suffice it to say that many factors conspired to create an erroneous interpretation of what the Court had done, a misunderstanding that is still with us twenty years later.

What Did the Court Say?

Even so, we are probably best advised by Mr. Justice Holmes: read the decision. It is neither technical nor lengthy. (In fact this journal might have been wiser to just reprint the decision rather than ask me to write this, but that is another issue.) Though the facts in the two cases (*Schempp* and *Murray*) were somewhat different, both involved devotional opening exercises which used readings from the Bible and prayer. The court combined them because neither the content of the prayer nor the exact nature of the readings was of substantial importance. What was important, from the court’s perspective, was that in both cases the public schools were sponsoring religious services; they were establishing a practice of religion. And it is squarely on the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment that the court based its ruling:

The place of religion in our society is an exalted one, achieved through a long tradition of reliance on the home, the church and the inviolable citadel of the individual heart and mind. We have come to recognize through bitter experience that it is not within the power of government to invade that citadel, whether its purpose or effect be to aid or oppose, to advance or retard. In the relationship between man and religion, the State is firmly committed to a position of neutrality.

and

Applying the Establishment Clause princi-

ples to the cases at bar we find that the States are . . . in violation of the Establishment Clause

The essence, then, of the *Schempp* decision, was that it is unlawful for the government to establish any practice of religion. In this country no agency of the government can tell the citizens what they ought to believe or how or when they ought to worship—perhaps a revolutionary idea in 1791, but certainly not a novel one in 1963. Why then the fuss? Certainly something changed in '63. There had been prayer and Bible reading in the public schools since colonial times. Why was it now ruled to be illegal?

Why the Schempp Decision?

When the First Amendment was added to the constitution in 1791, four of the thirteen states had state-established religions, which they maintained for another two decades, Massachusetts being the last to do so. Thus the amendment was written to say, "Congress shall make no law *respecting* an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . ." (emphasis added). Congress could neither establish nor disestablish religion. Also, it is clear that the restriction was aimed solely at the federal government ("congress"), not at the states. As late as 1833 the Supreme Court ruled that "congress" in the First Amendment applied only to the federal government (*Barron v. Baltimore*). However, the legal situation changed dramatically in the aftermath of the Civil War, when the Fourteenth Amendment was added to the constitution (" . . . No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States. . . "). There is a long series of court cases wherein the specific "privileges and immunities" of the federal constitution are gradually made to apply to the states: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly. It was not until 1940 that the Supreme Court ruled that the religious clauses of the First Amendment applied to the states (*Cantwell v. Connecticut*). Then, beginning after World War II, there was a series of cases that explored the meaning of this expansion for public schools: *Everson v. the Board of Education* (1947), *McCullum v. The Board of Education* (1948), *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), and finally *Abington v. Schempp* (1963). As the Court explained in *Cantwell*:

The Fourteenth Amendment has rendered the states as incompetent as congress to enact such laws (as are circumscribed by the First Amendment).

The Implications

Viewed as above, the *Schempp* decision is merely the culmination of the legal logic of our judicial

system as it has developed over the past 100 years. Viewed another way, *Schempp* was the beginning of a whole new conception of the relation of the public schools to religion. For the first time, the court has spelled out clearly and plainly the theoretical role of religion in public education. Reacting in part to the harsh response to the *Engel* decision the preceding year and in part to their own concerns, the majority opinion went out of its way to comment on the proper role of religion in public education. In what has become one of the most widely quoted dicta of the court they observed:

In addition, it may well be said that one's education is not complete without the study of comparative religion and of its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such a study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education may not be effected consistent with the First Amendment.

It is this clear conception of the proper role of religion in public education that has caught the attention of most of those who have taken the time to actually read the decision. The function of the schools in our society is, after all, to help the students understand the society and the world in which they live. To *study*, a word that echoes through the above quotation, is the function of public education. Just as certainly, one can understand neither history nor the present scene without a proper understanding of the role of religion in human life. (Ask anyone who has studied Shi'ite Islam if we handled the hostage situation in the wisest way.)

Many things have changed in the two decades since *Schempp*, most of them not reported in the newspapers. One of the most significant has been the determination of many educators to implement the logic of this decision in the curriculum. We have good reason to be thankful that the little town of Abington had at least one family that forced us to reconsider what the schools would be doing with religion.

David Barr

Thayer S. Warshaw:

Textus Receptus

In the relative calm of 1959 I changed careers and enrolled in a graduate program to become a secondary school teacher of English. My courses in methods of teaching and psychology of learning exposed for me what I had vaguely fumbled at as a youth group leader, as a Sunday School teacher, and as a parent (one daughter earned her BA the same week I won my MAT). Research, I was told, showed that a child tended to learn more when rewarded than when punished, in an atmosphere of love rather than of fear. Further, pupils in classes learned better when external discipline was replaced by internal controls, when pupils were encouraged to fulfill their own potentials rather than if treated as anonymous parts of a homogeneous group, and when they were motivated to seek knowledge rather than made to learn "meaningless" facts and skills.

I soon successfully established my own teaching style to fit both my earlier learnings toward stern academic and behavioral standards and my subsequent enlightenment at graduate school, but I ran into a curious and unexpected problem with our reading matter. I discovered that pupils were biblically illiterate: they missed crucial allusions in secular literature. Therefore, I instituted a unit (later an elective) to give them at least minimal information about the more popular stories, names, and quotations in the Bible. This experiment preceded the *Schempp/Murray* decision, but received much publicity as a result of that ruling.

In one sense, the 1963 decision is given more prominence than it deserved. Our current President notwithstanding, it did not expel God from the classroom or end a child's right to voluntary prayer in public schools. Nor did it lead, or even contribute, to the breakdown of the moral fiber of our country, as has been charged. Morning devotions—especially the Bible readings and the Lord's Prayer (or Our Father, to Catholics)—were by then mindless exercises. True, they violated church-state separation by furnishing continuity with Christian worship as children repeated in unison, led by a teacher, a part of their regular church liturgy. Nevertheless, one homeroom teacher in my school experimentally read the same Bible passage every day for a week to see whether anyone would notice; not until Friday did one student finally awake and ask whether the teacher hadn't read it once earlier that week.

In another sense, *Schempp/Murray* was important, both because it caused an uproar among angry traditionalists and because it forced some educators to face the fact that pupils were illiterate about religion(s) in general and the Bible in particular—two critical components of our culture. Responsible educators tried to find academically respectable remedies for these illiteracies. They developed liter-

ature courses that used biblical passages as texts and social studies units or courses that studied about religion as "part of a secular program of education," as the Court advocated in the *Schempp/Murray* opinion.

As for the Bible in literature classes, our own institute at Indiana University trained some 700 teachers from all 50 states and three foreign countries over nine years and produced eight books for teachers and their classes. Meanwhile, institutes and materials for teaching about religion(s) in social studies classes came out of Ohio, Florida, Kansas, Indiana, Missouri, Minnesota, California, Iowa, and other states. Some states wrote official guidelines for courses in both fields and even went so far as to develop criteria, in a few instances, for certifying teachers to teach about religion.

Religious traditionalists hated to lose the morning devotions. Furthermore, the outlawing of school-sponsored prayer and devotional Bible reading in public schools coincided with the beginning of the Great Shift in American society. The morally equivocal Vietnam War, the explosion of the black consciousness movement, the revelations of corruption and civil liberties abuses in the federal administration, the hippie phenomenon, the more militant threats (and some actions) of Yippies and Black Power advocates—all these came during the 1960s and early 1970s.

It is a curse of human nature that most people can sustain only one controlling idea at a time. Balancing two potentially conflicting "goods" calls for disturbing distinctions that upset the comfortable clarity of Good versus Evil. Criticism of excesses pushes the pendulum to the opposite extreme. And perhaps nowhere (except in clothing fashions) does the pendulum swing more from fad to fad than in education.

This Great Shift attacked all "establishments": political, economic, social, religious, familial—and educational. The approved stance among young people was that one must not cooperate in one's own "enslavement." "Responsibility" was a euphemism for repression and should be replaced by "relevance." One must demonstrate one's disapproval by defiant actions and appearance, by dropping (or tripping) out, by forming utopian societies, or by embracing violent and revolutionary disruption.

In education I, like many other teachers, bought into the revolt against stultifying standardization and thereby misled pupils and colleagues into thinking that I had bought the whole package. When I was found to be holding to my insistence on standards, academic and behavioral (at least in my own classroom and among my student teachers), the progressives called me Philistine and the reactionaries thought I had returned to the Right side. For my part, optionality that provided electives exciting to teachers and pupils alike did not include optionality about attendance, doing homework, and the stretching of mental muscles. Freedom in matters of clothing and hair styles was no license for insolence or foul language. I think I exhibited, and

usually got among pupils, respect for what we were doing and for the people with whom we were doing it.

A second Great Shift (son of GS-1?) swung the pendulum in the opposite direction in the mid-1970's. Teachers and pupils were to be examined for, respectively, setting and achieving "behavioral goals." "Accountability" and "back to basics" were the watchwords. Relaxed school academic and behavioral standards, lower national test scores, the economic letdown after the war, disillusionment with the immorality of highly educated people in places of power, and many other elements produced a "backlash" (another code word). It eliminated nearly all electives, demanded stricter discipline and academic standards, and (with long-awaited desegregation as another factor) saw the proliferation of nonpublic schools where they had not existed before. (In 1965, Catholic schools represented over 90% of such alternatives; today, according to a recent report, about 65%.)

From today's perspective *Schempp/Murray* has become a symbol. School-sponsored prayer and extracurricular Bible study groups (if not class devotional readings) have become battlegrounds in current educational debates. I suggest that these are surface, populist issues, however. Beneath them the battle is fought over the transmission of values in the schoolrooms. Extremists at both ends take the usual extreme positions: we are good and they are evil. A few people, nevertheless, today search for a middle path.

In my own 17-year saga, which bracketed the two Great Shifts, the problem all along had been insufficient discussion of the "why" of education. Teacher educators, boards of education, and administrators had justifiably assumed—but rarely mentioned—that teachers would transmit traditional community values. It had also been assumed, with equal justification, that teachers themselves were generally good people who would, by example and precept, encourage pupils to become good people: each teacher creating them in his or her own image, as it were. My 1959-61 courses in teacher education largely ignored questions about the transmission of values as being more or less self-evident.

Later, the upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s talked of "value-free" education. At most, "values clarification" would ask pupils to discover and express what their own values were. I recall a faculty meeting, widely and wildly divided over the Great Shift, that degenerated into vicious name-calling: "Fascists!" versus "Communists!"

More recently, the pendulum of attention to the value-laden aspects of education has swung to the opposite extreme. Reaction to moral relativism has brought insistence on censorship of curricular materials and on straightjackets for teachers' lifestyles, classroom behavior, and values. Educators' disputes today are no less hyperbolic than they were at that 1960s faculty meeting. Only the shibboleths have changed: "godlessness" versus "religious takeover"; "destroyers of family values" versus "know-nothings."

Constitutional issues aside, reversing *Schempp/Murray* will not provide, or even lead toward, a basic answer. Our country is committed to pluralism and democracy, not to an American version of totalitarianism—even under the well-intentioned aegis of a nonsectarian "religion." Under church-state separation, public schools are secular. That *need not* make them either champions of secularism as an ideology or enemies of religion. The task for educators and others is to engage in a thoughtful, slogan-free examination of how values are (and are to be) transmitted in the public schools of a pluralistic and democratic society.

I propose two premises for such an examination and discussion. First, public education must avoid extremes: either of complete moral relativism or of totalitarian moral absolutes. Certain basic moral principles seem almost universally agreed upon in our society: concern for others, acceptance of responsibility, and personal integrity; love of country and respect for law and order; a capacity and disposition to be informed, logical, and critical; and a few others.

Second, agreement on such principles does not mandate unanimity in schools and classrooms with regard to two related fields: the *authority* for and the *application* of moral principles. Teachers may differ as to the religious or nonreligious authority for these moral universals. In my experience, pupils rarely raise questions of authority for moral principles. If they should do so, or if the teacher feels it pedagogically appropriate to raise such questions, I would expect that trained and honorable professionals would not express only their own beliefs, but also present alternatives.

Teachers may also differ about the application of shared moral principles in specific and concrete cases. If done professionally, with due regard for the immediate classroom context (relation of the case to the overall program, relations among pupils and with their teacher), expressions of such differences by honestly differing teachers can be salutary. The process of growth in general, and of education in particular, is a continually expanding awareness of alternatives. Equally important, differences among teachers about the specific application of universal moral principles present to pupils vivid examples of how pluralism and democracy are distinguished from totalitarian control of thought and action.

There are encouraging signs that the *Schempp/Murray* ruling and subsequent arguments about it have contributed to investigations into the transmission of values in public schools and that they are based on the premises suggested above. If pursued to a reasonably broad consensus, *Schempp/Murray* will have helped to produce a much more valuable result than removing constitutionally and educationally questionable morning devotions from public schools.

Thayer S. Wentland

Charles R. Kniker:

Win, Lose, Stalemate?— Religious Studies in Public Schools Since 1963

If we liken the church and state battlelines in public education to a lengthy chess game, the *Schempp/Murray* decision in 1963 has been the equivalent of a bishop capturing a knight. More valuable than an exchange of pawns in an early sparring, the decision is a symbol of one of those periods of intense activity in the game when both sides make serious efforts to gain the upper hand. The verdict is not given a higher ranking because, in the opinion of this writer, only modest changes have occurred in public school classrooms around the nation. Since the purpose of this article is not to report new research or announce the secret to successful programs of religion studies in public schools, it will not have footnotes but will use the text to mention sources of interest. Rather, the article reviews what has happened in religion studies curriculum since 1963, interprets what have been the dominant responses by administrators and teachers, and postulates on what is likely to happen in the next twenty years.

In previous publications I have mentioned that the *Schempp/Murray* decision must be understood as part of a larger picture involving effective education. Within ten to twenty years after America has been at war, the republic makes extensive efforts to institute moral and spiritual values programs in schools. One of the best examples of this was the National Education Association's *Moral and Spiritual Values in Public Schools* report in 1952. The years following World War II record a spate of court decisions on religion in the public school curriculum, including *McCollum*, *Zorach*, *Engel*, and of course, *Schempp/Murray*. There are numerous books which detail the legal points in such cases, including those by Robert Michaelsen, Donald Boles, Claire Cox, and Thayer Warshaw.

Curriculum

Considering the amount of material published in the wake of *Schempp/Murray*, it is amazing that any interested educator, religious professional, journalist, or parent should be ignorant of what is or is not legally permissible and pedagogically sound regarding the objective teaching of religion in public schools. There are abundant sources both for general guidelines as well as a marvelous array of classroom materials.

Among the best references for the understanding of the legal, philosophical, and pedagogical

issues are, in addition to those sources previously mentioned, such works as: American Association of School Administrators, *Religion in the Public Schools*; Theodore Sizer (ed.), *Religion and Public Education*; and Philip Phenix, *Education and the Worship of God*. Groups such as the American Academy of Religion and the National Council for Religion and Public Education (NCRPE) have also published various publications which discuss philosophical perspectives. For the classroom teacher, the Florida State project in social studies produced a series of booklets which presented an excellent introduction to what it means to be objective regarding religion in the classroom.

Several institutions and organizations have developed programs since 1963, which have focused on constitutionally appropriate curriculum materials. The Public Education for Religion Studies Center (PERSC) at Wright State University has been a clearinghouse for reporting and reviewing such curriculum. Indiana State University has held numerous summer institutes and published key resource books on the topic of the Bible as/in Literature. States (such as Pennsylvania), organizations and publishers, or individuals have also issued important works. Examples include: Smith and Bodin's world religions curriculum, Dixon's curriculum for preschoolers and elementary students, and the study guides offered by the Kansas School of Religion.

Responses by Educators

It might be argued that the production of so much material has paralyzed the opponents of teaching about religion in public schools. Relatively little formal opposition has surfaced. (Far more has been evident regarding values clarification, for example.) But to anyone carefully observing what has actually gone on in the classroom, other explanations are needed to explain the slow acceptance of "religion as a fact of life" by administrators and teachers.

Certainly, a wide range of responses has occurred. Within the past year at least two administrators have told me that in their regions (the midwest and south) many teachers are carrying on in pre-*Schempp* ways—rather heavy religious indoctrination. On the other extreme, through summer institutes, teacher in-service programs, special programs sponsored by foundations and state humanities councils, much consciousness raising has

occurred and professional educators are using sound materials and methodologies. The few surveys of religion studies of which I am aware (they always seem to have a special focus which makes it hard to generalize or replicate) point, however, to little consensus of what to do or what is being done.

While other factors (mentioned below) may weigh more heavily, several generalities still hold. Teachers and administrators are reluctant to "make the next move," i.e., to engage in religion studies. Why? Because (a) they are still afraid religion will be controversial; (b) they feel unqualified to teach it; or (c) they have such strong personal religious commitments they do not believe they can be objective.

Paradoxically, proponents of religion studies tend to agree on what competencies those who teach about religion ought to have. They disagree, however on whether, strategically, it is wise to push for a new teaching certification area. (Eight states have some form of teacher certification in the area.)

Future Developments

The struggle to have some form of religion in public schools goes on, as the school prayer "game" indicates today. How strong religion studies will become depends on whether advocates can take advantage of the factors which will directly or indirectly promote it. There are, of course, other social forces which will tend to impede the adoption of religion studies.

The factors which supporters of religion studies should be able to use as pawns and more important allies include: the call for more humanistic education (that is NOT the same as secular humanism); the interest in multicultural studies; events in the

Middle East (oil crisis, hostage situation, confrontation over the future of Israel); and the general awareness that the world is becoming more of an interdependent group of nation/states. Even the growth of Christian day schools, reflecting the dissatisfaction of parents with lack of values instruction and/or religion, is making public school officials more sympathetic to religion studies as a way to stem the tide.

The "queen" which has led the way in inhibiting the growth of religion studies has been the "double whammy" of declining student involvement and double digit inflation. Cutbacks on elective courses, layoffs of teachers, and school closings have been all too frequent. Moreover, national and international conflicts (witness Vietnam) and now the technological craze tends to give higher priorities to math and science than the humanities.

What does the future hold? Generally speaking, the complex "board" picture indicates that the gains of religion studies will be slow. It takes constant education of parents and school officials to continue their interest in religion studies. Teachers especially have to be convinced that religion is a fact of life that cannot be ignored in the curriculum and that it is worth their efforts to infuse religion in what is already perceived as an overcrowded curriculum.

What will happen? It's your move.

Charles Krueger



Coloquium on Religion in the Public Schools

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The Coloquium marks the 20th Anniversary of the *Schempp/Murray* decisions, which made devotional reading of the Bible and school-sponsored prayer a violation of the constitution.

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Program Report

The Kansas School of Religion is a program agency for the study of religion. A private corporation, it was founded in 1921. For 56 years the KSR conducted the academic religion program for Kansas University at its own expense.

To the University's creation of a Department of Religious Studies five years ago, the KSR provided its outreach and the free use of its facilities, the building, furnishings and equipment, and its library.

Now at Kansas, the religion teachers are maintained at University expense, as is the practice in most tax-supported universities. Since 1977, the Kansas School of Religion has continued as a program enrichment agency. It does only what the University cannot do. This is beyond what is practiced at most tax-supported universities. The KSR program provides an extra, not only to the university but also to the people across the state, and beyond Kansas.

Programs:

Irma I. Smith Hall—While the University provides care and interior upkeep of Smith Hall in return for free use of it, the capital items, exterior maintenance and insurance are the responsibility of the School of Religion. In 1982 this included completion of the Moses statue.

RELIGION quarterly—Essentially a religious commentary for the supporting groups of the School of Religion, the magazine is now sent upon request anywhere in the U.S. There are 8500 copies printed.

Library—The religion library in Smith Hall contains nearly 12,000 volumes, built up over many years. To expand the holdings in selected areas and generally to update with current scholarship, several hundred new titles are added each year. The library has microfilm, fiche, and copying capacity. Part of the library staff is supported by this program, also.

Scholarships for Religion Students—To encourage religious studies, direct grants based on need or scholarship are made to students selected by the religion faculty. The recipients are designated KSR Scholars. This year six students received scholarships of \$1000 to \$1500.

Mini-Conference Series—This fund brings to the campus scholars in religion during successive weeks of the school year. The series is arranged by the Department of Religious Studies. This year conferences were held on alternative Mondays of the second semester; subjects were varied.

Public Education Religion Studies—This program in the past has fostered summer workshops for teachers in dealing with religion in public schools. It has developed an extensive reference and resource center which is now used by teachers from Kansas and other states. This year's emphasis is consultative visits to schools. The Center is also the office address of the National Council on Religion and Public Education, which involves wide consultations.

Annual Conference—For clergy and others interested, a popular update experience is conducted in religion skills. In the past conferences have been held in Topeka, Salina, and Wichita as well as in Lawrence. This year the conference was held again in Salina; the subject was "Conscience and Public Policy."

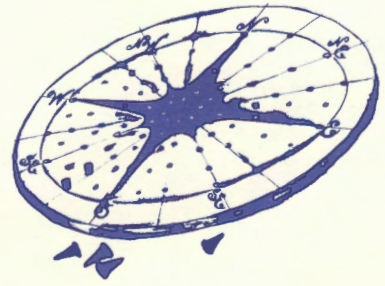
KSR Lectureship—Begun last year, the lectureship brings to the campus a major religious leader for a principal lecture and other related meetings. The 1982 lecturer was William Sloane Coffin of Riverside Church, New York; the 1983 lecturer is Martin E. Marty of the University of Chicago, and the lecturer for 1984 will be John Macquarrie of Christ Church in Oxford, England.

Faculty Development Funds—To encourage and facilitate attendance by the religion faculty at professional meetings, travel funds are granted to the department. This is supplementary to university travel money, and is given upon application for each trip.

Traveling Faculty Program—To provide leadership for religion study groups beyond Lawrence, this fund takes care of the expense of sending faculty members out. Interested groups request faculty services.



Traverse Log



Some people are so sure of their religious beliefs. They make the rest of us who cannot prove faith feel out of place—somewhat like a tuba player in a string quartet. Some folks who have a hammerlock on ultimate verities cannot tolerate anybody who harbors doubts. When their supply-side religion is squeezed, it can be reduced into pat platitudes and over-simplified answers. But really, the process of believing is not that easy.

The word for today is: there is a place for honest doubt. A thoughtful person can live with some “unanswers” and not feel like a fool or a failure. We do not need to prove an article of faith in order to keep its antithesis from submerging us in a smothering ooze. Proof and rejection of an idea are not antithetical.

What is proof? Commercials on the tube sometimes say things such as science has proven that a particular tooth paste is superior, or that a certain mouthwash outwashes another, therefore, run out and buy some. Come now; let us reason together. Science has not proven anything. Scientists characteristically proceed down a hypothesis route; they are pleased to find a working hypothesis. They will chuck it when further testing indicates a more workable one. And here is a for instance—after reviewing the symptoms of a sickness and some test results, we hypothesize a certain condition and proceed to treat it. If that treatment is not effective, we search further for a hypothesis. Sometimes there is some very good support for our theory. Some.

And that may be the best there is in the search for certainty in religious knowledge: on the basis of a little bit to go with a working hypothesis until something better comes along. Actually, “proved” facts are about as useful to a tenet of faith as a broken string is to a puppet. A notion has been voiced that the astronauts’ 1969 visit to the moon found its age to be about 10,000 years. The next step in this school of thought is to use that statement to support a particular theory of creation. And this in turn can “prove” God (as if God is in danger of losing out). God does not need to be proved. This argument has all the charm of a smile with two teeth missing. Operative believability does not need “proof.” It would be great if certitude were simple enough for sensory proof. But the process of believing does not relate to this.

One of the last projects of Paul Tillich was his publication *On the Border*, a series of studies in contradictions between ideas. He claims that life on the border is livable. Oxygen is there. A person can get along pretty well with some doubts. We do not need to be sure of very much.

I’ll bet George Washington and that ragged band of colonists who shivered at Valley Forge that winter had a lot of doubts. They were not sure of much. But of one thing they were certain: all men are and ought to be free and equal. That bit was enough.

That’s believable!

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