

The Necessity of Teaching Religion in Public Schools

THE investigations recently made by the government in connection with the charges against our three top Department of Education officials of obstructionism of the constitutional provision for the religious instruction of the youths in public schools have just been completed. Whatever may have been said, whatever judgment on the case will have been passed, there remains the fact that one of the primordial necessities in our schools today is the teaching of religion.

The need of religious instruction is especially imperative at the present time, in the face of the grave perils of Godless communism which threatens our very national survival. Dr. José P. Laurel emphasized the necessity of religious education for the Filipinos when he said, "Today, we are in the midst of an era of intense ideological conflict in which communism attempts, through devious ways and means, to destroy and completely annihilate human personality and its divine endowments, the better to make of peoples it can subjugate slaves and automatons who shall blindly serve a godless and ruthless government, established through class hatred and strife, in a supposedly classless and godless society."

"Thus, the Philippines, caught at the vortex of the continuing movement of communism towards the Far East, must respond to the imperative need for an educational

philosophy whose sublime purpose must rest on the bedrock of a moral hypothesis — the recognition and dignification of the human personality; the worth of the individual as an individual, created by and answerable to God, whence springs his faith in his uniqueness as the source of all the possible good, and the possible contributions that he may make to himself and to his kind — to society."

This imperative need for an educational philosophy can have its ready answer in the teaching of religion in our schools besides what are being taught today. Unfortunately, in the Philippines, the teaching of religion in the public schools has been relegated to the background because of the constitutional mandate that religion may only be taught in our public schools upon the option of the pupils' parents or guardians.

As a result, the implementation of the teaching of religion has not been carried to such an extent as to make it a contributing factor for the betterment of the individual and of the nation. In this regard, Dr. Pedro T. Orata, one of the leading educators in the country, said, "I believe it is safe to say that of all countries the world over, Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or any other, the Philippines stands unique in regard to the so-called religious instruction. . . . In enrollment, it is almost negligible — less than 350,000 in a total school population

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of 4,879,979, or roughly 7 pupils out of every 100. In other words, 4,537,592 or 93 of every 100 pupils enrolled are without religious instruction. Compare the ratio with Buddhist Thailand, Catholic Ireland, Protestant Scotland, to say nothing of France, Egypt, Israel, and Burma, where nearly every pupil enrolled in school is given an effective and well supervised religious instruction."

Dr. Orata continued, "That is quantitatively speaking. In quality, ours is also unique. We place high value in the fact that we are a Christian nation, but instruction in Christian principles is less, much less effective, than instruction in arithmetic or geography. We pay more attention to folk dancing or physical education. In fact, we pay more attention in everything else we do in school than to religious instruction. We give to God 'un-Godly hours,' and of course, supervisors are either eating lunch or taking a nap during these hours. We do not have courses in the teaching of religion in normal schools and colleges of education. In short, in theory we value religion in our lives, but in practice, religion is unimportant as a school subject."

Consequently, due to this lack of religious instruction in our schools, there has been moral decadence and increase of lawlessness in our country. Justice Luis P. Torres, chairman of the Integrity Board, assailed the inadequate provision being made for the religious or at least moral education of our youth, thus neglecting the formation of the character of our young citizens. Stressing the important role of the youth as future leaders, he stated that with the lack of religious education, one cannot say that "the Filipino youth is the hope of the country."

Justice Torres said, "I am concerned particularly about those boys

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—EDITOR

Complicity's

by
Vic Paras

It's summer time folks, and here's a grand parade of U.S.C.'s 1953 Summerians. . . .

Gracing the corridors every summer is ENDRING AÑOVER, . . . a public school marm of Leyte. Endy hopes to finish her B.S.E. course by the end of this term to brace up for the grind ahead. ROSETTA FERNANDEZ, VIC LEE, and PAT KRIECKENBECK, armed with elevated I.Q.'s are rainin' for top honors. Still at it, girls? Summer's offensive y' know.

Bright-eyed PANCHING NUÑEZ, is back again and for good measure. For one semester she made her exit and matriculated in Ateneo de Cagayan. Why, Ching? Can't make USC your alma mater?

Even a post-grad student (whose supposed to peer absent-mindedly behind specs and to appear old as grandma) isn't safe from prowling wolves who give whines at every pretty lass they least their eyes on. And Hildy Gocor is no exception. She's decidedly wolf-bait!

LETTY REYES is a new addition to the Carolinian world but she's beginning to like it here. Sweet and companionable Letty has told us that she has been bitten by the Carolinian bug. (We wouldn't know if the bug was a he or she).

KEILAN PALACIOS. . . gunning after the 1953 Mr. Philippines trophy with his extensor femoris and such stuff, breezed thru to the finals but failed to land a berth. Too bad, huh? A walking chunk of masculine eye-catcher is RAMON MECIANO whose gait is strictly PMA-ed. Planning to fight Huks, Ramon? Or wuzzit Korea. Tall, slim PORTIA BUNJUAN, conspicuous in her inconspicuousness. [How's that again?] Portia is back from heaven knows where. Some drawing card must have attracted her here. What's the low-down, Porf?

Morolandia's kind donation for this summer's parade are the twin glories—PADILLA and CARDONA. Glor Padilla intends to stay here only this summer. . . unless she changes her mind. Which is not unusual for a woman.

FRUCTUOSO RODRIGUEZ, that handsome, curly-haired jam-session habitué. Fruc talks like an authority on women and their idiosyncracies or whaddayacallit but at the end of every discourse on the obverse sex, he will confess that he has no g.f. [grandfather?], and that he would to heaven like one cute dream gal. Very nice companion certainly. . . Fruc, you need more legwork. ANITA CLAVERIA, whose mild and engaging disposition is a rarity hereabouts. Nice girl too, otherwise VENCIO [yaki yaki] wouldn't be hankering for her. Terribly in love, huh? Gosh, we never knew what was brewing all along. We need to poke our noses into more people's businesses. . .

LO VARELA. . . the enigma in black who seems very inscrutable in her simplicity. Highly intelligent and reads books avidly. We want to be in on who's the fortunate benefic-to-be. NGR. . . tall, fair and smart. Lawyer and editor of a local weekly is a very kind soul. [Ask Narciso Bacur. . .]. A hard-hitting penpusher who makes no bones and minces no words. ESTRING JAO comes to bone up on summer classes. Combine beauty, brains, a bank note and an impeccable grace in dancing and you have in your mind. Quite a combination, we would say.

PACHING BOLLOZOS will have her last stint in note-taking, this summer. Gosh, it was fun to have you in USC ching!

For music lovers, Little Menuhin, DANILLO CAÑETE, always has the welcome rug at his feet. One fling at his rendition of Massenet's "Thois" and you'll swear it was a sure-fire weapon to disarm stubborn hearts.

A group of would-be commerciantes find lots of headaches in their act.
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The Necessity of . . .

and girls of indigent families, of those who are in the slums of the big centers of population like Manila, and of those who have little or no notion of Divine Providence. Under this situation, youths easily fall prey to criminality and the vultures of communism. It seems that the sole purpose of our educational system is to cultivate only the mind of the pupil or student, to make him a wise man, a scientist in his own profession or calling, thus neglecting the other and most important part of the human being, his soul. Under such a system of instruction, it is not strange that a highly educated man, instead of being a worthy member of society, instead of using the knowledge acquired by him for some worthy purpose, becomes a criminal or an enemy of society.

The writer maintains that it is necessary that religion should be taught by compulsion in the public schools, for three main reasons. In the first place, from the viewpoint of the individual, religion should be taught, because it makes him feel secure in his relation with God. With this feeling of security, he can have peace of soul, and positively, as long as he is in good terms with God, he feels all right and is guided in the right path in life.

In the second place, from the standpoint of the State, divine security is important. The individuals in the State, who have no feeling of kinship with God, as can be established by the teaching of religion to them, will have no inhibitions in themselves. Within this kind of State, one does not have respect for the rights and property of others, because nothing will inhibit him from trespassing over these rights and property not his. The result would be chaos and disorder in the State.

In the third place, from the point of view of the Creator or Maker, religion should be taught. Religion is important because it IS so; it cannot be otherwise. There exists God; God must exist and this **must** is so strong that He insists on His honor. Therefore, we must give Him that honor, and to give Him that honor, we must have religion, which, to have adequately, must be taught in our public schools.

Religion cannot be separated from education. Sectarianism must be kept out of the public schools, but it is neither possible nor desirable.
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able to keep religion separated from education. The opponents of the suggestion for the compulsory instruction of religion in the public schools advance the theory that this would result in chaos and turmoil. They say that the group in the majority would force their will on the minority. They aver that if a Catholic public school teacher is assigned to teach religion as an additional subject, it will make him feel prejudiced to the pupils in his class who might be Protestants.

However, the writer believes that there is no difficulty of teaching religion in the school even if the students belong to different religious sects. The objection of prejudice is only theoretical and does not actu-

ally exist. Let us say a Catholic teacher teaches English only, and he does not feel any prejudice towards his Protestant student. If this teacher is assigned to teach religion, will it necessarily mean that he will feel prejudiced towards the Protestant students? Will the assigning of religion as an additional subject for him to teach change his attitude of non-prejudice and fairness towards his Protestant students? The answer is "No." Hence, the objection of prejudice is only in theory.

With all the foregoing arguments, we can, therefore, say that if the aim of education is not to produce children and youth who are merely well-informed and skilled but without moral and reli-

gious; if the aim of education is to produce citizens of deep and intelligent convictions; if in this age of materialism, in this period of human life when the struggle for human existence seems to be the only goal towards which humanity's efforts are directed to attain its happiness, all other considerations, particularly those of spiritual value, are ignored and forgotten; if we are to prevent the tide of communism from engulfing us; if we are to maintain rightfully our place as the "only Christian country in the Orient;" then, religion must be given a paramount place in our national life, and the teaching of it must be made necessary, better still compulsory, in our schools.

What is Russian Communism?

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force you to answer if it embarrasses you, Mr. Foster.

Mr. Foster: It does not embarrass me at all. I stated very clearly the Red flag is the flag of the revolutionary class, and we are part of the revolutionary class.

Chairman: I understood that.

Mr. Foster: And all capitalist flags are flags of the capitalist class, and we owe no allegiance to them.

(Writer's note: This last answer means plainly that Communists in the U.S.A. claim to owe no allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, and profess allegiance only to the flag of the proletarian revolution, which is guided, controlled, and ordered from Moscow. In other words, Foster's admission means that Communists throughout the world own no allegiance to the lawfully elected government of their respective countries, but, on the contrary, profess unwavering allegiance and blind obedience to Soviet Russia!)

USING FREEDOM TO CRUSH FREEDOM

Here in free America, as in other free countries, we find a contemptible organization, the Communist Party, taking advantage of democracy to overthrow democracy; using freedom of speech to exterminate freedom of speech; availing themselves of freedom of assembly to eliminate freedom of assembly. Just suppose that in Soviet Russia a party attempted to organize in order to introduce the American form of government and destroy the Soviet system! We cannot make

everyone who is conversant with the Soviet system knows well that no such attempt would be tolerated, and that even those who, without aiming at the overthrow of the Soviet government, merely strove to introduce a truly democratic system of voting would be promptly liquidated. No papers could possibly be published advocating any but the despotic Soviet system; no meetings could be convened to launch a democratic system; no speeches could be delivered to advocate free elections. To suppose such an investigation in the U.S.S.R. as I have been describing, which was a reality in the U.S.A., and to imagine in addition that, as in the advocated another form of government was allowed to pursue his way and continue his propaganda, would be to suppose or imagine an impossibility.

Yet here in our midst, in "the land of the free and the home of the brave;" here in a country that is known throughout the world for its democracy and liberty; here in a land where workmen have singular advantages and effective means of redressing any grievances; here in a Republic where flourish freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of voting for whom one wishes, freedom to express one's opinion and to criticize the government and even the President, we find despicable traitors who, while refusing to give allegiance to the flag of their homeland which guarantees such freedom, pledge their complete loyalty to a

horrible alien power and use (or, rather, abuse) the very freedom of their homeland in order to crush out the vestige of that freedom and establish in its place the Soviet system, which has emerged from the bowels of hell and strives with diabolical ingenuity and infernal power to pollute the entire world.

America is very tolerant; but there is such a thing as being too tolerant when it comes to the question of dealing with the worst kind of criminals. Freedom must not be allowed to grow into unbridled license. As the gangster and the murderer are checked by drastic laws, or at least severely punished by the State, so also those who are disseminating the worst kind of disloyalty to the State, the most terrible form of treachery to their country, and the most awful species of enmity to society, and who are actively striving to attain their iniquitous ends under the aegis of an alien government, should be effectively checked and, if they strive to persist, put where they can no longer exercise their baneful influence. By all means let them, if they so desire, migrate to their beloved U.S.S.R. — and remain there "for the term of their natural lives."

A mother gives her children whatever religion is advisable; but we cannot imagine any sane mother allowing a wayward child to take from a shelf his father's razor when she knows that the child's intention and avowed purpose is to slash her own throat at the very first opportunity!