

On the other hand, the church-related and other private schools should be far better appreciated by that large part of the public which has not had direct association with them.

2. *Church-Related Schools and the Public Welfare*

The church-related school, teaching largely the same curriculum as the public school for the general education of the citizen, is not an intruding latecomer on the American educational scene. It represents, rather, our original source of popular education and, far from being a distractive force deviating from the American educational tradition, it stands instead at the core of that tradition and as a force which emphasizes certain moral and spiritual values with which that tradition is identified.

The elementary schools in all the colonies had the teaching of religion as their chief aim and as their main component. And Massachusetts, in 1647, enacted what has been described as "the first system of public education in the colonies." Known as the "Old Deluder" Act, it provided:

It being one chiefe proiect of ye ould deluder, Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of ye Scriptures It is therefore ordred, yt evry towneship in this iurisdiction, aftr ye Lord hath increased ye number to 50 housholders, shall then forthwth appoint one wth in their towne to teach all such children⁸

New York, a nontheocratic colony, adopted a similar law. Education in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and throughout the South, was emphatically religious.⁹ One of the earliest tasks to which French and Spanish missionaries in America devoted themselves was the founding of schools. They were among the first in the land, and, while they offered training in secular subjects, they were religious in nature generally.

The end of the colonial era and the coming of the Republic witnessed no change with respect to the strongly religious character of the American people, and it is not therefore surprising that hospitality to the religious upbringing of their children should have marked public attitudes toward education. The third article of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 directly linked religion with good government and the well-being of society, and thus stated a major purpose of education: "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government

⁸ The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts (1648) at 47 (1929).

⁹ See Dunn, *What Happened to Religious Education?* 16 (1958).