

New GI Law For Junior?

Sunshine and shadow highlighted the school aid picture this week.

On the national level, Representative James J. Delaney of New York City proposed a "G.I. Bill for Junior" to give \$20 every year to every grade and high school pupil in the country. Delaney claims this is the "common-sense solution" to the current impasse in the administration's efforts to bolster the nation's educational program without constitutional conflict over direct aid to church-run schools.

In Minnesota, however, 350 delegates attending a meeting of the state's School Boards Association shouted down a proposal for bus rides for parochial school children and any federal aid for them.

They even refused to listen to one delegate who asked to explain the plight of parochial school pupils. He said, "It is not the Catholic Church that is pushing this, but Catholic parents, who want equal rights for their children."

Representative Delaney's \$1,700,000,000 proposal in Congress would bypass such bias and aid pupils rather than schools.

As a precedent for his proposal Delaney cited the G.I. Bill and the federal page boys program. Under both, federal funds have gone to individuals, to be used at the school of their choice, whether public or private.

Delaney stressed that for the welfare of the country, "it is imperative that our educational systems operate at their fullest capacity."

"Today as never before, because of the Soviet threat, the national interest requires that every child be educated to his highest potential," he said.

"In the American-Soviet battle of the classroom, we cannot afford to deny better educational opportunities to seven million potential scientists and leaders in other fields simply because in addition to secular subjects they receive some religious training."

He warned against educational monopolies, saying, "diversity in education is essential to a free and open society."

The New York Congressman gave particular emphasis to the right of parents to choose the form of education their children receive. He said this is a "natural, civil and constitutional right," protected by the First, Fifth and Ninth Amendments to the Constitution and recognized by the Supreme Court.

He outlined several instances of federal aid to higher education, including the case of Harvard University, which received 25 per cent of its income from federal funds in 1961, and of Howard University, which, Delaney said, is "supported mainly by" the federal government.

Schools of divinity and religion are allied with both these institutions, Delaney noted.

Citing the G.I. Bill and the page boy education act as "exemplars" of desirable federal aid to primary and secondary education, he commented:

"Both of these acts have worked well and neither of them discriminates against any American nor do they encourage a monolithic or totalitarian school system."

"Secular subjects taught in Church-related schools are, of course, the same as secular subjects taught in our public schools. There is no Jewish multiplication table, there is no Catholic Boyle's Law in physics, there is no Protestant alphabet."

"My bill is a G.I. Bill for Junior. It treats every child alike and penalizes none of them because they study secular subjects in a Protestant, Catholic or Jewish school."

Delaney was a key figure in last year's congressional battle over federal aid. His vote in the House Rules Committee was regarded as having blocked the administration's federal aid program, which would have given assistance to public schools only.



Catholics and Protestants Get Together

Alexandria, Va. — (RNS) — Father Thomas J. Quinlan, associate pastor of the Blessed Sacrament Catholic church in Alexandria, Va., chats with two Protestant women's group presidents at a parish-sponsored dinner which was one of the Catholic-Protestant events during the observance of the Chair of Unity Octave and the World Council of Churches' Week of Christian Unity. This is believed to be the first time that American Catholics and Protestants have cooperated on a community basis during the annual eight day period (Jan. 18-25) when special prayers are offered for Christian unity.

School Bus Debate Rages In Eleven States

By JOHN J. DALY, JR. (N.C.W.C. News Service)

School buses are facing more than winter winds in at least 11 states. They are also being buffeted by controversy over whose children are entitled to their protection. Debate on providing tax-paid bus rides for children attending parochial and other private schools is found from Alaska east to Colorado and down into Kentucky.

Episodes in past months range from passage of bus legislation in Wisconsin after a heated letter-writing campaign to rallying support for a Missouri law because of the collapse of a student who was walking to a Catholic school in subzero cold.

The controversy is taking place against the backdrop of decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court — in 1947 and 1961 — that such rides do not violate the Federal constitution.

Other elements include apparent growing impatience by parents of private school pupils; court interpretations of state constitutions as banning such rides and opposition to transportation from Protestant church bodies.

RECENT EVENTS include: In Alaska, the State Supreme Court has turned down, 2 to 1, a petition by parents of a Catholic school pupil that she be permitted to ride a tax-paid bus which passes their residence. The court said no. It held such transportation benefits the nonpublic school, an act the state cannot legally permit.

In Maryland, voters in Baltimore, probably will be asked in a November referendum to decide the fate of a law liberalizing the existing statute permitting nonpublic pupils in the county to ride public school buses. A court case challenging the referendum and Jewish groups have led opposition to the proposed rides.

In Maine, Protestant churches supported a campaign to force a statewide referendum on a new local option bus law. Many ministers circulated referendum petitions, but the drive failed. The first three towns voting on whether to transport private school pupils at tax expense approved the question overwhelmingly.

In Missouri, Citizens for Education Freedom, a parents' group, is pointing to the

collapse of a Catholic school pupil in subzero cold as dramatizing the need for a law permitting nonpublic school pupils to ride tax-paid buses.

In Kentucky, where courts have held rides to be legal, fiscal authorities of Boone County voted to continue paying for transportation of parochial school pupils after Bishop Richard H. Ackerman, C.S.Sp., of Covington ordered three county pastors to close their schools until bus service was provided. The threat to end transportation for 700 pupils in parochial schools was not carried out.

In Oklahoma, ten parents are appealing to the State Supreme Court from a decision of a District Court that the Oklahoma constitution prohibits giving tax-paid transportation to their children attending a Midwest City parochial school. The decision ended a five-year practice.

In Colorado, the State Commissioner of Education, citing a recent court decision, has ordered public school districts to put parochial school pupils off their buses or face withdrawal of state subsidies. Catholics turned to the state legislature. But in its so-called "short session" this year, it can consider only items designated by the governor. Gov. Stephen L. McNichols refused to present the question, saying it is a matter for courts.

In Minnesota, the State Senate Majority Leader, John Zwich, said the issue is so alive that "it has to be aired." He urged that a bus law be passed and brought before the courts' Bills were introduced in the 1961 legislature, but died in committees.

In Ohio, Steubenville City Solicitor LeRoy C. Schell held in an opinion that six children who attend St. Peter's Catholic school must be left behind by the bus they had been riding. It said Ohio law does not authorize such transportation Catholic parents may contest his opinion.

In North Dakota, Atty. Gen. Leslie R. Bergum has repeated his opinion that transportation of nonpublic school pupils does not violate state law as long as no public money is spent for it. His original opinion, given in 1960, was prompted by complaints of two Protestant ministers about children riding

'Finger of God' Guides Christians Toward Unity

Commission preparing for the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, is the first Catholic priest known to have addressed the Protestant pastors' meeting.

Unity of Christians against the common enemy has been most evident in Germany, he said, where "the persecuting Nazi regime was so easily recognized."

Efforts of Christians to present a united front have been intensified in the face of greater dangers, he said, and have led Catholics to a "post-Council Reformation" attitude which promises to be something "more positive."

Father Godfrey said that Protestant work toward ecumenism has centered in the World Council of Churches. "I think few Catholics would not gratefully say of it, 'The finger of God is here,'" he commented.

Father Godfrey cited three main currents of activity among Protestants and Catholics which "give most grounds for hope."

Minneapolis — (NC) — Three major factors leading to unity among Christians were cited by a Catholic theologian at a Protestant pastors' conference here.

Father Godfrey Diekman, O.S.B., editor of *Worship* magazine and chairman of the theology department at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., addressed the Minnesota Pastors' conference at a session in Bethlehem Lutheran church.

In his talk to 350 Protestant pastors (Jan. 18), Father Godfrey cited these three factors:

1. A common enemy — the devil, "in his guise of secularism, materialism and communism";
2. Positive efforts by Protestants and Catholics toward ecumenism;
3. God Himself, willing unity and already having united Christians in many ways.

Father Godfrey, a consultant to the Pontifical Liturgical

Buses. They are: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Rhode Island.

Supreme Courts in six states — California, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut — have ruled that the practice is permitted under their state constitutions.

Courts in six other states — Alaska, Delaware, Missouri, Oklahoma, Washington and New York — have held that the practice is not permitted. But immediately after the New York decision, an amendment to the state constitution was enacted which authorized the practice.

He listed these as renewed study of the Reformation and the "Reformers'"; historical studies of a pre-Reformation trends; and a return to biblical, patristic and liturgical sources.

Recent objective studies of the Reformation have indicated, he said, that "all that was positive in the Reformers' platform was sound, traditional Catholic doctrine, sometimes indeed more Catholic and traditional than what was being presented at the time by many professedly Catholic teachers."

"Above all," Father Godfrey said, "we can agree that a prayerful return to Scripture means... a petition to the Source of Truth who will not despise our humble seeking."

Protestant sects are becoming "altar — instead of pulpit centered." Father Godfrey said, and His Holiness Pope John XXIII has "repeatedly... summarized our true Christian heritage by speaking of the 'Book and the Cup' as the two chief sources of our spiritual life."

Many Protestant churches today are concerned, he said, with liturgical reorientation, with sacraments not as mere ceremonial but as "signs of faith."

"Not a few Protestant and Catholic writers on ecumenics in fact feel, and openly say, that the liturgical movement at the present time offers the most hopeful bridge," he said.

"One reason, undoubtedly, is that the liturgy, and the early common liturgical texts, are doctrine, not argued — but prayed," he added.

Reapings at Random

Good Drivers Victims With Highway Culprits

BY GERARD E. SHERRY
Editor, Central California Register

Local traffic courts are probably the greatest blot on the American judicial scene. Much has been written about them, but almost nothing has been done to change the system.

Motorists throughout the land have been suffering rank injustice for many years and in almost all cases the right of appeal is denied or too expensive to pursue. One other important element of our judicial system is missing from the traffic courts — the accepted legal tenet that a man is innocent until proven guilty.

The traffic ticket is a typical example of the grave injustice meted out to our citizenry by those responsible for court procedures. In most cases the ticket says right there, in the no-so-fine print, that one is guilty of the charge made by the officer. And even though it is very often a question of one man's word against the other, traffic court judges almost never take the side of the long-suffering motorist.

The average citizen involved in a traffic ticket complaint, be it for illegal parking or any other alleged failure to comply with traf-

fic laws knows that he is not going to get justice, even if he's not guilty. Hence, he pays up. And more and more policemen are being encouraged to fill traffic quotas which are almost no gamble.

Then, of course, there are the thousands of harassing speed and other traps set for the unwary motorist by many of our smaller communities throughout the United States. It is a means of revenue for some of these people and they play the game to the hilt. Often it is a form of legalized blackmail against the motorist. The courts convened by some of these local communities are often set up in barber shops or general stores and the like, presided over by politically appointed judges, some of whom are not qualified. But there is money in the game, and state and county police chiefs go along with it in the interests of civic harmony.

In some parts of the country there are traffic judges who have got a lot of prominence through excessive penalties meted out to perfectly good citizens. They normally justify this by proclaiming that examples have to be made and they have the courage to do the making. Indeed, there is one traffic court judge who is described as meaner than Judge

Ray Bean of the hanging days, and seemingly no more competent.

These reflections are put forward at a time when even further steps are being taken against the almost persecuted driving public of these United States. Not only do we have to watch out for city, county and state patrol cars—now they are experimenting with aerial traffic policemen. Highways in certain parts of the country are having special markings on them in order that auto-ground control of speeders can be worked out.

Of course, these aerial traffic cops are also on the lookout for accidents, traffic jams and the like. And they can certainly help to make our roads safer. But they are mainly used as evidence for all kinds of traffic violations. We wonder whether or not George Orwell was wrong in his prophecy. Maybe he should have said "Big Brother" will be here before 1984 rather than 1984.

These Reapings are not meant to decry honest attempts at avoiding reckless driving or to condone any form of traffic violation. However, one can go along with all these legal harassment of motorists if at the same time the motorist could be guaranteed justice;

if he could feel secure that he was not merely the victim of "ticket-happy" policemen who must impress their chiefs.

In addition, tickets should be amended to give the motorist a chance to assume that he is innocent unless he pleads otherwise. Traffic court judges, too, should be specialists, not political appointees or publicity seekers. Some traffic violators do need jail and heavy fines. Many, however, are victims of circumstance and should be treated as such. Traffic safety will never be achieved through repressive methods.

No, your Reaper has not had a traffic ticket recently. He is as much concerned about road safety as anyone else. However, road safety involves the two-way application of justice. If alleged traffic violators had a chance to expect justice their response to the pleas of traffic safety experts may be more fruitful.

The law must always be upheld and the policemen must always be there to administer it. But the law was never meant to be onerous. And it is in this area that most law enforcement agencies have let the public down—denying them elementary rights.



Saints of Unity

St. Alexander Akimetas... was a somewhat turbulent Archimandrite best known for his institution of the "sleepless monks" (Akimeteoi) who sang the Divine Office in relays without intermission, day and night. His feastday is Feb. 25.

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