

RELIGION

"A Wall of Separation"

How far should the state go in supporting religious education? Or should the state support such education at all? In the white marble temple of the U.S. Supreme Court last week, a new engagement was fought in this running battle. Atheist Vashti McCollum had a final hearing in her suit to stop the board of education in Champaign, Ill. from allowing religious instructions at her son's school (TIME, Feb. 10).

The two-year-old argument lasted about two hours in court. Some Saturday soon the justices will decide in private conference whether the "wall of separation between church & state" has been breached in Champaign.

Last week the *Christian Century* was ready with answers to several specific church-state problems.

¶ Tax-supported free bus transportation, free lunches and textbooks for parochial schools are unconstitutional, said the *Century*:

"Such a diversion of public-school funds involves the interlocking of the taxing function of the state with the institutional functioning of the church which owns and operates . . . schools. . . . The majority decision of the Supreme Court in the New Jersey case undertook to justify such aid to parochial schools by detaching bus transportation from the institutional functioning of the church, and even of the school. Having thus detached it, the court then classified bus transportation as a 'public welfare' measure. . . .

"The fallacy of this procedure should be apparent. Other functions of the school can be detached from the school in like manner one after the other. . . . The state cannot assume responsibility for any function of a parochial school without interlocking its function with the institutional functioning of the school and of the church which, for its own religious purposes, maintains it."

¶ "Released time" for religious instruction in public-school buildings is also unconstitutional. (" . . . The school instructors vacate their function and the several churches take it over. . . .")

¶ Devotional Bible reading and prayer in public schools is all right with the *Century*.
¶ Similarly, the *Century* approved of "the study of religion as an integral part of the public-school curriculum under the instruction of regular public-school teachers."

¶ A U.S. "ambassadorship" to the Vatican, said the *Century*, is unconstitutional.

¶ The *Century* also disapproved of the chaplaincy in the armed services. The clergy should serve as chaplains but "be paid by the church, wear a uniform or garb distinctive of the church, accept no military rank and, beyond their civilian patriotism, own no allegiance save that to which they are solemnly committed in their ordination vows."

Christian Experiment

The Rev. Robert Herbert Mize Jr. is an Episcopal minister who is conducting an experiment. That experiment has sometimes roused the good citizens of Ellsworth, Kans., to unholy wrath. But this week Kansans were digging down as usual to give Mize the money he needs for his St. Francis Boys' Home. Said one bank vice president wonderingly: "This man is Christlike, all right, but he's a genius at raising money."

Bob Mize, 40, took his B.A. in journalism at the University of Kansas and went to work for the United Press. He was a



FATHER MIZE & CHARGES
"Pesterin' the Lord" is essential.

Quentin Eklund

good newspaperman; one night he made up his mind that he would be a better minister.

After his ordination in 1932 he was assigned to a mission in western Kansas. As an unmarried vicar he was often asked to board paroled reform-school boys. The boys' response to his decent treatment kept Minister Mize pondering the problems of "exceptional children," as he likes to call delinquents. In 1945, when he learned that the vacant Poor People's Home at Ellsworth could be rented cheaply, "Father Bob" seized the opportunity to put some pet theories into practice.

Mize's bishop gave his blessing, but no salary; the county commissioners gave him a three-year lease on the poorhouse at \$25 a month; the Kansas businessmen he buttonholed came across with \$25,000. In September 1945, he opened St. Francis Home and brought in 22 tough kids, more than 75% of them with jail records.

Bob's Bad Boys. The cornerstone of Bob Mize's method is to give delinquents a chance to mingle with normal society.

St. Francis boys go to regular public school, and are encouraged to date local girls on Friday or Saturday nights. At the beginning, Ellsworth's citizenry was skeptical of such free-wheeling, and they soon had apparent cause. Father Bob's first bad boys practically took the town apart.

Since then, things have changed. Twenty-one boys have been "honorably discharged" without a single backslider so far. But in Ellsworth, there is still some head-shaking. Said a leading local lawyer: "I think he might better do a little whipping out there than waste time having the kids bending marrow bones, pesterin' the Lord."

The Dreamer. Bob Mize sees it differently: "If I had to give up the spiritual side of the Home, I'd just as soon give it all up." For 15 minutes in the morning

and 10 at night the boys attend compulsory chapel services. And the spiritual effort is far more than "bending marrow bones." Perhaps Mize's most revolutionary practice is his emphasis on forgiveness, rather than discipline.

"In the act of forgiveness," says Father Bob, "we have the most effective instrument for the transformation of character. . . . If you forgive a boy, his knowledge that he has done wrong is deeper and his penance is more sincere. . . ."

Mize is so sure that his methods are practical that he has just bought another poorhouse and hopes to open a second unit of St. Francis. He is now out raising money to pay for it and to meet St. Francis' \$22,000 budget for next year. New contributors are sometimes surprised to discover that Mize's own salary is the smallest on the Home's full-time payroll (\$25 a week, less withholding tax). Said a hardheaded admirer last week: "The man is a dreamer. He's raised \$40,000 in the past two years, but he has holes in his shoes most of the time."