

**\*ISSUES OF OUR TIMES**



**50 Questions & Answers  
on  
Federal Aid to Education  
and  
Related Matters**

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**1) Let's get down to brass tacks. Everyone knows federal aid to private schools—especially Catholic schools—is a problem. But wouldn't the problem disappear if there were no such schools?**

For all practical purposes, yes.

**2) Well, why should there be such schools? The free, public schools are good enough for almost everyone else. Why not for Catholics?**

Because Catholics do not believe their children can get a complete education in the public schools. As a matter of fact, they find that the very questions they consider most important—the nature of God and man, the purpose of human life, Christ's mission, and the role of the Church He founded—are passed over in the public schools. In conscience, Catholics cannot let their children grow up ignorant of the answers to these questions.

**3) In other words, Catholics want something from education that public schools don't provide. But was it always that way? How did Catholics stand in relation to education back in colonial times, for instance?**

To begin with, let's remember that the Pilgrims didn't bring public schools along with them on the Mayflower. During colonial times schools were run by religious sects, and their main objective was to make good church members out of their pupils. Since the colonies were overwhelmingly Protestant, the schools were, too. Catholics were forbidden in most places to have their own schools. They had to send their children to militantly Protestant, anti-Catholic schools.

**4) How—and why—did the public schools as we know them come into existence?**

Historians usually see two main factors at work in the development of the public schools. The first was the filing down of theological rough points which had caused the Protestant churches to feud among themselves. This occurred during the eighteenth century. The second factor was the general realization that a working democracy needs educated citizens—which means education for everyone. The two things together made the growth of the public schools both possible and necessary.

5) It's easy to see why Catholics didn't want to send their children to schools run by other churches. But weren't the religiously neutral public schools a solution to the problem? Why did Catholics pull away from the public schools and set up their parochial school system?

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The answer is that the public schools *weren't* religiously neutral. They no longer could be identified with specific Protestant sects. But throughout the nineteenth century they kept a definite Protestant tinge. The King James Bible was used in the public schools, and other Protestant religious practices were common there. Protestant leaders boasted of the numerical losses Catholics were suffering by having to send their children to public schools. One Methodist minister estimated the figure at 1.9 million in twelve years. The courts showed no sympathy to Catholic pleas for relief from sectarian religious practices in the schools. And Catholic efforts to win a share in the common education fund were rebuffed. Under the circumstances Catholics had no choice but to set up their own schools.

6) Well, supposing public schools weren't really neutral on the subject of religion in the beginning—that was a long time ago. Surely they are today?

If you mean are they free from a Protestant bias, the answer is yes. But Protestant sectarianism has been replaced by a new sectarianism—democratic humanism. In plain language, this means that traditional religion has been replaced in the public schools by a secularist philosophy which, by implication at least, denies the very existence of the supernatural. Catholics are not the only ones who think this way. For example, in 1946, Methodist Bishop Fred Pierce Corson stated: "Today the public school is not only ceasing to be a colleague in religious teaching and training, but by its attitude of exclusion, as well as separation, and its renunciation of responsibility, it is becoming an obstacle in the way of adequate religious education."

7) You have a lot to say about what's wrong with the public schools. But don't you think there's something to be said for having a "common school" for all children?

If by having a "common school" you mean establishing a

state monopoly of education, much could be said—all unfavorable. This may sound like strong language, but a “common school” which all children must attend would be a big step along the road to totalitarianism. Look at Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. The nation which establishes a state monopoly of education is attacking individual liberties. Today, when American democracy is under attack from outside, is no time to be talking about subverting it from within by setting up a school system modeled on that of totalitarian countries. Thanks to the wisdom of the vast majority of Americans, including public school officials, there is no immediate danger of this happening. But it would be folly not to realize that this is the logical conclusion of proposals for a compulsory “common school” system. To say this is not to attack our public schools. Catholics fully agree with Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati, who said in November, 1960, that Catholics feel that if the public schools didn’t exist, “we’d have to create them.”

**8) Getting back to this question of religion in the public schools— isn’t the character formation they offer enough?**

No. Catholics do not believe that programs of “character formation” are any substitute for instruction in the great truths of their religion.

**9) Well, what about released-time programs, or the program of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine? Can’t Catholic children in public schools get enough religious training from them?**

Such programs are immensely important, and the people engaged in them cannot be praised too highly. But you should remember two things in this connection. First, released-time is not available everywhere, since many school districts have turned down parents’ requests for it. Second, no such program is an adequate substitute for a full Catholic education, which can be had only in a Catholic school.

**10) When you come right down to it, though, isn’t formal religious education the business of the family and the church?**

Certainly it is, but that doesn’t mean it has no place in the schools. All three should work together on behalf of re-

ligious education. When one of them falls down on the job, the effectiveness of the religious education of the child is impaired.

**11) How can you expect anyone to be sympathetic to a school system which is competing with the public schools? It has taken Americans a lot of time and effort to build up their public schools, and you cannot expect them to be happy about seeing them undermined.**

All Americans, Catholics included, appreciate the great work of the public schools. All Americans, Catholics included, pay to support them and do so gladly. So to begin with, there is no intention on the part of private school supporters to "undermine" the public schools. As for the possibility that this might be the result despite their best intentions—it's pretty hard to believe that the public school structure is so fragile that the existence of private schools really threatens it. And what is the alternative? Force all children to attend public schools? Eliminating private schools would be a blow to the public schools, too, by burdening them with still more students at a time when they are already crowded. And don't forget that making attendance at public schools compulsory brings us face to face with totalitarianism again. Look at it from American Catholics' perspective, too. They have spent a lot of time and effort in building up *their* schools, and they don't take a very sympathetic attitude toward people who want to deny them their right to educate their children as they see fit.

**12) But isn't it true that Catholic schools are divisive—that they are a threat to our national unity?**

Our society is made up of a multitude of minorities. That's what we mean when we call it pluralistic. If Catholic schools are "divisive," then so, too, are our churches and synagogues, our labor unions, our fraternal societies, and any group, in fact, to which some people belong and others don't. Would it be desirable to outlaw all these institutions in order to impose some sort of monolithic uniformity on all citizens? When some supporters of public education insist that non-public schools are divisive, it's a good idea to remember the warning of Gov. William H. Seward of New York, who

pointed out as far back as 1842 that it runs counter to American democracy to hold that "society must conform itself to the public schools, instead of the public schools adapting themselves to . . . society." In other words, the question is what benefits society, not what benefits the public schools. Besides, young people have plenty of opportunities to mingle socially outside the classroom. And the graduates of Catholic schools fit into the community just as easily and serve it just as well as their counterparts from public schools. The principles of love of neighbor and the dignity of the individual person—both essentials of Catholic education—foster unity. In short, the facts just don't give any basis for hand-wringing about the "divisiveness" of Catholic schools. Quite the contrary.

**13) You mean that Catholic schools are actually making a contribution to American democracy?**

Definitely. As citizens, Catholic school graduates perform as well as anyone else. More basically, Catholic schools help preserve the diversity which has enriched American democracy and made it strong. Let's not forget our national motto: "E Pluribus Unum."

**14) But do parochial schools do a real job of education? Isn't so much time spent on religion that other subjects are neglected?**

The average parochial elementary school class spends thirty minutes a day formally studying religion. Two-and-one-half hours out of twenty-five class hours each week is hardly too much. And let's be sophisticated enough to remember that "religion" includes a great deal of the cultural heritage of the western world. Through its study the student learns much about the civilization in which he lives. The absence of religion from the public school curriculum leaves a cultural as well as a spiritual vacuum.

**15) Isn't it a fact that Catholic educators believe Catholic schools exist just to save souls?**

Only in the same way Catholic hospital administrators believe that Catholic hospitals do. The spiritual goal is the remote purpose. But the immediate and specific purpose of a Catholic hospital is to care for sick people. And the imme-

ciate and specific purpose of a Catholic school is to form educated Catholic citizens.

**16) Then the Catholic schools are just public schools plus the catechism?**

Not at all. The Catholic philosophy of education is firmly rooted in the Catholic faith. As Father Neil McCluskey, S.J., has written: "The Catholic belief that man is a creature of God destined to share in the divine life answers the two questions upon which every philosophy of education is built: What is man? What is his purpose?" In practice this gives Catholic education a spiritual orientation which public education doesn't have.

**17) Wasn't the whole idea of the parochial school imported into this country from Europe? It isn't really an American institution, is it?**

Everything American except the Indians was originally an import. What of it? Historically, America's first schools were church schools. Were the signers of the Declaration of Independence un-American because they attended them? U.S. Catholic schools have as much right to the title "American" as any other institution in this nation. Public schools have no monopoly on Americanism. Parents who exercise their freedom of choice in education certainly don't deserve to be tagged as subversives.

**18) You put a lot of emphasis on the right of parents to educate their children as they see fit. But surely the rights of the state come first in education?**

Definitely not. The parents' rights come first. Any other arrangement goes contrary to nature and is a serious menace to the family. The child is a member of the family before he is a member of the state, and the family's right in regard to his education has priority over the state's.

**19) But isn't the purpose of a school first and foremost to train children to be good citizens?**

Certainly that is one purpose. But it is not the primary one. As for what is, this is what Pope Pius XI had to say in the encyclical "The Christian Education of Youth": "Since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to ob-



tain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end." Of course, this will make no sense to the secular humanist for whom supernatural religion is outmoded and irrelevant. But it stands squarely in the great tradition of western culture, and from the point of view of the Catholic, it holds the key to the purpose of education.

**20) You say the state doesn't have the right to compel all children to attend one kind of school exclusively. But doesn't the Church say that all Catholic children must be in Catholic schools?**

Probably what you have in mind is the Church's canon law on education. Here for the record is what Canon 1374 states: "Catholic children may not attend non-Catholic, neutral, or mixed schools, that is, those which are open also to non-Catholics. It pertains exclusively to the local Bishop to decide, in accordance with instructions of the Holy See, under what circumstances and with what precautions against the danger of perversion, attendance at such schools may be tolerated." To understand this piece of legislation, it is necessary to see it in its historical setting. It was developed at a time when non-Catholic educators in Europe were often strongly anti-clerical—and at a time, too, as we have already seen, when non-Catholic church leaders in the United States were boasting of the losses Catholics were suffering from having to send their children to public schools. The situation has changed today, but not necessarily for the better. Catholics know the secularist philosophy which is so influential in public schools is hostile to their religious beliefs and a threat to the religious faith of their children.

**21) Well, isn't the Church engaging in compulsion by discouraging attendance by Catholic children at non-Catholic schools?**

Catholics believe their Church was entrusted by Christ with a mission to teach all men in all ages. Traditionally, Protestants have stressed the rights of the individual. But Catholics—while they cherish these rights—put equal emphasis on the rights of the Church. They believe the Church's rights necessarily include rights in education, since it is

through education that spiritual values are developed—or killed—in the child. Control over the education of children belongs first of all to the parents. But for this very reason parents have serious duties in regard to the education of their children. It is clear to the Catholic that these duties include providing for religious instruction according to the directions of the divinely-instituted Catholic Church. And the Catholic parent feels, moreover, that any deliberate attempt to prevent him from doing so is an attack on his freedom of conscience—which is the very cornerstone of the U.S. Constitution. After all, the Constitution isn't meant to protect just the freedom of the Protestant conscience or the secularist conscience. The Catholic conscience is entitled to just as much protection. And the Catholic conscience demands Catholic education.

**22) But how do you reconcile the Church's stand with your argument that parents have the primary rights in education?**

To repeat—parents have not only rights, but duties. And one duty is to provide for the religious education of their children. For Catholics, that means Catholic education, according to the guidelines laid down by the Church. The Catholic parent isn't aware of any conflict with his rights. He knows he is exercising his right at the same time he fulfills his duty by sending his children to a Catholic school.

**23) It's hard to believe the Church is really disinterested in this matter. Education is just one more way for it to maintain its power, isn't it?**

To understand the Church's position you have to realize that the Church feels itself to have a God-given duty to provide for the instruction of its members. People hostile to the Church speak as if it were an ecclesiastical dictatorship trying to strengthen its position by invading the field of education. This just isn't so. The Church regards its educational activities as the fulfillment of a serious duty.

**24) It's all very well to talk theory. But what have our American courts actually had to say on the subject? Has the Supreme Court specifically upheld parents' rights in education and the right of private schools to exist?**

The landmark ruling on this question is the court's deci-

sion in 1925 in the so-called Oregon School Case. This involved a state law adopted in Oregon in 1922 requiring that all children between eight and sixteen attend public schools. The Supreme Court's reaction was forthright. It struck down the law as unconstitutional and said in doing so: "The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

**25) Granted Catholics can have their own schools and send their children to them. That doesn't give them the right to expect other people to help them support their schools, does it?**

Catholics look at it this way: Part of their tax money goes into a common fund to be used for educational purposes. But this money is spent exclusively to support schools—the public schools—to which they cannot in conscience send their children. They regard this as an injustice. Also, to their way of thinking, it's a mistake to put the emphasis in education on the school instead of the child. The one who directly benefits from tax money spent for education is—or should be—the child. And so far as the individual child benefits, society benefits, too. Catholics don't see why their tax money shouldn't be used to benefit their children—no matter where they go to school. They believe it is just as much in society's interest that their children be educated to be mature, responsible adults as it is that other people's children be. Catholics aren't asking anybody else to help them support their schools, either. They just ask that when benefits—paid for in part with their tax money—are being passed out, their children be invited to share in them.

**26) The Constitution demands absolute separation of church and state. It sets up a wall of separation between them. You can't deny that, can you?**

Certainly. As a matter of fact, the Constitution in no instance uses the word "separation" in regard to church-

state relations—to say nothing of a “*wall* of separation.” The phrase appears in a letter of Thomas Jefferson’s. As for “absolute” separation of church and state, we’ve never had it in the United States. All but a tiny handful of Americans would be unhappy if we did. “Absolute” separation would commit the state to an anti-religious policy. In theory—under the Constitution—and in practice, the American relationship between church and state has been one in which each has retained its independence while at the same time cooperating with the other.

**27) You speak of cooperation between church and state. Can you give some examples of how this works?**

National policy statements, from the Declaration of Independence on down, have often contained references to God and religion. Many public ceremonies—for example, the oath of office taken by a President of the United States—include actions of religious significance. One of the most striking ways in which the state cooperates with the church is by providing chaplains to minister to the religious needs of citizens serving in its armed forces. This, incidentally, is a clear illustration of the fact that the American tradition is for the state to use its resources to make it easier for citizens to exercise their religious liberty. The Supreme Court itself has pointed out how absurd “absolute” separation of church would be—and how intolerable to almost all Americans. The state could not require churches to pay property taxes. Cities could not give churches police or fire protection. Sessions of Congress and the state legislatures could not begin with prayer. And the Supreme Court itself could not open its sessions, as it traditionally does, with the solemn phrase: “God save the United States and this Honorable Court.” Religious groups receive public funds for hospital construction. They get special postal concessions. And, of course, church-run educational and charitable institutions have traditionally been tax-exempt.

**28) But separation of church and state is something desirable in itself, isn't it?**

Not really. It is a means to an end, and the end is religious liberty. That was the intention of the framers of the Con-

stitution, who stated that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." When separation of church and state impedes religious freedom—as "absolute" separation would do by making the state in practice hostile to religion—then it is "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion.

**29) Let's go back to the courts again. Hasn't the Supreme Court said that it's unconstitutional for the state to aid religion, even if all religions are aided equally?**

Yes, in the 1947 *Everson* decision. In that ruling the court upheld a New Jersey law under which parochial school pupils were given tax-paid transportation on public buses. But at the same time, the Court observed that neither federal nor state governments can constitutionally enact laws which "aid one religion, aid all religions or prefer one religion over another." In 1948, the Court carried this line of thinking one step further in the *McCullum* case, when it held that a released-time religious instruction program in Illinois conducted on public school property was unconstitutional.

**30) It sounds as if these decisions are pretty clear. The court hasn't changed its mind since then, has it?**

It's not good policy to try to second-guess the court. Let's let the facts speak for themselves. In 1952, in the *Zorach* case, the court was asked to rule on a New York City released-time program which differed from the Illinois program in one important detail—the religious instruction was not given on public school property. Justice William O. Douglas, speaking for himself and five other members of the court, held that such a program is constitutional. He also said that separation of church and state does not mean the state should be "hostile, suspicious and . . . unfriendly" to religion. As a matter of fact, he said that "when the state encourages religious instruction . . . it follows the best of our traditions." As for "absolute" separation of church and state, Justice Douglas specified that it applies in only two areas—the "free exercise of religion" and an "establishment" of religion.

**31) You mean that in the Zorach case, the court said separation of church and state needn't be absolute in all areas?**

Exactly. Justice Douglas declared that the First Amendment—concerned as it is with religious freedom—“does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of church and state. Rather, it studiously defines the manner, the specific ways, in which there shall be no concert or union or dependency one on the other. That is the common sense of the matter.”

**32) Getting back to the schools—how has this “traditional” doctrine of church-state relations been applied to them?**

In various ways at various times. As for what's being done *now*, here are a few statistics: in four states, private school children receive physical examinations under supervision of the state education departments; in three states, public officials are responsible for seeing that persons with communicable tuberculosis are not employed in private schools; three state departments of education supervise private school fire drills; five states provide free textbooks to private school pupils; and, of course, compulsory school attendance laws apply to these children. The federal government has also entered the picture. In twenty-seven states it makes cash payments directly to private schools for free milk and hot lunches given to students. On the local level, innumerable communities have adopted zoning regulations designed to protect private schools from physical dangers or unwholesome influences. Communities close off streets at certain times during the day to form play space for private school pupils. These youngsters also get preferred treatment when it comes to using public parks and playgrounds for organized school activities.

**33) You said earlier that separation of church and state is a valid principle as long as it promotes religious liberty. How would you apply that to the question of state aid for church-run schools?**

The state has enacted compulsory school attendance laws, but—as the Supreme Court made clear in the Oregon School Case—it must leave parents free to send their children to the school of their choice. Yet parents who exercise their

religious freedom by sending their children to Catholic schools are in effect penalized by being denied their share of the common educational fund to which they contribute. Thus, the state has established a religious test for sharing in this education fund. By denying education benefits to Catholic parents and children who patronize parochial schools, the state is putting a price tag on the exercise of religious liberty. An interpretation of the "separation" principle which holds that no tax funds can go to aid Catholic education, effectively hinders Catholics in the exercise of their constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom. It is as if the state were to say to Catholics: "Certainly you have religious liberty. But you'll have to pay double for your children's education if you choose to exercise it."

**34) Well, supposing Catholic parents do have to make extra sacrifices to exercise their freedom in this field. No one is forcing them. Isn't that just the price they've freely chosen to pay?**

No American should have to pay a "price" for the rights guaranteed him by the Constitution. They are every American's birthright. Why should it be any different for Catholics?

**35) Do Catholics feel they have a real grievance on this point?**

Of course they do. And perhaps they are disturbed most of all by the blank wall of apathy or hostility which some members of the non-Catholic community have raised against them. There would be relief for Catholics simply in having their arguments given a respectful and sympathetic hearing. Certainly it should not be too much for their fellow Americans at least to acknowledge that Catholics must bear a heavy financial burden in order to exercise their freedom of choice and their religious liberty in the field of education. Catholics are tired of being told that they really have no one to blame but themselves, because they are free to send their children to the public schools. The point is precisely that Catholics *cannot* regard the education offered in public schools as adequate to the spiritual needs of their children. In conscience, they must maintain their own schools. And

they see very little justice in putting a price tag on the right to act according to their consciences.

**36) And this means that children in parochial schools should get some form of governmental aid?**

In many places, they already do get *some* form of governmental aid—textbooks, transportation, free lunches, and health programs, for instance. Catholics believe the child welfare principle which governs this sort of aid could well be extended further.

**37) You spoke of the “child welfare principle.” What’s that?**

Courts have repeatedly agreed that forms of aid which primarily benefit the child—regardless of whether he attends a parochial or a public school—are constitutional. Here is what the Supreme Court had to say in the Everson case: “We must be careful, in protecting the citizens of New Jersey against state-established churches, to be sure that we do not inadvertently prohibit New Jersey from extending its general state law benefits to all its citizens without regard to their religious belief.” Justice Robert H. Jackson dissented from that ruling, which upheld free bus rides for Catholic school students. But he said later, in connection with the McCollum decision, that if the aid involved in the Everson case had been “for the protection of the safety, health or morals of youngsters it would not merely have been constitutional to grant it. It would have been unconstitutional to refuse it to any child merely because he was a Catholic.”

**38) But if the pupils are benefited, aren’t the schools they attend benefited, too—at least to some extent?**

No more so than the churches are benefited by the military chaplain programs. The primary benefit of having chaplains goes to the individual citizen-soldiers whom they serve. And the primary beneficiaries of aid to education are the individuals educated. This is obvious in regard to such things as health programs or free textbooks. But it is no less true of any governmental aid to education. The school acts simply as a sort of filter through which the aid passes on its way to the student.



**39) Is there any real limit to this child welfare principle? Won't Catholics eventually be arguing that all education benefits the child and therefore their schools have a right to complete state support?**

There are two things to be said in this regard. In the first place, no one is in a position to give an absolute guarantee that Catholics will ask for just so much and no more. The notion that this could be done is based on the old, slow-dying stereotype of the "monolithic" Church, all of whose members think alike on all subjects at all times. As a matter of fact, there is great diversity of opinion within the Church on the question of aid to education, as on all other questions. Furthermore, Catholics feel under no obligation to give any guarantee on this point. And they object to being accused of subversive pilfering of public funds whenever they ask to share in education benefits for which they are paying. They believe the issue to be one of civil rights—*their* civil rights. They hope that eventually their fellow Americans will give them a hearing.

**40) Hasn't the Catholic hierarchy had anything to say on this subject?**

There are some 135 Catholic dioceses in the United States, and what any one Bishop says is binding only within his own diocese. Bishops have made various statements on the issue. Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, for example, said Catholics do not ask for or realistically expect public funds to build or maintain parochial schools or pay teachers' salaries. But on the other hand he noted that it is a different question as far as such incidental, welfare items as transportation, textbooks and health services are concerned. This same distinction—between basic, institutional support and welfare benefits—has been stressed by the Administrative Board of Bishops of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Many Catholic spokesmen have been wary about aid to Catholic schools, on the grounds that support would lead to control. Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston said in 1955 of government aid: "I would absolutely refuse the offer, for I cannot see how any government or state would build schools, without expecting to control them in whole

or in part. We are not looking to any government for any assistance in building our system of education."

#### **41) What about bus rides?**

Probably no aid-to-education issue has stirred up more controversy in recent years than the question of providing tax-paid bus transportation for private school students. Catholics find this hard to understand. For one thing, bus transportation is clearly a welfare benefit which aids the child directly and the school only very indirectly indeed. For another, the Supreme Court itself, in the *Everson* case, ruled that the practice does not violate the Federal Constitution. Catholics wonder why so many Americans seem to have trouble grasping the principle laid down in 1945 by the Kentucky State Supreme Court when it said: "In this advanced and enlightened age, with all of the progress that has been made in the field of humane and social legislation, and with the hazards and dangers of the highway increased a thousandfold from what they formerly were, and with our compulsory school attendance laws applying to all children and being rigidly enforced, as they are, it cannot be said with any reason or consistency that tax legislation to provide our school children with safe transportation is not tax legislation for a public purpose." Catholics also see a certain inconsistency in the fact that the same people who raise a hue and cry over the alleged "divisiveness" of parochial schools, try to keep Catholic school pupils from mingling with their public school friends on the school bus.

#### **42) Are Catholics now seeking direct, basic aid to their schools?**

If, by direct, basic aid is meant tax money for building Catholic schools or paying faculty salaries, the answer is no. Catholics are aware of the various constitutional limitations in the way of such aid. They also fear that such aid might bring with it intolerable government controls over their schools. And they know that civic harmony would be shattered by the controversy which would erupt over an all-out campaign for aid of this sort.

#### **43) What do Catholics want?**

Most of all, a fair hearing from their fellow Americans

of good will. As for specifics, courts have upheld the constitutionality of several forms of welfare aid to Catholic pupils which could be extended more widely to them. These include bus transportation, textbooks, health services, testing and guidance programs, and special education for handicapped and retarded children. Catholic parents would also like to see more consideration given the various tax credit plans.

**44) Tax credit plans—what are they?**

Basically, the idea is that parents be allowed to deduct part of what they pay in school tuition from their income tax. Bills for this purpose have been introduced in Congress. They would operate in various ways, but all have the basic purpose of giving tax relief to a parent who is bearing the burden of tuition costs for a son or daughter in college. It has been suggested that the same tax rebate be granted to parents of grade and high school youngsters.

**45) Is there any other program in which the government has given financial assistance to citizens in getting an education?**

There is. The federal government, through G. I. benefits, has paid out millions of dollars for the education of ex-servicemen. The money has gone to the institution of the individual's choice, whether it be public or private.

**46) Catholic schools benefit from the 1958 National Defense Education Act. Isn't the aid provided there enough?**

In some respects this act seems an example of the left hand not knowing what the right was doing. While it has many good points, it contains basic inconsistencies between its professed purposes and its treatment of private schools. It begins by declaring that national security requires the fullest development of the mental abilities of the country's youth and that no deserving student should be denied higher education because of financial need. It would naturally follow from this that the benefits provided under the act should go to all students in all institutions. But this is not the case. For instance, a student who receives a government loan to finance his college education can be forgiven up to half the amount if he teaches after graduation in a public school.

But the student who teaches in a parochial school will have none of his loan forgiven. The federal government makes outright grants for science, mathematics and modern language teaching equipment for public schools. Private schools get only loans for the same purposes. Public school teachers attending counseling institutes receive \$75 weekly for expenses. Private school teachers receive nothing. These and other provisions of the act seem discriminatory and inconsistent to Catholics. They feel that a program designed to promote national security through education is done only a piecemeal job if it benefits just some students in some schools.

**47) If Catholic schools began getting government aid, wouldn't every religious group set up its own schools and demand the same? And wouldn't the end result be a wasteful multitude of sectarian schools, each one dipping into the public till?**

This "problem" is only a "bogey-man." Apparently, the many other countries which subsidize private education (England, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Canada, India, Holland) haven't found it absolutely impossible to work out a solution. Common sense dictates that the state should establish reasonable requirements for sharing in its aid; only those private or church schools would qualify for assistance which would guarantee a fairly large and continuing number of students, as well as a sound administrative program. In some countries any tendency toward "splinter" schools is checked by limiting governmental assistance to only part of the total cost of education.

**48) Aren't Catholics using the school question as a smoke screen for achieving something they've always wanted—union of church and state in America?**

This charge was freely circulated after the Everson decision, in which the Supreme Court upheld New Jersey's right to provide bus transportation for Catholic school pupils. It has been repeated with monotonous frequency by a noisy minority ever since. U. S. Catholic spokesmen on every level have repeatedly refuted these claims. And the continued patriotic service of Catholics to their country has been the most crushing refutation of all. Probably the fa-

natics who regard every Catholic church and school as a center of sedition can never be persuaded. But Catholics would like to see other, more reasonable Americans take at face value the words of the late Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati, who as chairman of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, stated: "No group in America is seeking union of church and state; and least of all are Catholics. We deny absolutely and without any qualification that the Catholic Bishops of the United States are seeking a union of church and state by any endeavors whatsoever, either proximate or remote. If tomorrow Catholics constituted a majority in our country, they would not seek a union of church and state. They would then, as now, uphold the Constitution and all its amendments, recognizing the moral obligation imposed on all Catholics to observe the Constitution and its amendments."

**49) For years Catholics seemed happy with their parochial school system just as it was. Why this sudden interest in getting government aid?**

It's questionable just how "happy" Catholics have been. Out of realism and a wish not to disturb community harmony, they have put up with the injustice according to which their children are denied a share in educational benefits paid for by their tax money. But the fact that they have put up with injustice does not mean that they have ever regarded it as anything but injustice. As for why Catholics are now beginning to seek their rights more actively—the answer is simply that internal pressures within the Catholic school system have made action imperative. Statistics tell the story. Since 1940 the number of youngsters in U. S. private schools—most of them Catholic schools—has risen 118 per cent. Catholic elementary schools now enroll more than four million children. Catholic high schools enroll more than 850,000. In most parts of the country existing Catholic schools are filled to capacity—and parents are still clamoring to have their children admitted. Many dioceses are engaged in virtual crash programs of school construction, but with the almost certain knowledge that the planned facilities won't be able to accommodate all Catholic children. Building and maintenance costs are skyrocketing, and

the number of salaried lay teachers in Catholic schools is increasing to the point where observers confidently predict they will fairly soon outnumber religious. And despite truly Herculean efforts, the fact remains that half of the nation's Catholic students are not in Catholic schools, mainly because there is not enough room for them. In view of these facts, Catholics no longer feel they can afford the luxury of tolerating the injustice done them for so long.

**50) Do Catholics feel they've been getting a fair hearing on this issue?**

No, just the opposite. The propaganda mills of the anti-Catholics and the militant secularists have been grinding out a steady line to the effect that Catholics are somehow being un-American when they ask for their rights—or ask even that their arguments be listened to. Probably more irksome to Catholics than anything else is the barrage of name-calling kept up constantly by some of those who differ with them on this issue. Catholics feel that as citizens of a democracy presenting reasonable arguments on behalf of their basic civil rights, they deserve at least the chance to speak without having their motives questioned and their patriotism impugned. They feel that this is the real American tradition. They believe that frank and full discussion in the democratic forum will convince their fellow Americans of the justice of their cause. And they know their nation will be all the stronger once they have been granted their rights.

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