

June 1960

Masthead Volume 62, Issue 4

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Recommended Citation

Masthead Volume 62, Issue 4, 62 W. Va. L. Rev. (1960).

Available at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvlr/vol62/iss4/1>

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West Virginia Law Review

Published by the College of Law of West Virginia University. Official
publication of The West Virginia Bar Association.

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STUDENT NOTES

THE COURTS AND BIBLE READING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A firmly established principle in the state and federal governments is that there should be a separation between the church and the state. One controversial question which has arisen under this principle is the permissibility of Bible reading in the public schools.

The Federal Constitution provides that "Congress shall pass no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."¹ Many state constitutions have comparable provisions.

The purpose of this note is to consider the various means in which state courts have dealt with the problem and to enumerate the factors which the United States Supreme Court may have to consider when it is called upon to resolve this question.

The usual situation in which the issue of Bible reading in public schools has arisen involves these facts: A person with a religious belief, other than Protestant, contests the reading or other use of

¹ U.S. CONST. AMEND. I.