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# SCHOOL, CHURCH AND STATE R E C O N S I D E R E D



Editor: Chris Eisele, Illinois State University  
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## Editor's Introduction

Chris Eisele

There is no need to justify our topic as a "current issue." The daily news accomplishes that. In fact, the issues are so current that the June Supreme Court decision upholding Minnesota's tuition tax deduction system necessitated changes in these essays written as recently as this Spring. "Current," of course, does not necessarily mean of recent origin. The argument about church/state religious entanglement in the educational process is an old one. As both authors make clear, the source of this current issue goes well back in American history.

One historical commentator on the question of state aid for religious instruction, John Dewey, has a special interest for us. In his longest comment on the subject, "Religion and Our Schools" (Hibbert Journal, 1908), Dewey found not only the roots of the controversy in American history but also one source of his opposition to state support, "The lesson of the two and a half centuries lying between the Protestant revolt and the formation of the nation was well learned as respected the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the state as against all divisive ecclesiastical divisions." Dewey's later remarks echoed his 1908 article. For example, in 1940, as Honorary Chairman of the Committee for Cultural Freedom, Dewey spoke out against a released time plan for the New York Public Schools (New York Times, 14 November 1940, p. 18). And in 1947 he joined with several other prominent educators in this reaction against using public funds to support transportation for parochial education, "Our historic American doctrine of the separation of church and state appears seriously threatened, and many of our people are much troubled. The 5-4 decision some months ago of the Supreme Court upholding public pay for bus service to parochial schools feeds fuel to the flames" (New York Times, 1 October 1947, p. 28).

I note these sources showing Dewey's opposition to the private educational use of public funds for two reasons: first, for the avid "what did Dewey say" readers; second, and more importantly, to suggest an interesting comparison between Dewey's thinking and the reasoning of our experts. Edd Doerr, who offers very similar arguments to Dewey's in his essay opposing the use of public funds for private education, does not cite Dewey. But Allan Carlson, writing on the other side, invokes the spirit of Dewey--if not Dewey's specific statements--to buttress his argument. How this apparent paradox comes about you will have to read for yourselves. HOWEVER, what you think about Carlson's or Doerr's arguments, or the issue itself, you should not keep to yourselves.

With this volume, the editors of Current Issues and Insights initiate a policy of joint themes which we hope will appeal to the Dewey Society membership. Later this Fall, the Dewey Society will publish an Insights based on your reactions to this Current Issues in Education. Thus, if either or both of these essays or the topic evokes a reaction, members will now have a chance to share their responses with other members by writing for Insights. Please consult the Insights "Call for Papers" included with this Current Issues for details. (Additional copies of this volume can be purchased for \$2.00 from Dr. Robert Morris, Secretary-Treasurer, John Dewey Society, College of Education, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.)

#### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Edd Doerr and Allan C. Carlson for their cooperation, especially the speed with which they produced their essays; Glenn Hass, President-Elect of the John Dewey Society who arranged the J.D.S. session at which these papers were originally presented; Art Brown, President, and the Board of Directors of the Dewey Society, for encouraging this issue; and Dean William Dunifon and the Illinois State University College of Education for generous support in meeting production costs.

## Introduction

Glenn Hass

In April, 1982, President Reagan announced that he would ask Congress to pass legislation to provide massive federal aid to religious and other private schools under a Tuition Tax Credit Plan. In May, 1982, President Reagan announced that he would submit to Congress a constitutional amendment to (in his words) "allow our children to pray in school." On these and similar questions the present official position of our country was stated in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Everson case in 1947. In that decision Justice Rutledge wrote, "We have staked the very existence of our country on the faith that a complete separation between the government and religion is best for the state and best for religion." The positions advanced by President Reagan and the restlessness of many people today regarding the doctrines of the separation of church, state and private education have led to the planning of this publication on "School, Church, and State Reconsidered."

We are most fortunate to have two authors whose contrasting points of view will help us examine these issues which have such great significance for American education. The first paper is by Allan C. Carlson, Executive Vice President, The Rockford Institute, Rockford, Illinois, and Editor of Persuasion at Work, published by the Institute. He has also served on the faculty at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania; as NEH Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C.; and Assistant Director, Office for Governmental Affairs, Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., Washington, D.C. The second paper is by Edd Doerr, Executive Director, The Voice of Reason, Silver Spring, Maryland. Mr. Doerr has also been Vice President, Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights; Editor of Church and State Magazine, and author of The Conspiracy That Failed (1968), Parochialism and the Law (1975), and Eden II (a novel, 1974).