

Expert Explains Reasons Behind Growing Movement To Provide Catholic High School Education For Every Catholic Boy And Girl

By MONSIGNOR JOHN H. SPINON
(N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE)

For generations Catholic educators have been inclined to accept as a fact the supposition that it is practically impossible to provide Catholic high school accommodations for all Catholic students. Furthermore, they have held that from the viewpoint of religious training to do so is not necessary, even though it is desirable for every Catholic boy and girl to go to a Catholic high school; knowledge of religion can be gained through the home, the Church, the Sunday school, give all children a Catholic elementary school education by providing a sufficient number of elementary schools and you thereby give them such a strong religious foundation that they will be fitted to serve God and country well, no matter where they receive their secondary and higher education.

Various factors have started a strong trend in thinking that Catholic high school education must be provided for all. First, there is the fact that in the United States today high school education has come to be looked on as basic and essential for everyone. Next, there is the ever-increasing reality that mere knowledge of religious truths is not sufficient to withstand the onslaughts of immorality and secularism which the mass media of communication have brought into everyone's world. Moreover, the advance in adolescent psy-

chology made during recent years has brought forth revelations which, in my judgment, build up the strongest case for giving every Catholic a Catholic high school education.

Paramount among the findings of adolescent psychology is the existence in every normal youth of a high idealism which, if properly cultivated and reinforced, results in the formation of character of high degree. Instinctively, youth seeks to look up; he aims at the stars as long as he knows that his objectives are real and his standards are worthwhile.

It is when conflicts and discrepancies present themselves between youth's internal aspirations and the realities of persons and things in his world that his idealism appears futile and he sinks to the level of mediocrity, even depravity, because his most important reality appears to be self.

Does it not follow then that the surest way to preserve and foster the idealism of youth is to provide a philosophy of life based on the reality and validity of high spiritual and moral values? This can be accomplished certainly and most effectively through the integration of religion in all phases of learning.

By recognizing God and the supernatural as the immutable basis of every reality, youth's idealism is never shattered and



Army caps and Communist red star are worn by these youngsters at a former Maryknoll mission school in South China. Communist teachers are now in charge of the school and all religious influences have been removed. Priests at the mission are forbidden to make any contacts with the children. Students are being indoctrinated in the new philosophy of China.

his standards are never lowered no matter what disillusioning experiences destroy his faith in persons and things.

Youth ceases to adore in the moment that he sees his idol to have feet of clay, but when his idol is the one True Living God, unshackled to the dust of earth, his adoration remains permanent and undiluted. This set of unchanging and un-

changeable spiritual realities based on the Christian philosophy of life is offered to high school students almost exclusively in Catholic high schools.

Psychologists further reveal that a basic seeking after security is responsible for much of adolescent behavior. Youth wants to be accepted; he wants to make his mark in life; he wants to lay hold of the things that mean fullness of living. Consequently, everything depends on his notion of what constitutes security. If he has a purely mundane concept — if he thinks that security consists in the possession of things, believes that the grave in the end of all, does not admit compliance with higher law and order as being necessary for the attainment of permanent life — then, in confusion and bewilderment, he will strike out madly in every direction to find security in the appeasement of the moment.

Only through a religious education is the right notion of security imparted, only by that means is adolescent energy and activity channeled into the pathways of moral civil and social rectitude.

Still another common characteristic brought to light by the science of adolescent psychology is the seeking after independence involved in a natural desire for self-expression. A corollary of this is adolescent rebellion against authority.

Only in a system of education where the true nature and purpose of authority is imparted can this urge to rebel be curbed and voluntarily corralled within the lawful limits of human freedom.

In the Catholic High School system almost exclusively is this nature of authority portrayed as emanating from God through His earthly representatives.

Before the Church can make adequate provision for all her children to enroll in Catholic high schools, a vast program of expansion will have to take place. How long, how much and what means are all items for the future, but the indication is that the expansion has already begun. All over the country Catholic high schools are being built as rapidly as funds will allow.

Approximately 50 Catholic high schools have been built in the past four years, bringing the total number up to 2,150, in Boston and in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, in Cleveland and in Washington tremendous steps have been taken in increasing high school facilities within the past year.

However, buildings are only one part of the Church's prob-

lem. To house all Catholic children in Catholic high schools would involve an increase in the number of teachers far above the ability of our religious teaching orders to supply. Accordingly, it behooves Catholic educators to start now setting up systems of adequate salaries, permanence of position and social security coverage such as exist in the public school system for the lay teachers who will definitely be needed to implement the Church's total high school program.

Basic Needs

Still another area of expansion is the curriculum of the high school. If the Church is to assume the responsibility of giving education to all types of her students she must of necessity provide courses of study that all types of students can follow, and which will help them develop to the utmost the abilities given them by their Creator. This reconstruction of the high school curriculum should be determined by the needs confronting youth in today's world.

There are some needs today that are basic to all, the serving of which would constitute the common base of all courses of study. Beyond these, however, are needs that are peculiar to individual persons, groups and localities. Therefore, opportunities should be provided to allow Catholic students to select certain phases of the curriculum which they feel will best enable them to meet their particular needs.

Maybe this movement to give a real and permanent sense of values to all the Catholic Youth of America is just what is needed to spearhead the "moral regeneration" which the Crime Pruders declare is needed if our country is to be brought back from the abyss of decadence.

St. Michael's College

The Catholic College of the University of Toronto

+ + +

As one of the Federated Colleges in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Toronto, St. Michael's College, founded in 1852 by the Basilian Fathers, enrolls students in all courses in Arts and Sciences leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Commerce, and preparatory to admission to the Schools of Graduate Studies, Education, Law and Social Work.

For full information apply to

THE REGISTRAR
TEEFY HALL
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
TORONTO 5, CANADA

BELL & HOWELL FILMOSOUND



Special Representatives

in

CHEMUNG, STEUBEN,
YATES and SCHUYLER
COUNTIES

Catering to the Audio-Visual
Needs of Schools, Churches
and Industries.

Also Dealers for

Sawyers' Viewmaster

Rediant Screens

Viewlex Projectors

Popular Science Film Strips

Encyclopedia Britannica Films

Catholic Vis. Ed. Slide-Films
and Records

Complete Sound Film Library

Bovik & Grandall
Photographic Supplies
263 State Street,
Elmira, New York