

Gerald R. Grace
Joseph O'Keefe, SJ
Editors

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOKS OF RELIGION AND EDUCATION 2

International Handbook of Catholic Education

*Challenges for School Systems
in the 21st Century*

Part one



Springer

International Handbooks of Religion and Education

VOLUME 2

Aims & Scope

The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each *Handbook* presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

International Handbook of Catholic Education:

Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century

Part One

Edited by

Gerald Grace

*Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London,
Institute of Education, UK*

and

Joseph O'Keefe, SJ

Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA

 Springer

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Dedication

These volumes are dedicated to the memory of the many thousands of religious sisters, priests, and teaching brothers who established the work of Catholic education across the world, faithful to the call of Jesus Christ– “Go and teach all nations”, and, in respect, to the work of their lay successors who carry on the mission amidst the many challenges of the contemporary world.

Gerald Grace
Joseph O’ Keefe, SJ.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our prime motivation in assembling and publishing this first ever *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, with special reference to Catholic schooling has been to provide a stimulus for more research and systematic enquiry into what is the largest faith-based system in the world.

Although there are over 200,000 Catholic schools internationally and over 1,000 Catholic universities and colleges, it is remarkable that research and scholarly analysis of this major educational system is still relatively undeveloped.

We have therefore asked contributors to these two volumes to conclude their analysis of the challenges for contemporary Catholic schooling, with a section entitled “Agenda for Further Research”. Some contributors are able to report the results of empirical studies of Catholic schools in their particular national contexts. Most of them however found in the process of writing their chapters that no significant body of empirical research existed in their societies. This is why the “Agenda for Future Research” sections of each chapter are so important in pointing the way ahead.

We hope that major Catholic schooling systems across the world will be prepared to commission more empirical research on Catholic education and that universities and colleges will be prepared to undertake such projects. However, a comprehensive, objective, and academically reliable account of the outcomes, effectiveness, and mission integrity of Catholic schools internationally will only emerge when research is undertaken not only by Catholic institutions but also by secular institutions of higher education and by secular research agencies. Moreover, it is our hope that this handbook will encourage social scientists across the world to focus their scholarship on Catholic education, a field that is rich with possibilities and very underdeveloped. We are confident that when such research is undertaken many contemporary misunderstandings of the purposes and mission of Catholic schools will be corrected and many provocative and polemical assertions about the consequences of Catholic schooling will be refuted.

These volumes are therefore offered not only to Catholics and Catholic educators, researchers, and policymakers but also to the wider world of international educational researchers and academics. We would welcome critical follow-up studies from such researchers on the analysis reported in these chapters.

Our primary focus has been upon Catholic elementary and secondary schools. A later publication is planned to focus on Catholic higher education institutions.

In the course of the five years in which these volumes have been in preparation we have relied upon the cooperation and assistance of many people whose roles in bringing this project to a successful completion need to be acknowledged.

Our greatest debt is to the 60 authors of the chapters and to their supporting institutions. Many of them are working under considerable pressure and we are grateful to them for finding the time to make their contribution to this international project. We thank Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome who has been a supporter of this project from the outset and we are also grateful for the contributions from Cardinal Telesphore Toppo (for India) and from Cardinal George Pell (for Australia).

The support which we have received from our research and administrative assistants has been crucial to the successful completion of this work. Gerald Grace would like to acknowledge the valuable help of Matthew Urmenyi, Mischa Twitchen, Dr. Kate Punnachet, and Sister Maria Supavai, SPC, and he would also like to thank Claire, Helena, and Dominic Grace. Joseph O'Keefe would like to acknowledge the assistance of the faculty and staff of the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, especially Aubrey Scheopner, a former Catholic school teacher and currently a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction.

The editorial team at Springer have been helpful and hospitable mentors of this work and we thank Maria Jonckheere and Astrid Noordermeer for their assistance.

Gerald Grace and Joseph O'Keefe SJ

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Winston Akala is Head of Postgraduate Studies in Education, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya.

Mirentxu Anaya is an education researcher at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

Adriana Aristimuño is Professor and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Catholic University of Uruguay, Uruguay.

Joaquim Azevedo is Director of the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

Lyn Marie Birch is member of the teaching staff at the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland, New Zealand.

Brendan Carmody, SJ, long-standing Professor of Education at the University of Zambia, Lusaka.

Gerald Cattaro is Director of the Centre for Catholic Leadership at Fordham University, New York City.

Argaw Chernet is a teacher and deputy head teacher at St. Comboni Secondary School in Awassa, Ethiopia.

James Conroy is Professor of Religious and Philosophical Education and Dean of Education at the University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland.

Bruce Cooper is a Professor in the Division of Education Leadership at Fordham.

Brian Croke is Director of the Catholic Education Commission, Sydney, Australia.

Mary Darmanin is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Malta, Malta.

Hugues Derycke was formerly a staff member of the Catholic Bishops' Secretariat, Paris.

Annemie Dillen is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

Anna María Cambours de Donini is a member of the Ph.D. Committee at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, Buenos Aires.

Aidan Donaldson is assistant head of the Religious Education Department at St. Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School, Belfast.

Patricia Helene Earl, IHM, is Director of the Catholic School Leadership Program at Marymount University, USA.

Lydia Fernandes, AC, was formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education, Mangalore University, India.

António Fonseca teaches Education at the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

James Gallagher, SDB, is a member of the Diocese of Shrewsbury Education Service, UK.

Gerald Grace is Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London, Institute of Education, UK.

Angelina Gutierrez is Professor of Theology and Music at St. Scholastica's College, Philippines.

Virginie Habib is the Director of the Catechetical Center, Jerusalem.

Nathan Johnstone was formerly Director of the Catholic Institute of Education, South Africa.

Aad de Jong is Professor for Identity of Catholic Schools and Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology at Radboud Catholic University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Sally Kaissien teaches Catechism at Bethlehem University, Bethlehem.

Jamal Khader is the Chairperson of the Department of Religious Studies at Bethlehem University, Bethlehem.

Jeffrey Klaiber, SJ, teaches History at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Lima.

Martin Komolmas, FSG, is President of the Catholic Education Association of Thailand, Thailand.

Jiro Kozaki, SJ, was formerly President of the Japan Federation of Catholic Schools.

Maria del Mar Griera Llonch teaches Sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain.

Michael McGrath is Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service.

Sergio Martinic teaches Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo teaches Education at the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

Michael Miller is Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education, Vatican City.

Magdalena Mok is Professor of Education at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong.

Martin Mtumbuka is Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the Catholic University of Malawi, Malawi.

James Mulligan is a Holy Cross Father who has worked in Catholic secondary education in Canada for three decades.

Maria Luisa De Natale is Pro-Rector of the University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy.

Ronald Nuzzi is Director of the ACE Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA.

Joseph O’Keefe is Professor and Dean of Education at Boston College, USA.

Susan Pascoe was formerly the Director of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia.

George Pell is Archbishop of Sydney, Australia.

Mark Philpot was Formerly Headteacher of a Catholic School in Wales. He is Currently President of the World Union of Catholic Teachers.

Mark Potterton is Director of the Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Kaetkaew Punnachet is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London, Institute of Education, UK.

Aubrey Scheopner is a doctoral student at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA.

Wolfgang Schönig is Professor of Education at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Bavaria.

Merylann Schuttloffel is Professor and Chair of the Department of Education at The Catholic University of America, Washington, USA.

Aldino Segala is Professor of Humanistic disciplines at UNISINOS, Brazil.

Paige Smith is a graduate student at the John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family, USA.

Danilo Streck is Professor of Education at the Universidade do Vale do Rios dos Sinos (UNISINOS), Brazil.

Maria Supavai, SPC, is a former head teacher of a Catholic school in Bangkok.

Nicholas Tete, SJ, is Director of St. Xavier’s College, Jharkhand, India.

Telesphore Toppo is President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, India.

Carlos Torrendell teaches Educational Policy in the School of Psychology and Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.

David Tuohy, SJ, works as an independent consultant in education in Ireland.

Raf Vanderstraeten is Professor of Sociology at the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Kevin Wanden, FMS is member of the teaching staff at the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland, New Zealand.

Włodzimierz Wiczorek teaches Theology at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW

Gerald Grace and Joseph O’Keefe, SJ

One of the purposes of the International Handbooks in Education Series is to review the state of research and systematic analysis in particular fields of educational practice and to suggest agendas for future research to stimulate and develop the field. This is the intention of these two volumes, with specific reference to the international field of Catholic schooling. We believe that Catholic schools play a vital educational role in free societies, even in countries with a small Catholic population. The issues that are raised here should be of interest to a broad range of educators, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners alike, across boundaries of nation and creed. It is our hope that this project will stimulate interest in published scholarship about faith-related schools from a variety of denominational and secular perspectives.

In his contribution to Volume 1, Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome, argues:

Since research should serve the human person, it is altogether fitting that the Church’s institutions of higher education take up the pressing challenge of fostering serious studies that further the common good of Catholic schooling. This research should include longitudinal, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary studies that would enable educators to gain a more international and empirically based perspective on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges faced by Catholic schools across the globe¹

In addressing this project we invited 59 researchers and analysts working in 35 societies across the world to present reports on the challenges for Catholic schooling systems in contemporary conditions. We regard it as a strength of these volumes that we were able to attract a catholic range of writers, including

¹ Volume 1, pp. 475–476.

academic researchers, practising teachers, Catholic school administrators, members of religious congregations working in schools, and three senior members of the Church's hierarchy with responsibilities for the oversight of Catholic schooling systems. While the majority of contributors have associations with Catholic universities and colleges,² there are also contributions from those working within secular universities. Each chapter also reports the ways in which Catholic educational systems respond to the many challenges of the 21st century.

- These challenges have been identified by our contributors as:
- The challenge of secularisation in culture and society in the 21st century
- The impact of global capitalism and of its values
- The changing nature of Church–State relations, i.e., the political context of Catholic schooling
- Responding to Vatican II principles of renewal of the mission, e.g., with special reference to “the preferential option for the poor”
- The responses of contemporary students to Catholic schooling
- Issues of faith formation in a context of rapid change
- Catholic schooling and the changing role of women
- Leaders and teachers in Catholic schooling: challenges of recruitment, formation, and retention
- Moral and social formation in Catholic schooling
- Financing the educational mission in changing circumstances

Secularisation

The development of secularisation in the modern world from the Enlightenment to the present day presents the agencies of sacred culture (including Catholic schools) with a powerful and sharp challenge. Secularisation represents the denial of the validity of the sacred and of its associated culture. It works to replace this by developing logical, rational, empirical, and scientific intellectual cultures in which the notion of the transcendent has no place. It affects the world view of many individuals so that religious concepts, religious discourse, and religious sensitivities are regarded as simply irrelevant to the everyday business of life. Secularisation challenges religious beliefs about the

² The following Catholic universities and colleges are represented in these volumes:

- *USA* Boston College, Catholic University of America, Fordham University, Notre Dame University, Marymount University
- *Latin America* Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Pontifical Catholic University (Peru), Catholic University of Uruguay.
- *Europe* Catholic University of Eichstätt, Bavaria, Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), Catholic University of Lublin (Poland), Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (Italy), Catholic University of Portugal, Radboud University (The Netherlands)
- *Africa* Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Kenya), Catholic University of Malawi
- *Asia* St. Xavier's College (India), St. Scholastica's College (Philippines), Assumption University (Thailand)

inestimable dignity of every human being and the need to balance individual rights with communitarian responsibilities. This is what Peter Berger in his influential study, *The Social Reality of Religion* (1973) refers to as “a secularisation of consciousness.”³

Steve Bruce in his provocative book, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (2003) argues that “widespread indifference”⁴ characterises the attitudes of most people in the West towards religion. But it is also a worldwide phenomenon. It is hardly surprising therefore that the challenges of secularisation for contemporary Catholic schooling are permeating themes of many of the chapters in these volumes, but particular attention to them is given in the contributions from Uruguay (Chapter 8), Scotland (Chapter 21), Poland (Chapter 26), and India (Chapter 35). Catholic schools across the world continue to struggle to bring young people to a knowledge and experience of God in a world which seems increasingly indifferent to these questions.

Globalisation

The challenge of globalisation (by which we mean the extension of capitalist values in every part of the world) is another major theme which permeates many of the chapters. Commenting on the growth of commodity worship and of materialistic values across the world, the economist Kamran Mofid reflects:

Today, in place of the one God that I was encouraged to believe in, we have been offered many global gods to worship. For many people today’s gods are Nike, Adidas, Levi, Calvin Klein, American Express, Nokia. . . . Today’s global churches are the shopping malls, the superstores and factory outlets, many of them open twenty-four hours a day for maximum worship! (2002, p. 8)

Much of the marketing enterprise is targeted specifically at young children, who are particularly susceptible to fads and trends. In her book *Born to Buy*, sociologist Juliet Schor (2004) documents the exponential increase of advertising aimed at children in the last decade, and presents data on how consumer culture has affected children’s self and self-worth.

The impact of materialist consumer culture upon young people was a concern for the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1988 when it called for a countercultural response from the Catholic schooling system to these challenges:

Many young people find themselves in a condition of radical instability. They live in a one-dimensional universe in which the only criterion is practical utility and the only value is economic and technological progress. . . . Young people unable to find any meaning in life. . . . turn to alcohol, drugs, the erotic,

³ Berger, 1973, p. 113.

⁴ Bruce, 2003, p. 42.

the exotic. Christian education is faced with the huge challenge of helping these young people discover something of value in their lives.⁵

The contributions from South Africa (Chapter 29), the Philippines (Chapter 37), Thailand (Chapter 38 and 39), and Japan (Chapter 41) show the ways in which the Catholic schools in those countries seek to be countercultural to the dominance of individualistic hedonism and consumerism in the modern world.

Political Contexts

The work of Catholic schooling internationally has to take place in various political contexts. With the rise of the secular state in modern times, Church–State relations on the provision and nature of Catholic schooling have sometimes been characterised by struggle and conflict. State agencies in education frequently hold contradictory attitudes to Catholic schooling internationally. On the one hand, states welcome the cultural, economic, and personnel resources which the Church provides for educational services. It is often the case that government ministers and senior officials (regardless of their personal religious or ideological position) commit their own children to Catholic schools for quality education. On the other hand, some political ideologies which are strongly secularist or strongly nationalist are suspicious of what a Catholic education provides. The spiritual work of Catholic schools may be seen as undermining or distracting from the secular goals for national progress. The moral and social teachings of the Church may be viewed as impediments to the progress of liberated human relations, sexual relations, and a changed role for women. In former “missionary” contexts, the work of Catholic education may appear to be a continuation of colonial cultural domination of the society. In a number of locations, Church–State struggles focus upon the control of the school curriculum and of its contents. The nature and amount of Religious Education as a subject and the extent to which the Catholic school curriculum meets the secular goals for national development are frequent conflict points. The contributions from Spain (Chapter 16), Zambia (Chapter 28), Malawi (Chapter 30), and from Kenya (Chapter 31) provide detailed case studies of this particular category of struggle.

The changing nature of Church–State relations in education in general is a major focus of the contributions from Argentina (Chapter 12), Northern Ireland (Chapter 13), Spain (Chapter 16), Portugal (Chapter 17), France (Chapter 18), Zambia (Chapter 28), and Hong Kong (Chapter 40). What these contributions demonstrate is that Church leaders in education (generally archbishops or bishops) have to be well informed about the work of their Catholic schools and the populations which they serve. They also require a sensitive understanding of the socio-political and economic context in which they are working and they need to possess considerable skills of advocacy, diplomacy, and the capacity to negotiate. The requirement, in

⁵The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, pp. 8–10.

short, for Catholic system leaders in these contexts is that they should not only be holy but also “savvy.” The political relations of Catholic schooling in various contexts are very significant for the nature and continuance of the Catholic educational mission and much more research is required in this strategic area.

Preferential Option for the Poor

Adrian Hastings (1991, p. 525) has argued:

There can be no question that the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was the most important ecclesiastical event of the century. . . . It so greatly changed the character of by far the largest communion of Christendom.

Among the many changes heralded by Vatican II was a renewed corpus of Catholic social teaching centred on “a preferential option for the poor” and a more extensive criticism of structures of oppression and exploitation (“structures of sin”)⁶ constituted in unregulated capitalism, in oppressive race relations (apartheid in South Africa) and in exploitative economic relations in various parts of the world (e.g., in Latin America).

These emphases were mediated into the world of Catholic education by a foundational document. *The Catholic School* which was published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome in 1977. At the heart of this document was a radical commitment to the service of the poor (comprehensively defined):

First and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor, or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith.⁷ Since education is an important means of improving the social and economic condition of the individual and of peoples, if the Catholic school was to turn attention exclusively or predominantly to those from wealthier social classes it could be contributing towards maintaining their privileged position and could thereby continue to favour a society which is unjust. (pp. 44–45)

An important objective for this *International Handbook of Catholic Education* has been to try to monitor the extent to which these radical commitments to the service of the poor have been realised in the contemporary practice of Catholic schooling systems internationally. Cardinal Telesphore Toppo, President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India provides a detailed and inspirational

⁶ Walsh and Davies (1991) point out that the concept of “structures of sin” was first used by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987). The concept refers “on the one hand to the all-consuming desire for profit and on the other the thirst for power” (p. 394).

⁷ Post-Vatican II Catholic education in this way proclaimed itself to be at the service of the economic poor, the family poor, and the faith poor. This latter commitment represented a radical commitment not only to the service of lapsed Catholics but also to the service of those of other faiths and indeed of no faith. Those critics who view Catholic schooling as an exclusive service for the Catholic population have not appreciated this radical extension of its service to the wider community.

account of the Church's educational concern for the poorest and most marginalised sectors of Indian society (Chapter 33). Here we can see a clear realisation of the new spirit of Vatican II Catholic schooling.

Similarly the accounts from Latin America, in particular the contributions from Brazil (Chapter 9), Peru (Chapter 10), and Chile (Chapter 11) show, what the Brazilian authors call "a new way of being school." This new way of being school has been influenced by liberation theology, by the educational writing of Paulo Freire and by the commitment of many priests and religious to a greater solidarity with the poor in Latin America. It has the generation of a critical literacy and of a new praxis of Christian action as a central goal.

However, it is also clear from the contributions from Latin America and from other national settings that many Catholic schools are still in the service of the "wealthier social classes." The reasons for this are complex involving not only the innate conservatism of some schooling systems but also real financial constraints in serving the poor if state aid or subsidy is not available to the schools.

In those countries where visible academic results published in league tables and amplified by the media are very salient (e.g., England and Wales, Chapter 14), there are strong temptations for Catholic schools to admit students who will certainly "add value" to the school's reputation and image. This could mean that students from backgrounds poor in cultural and economic resources do not have the same access to the best Catholic schools as those students from more privileged backgrounds. To the extent that competitive market culture has permeated the world of Catholic schooling this is a real threat to the mission integrity of the schools. Market forces always favour the already strong. Catholic schooling internationally will be faced with a major contradiction if, despite a formal commitment to the service of the poor, it is found in practice to be largely in the service of students from more favoured sectors of society.

The Voice of the Students

If the spiritual, moral, and justice commitments of Catholic schooling are strongly grounded upon a "dignity of the person" principle, the students in Catholic schools can be expected to experience this as a reality. A key research question then becomes, *do* they experience this as a reality? A Vatican II educational principle of openness and dialogue does seem to entail openness to the "voice" of students in Catholic schools as they represent both their views about a Catholic education and their personal experiences of it. A major research study in this field was produced in 2000 in Australia by Dr. Marcellin Flynn and Dr. Magdalena Mok. Their book, *Catholic Schools 2000: A Longitudinal Study of Year 12 Students in Catholic Schools 1972–1998* represents the responses of 8,310 students in 70 Catholic schools.⁸ Despite this pioneering study, research

⁸ One of their major conclusions was "about two-thirds of students acknowledged that they were happy at the Catholic schools they attended. Overall, however, the responses of students in 1998 were lower than those of earlier years" (p. 307).

in this sector is not extensive. In this *International Handbook*, the responses of Malawian students to Catholic schooling constitute the central contribution of Chapter 30, while research on student responses is also reported in the contributions from Ireland (Chapter 15) and from the Philippines (Chapter 37). As many of the agendas for future research in these volumes suggest research into students' attitudes and experiences of Catholic schooling should be a priority for further empirical investigation. Just as the institutional Catholic Church has, in post-Vatican II terms, moved from a view of the laity as passive recipients to that of active participants, the time has come for Catholic education research to take seriously the role of students as active participants in the life of schools. We need more studies which look at Catholic schooling through the eyes of the students.

Faith Formation

The challenges of faith formation in contexts of rapid change are addressed in contributions from Marymount, USA (Chapter 3), Belgium (Chapter 19), and India (Chapter 34). Sister Patricia Earl, I.H.M. expresses the challenge facing American schools in these terms:

The issue of how to preserve the Catholic identity of our Catholic schools at a time when the numbers of religious sisters, brothers and priests still continue to decline and rising pressures of materialism, secularism and relativism continue to increase is urgent. If the laity comprise 95% of the faculty and staff in the Catholic schools, then they will need to assume the responsibility for the continued spiritual development of the Catholic identity of these schools.⁹

In other words, the faith formation of the next generation of school leaders and teachers in Catholic education is a crucial issue. This challenge is not of course, confined only to the USA—it is a theme repeated in many of the chapters in this publication. If the faith formation of the teachers is weakening over time, it can be expected that the faith formation of the students will follow a similar pattern. In this way, the distinctive Catholicity of the whole school system may be at risk.¹⁰

Catholic Schooling for Girls

Catholic schooling and the changing role of women receives special attention in the contributions from Malta (Chapter 22) and from Japan (Chapter 41). Dr. Mary Darmanin traces a new theology of women in formation since Vatican II Council. Her rich ethnography of the Catholic schooling of girls in Malta shows “evidence of remarkable commitment to the full development of girls in a global society.”¹¹

⁹ Volume 1, p. 40.

¹⁰ For one view which argues this case strongly, see Arthur (1995).

¹¹ Volume 1, p. 415.

While the power of patriarchy remains strong within the institutional Church, Darmanin's research shows the creative and educational potential of girls' schools especially under the leadership of dynamic and progressive religious sisters. This research does much to refute pre-Vatican II images of girls' schools as inhibitors or constraints upon the full development of young women. However, the chapter from Japan makes disturbing reading as Father Kozaki, SJ charts the intention of government policy to move towards co-educational schools (for system "rationalisation" reasons) and this will apply to Catholic schools also. Kozaki points out that all-girls' schools in Japan have contributed powerfully to the personal and educational liberation of young women in a strongly patriarchal society. If Catholic schools in Japan are compelled to make this transition he argues that the cause of women's education will suffer a setback.

School Leaders and Teachers

The challenges of recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school leaders and teachers are a strong focus of the contributions from the USA, especially Chapter 5 (Schuttloffel) and Chapter 6 (Nuzzi & Paige Smith). It is clear from all of the chapters which represent the changing situation of Catholic schooling in the USA, that Catholic educators understand that a major transition from the stewardship of religious school leaders and teachers to that of their lay colleagues in taking place in the American schooling system. It is also clear that this transition has many consequences which relate inter alia to the role of school principals as faith leaders, the role of teachers as "witnesses of faith," continuity of service and commitment to the education of the poor especially in inner-city areas and serious implications for the economics and financing of the Catholic School mission in the future. What one of us (Grace, 2002, p. 87) has called the "strategic subsidy" of religious congregations in providing spiritual, cultural, and economic capital for the schooling mission and a supply of school personnel at both leadership and classroom levels, is weakening over time. This raises the urgent question as to what new sources of support are available to sustain the mission in these circumstances? Merylann Schuttloffel (Catholic University of America) and Ronald Nuzzi and Paige Smith (University of Notre Dame) provide indicative accounts of the responses being made to this problem by many Catholic universities and colleges in the USA. What is impressive about the American response (to what is in fact a worldwide challenge) is that systematic and coordinated action is taking place to deal with this major transition. As Schuttloffel reports:

Launching 21st century discussion about Catholic school leadership, the University of San Francisco (2001) and the University of Dayton (2002) hosted a symposium in conjunction with the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. The topic of the symposium was 'Finding our Successors'.¹²

¹² Volume 1, p. 93.

In other words, a major challenge for Catholic schools in the 21st century is being met by a major alliance of Catholic universities and colleges, the leading professional organisation of Catholic education, and by the national conference of bishops. This provides a good practice model which could beneficially be adopted in other national contexts.

Moral and Social Formation

The issue of the moral and social formation of students in Catholic schools is a permeating theme of many chapters. As these contributors to the *Handbook* report from their various national contexts, the Catholic schooling system internationally faces an external globalised culture which is increasingly preoccupied with individualistic personal “success,” with a cult of “celebrities,” with commodity worship and with an explicitly hedonistic and sexualised media and entertainment culture amplified in every location. The educational work of the moral and social formation of youth in contemporary conditions constitutes a major challenge for Catholic schools across the world.

The two chapters from Thailand provide indicative accounts of this challenge and of the responses being made to provide a countercultural gospel witness. Brother Martin Komolmas, FSG (Chapter 38) outlines the ways in which the Catholic schools in Thailand are working to resist the potentially corrupting effects of consumerist culture on Thai youth. Dr. Kaetkaew Punnachet and Sister Maria Supavai, SPC (Chapter 39) report the action of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres in their struggle against the commodification of persons and of sexual relations which is one of the consequences of globalisation. Against a modern marketplace of “love,” the sisters work to establish the civilisation of the love of Christ in their schools and in their wider community education and action.

As Pope John Paul II expressed it in 1994:

Against the spirit of the world, the Church takes up each day a struggle that is none other than the struggle for the world’s soul. . . . The struggle for the soul of the contemporary world is at its height where the spirit of the world seems strongest¹³

The Economics of Catholic Schooling

Financing the Catholic educational mission in changing circumstances emerges as a major problem for Catholic schooling internationally. As the “strategic subsidy” provided by religious congregations has declined in the Catholic educational mission, there has been an inevitable increase in the costs of providing Catholic schooling as more lay people are employed at higher salary levels.

¹³ *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994, p. 112).

The consequences of this are very serious for Catholic schooling in general but especially for the Church's commitment that "first and foremost the Church offers its educational services to the poor."

The research of one of us (O'Keefe et al., 2004) brings into sharp focus the fact that lack of adequate finance is threatening this educational mission to the poor. Catholic schools in inner-city America which have traditionally served those most in need (Catholic and non-Catholic) are being forced to close at an increasing rate (Chapter 2). Here we find a major contradiction between the publicly stated principles of Catholic schooling and the realities of policy decisions.

Confirming this trend, Cattaro and Cooper (Chapter 4) point out that "last year, the diocese of Brooklyn which prizes itself as the only totally urban diocese closed over 25 of its schools."¹⁴

This threat to the "preferential option for the poor" in Catholic education exists wherever religious congregations are declining and where there is inadequate financial support from the State. Those Catholic school systems which receive substantial support from the state, including England and Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand have defences against the weakening of this mission.¹⁵

Church–State Partnerships

As the evidence provided in the various chapters of this *Handbook* shows, Catholic schools are contributing significantly to the common good of all societies in which they are located. They provide an educational, spiritual, and moral culture which benefits the future citizens of each country. It seems, in these circumstances, that historically established doctrines of Church–State separation in relation to the financing of schooling are now in need of reform and revision. State failure to provide adequate finance for Catholic schooling means in practice that its poorest citizens are denied access to a schooling culture which has much to offer them. State agencies which take the educational, moral, and social stewardship of their youth seriously, need, in contemporary conditions, to look hard at historically formed ideological positions which are now counterproductive to the common good.

Mutual Church–State suspicions in educational policy need to be overcome by the forming of productive partnerships which will advance the cause of the common good in education by harnessing the strengths of Catholic schooling for the

¹⁴ Volume 1, p. 73.

¹⁵ However, even within these countries problems remain.

As Brian Croke remarks in Chapter 43:

It has become increasingly clear in recent times that despite the substantial government funding of all Australian Catholic Schools . . . some dioceses are more advantaged than others. For the Australian church this is a fundamental issue . . . in the context of the wider challenge of addressing the declining affordability of Catholic schools. More difficult still is the challenge of sharing current resources more equitably across schools and dioceses. (Volume 2, p. 820).

service of the most disadvantaged students and communities.¹⁶ Moreover, the Catholic community itself must recognise the contributions of Catholic schools to the Church and to greater society and offer support for these endeavours in the strongest terms. It is our hope that this handbook will forward this agenda at such a crucial point in the Church's history.

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¹⁶ See Grace (2003).

SECTION ONE

**CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC
SCHOOLING IN THE USA AND CANADA**

NO MARGIN, NO MISSION: CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC URBAN SCHOOLS IN THE USA

Joseph O’Keefe, SJ and Aubrey Scheopner

In the USA over 220 Catholic schools closed in 2006, many of which were in urban areas, leaving a number of parents, students, and teachers forced to find new schools. Financial troubles are afflicting Catholic schools around the country as parish subsidies decrease and school enrollments drop, while the costs of educating students in Catholic schools increases. But Catholic schools are still an indispensable presence in urban education. Urban education in the USA is inadequate. Catholic schools, especially urban Catholic schools, have been shown to actually increase student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores, dropout rates,¹ and even college admission. The situation is complex, and the literature on urban Catholic schools reflects this complexity and begs the question of how to sustain these Catholic schools.

What does it mean to sustain these schools? *Sustaining the Legacy: Inner-City Catholic Elementary Schools in the United States* (2004) took an in-depth look into inner-city or urban schools, painting a portrait of these schools and describing the situation according to three main elements within these schools: students, staffing, and structure. Urban and inner-city Catholic schools need enrolled students, committed staff, and creative structures that allow these schools to meet the needs of the communities they serve while attaining the resources to provide for these needs. As this chapter will show, in many ways Catholic schools are more effective than public schools (government-funded schools), yet face many challenges regarding students, staffing, and structure causing many to close their doors as a result.

¹ Dropout rates refers to students who do not complete elementary and secondary education.

Urban Education in General

Looking at research on urban education in the USA, including both public and private (schools not receiving any type of government subsidy) education, the picture painted is bleak. Students in these urban schools are often those who are in the most need for highly qualified, highly skilled teachers; yet schools and districts for the most part have been unable to provide students with what they need most: excellent teachers. As a result, students are not attaining high levels of academic achievement. This section will take a closer look at the situation, describing the students, staff, and structure of urban schools in general. Following this section will be a comparative look at urban Catholic schools.

Students

More than one-third of children in the USA live in urban areas with 51% of these children living in low-income families (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2005). Many of these children who live in high-poverty areas and attend urban schools are more “likely to be members of racial and ethnic minority groups and are also at greater risk for school failure” (Ludwig et al., 2001, p. 147). According to the Student Effort and Achievement study from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), high school students from low-income families have a dropout rate six times that of their peers from high-income families (US Department of Education, 2005b).

Achievement rates for children living in urban areas are often lower than the national average. For example, Ludwig et al. (2001), writing for the *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs*, cited statistics from the US Department of Education that in high-poverty schools in Washington, DC, only 11% of fourth graders scored at or above the basic level of the NAEP math test, when the national average was 62%. Dropout rates in Washington, DC, ranged between 30% and 40% which was higher than the national average (Ludwig et al., 2001). Mathematical literacy scores on the 2003 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures 15-year-olds’ achievement in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy through a standardized test of a selected representative sample, found an overwhelming pattern for students in the USA: “White students (disregarding social classes) and upper-income students (of all races) score well. But lower social class children of any race and Black or Hispanic children of all social classes are not performing well” (Berliner, 2005, p. 14). Similar findings were present in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which measures fourth grade reading achievement in approximately 50 different countries using a standardized test and student, family, and teacher questionnaires. On this test, students from the USA attending high-poverty schools had scores that were “shockingly low” (Berliner, 2005, p. 15).

Staff

Studies report high rates of teacher attrition in urban schools and many researchers declare that teacher retention is a huge problem for urban schools and schools serving low-income and minority students (Gritz & Theobald, 1995; Kelley & Finnigan, 2004; Przygocki, 2004). Useem and Neild's (2002) report to the community on Philadelphia schools found that in the 1999–2000 school year, 46% of teachers in the six highest-poverty middle schools were new to their school in the last two years. Neito's (2003) research on what motivates teachers to continue to teach cites that over half of new teachers assigned to urban schools leave during the first five years. Over half of these teachers return to the field of teaching, demonstrating the problem that exists in these environments in supporting and retaining teachers, as these teachers are willing to teach but not in urban schools. Teachers in urban schools are more likely to cite little influence over policy decisions, dissatisfaction with job conditions and salary, problems with student discipline, high rates of student absenteeism, violence, and low parental support (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999; Roellke & Rice, 2003). In the Boston Public Schools district, a study found that by 2005 almost half of Boston's newly hired teachers were leaving within three years (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2005). Literature is clear, however, that the demand for teachers in urban schools is ever increasing. Teach for America and the Urban Teacher Corps at Boston College are just two programs committed to this issue.²

There are far fewer minority teachers than minority students in public schools, including urban schools (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). In central city schools, 70.5% of teachers were White, non-Hispanic; 15.1% were Black, non-Hispanic; .5% were American Indian/Alaska Native; 2.2% were Asian; 0.2% were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and 10.4% were Hispanic according to US Department of Education Statistics (2006a). In central city schools, the percentage of teachers with three or fewer years of full-time teaching experience was 20.3%, which was higher than urban fringe/large town schools (17.6%) and rural/small town schools (14.6%). In central city schools, the percentage of teachers with four or more years of full-time teaching experiences was 79.7% which was lower than that for urban fringe/large town schools (82.4%) and rural/small town schools (85.4%) (US Department of Education, 2006a). Clearly, urban schools are lacking in providing their students with experienced teachers.

² Teach For America is a program offered to college graduates providing intensive teacher training over the summer to prepare teachers for teaching in low-income communities. The Urban Teacher Corps at Boston College is a separate program, offered to college graduates of teacher education programs. Students can earn an advanced degree in education while completing the two-year program teaching in urban Catholic schools in the Boston area and living in community with other teachers. Both programs are committed to training teachers for urban and low-income community schools.

Structure

Haberman (2005) describes urban schools as having “essentially the same teaching materials as teachers in Afghanistan” functioning with scant equipment, supplies, and teaching materials that are needed for effective instruction (p. 34). Urban schools often reside in financially struggling neighborhoods “where both students and teachers may experience schools as harsh places that would be unrecognizable to those who taught twenty or thirty years ago” and to those teachers who work in schools with greater resources (Nieto et al., 2002, p. 2). Many who live in these urban neighborhoods “are so poorly equipped to raise healthy children, that the schools those children attend would have a hard time educating them, even if they weren’t also so poorly organized and run” (Berliner, 2005, p. 3). These schools have guards and metal detectors, unsanitary and nonfunctioning bathrooms, and are segregated by race, ethnicity, and social class with segregation greater today than it has been in the last three decades, especially for African- American and Latino students (Nieto et al., 2002). Nieto and her colleagues (2002), researching the lives and perspectives of teachers, concluded that “it is little wonder that teachers leave and students drop out” given the conditions of urban schools (p. 2).

Urban Catholic Schools: A Snapshot

As stated earlier the research behind *Sustaining the Legacy: Inner-City Catholic Elementary Schools in the United States* helped describe trends in the student populations, the staffing, and the structures of urban Catholic schools. The study combined results from an initial survey in 1995 of inner-city Catholic schools and a follow-up survey that was conducted in 2000. In all, 384 schools were surveyed and about 100 schools completed the survey both years (O’Keefe et al., 2004). Results were used to determine trends and pose projections as to where urban Catholic schools are headed.

Students

According to the findings from the two surveys, the student populations in urban Catholic schools are increasingly becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Only 4% of participating principals reported that minority enrollment had decreased in the five-year span of the two surveys. In fact, 40% reported that minority enrollment had increased (O’Keefe et al., 2004). Those schools with three-quarters of the student enrollment comprising of Hispanic students reported a greater number of students lacking complete English proficiency. Survey results also revealed that increases in the number of students living below the poverty line correlated with increases in the enrollment of students with limited English proficiency (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 16).

Over half of the schools sampled in the surveys reported that over 40% of students in their schools were eligible for free- or reduced-lunch, one of the most reliable indicators of poverty status in the USA. Seventy percent of principals of schools with high minority enrollment report 40% or more of their students are

eligible for free- or reduced-lunch (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 19). These data indicate a relationship between poverty and minority enrollment where “the percentage of those students living below the poverty line increases as minority student enrollment increases” (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 20).

The religious identity of students is changing in urban Catholic schools from a time when the vast majority of enrolled students were Catholic, to an increasing enrollment of students of Baptist and other Protestant religions. For example, O’Keefe et al.’s (2004) study found that in primarily minority elementary schools an average of 66% of students were Catholic, 17% were Baptist, and the remaining students were other types of Protestants (p. 24). According to national trends, the average Catholic enrollment in schools is 86% (McDonald, 2006). The number of enrolled Catholic students is dependent upon the dominant race or ethnicity of the student body (with larger percentages of non-Catholics reported in those schools with higher minority enrollment), and the socioeconomic status of the school’s student body (with somewhat higher percentages of non-Catholic students reported in schools with 60% or more of the student body living at or below the poverty line) (O’Keefe et al., 2004, pp. 25–26).

Staff

Looking at the staffs at urban Catholic schools, while over 90% of the staffs were Catholic, survey results indicate that staff members are overwhelmingly White (72%), but with greater numbers of racial or ethnic minorities at schools where 75% of students are minorities (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 35). This is reflective of national trends across public schools in the USA. Survey results from the sample of urban Catholic schools show that “the percentage of first-year teachers did not vary greatly by either race/ethnicity or poverty indicators” (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 37). Private schools have been found to hire more “brand-new” teachers than public schools, according the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) records; “however, no such difference was detectable between low- and high-poverty public schools” (US Department of Education, 2005a, p. 12).

Teacher attrition is a problem that not only Catholic schools face, but the nation’s schools as a whole. Research results found that at schools with a majority of White students, “almost 10% more teachers leave the Catholic school sector for public schools, and fewer of these teachers leave the profession altogether” (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 40). While urban schools and high-poverty schools experience high rates of teacher attrition, Ingersoll (2001) found that small private schools actually experience the highest teacher attrition rate with attrition average levels of about 23%, which is higher than the rate in high-poverty public schools. Since small Catholic elementary and high schools are the largest independent school system in the U SA, this is particularly troubling (Przygocki, 2004). Each year, small private schools experience a loss of almost one-quarter of their faculty (Ingersoll, 2001). Stinebrickner’s (1998) study on teacher attrition also found that private school teachers are more likely to leave the field of teaching than their public school counterparts. The 1999–2000 and 2000–2001 Schools and Staffing Survey data reveal that 21% of teachers left private schools when only 15% of

public school teachers left. Of these private school teachers 53% moved into the public school system to teach. With 223 Catholic school closings at the beginning of the 2005–2006 school year and more closings anticipated in the coming school year, Catholic schools are not only losing their teachers, they are also beginning to lose their presence. Retaining quality teachers is crucial to the sustainability of these urban Catholic schools.

Principals at these urban Catholic schools were overwhelmingly Catholic with higher concentration of religious sisters acting as principals in urban schools when compared to all the nation's Catholic elementary schools³ (O'Keefe et al., 2004, p. 41). In fact, the percentage of religious sisters is 10% greater at the poorest schools (p. 42).

Structure

Regarding structure, the survey results found that among the sample of inner-city Catholic schools, the majority were parish-based or parochial schools, with 15% being diocesan schools, 8% inter-parish, and 4% private or owned by a religious order (O'Keefe et al., 2004, p. 47). The schools in the sample remain very traditional, serving students from kindergarten through eighth grade and are governed by school boards. Many schools are reporting an increase in nontuition income, including donations from individuals and community businesses. Those schools with a majority of students living in poverty report even greater increases in nontuition income, including increases in grants received (O'Keefe et al., 2004, p. 48). There has been rapid growth in the number of paid development officers, especially in the highest poverty schools (p. 49). These development officers seek out donations, grants, and development monies for the school and operate separately from fund-raising efforts, which typically provide minimal supplementary funds for the school. For example, development officers run events such as capital campaigns to raise significant amounts of money for school improvement and endowments. Another innovation is cluster organization where several Catholic schools centralize their administration. One-third of the schools in the sample reported having cluster or regional organization. Providing prekindergarten programs as well as extended day programs is another development that has grown rapidly in urban schools, especially when compared to all Catholic schools. Of the sample schools 83% had extended day programs compared to 60% of all Catholic elementary schools in 1998. Increasingly schools are also providing mentoring for their beginning teachers and are participating in partnerships with other Catholic institutions to help provide services for families including partnerships with hospitals, other Catholic elementary schools, Catholic social service agencies, or Catholic

³ In O'Keefe et al.'s (2004) sample of inner-city Catholic schools, 40% of the principals were religious sisters compared to national trends indicating that only 5.4% of sisters serve as principals for Catholic elementary schools overall (p. 41).

universities and colleges (O’Keefe et al., 2004, p. 56). In fact, 95% of schools that reported partnerships indicated that they have experienced an increase in the level of partnership between the 1995 and 2000.

Higher Achievement in Catholic Schools

The research on Catholic education and student outcomes is compelling, but controversial. Catholic schools in the USA have committed themselves to and have demonstrated “the know-how to educate the poor and ethnic minorities in significant numbers” (DeFiore, 2006, p. 110). Studies have found that Catholic schools lead to higher achievement, as evidenced by higher standardized test scores, lower dropout rates, and higher achievement for disadvantaged students when compared to public school students. Critics argue that Catholic schools have the ability to choose which students they will accept in their schools, dismissing those with learning disadvantages. Some argue that previous studies do not compare Catholic and public school students in appropriate ways. This section will explore the research findings and critics arguments regarding the research. While there may never be a definitive answer to whether or not Catholic schools are more effective than public schools due to the multitude of factors that attribute to student achievement, it seems clear that Catholic schools do have a positive impact on students, especially those who are least likely to succeed.

Regarding standardized test score achievement, statistical evidence finds that Catholic schools improve test scores regardless of the students’ backgrounds (Ilg et al., 2004). This impact includes high levels of student learning, distribution of learning equitably across race and socioeconomic status, and high levels of teacher and student engagement (Ilg et al., 2004). Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on student achievement in private schools found that all types of private schools outperformed their public school counterparts with higher average reading, mathematics, science, and writing scores in grades 4, 8, and 12 in 2005 (US Department of Education, 2006b). More students performed at or above the proficient and basic levels in reading in private schools than public school students. Private schools, including Catholic schools, outperformed their public school counterparts when comparing average scores in mathematics for students in grades 4, 8, and 12, science in grades 4, 8, and 12, and writing in grades 4 and 8 in 2003 (US Department of Education, 2006b).

The achievement gap between White and minority students in Catholic schools is “narrowed substantially” in comparison to the achievement gap in public schools (Shorkaii, 1997). Data from the *High School and Beyond* study indicates that dropout rates for students in Catholic schools are substantially lower as well, with over 13% of White students dropping out of public school compared to a 2.6% dropout rate for White Catholic school students. Hispanic students have a dropout rate around 19% in public schools and only 9.3% for Catholic school students. While 17.2% of Black students drop out of public high schools, only 4.6% of Black students drop out of Catholic high schools (Shorkaii, 1997). Using data from the National

Longitudinal Survey of Youth and controlling for family background, including parent education, Catholic schooling was found to increase high school graduation rates by 26% (Neal, 1997). Conducting a long-term study to include both elementary and secondary school achievement, one study found that students from Catholic elementary schools have higher reading and writing achievement in tenth grade, but significantly lower achievement in science at tenth grade than their public school counterparts (Bryk et al., 1993). Bryk et al. (1993) attribute the lower achievement in science to Catholic elementary schools not having the resources to provide students with effective science instruction. Even though these studies focus on high school student achievement, the data does provide insight on Catholic elementary schools given that about 60% of those attending Catholic high schools attended Catholic elementary schools from kindergarten through eighth grade (Bryk et al., 1993).

A qualitative, multiple case study examining four Catholic school settings was initiated by research findings indicating that “the effect of many Catholic schools are especially powerful for the multiply disadvantaged” or for students whose parents did not attend college or qualify for academic programs and students from families with low socioeconomic status (Watt, 1999, p. 23). The study found that the environmental factors of Catholic schools, including teachers, school culture and climate, curriculum, parents, administrators, and religion were interrelated components that led to high achievement for low-income Mexican-American students (Watt, 1999). Bempechat (1998), researching fifth and sixth grades student motivation to achieve, found similar findings in that “something very important is going on in Catholic schools that is contributing to the academic success that is being enjoyed by poor and minority students” (p. 10). In her research findings, Bempechat found that African-American and Latino students in Catholic schools had beliefs about the causes of success and failure “that were more conducive to learning” than their public school peers (p. 31). While the research does not prove causality, Bempechat concludes that the Catholic school environment led to improved success of students, especially for minority students. Specifically, Catholic schools encourage positive attitudes about learning that foster children to believe in their own intellectual abilities (Bempechat, 1998).

Other studies found that “Catholic schools attract some students from disadvantaged families” where the parents are willing to sacrifice more of their income to provide their children “with better life opportunities” (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 218). These students’ educational outcomes, including academic achievement, depend largely on the Catholic school that the students attend as these students often “lack the personal background and cultural experience” to help them choose courses and experiences to benefit their academic careers (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 219). Academic achievement is vital in the USA for steady employment and economic success. Those students who fail to receive their high school diploma face an 7.6% unemployment rate according to data from 2005, and will likely earn merely \$23,176 according to median earnings findings in 2004 (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 2006). High school graduates, on the other hand, are likely to face only a 4.7% unemployment rate and in 2004 had

a median income of \$31,075. Only 2.6% of those with a bachelor's degree were unemployed in 2005 and had a 2004 median income of \$50,394. Those without a high school diploma earned \$7,899 less than those who graduated from high school and \$27,218 less than those with a bachelor's degree. With such high stakes riding on academic achievement, the research base indicating that Catholic schools improve student achievement is significant. Catholic schools not only improve test scores on standardized test results, graduation rates for students in urban schools, and the achievement gap, but they also improve these students' futures with lower per-pupil expenditures. In 2003–2004, public schools spent an average of \$8,287 per pupil (US Census Bureau, 2004). Catholic schools, however, report a per-pupil cost of \$4,268 for elementary schools and \$7,200 for secondary schools in 2004–2005 (McDonald, 2006).

Findings and claims of increased effectiveness of Catholic schools are hotly contested. Some argue that Catholic schools have the ability to choose which students they will admit into their school, thus the ability to ensure success by not admitting students with low levels of achievement, students where English is a second language, and students with special needs (Neal, 1997). Research indicates, however, that this is not the case and that in fact, Catholic school student enrollment includes many students who are academically disadvantaged (Bempechat, 1998; Neal, 1997; O'Keefe et al., 2004). Research has also shown that the majority of Catholic school students live in large cities where public schools perform lower than rural and suburban public schools and this performance gap is most significant in minority neighborhoods (Neal, 1997). More than 44% of Catholic schools are in inner-city areas and over 27% of the total Catholic school enrollment consists of minority students (Keebler & Gray, 2005).

One study by Alexander and Pallas (1983) critically examined Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore's research study which found increased student achievement outcomes among Catholic high school students. Alexander and Pallas claim that the way public school students were compared to private school students did not take into account several variables that offer alternative explanations for the difference in student achievement outcomes. For example, where 69% of Catholic school students were in college preparatory courses, only 34% of public school students reported participating in college preparatory track (Alexander & Pallas, 1983). When students were compared according to "sectors with similar academic orientations," as opposed to the overall comparisons that were done in the Coleman et al. study, no significant differences in test scores of more than one-fifth of a standard deviation were found (Alexander & Pallas, 1983). According to Bempechat's (1998) research, however, Catholic schools and public schools do not track their students in parallel ways. In Catholic schools, "track placement is unrelated to race or ethnicity" and even for students in lower tracks the educational experience is much more demanding than for those in public schools (Bempechat, 1998, p. 92). In public schools African-American and Latino students are "excessively" placed in lower tracks where the work is far less academically rigorous (Bempechat, 1998). Catholic schools are committed to preparing every child for college and further education,

whereas this does not seem to be the case for public schools (Bempechat, 1998). Therefore, comparing public school students with their Catholic school counterparts would be difficult because the expectations are simply different.

Looking at achievement at the elementary level, one recent study attempted to eliminate selection bias by using the *Prospectus* study, which evaluates the Title I program⁴ using extensive measures including Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills scores of students along with student, parent, teacher, school administration, principal, and district questionnaires (Jepsen, 2002). The study focused on elementary school students and included more than 10,000 public school students and over 1,000 Catholic school students purposively chosen to represent students receiving Title I funding and ensure similar demographic characteristics between private and public school students. Using a value-added approach to the data, Jepsen (2002) did not find statistically significant effects, "but generally positive effects of Catholic schooling on 1993 mathematics and reading test scores" for first and fourth grade cohorts (p. 929). Jepsen (2002) did concede that Catholic elementary schools could have a "cumulative effect" that was not measured in his study (p. 938).

Why is it that Catholic schools appear to be succeeding? Researchers point to several characteristics of Catholic schools that help boost student achievement, including the focused mission of Catholic schools; high expectations for all students; the inclusion of nonminority and minority children; safe and orderly environment; flexible principal leadership and school-based management of Catholic schools; relevant curriculum; high levels of parental involvement; and dedicated staff (Bempechat, 1998; Bryk et al., 1993; Convey, 1992; DeFiore, 2006; Grace, 2002; Ilg et al., 2004; Lamb, 1996; Shorkraii, 1997; Watt, 1999). In many Catholic schools a clear and focused mission is the centerpiece of the school, uniting the teachers and staff in their commitment to education. A research study using narrative inquiry of 12 effective inner-city elementary Catholic school principals in schools increasing student achievement, found that these schools all had a clear and focused mission that incorporated values and commitment to equity in education (Lamb, 1996). The focused mission of Catholic schools includes holding high expectations for all students and preparing each child for further education (Bempechat, 1998). Principals in Catholic schools generally have more flexibility when it comes to creative leadership and curriculum development. Successful urban elementary schools, in particular, are affected by the leadership of the principal and the principal's ability to set goals, devise strategies, develop a team approach to learning and teaching, and use shared decision-making procedures (Lamb, 1996).

Indeed we may never know decisively if Catholic schools are more effective than public schools due to the vast number of nonschool factors that

⁴ The Title I program is a federal program providing financial assistance to schools serving low-income families to ensure that all children meet academic standards. Private schools are only allowed to use the funds on those students who qualify, whereas public schools can use the funds to support school-wide programs that target students who qualify for assistance.

affect student achievement. Research comparing Catholic schools with public schools involves complexities, including “unmeasured and uncontrolled attributes” of students, schools, and communities, making it impossible to come to “conclusive answers to whether or not Catholic schools are more effective than public schools” (Convey, 1992, p. 6). Still, the research results are undeniable and even Alexander and Pallas (1983) had to admit that for normal track students, Catholic schools are beneficial and increased student achievement. These outcomes not only positively impact the students, but also demonstrate “to public policy makers and others that minority and disadvantaged students will perform well in reasonably good schools” (DeFiore, 2006, p. 111).

Closing Their Doors

Even though Catholic schools are performing so well many are forced to close. As these schools close they leave the students, families, and communities they serve faced with a harsh reality and a difficult decision. The harsh reality being that these students and families have lost their school and the school community of which they were apart. Reactions to these school closure announcements range from fighting to keep the schools open to feelings of frustration. Families face a difficult decision in deciding where to send their children to school when many times sending them to another Catholic school would mean sending them miles away from their homes. These school closures are a sad reality for families who find themselves displaced, but it is also a devastating loss to education as well; one that hopefully will be realized before it is too late.

In the 2005–2006 school year 223 Catholic elementary and secondary schools closed or consolidated and only 38 schools opened (McDonald, 2006). This led to a 185 school loss, most of which were elementary schools. In March of 2005, the National Catholic Educational Association report on Catholic School and Enrollment Statistics announced that 173 Catholic schools had either closed or consolidated in the 2004–2005 school year (Keebler & Gray, 2005). While 37 new schools opened during the year, in all there was a net loss of 136 schools and enrollment was down 2.6% from the previous school year (Keebler & Gray, 2005). Among these closings in 2004–2005 included 26 in the Brooklyn Diocese, 6 in the Archdiocese of New York, 7 in the Archdiocese of Newark, 8 in the St. Louis Archdiocese, 17 in the Archdiocese of Detroit, 2 in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, and 23 closings, and 4 consolidations in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Projections for next year indicate that this trend will continue with announcements for the 2006–2007 school year already alluding to another year of loss. In New Jersey, the Archdiocese of Newark is closing three schools at the end and three schools are to be consolidated into two schools. In the Diocese of Paterson one school will close and two will consolidate. The Diocese of Green Bay in Wisconsin has reported three school closures and one consolidation of two schools. In New York, two schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn, one in the Diocese of Buffalo, and

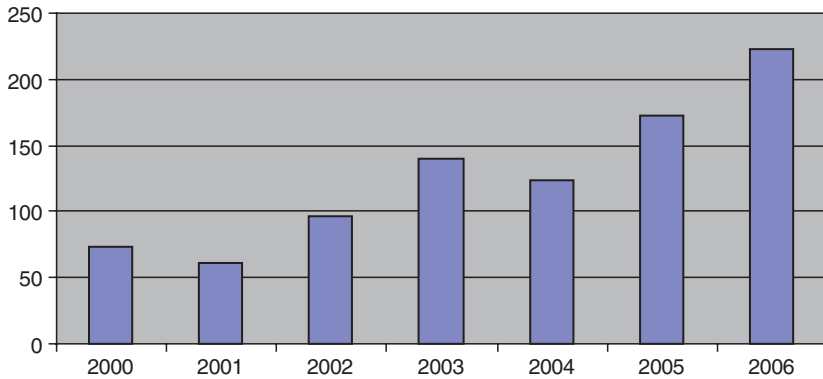


Figure 1. Catholic school closures, 2000–2006 (McDonald & Schultz, 2006)

one in the Diocese of Albany are closing at the end of the school year. In addition, the Diocese of Buffalo announced a consolidation of three schools, the Archdiocese of New York will close eight schools and consolidate two schools, and the Diocese of Syracuse will close three schools and consolidate two schools. The Diocese of Trenton in Pennsylvania has announced a consolidation of four schools and three more schools in the Allentown Diocese in Pennsylvania are to be consolidated. The Diocese of Pittsburgh has announced four school closures and one consolidation of two schools. The Archdiocese of Hartford in Connecticut plans to consolidate three Catholic schools. In Massachusetts, the Diocese of Worcester and the Archdiocese of Boston are each closing one school. In the Diocese of Cleveland in Ohio, the Archdiocese of San Antonio in Texas, the Diocese of Biloxi in Mississippi, the Diocese of Little Rock in Arkansas, the Stockton Diocese in California, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in New Mexico an announcement was made that one school in each will close at the end of the school year. More closings and consolidations are likely to come and since most archdioceses typically do not publicly report their school closures, it is difficult to find how many schools are closing. The results posted here were found from newspaper searches. Most likely there are more school closures than reported here and these developments are associated with a decline in overall enrollment.

Catholic school closures are not a new phenomenon. Between 2000 and 2005 there were 667 Catholic schools that were forced to close (see Figure 1). In that period there were six school districts reporting more than 20 school closures, including the archdioceses of Chicago (52), Detroit (35), Philadelphia (31), St. Louis (31), Newark (27), and Milwaukee (22) (McDonald & Schultz, 2006). An interesting trend is the disproportionate effect on elementary schools. A total of 277 Catholic elementary schools closed in 2004 and 2005. Only 19 Catholic secondary schools closed during that same period (McDonald & Schultz, 2006). This is partially due to fact that Catholic elementary schools outnumber Catholic secondary schools. In the 2004–2005 school year there were 6,574 Catholic

elementary schools compared with 1,225 secondary Catholic schools. Still, the trend indicates that Catholic elementary schools are suffering. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005) admits to the growing problem of Catholic school closures stating, "Regrettably, there has been a net decline of more than 850 Catholic schools in the country" since 1990 (p. 5). They further remark that "almost all of this loss has been in urban, inner-city, and rural areas of our nation" (p. 5).

A recent report from Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University (CARA) (2006), surveying Catholic parents and Catholic school leaders, found that the main culprit for these Catholic school closures is that "campuses and buildings don't move, but people often do" (p. 3). When these Catholic schools were established they were centered in regions with large Catholic populations, but these populations have moved. This movement is mainly due to the economy, as areas like Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin have experienced job loss due to businesses moving. Once the jobs are gone, many families move to new areas in search for employment. According to a recent article in *American Demographics* most of the migration is headed to the southern states, prompted by a search for employment and for retirement life (Taylor, 2004). The decline in Catholic populations in these areas makes it incredibly difficult to maintain enrollment for many Catholic schools in these regions. While Catholic schools are increasingly serving non-Catholic students, these schools are not attracting these students in the same numbers as Catholic students. Without enrollment, Catholic schools do not have the tuition base necessary to remain financially stable. The CARA report found that most schools without a tuition base were in the geographic areas of the Mideast and the Great Lakes and within urban inner-city areas and rural areas.

In fact, many of the school closures are in urban areas with high poverty rates and large numbers of minority residents. This is especially problematic, given that only 912 out of 7,799, or 12% of Catholic schools are serving inner-city communities (McDonald & Schultz, 2006). Between 1995 and 2006 there has been a 16.5% decline in the number of Catholic schools in the 12 largest urban dioceses, whereas there was only a 5.9% decrease in all schools outside these 12 dioceses (McDonald, 2006). Elementary schools in these urban dioceses dropped by 20%, whereas elementary schools outside these dioceses only experienced a 10% decline between 1995 and 2006 (McDonald, 2006). The 23 Catholic school closures in Chicago were concentrated in mostly African-American and Latino communities ("23 Catholic school closings," 2005). The Brooklyn Diocese closures were centered in Brooklyn and Queens, both neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and minority residents. Many would argue that these are the types of neighborhoods that need the strength of a community in order to best serve the needs of the children who live there (O'Connor, 1998). This makes these Catholic school closures all the more troubling and calls into question the fate of the "preferential option for the poor" given these developments.

These school closures are devastating to the communities served by these Catholic schools, and the communities react in different ways. In some instances,

parents plan to fight the closings as was the case for parents in New York after the Brooklyn Diocese announced that 26 schools would be closed at the end of the 2004–2005 school year (Hays, 2005). According to a Daily News article, after the announcement “parents at many schools said they were shocked by news of the closings, and vowed to do whatever they could to keep the schools open” (Hays, 2005). On the West Coast, parents reacted to the announcement of the Our Lady of Soledad School closure by forming a group, the Our Lady of Soledad School and Community Association, and petitioned for the school to remain open (Pierce, 2005). In Boston, parents planned to buy the school building scheduled for closure with the help of the Massachusetts Secretary of State, who had attended the school and put money down to buy the building. The offer was rejected by the Boston Archdiocese which decided to retain the building for archdiocesan needs. Even after this rejection, the parents were undeterred, planning meetings with the archbishop and succeeded in purchasing the building in 2006 (“Parents vow to fight for school after rejection by archdiocese,” 2005).

Keeping these Catholic schools open is a constant struggle, and while they yearn to provide for the communities they serve, many find their financial stability in peril. Yet, while these inner-city schools struggle to remain open, those Catholic schools in suburban areas and in urban non-inner-city areas have wait lists and struggle to meet a growing demand (CARA, 2006). Families in inner-city areas often cannot afford the tuition and as a result, schools relying on tuition are finding it hard to survive. The Bishops of the USA assert that “Whenever possible, Catholic schools should remain available and accessible in all areas of a diocese for children who are from poor and middle-class families who face major economic challenges” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005, p. 8). They challenge the entire Catholic community to support these schools as “the burden of supporting our Catholic schools can no longer be placed exclusively on the individual parishes that have schools and on parents who pay tuition” (p. 10). The community reactions to school closures, unfortunately, are not making enough waves among the general public and the Catholic community at large to create a substantial move toward supporting inner-city schools in order to keep them open.

Facing Financial Trouble

Given that Catholic schools are achieving increased student outcomes, are successfully teaching students who are in the greatest need, and are doing so at a lower cost than most public schools, it is especially troubling that so many are having to close their doors. The reasons for the closures stem from one main source: finances. Announcements of school closures often cite a combination of waning enrollments and financial problems as the reasons for school closures (Ihejirika, 2005). At the peak of Catholic school enrollment, Catholic schools enrolled over 45% of school-aged children in the USA. Today, only 18% of the Catholic school-age population is enrolled in Catholic schools (Wallas, 2001). This is a drastic

decline. Without the enrollment and the tuition money of these students, Catholic schools are suffering financial woes. Many parishes are not offering the subsidies for Catholic schools that they have in the past due to declining parish membership (O'Connor, 1998). Catholic schools have had to hire more lay teachers as the number of members of the church who are able to teach in schools declines, adding additional costs (Przygoski, 2004). As a result of increasing costs, many schools are forced to raise tuition. As one principal reported, "like every other school, we keep raising our tuition over the years, and before long, it gets too much for most families to afford" (Ihejirika, 2005). It is a vicious cycle that is having a deep impact on Catholic schools.

Financial support available to Catholic schools has steadily declined over the decades. In 1969, parishes subsidized 63% of Catholic school costs, by 2000 parish subsidies were only 38% of the cost (Wallace, 2001). Between 2002 and 2005 financial giving to the church had decreased by 10%, making it more difficult for parishes to subsidize Catholic schools (CARA, 2006). This, along with increasing costs of education, have forced Catholic schools to dramatically increase their tuition rates, where today tuition for the average family with one student attending a Catholic elementary school and one student in a Catholic secondary school constitutes over 11% of the household income (Wallace, 2001). While 80% of Catholic elementary schools and 99% of Catholic secondary schools offer financial aid, more and more Catholic families are finding that they cannot afford to send their students to Catholic schools. This in turn leads to decreased enrollment, placing more pressure to increase tuition in order to cover costs (Wallace, 2001).

These financial issues are further complicated as Catholic schools grapple with problems related to the changing teaching force within their schools. Prior to 1960 over 90% of the teaching positions in Catholic schools were filled by members of the church: sisters, priests, and brothers (Przygoski, 2004). A radical shift has occurred where as of 2000, 93% of teaching positions in Catholic schools were held by lay teachers (Przygoski, 2004). This has created new challenges for Catholic schools, including issues related to finance. Having religious men and women hold teaching positions not only kept education costs down, it stabilized the community as teacher attrition was not an issue (Grace, 2002). Lay teachers, of course, require salaries that are competitive with the public sector as well as medical and health care benefits adding to the cost of education in Catholic schools. As reviewed previously, teacher retention is a serious problem that all schools in the USA are grappling with, but private schools have higher turnover rates than public schools. Losing teachers is a great expense to private schools, both financially and for noneconomic reasons. The Texas Center for Educational Research (2000) found conservative estimates of the cost of teacher turnover, with a model that included the costs of exit interviews; administrative tasks related to the exiting teacher; hiring costs of advertising, processing applications and resumes, background checks, conducting interviews, and administrative tasks; and training costs of orientation and training. Findings from two large districts in urban areas reported a cost of around \$355–5,166

for each teacher that left the school (p. 15). With Catholic schools losing almost a quarter of their faculty every year, the cost is substantial even according to conservative estimates. Turnover also includes the loss of resources, student performance, and “human costs for teachers” who “invested time and resources to become teachers” (p. 16).

Private schools, including Catholic schools, face the difficult challenge of attracting students through high quality education, while keeping costs down and must find new, innovative ways to finance their schools if they hope to survive (O'Connor, 1998). The current economic situation, with high rates of unemployment and increased cost of living, has made it impossible for many families to afford private school tuition further complicating the situation (O'Connor, 1998). In many cases schools in these urban areas serve populations that do not have the financial means to support their own families, let alone pay tuition for a Catholic education. Finding new and creative ways to finance schools that no longer rely on fund-raisers and tuition as in the past is the key to sustaining Catholic schools. These innovative ways to raise resources include development initiatives that reach out to the extended community, including businesses, universities, and alumni (O'Connor, 1998). Catholic schools must also learn to be flexible, “recasting the development mold to fit their respective situations” (Tedesco, 1992 cited in O'Connor, 1998).

Projections: Urban Catholic Schools in the Next Five Years

These research results reveal provocative findings, but as Gerald Grace (2002) so aptly stated, “Just at the time when educational research has established the particular effectiveness of Catholic schools in urban areas and just at the time when the American Catholic population has experienced its highest levels of social mobility and economic prosperity, the future of Catholic inner-city schooling seems in doubt” (p. 88). This information provided a snapshot of urban Catholic schools as they were in 2000. The follow-up study has not been done yet, but projections can be made based on this data and literature that has been published since the study. The final chapter of *Sustaining the Legacy* presents a possible future for urban Catholic schools, one in which bishops, superintendents and vicars, pastors, principals, and laypeople have a role in helping to sustain and support inner-city Catholic schools. For instance, bishops can make the ministry of teaching in urban Catholic schools a top priority, elevating the urgency for funding and resources for these schools. Superintendents and vicars need to be creative and innovative, finding research-based solutions and strategic efforts to improve the quality of education and sustain these schools. Laypeople need to become involved, especially with their financial resources given the growing wealth of Catholics (O'Keefe et al., 2004, p. 71).

Restructuring schools to provide holistic services to families is an intriguing possibility for the future of urban Catholic schools that is currently underway

in some areas. In the history of parish schools, academics and spirituality were not the entire focus of the school, rather these schools brought community resources together to provide many types of supports for families, including health, psychological, social, and emotional services (Walsh & Goldschmidt, 2004). Catholic schools, in accordance with the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, have committed themselves once again to providing services for the whole child, which includes not only academic and spiritual development, but emotional, physical, and even financial health. This comes at a time when research demonstrates that the achievement gap is not only due to inequalities in educational resources, but due to “non-academic barriers” as well (Berliner, 2005). Recent research found that some Catholic schools are working in partnerships with Catholic hospitals, universities, or state public health services to provide services to address these “barriers to learning and to healthy development” (Goldschmidt et al., 2006, p. 22). While many of these efforts are not coordinated and operate much more in a “piecemeal fashion,” there are programs operating in Catholic schools that illustrate a “paradigm shift for Catholic education away from isolated parish schools toward a new ethic of collaboration” (Goldschmidt et al., 2006, p. 24). This study sampled five programs in Catholic schools providing health education or services in partnership with one or more outside organizations. Results highlighted the potential dioceses and archdioceses have in providing “services beyond just health, including mental health, family outreach and other social and educational support services” (Goldschmidt et al., 2006, p. 28).

One restructuring trend in particular is the consortium model. This new model is an alternative to parish schools functioning independently. The consortium model involves a group of schools clustering together in a single administrative body. In an unpublished study interviewing six administrators of consortia models, Goldschmidt et al. (2004) found that in all six cases, the consortium model was adopted to prevent school closures. Under most models, administrative boards include a mixture of pastors, religious, and lay professionals. These boards have control over school operations and centralized budgeting including, debt management, tuition collection, payroll, and purchasing. This replaces the role of the parish and relieves pastors from school administrative duties. In the study, the consortia either paid rent for the school buildings, had purchased the school buildings, or paid all maintenance and capital charges. Administrators in the study believed that their schools were made stronger through the consortium model, with increased opportunities for teacher professional development and greater occasions for teachers to share with colleagues; increased support services at the school; and provided greater opportunity for principals to concentrate on effective educational leadership and for pastors to concentrate on spiritual leadership as both were alleviated of administrative duties. Overall, the study suggests that this model had been successful, with some initial difficulty dealing with the debt of individual schools as they join the consortium model. The flexibility of the model to adapt to community needs is especially effective (Goldschmidt et al. 2004).

Direction for Future Research

As this report has indicated, there has been some breakthrough research on trends in Catholic schools and Catholic education, including studies on the history of Catholic schools, past trends in Catholic education, and enrollment, closures, achievement, and financial stability of Catholic schools. Yet there remains a need for focused research on Catholic elementary schools as they are deeply impacted by school closures. Achievement data on Catholic elementary schools is sparse and much of the research is focused on private high school achievement rather than focusing on Catholic elementary school students. Conducting longitudinal studies of educational attainment of Catholic school graduates is another area needing more attention and research. There is a severe lack of data on long-term Catholic school student achievement. Within the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), reports like the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), and the High School and Beyond Study all report on Catholic schools as separate from other private schools, but researchers need to mine the federal datasets for themselves doing the necessary disaggregation rather than relying on published reports. Utilizing the data from NCES and creating reports more specific to Catholic education is also a possible source for conducting longitudinal studies. Universities could also make researching Catholic schools a priority, taking on research projects that would help Catholic schools to better understand what aspects of the schools, teaching, and structure are leading to student achievement results and provide data specific to Catholic schools.

Another area for further research is federal Title I funding. In the USA federal dollars cannot be given to religiously affiliated schools directly. However, for students who qualify as requiring special services federal money can be used by the school to ensure that the students receive needed assistance. More research needs to be done on how Catholic schools can best put these funds to use and successful efforts need to be documented. What funds are available? What is the application process for these funds? How can these funds be used? By exploring this area further, Catholic schools could gain a broader perspective about these funds, their availability, and how they can be utilized to maximize benefit to students.

As restructuring seems to be one of the most promising models for helping to sustain Catholic schools, more research needs to be done on this model and the process Catholic schools go through as they transition from a traditional school model. Lessons can and should be learned from those schools that have already gone through the process and this information needs to be disseminated. For example, based on conversations with leaders involved in recent restructuring initiatives, buy-in and community support from parishioners, students, parents, and pastors is essential for success in order to retain a sense of community and identity and to ensure a smooth transition in restructuring efforts. Some programs have struggled significantly, facing parent protests, opposition from council members, and parishes losing the sense that the schools belong to them. Providing services to Catholic families, including emotional, physical, and financial health through

collaborations has great potential, but is also wrought with complications. Consortium models present a similar situation for struggling Catholic schools.

Indeed there are many programs operating now throughout the states, including sustained fundraising, philanthropy, and development programs like the Inner-City School Fund in Cincinnati; creative approaches to leadership and staffing, including the School Viability Formula program in the Archdiocese of St. Louis; and advocacy initiatives that have made progress and offer new and innovative ways of thinking about the structure and function of Catholic schools, like the Urban Catholic Teacher Corps and Alliance for Catholic Education programs which prepare teachers for working in Catholic schools. Conducting surveys, in-depth qualitative case studies, and interviews with those who have been involved with these types of innovations could help us better understand how struggling Catholic schools can beat the odds to succeed and thrive. With the ability to help sustain Catholic schools it seems imperative that we know more about these models and the effects they have on Catholic schools.

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CHALLENGES TO FAITH FORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN THE USA: PROBLEM AND RESPONSE

Sister Patricia Helene Earl, IHM, Ph.D.

Issue: Faith Formation in Contemporary Catholic Schooling

Traditionally, Catholic schools in the USA were staffed exclusively by priests, sisters, and brothers. Today, however, they are predominately staffed by laypersons. This change in teaching staff has inevitably altered, to one degree or another, the essential religious character and culture of Catholic schools. While the religious quite naturally filter all of their teachings through their own religious formation and emphasize the mission, spirit, culture, and charism of Catholic education, lay staff often lack the same intensely religious experiences to bring to the teaching/learning environment. In addition to high academic standards, an important attribute of Catholic education is, in fact, the religious, spiritual, values-oriented environment that parents value. To maintain this environment, do the laity need in-service assistance in the overall mission, spirit, culture, and charism of the Catholic schools' religious foundation? To provide this assistance, is there an available model for this formation that could be adapted to this purpose? In the Catholic schools, the principal serves not only as the instructional and managerial leader of the school, but also as its spiritual leader. This chapter examines the challenges and then proposes a model to assist in this faith formation of teachers in contemporary Catholic schooling.

Contemporary Challenges for Faith Formation

Catholic schools have a long tradition in the USA. They were founded in the USA to assist parents in the faith formation of their children, as well as to provide these children with a solid education that would prepare them for life. In 1727, the Ursuline Sisters established the first Catholic school in New Orleans (Buetow, 1985). However, the birth of the Catholic school system is attributed

to Elizabeth Ann Seton who began a school in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1808 for the purpose of educating the daughters of Catholic families (Convey, 1992; Kelly, 1996; McNeil, 1996; Melville, 1951). Soon after, Catholic immigrants built a large number of schools to educate their children in the Catholic faith and to prepare them for life in the USA. Large numbers of non-Catholics also asked to attend these schools, indicating that the schools' programs must have been desirable (Buetow, 1985). In 1884 (Heft, 1991), the bishops of the USA convened the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore and established an extensive parochial school system.

Teacher preparation, at least up to the American Revolution, was almost non-existent and teacher standards were low in Catholic, as well as other schools (Buetow, 1985). Priest-teachers in Catholic schools for boys were often educated in Europe and unrivaled in academic ability. Catholic schools were more fortunate than others in having groups of religious, dedicated teachers living in community, guided by a Gospel-centered spirituality, who provided their services generously and without consideration of much financial remuneration. In these early days, the teaching sisterhoods were trained by the educated priests. Later, the sisters trained their own novices within each congregation of sisters.

Up until the 1950s, Catholic schools were almost entirely staffed by priests, sisters, and brothers. Statistically, the US Catholic school system reached its peak in 1964 (Groome, 1998). There were over 13,000 schools with 5.6 million students. Until the mid-1960s, priests, brothers, and sisters made up 95% of the faculty and staff of US Catholic schools. The presence of religious, with their faith and spirituality developed through their formation of preparation for this vocation, was the distinguishing mark of a Catholic school.

However, by the mid-1990s (Cook, 2001), laypeople made up 95% of the faculty and staff of US Catholic schools. The number of religious sisters, brothers, and priests has steadily declined, while the percentage of laymen and laywomen committed to the Catholic Church's educational apostolate has substantially increased. While the generosity of the laity to respond to God's call to serve is valuable for the Catholic schools, there is concern that the laity will receive the formation needed to preserve and perfect the identity of the Catholic school (Cook, 2001).

All of these internal challenges are complicated by some of the external challenges for faith formation in the USA. The culture places increasing emphasis on materialism and consumerism. A quick look at the television advertisements and the full page advertisements in the newspapers seems to refocus or cloud the difference between needs and wants, especially for the youth who are so easily impressed by what their movie and song idols are wearing or endorsing. Plastic charge cards, while easier, can provide the user with a quick purchase. However, the late fees mount and with them so does the individual's debt. Promises of "no interest for 2 years" entice home owners to buy everything now, often missing the joy of waiting and searching for the extra "wants" as time and finances allow. People are glued to their cell phones, not only for business, but while driving,

shopping, and dining. Though there are parental controls to block unwanted images and pornography from children's view on home computers, it is increasingly harder to block this with cell phones that take pictures and link to the internet, as well as PDAs and iPods that keep young and old plugged into the latest music, messages, and pictures.

Though the majority of Americans believes in God and practices some type of religion, the danger of secularism increases. Debates over "Church vs. State" occupy much of the political realm, especially during campaigns for election and recent hearings of potential Supreme Court Justices' qualifications and ability to take the bench. Issues of prayer in public schools, abortion and women's rights, embryonic stem cell research, and euthanasia try to present convincing arguments and threaten to reduce God and Religion to a very private devotion, so private that it should have no place in influencing or deciding these issues. From this perspective, secularism becomes the new god, and the shopping mall the new cathedral, and as Pope Benedict XVI has so often stressed, the dangers of relativism threaten to cloud our thinking, influence our decision-making, and prevent us from both seeking and seeing the real Truth and the God who loves us and saved us through His Son, Jesus Christ. How difficult it is to teach the message that Gospel values are countercultural, when many television shows and musical lyrics offer instant gratification and love, violence as a solution to problems, and personal success no matter who or what gets in the way.

How can we teach our youth to counter the culture with choices inspired by the life and teachings of Christ and the Church? How much more difficult it is to teach family values when our youth are pulled in so many directions to do whatever in order to be popular, to win, and to get ahead. While many struggle to keep the family together, even with an increasing number of single parents, family life is changing. Dinner, which used to be a time to come together and be together, is often a once-a-week event, with work schedules, after school activities, sports, commuting, and the like consuming more and more of each person's day. Recognizing parents as the primary educators of their children, Catholic education in its various forms becomes even more important in helping the youth, as well as the adults in their initial and ongoing faith formation.

In addition, while there are lapsed Catholics and those who attend Mass, perhaps on Christmas and Easter, there are also many who are searching and who enter the Church each year through the RCIA, making a faith-informed, adult decision to practice the Catholic faith. These new converts to our faith need to continue their formation through the Mystagogia as do the cradle Catholics who may or may not have attended Catholic school, or some type of weekly Religious Education, and who now depend on the Sunday homily for their ongoing faith formation. All of these external challenges again raise the concern whether the laity involved in Catholic education will receive the faith formation needed to preserve and perfect the identity of the Catholic school (Cook, 2001).

Responding to the Challenges

The issue of how to preserve the Catholic identity of our Catholic schools at a time when the numbers of religious sisters, brothers, and priests still continue to decline and rising pressures of materialism, secularism, and relativism continue to increase is urgent. If the laity comprise 95% of the faculty and staff in the Catholic schools, then they will need to assume the responsibility for the continued spiritual development of the Catholic identity of these schools.

Numerous Church documents written by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church identify the purpose of the Catholic school. The US Catholic Bishops (1999) presented a plan for adult faith formation in *Our Hearts Were Burning within Us*, which addressed some of the challenges, outlined qualities of mature adult faith and discipleship, offered a plan for ministry with goals and content, and addressed ways of organizing an adult faith formation program, including the roles of the diocese, parish, and individuals called to leadership in this important task. Most recently, the US Catholic Bishops completed a document (2005, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*), supporting the role, mission, and need for Catholic education, providing an overview of Catholic education in America since 1990, and addressing some of the future challenges such as personnel and finances. With fewer religious on staff to model and mentor the laity, how can the laity be taught and what should they be taught to enable them to continue to build a Catholic system of education? Personal experience for the last 13 years with teaching personnel revealed the increasing number of teachers who are coming to the Catholic schools for the first time, without ever having attended a Catholic school as a student.¹ Many of these teachers not only need to be taught the Church teachings or doctrine, but also need to understand the purpose and identity of a Catholic school.

In addition to providing for the spiritual formation of the laity who staff Catholic schools, diocesan offices and principals need to be concerned with the character education of students. This issue is not unique to the Catholic schools but is a challenge for all schools. With a rise in secularism and materialism and a seeming collapse of the family, all schools must try to teach children good values (Lickona, 1991).

Specifically, with the external cultural challenges, the decline in the number of Religious staffing the Catholic schools and the increased role of the laity, what can be done to assist the laity in their formation so that the purpose, spirit, culture, and charism of the Catholic school are maintained and Catholic schools can continue to grow and provide for the total development, including spirituality and character education, of the students who attend?² Many national

¹ Sister Patricia Helene Earl, IHM served as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Arlington from 1990–2003. She interviewed all prospective teachers.

² The issue of spiritual formation of Catholic school educators and students is both a national and an international one. Timothy Cook, Thomas Groome, Thomas Hunt, Ronald Nuzzi, and Merylann Schuttloffel are among the US scholars who repeatedly address the challenges facing Catholic education, particularly in the area of faith formation. Australia's Bro. Marcellin Flynn's 1994 study *The*

and international scholars continue to research and study to look for answers to these questions as they apply to Catholic education in a variety of cultures around the world.

Responding to the interest in spirituality that emerged during diocesan school board meetings several years ago, a series of seminars was created for teachers and administrators in the Arlington Diocese in 1997. The first was a four-week series on basic elements of spirituality. The second was a two-day summer seminar on virtues for the classroom.

The spirituality seminar reported here provides teachers in the Catholic schools in the Arlington Diocese with some basic education on what spirituality is and how it can be developed. The seminar was designed to give the teachers a background for spirituality based on the Bible, Catholic Church documents, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Pope John Paul II, 1992). It also provides an understanding of what spirituality is, an overview of different forms of spirituality, the importance of prayer as the key or food for the spiritual life. Each session also provides opportunities for various prayer experiences.

The virtue seminar reported here provides teachers in the Catholic schools in the Arlington Diocese with a basic understanding of virtue and how to develop it in the classroom with their students. The seminar was designed to give teachers a theological background or basic knowledge about the Sacrament of Baptism, grace, virtue, Theological Virtues, Moral Virtues, conscience formation, commandments, and natural law, as well as a variety of teaching strategies and resources to use in the classroom with students of various ages.

The number of teachers attending the seminars continues to increase.³ The teachers who have attended consistently express positive feedback. Knowing that the seminars already had a positive impact on teachers, the question emerged how or in what way the seminars influence the lay teachers' understanding of Catholic schools. Based on formation for religious life, the seminars tried to capture a few of these elements of basic spirituality and moral development. If Catholic schools have traditionally been associated with the priests, sisters, and brothers who had some type of lengthy spiritual formation, and if these seminars have tried to create a mini-formation, in what way do these seminars or similar types of programs contribute to the issues of Catholic identity and character education?

Culture of Catholic Schools and his more recent 2000 study *Catholic Schools* highlighted the crisis of faith and the need to develop the Catholic culture. Ireland's Bro. Matthew Feheny (*Beyond the Race for Points: Aspects of Pastoral Care in a Catholic School Today* 1999) and Rev. David Tuohey (*Leading Life to the Full: Scriptural Reflections on Leadership in Catholic Schools* 2005) and England's Gerald Grace (*Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality* 2002) explore issues related to maintaining the sacred culture of Catholic schools amid a growing secularism of society.

³ The first Virtue Seminar drew 28 educators. Beginning with the second year, the seminar moved from a classroom to the school hall to accommodate the 48 participants. Over the ten years, numbers have ranged from 28–63, with the most recent number of 47. The first Spirituality Seminar drew 15 educators. Over the ten years, numbers have ranged from 12 to 48, with the most recent number of 32.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study reported here were developed to explore the issues of Catholic identity and character education. These questions provided the foundation for this study. The research questions were:

1. What sorts of significant experiences do these virtue/spirituality seminars produce, and how do they affect the participants?
2. In what specific ways have the seminars been reflected in participants' teaching or influenced their thinking about their teaching pedagogy?
3. How do participants, upon completion of the seminars, define character education and articulate whether or not a relationship exists between the seminars and character education?
4. What impact does participation in these seminars have on lay teachers' perceptions of Catholic education?

Theory and Existing Literature

A review of relevant theory, literature, and personal experience served as a foundation for this study. Relevant theory focused on education leadership, literacy, and teacher formation. Literature related to literacy, moral and ethical education, character education, spirituality, and Catholic Church documents related to Catholic education were reviewed. Finally, personal experience linked the theory and literature and provided the impetus for the study.

Relevant theory related to the real-world problems of maintaining and developing the Catholic identity of Catholic schools and the growing interest in character education focused on education leadership, literacy, and teacher formation. These theories serve to establish a foundation to show the need for the spirituality/virtues seminars, a model of how learning occurs, and the value of these seminars in teacher preparation. A brief review of some basic elements of education leadership establishes the existence of spiritual leadership as a basic component of the role of the Catholic school principal. Recognizing this role of the Catholic school principal as the spiritual leader, who must nurture the spiritual formation of both faculty and students, helps to establish the importance of creating seminars to nurture the spirituality of the teachers within the Catholic school. A brief review of some major theories of literacy, emergent literacy, scaffolding, and storybook reading establishes some basic principles of literacy and learning that could serve as a model of how learning takes place. These principles of learning help to establish how spiritual formation and character development can be developed through the spirituality/virtues seminars. Finally, a brief review of some issues related to teacher formation considers how literacy and staff development may be intertwined. Focusing on the theory that a teacher's own personal development may be an important part of teacher

preparation helps to establish the value of the spirituality/virtues seminars. Thus, the theory related to education leadership, literacy, and teacher formation serves as a foundation to establish the need for the seminars, a model of learning, and the value that these seminars could have.

In order to establish a foundation for a study that centered on Catholic identity of the Catholic schools and the general growing interest in character education, the literature review provided the opportunity to gather resources on several related areas. These include the importance of caring as an aspect of literacy, moral and ethical education, character education, spirituality, and Catholic Church documents. A review of literature related to caring as an aspect of literacy not only helps to create the atmosphere for learning but also supports the premise that a teacher's personal development is important to professional development. The concept of caring is essential to character education and spiritual formation since the caring teacher seems to be able to teach more effectively.⁴ If the caring teacher teaches how to care, then it may be possible to show that the moral, virtuous, character educated and spiritual teacher may teach others to be moral, virtuous, strong in character, and spiritual. Since spiritual leadership is important to the Catholic school, and since one of the seminars is a spirituality seminar, it was important to include some review of literature on spirituality. Finally, since the research for this study focused on the spirituality/virtues seminars as taught to Catholic school teachers and as an influence on the lay teachers' understanding of Catholic education, a review of literature written by Catholic Church leaders was important to establish an understanding of the role and value of the Catholic school from the perspective of the Catholic Church. Thus, a review of literature related to literacy and caring, character education, spirituality, and Catholic Church documents served as a foundation for the content and purpose of the spirituality/virtues seminars.

Research Outcomes Summary

The study revealed that the seminars had influence on four areas: the individual, teaching pedagogy, character education, and understanding the mission of Catholic education. A brief review of each of these follows.

Personal Influence of the Seminars

The first research question asked the following: What sorts of significant experiences do the virtue/spirituality seminars produce and how do they affect the participants? Feiman-Nemser (1990) states: "The teacher's own personal development is a central part of teacher preparation"⁵ (p. 225). Throughout the seminars, the

⁴ The theme of caring has been studied by Noddings in many of her works, including, but not limited to the following reference: Noddings, N. (1984).

⁵ Feiman-Nemser, S. (1990).

researcher told the participants that “you cannot give what you do not have.” This is a basic underlying theme for the purpose of adult formation as outlined by the US Catholic Bishops in *Our Hearts were Burning within Us* (1999).

In addition to the knowledge gained and the need for Religion certification, teachers felt more informed about prayer, how to pray and how to create the atmosphere for prayer. They were aware of the importance of making time for prayer and expressed a change in themselves. The seminars had the most notable personal influence on the participants’ understanding of prayer and its value as a way of keeping them in touch with God. They learned about various forms of prayer and became more confident in their ability to pray and to feel they were praying correctly. One participant in the study attended the Spirituality Seminar three times. Lucy explained:

Prayer is very important to me and every time I have come to the seminar, I have received more. I have learned more. It has deepened my perspective on prayer. Even though it’s the same material, I remember hearing, you know, you can never hear it too often. It touches you differently each time. . . . It does cause you to look at prayer differently and where prayer involves you, where you are at that stage.

Jeannice expressed uncertainty about prayer. She was not sure whether she “actually prayed right.” She explained:

Sometimes you feel like you’re not doing it right, praying right. . . and that helped me. . . . I realized maybe I’d been praying all along. . . . I used to stop and say thank you God, you know, just privately, but I never thought much of that as a prayer.⁶

Prayer became an integral part of their daily routines and they felt that they were growing in their love of God. This inspired and energized them in the way that they began to pray with their students. They learned to take time for prayer and they understood and recognized the meaning of the words, “You cannot give what you do not have.” They recognized the importance of developing their own spirituality, and they acknowledged that for them, it was rooted in Christ.

Inspired by prayer, the participants also felt that they gained a deeper understanding of the theology related to grace, morality, and virtue. They personally grew in their appreciation of virtue and good character. Dolores explained that she believed the seminars “re-energized” her and gave her more confidence in teaching her students about good character, moral development, and virtue:

Teach it differently—that’s a good question. I think that the students focused on how the faculty—once they became familiarized with the virtues, once the children themselves first learnt just what a virtue is and what are

⁶ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM, *Formation of Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools: The Influence of Virtues/Spirituality Seminars on Lay Teachers, Character Education, and Perceptions of Catholic School*, written and copyrighted in 2003.

virtues and why do we have them. First, I think we were able to teach it even more soundly and with more confidence than before because we felt ourselves that we had a good hands-on. But then as we practiced amongst the staff and we started to interact, I think the children now understand what is a virtue or what is—they see it and they start to practice, to emulate it. And I think, especially, I was thinking for the junior high school, you have to demonstrate for them to really be taught. If you could lecture to them and you can give them notes, but you have to demonstrate. That's the best type of learning in junior high. You have to demonstrate your teaching. So getting up in front of the class and teaching about a virtue or about the Scriptures or whatever you're teaching, you have to show them that you are first, knowledgeable and such and second, that you feel it and are enthusiastic about it. And then they catch on and it makes you an effective teacher. And so I think the seminars and the spirituality class, they just tune you in to your faith. They energize you. I think energize is the word I would use because it gets you excited because it re-energizes your spirituality.⁷

This was especially important to Angel, a primary teacher, in trying to teach virtue and help her little children develop a foundation for good character:

I think one of the issues in the Virtue Seminar—the way children are today as opposed to ten years ago, which is something as teachers, we need to know that so that we can deal with that, because that's what we confront. So, I think it gave me a very broad, a review, the virtues, the Virtue Seminar. I knew most of it. It was a refresher. But the spirituality, it just kind of really drove home, and I was very, very comfortable after I left.⁸

Another teacher commented on how she felt strengthened in her resolve to teach her students how to be moral and virtuous people of good character. Rebecca reflected:

I think it was an awareness to me that other people are doing this. I think that I left with more of a sense that others, my colleagues in other Catholic schools in this Diocese, are doing it also. I think that from that, the two-day workshop, I think to take back to my school the sense of increasing the individual's value, the worth of the child, no matter at what grade level they are at. That was important. There is something you can do with that virtues' program at all levels. I think the core of it is showing the child their value, increasing self-esteem, and helping them to see that they really are a very special creation of God.⁹

Thus, the personal influence of the seminars seemed to affect their teaching methods and their understanding and implementation of virtue development. Teachers willingly made time for stories and activities to help their students grow in virtue.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Strengthening and integration into life, as well as an understanding and interest in the importance of spirituality, also emerged. All of these themes seem to be connected as ways in which the seminars personally influenced the participants. Perhaps this is because all forms of spirituality have a common thread, “the quest of the human spirit for something that is above, that is bigger, deeper, ‘more than’ the ordinary surface reality of life”¹⁰ (Guinan, 1998, p. 1). Christian spirituality could be broadly defined as “our life in the Spirit of God” or “the art of letting God’s spirit fill us, work in us, guide us”¹¹ (Guinan, 1998, p. 2). It deals with the whole person, body and soul, calling the individual to live life to the fullest. Each of these themes in some way seemed to touch the participants and help them in their personal quest for meaning.

In addition, since all participants were teachers, this desire for the spiritual seems even more likely in light of Groome’s (1998) approach to education. For Groome, every teacher and parent has a call or vocation to be a “humanizing educator, to teach with a spiritual vision”¹² (p. 37). This calling (*vocatus*) is heard within one’s being and comes from beyond oneself. As a result, philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, “have understood educator as a spiritual vocation, implying that its surest foundation is the educator’s own spirituality”¹³ (p. 37).

Finally, if teachers felt personally enriched because of these seminars, it seems incumbent on principals and diocesan superintendents, in their roles as spiritual leaders, to look for and sponsor this type of program, especially for their teachers. Sergiovanni’s (1984) distinction between the competent and the excellent school principal makes this clear. Muccigrosso (1994) affirms that to be excellent, the Catholic school principal must accept the challenge of articulating a Christian vision and the development of spiritually self-aware and motivated Christian individuals.

Influence of the Seminars on Teaching Pedagogy

The second research question asked: In what specific ways have the seminars been reflected in participants’ teaching or influenced their thinking about their teaching pedagogy? Doyle (1990) describes teacher education research as “a loosely coordinated set of experiences designed to establish and maintain a talented teaching force. . .”¹⁴ (p. 39). He states that the study of teaching practices “shifts . . . to an explanation of how a practice works and what meaning it has to teachers and students in a particular context”¹⁵ (p. 20). If teachers’ personal development is essential to their preparation for teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 1990), and if the seminars personally influenced the participants in this study, then it is important

¹⁰ Guinan, M.D., OFM (1998).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹² Groome, T. (1998), p. 37.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Doyle, W. (1990), p. 39.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

to examine the influence of the seminars on teachers' teaching and thinking about teaching pedagogy. Many of the themes related to the personal influence of the seminars were also relevant for the influence of the seminars on teaching methods and how they approached their students. The following themes related to teaching methods emerged in the interviews: prayer, listening, quiet/calm, time and space, the manual of resources, modeling, care, strengthening, and integration.

All of these themes seem to be connected as ways in which the seminars influenced the participants' teaching or thoughts about teaching pedagogy. Other teachers identified the influence that the seminars had on their teaching methods. They focused on being more sensitive to a parent in need. They spoke about understanding their students and seeing the importance of being more caring and nurturing. They recognized opportunities to integrate virtue into other disciplines in ways that they had not done before coming to the seminars. Jeannice became more aware of the importance of integrating Religion into other subjects after attending the seminar:

But after the Virtue Seminar, I did try to do more integration, more of that across because Religion is a part of everything, just the same as every subject is a part of every other subject, you know. And Religion is not so much a subject. It's a way of life.¹⁶

Rose felt that the seminars had challenged her creativity to look for meaningful and appropriate ways to integrate Religion with her fourth grade class:

Yes. I have a better understanding of how to be able to apply it to myself in my life. As far as a better understanding of how to incorporate that into my teaching, not just in Religion but to, other subjects, I get a big kick out of incorporating God in every subject in any way or situation that I can. And with the virtues, I'll give myself time to incorporate it quite a bit into any subject.¹⁷

The most significant method seemed to be teaching the students how to meditate. Having experienced their own sense of calm and peace in the classes, the teachers tried to teach this to their students. Several teachers noticed how much their students enjoyed meditation and how it brought a sense of calm and peace to their students.

It was very apparent that the manual and materials provided during the seminars were of value to all of the teachers. The resources, the activities, the use of music, and the interest in having a prayer corner were significant in assisting teachers with teaching methods. One of the most significant teaching tools was a small baby food jar filled with a large walnut and rice. I had discovered this as a table favor I received from the 75th anniversary celebration of St. Charles School in Arlington, Virginia. The jar was a symbol of how to make time for the Lord

¹⁶ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

each day. If one fills the jar with rice and then tries to fit in the walnut, it does not work. However, if one puts the walnut in the jar first and then fills it with rice, both walnut and rice fit into the jar. Similarly, if we fill the day with all of our activities, we often get to the end without having had any time for the Lord in prayer. However, if we first make time for the Lord in our day, it seems we can still accomplish all of the day's tasks. The "walnut and the rice" have become one best teaching tools to come from these seminars. Teachers use it as a reminder for themselves; others make it a class project, often in preparation for Confirmation, and have the students each make one of the jars as a personal reminder of the Lord's importance in our lives.

In coding for common themes, almost every theme discovered in relation to the personal influence of the seminars was also a significant theme in the seminars' influence on teaching pedagogy. From the statement, "You cannot give what you do not have," it appears that many things taught during the seminar, as well as the manner in which they were taught, influenced participants' teaching content and pedagogy. In addition, they seemed to absorb some of the perceived manners and personal qualities of the researcher, actually taking resources from the seminars into their classrooms, as well as presenting them to their students as I did to them, particularly in teaching students how to meditate, setting the stage with quiet music, reading a Gospel passage, and gently raising questions as in a guided meditation.

From this perspective, the participants and the researcher formed a relationship similar to that found between a parent and child where Emergent Literacy (Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Sulzby, 1994; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1996; Yaden et al., 2000) occurs. Sulzby & Teale (1991) offer a definition of this area as behaviors in reading and writing that precede and develop into conventional literacy. Teale and Sulzby (1996) note that the functions of literacy are an integral part of the learning process that takes place. Children learn through active engagement, constructing understanding of how the written language works.

In their study, the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994) proposed a broader understanding of literacy. Their definition of literacy shows how literacy was defined, redefined, constructed, and reconstructed with a group. Thus, "the outcome of this process is not a single definition of literacy, but an understanding of the multiplicity of literacies individuals face as they become members of ever-expanding groups and communities"¹⁸ (p. 147). They conclude: "like their students, the teachers were influenced by the opportunities they have to learn new ways of being teachers and engaging students in learning"¹⁹ (p. 148). In addition, they conclude that issues of literacy and professional development are intertwined.

In addition to finding a similarity between the influence of the seminars on teaching pedagogy and Emergent Literacy, the concept of "scaffolding" (Sulzby

¹⁸ Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994), p. 147.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

& Teale, 1991) also seems to describe a link between the content and pedagogy of the researcher and what and how they, in turn, chose to teach these religious truth, elements of prayer and spirituality, and virtue and right conduct to their students. Sulzby and Teale (1991) explain “scaffolding” in relation to storybook reading. The language of the adult and the child surrounds the author’s words. The participants cooperate and seek to negotiate meaning by using verbal and nonverbal means. The adult supports the child’s performance through successive engagements. Gradually, the adult transfers more and more autonomy to the child (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Based on this “scaffolding” concept, reading aloud is an act of construction. Language and the accompanying social interaction are an integral part of the influence of storybook reading on literacy development. Thus, through cooperation, interaction, and routine, the scaffold is built so that gradually, the adult reader does less and the child begins to do more and more of the reading, gradually becoming independent.

This model of learning and acquisition of literacy was used in the design of the seminars. By teaching, guiding, and providing experience, and repeating that each week or in each seminar session, the researcher hoped that the participants would become more assured and confident and able to teach their students about spirituality and virtue. Many participants commented about copying or modeling teaching methods, as well as perceptions of listening, and attitudes of patience and calm. In addition, they repeated these same things with their students. Katherine recognized the value of quiet and the seminars reminded her of this:

I know very definitely that the “Tips on Spirituality” had a calming effect on me. I remember post “9–11” and also the ramifications bubbling around, inside me every day over that. And I know that just going there every week had a very calming effect on me.²⁰

Rose indicated that she was able to teach her students not only how to meditate, but also to appreciate quiet and calm:

Personally, it has had an effect, like I said before, we did the meditations. I did incorporate that last year into my class quite a bit off and on. I had a very challenging group last year for my first year and I found that the meditation and getting them to do self-reflection, it calmed the children quite a bit and it got them to actually be a little bit nicer to one another.²¹

Thus, the “Emergent Literacy” and “scaffolding” seem to be good models of learning both in the researcher’s plans, and listening to how participants followed this same model in their plans.

Relationship Between the Seminars and Character Education

The third research question asked: How do participants, upon completion of the seminars, define character education and articulate whether or not a relationship

²⁰ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM.

²¹ *Ibid.*

exists between the seminars and character education? Coles (1986) examines moral thinking and how influences, outside the home, shape it. He also examines the issue of moral conduct (1997) as it develops in response to the way a child is treated at home or in school, a response to moral experiences as they take place in a family or a classroom. Moral intelligence (1997) is acquired and grows not only by memorization of rules and regulations but also “as a consequence of learning how to be with others, how to behave in this world, a learning prompted by taking to heart what we have seen and heard”²² (p. 5). The child witnesses adult morality or lack thereof, looks for cues about how to behave, and finds them in parents and teachers. Life’s experiences, as well as stories (Coles, 1989), provide nourishment for the moral imagination.

Many of the themes related to the personal influence and the pedagogical influence of the Spirituality Seminar and the Virtue Seminar²³ provided learning opportunities for the participants. They attended a Virtue Seminar, and knew that virtue and moral development are more commonly used terms in the Religion curriculum of the Catholic schools than character education and value. Therefore, they automatically identified the virtue and moral concepts with character education, suggesting that character is the fruit of virtue. Though many teachers initially attended the seminars to earn credit toward their Religion certification, the interviews showed that the seminars were also relevant in showing the relationship between the seminars and character education or moral development. Elizabeth believed that the seminars had “re-affirmed” and “confirmed” her awareness of God’s importance in her life. She felt better able to see the purpose of the Catholic school and practice it with more motivation. She explained the importance of the seminars:

So I feel that the seminars helped me to realize that, how important these things are to everybody, everyday. From living the virtues and being spiritual are necessary in our society. So because we have a chance to teach in the Catholic school, then that helps explain why it is so important to bring this to the kids and to show them how to live and how to care for others and be compassionate and be honest. And so the seminars I think helped me realize the importance of Catholic schools and having the kids and what to teach and what’s important for them to know as far as our faith and as far as the social, when they go out in society.²⁴

²² Coles, R. (1997), p. 5.

²³ The Spirituality Seminar is a four-week program that focuses on defining spirituality, first as rooted in our Catholic faith, and then as it should develop within the person. Various forms of prayer beginning with the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, and then including traditional devotions as well as meditation and centering prayer are explained. Participants are given some experiences with each of these prayer forms. The Virtue Seminar is a two-day program in which participants explore the foundation for virtue beginning with the baptismal call and grace, and then look at virtue, the Theological and Moral virtues. In addition, time is devoted to conscience formation, moral development, the Commandments and Beatitudes. Finally, participants work with a variety of classroom activities to enable them to develop a meaningful “Virtue of the Month” program within their schools.

²⁴ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM.

Dolores noted that even with her 20 years of teaching in Catholic schools, she believed that the seminars, which she had attended several times, “re-energized” her:

It gets you excited. It gets you back in touch. It introduces many new things to you, things that should be important. You know, you become stale. You usually become stale. But you go to one of these seminars and you get excited. You learn something new. You see something, going. So these seminars are so important... Sure I teach Literature plus I teach Social Studies. But I live the virtues, I have to live it. I have to live it. The only way I can live it is to understand it. That’s what these Virtue Seminars do for you, those workshops.²⁵

Knowledge was important since the seminars attempted to expand the participants’ theological knowledge as related to virtue development or character education. Some earlier themes were combined, such as, prayer, meditation, listening, and quiet. Other significant themes related to character education included time, modeling, strengthening, and integration.

Throughout the interviews, participants seemed to recognize the personal influence of the seminars, which, in turn, seemed to help them in general with their teaching, and in particular with their understanding and ability to teach students to understand and practice virtue in order to develop sound moral character. The positive personal influence of the seminars affected the relationship between the seminars and character education in a manner suggested by the themes related to teaching pedagogy. The patterns of knowledge development, reflected in the theory of Emergent Literacy (Sulzby & Teale, 1991) and the concept of scaffolding, could, therefore, apply to the development of character.

In addition, the acquisition of good character, morals or virtue may suggest that they could be considered within the broader understanding of literacy suggested by the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (1994). The participants seemed to progress in their understanding and practice of virtue, as well as their ability to teach this to their students.

It seems that the participants’ comments and behavior would support Lickona’s (1991) view that “We progress in character as a value becomes a virtue, a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way”²⁶ (pp. 50–51).

The participants seemed to progress in their value for character and in their ability to care for their students. This could suggest that the participants’ actions also support Sergiovanni’s (2000) theory about care and character. With care as the cornerstone and character a goal for education, Sergiovanni believes that teachers are concerned about maintaining and nurturing higher levels of competency, while paying attention to caring and community building. Sergiovanni seems convinced that competence alone is not a sufficient goal for education. Competence and care need to join together in the practice of teaching.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Lickona, T. (1991), pp. 50–51.

Impact on Perceptions of Catholic Education

The final research question asked: Is there an impact on lay teachers' perceptions of Catholic education as a result of participation in the seminars? The Spirituality Seminar and the Virtue Seminar provided learning opportunities for the participants. As the teachers revealed their understanding of the mission and purpose of Catholic schools, both the spiritual and character dimensions of the seminars seemed to lead into several themes related to the influence of the seminars on the teachers' understanding of the mission and purpose of Catholic schools. The most notable themes were modeling and integration, strengthening and care.

In order to evaluate the influence of the Spirituality and Virtue Seminars on the understanding of the mission or purpose of the Catholic school, each participant first described her understanding of the mission. Then within that context, each teacher could explain the influence of the seminars. Dolores continued to explain the importance and purpose of a Catholic school and her mission as a teacher in the school. She believed that the Catholic school educator should:

Try to teach as Christ teaches, as Christ would, make it simple, make it honest, make it true. Don't make it fake and as a Catholic educator you have to remember you are in a Catholic school and you are representing the Church but you also have to be representing Christ to the children. And as I said so many times, you may be the only link to the Church, to the faith that these children have. Maybe you are a defender of the faith because often virtues seem outdated but you are an advocate for the faith, you have to be representative of Jesus in the classroom and outside the classroom.²⁷

Reflecting on the mission of a Catholic school, Donna described it:

To be Christ centered. Not only with the academics, to be able to apply it. . . to the very life in a Christian society. . . How can you make a better place? . . . So going to a Catholic school, learning the virtues and the values and being able to apply it is going to help. And so you're learning that and your English and your History. But to be a full person, you can get Christ involved in this and then be able to live it, not just say it. And so I think that's pretty much it.²⁸

Though each one was unique in describing the Catholic school mission, it was interesting to see that they all captured the idea of a school that could be recognized as guiding its students to know and love God and to bring this love to others. With this guiding principle, the Catholic school could educate the whole child, intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

²⁷ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM, *Formation of Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools: The Influence of Virtues/Spirituality Seminars on Lay Teachers, Character Education, and Perceptions of Catholic School*, written and copyrighted in 2003.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) stressed the importance of the “climate,” which, “if it is not present, then there is little left which can make the school Catholic”²⁹ (n. 26, p. 13). This climate should be noticed as soon as one enters a Catholic school as though one had entered a new environment, permeated by a Gospel spirit of love evident in a Christian way of thought and life and the presence of Christ. The Catholic school must motivate the student to come to the faith, to integrate it into life, and to accept and appreciate its values (Keating, 1990).

Hellwig (1998) believes that spirituality must try to be in harmony with the source and meaning of being in contemplation and in action. With discipleship or apprenticeship, “Christian life is a continual learning from and empowerment by the person of Jesus of Nazareth”³⁰ (Hellwig, 1998, p. 7). Many participants felt spiritually enlivened and renewed to model this spirit to the students and to make a deliberate effort to integrate this Christ-centered modeling, incorporating moral and virtuous acts, as well as prayer in its varied forms throughout the school day.

The US Catholic Bishops in their 1972 document, *To Teach as Jesus Did*, affirmed that the Catholic school is distinguished by the integration of religious truths and values with life. The Bishops note the importance of this in light of the current “trends and pressures to compartmentalize life and learning and to isolate the religious dimension of existence from other areas of human life”³¹ (n. 105, p. 29). The participants, who felt enlivened spiritually from the seminars, also felt that they could see the importance of integrating Religion, especially living the virtues, into all subjects. Alice echoed these sentiments: “So the message of Christ was being poured into our hearts to be kind of digested so that when we went back into the classroom, we thought about those things that you had taught.” Angel also described the seminars as becoming an integral part of herself. They influenced her: “It helped me to improve my own spirituality, which then in turn, the way I looked at it, helped me teach spirituality to the children.” Rose was excited about incorporating Religion into other subjects. She felt the seminars had challenged her creativity to look for meaningful and appropriate ways to integrate the Religion with her fourth grade classes:

Yes. I have a better understanding of how to be able to apply it to myself in my life. As far as a better understanding of how to incorporate that into my teaching, not just in Religion but to, other subjects, I get a big kick out of incorporating God in every subject in any way or situation that I can. And with the virtues, I’ll give myself time to incorporate it quite a bit into any subject.³²

²⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988), p. 13.

³⁰ Hellwig, M. (1998), p. 7.

³¹ US Catholic Bishops (1972). *To Teach as Jesus Did*. Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul. No.105, p. 21.

³² The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM.

Jeannice took a greater interest in taking time to integrate virtues into her other plans, especially since she had more understanding about their meaning. After introducing the virtue being practiced for the month, she “started trying to find books for them to read.” In addition, she tried to include the virtues and moral choices in her other subjects. She explained:

Yes, and I would try to focus on that. We would discuss it regularly. If I saw something in History, when I’m teaching History, and if I could relate it to a virtue, I would start trying to make it more—. Whenever I could plan it out because I got ideas. And I realized just how important it was not to just keep everything inside, saying it once, constant repetition, write them on the board and by example and trying to find a student who was practicing it. And you might point it out. I try to find examples. I didn’t do so much of that before the seminars.³³

They believed that they made more of an effort toward this integration because of their deeper understanding.

The concept of caring is not only integral to the Catholic school but also synonymous with any effort to model Christ. This vision of Catholic education resembled the spiritual experience noted by Groome (1998). He believes that the ultimate goal of this education enables people to become fully alive human beings and to fulfill their ultimate human vocation with a horizon that stretches to the Transcendent. Reflective of the value of caring in education as developed earlier, Groome believes that a humanizing education seems more likely for educators who have an abiding faith in the worth of their vocation, the potential of their learners, and in Gracious Mystery.

Modeling virtue and prayer, integration of Religion and concepts of moral development, and nurturing and caring for students as a sign of God’s love were major themes that participants identified as signs of the influence of the seminars on their own growth in understanding the mission of Catholic education. If the teacher in the Catholic school is called to assist with the formation of students, helping them to grow and develop in faith (Keating, 1990), then teachers must also be well formed in this faith. Skilled in the art of education, they should also “bear testimony by their lives and by the teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ”³⁴ (*The Declaration on Christian Education*, 1965, n. 8, p. 733). Spiritual formation must be a part of and complement to the professional formation of the Catholic school teacher (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The seminars seemed, in the spirit of these Church documents, not only to provide teachers with the information, but also with the necessary personal formation needed to guide students to a deeper love of God and neighbor, to fully develop and learn to use their gifts and talents, and to become caring and responsible individuals. Modeling and strengthening, integration, and care were the major themes that described the influence of the seminars on teachers’ understanding of the mission of the Catholic school.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Paul VI, Pope (1965),. p. 733.

Research in Catholic Education: Current Achievement and Future Needs

The research recommendations that follow may potentially provide greater insight into the formation of lay teachers in Catholic education, as well as the moral formation or character development of students, primarily in Catholic schools, but also in any educational setting.

Formation of Lay Teachers in Catholic Education

In recent years, there has been an emphasis in Catholic education to define and characterize the Catholic identity of Catholic schools. In addition, programs to assist with the formation of Catholic school principals have been developed. However, the lay teacher in the Catholic school in most Catholic dioceses in the USA has been required to pursue and maintain the courses necessary for teacher licensure and the Religion courses needed to obtain Religion certification within the specific diocese. In both cases, the focus has been on teacher development, both professionally and theologically.

The results of this study suggest that, in addition to the necessary educational and theological content, teachers also need guidance to develop their spirituality. Teachers attending the Spirituality and Virtue Seminars felt renewed. They learned to recognize the need to develop their own personal relationship with Christ, which, in turn, motivated them. They not only felt that they did a better job of teaching the content of the Religion, but they also discovered the importance of their own underlying relationship with Christ. Lucy came to the Spirituality Seminar three times. She felt that the seminars had “deepened” her understanding of prayer. She explained:

Prayer is very important to me and every time I have come to the seminar, I have received more. I have learned more. It has deepened my perspective on prayer. Even though it's the same material, I remember hearing, you know, you can never hear it too often. It touches you differently each time.... It does cause you to look at prayer differently and where prayer involves you, where you are at that stage.³⁵

Rose already enjoyed doing some type of “self-reflection” in the morning when she walked her dog. She explained that after the seminars she also tried to do an evening meditation:

Doing a self-reflection at the end of the day also.... It relaxes me. It gives me a better perspective on what I did, what I've accomplished during the day, what I did, what I can do to make things a little better for myself the next day or anything I need to improve on.³⁶

Cecilia learned that there were different types of prayer. The Spirituality Seminar affected her prayer: “It affected me by increasing my daily prayer and by enlarging

³⁵ The quotations are from the dissertation of Sr. Patricia Helene Earl, IHM.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

my prayer group.”³⁷ She and her friends returned to school and encouraged the entire faculty to have more prayer at the beginning of the day, including praying Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours that were examined during the seminars. They no longer taught just a subject called Religion, they taught a way of life. They grew in understanding how to live this Christ-centered life and were, therefore, enthusiastic in sharing this with their students.

However, approximately 300 teachers in the Arlington, Virginia Diocese attended both of these seminars. Additional research needs to be done first within the selected diocese, and then across multiple Catholic dioceses in the USA. Within the original diocese, more teachers need to attend the seminars so that more data can be gathered from a larger number of participants. Studies also need to be done with teachers on the secondary level to see if the seminars have the same influence on this level as on the elementary level.³⁸ Additional studies need more variation in the sample based on gender and number of years teaching. Since the majority of teachers in the sample for this study had attended Catholic schools for some period in their lives, more work needs to be done to see if there are significant differences in the seminars’ influence on teachers who have never attended Catholic schools.³⁹ If the increased numbers within the original diocese continue to support the positive influence of the seminars, other dioceses would be more likely to want their teachers to attend the seminars.⁴⁰ This, in turn, could lead to a national database to try to confirm these initial findings.

Another area for research related to the formation of lay teachers could focus on the influence of each of the seminars on participants. Approximately 500 teachers in the selected diocese attended one or both of the seminars. In the current study, several participants seemed to imply that the Spirituality Seminar

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Though the seminars were planned and open to all elementary and secondary teachers and principals in the Arlington Diocese, at the time of the study or during its seventh year, only 10–12 of the 300 participants were secondary educators, and thus, they did play a significant role in this study.

³⁹ A survey was sent to the 300 attendees to determine how many had attended one or both of the seminars, and to determine the backgrounds of the attendees, as well as to create a sample for personal interview. From the responses received, a representative interview sample of 15 was created that was sensitive to all of the elementary grades, as well as special subjects such as music or art. In addition, the sample included teachers who were new to teaching, teachers who had many years of experience in Catholic schools, teachers who had just retired from teaching in Catholic schools, teachers who had attended Catholic school themselves, and teachers who had not attended Catholic schools. Since there were fewer than ten male teachers who had attended the seminars, the sample was totally female. Since there were 10–12 secondary teachers who had attended the seminars, the sample was confined to the elementary level. Though a number of principals attended the seminars, since the Arlington Diocese has only 42 schools, interviews were focused on teachers since they comprised the largest body of attendees.

⁴⁰ While most American dioceses create Religion certification requirements, and the author created these specific seminars on virtue and on spirituality, based on the fact that the author draws a significant audience of superintendents when speaking at national meetings such as the Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE) of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), it seems that this type of seminar is original. However, several authors, such as Timothy Cook, Meryllann Schuttloffel, Ronald Nuzzi, Thomas Hunt, and James O’Keefe, SJ continue to research areas related to spiritual formation.

influenced their own spiritual growth, while the Virtue Seminar provided the content so that they could teach this to their students. However, the research only questioned them about the total influence of the two seminars. Thus, studying the separate influence of each seminar could provide more data about the nature and specific influence of each seminar. This could serve as a guide for the creation of additional seminars to build on the foundation provided by the Spirituality and Virtue Seminars.

This current study related to lay teacher formation was broad in the sense that the Spirituality Seminar offered general advice to help participants with their spiritual growth. The study could be expanded by creating a spirituality seminar that would focus on the charism or spiritual characteristics of a particular religious community since many do try to create a program to introduce new faculty to the Community's history and charisms, including the Xavierian Brothers, Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, and Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary among many others. Based on the outcome of this current study and the positive influence it had on the participants, this could be a means for current religious communities to nurture the charisms of their founders and continue their community's influence on Catholic education, despite declining numbers of religious vocations.

Character Education

In recent years, many materials have been created related to character education. These have included stories, videos, and manuals filled with a wide range of activities to do in the classroom. However, this current study was more focused on the teacher's personal preparation. Teachers' personal spiritual growth and development of their relationship with Christ, along with a plethora of theological and psychological content to give them an understanding of virtue and human development, seemed to take them from simply doing activities to looking to inspire students to act morally and virtuously as a way of life modeled after Christ.

A future topic for study would be the students who are involved in some type of character education. Does a Virtue of the Month Program, implemented by teachers who have attended the Spirituality and Virtue Seminars, produce more positive and lasting character development in students than a set of character or virtue activities, implemented by teachers who have not had this type of preparation?

An additional topic for future research, and specifically teacher education research, could be to adapt the seminars to provide a character education preparation for teachers in any school, including the public sector. While the faith dimension and Christ-centered approach provides an essential foundation for a character education program in Catholic education, several recognized educational theories supported the Spirituality and Virtue Seminars, regardless of the religious dimension. These included the role of the educational leader to create schools of competence and excellence (Sergiovanni, 1984), the pattern of Emergent Literacy (Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Sulzby, 1994; Sulzby & Teale,

1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1986, 1996; Yaden et al., 2000), scaffolding (Sulzby & Teale, 1991), and a broadened view of literacy (Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1994). In addition, the role of the educator, noted by Plato and Aristotle, has been seen as “a spiritual vocation implying its surest foundation is the educator’s own spirituality”⁴¹ (Groome, 1998, p. 37). Other supporting educational theories were a program of character education built on respect and responsibility (Lickona, 1991), the importance of caring as the cornerstone for the commitment of teaching (Sergiovanni, 2000), the need to recognize the relationship between the one caring and the one cared for (Noddings, 1984), and the importance of building a moral literacy for youth (Bennett, 1993). Finally, the study was supported by the notion that “We progress in our character as a value becomes a virtue, a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way”⁴² (Lickona, 1991, pp. 50–51). Character is the fruit or outgrowth of virtue. Therefore, a series of seminars to strengthen the teacher’s own spirituality and to provide an understanding of the meaning and values associated with virtue could provide the enrichment and motivation to make the character education manuals come alive.

Conclusion

Traditionally, Catholic schools in the USA were staffed exclusively by priests, brothers, and sisters. Today, however, they are predominantly staffed by laypersons. This change in teaching staff has inevitably altered, to one degree or another, the essential religious character and culture of Catholic schools. In addition, the broader Catholic culture is threatened by external challenges, including materialism, consumerism, secularization, relativism, and changes in family life. The need for Catholic education as an aide to support parents, the primary educators of their children, is even greater amid these external challenges. To provide assistance in the overall mission, spirit, culture, and charism of Catholic schools, a series of Spirituality Seminars and Virtue Seminars was created. Based on this qualitative interview study, the seminars had a positive influence on the individual participants, especially in developing their spirituality. The seminars also assisted them with their teaching and thinking about their teaching pedagogy. The participants found a relationship between the seminars and character education. Finally, the participants perceived that they had a deeper understanding of the mission or purpose of a Catholic school and how to implement this in their daily interaction with students, staff, and parents. The seminars not only provided the participants with information, but also provided for the formation of the participants.

This qualitative study not only examined these topics by reviewing each case study, but also identified specific themes that emerged in trying to determine

⁴¹ Groome, T. (1998). p.37.

⁴² Lickona, T. (1991), pp. 50–51.

the influence of the seminars. Some of the themes, including prayer, modeling, strengthening, and integration, existed within and across the four areas being studied for the influence of the seminars. The implications of this study reveal that the seminars could be valuable for Catholic education, as well as character education in any school setting and could be of importance for future study.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE USA: POLITICS, POLICY, AND PROPHECY

Gerald M. Cattaro and Bruce S. Cooper

Introduction

Long a major force in American¹ education, new Roman Catholic elementary and secondary schools continue to open in such geographically diverse locations as Atlanta, Minneapolis, and Orlando (Zehr, 2005). At the same time, schools in such places as the Diocese of Brooklyn, the only all-urban diocese in the USA, and home to some of the oldest Catholic schools in the nation, schools continue to close (Newman, 2005). As a result, the Catholic schools' share of the non-public school population continues to decline. Yet, even in light of this steady decline, Catholic schools remain the largest nonpublic school "system" in the USA (see Figure 1). In reality, it should be kept in mind that Catholic schools are not as much a system as a loosely coupled collection of independent schools.²

Catholic schools in the USA have been critical to the development of the American culture, legal rights, and religious values, and family choice for over 200 years. For when the nation was founded and the current constitutional government implemented in 1784, not one Catholic parochial school existed in the nation (as the first Catholic parish was not opened until 1783 in Philadelphia), even though a Protestant system of public schools was established in each state and a range of religious schools, again run by Protestant sectors. It was not until the first wave of Catholic immigrants arrived, that the set was staged for the formation of religious rights of schooling.

The fusion of politics, policy, and prophecy paved the road to what is perceived by many to be one of the most complex structures of Catholic education in the

¹ American for the purpose of this chapter refers to the USA an important concept as it led to the development of Americanism which was challenged by Papal authority (see notes 11 and 12).

² A paradoxical phenomenon, on the one hand there is a view that Catholic schools are viewed as a system actually ownership is predominantly by parish or religious congregation and not systemic (Buetow, 1970).

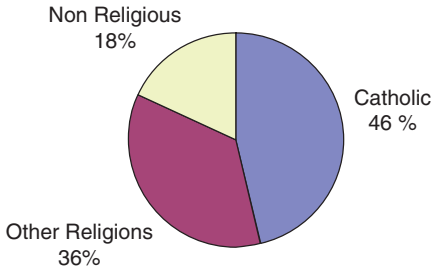


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of students in private schools by typology (US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Private School Universe Survey, 2003–2004)

global sphere. Politics led the way to legal concerns amid a growing tide of anti-Catholic sentiment, policy providing the lens of the contextual frame as to identify mission of the development of Catholic schools and prophecy provided the drive for the future of this “gift” to the USA. These archetypes buttress this chapter on the development of Catholic education in the USA as they bridge the gap between the pedagogical and spiritual nature of the Catholic school in a secular nation.

Politics

Interestingly, the drafters of the US Constitution sought to prevent both the establishment of an official state religion and the prohibition of religious rights to congregate and worship. The First Amendment is clear on these two points: the government may neither establish an official state religion nor act to prohibit on the contrary practices thereof. But concerning the rights of religious congregations, churches, synagogues and mosques, and religious associations to open their own schools and to control the curriculum and pedagogy for their children, the Constitution and state laws were silent.

So, when in 1923, the state of Oregon led the way in establishing public education as the official exclusive schools, and in disqualifying children from fulfilling their compulsory education laws in nonpublic, religious schools, the stage was set for a clash of ideologies. The dispute led finally to a lawsuit, challenging the exclusivity of public schooling and the pursuit of *Pierce v. Society of Sisters of Charity* (1925)³ case. The Supreme Court ruled to protect not only the rights of worshippers and congregation, but also the rights of religious groups to establish private, faith-based schools in the USA, which would fulfill the compulsory education statutes of the states.

So while Catholic and other private and religious schools enjoyed legal protection breaking the hegemony of public schools to fulfill the state requirements for compulsory schooling, the right to exist did not guarantee families public

³ *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* 268 US 510. The Supreme Court of the USA upheld the decision of a federal district court, which overturned Oregon legislation requiring all grammar-school students to attend public schools. The law effectively prohibited Catholic and other private schools; the Court's ruling, therefore, permitted the continued existence of Catholic schools.

subsidies for their children's education; thus private education in the USA became dependent on tuition and subsidies from a variety of faith-based sources, i.e., families, churches, charities, and donations through fund-raising.

Thus began the modern era of judicial educational policy where each value judgment under the religion clauses must turn on whether acts in question are intended to establish or interfere with religious belief and practice or have the effect of doing so. Cases such as *Cochran v. Louisiana State Board of Education* (1930)⁴ which resulted in allowing public funds to be used to furnish textbooks to children enrolled in parochial schools on the basis that the benefit was to the child, not the school; *Everson v. Board of Education of the Town of Ewing* (1947)⁵ considered tax-supported transportation for nongovernment school pupils constitutional on the basis of the child benefit theory (also, the exclusion of students of schools parochial from bus service imposed a burden on the free exercise of religion) and *The Board of Education v. Allen* (1969)⁶ in which states were permitted to loan secular textbooks to nonpublic schools became a litmus test of the first amendment and the establishment clause. Creating an ideological battle of legal judgments federal programs to offer needy, disabled, and limited English-proficient children their share of public resources and help were challenged in court as recently as *Aguilar v. Felton* (1985)⁷ using the "separation of church and state" as a reason to deny children help on the campuses of their faith-based schools, a decision later reversed (*Agustini v. Felton*, 1997)⁸ thus establishing a seesaw effect.

Catholic schools in the USA fought for the right to exist and won some public support, and won under federal programming, but lost access to full or even partial tuition support, until recently when vouchers were made available to private and Catholic school families under state voucher programs in Wisconsin (Milwaukee), Ohio (Cleveland), and across Florida for children attending "failing" public schools. This right to voucher usage in Catholic and other private religious schools was upheld in 2002 in a US Supreme Court decision, (*Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, 2002)⁹

Meshed in the political milieu of the country, the growth of Catholic schools in the USA has been steady from the 1880s to 1964, the peak year in US history in which some 5.7 million children attended Catholic K-12 schools, which comprised

⁴ *Cochran v. Louisiana State Board of Education* 281 US 370 (1930). This decision of the US Supreme Court is significant in the area of separation between church and state, because, by adopting the child benefit theory, it holds that a state statute providing free textbooks for the pupils of both public and private schools does not violate the 14th Amendment.

⁵ *Everson v. Board of Education of the town of Ewing* 330 US 1 (1947). The court of Appeals ruled in favor of Transportation for Catholic School Children citing the Child Benefit act.

⁶ *Board of Education v. Allen* 392 US 236. This decision upheld that New York Textbooks were free of charge to all students grades 7-12.

⁷ *Aguilar v. Felton* 473 US 402 (1985). Upheld that Title I programs in religious schools violated Establishment Clause of US Constitution because state presence was needed to monitor Title I programs.

⁸ *Agustini v. Felton* 521 US 203 (1997).

⁹ *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 639 (2002). The Supreme Court's upholding the Cleveland voucher program in offering tuition assistance has certainly heightened public awareness of the contributions that Catholic elementary schools have made to the common good of America.

12% of all children in American schools, and 81% of the total number of children attending nonpublic schools.

The country was ready; as it had survived World War II, the post-war Depression, the Cold War against rising Communism, and built new schools in the 1950s, leading to the largest enrollment in US history in the early 1960s. By 1964–1965, Catholic schools accounted for nearly 89% of all private school attendance and 12% of all school-age children in school (K-12) in the USA. The number of religious (priests, brothers, and sisters) was at its highest, allowing schools to offer qualified teachers at minimal costs, meaning that most children in the 1940s and 1950s attended their parish school free of charge, with tuition being collected in the Sunday collection, plus help from wealthier families.

Growth and Decline

Overall private elementary and secondary school enrollment increased by 23% between 1989 and 2002, while the Catholic attendance and percentage had begun to decline. Furthermore, the private sector school enrollment is projected to increase an additional 5% between 2004 and 2014 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005, p. 11). What were some of the contributing factors to this growth and decline?

In attempting to explain the growing numbers of children attending Catholic schools in the 1950s, leading up to the peak year of 1964 with 5.66 million children attending, we must consider some of the political and socioeconomic factors in play between 1950 and 1964. As the Golden Age of US Catholic education, this era found traditional, Catholic ethnic groups (particularly Irish and Italian) entering the middle class in large numbers. Many of these veterans returned from World War II and the Korean War, to an economic boom, supported by college attendance under the GI Bill, suburbanization, and new white-collar employment, marked by the height of industrialization and manufacturing.

As Hallinan (2000) fully explains:

Fearful that the public schools would promote Protestantism, Catholic leaders devoted extensive resources to forming their own schools, attempting to have a Catholic school in every parish. Catholic parents were commanded to send their children to Catholic schools. This attitude, coupled with the large influx of Catholic immigrants to the United States, fed the dramatic expansion of the Catholic school system, paralleling the expansion of the public schools. (p. 210)

Particularly unique was that the traditional family structure had remained intact, with men working and women staying at home after working women were in factories to support the war effort. Thus, we have seen an interesting mix of modernization and industrialization between 1950 and the mid-1960s, while retaining the so-called traditional familial values. The Catholic schools benefited from the economic boom, as never seen before, while bolstered by conservative religious and family values all of which meant regular church attendance and

Table 1. Total Catholic school enrollment and number of Catholic schools by decade: 1880–2006 (From National Catholic Educational association US Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2005–2006)

Year	Total Catholic school Enrollment (million)	Total number of Catholic schools
1920	1.926	8,103
1930	2.465	10,046
1940	2.396	10,049
1950	3.067	10,778
1960	5.253	12,893
1964	5.662	13,296
1970	4.367	11,352
1980	3.139	9,640
1990	2.589	8,719
2000	2.653	8,144
2006	2.363,220	7,589

support of local parish churches and local parish Catholic schools. By the mid-1960s, however, the social ethos had changed with Civil Rights, the anti-Vietnam movement, social experimentation, the Women’s Movement, Vatican Council II (1962), and the liberalization of education (Bryk et al. 1984). An increasing number of Catholic families, many now solidly in the middle class, were sending their children to suburban public schools, leaving the urban parochial schools to accept non-Catholics, and either to merge or close.

As shown in Table 1, the number of Catholic schools in the pre-World War II era (1940) is 10,049, peaking at 12,893 in 1960, but by 2006, we see a decline to 7,589 or a loss of 5,304 schools with enrollment down by 3 million students. In effect the combination of suburbanization, liberalization, and the rise of the Catholic middle class, together, may help to explain the precipitous drop in Catholic schools enrollment numbers between the mid-1960s and 1990.

In the 1990s, once the Catholic school enrollment had settled around 2.5 million, we see a fairly flat trend line with enrollment remaining at around 2.5 million through the 1990s and early 2000s (1990 showed 2.58 million; 2000 with 2.62 million; 2002 with 2.52 million; and 2004 at 2.42 million). According to predictions, these numbers will drop further with a number of schools predicted to close. In the latest year we see 38 new Catholic schools opening but 223 schools closing or merging nationally (MacDonald, 2005).

Catholic schools enrolled 86% or 5.6 million students out of the total private enrollment of 6.4 million children in nonpublic schools of all types in 1964, with non-Catholic private school students at 0.795 million. This level of enrollment was the high watermark for US Catholic education, which has declined steadily to the present. For example, in 1985–1986, Catholic school enrollment was down to 2.9 million and the enrollment in non-Catholic private schools was 2.7 million with a total for that year of 5.7 million enrolled in all nonpublic schools.

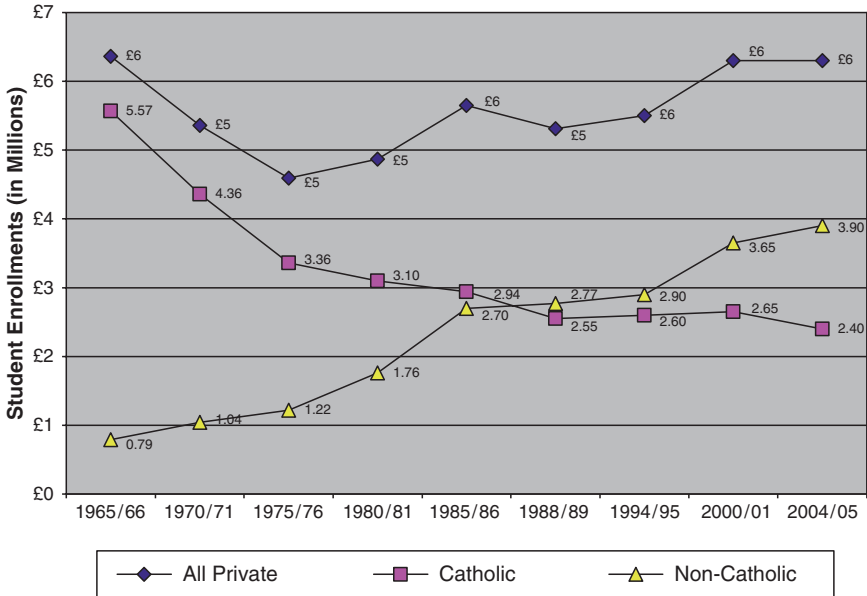


Figure 2. Private school enrollments by group 1965/66–2004/5 (US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Private School Universe Survey)

By 1995, Catholic school enrollments were 2.6 million students and non-Catholic private school enrollments were at 2.9 million, for a total of 5.5 million in all non-public schools. In the most recent data, the trend has continued, even intensified, as Catholic enrollments dropped to 2.4 million while others rose to 3.9 million, for a total of 6.3 million, wherein the total in 2004/5 for all private schools at 6.3 million was similar to the total in 1965 (see Figure 2).

Thus, in 1965, we see that students attending Catholic schools comprised 87.5% of all students with only 12.5% attending non-Catholic schools. By 1985, the total for all private schools had dropped to 5.65 million pupils but the total non-Catholic private school enrollment had grown to 2.7 million; and the Catholic school enrollments were barely the majority of 2.9 million, or about 51% of the total. By 2004/5, Catholic schools were at only 2.4 million pupils, while total nonpublic was 6.3 million, meaning that Catholics remain the plurality at 39%, but are no longer the majority of children in nonpublic schools.

Table 2 shows the changes in the mix of private schools, with an overall increase of 0.285 million students in total private school enrollments, with Catholic schools declining from about 55–46% of all private school enrollments. Meanwhile, Conservative Christian enrollments grew by 4.2%, and “affiliated private school” students saw a drop of 2%, while unaffiliated/independent and non-sectarian private school enrollments went up by 1.4% and 4.8% respectively. So not only have Catholic school students decreased, but also their share of the sector also diminished.

Table 2. Trends in Private School Enrollments K-12 (From US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Private School Universe Survey)

School year ending	Total private school enrollment (in million)	Roman Catholic %	Conservative Christian %	Affiliated %	Unaffiliated %	Nonreligious %
1990	4.838	54.5	10.9	12.8	8.5	13.2
2004	5.123	46.2	15.1	10.8	9.9	18.0
Change	+0.285	-8.3	+4.2	-2.0	+1.4	+4.8

Total enrollment and percentage distribution of students enrolled in private elementary and secondary schools, by school type and grade level: 1989–1990 and 2003–2004, are presented in Table 2.

In 1990, 12.5% of all US students of school age went to private schools, of which 48% were attending the nation’s Catholic schools. By 2002–2003, the percentage of total K-12 children in nonpublic schools remained fairly constant at 11.7%. However, the Catholic percentage of private fell by 9% to just 39% of the private sector, and only 4.6% of the total of school-age children in the USA. In the period, then, between 1965 and 2003, Catholics went from 87.5% to a low only 39% in 2002/3. Thus, of all children in the USA in schools, public, and private, in 1964, we see a total of 41.4 million, of which 5.6 million were in Catholic schools, for a percent total of 13%.

In 1988, the total enrollment in all school was 40.1 million, but the Catholic school number and percent was down to 2.8 million or 7%; and by 2005, the total number of children in all schools was at 54.3 million, of which 6.3 million or 11% are in private and 4.4% are in Catholic. So at its peak, Catholic school children were 13% of the school population. Recently, it is down to 4.4% as overall populations grew and Catholic enrollments sank.

Policy

For the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. (Lumen Gentium, November 21, 1964, 18,136)

With right to exist, and even now the right of access to marginal funding under vouchers, the growth, and recent decline of Catholic schools in the USA are also related to the actions of the Church and its response to the external environment of its own organization. The Catholic community has always established some sort of school wherever they settled in China, India, Africa, or the “New World,” whether conquerors, explorers, or missionaries. The command was clear “Euntes, *docete omnes gentes!*” “To go forth and teach all nations” (Matt. 16: 15), this biblical imperative, propelled, and rationalized all

efforts of the Roman Catholic Church’s labors in education. It is in the illumination of this tradition that the cyclical evolution of the Catholic schools in the USA begins.

Conversion

The first juncture (Figure 3) of Catholic education in what is presently the USA occurred in the 16th century when the Franciscans in the Spanish territories set up mission schools. Nowadays, many of these “missions” such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and Sacramento are mega urban centers. The French Jesuits also contributed to the establishment of schools in St. Louis, Milwaukee, and the Louisiana territory. Righteous men such as Father Serra, a Franciscan, and Father Marquette, a Jesuit, opened these schools to the indigenous people of the region. The thinking of the time was the hope of conversion to the Catholic Religion. Under French and Spanish jurisdictions, schools were also started in Illinois, Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania. With the witness of early disciples as their models, the Catholic Church kept true to its mission in the presence of the first Catholics who arrived upon the American shores. Their mission was direct, preaching the gospel, baptizing and teaching the indigenous people they encountered. Pope Leo XIII put this so eloquently in his apostolic exhortation *Longinqua* (1885) given on the Feast of the Epiphany to the US Bishops reminding them of the Catholic Identity of America:

For it is sufficiently well known how many of the children of Francis, as well as of Dominic and of Loyola, were accustomed during the two following centuries to voyage thither for this purpose; how they cared for the colonies brought over from Europe; but primarily and chiefly how they converted the natives from superstition to Christianity, sealing their labors in many instances with the testimony of their blood. The names newly given to so many of your towns and rivers and mountains and lakes teach and clearly witness how deeply your beginnings were marked with the footprints of the Catholic Church. (Wynne, 1903: *Longinqua*, 3)

The mission of Catholic education was primarily concerned with the supernatural and a tradition of justice. The first schools set up as mission schools were in

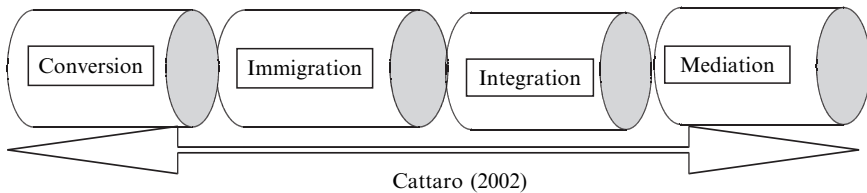


Figure 3. Cyclical development of Catholic urban schools from conversion to mediation

fact for the Native Peoples of America. Black children migrants of force, were also constituents in Catholic education in America from almost the very beginning we read of black children attending the Ursuline school in New Orleans as early as 1724 (Buetow, 1970). These early attempts to educate Native Americans and African Americans were indeed Eurocentric and those who accomplished the task of instruction were white Europeans most committed to the salvation of souls as Pope Leo XIII further indicates:

We cannot pass over in silence those whose long-continued unhappy lot implores and demands succor from men of apostolic zeal; We refer to the Indians and the negroes who are to be found within the confines of America, the greatest portion of whom have not yet dispelled the darkness of superstition. How wide a field for cultivation! How great a multitude of human beings to be made partakers of the blessing derived through Jesus Christ! (Wynne, 1903: *Longinqua*, 23)

Bishop John Carroll, the first American Catholic Bishop, a Jesuit consecrated in 1790 continued the missionary efforts of Catholic schooling by encouraging the development of schools in letters dated 1792 (McCluskey, 1964). Almost all his clergy were immigrants; yet he wished that all would lay aside national distinctions and attachments to from not an English, French, or Irish church but rather a Catholic American church. The anti-Catholic climate during the colonial period in which Catholics were without status and were restricted by colonial penal laws (Fitzpatrick, 1958) began the great debate which raged between church leaders as they tackled the swarms of immigrants who were to be their charge. Was it the responsibility of the Catholic schools to “Americanize” or encourage immigrants to continue their own national language and faith customs? Over the long term, *both* the Americanists, those who wished to see a new world path for the Church led by Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, and the conservatives who wished to keep a status quo led by Archbishop Corrigan of New York further split over the issue of Catholic schools presented by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, that every Catholic child must be in a Catholic school:

The third Plenary council of Baltimore 1884 which decreed: That near every church a parish school, where one does not yet exist, is to be build and maintained in perpetuum within two years of the promulgation of this council, unless the bishop should decide that because of serious difficulties a delay may be granted. (McCluskey, 1964, p. 94)

If this was not clear enough, the faithful were encouraged:

That all Catholic parents are bound to send their children to the Parish school, unless it is evident that a sufficient training in religion is given either in their own homes, or in other Catholic schools; or when because of a sufficient reason, approved by the bishop, with all due precautions and safeguards, it is illicit to send them to other schools. What constitutes a Catholic school is left to the decision of the bishop. (McCluskey, 1964, p. 94)

Table 3. Catholic school growth in the USA, 1880–1920 (Buetow, 1970)

Year	Catholic	Parochial	Pupil
	Population	Schools	Enrollment
1880	6,143,222	2,246	405,234
1890	8,277,039	3,194	633,238
1900	10,129,677	3,811	854,523
1910	14,347,027	4,845	1,127,251
1920	17,735,553	5,852	1,701,219

The Americanist were in favor of some sort of public education, conservatives demanded that children go to Catholic schools only. The situation became so grave that the Pope sent Archbishop Sorelli his representative to solve the issue.¹⁰ Even the presence of the Papal Legate could not resolve the feud. In May 1893 the public discussion was ended by Pope Leo XIII who indicated that while Catholic schools were to be promoted he left it up to the local bishops' as to when it was lawful and unlawful to attend public schools. (Reilly, 1944)

Immigration

Scholars of American Catholic history have universally considered immigration by far the most dynamic force in the 19th-century American Church, but they continued to debate the issue of "Americanization."¹¹ The commanding histories of American Catholicism written successively by, Peter Guilday (Guilday, 1932), and John Tracy Ellis (Ellis, 1971) considered "Americanization" the pivotal question of the day. As poor immigrants began to arrive in urban centers in the 1800s, the mind of the clergy seemed to be that of protectionism. They were protecting them from the Protestant religion. Consequently public schools were not only seen as an enemy of the Catholic Faith but also of ethnic cultures. The Cahenslyism (Barry, 1953) movement opposed any assimilation paving the way for an anti-Americanism (liberalism) (McAvoy, 1963) from Europe and a response from Holy See.¹²

Catholics comprised some 65% of the immigration in the USA between 1851 and 1870 (Government Printing Office, 1895). Many priests, brothers, and nuns who were involved in the teaching apostolate also arrived on the shores of the USA, making it easier for church officials to set up their own system of education. Buetow (1970) notes that the Catholic population of the USA increased threefold from 6,143,222 in 1880 to 17,735,553 in 1920 reflected in the growth of the Catholic school system, see Table 3.

¹⁰ Archbishop Satolli reiterated Pope Leo XIII's compromise supporting the effort of Catholic schools but not condemning parents who did not send their children to Catholic schools.

¹¹ Americanization or citizenship education became the Protestant basis for public schools in America (See Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

¹² The alleged heresy of Americanism addressed by Pope Leo XIII in *Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae* promulgated on January 22, 1899.

Thus, at their inception, Catholic schools functioned as a “fortress” protecting the immigrant population from the Protestant majority. This fortress, accordingly, was culturally dominated by the Catholic church until the 1960s (O’Keefe, 2000). The Church was protecting youth from the Protestant religion. But as new generations were born, of course, Catholics became quite “Americanized” as aspects of the Old World devotional culture and theology were gradually left behind and shades of a new, more individualistic, and democratic Catholicism appeared.

Integration-Mediation

Contextualization, which places a groups, religious education, and mission in a historical, political, social, and economic condition within which it finds itself, provides the theoretical underpinning for the transitions taking place in Catholic urban schools (Geertz, 1971). Based on their response to external environments, Catholic urban schools are transforming themselves from institutions that convert, assimilate, and protect to institutions of pluralistic complexity. O’Keefe (2000, pp. 66–67) provides information about urban Catholic schools and their pluralistic religious demographic from an Urban Catholic School Survey, surveying 631 urban schools, 398 primary and 243 secondary having a total population of 98,467 and 138,996 respectively.

Table 4 exhibits data drawn from the survey and demonstrates that 72.15 of students attending Catholic Urban Elementary schools are Catholic; however over 25% of the students are non-Catholic. This differs significantly from all Catholic primary schools where 88.6% of the students are Catholic (Metzler, 1998, p. 16).

Studies provide data demonstrating that a large number of minority students attend Catholic schools in the dioceses known as the “Big Ten” which include: New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Newark, Cincinnati, Detroit, Miami, Brooklyn, Los Angeles, among others (Convey, 1992). Unlike the Hispanics who tend to be Catholic, 80% of black students who attend Catholic schools are non-Catholic

Table 4. Religious affiliation of students in Catholic urban schools (*n* = 138,996) (O’Keefe, J., 2000)

Religious affiliation	% Elementary	% High school
Catholic	72.1	77.3
Other Protestant	7.4	9.2
Baptist	13.6	6.9
Pentecostal	1.8	2.1
Non-Christians	<1	1.5
Muslim	<1	<1
Buddhist	<1	<1
Hindu	<1	<1
Jewish	<1	<1
Report Other	4.9	3.1

(Favors & Carroll, 1996). According to McDonald (2005) non-Catholic school enrollment is currently at 13.5%, and the percentage of minorities in Catholic schools over the last 30 years has more than doubled. In 1970 minorities accounted for 10.8% of the Catholic school population in 2006 it is at 27.5 of the population. Latinos comprise 12.0%, African Americans 7.2%, Asian Americans 3.9%, and multiracial 2.8%. In recent times, the issues of immigration and race and their position as fundamental elements of education in the USA have received renewed attention in various documents of the Catholic Bishops' *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (NCCB, 1979), a letter which for the first time denounced racism as a sin, *Together a New People*, (USCC, 1989) *One Family Under God*, (NCCB, 1995). Reinforcing Cooper and Guare's (1997) research, which maintains that the process of contextualization critically assesses the forces that shape or distort the particular mission of religious education. For example, how do you maintain the Catholic ethos in a school where over one quarter of the students in urban areas are not Catholic?

The Case of Urban Catholic Schools

Catholic school urban students have demonstrated significant achievement compared to their public school counterparts, as evidenced by Greeley (1967), Cibulka et al. (1982), Coleman et al. (1982), Bryk (1982), Coleman and Hoffer (1987), Irvine and Foster (1996).

The Church's commitment to Catholic urban education is discussed qualitatively by Nina H. Shokraii (1997) in *Why Catholic Schools Spell Success for America's Inner-City Children*, in which she demonstrates in three case studies as to how the urban commitment of Catholic schools is lived out. Her vignettes provide us with evidence about the success of Catholic schools serving the needs of the inner city poor in their attempt to get a good education. She reveals how Holy Angels School located in the Kenwood–Oakland neighborhood of Southside Chicago, Illinois, where three out of four people live in poverty and violent crime is the rule rather than the exception has managed to become one of the strongest academic institutions in the country.

We also learn of St. Gregory, the Great Elementary School on West 90th Street in New York City, which serves only low-income black children from Harlem and Washington Heights. In 1995, 62% of St. Gregory's third graders were reading above the minimum standard, and 92% functioned above the standard in math. In Detroit, Michigan East Catholic High serves low-income minorities almost exclusively and has been particularly successful in teaching students who were not performing well. Nearly 75% of its students go to college after graduation, and only 15% of the parents paying the \$2,000 tuition fee are Catholic.

Holy Angels, St. Gregory the Great, and East Catholic High Detroit are typical of inner-city Catholic schools serving the common good. While these schools surviving on privately funded scholarships, long waiting list for lottery like

selection have survived, how long the Catholic schools will be able to be marked present in the Urban environs of American remains to be seen. Last year the Diocese of Brooklyn which prides itself as the only totally urban diocese closed over 25 of its schools. This last decade it has become difficult for diocese and parishes to provide the necessary funding to keep tuitions modest and compensate staff reasonably (McDonald, 2005).

Nativity Schools: A Creative Response in the Urban Context

Facing this challenge, creative models and prophetic leadership as demonstrated in refounding concepts, have open the path to new forms of Catholic education to meet the needs of urban America. The cylinder model presented in Figure 3 demonstrates the ability of the Catholic school “system” to refound itself in service to the urban populations in the USA. This reinvention seems to apply to a new model of Catholic school emerging that is committed to serving the urban poor at all cost. Not surprisingly, as with past movements it rests on the shoulders of religious congregations. Almost unnoticed, Nativity model schools have developed. These schools do not receive governmental or diocesan subsidy to aid in their operation. Unlike more traditional Catholic urban schools that charge a tuition fee to meet their expenses, Nativity model schools are essentially tuition free. The funding for Nativity model schools is provided by individual donors and organizations.

The original Nativity model school was founded by the Society of Jesus in 1971 in the lower east side of Manhattan. The school was founded to provide educational, emotional, and social support to the underserved minority youth living in the lower east side neighborhoods. The Nativity model has been found to be so effective in serving underprivileged youth it has been replicated over 40 times in some of the neediest neighborhoods in 20 states and the District of Columbia. Presently, 15 of the 41 Nativity model schools in operation are sponsored by the Society of Jesus. Another 19 schools are sponsored by a variety of religious orders.¹³ Only 7 of the 41 schools describe themselves as unaffiliated with any religious order (Smith, 2006).

Elements of the program components cited by Podsiadlo and Philliber (2003) can be found in each of the other 40 existing Nativity schools. According to the Nativity Network, a national association of independent educational centers, which serves as a clearing house and resource center for Nativity model schools, each Nativity educational center has its own distinctive identity, mission, and character, but each is patterned on an original model developed in 1971 by the

¹³ Non-Jesuit Nativity Schools: San Francisco, CA — DeMarillac Middle School (Daughters of Charity), Browning, MT — De LaSalle Blackfeet, (Christian Brothers), Brownsville TX — Guadalupe Educational Center (Marist Brothers), Lawrence, MA — Blessed Stephen Bellesini, O.S.A. Academy (Augustinians), New York — Cornelia Connelly Center, Connelly Middle School of the Holy Child, (Holy Child Sisters), Baltimore, MD — Mother Seton Academy (Collaboration of six Religious Congregations).

Nativity Mission Center in New York City. The Nativity Network describes ten elements that are considered key in the Nativity model.¹⁴

In an unpublished study of Nativity model schools by Smith (2006), data were collected from 39 of the 41 existing Nativity model schools. According to Smith (2006), 36 out of 39 of the schools indicated they served middle-school-age students. One school indicated it served a high school-age population and two schools indicated they served elementary aged students. Of the 36 schools that serve middle-school-age students, two schools operated a K-8 model, the remaining 34 schools served exclusively middle-school-age students. The entry grade of the school ranged from grade four to grade six.

Explaining Some Causes of Decline of Urban Catholic Schools

1. Economics

In the period 1930–1970, most Catholic parochial schools had no tuition charge for members of the parish, since costs were low and many teachers and school administrators were dedicated to teaching as vocation as religious, and were paid little to no salary. Thus, parishes, and religious orders were providing school opportunities at virtually no cost to parents. Mothers, too, were typically not working in the 1950s and 1960s, and volunteered in the parish and the school. All this changed as the numbers of religious declined, women went to work in large numbers, and the schools began charging a tuition fee.

Catholic schools have long been supported by the official Church, including (arch)dioceses, religious communities, and by philanthropy, as well as government subsidies under federal programs such as (Title I),¹⁵ and state programs, such as funding of Catholic schools in New York State for state-required mandates (e.g., testing, enrollment). While these public funds have never been large, they continue to be important to schools. The philanthropy has been variable, since many schools are seen as diocesan and parish and have had trouble raising large grants and donations from donors like Bill Gates, who gives billions of dollars to public schools.

It appears, then, that Catholic schools are vulnerable, being unattractive to liberal donors because of the Church and schools' mission and opposition to liberal issues such as gay rights and abortion. Meanwhile, some right-wing supporters may fault the Church for not being outspoken enough on conservative on issues such as Catholic Identity. And for the mainstream givers, the recent spate of child abuse and molestation cases with expensive settlements may be a disincentive for donations.

¹⁴ Qualities of Nativity Schools: Essentially a middle school, Quality education: academic, physical, social, moral, and spiritual development, For students of low-income urban families who would not otherwise have access to such an education, Not tuition driven, Faith-based, Small classes Extended day, Extended year, Parental involvement, Support during the high school years

¹⁵ Program provides remedial educational services to Nonpublic and Faith-based schools serving high percentages of poor children.

Table 5. Parishes–Catholic population (From Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2006)

	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2005
Parishes	17,637	18,515	19,244	19,331	19,236	18,891
Without a resident priest pastor 3,251		549	702	1,051	2,161	2,843
Catholic population million	45.6 million	48.7 million	52.3 million	57.4 million	59.9 million	64.8 million
% of US population	24	23	23	23	22	23
Catholic elementary schools	–	–	–	6,979	6,923	6,574

Table 6. Clergy-religious

Religious	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2005
Diocesan priests	35,925	36,005	35,052	32,349	30,607	28,375
Religious priests	22,707	22,904	22,265	16,705	15,092	14,137
Total priests	58,632	58,909	57,317	49,054	45,699	42,528
Priestly ordinations	994	771	533	511	442	454
Graduate-level seminarians	8,325	5,279	4,063	3,172	3,474	3,308
Permanent deacons	–	898	7,204	10,932	12,378	14,574
Religious brothers	12,271	8,625	7,544	6,535	5,662	5,451
Religious sisters	179,954	135,225	115,386	90,809	79,814	68,634

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (2006)

2. Staffing and Religious

While the number of Catholics in the USA has grown strongly, as shown in Table 6, with an increase in the number of parishes, the numbers of clergy and religious particularly religious sisters has dropped dramatically (Table 7).

The number of Catholics in 1965 numbered 45.6 million in the nation, a number that grew by 42% by 2005, for a total of 64.8 million adults and children. Also, the number of Catholic parishes grew by 1,254 or 7% from 17,637 in 1965 to 18,891 by 2005.

However, the personnel problems became enormous. Priests declined in numbers by 27% in the period 1965–2005, from 58,632 to 42,528 or a loss of 16,104 in 40 years. Worse for schools was the loss of teaching religious (brothers and sisters), as the number of religious brothers sank from 12,271 in 1965 to only 5,451 brothers in 2005, a decline of 6,820 or 55% in 40 years. But the loss of religious sisters, many of whom had been teachers in Catholic K-12 schools, was most problematic for Catholic schools, dropping from 179,954 sisters in 1965 to just 68,834 in 2005—a loss of 111,120 or 62%. Of the remaining numbers few have remained in Catholic schools thus compounding the situation see Table 8. In addition, many of the religious are near retirement or are retired and employed halftime.

Table 7. US numbers of Clergy-religious in Catholic schools (From National Catholic Educational Association of United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2005–2006)

State in life	Numbers	%
Sisters	5,244	3.4
Brothers	1,044	0.7
Priests	865	0.6
Female lay	112,844	74.0
Male lay	32,505	21.3
Total	152,502	100

Table 8. Location of Catholic schools in the USA (From National Catholic Educational association United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2005–2006)

	Number	%
Urban	3,237	43.2
Suburban	2,645	35.2
Rural	1,625	21.6

For, while the Catholic community had grown steadily in 40 years, by 42% due to birthrates and immigration, the total numbers of religious dipped from a bit more than a quarter million (250,857) to just 116,613 religious by 2005, or a loss of 134,244 or more than half (–53.5%) in 40 years. So, not only did these precipitous changes in numbers of religious mark a loss of spiritual leadership available to Catholic schools, these losses also meant that Catholic schools were replacing religious teachers and leaders with lay personnel. These changes meant greater costs in salaries and benefits and the instability of higher staff turnover unlike the generations of religious who had devoted their entire lives to these schools.

3. *Immigrants*

Traditionally, each new wave of Catholic immigrants has supported their local and parochial schools, starting with the Irish in the mid-19th century, the Italians and Polish at the turn of the 20th century, and many other European Catholics in the 20th century, all of whom have filled the seats in Catholic schools for the last 100 years. However, starting in the 1980s, the majority of new immigrants has been Latino who have joined Latino–Pentecostal churches that have sprung up in the storefronts in many Latino neighborhoods. It also appears too that the Catholic Church is less able to recruit Latino priests and religious who speak Spanish and relate to, or come from, these new immigrant communities.

Thus, one explanation for the decline of urban Catholic schools is their inability to provide a basic function: attract new parents and provide religious and educational services. So, as the former, older immigrants groups have used Catholic

schools as a stairway into the middle class and the suburbs, their replacements are filling cities but not Catholic churches and schools. Since many of the new immigrants are undocumented or in the country illegally some are fearful of the formal process of school registration. So while European immigrants often found Catholic schools that were, e.g., Irish, German, Italian, and Polish, contemporary Catholic immigrants are unable to find schools led by members of their own ethnic group let alone have familiar customs, language, and familiar religious ritual.

4. Institutional Factors: Demography Meets Geography

The Nations Bishops document on Catholic Schools Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (USCC, 2005) directs that Catholic schools should not abandoned their assurance to urban populations and therefore the educational needs of many poor families. This policy is evident in the demographics in Table 9 which illustrates that Catholic schools have 3,237 schools or 43.2% of their population in inner city or urban environments supporting the Church's traditional policy of mission to serve the poor and the immigrant.

However, as the Catholic communities moved out of cities and into suburbs and exurbs, they found local property taxes in the suburbs which are very expensive, and specifically are collected to support expensive local public schools.

Thus, why would a Catholic family pay \$12,000 property tax per annum for public schools, and then patronize a tuition-driven parochial school if one existed in that area? The mandate of the Third Baltimore Council is inoperative as parishes no longer build schools on their ground.

Prophesy

Opportunities and Promises

Catholic schools have to pursue the two major privatization efforts in the USA since the Reagan administration introduced charter schools¹⁶ and vouchers programs. In the case of charter schools, the courts have ruled against any religious charter schools been created at all (Weinberg, 2005). And while the legal precedent is for limited voucher payments for Catholic schools in Ohio and Wisconsin, not enough states have vouchers illegal or put so little funding into the vouchers that Catholic schools have hardly benefited. Catholic schools have been slow to benefit from voucher initiatives,

¹⁶ Charter Schools are innovative public schools that have been freed from some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that are applied to public schools. Their establishment, governance, and accountability vary by state and each charters school charter.

Having stated the possible judicial stance on charter schools, religious organizations could argue that recent Supreme Court precedents not only allow religious charters, but also requires that religious and nonreligious charters be funded in the same manner. *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia*¹⁷ (1995) held that the University of Virginia, a public government institution, could not deny funding to a Christian student group's publication. The Court found that the Establishment Clause did not bar funding the group's publication because the funding statute was neutral. Moreover, the university could not deny funding because to deny a religious group funding for a newspaper would be unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination (censorship). In 2001 the Supreme Court held that a New York school district could not ban parents from operating a religious after school club once it allowed secular groups to operate similar clubs (*Good News Club v. Milford Central School*, 2001).

In the case for vouchers, advocates such as Chester Finn,¹⁸ have argued that *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002), the Ohio voucher case, indicates that religion-based charter schools are constitutional. One must recall the infamous Americanism debates which fueled the early history of Catholic school development and thus pose the question, How will any of these proposed initiatives bear on the Catholic Ethos of the schools?

Agenda for Future Research

The decline of Catholic schools is both a problem and a challenge, not only to leaders of the Catholic Church, but also to communities, families, political leaders, and educators, and their concern for the common good of all children. The statistics, as shown, are devastating; there are five important opportunities and these need to be researched. First, Catholic schools are growing in those parts of the country where people are moving: the south, southwest, and west. Further analysis of the conditions in Texas, North Carolina, Louisiana, California, and other states and regions that are growing might give clues as to what might be done in the rest of the country.

Second, while Catholic *elementary* schools have precipitously declined in number and enrollment nationally, *secondary* schools have not. Perhaps some families are saving their money in the lower grades by using a local public elementary school, and then enrolling their children in Catholic high schools, which are perceived as safer, more supportive, and better at giving their children a chance to attend college. But more families may choose Catholic parish elementary schools in the future, seeing that they might better prepare their children for high schools or lower- and upper-level schools might work together to build a community and support one another. Further research is needed in this area.

¹⁷ *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* 115 S.Ct. 2510, 2523.

¹⁸ Chester Finn President of the Fordham Foundation promoting School Choice in the USA.

Third, much can be done to increase public support of Catholic schools, as the Hurricane Katrina recovery case shows. Congress allocated money to Catholic schools, in Louisiana and Texas, that were destroyed and damaged by the hurricane; these funds could help the families too. We need to devise a national strategy for gaining more public funds, through vouchers (public and private), charter schools, more Title I money, and greater funding from the state, equitable with what public schools receive. The Catholic schools can offer a high-quality education, a private alternative, and a school with values to many children from poor and middle-class homes. One approach might be to take a number of Catholic schools which have closed, or are about to close, and make them private; then place alumni and important corporate and business leaders on the new private Catholic school's board to help raise money and recruit staff. It may be that Catholic schools are suffering in their status as being neither fully supported by the Church, nor gaining resources available under private care and management.

Holland (2001) explained, one might interpret research to indicate that successful Catholic schools of the future need to adapt to their new populations, principle of Chapter 1 under No Child Left Behind states that all poor kids deserve extra help. Catholic schools have received millions of dollars in services from public funds through local school district (e.g., public school teachers, equipment, books are available to Chapter 1 eligible Catholic schools). This policy could be expanded. More research is required in this area.

Fourth, Church, community, and private agencies should join hands to support problems as opportunities, read and interpret the signs of the times with precision and dispatch, remain true to their academic and social mission, and "press for substantial public funding for their work" (Holland, 2001, p. 424).

Historically, the great strength of US Catholics for the last 100 years had been the parish structure that supports a local parish school. The parishes owned the property, built the buildings, had inexpensive religious to do the teaching, and a stable, loyal local client base. With changes in demography and technology, many Catholic families have moved out of cities and have other options, including improved public schools and a range of other private schools. However, the heavily bureaucratic diocesan structure, top-down control, and aging priesthood has been slow to adapt to these changes. Instead, we see school closings, mergers, and decline, without a clear, viable national strategy.

Catholic schools have been reluctant to engage in marketing, believing the faithful in the parish would send their children to them without considering other options. Families today in many urban areas have three choices: they can move to the suburbs where public schools are reputedly better, they can select from a growing range of other nonpublic schools, or they can select a charter school that is somewhat private. Many Catholic schools are wedded to the parish/diocesan structure, when perhaps they should incorporate, involve laity, raise money privately, and begin to act more like private schools and universities.

Some Catholic schools are incorporated¹⁹ and we shall have to wait to see if this new model is effective in recruiting, funding, and building schools in the future. Research into new developments is essential.

Now we see proposals afoot to privatize (incorporate) Catholic schools and to create local boards of trustees for these schools; a great way to bring rich Catholics and other groups onto the board, and solicit their ideas and support. Colleges and other private schools have been running successfully with trustee boards for centuries. Sixth, the USA has to appreciate the *contribution of private and religious/Catholic schools to the common good*, and make allowances to keep them going, growing, and improving.²⁰

We see this kind of commitment to colleges and universities, of all types and religious affiliations. Why not to K-12 Catholic schools also? And why are Catholic colleges deemed worthy of public support (from the GI Bill to Pell Grants), while Catholic elementary and secondary schools, that have contributed so much to the good of society for nearly two centuries, are deemed less worthy of help?

The past showed steady growth, as new immigrants and new parishes worked to form a growing number of new schools. They peaked in 1964 and have declined and stabilized since 2000. Catholic schools will never again be the dominant type of private school in the USA, but they have an important role to play. We see a new economics of Catholic education: tuition is here to stay; paid staff has replaced religious (who worked for virtually nothing); and the market is more competitive. But Catholic schools will continue to exist in some form; and will be called to compete in a more dynamic educational marketplace where adaptability and flexibility may allow them to thrive.

The future of Catholic schools is also very much related to the future of the Church in America: its structure, leadership, funding, and purpose. Some would argue that parochial schools have met their mission, helping to absorb millions of Catholics from Europe and other continents.

Now that the flow has slowed, perhaps the American Church should turn its attention to other roles and missions. Others would argue that with changes in the parish (private incorporation of Catholic schools) and leadership (more lay leadership, ministers), the schools may continue. And as privatization of education becomes more popular, perhaps Catholic and other religious schools may receive subsidies for their efforts, as happens in most other modern nations in the world (Cooper, 1991). Or perhaps Catholic schools will become

¹⁹ Incorporated Schools are owned and governed by lay school boards not by juridical persons or jurisdictions such as priests, religious, or Dioceses.

²⁰ The First Amendment of the US Constitution states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the exercise thereof." The courts have applied this statement in various cases. These decisions affect nongovernment schools. Numerous efforts and campaigns have been launched to try to expand the interpretation of child benefit theory and Establishment clause. The National Catholic Educational Association <http://www.ncea.org/public/index.asp> continues supporting full and fair parental choice in education to provide tax relief, vouchers, and scholarships. For a list of state support of religious schools. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/RegPrivSchl/chart3.html>

more like other private schools, available in the USA to middle-class families who can afford the tuitions, and cease to be eleemosynary organizations as in the past.

Whatever we see in the future, the USA is a better educated, freer place, more human place because of its Catholic schools. Hallinan (2000) makes a strong argument for these schools, when she explains:

[T]he Catholic school system provides a value-added dimension to education. Over and above their perspective on life that promotes justice, responsibility, and social service, they also challenge students to live generously in community, motivated by their religious faith. By providing this alternative to public schools, which at best offer a vague humanism to sustain the individual and communal behavior, Catholic schools make a unique and significant contribution to American society. (p. 218)

We hope these schools can survive in a competitive, modern, and public system, as the Church itself adjusts to its role in the 21st century:

Young people are a valued treasure and the future leaders of our Church. It is the responsibility of the entire Catholic Community—bishops, priests, deacons, religious, and laity—to continue to strive towards the goal of making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children, including those who are poor and middle class. All Catholics must join together in order to ensure that Catholic Schools have administrators and teachers who are prepared to provide an exceptional experience for young people—one that is both truly Catholic and of the highest academic quality.

—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO THE RECRUITMENT, FORMATION, AND RETENTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN THE USA

Merylann Schuttloffel

Historically, American Catholic education runs parallel to American public education and in tandem with the history of the American Catholic Church (Buetow, 1970; Elias, 2002; Walch, 2003). Two recent national events challenge the recruitment, formation, and retention of leadership for American Catholic schools. First, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002), a landmark piece of federal educational legislation, affects local schools in unprecedented ways. The second event challenging the leadership discussion for Catholic schools is the “leadership crisis” within the American Catholic Church (Weigel, 2002).

This chapter will explore the influence of these challenges. First, I will consider NCLB as an external challenge to the recruitment, formation, and retention of teachers and principals.¹ Second, I will describe the internal challenge presented by Church leadership. Next, I will present research that informs the current reality for the recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school teachers and principals. Lastly, I will reflect on these challenges and respond with recommendations and areas for future research.

An External Challenge from Federal Government Legislation

Federal educational policy was rare until education was tied to various poverty programs following the civil rights era of the 1960s. Americans have resisted a centralized model for their educational decision-making, as local control has possibly been the most consistent value in the USA for public education. Even today the locus of governance control rests at the district level, with an individual

¹ Teachers and principals are considered school leaders in many educational discussions and also for this chapter.

state as the highest level of local control. This model is in sharp contrast to those who follow a European or federally centralized model.

Similarly, American Catholic schools grew within the local community as national or ethnic churches suited to secure cultural roots that included the Catholic faith. As the USA grew into a nation, Catholic schooling focused on the transmission of faith and citizenship in order to demonstrate the ability of Catholic immigrants to be both good Americans and good Catholics (Buetow, 1970). Peaking with the election of John F. Kennedy as the first Catholic president, Catholics became mainstream American citizens.

An example of the relationship between Catholics and American society, NCLB, a government mandate, has had a ripple effect on Catholic schooling. Parents whose children attend Catholic schools typically gain their educational perspectives from mainstream secular media. From that view, much of the influence of NCLB for Catholic schooling rests within its language such as “quality teacher.” NCLB terminology has become part of everyday education parlance inside and outside of government (more typically referred to as “public education” in the USA) education.

Fundamental to reform legislation, policymakers propose that the principal is *the* change agent and crucial to the effective implementation of NCLB (*Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership*, ed.gov, *Teacher Quality*). The legislation’s focus on school site leadership mirrors the way Catholic schools have always operated, that is, with a lean structure based in the principle of subsidiarity. On this count, Catholic schools are ahead of the reform’s requirements for site-based management.

These reforms require school principals to exact change through an emphasis on quality teaching through accountability (ed.gov, *Teacher Quality*). For Catholic school principals the challenge is to recruit and retain teachers who demonstrate academic preparation and professional qualifications equivalent to their public school counterparts (Williby, 2004). Several conditions aggravate this situation that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The recent statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) recognizes that Catholic schools must have broad support, including financial resources, from within the Church in order to survive and thrive (2005). For example, the following point within the statement declares:

We must work with all parents so they have the choice of an education that no other school can supply—excellent academics imparted in the context of Catholic teaching and practice. (p. 4)

Catholic school leadership faces numerous challenges due to a new powerful national education policy that shapes client expectations. Responses within Catholic schooling to NCLB range from indifference to implied adoption within and across dioceses.² The next section raises the additional dilemma facing

² By visiting (arch)diocesan web sites it is possible to view a Catholic Schools Office’s vision, mission statements, and curriculum guides. While all include references to the teaching mission of the Church or statements about Catholic identity, evidence of NCLB is present within the language of standards and high stakes testing, common in the presentation of curriculum and testing measurements. Often

Catholic school leadership as a result of the recent events involving bishops and the pedophilia scandal. This presents the second leadership challenge.

Challenges from the Internal Relations of the Church

The visible, well-documented lack of leadership³ acumen among Church officials, and their misuse of authority within the events of the pedophilia scandal has caused many American Catholics to wonder about leadership for the Church and her many affiliated institutions. Unfortunately, the culture of hierarchy within the Church resists many of the characteristics attributed to organizations capable of transformation: a powerful vision, supported risk taking, active listening, and collaboration shaped by trust and honesty. How to create an organizational culture that supports these characteristics within the chancery building of an American diocese at this time challenges every ministry and nowhere is this more true than how the culture of hierarchy negatively impacts the role of a Catholic school principal.

The USCCB's renewal statement challenges the many diocesan constituents, including those that benefit from Catholic schooling, and points directly to routine financial constraints (USCCB, 2005). Supporters of Catholic schooling applaud the bishop's statement, "The burden of supporting our Catholic schools can no longer be placed exclusively on the individual parishes that have schools and on parents who pay tuition" (p. 10). And their powerful plea: "The future of Catholic school education depends on the entire Catholic community embracing wholeheartedly the concept of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, and translating stewardship into concrete action" (USCCB, 2005, pp. 10–11). One implication of this line of reasoning cannot be underestimated. American Catholics are in general no longer poor or disenfranchised. Catholics populate the corporate offices of the American business community, prominent legal firms, and status positions of elected public officials. Catholics have access to the resources to provide quality

the nature of these descriptions reflects the relationship of the diocese to the state. For example, Ohio is a state with a cooperative relationship with the Catholic schools, so the schools benefit from state resources but also maintain a powerful Catholic identity. In states where the relationship may not be as positive, Catholic schools promote the strength of their programs in the common language of the state education agencies to create legitimacy or have little to gain by engaging in a confrontation with the state. The size of the diocese is also relevant, a small diocese with a single staff person operating the Catholic schools office, may simply not have the resources to participate in the debate.

³ Peter Steinfels discussed the leadership dilemma facing the Church in his 2003 text: *A People Adrift: The crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America*. He proposed that the sex abuse scandal highlighted larger systemic problems with ecclesial leadership. He noted six categories: Failure of comprehension and empathy; failure of decisiveness; failure of focus; failure of persistence and follow-through; failure of openness; and failure of explanation (309–312). McBrien raised the question of the quality of bishop appointments in his National Catholic Reporter column (9/8/2006). Fullam considered the focus of the *Instrumentum Laboris (IL)* evaluation on seminary curricula. She questioned whether the narrow focus of the *IL* might impact the ability of future priests to learn appropriate competencies to work collaboratively with laity when they become pastors. Sofield et al. has argued that the essential elements of collaborative leadership are key to the building of community within the Church (Sofield & Juliano, 1998; Sofield et al., 1998; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995).

Catholic schooling to all who would benefit. Questions related to lay leadership, including financial support for the preparation, portability of benefits, increased authority concurrent with increased responsibility, and appropriate theological and spiritual formation, require thoughtful responses. The answers to these questions related to recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school leaders rest partly within the purview of the American bishops. However, while using their influence in resolving questions, bishops must understand the critical nature of their role in providing supportive conditions for the future of Catholic schooling, particularly in the area of succession planning in Catholic schools.⁴

Two contemporary challenges have been introduced. One challenge, NCLB, exerts influence externally on Catholic schooling. The second challenge, weak ecclesial leadership, internally affects Catholic schooling.⁵ The following section provides current research that portrays the shortage of Catholic school teachers and principals, the inadequacies of their preparation, and the difficulty in maintaining sufficient retention. This research emphasizes the interaction of these larger challenges and their cumulative effect on future recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school leaders.

The Research Context

Since the inception of American Catholic schooling, there has been an internal debate among American bishops surrounding the role of Catholic schooling as a priority (Bouquillon, 1892; Buetow, 1979; Reilly, 1943). The debate centers on the role of Catholic schools in a democratic, pluralistic society. Covertly, if not explicitly, the debate is about the use of the Church's financial resources. For Catholic school educators and school supporters, there was both enthusiasm and relief at the release of the recent USCCB statement in support of Catholic schooling (2005). However, the statement did not mark the end of the schooling debate. The USCCB's use of a consensus model of decision-making oftentimes masks fundamental differences between bishops beneath a language of agreement (Weigel, 2002).

As Convey (1992, 2000) noted was the case during the last 35 years, the support of bishops and pastors is essential to the viability of a Catholic school. Key

⁴ Succession planning is the process of identifying future leaders to fill key positions and providing the appropriate preparation for their transition into leadership (Hirsh, 2000). Typically associated with business, the term is currently applied within a wide range of management or leadership roles.

⁵ In spite of a bishops' statement that endorses Catholic schools, the reality is that many bishops are weak in their distribution of resources for Catholic school leadership (e.g., portability of benefits, professional development). There is a marked difference in the behavior of those bishops who *actively* support Catholic schools. For example, the Catholic Education Leadership and Policy Studies program at The Catholic University of America was designed to create a pool of future diocesan educational leadership. CUA provides generous tuition support to these students (50% reduction of the summer tuition rate). These graduate students, typically employed as principals or associate superintendents, are encouraged to seek diocesan support for the balance of their expenses (room and board, books, travel, child care, etc.). A small percentage of these students actually receive some type of support from their local diocese. A broader view of Catholic education is required so that the professional development of future leaders is seen as a contribution to the entire Church, even if, in this case a principal, chooses to take a position in another diocese than the supporting diocese of origin.

indicators of school viability are “their value, quality, effectiveness, sources of support and parental involvement” (2000, p. 26). The survey data highlight how bishops have strong support for Catholic schools, while pastors, potentially future bishops, who have firsthand experience with Catholic schools, are more supportive than those who do not. These views reinforce the perception that Catholic schools are valuable contributors to the Church, and indeed, Catholic schools make a valuable educational contribution (Hunt et al., 2002). The question remains whether survey responses or public statements translate into resource priorities that strengthen the long-term viability of Catholic schooling.

The continuing presence and effectiveness of Catholic schooling within the larger schooling debate draws a spotlight from those who question “why” or “how” successful education happens within Catholic schools (Bryk, 1996). Bryk et al. (1993) propose that Christian personalism⁶ and subsidiarity ultimately define the differences between effective Catholic schools and effective government schools. Grace’s (1996) analysis shapes a compelling argument for the significance leadership plays in Catholic schooling particularly during the final transitional stage to lay leadership. If a post-Vatican II understanding of Catholic schooling is to prevail, the balance between mission and survival rests with capable leadership. Again, this challenge points to the recruitment, formation, and retention of well-formed leaders.

Recruitment of Teachers and Principals

Typically Catholic school principals rise from the teaching ranks. For that reason, shortage questions about teachers have direct implications for finding future principals. The daily stresses of school leadership leave many classroom teachers reluctant or unwilling to consider moving into the principal’s office. Hine (2003) proposes that there are an adequate number of principal candidates, but that many candidates simply choose not to become principals. “Some factors that school districts may consider in alleviating this problem include reducing the myriad of requirements needed for certification, increasing the relative compensation for work and hiring younger administrators” (p. 275).

In turn, the explanations for the current teacher shortage in government schools apply to Catholic schools: (1) the increase in baby boomer teacher retirement⁷; (2) growing student populations by the baby boomlet (children

⁶ Christian personalism, as defined by Bryk et al., “calls for humaneness in the myriad of mundane social interactions that make up daily life” (1993, p. 301). This concept shapes the behaviors within Catholic schools beyond the skills for academic performance into the relationships and actions identified with a Christian community.

⁷ Data suggest that attrition is the major problem, not novice teacher shortage. In other words, if those who are prepared to teach would remain teaching, there would not be a shortage. Retirement might fuel the teacher shortage in the future as so many current teachers are members of the baby-boomer generation (1946–1964 birth dates) and are soon eligible for retirement, the larger issue seems to be attrition.

of the boomers); (3) lucrative nonteaching careers; (4) the lack of autonomy for teachers in an era of tightening policy mandates; and (5) diminishing parent involvement, administrative support, and a general public disparagement for teachers (Boe, 1996; Durrow & Brock, 2004; Hughes, 1990; Lucke, 1998; Polansky, 1999; Williby, 2004).

There are additional reasons that account for the decreasing number of teachers including: (1) the lack of religious vocations; (2) attractive incentives offered by public school districts; (3) the continuing gap between Catholic teacher salaries and benefits and government schools; (4) minimal encouragement to serve in Catholic schools by Catholic teacher preparation institutions⁸; and (5) little impetus within Catholic families for their children to serve the Church (Schutloffel, 2001).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future argues that by seeking a solution to the teacher shortage the focus is misguided. NCTAF proposes that the core issue is attrition (2002). Their strategies address four key areas: salaries, working conditions, teacher preparation, and beginning teacher mentoring (2002). These challenging areas are also present within Catholic schools. Within this competitive environment, diocesan administrators and local Catholic school principals remain diligent, though anxious, in their efforts to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

Furthermore, Catholic school principals also feel increased pressure from parents who seek teachers with professional credentials comparable to many government school teachers. In addition, too often parents see only an ancillary relationship between parish life, or the Church, and the Catholic school. Many suburban parishes include a much larger religious education student population than the numbers attending the Catholic school. In other cases, regional school configurations separate parish and school into separation constituencies.

Similarly, NCLB has had an impact on Catholic schooling. Parents whose children attend Catholic schools typically gain their educational perspectives from secular media.⁹ From that view, much of the influence of NCLB for Catholic schooling rests within its language such as "quality teacher" from the legislation. NCLB terminology has become part of everyday education parlance inside and outside of government schooling.

⁸ Few Catholic institutions provide regular teacher preparation students with incentives to work in Catholic schools. In fact, the high tuition rates at Catholic colleges and universities, preclude these students from taking a position in a Catholic school at a lower salary. The Association of Catholic Leadership Programs engages in efforts to improve the recruitment and formation of Catholic school teachers by encouraging stronger relationships between Catholic teacher preparations institutions and local (arch)dioceses. Lourdes College (Ohio) is an example of a teacher preparation program that supports students to become Catholic schoolteachers that includes financial incentives.

⁹ Anecdotally principals readily describe the influence of public schooling on their school, particularly in parent involvement spheres (e.g., Home and School Associations and school boards). Those who work with school boards, such as members of the NABCCE executive committee, find that making the distinction between Catholic school boards and public school boards is a typical area for training for parents. Also principals report that parent comments and questions about the school reflect secular education jargon and issues more often than catechetical discussions.

School principals are also challenged to demonstrate change through an emphasis on quality teaching through accountability (ed.gov, *Teacher Quality*). Several conditions aggravate this situation.

First, highlighting student achievement forces principals of those schools where students perform modestly to focus on the teacher's role in raising student performance. For example, NCLB emphasizes the relationship between student achievement and a quality teacher. But as Cochran-Smith (2005) states, this emphasis on teacher quality is both good and bad. She points out that other intervening variables (most notably SES) will continue to attract teachers to those schools and districts that already have higher test scores. In turn, those highest performing districts will seek to employ only the highest qualified teachers to maintain their ranking. Ultimately, those districts having the financial resources will hire the most qualified teachers. Potentially, this situation could exacerbate the cultural dichotomy pitting the haves against the have-nots. Given the emphasis on quality teachers, Catholic schools are not isolated from the implications as new scrutiny is being given to the teacher quality within Catholic schools (Williby, 2004).

Second, public school districts aggressively recruit teachers who have completed their novice experience within Catholic schools and were thus nurtured to become highly qualified teachers. Research into teaching indicates that novice teachers require intensive supervision and mentoring to transition into reflective teaching practice (Zumwalt, 1989). With their small size and intense relationships, Catholic schools may do a better job of integrating novice teachers into the ranks of experienced teachers. However, there are wide discrepancies in entry-level programs. The local diocese and individual school play a huge role in how effectively this process takes place. The Diocese of Denver (2000), among others, provides a model program for mentoring novice teachers. Catholic school leaders might argue that Catholic school principals serve the secular schools by nurturing novice teachers.

The third reason for decreasing numbers, in most areas of the USA is that salaries and benefits continue to lag behind suburban public school districts that are often perceived to be more attractive teaching locations further stymieing Catholic school principals in their retention efforts. Research illustrates how the "spread" between Catholic school salaries widens in direct relation to the strength of the local public school district salary scale (Schuttloffel, 2003a, pp. 15–16). For example, in a typical metropolitan area, suburban public school districts may offer as much as 50% more salary and benefits to their principals. Catholic school teachers and principals in suburban or large metropolitan urban areas have both lower wages and a higher cost of living. Then by comparison, Catholic schools in smaller cities or rural areas appear to be more competitive with the local public school district (80–100% of the local public school salary scale). In these locales, the public schools also lag behind the suburban school districts in salaries and benefits. Modern trends no longer consider a wife's income as supplemental, but integral to the family budget, add to the financial stress for both schools and families. Many Catholic school teachers and principals anecdotally convey that they cannot afford to send their own children to Catholic schools

due to high tuition and their low salaries, clearly an embarrassing position for both schools and families.¹⁰

Fourth, only a small number of Catholic school graduates choose to return to teach within Catholic schools. There are several reasons for their lack of interest in teaching in Catholic schools. Typically preservice teachers did not attend Catholic schools and do not have any attachment or allegiance. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that preservice teachers may have a desire to teach in Catholic schools, but their own educational debt prohibits them from taking a position in a Catholic school.¹¹

Lastly, the lack of a clearly articulated argument for Catholic schooling within the larger parish and civic community makes it difficult for leaders to promote how Catholic schools contribute positively to the national educational debate. An unclear understanding of Catholic schooling mitigates the ability to build a broad constituent base for Catholic schooling (Schuttloffel, 2005). The bishops' statement attempts to address this challenge (USCCB, 2005, p.11).

In an earlier study, I asked the question, "Why do candidates choose to teach in a Catholic school? And why do some remain there?" Five response groups help to identify why individuals who do choose to begin their teaching career in Catholic schools do so for a variety of reasons (Schuttloffel, 2001). Participant responses break into the following groups:

- Group One (45%) teachers accepted a teaching position in a Catholic school because they wanted to share the faith. These teachers believed in the mission of Catholic education and saw their role as that of a ministry.
- Group Two (15%) accepted their Catholic school position because they needed a job, but have remained in Catholic schools because they came to believe in the values represented by the school's mission and vision.
- Group Three (12%) found the community within their Catholic school their most powerful attractor.
- Group Four (9%) just liked teaching and would probably have remained wherever they began their teaching career. Interestingly, members of this group did not ascribe to the school's values as their primary motivation.
- Group Five (12%) attended Catholic schools as students, experienced positive relationships with their own teachers, and desire to become the teacher that offers that same experience to students.

Other miscellaneous reasons were put forth explaining why teachers chose to teach in a Catholic school and why they remained in a Catholic school. The

¹⁰ My work with national graduate student, dioceses, and NCEA provides me with opportunities to discuss the *Report on the Future of Catholic School Leadership* data. Many principals and superintendents are very interested about the salary and benefits issue particularly how it impacts recruitment and retention of quality teachers. They are quite willing to share stories from their local experiences. During the recent NCEA strategic planning session, salary and benefits drew much of the discussion. My statement is based on these frequent comments.

¹¹ Unfortunately there is little research that has been done on this topic; fertile ground for a dissertation. Again, colleagues in Catholic colleges and universities point to salaries and benefits as a recurring obstacle as they attempt to recruit students into Catholic schooling.

emphasis on community spirit and explicit values gives insight to the importance of school culture in the formation and retention of Catholic school teachers. Probably the most hopeful area for exploration is within Group Five, that is, these teachers identify the “grow our own” approach to recruitment, formation, and retention.

Also, there is some reason for optimism as the number of nontraditionally prepared Catholic school teachers rises due to alternative programs that bring fresh faces into the classroom¹² (Watzke, 2005). In addition, many second career individuals choose to work in Catholic schools because of their mission and the perception that these schools have fewer discipline and parent involvement problems. Oftentimes, these mature teachers bring life experiences that enrich the Catholic school experience. At the same time, they may be unfamiliar with the ethos of Catholic education and unprepared for their role as spiritual leaders. It is unclear whether these nontraditional teachers will remain in Catholic schools longer than their traditionally prepared counterparts, or whether their presence is merely a stopgap solution.

Since most Catholic school principals rise from the teaching ranks, the problems with recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school teachers magnifies the problem for school and diocesan leadership positions. There is some evidence that an increasing number of principal searches draw candidates from the ranks of either fleeing or retiring government school administrators (Schuttloffel, 2003). Many are well qualified and have a sincere desire to serve the Church but they also are unfamiliar with the distinctiveness of Catholic school culture and spiritual leadership. The next section further explores the formation of teachers and principals including the question of spiritual leadership.

Formation of Teachers and Principals for Catholic Schooling

Launching 21st-century discussion about Catholic school leadership, the University of San Francisco (2001) and the University of Dayton (2002) hosted a symposium in conjunction with the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (Schuttloffel, 2003b). The topic of the symposia was “Finding our Successors.”¹³ One recommendation was to determine a profile of the Catholic principalship in the USA. This study of the current reality gives particular attention to recruitment and preparation efforts as they inform succession planning (Schuttloffel, 2003a).

¹² There are a variety of nontraditional teacher preparation programs. Alliance for Catholic Education (Notre Dame), Lalanne (University of Dayton), and Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers are examples of programs that specifically prepare teachers for service in Catholic schools. Numerous states also offer alternative ways to meet teacher licensure requirements.

¹³ The original analysis of this data was presented in the *Report on the Future of Catholic School Leadership: A study commissioned by the National Center for Research in Catholic Education of the Chief Administrators of Catholic Education of the National Catholic Educational Association* (2003).

Results of data collected from a national survey of superintendents, directors, and vicars of education, indicate the urgency of the situation. Fifty percent of the reporting superintendents have begun the school year without a principal in place in at least one of their schools (Schutloffel, 2003a, p. 9). Superintendents respond to this question in various ways (Schutloffel, 2003a, Figure 1), which point quantitatively to the lack of sufficient numbers of individuals who are willing to become principals, while qualitatively, the evidence points out that many of those who take on the position are not adequately prepared for spiritual leadership (p. 14).

Another important finding relates to questions about the preparation of principals and their ability to meet the special leadership demands required for principals of Catholic schools. For example, when superintendents were asked to characterize the most effective preparation for their principals, more than 50% indicated that Catholic leadership programs offered by Catholic colleges and universities best met a principal's preparation needs. At the same time, superintendents stated that more than 70% of their principals received their administrative preparation at secular institutions¹⁴ (p. 11). This limitation in preparation portends a lack of the critical theological knowledge necessary for principals to provide spiritual leadership and the ensuing threat to their school's Catholic identity (p. 14). Adding to the concern is that more than 50% of principals hired were novices with less than three years experience as a principal, often stressed by initial demands of their new role (p. 13). The next section addresses the interplay between retention and the previous topics, recruitment, and formation.

Retention of Teachers and Principals

Recent principal retention may not be an indicator of the future (Schutloffel, 2003a, p. 20). Considering that vowed religious, former religious, those who worked side-by-side with religious, and those formed as students by religious, make up the vast majority of current school leaders, their cultural preparation has been qualitatively different from newcomers. These former teachers, later as principals, eschewed higher salaries acknowledging that their religious counterparts had received minimal compensation. More likely, former and current lay school leaders viewed themselves as committed to a vocation in Catholic schooling first, and a professional educator second.

By comparison, today's Catholic school teachers become principals following a career path similar to their colleagues in government or private schools, one that emphasizes the role of a professional educator. From that view, if salaries

¹⁴ Catholic schoolteachers, who want to become a principal, often attend a secular higher education institution due to cost or proximity. Some locations in the USA, particularly in southern or western rural areas, Catholic colleges are simply not convenient. In other cases, even with tuition reduction, more economical alternatives exist compared to a Catholic college or university. Finally, in some cases Catholic colleges or universities have not adequately developed their relationship with the local Catholic schools office to provide appropriate preparation for future school personnel.

and benefits are not commensurate with the job, then teachers, who are potential principals, will leave for another position, perhaps in another Catholic school, private school, charter school, or public school. Furthermore, the personal lifestyle benefits of the job are regarded as the measure of success rather than the satisfactions of the ministerial role. In fairness, many Catholic school teachers who become principals leave because they simply cannot afford to stay any longer.¹⁵ Little effort has been made to document a teacher's rationale for leaving a Catholic school. Notably some Catholic school teachers migrate through their diocese along a path that leads from school to school with improved salaries and benefits. In these situations urban schools are typically left wanting.

When considering the strategies suggested by the symposia, measuring the personal life benefits of Catholic school leadership positions becomes an important goal. Young, bright, willing Catholic school leaders, both teachers and principals, come with husbands, children, and home life responsibilities that must be balanced with their ministry in Catholic schools that they may remain healthy and connected to their families. These competing demands, particularly for women, have challenged them along every career since the so-called liberation of women in the 1970s. The reality is that women are not very liberated when it comes to home duties. When a woman takes on a demanding professional role, they must often make painful choices between home and work or, do what the research relates they often choose to do, that is, stretch their capacities to the edges by trying to do it all. Durrow and Brock referred to this choice as one pitting "personal needs" against "welfare" (2004, p. 198–199). They noted that the complexity of commitments again related to a leadership position often led to family stress. Increased thought and planning must be extended to assist laywomen (and laymen) creatively to cope with their multiple roles and responsibilities as Catholic school leaders and a healthy balanced lifestyle (USCCB, 1994a, b). Because of this tension a Catholic school teacher might consider another teaching position more attractive than a principal position.

Governance issues or conflicts with pastors also complicate the recruitment or retention of principals (Durrow & Brock, 2004, p. 203). Schafer (2004) pointed out that pastors oftentimes do not have a clear understanding of their appropriate role in school governance and administration. Schafer goes on to summarize other research on the pastor–principal relationship, and considers Gilbert's (1983) position that

the pastor and the principal should jointly formulate a clear pastoral job description which clarifies each other's responsibilities and effectively taps the specific talents and gifts that each possess (p. 244).

Others have also noted the importance of a collegial relationship between pastor and principal if the school community is to function smoothly (Campbell, 2000; Schuttloffel, 1999). If solutions are not found to these relational tensions, it will

¹⁵ Superintendents report informally that this situation exists, but little empirical research has been done to produce hard data.

become increasingly problematic to sustain lay leadership for Catholic schooling into the next generation (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995).

American Catholic educators would benefit from more frequent exposure to the Catholic educational experiences on other continents (Nijhuis et al., 2002; Duncan & Riley, 2002; Mulligan, 1999; Grace, 1996, 2002). For example, Canavan (2003) provides a highly developed model for strategic leadership and management planning to deal with these challenges (2003). Canavan's leadership experience led him to develop a model that balances current research on management, learning, and organizational theory with Catholic identity.

In this survey of research on the recruitment, formation, and retention of American Catholic school teachers and principals, an overview of the external challenge of NCLB, a Federal Government legislative mandate, and the internal challenge exposed by the bishops' weak leadership, coalesce to underscore the urgency for new thinking about old problems. Multiple reasons for the national teacher shortage, in addition to reasons unique to Catholic schooling, give emphasis to these challenges. Catholic school leadership that traditionally rose routinely from the teaching ranks formed by religious communities, now requires new incentives and further preparation, particularly for spiritual leadership.¹⁶

Recommendations

Dilemmas inherent when recruiting, preparing, and retaining qualified leaders for Catholic schools require that solutions go beyond individual schools and dioceses. Harris (1999) suggests two potential futures for Catholic schooling: one maintains a system of isolation from government schools and the second considers the possibility that Catholic schooling could become America's schooling innovators that shape changes within government schooling. The decentralized history of American education and the independent nature of Church dioceses have prevented an orchestrated plan to address leadership challenges. In the past, religious congregations have provided the structure to resolve the demands for leadership recruitment, formation, and retention. With an era of lay leadership at hand, new structures, processes, and procedures must be considered to extend the legacy of American Catholic schooling and perhaps forge exciting contributions to conventional schooling practice.

¹⁶ Until recently Catholic schools have not taken full advantage of the government funds allowed. Broad disparities exist between states, and sometimes even between local school districts within states. Students in the CELPS doctoral program at CUA who live and work across the USA soon come to realize as part of their policy studies that a diocese's relationship with a state department of education or a local public school district differ widely. Because of those LEA (Local Education Agency) relationships, the distribution of federal money may be impacted. Due to the local structure of American public schooling and the perceived "wall" that separates church and state, funding issues may be more complex than within a centralized system within a different historical tradition for school funding.

National legislation like NCLB that popularize educational debates about school leadership draws Catholic educators into the public forum. Societal perspectives of Church leadership also focus on the significance of leadership for Catholic institutions. In view of these forces, American Catholic bishops, the National Catholic Educational Association, Catholic colleges and universities, and all who value the historic contribution of Catholic schooling to the common good must seek and find solutions to the leadership challenges within Catholic schooling in particular, and Catholic education broadly conceived.

Comprehensive strategic planning across the Catholic community and agencies, would benefit Catholic schools and their students (O'Keefe, 1998). Several steps are in order to create this solidarity. First, bishops must lead the transition by providing realistic and practical solutions to the problems highlighted within their statement on Catholic schooling (USCCB, 2005). The USCCB's renewal statement illuminates pressures from the many constituents that would benefit from Catholic schooling and points directly to routine financial constraints. A commitment to the requisite financial resources seems obvious, but how the funds are acquired is a question of formulating creative solutions.

More is required of the USCCB beyond supportive statements. Bishops must create conditions within dioceses and nationally that support innovative problem solving. Organized forums attended by local clergy and the laity, carried out within an environment of active listening and participation, could translate key dilemmas raised by the statement into concrete action. Not least among those issues is the financial viability of Catholic schooling linked to broad access by all families who choose Catholic schooling. An emphasis on the political arena offers one potential solution (Cooper, 1996; McDonald, 1999).

Contrasting the purposes of Catholic schooling with secular schooling, Jacobs (1997) reminds that neither a government nor the Church holds the divine right for a child's education. *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (268 USA 510, 1925) established that the government's interest in a child's education comes from the parent's choice for government schooling. Only parents possess a divine right to educate their children. From this parental right comes the obligation and responsibility to seek the most appropriate educational setting that meets their child(ren)'s holistic development. The government holds an interest in the education of its future citizens and workers, while the Church has an interest in its future faithful. Both government and Church are obliged *to support the parent* to form the child as citizen and believer. The government does not have the right to neutralize a parent's rights nor diminish their influence. Catholic parents have the right and the obligation to defend their choice of schooling, not only as a political or economic statement, but also as a divine right given by God when their child was created.

Both the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and USCCB are located in the Washington, DC. As base for political discussions, their location makes them the obvious leaders to organize parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, religious educators, and other supporters of Catholic schools.

NCEA's ability to serve as the locus of national and regional networking should remain a priority. USCCB has the political experience to formulate the "divine right" argument that reestablishes the parent as the primary educator with the authority to choose their child(ren)'s schooling without financial penalty.¹⁷

In the spirit of *Ex Corde Ecclesia*,¹⁸ a renewed sense of kinship must be encouraged between Catholic schools and Catholic higher education. Catholic higher educational administrators are obliged to renew their commitment to quality K-12 Catholic schooling and initiate preparation programs, continuing education programs, and research projects that support quality Catholic schooling. In an effort to become mainstream, many Catholic colleges and universities shifted their focus to secular audiences. Following Vatican II when the majority of Catholic students were no longer secured within Catholic elementary and high schools, Catholic colleges and universities sought to broaden their appeal. During this process, these colleges and universities distanced themselves from their historical service to K-12 Catholic schooling. By the mid-1980s representatives of some Catholic colleges and universities recognized the need to create programs with the express purpose of preparing Catholic school principals. Today the Association of Catholic Leadership Programs includes support for both principal and teacher preparation programs that serve Catholic schools.¹⁹

Agenda for Future Research

Research on and for Catholic schools frequently has not been a priority for scholars at Catholic colleges and universities. Instead, researchers within Catholic higher education should regularly provide substantive and influential research for Catholic schooling. For Catholic schools to continue as excellent educational enterprises, laboratory schools linked to Catholic universities that research practice within the Catholic school context would create a process beneficial to both

¹⁷ The history of school funding in the USA for religious schools generates a highly charged political debate. But recent policies on vouchers for underprivileged children in underperforming schools opened the door for new public funds to allow a student to attend a religious school. How broadly these policies will extend remains to be seen. Even the Bishops' recent statement addressed the need to "Develop strategies to increase the effective advocacy for the equitable treatment of Catholic school students and teachers in government programs. This would include support for existing and creation of new parent advocacy groups in each state and diocese" (2005, pp. 12–14). A policy argument continues to offer possibilities for the financial strains faced by many Catholic schools.

¹⁸ *Ex Corde Ecclesia* is a papal document that challenges Catholic institutions of higher education to strengthen their Catholic identity by increasing the evidence of their Catholicity within their mission statements, but more importantly within the activities of the university itself.

¹⁹ ACLP promotes programs geared to prepare teachers and principals specifically to work within Catholic schools. An examination of these programs demonstrates an emphasis on the Catholic scholarly tradition, knowledge of theology and Church documents, and an understanding of spiritual leadership. The chief competencies are delineated within a leadership framework published by USCCB (Ciriello, 1993, 1994, 1996).

college programs and pre-K to grade 12 schools. Research grants should be widely available to sustain these endeavors. Qualitative and quantitative studies are necessary to continue to provide evidence that legitimates the claims of effectiveness in Catholic schooling (Convey, 1992; Hunt et al., 2000). Catholic schools must be both excellent schools and mindfully Catholic (Jacobs, 1996).

Questions related to recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school leaders require further exploration of these three core topics and several related themes. Scant research exists that tracks the career path of a Catholic educator. Why does an individual choose to become a Catholic school teacher, principal, or superintendent? More data on this core question could guide recruitment efforts.

Research into the long-term commitment of alternative teacher preparation program graduates could provide a model to cope with the looming teacher shortage. Further research that investigates mentoring and the entry of novice teachers into the profession within the Catholic school context have important implications for retention (Chatlain & Noonan, 2005). Questions related to supervision, evaluation, and the professional development of Catholic school teachers also warrants exploration. The concept of “growing our own” has yet to be thoroughly studied (Schuttloffel, 2001).

Finances are at the core of many of the recruitment, formation, and retention problems. Does the stewardship model serve as a lifestyle choice that potentially meets the financial demands of Catholic schools and other parish services? What governance models lead to financial viability for Catholic schools? What philanthropic endeavors will attract the growing American Catholic wealth? What governance models lend themselves to collaborative relationships with other parish entities? What administrative team characteristics promote a cohesive parish mission and how are these qualities formed within lay and clerical leaders? These topics have received little research attention.

Questions related to job satisfaction and the role of mission also could give insights into how to enhance the professional and personal development of Catholic school leaders? What barriers keep today’s Catholic school leader from remaining committed and motivated about their work? In an era of lay Catholic school leadership, what conditions support retention?

This is not an exhaustive list of important research topics related to recruitment, formation, and retention of Catholic school leaders. Notable areas for inquiry focus on the qualities and competencies that will meet the demands of managerial, instructional, and spiritual leadership. The current external and internal challenges may remain on the educational horizon for the near future. But after their pressure subsides, multiple outcomes are possible. First, Catholic schools will experience either a dynamic or diminishing relationship within the larger American society. And second, Catholic schools will benefit from visionary Church leadership, or a lack of insightful leadership will be a detriment to the entire ecclesial community. Future historians will determine how capably leadership responded at this juncture.

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BEYOND RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS: RESPONDING TO NEW CHALLENGES IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Paige A. Smith and Fr. Ronald J. Nuzzi

The Second Vatican Council exhorts the faithful “to assist to their utmost in finding suitable methods of education and programs of study and in forming teachers who can give youth a true education” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §6). Two manifestations of this exhortation have been the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE), a collaboration of 13 programs at colleges and universities across the country,¹ which receive and form recent college graduates to teach and serve in K-12² Catholic and parochial schools (see Figures 1 and 2, Tables 1 and 2), and the Association for Catholic Leadership Programs (ACLP), a confederation of graduate programs in educational administration, focused on the preparation of principals for Catholic schools (see Figures 3 and 4, Table 3). With the declining numbers of vowed and ordained religious men and women to staff Catholic schools, the UCCE and the ACLP have been major contributors to the renewal of Catholic education by providing a steady supply of valuable, well-prepared professionals to serve as teachers and administrators. Since its beginnings in the late 1990s, the UCCE supports primarily Catholic colleges and universities as they design and implement graduate-level teaching service programs for the purpose of service to Catholic and parochial schools in the USA. The ACLP, organized in 1983, promotes degree and licensure programs for Catholic school principals.

¹ Member institutions along with respective program inception dates include: University of Notre Dame (1993), Boston College (1997), University of Portland (1998), University of Dayton (1999), Seton Hall University (2000), Valparaiso University (2001), College of Notre Dame of Maryland (2001), Loyola Marymount University (2001), Providence College (2001), Creighton University (2001), Loyola University of Chicago (2001), Christian Brothers University (2003), and University of Great Falls (2005).

² In the U.S. educational structure for both private and public schools, the organizational framework typically distinguishes between the elementary and secondary educational levels. Elementary schools typically house eight separate grade levels, 1-8, with an accompanying Kindergarten to prepare children for the first grade. The K-8 designation refers to this level. Secondary schools, more commonly called high schools, encompass four years of education, grades 9-12. Nearly all Catholic dioceses in the U.S. offer a complete K-12 Catholic education experience.

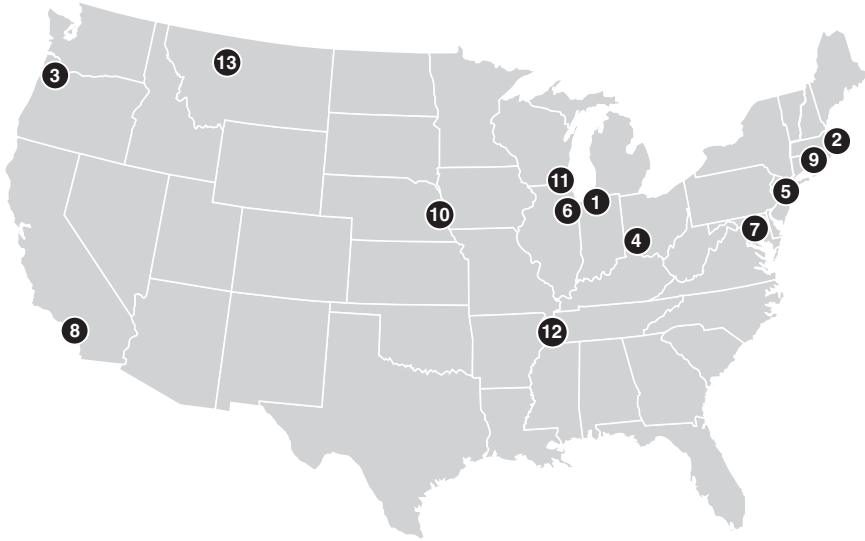


Figure 1. Map of UCCE member programs

Table 1. UCCE member programs map key

Acronym	Program name
1. ACE	Alliance for Catholic Education
2. UCTC	Urban Catholic Teacher Corps
3. PACE	Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education
4.	Lalanne
5. EPICS	Educational Partners in Catholic Schools
6. LEAPS	Lutheran Educational Alliance for Parochial Schools
7. Operation TEACH	Operation Teachers Enlisted to Advance Catholic Heritage
8. PLACE Corps.	Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education
9. PACT	Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers
10. MAGIS	Mentoring Academic Gifts in Service
11. LU-CHOICE	Loyola University-Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education
12. LANCE	LaSallian Association for New Catholic Educators
13. LUMEN	Learning Through Understanding by Mentoring and Engaging New Teachers

To explore the contributions of the UCCE and ACLP, we begin by reflecting briefly on the history of Catholic educator preparation, particularly in the context of religious communities. We then explore the shift that took place in the latter part of the 20th century from a teaching population in Catholic schools of predominantly vowed religious to laity and how this transformation has

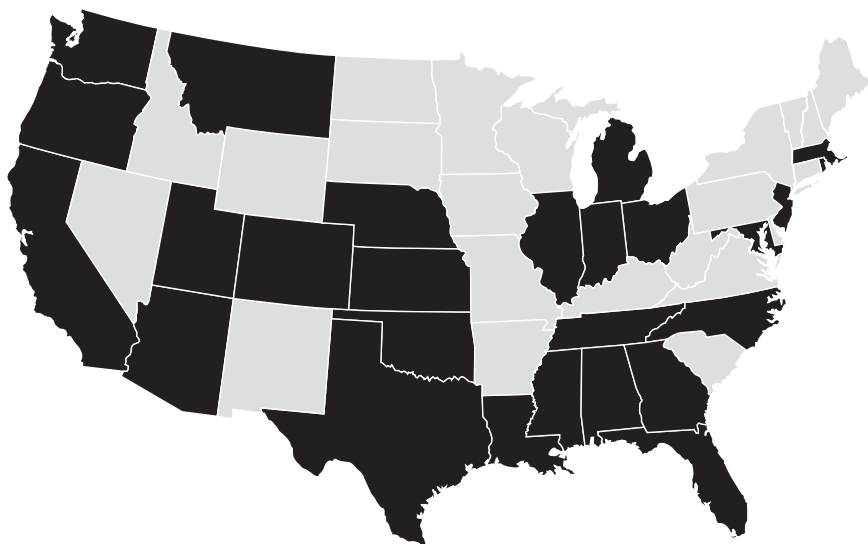


Figure 2. Map of states served by the UCCE, 2005–2006

**black states are those served*

Table 2. UCCE member institutions and program inception date

Program	Institution	Year
ACE	University of Notre Dame	1993
UCTC	Boston College	1997
PACE	University of Portland	1998
Lalanne	University of Dayton	1999
EPICS	Seton Hall University	2000
LEAPS	Valparaiso University	2001
Operation TEACH	College of Notre Dame of Maryland	2001
PLACE Corps.	Loyola Marymount University	2001
PACT	Providence College	2001
MAGIS	Creighton University	2001
LU-CHOICE	Loyola University-Chicago	2003
LANCE	Christian Brothers University	2003
LUMEN	University of Great Falls	2005

contributed to the rise of alternative teacher preparation programs. A similar shift, though not as pronounced, in the ranks of Catholic school principals receives attention as well. Such a historical discussion enables a deeper probing into the essential task of Catholic education and the spiritual role of those involved at every level to create communities “animated by the Gospel . . . and illumined by faith” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §8). In short, an understanding of what it means to be an educator imbued with an authentic Catholic identity

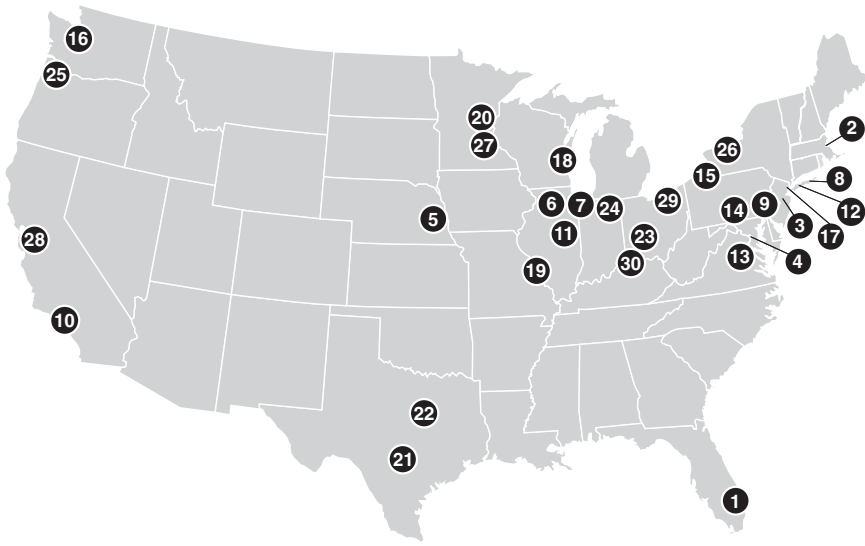


Figure 3. Map of ACLP member institutions

Table 3. ACLP member institutions map key

Member institutions	
1. Barry University	16. Seattle University
2. Boston College	17. Seton Hall University
3. Caldwell College	18. Silver Lake College
4. The Catholic University of America	19. Saint Louis University
5. Creighton University	20. Saint Mary’s University, MN
6. De Paul University	21. St. Mary’s University, TX
7. Dominican University	22. University of Dallas
8. Fordham University	23. University of Dayton
9. Immaculata University	24. University of Notre Dame
10. Loyola Marymount University	25. University of Portland
11. Loyola University Chicago	26. University of Rochester
12. Manhattan College	27. University of St. Thomas
13. Marymount University	28. University of San Francisco
14. Neumann College	29. Ursuline College
15. Niagara University	30. Xavier University

will be posited. Finally, we will touch upon the mutual gift of Catholic schools and the family and what this suggests about the manner in which we should engage in future research and responsible stewardship of the Church and her resources.

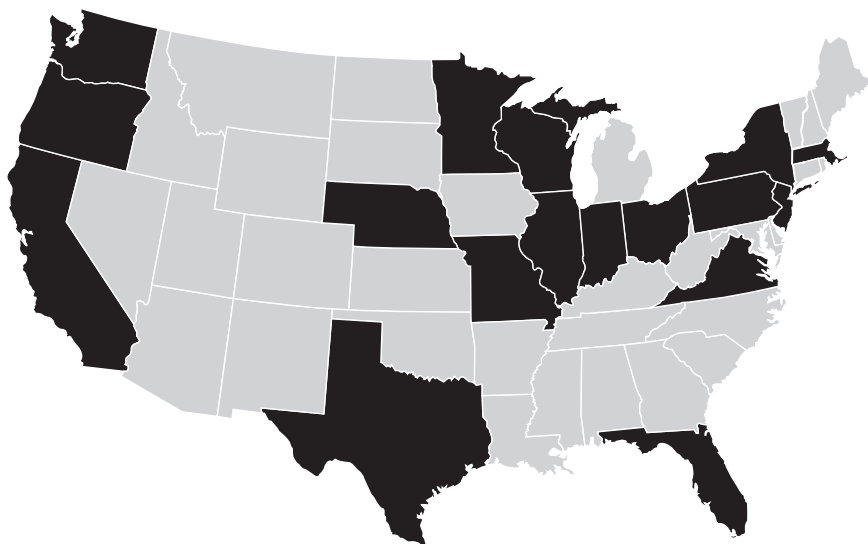


Figure 4. Map of states with an ACLP member institution
**black states are those with programs*

History of Catholic Educator Preparation in the USA

Like the core of the Catholic faith, the origins of the American Catholic school system can be attributed to sacrifice; most notably, the sacrifice of vowed women religious who faced the challenges of serving in parish schools throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries (Jacobs, 2000; Walch, 1996). Hostility toward Catholics began to appear from Protestant pulpits beginning in the 1830s; however, concurrently the Holy Spirit was preparing new vessels to imbue with its grace: the Catholic school (Walch, 1996).

Between 1820 and 1870 the wave of European immigrants to the USA numbered over five million. The children of these immigrants were being schooled in anti-Catholic environments; Catholic schools began to combat the dangers of public schools, which Americanized children through Protestant ideals. This gave rise to Catholic communities that banded together in ethnic neighborhoods to preserve their Catholic identity and protect their children’s faith development, a dynamic that supported the building of Catholic parochial schools (Walch, 1996). These communities were strengthened by their common adversary—publicly funded Protestant schools, which aggressively formed children contrary to the culture of their heritage.

At the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, the bishops, responding to the ardent desire for Catholic schools, commanded that a Catholic school be founded at every parish in the USA (Gibbons, 1954 [1884]). Although this lofty goal was never in fact achieved, it stands as the strongest historical statement in support of Catholic schools ever articulated by bishops in the USA. A new

challenge naturally followed this well-intended mandate; who will serve to staff Catholic schools with qualified Catholic educators?

Women religious had been teaching in Catholic schools throughout the 19th century, often having left their home countries to serve in the missions of the USA (Walch, 1996). Their preparation for teaching largely took place in the context of their religious communities where they were mentored by older, experienced sisters. This allowed their teaching apostolate to be fully integrated with their vocation. Their prayer life and community living centered around service to their students, the school, and ultimately their response to God. During postulancy and novitiate, sisters were formed to respond to their vocation to the religious life rather than merely to prepare professionally for classroom experience. Pedagogical preparation came as a result of the authentic living and formation in the religious community, which was manifested through prayer and daily interaction with a sister-mentor who assisted with the challenges of lesson planning and managing classrooms of up to 100 students (Jacobs, 2000; Riley, 2004). Formal teacher training was of little importance in the face of profound “confidence in the vocation itself and in God’s divine assistance” (Walch, 1996, p. 136).

From Evangelical Counsels to Three Pillars

Young laymen and laywomen teaching through the UCCE are not members of a religious community. They do not take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Neither are they formally subscribing themselves to a specified religious community or spirituality less broad than the universal magisterial teachings of the Church. (The UCCE does not exclude non-Catholics from its programs; however, the majority of its participants are Catholic. One of its programs is at a Lutheran university and serves both Lutheran and Catholic parochial schools.) As a result, these programs have participants from varied formation experiences and personal faith histories. The formation they experience through the UCCE is of both a professional and spiritual nature.

Despite the distances the UCCE teachers are from the lives of their religious predecessors and colleagues, they remain inextricably linked to them. In an attempt to narrow an identification as being Catholic to a specified common mission, the bond that unites all members of the UCCE are the three pillars of professional preparation for teaching, community, and spirituality seen through the lens of service. One example of the UCCE teachers’ connection to vowed religious lies in their financial limitations: “Sisters were elevated spiritually in the eyes of their parishoners, their lack of financial security enabled them to empathize with the people they served” (Coburn & Smith, 1999, p. 9). While the young teachers of the UCCE are not bound by a vow of poverty, their commitment to service marked by simple living likewise

allows them to approach a solidarity with students and families they serve in underresourced Catholic schools. Released from financial preoccupations³ that often burden lay teachers who must support a family, teachers within the UCCE are able to offer monetary sacrifices with greater freedom (Jacobs, 2000). Similar to the spiritual elevation seen in sisters, UCCE teachers are often elevated by their youth, enthusiasm, and an initial otherness as strangers in a new community.

Leadership Preparation

In addition to providing a teacher force for Catholic schools, religious communities were also the source of most principals for Catholic schools (Sheehan, 1991). With such an arrangement of personnel, concerns like Catholic identity, governance, and administration were not common concerns of the Catholic community. The religious community provided a continuity of human resources in the persons of teachers and principals, assured the Catholicity of the school by their presence and witness, and for the most part operated, if not owned, the school. Research indicates that in the mid-1950s, over 90% of Catholic schools' staff were sisters, brothers, or priests (McDonald, 2001). That number dropped to under 50% in the 1970s, and to 7% in the 1990s. Currently, it stands at approximately 5% (McDonald, 2005).

This remnant of vowed religious men and women in Catholic schools has moved into school leadership positions. This movement was not entirely unanticipated, as some observers predicted it decades ago (Drahmann, 1984; Ryan, 1964). Drahmann was uncertain if religious communities, with declining numbers and increasing needs, could prepare their members for the principalship, thereby adding to the strain of finding qualified laypersons to become principals. Vaughan wondered as early as 1978 if Catholics would accept lay principals (Vaughan, 1978), but increasingly, they have had no other choice.

Research in 1995 found that approximately 50% of Catholic high school principals were still vowed religious and clergy (Wallace, 1995). Later research (Archer, 1997) found that 47% of Catholic elementary school and 62% of Catholic high school principals were vowed religious or clergy. Clearly, vowed religious and clergy are overrepresented in the ranks of principals. As the number of lay principals continues to increase, the need for preparation programs becomes more acute.

³ UCCE teachers live in intentional faith communities with other teachers, share resources, have common meals and prayer, and live a community lifestyle, modeled somewhat on the previous generations of vowed religious women and men who once staffed Catholic schools. While their basic needs for safety, shelter, and food are met, the stipends they earn are small and go almost totally to maintain the community home.

Catholic colleges and universities remain proactive in their approach, with 30 programs currently in operation for the preparation of principals exclusively for Catholic schools⁴ (ACLP, 2006). Similar to the consortium established by teacher preparation programs, a national organization, the ACLP, exists to promote degree and licensure programs that serve Catholic school educators interested in leadership. Unlike the teacher preparation programs, however, these are not service programs, but rather, graduate professional programs, which are typically a part of the host institution's overall departmental programming. Because participants in these programs are typically older and mid-career, they tend to come from the ranks of experienced teachers who are contemplating a career in administration. While the ACLP has had a long organizational history throughout the post-Vatican II era, research on its graduates, their preparation and success, remains to be done.

Aspects of the Current Challenges Faced

While the American Church would seem to be in a drastically different place than it was 50 years ago, challenges in staffing persist. Although perspective has shifted, the question remains: who will serve to staff Catholic schools with qualified Catholic educators? The UCCE and ACLP are part of the courageous renewal and prudent innovation that echoes the affirmation that the Catholic school is at the heart of the Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998; Vatican Council II, 1965). The UCCE and ACLP have positioned themselves to respond to the dramatic transition in the staffing of K-12 Catholic schools that has taken place over the last 50 years. With the decrease of vowed religious, schools face an ever-increasing need for laymen and laywomen to serve in Catholic education. The unique response to this transition has been to recruit energetic college graduates who are poised for vocation and ministry and give them the education, skills, and support needed to teach in underresourced Catholic schools, and to provide free-standing graduate formation programs for experienced teachers interested in leadership that not only offer the requisite academic background for the principalship, but that also replicate in some way the spiritual and religious formation that the previous generations of vowed and ordained men and women experienced within their respective communities.

The need for dedicated people to continue serving in Catholic schools in the USA is pronounced. These are not days for the weak of spirit. Reports of closing schools continue, and while 400 new schools have opened since 1990, there has likewise been a net decline of 850 schools (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005, §3). The UCCE and ACLP are targeted, sensitive responses to the current age within the Church, which is always seeking "to discern in the events,

⁴ The University of San Francisco has the oldest program in the U.S. for the formation and preparation of Catholic school principals. The University of Notre Dame has the newest program, recently establishing a master's degree in 2006.

needs and hopes of our era, the most insistent demands which she must answer if she is to carry out God's plan" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §10).

Alternative Teacher Preparation

Part of the current insistent demands placed on Catholic schools today result from a decrease in the number of vowed religious working in schools as well as a lack of enthusiasm⁵ on behalf of many Catholic college and university departments of education to prepare teachers for an intentionally Catholic mission. As a result, the first program of the UCCE, the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), attempted to shape a new landscape for teacher preparation.

The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE)

History of Teacher Preparation at Notre Dame

Relative to the history of Catholic education in this country, ACE's beginning in 1993 would seem a long overdue response to the perilous climate of Catholic education. The University of Notre Dame's commitment to K-12 Catholic education, however, began nearly 80 years before the inception of the Alliance for Catholic Education through a summer institute that invited women religious from orders throughout the USA to pursue their studies on campus. The program, founded in 1918, conferred 4,600 degrees on women religious by 1971. The sisters' participation and presence created a mutual exchange of gift and opportunity for both the university—which was experiencing a decreased summer enrollment due to war and the Great Depression—and the orders called to serve the Church's children through Catholic education as teachers and administrators in parochial schools (Ganey, 2003).

When the university closed the Department of Education in the early 1970s, president Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, was convinced that the time would come when Notre Dame would become reinvested in the field of education.⁶ The mission of education was an integral part of the life of the university, and preparing future leaders in education was too great a service to abandon. Subsequently, in the early 1990s, Notre Dame recommitted itself to playing a major role in the revitalization of America's Catholic schools through the Alliance for Catholic Education.

⁵ The general lack of interest on behalf of Catholic colleges and universities to prepare teachers explicitly for Catholic school in their regular teacher education programs and traditional departmental offerings has been well documented in research. Watzke (2002) reported widespread disengagement from this mission as well as a lack of recognition of the place of K-12 Catholic schools in the overall educational mission of the church.

⁶ The University of Notre Dame once operated a large department of education, offering undergraduate, graduate, and even doctoral degrees. The various programs were phased out over a period of years throughout the early 1970s for a variety of reasons related to academic quality, departmental overlaps, and strategic planning concerns involving St. Mary's College.

In 1993, the Rev. Timothy R. Scully, CSC, and Rev. Sean D. McGraw, CSC, founded the Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame to form recent college graduates and expose them to the riches of Catholic education as teachers in underresourced Catholic schools across the country. Undeterred by the absence of a department of education at the university, the first participants studied at Notre Dame's campus to receive a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree through an academic program administered by the University of Portland.

In 1998, as the program expanded and achieved national recognition, the academic administration was newly housed at the Institute for Educational Initiatives at Notre Dame giving way to the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) to continue through the University of Portland. Since 1998, ACE teachers have received a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Providing professional preparation through the Institute for Educational Initiatives rather than a school or department of education has given the ACE program greater freedom to design an innovative program particular to the alternative nature of teacher preparation for Catholic underresourced schools. As a result, the ACE program is an initial licensure program while many other UCCE programs are able to confer specialized degrees to students who received education degrees as undergraduates.

To date, ACE has prepared a total of 640 teachers for underresourced schools,⁷ and has successfully placed them for service among at-risk students. Moreover, more than 95% of admitted applicants graduate from the program, and more than 75% of graduates remain in education beyond their service in ACE, most as teachers. ACE Fellowship, a national alumni organization for ACE, currently has nearly 700 members with formal meetings in six cities (Alliance for Catholic Education, 2005).

As it enters into its 13th year, the model of ACE has historically proven to be highly successful; its presence forged the path for the UCCE to enter into being and gain momentum in support of Catholic education at a national level. The commitment of ACE, and likewise the UCCE, stands on the shoulders of the thousands of vowed men and women who gained professional expertise at Notre Dame and other institutions in the middle part of the last century to sustain and strengthen K-12 Catholic education in the USA.

Decision to Replicate

Despite continuing requests from dioceses for teachers, ACE made a programmatic decision in 1999 not to expand its model beyond 90 teachers per cohort so as not to compromise the personal, professional, and pastoral attention given to each of its participants. In the spring of 1999, Notre Dame received a grant for the pilot replication of ACE at Seton Hall University, and in the fall of 1999, received a 54-month grant to replicate the ACE program at four other colleges and universities:

⁷ In this context, under-resourced refers to the lack of significant human and fiscal resources to operate a school at a high level of quality.

University of Portland, Valparaiso University, Loyola Marymount University, and Providence College. Funding from other foundations soon followed, allowing the UCCE to grow to its current membership of 13 colleges and universities.

While Notre Dame’s ACE program is the largest and oldest program of its kind, it is inaccurate to view it as the sole contributor to the alternative teacher preparation movement. Some programs did come to birth with ACE’s decision to replicate, while many others had already been forming before the partnership that would become the UCCE was established. These programs are all a model learning community for the teachers they form. The prudence of ACE’s decision to replicate broadened and furthered its mission giving way to the successful collaborative relationships found in the UCCE, which are marked by respect, humility, and diversity, characteristics that are likewise instilled in the teachers they place in Catholic school classrooms across the country.

The University Consortium for Catholic Education

Clearly, the service of the UCCE touches Catholic education nationwide; in the 2005–2006 school year, 441 UCCE teachers served in over 200 Catholic schools throughout 51 (arch)dioceses in the USA (see Table 4). The 13

Table 4. Dioceses served by the UCCE, 2005–2006

Program	Archdiocese/Diocese
ACE	ATLANTA, Austin, Baton Rouge, Biloxi, Birmingham, Brownsville, Charlotte, Dallas, DENVER, Fort Worth, Jackson, St. Augustine, KANSAS CITY, LOS ANGELES, Memphis, MOBILE, Nashville, OKLAHOMA CITY, Pensacola- Tallahassee, Phoenix, SAN ANTONIO, Savannah, Fort Wayne-South Bend, St. Petersburg, Tucson, Tulsa
UCTC	BOSTON
PACE	PORTLAND, Salt Lake City, Yakima
Lalanne	CINCINNATI, INDIANAPOLIS, Cleveland
EPICS	NEWARK, Camden, Metuchen, Patterson, Trenton
LEAPS	CHICAGO, DETROIT, Gary, Cleveland, Chicago Lutheran Schools
Operation TEACH	BALTIMORE
PLACE Corps.	LOS ANGELES
PACT	Fall River, Providence, Springfield, Worcester
MAGIS	OMAHA, Grand Island, Lincoln
LU-CHOICE	CHICAGO
LANCE	Memphis
LUMEN	Cheyenne
TOTAL	51

programs of the UCCE each offer an accredited graduate degree in education through concurrent coursework and a multiyear teaching experience (in most cases two summers and two academic years). The shared mission of each program within the UCCE places the consortium of universities and colleges in the position to be national agents of change and gives volume to a unified voice in support of Catholic education.

Current Structure

The UCCE has and continues to make a significant contribution to Catholic education by preparing and placing faith-filled teachers in K-12 Catholic schools, supporting the outreach of Catholic higher education to K-12 schools, and forming young men and women to be lifelong advocates and leaders in Catholic education. Its contribution is integral to Catholic education and the Church's evangelical mission. While the organization is relatively new as the UCCE (until 2002 the programs referred to themselves as the Consortium of Catholic Partnering Universities), it is showing signs of sustained strength and longitudinal force as a movement in Catholic education. In 2006, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) awarded the UCCE the C. Albert Koob Award, which honors distinguished Catholic educators who have made extraordinary contributions on a regional and national level. In fall 2005, the UCCE developed a constitution as an autonomous body and has plans for a website that will link its directors and participants (www.ucceconnect.com).

Each program has been a witness to the fruits of the collaboration now inherent in the UCCE (Vatican Council II, 1965). The UCCE plans two formal conferences a year at which members gather to share experiences, receive support from one another, and strategize for a growing presence of alternative teacher preparation through continued UCCE activity. While ACE once served as the mentoring program, the programs are now on equal footing. Locations of UCCE conferences are rotated between colleges and universities, and planning and leadership are shared while directed by an elected chair and cochair as stipulated by the UCCE's recently ratified constitution.

Participants and Alumni

In its support of Catholic educators, the UCCE views its program participants as an integral part of its mission. The UCCE encourages and supports its alumni, which to date number over 1,000 (see Table 5). As a result, the work of the UCCE has truly become more than a group of programs but a lay movement that will continue to transform and strengthen the face of Catholic education. Participants' experiences in UCCE programs help form them into passionate advocates of Catholic education committed to working to sustain Catholic education beyond their initial two years of service.

Table 5. Participants and Graduates of the UCCE, 2005–2006

Program	Current participants	Graduates	Graduates teaching	Graduates teaching in Catholic schools
ACE	173	640	386	264
UCTC	12	33	16	6
PACE	15	41	32	26
Lalanne	21	45	41	28
EPICS	47	99	70	60
LEAPS	28	32	25	13
Operation TEACH	20	13	13	10
PLACE Corps.	51	54	42	31
PACT	38	48	42	19
MAGIS	7	12	10	9
LU-CHOICE	20	15	11	5
LANCE	8	7	6	6
LUMEN	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	441	1039	694	477

Areas for Growth

The UCCE currently is poised for growth and further development. In the recent years since its inception, it has come to know itself and its mission substantially so as to now respond to ever-growing national needs. The hopes and potential of the UCCE, however, are limited by lack of funding. The grants that were received for initial replication have run their course and now that the individual programs have proven their self-sustaining ability, further support is needed to continue their development and impact. Funding is needed to provide for travel and presentations at conferences, additional staff to provide administrative support, as well as support of alumni to continue the mission of advocacy for Catholic education. In time, new colleges and universities are expected to be added to the UCCE as this movement of alternative teacher preparation continues to serve more and more dioceses across the country.

Contributions of the UCCE

Effectiveness of Preparation

The development of alternative teacher preparation programs has been received with skepticism compared to traditional 4- to 5-year undergraduate and/or graduate teacher education programs. Studies conducted to engage this debate have found alternative Catholic teacher preparation programs to respond effectively to the task, while programs such as Teach for America have been found to send

its recruits to the classroom “unprepared for many of the core tasks of teaching” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p. 291).

Not only do UCCE programs prepare its teachers with academic rigor, they do so with an unapologetic Catholic mission. UCCE programs know what they are. This commitment to a Catholic identity enables the preparation to extend to all school contexts rather than being limited to TFA’s outreach to inner-city public schools after a few weeks of summer training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Watzke, 2002). The graduate school context present in UCCE programs increases teachers’ perceptions of their competence in classroom instruction across professional dimensions (Watzke, 2002).

Graduate School Contexts

Teacher preparation in the context of graduate-level coursework provides an advanced experience for teachers to learn in preparation of their classroom experience. Teachers enter the programs with a degree in a content area already earned, which deepens the ability to come to education with unique perspectives. This provides fertile ground for further research in specifically Catholic education that can take place at the national level as a result of the many grade levels and demographic locations of teachers prepared and available for collaborative action research to add to a field that is often neglected and understudied.

Such study is increasingly continued beyond matriculation in UCCE programs. The importance of professional preparedness emphasized through graduate coursework in the UCCE supports the development of commitment to academic pursuit as a life-long task (see Table 6). Following their initial two years of service in which a master’s degree is earned, many graduates continue to receive terminal degrees in education as well as law, medicine, and business. Graduate-level work begun through alternative preparation in Catholic education inspires work in a

Table 6. Degree programs pursued by participants beyond matriculation in UCCE programs, 2005–2006

Degree program	Number of graduates with degree
Education, Ph.D./Ed.D.	41
Content Area, Ph.D.	9
Law	47
Medicine	13
M.B.A.	7
M.Div.	11
Master’s outside Education	44
Second Master’s in Education	22
School Administration	45
Catholic School Administration	36
TOTAL	275

multitude of fields enabling graduates of the UCCE to be advocates for Catholic education in their service to the common good in all sectors of public life.

Bridging the Schism

The consortium also serves as a significant reminder to Catholic colleges and universities of their responsibility to support K-12 Catholic education through their efforts of K-12 educational outreach and the design of teacher preparation programs. The UCCE helps repair the schism that is often felt between teacher preparation programs and K-12 Catholic schools by taking seriously the mission to integrate what it means to be a Catholic educator into its pedagogical programs (Watzke, 2002).

The Catholic university, in its most authentic endeavors, “prepares men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church” (John Paul II, 1990, §31). Catholic higher education, regardless of its students’ field of study, touches K-12 Catholic education; to attend a Catholic school at any level is at the very least a subtle formation in the importance of such an education. Elementary, secondary, and university-level Catholic schools should not function in isolation, but rather be intimately connected by mission and purpose in theory and practice. The programs of the UCCE are no exception. They show the power and potential of the collaboration of Catholic universities working with dioceses in support of each other by forming Catholic educators to serve in K-12 Catholic schools. However, a school of education, a small percentage of a university’s population, is not the only way a Catholic university should reach out to schools.

The responsibility and need to support Catholic education should be systematic, broad, and in propinquity to a student’s experience at a Catholic university. If the Catholic school’s graduates do not go on to be teachers or administrators in Catholic schools, if the school has had any success at all, its students will be formed in the Catholic intellectual tradition and therefore be advocates for the educational ministry of the Church. They will grow up to be parents who send their children to Catholic schools, laymen and laywomen who generously tithe in support of their parish school, and sisters, priests, and bishops who will continue the legacy of the American charism for Catholic education (Heft, 2001). Such an authentic collaboration deepens Catholic identity and responds to the realization that Catholic schools and their graduates are the body of Christ.

The UCCE initiates a dialogue between schools of higher education, K-12 Catholic schools, dioceses, and young men and women who desire to serve, placing dedicated and professionally prepared teachers with the ability to be licensed in Catholic schools that otherwise might not be there.

Dispositions of UCCE Teachers

Portier (2004) considers the dissolution of American Catholic subculture as the defining factor in the development of what he terms “evangelical

Catholics” (p. 39) in contemporary American society. These Catholic young adults “are eager to act and yet intent on contemplation” (Vatican Council II, 1963, §2); they have an insatiable hunger for theological inquiry combined with a devotion to social justice (Portier, 2004). Many of the teachers who serve in the programs of the UCCE are characterized likewise to the extent that these programs have organically formed a national subculture of young laymen and laywomen dedicated to the Church through Catholic education. Central to this paradigm is Christ the Teacher, a Christocentric emphasis profoundly attractive to “evangelical Catholics who have never known a subculture they want to be freed from” (Portier, 2004, p. 48). Because the teaching and administrative force in Catholic education has shifted from predominantly religious men and women to the laity, it is vital that those who work in Catholic schools have a solid theological and spiritual formation. It is imperative to invest in the formation of lay leadership in the way that in the past the Catholic culture and family invested in the formation of priests and religious (Heft, 2001).

Leadership Preparation for the Principalship

Although the formation of the ACLP predated the establishment of the UCCE by several years, the organization itself is loosely coupled and has not experienced the push toward centralization evident in the UCCE. Because of the need to meet state standards for licensure, quickly replicate, and raise funds for operations, the UCCE became a strategic alliance. Moreover, UCCE programs, though often geographically proximate, were not often in direct and immediate competition for the same student applicants. Though some recruitment efforts have overlapped, most UCCE institutions focus their service on the dioceses and schools immediately surrounding their universities, with the notable exception being the nationwide reach of Notre Dame’s ACE program.

The ACLP institutions, on the other hand, are always in competition for students, as these programs are regular offerings in traditional university departments and schools. While it is common practice for ACLP member institutions to offer discounted tuition for those in service in Catholic schools or those who pledge to do so, graduate programs in educational administration remain tuition-driven in large part.

The most recent study of Catholic school leadership needs (Schuttloffel, 2003) found several alarming trends. Half of the dioceses in the study had at least one school without a principal in place as the academic year began. Of those new to the principalship of a Catholic school, 23% had attended a preparation program at a Catholic university, while 71% completed their work in a secular educational administration program. An additional 6% completed the requirements set forth by their diocesan office.

Because Catholic school leadership includes spiritual as well as academic and managerial responsibilities, it is becoming increasingly important that preparation

programs respond to this manifest need for spiritual and theological formation for aspiring principals. Over half of the new principals in the aforementioned study lacked theological and spiritual formation, and that number rises to 95% for principals who are hired from the public school system to serve in Catholic schools.

ACLP member institutions struggle to respond to this growing need through programs that integrate the knowledge base of educational administration with the richness of the Catholic theological tradition, using official church documents on education, *The Code of Canon Law* (Beal et al., 2000), *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997), and the liturgical rites and seasons to blend effectively the academic goals of a school with the spiritual goals of Catholicism. As the numbers of laymen and laywomen holding Catholic school principalships continues to rise, and the number of vowed religious in such positions moves toward zero, formation in faith for aspiring principals becomes more urgent.

Currently, there are no aggregated data of ACLP graduates, or even descriptive statistics about participants or recent graduates. Such research remains to be done. But the number of institutions with such programs⁸ is itself a sign of the growing commitment of Catholic higher education to the future of K-12 Catholic education.

Preparing Distinctly Catholic Educators

Being a Catholic educator is more than a list of functional tasks; it is a disposition of the soul and fruition of the interior life. The Catholic teacher is not simply one who grades papers, pins up bulletin boards, and keeps meticulous records of absences and behavior. A Catholic school principal is not simply a public school principal taught to pray. Neither does a Catholic teacher attain his or her end in developing creative and intricate units of instruction curricularly aligned to meet diocesan benchmarks and state standards. Being a Catholic educator is to care for souls and help form them to one day meet the beatific vision. Academic excellence in and of itself is insufficient for a Catholic school. As articulated by the Congregation for Catholic Education: “Teaching has extraordinary moral depth and is one of man’s most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings” (1998, §19).

What goes on in a Catholic classroom is a participation in the divine pedagogy and contribution to American history and culture, an endeavor which reveals the need for Catholic educators to be spirit-filled through full participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Principals and teachers are called to be Christlike in

⁸ Larger and urban Catholic universities serve a more significant market with leadership programs and reach more students. Boston College, DePaul University, Loyola University of Chicago, University of Notre Dame, Seton Hall University, Saint Louis University, University of Dayton, and Xavier University are examples of such programs. But the commitment to this effort is also in evidence with smaller market institutions making leadership preparation programs a priority. Among these are: Neumann College, Niagara University, Silver Lake College, and University of Rochester.

their demeanor and performance, creating a Christian community of the faculty and staff that invites the students, parents, and families into a sharing in Christ's life through the educational services of the school.

Catholic Education by Way of the Family

“Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents in fulfilling their duties and who, as representatives of the human community, undertake the task of education in schools” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §5). In *The Catholic Character of Catholic Schools*, Walch (2000) cites the changing structure of the American family as a major factor in the landscape of Catholic education. As indicated by the research of Portier (2004) among others, families no longer live in neighborhoods of an ethnic subculture; children often experience a single parent household or one in which both parents work. The Catholic school and parish are no longer central to the family's culture and activity. As a result, in some cases, the presence of parents in schools is sometimes limited to back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences, if at all. Despite these, the role of parents must be approached with reverence. The education of the young “belongs in the first place to those who began the work of nature by giving them birth . . . forbidden to leave unfinished this work and so expose it to certain ruin” (Pius XI, 1930, §16). Parents are entrusted to care for the soul of a child for a lifetime, while a teacher's care is limited to the span of a school year. Teachers should cultivate a disposition of respect and knowledge of “the preeminent value of the family, the primary unit of every human culture” (John Paul II, 1990, §45).

Duties of Catholic Parents

As the primary educating agency in society, the family has a divine mission and responsibility in the education of children (Gibbons, 1954 [1884]; Nevins, 1963). *The Code of Canon Law* states that parents are

bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring. Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children. (Beal et al., 2000; Canon 793, §1)

Schools receive their right to educate children from parents who send them there (Nevins, 1963).

Duties of Catholic Teachers

Strong Catholic schools, composed of a strong faculty and staff, enable parents to respond to their duty to send their children to a Catholic school (Vatican II, 1965). At the same time, an education by parents is “irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated” to the Catholic school

(John Paul II, 1982, §36). Teachers should approach their service with self-giving love, profoundly modeled by their principals, and a reverence for the parents of the children they teach. Collaboration of teachers with parents is demanded by Canon Law: “parents must cooperate closely with the teachers of the schools to which they entrust their children to be educated; moreover, teachers in fulfilling their duty are to collaborate very closely with parents, who are to be heard willingly” (Beal et al., 2000; Canon 796, §2).

Parental Involvement and Student Success

Parents have the primary role in a child’s social, moral, and cognitive development (Frabutt, 2001). Relationships experienced in the home are the first lessons for relating to communities found at school, the workplace, and the Church itself. As the domestic church, the “daily experienced closeness that is proper to love...is above all the family community” (Benedict XVI, 2005, §37; Vatican Council II, 1964, §11). The relationships between children and their parents directly affect student achievement in school.

Creating a culture of education in the home correlates to positive attitudes toward learning in the classroom. Homes rich in accessible reading and language experiences correlate to academic success. Modeling reading and writing behaviors as adults has a powerful impact on children’s attitudes toward learning. A parent attentive to the expectations of a child at school, which are also upheld at home, creates a self-fulfilling prophesy of being supported through all educational enterprises undertaken from the early years through postsecondary study (Frabutt, 2001). Parents and the schools should work together for the whole human society; “whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me” (Mk 9: 37; Pius XI, 1929, §9).

Sustaining Collaboration

It is from parents that educators can understand the norm for teaching to enrich their work “with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruits of love” (John Paul II, 1982, §36). Viewed in collaboration with the family, Catholic education essentially promotes the Gospel of Life as fundamental to its self-understanding. Catholic schools and families are called to mutual service of one another. If “the future of the world and of the Church passes through the family” so too does the future of Catholic education (John Paul II, 1982, §86).

Agenda for Future Research

An empirical exploration of the spiritual dispositions of UCCE teachers, much like the work done by Portier (2004) with attention to young Catholics upon the dissolution of ethnic subcultures, would provide a worthwhile picture of this current

Catholic educational work force. Data collection from schools served by UCCE programs would also give a more complete understanding of the UCCE's impact and provide insight to the needs unique to these. Additional studies on the impact of alternative teacher preparation programs on existing schools and departments of education at the college and university level would serve to strengthen the Catholic identity of teacher preparation as well as further connect the responsibility of Catholic higher education to that of K-12 education. Connections between schools and the family also need to be explored.

Similar research initiatives are needed among ACLP graduates to understand the effectiveness of their theological and spiritual formation, as well as to compare and contrast school-based outcomes with those of principals who have not had significant religious formation. National and diocesan data are needed to track ACLP graduates, to measure their effectiveness, and to respond to their ongoing needs and challenges.

Both the UCCE and ACLP are in their infancy, a climate that provides great promise for study. It is an untapped treasure for substantial research ready to be engaged. Further and systematic research regarding the UCCE and ACLP would undoubtedly further reveal the gift of Catholic education and the continued need and privilege for it to be sustained and strengthened.

Conclusion

These programs do not purport to be the answer to the challenges in Catholic education today; however, they are a substantial and valid contribution to the overall educational mission of the Church carried out by Christians living out the universal call to holiness (Vatican Council II, 1965). Approached with the disposition of a humble fiat, the model of alternative Catholic teacher formation implemented by the UCCE and the focused formation efforts of the ACLP, inspire every member who contributes to this movement—university administrators and faculty, program directors, pastors, principals, parents, and teachers—to learn from those entrusted to their care. “And a child shall lead them” (Is 11: 6).

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CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN CANADA*

Fr. James Mulligan, CSC

As a work in progress, Catholic education is also replete with challenges. Again, my dictionary defines *challenge* as “a demanding task that calls for special effort or dedication.” Such tasks calling for special effort continue to be abundant.

It is not difficult to trace some of the major challenges that Catholic education has confronted in the course of my own three and a half decades of experience in Ontario. There was the financial challenge of the 1960s and 1970s, the need to find the funds to keep Catholic high schools open, operating, and affordable for families who were not affluent. Concurrently, there was the academic challenge—the need to find qualified teachers and offer an education at least equal, if not superior, to public education. Through the 1970s into the 1980s, the identity challenge surfaced: how to keep our schools Catholic: how to awaken within lay teachers the sense that they, too, are sacred and have an authentic vocation as Catholic educators at a time when the presence of religious sisters, brothers, and priests began diminishing rapidly.

Today and for the immediate future, a new set of challenges demands our engagement. This chapter addresses some of these current and future challenges.

Many of these challenges are rooted in the concrete, everyday practice, and experience of Catholic educators. I hope that systematic reflection on that practical experience will both elucidate some of the challenges facing Catholic teachers and help muster the special personal and collective effort and dedication needed to confront them.

It is important to acknowledge that several of the larger challenges facing Catholic educators are beyond our control. The increasing fragility of the family, the diminished number of religious and clergy, and the relentless assault of post-Christian culture on traditional faith values are challenges so daunting that they render Catholic educators vulnerable. At times the most effective thing we can do is humbly recognize the mystery of it all. This, of course, means prayer rooted in faith and

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hope, trusting that the Holy Spirit is holding the Catholic education project in her hands. It is hard to trust in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is such trust, however, that the uncertainty of our times increasingly demands. The fear, the confusion, the invitation to trust are all part of the cross that always marks our vocation.

Three Challenges

These are the challenge of neo-conservative ideology; the challenge for Catholic educators to accept the political dimension of their vocation; and the challenge to interpret postmodern culture. The detailed review of each of these challenges that follows delineates in practical ways how all the partners in Catholic education can be summoned to renewed vigilance and action.

1. The Challenge of Neo-conservative Ideology to the Vision of Catholic Education

Across the Canada, neo-conservative ideology is restructuring education. Neo-conservative ideology uses unnuanced propaganda such as: too much tax money has been wasted in education; too many educational bureaucrats with too little accountability; international comparative testing has determined that Canadian education has failed to serve business and corporate interests. In the neo-conservative vision, the marketplace becomes the major determinant of educational policy. Schools should train students for jobs, since a major indicator of a “successful” education is a lucrative salary. Computer technology ought to be the priority in the budget of every school district. Schools are encouraged to “partner” with corporations as a way to secure funding—or, sometimes, additional funding—for both curricular and co-curricular necessities that used to be routine line items in school budgets.

Education is always in need of reform. It is always possible to arrive at a more meaningful curriculum and deliver it more effectively. It is always possible to be more sensitive to student need and distress. Undoubtedly there have been and may still be instances of waste. *Neo-conservative* and *reform*, however, contradict each other because the ideology cuts much deeper into education than do cuts in budgets or supervisory personnel. The very idea of education is being radically refashioned. There is a breathtaking pragmatism in the curriculum required by neo-conservative policy. This pragmatism is soulless in its striking devaluing and de-emphasizing of the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts.

The vision of Catholic education has always affirmed that education is for the whole of life, not merely for financial gain or the current and transitory needs of the marketplace. A Catholic education must reverence and foster the life of the soul—the spiritual dimension of the person—and the life of the imagination. Authentic Catholic education asks the meaning questions and insists that career choices be seen in light of the person’s unique vocation. Success in Catholic education is measured in terms of values lived (Matt. 5: 1–11) and faith integrated into social, political, and economic activity (Matt. 25: 31–46). How different our

Catholic vision is from neo-conservative ideas, and therefore, how much more threatened by neo-conservative curriculum reforms.

The great challenge for Catholic education is to counter the rampantly creeping utilitarianism in contemporary Canadian education. This is best done when the partners in Catholic education, personally and collectively, continue to deepen and live out their own vision of Catholic education in its wholeness.

2. The Challenge to Catholic Educators to Accept the Political Dimension of Their Vocation

For educators generally, including Catholic educators, it would seem that to be political is to mobilize people towards common strategies designed to protest government initiatives that threaten the true welfare of teachers and, therefore, of students. Teacher federations rightfully exist to protect and further teacher welfare in just proportion to the economic and social realities of their society at a given time. Teacher welfare includes salary, benefits, working conditions, and pensions. In suggesting that Catholic educators accept the political dimension of their vocation, however, I mean something much more than active participation in teachers' federations or unions in their efforts to secure teacher welfare.

In *Choosing a Government*, their pastoral letter of Pentecost 1998, Ontario's bishops describe the political dimension of the Christian vocation:

In a very real sense, we are the government. In a democracy such as our own, our political responsibility is very serious. Politics in this sense is a vocation. Our involvement in it will reflect the degree to which we accept our responsibility and vocation to create a just society. (p. 2)

"Politics in this sense is a vocation." The point the bishops make throughout this timely pastoral exhortation is that we all must be involved in politics. If this is true for the vocation of every Christian, I believe that it is absolutely fundamental to the vocation of the Catholic educator. We are educators; we model what we teach; we witness to the gospel of life and the gospel of justice. Indifference to political questions and cynicism regarding the political process are among the great public temptations of our contemporary social and cultural life. Our challenge is to overcome the temptations of indifference and cynicism because we all share "the responsibility and vocation to create a just society." This is what it means to accept the political dimension of our vocation.

The political questions of our time are also faith or gospel questions. Such questions demand reflection, critique, and action. We have seen how neo-conservative ideals in education can contradict the gospel of life and oppose an authentic vision of Catholic education. To challenge such ideas is to express the political dimension of our vocation.

Globalization of the economy shows clearly that the globalization that brings increased wealth to an elite group of shareholders at the same time advances poverty in both poor and rich countries alike. This reality, too, is part of the political dimension of our vocation as Catholic educators. We are invited to become more critical and undertake more tangible actions of solidarity.

We Catholic educators no longer have the luxury of political neutrality on the larger social questions that stand at the core of Canadian democracy. The economy, education, employment, the environment, life ethics, the family, health care, human rights, labor relations, taxation (*Choosing a Government*, pp. 7–9), and the importance and meaning of marriage: these are all political questions that call for discernment and response. The prophets, the gospels, the social teaching of the Church all shed light on the fundamental values inherent in these questions. As Catholic educators we owe it to our students to model responsible political awareness. In so doing, we help strengthen Canadian democracy and contribute to global justice.

Christians who take an active part in today's socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of humankind and to the peace of the world.

(Vatican II, *The Church in the Modern World*, #72)

Let cynicism give way to actions for justice and solidarity. This is the political challenge. Increasingly, it is clear that this challenge, while becoming more and more difficult, is more urgent than ever. For example, the same-sex marriage question has commanded the sustained attention of a broad cross section of the Canadian population: politicians having to deal with court decisions, secular editorialists having to defend the newly assumed sacrality of the reigning secular religion, and churches having to deal with centuries of understanding and tradition around the meaning of human sexuality and the place of family and marriage in social life.

Certainly, same-sex marriage is not an easy issue. And, it is inevitable that when courts, governments, and even public opinion subscribe to the theory that individual and secular so-called human rights supersede all other rights, then faith communities, some of whose rights, laws, and traditions may not be in sync with a particular secular human right, may feel threatened about the outcome if a conflict between the secular and the religious were to be adjudicated.

This is why politics and a political reflex are so important. A Catholic educator has to have an understanding of such issues as same-sex marriage. A lot of learning must be followed by a lot of thinking and reflecting to sort out its various strands. We need to do this for ourselves, as adult believers who are called to interpret the signs of the times in the light of the gospels. And we need to do this for our students, so we can help them grow in a habit of learning and discerning from the vantage point of a follower of Jesus.

What makes such a question so difficult in our times is the new militancy or aggressiveness coming from the secular ideology that currently reigns throughout Canada. Those who subscribe to such an ideology are not only indifferent to religion and the sacred or transcendent, but they are now trying to define faith experience and religious practice on their own secular terms.

I grow increasingly distressed at how glibly some commentators dismiss, for example, the legitimacy of Catholic teaching, experience, and conviction about

marriage by simply referring to the sex scandals in the Church, inferring, thereby, that the voice of the Catholic Church has no legitimacy, credibility, relevance, or value. This dismissal almost nonchalantly negates the Church's two millennia of history—of which so much was grace history. This dismissal arrogantly reduces everything Catholic to the sins of very few. Such a dismissal is as intellectually dishonest as it is insulting.

In these times of heightened conflict between secular and religious values, dismissals of the religious voice occur almost daily in the media. One aspect of the fallout is that Catholic educators, influenced by a militantly secular media, can so easily be duped into discounting the teaching and witnessing Church—one more indicator of the importance of ongoing faith formation.

The most egregious damage that secular media and opinion makers do to a religious faith experience and understanding of reality is to claim that religion is private, that faith must be solely a personal thing. The error is compounded by Catholic politicians who declare in the public forum that their faith is private and personal, and that it will not enter into their judgments and service while they are in public office. How can it not? There is a difference between judgments and actions influenced by faith and attempts to impose tenets of faith on a wider, pluralistic society.

There is an aberration in the thinking—and the proclaiming—that faith is private. It betrays a very impoverished understanding that genuine faith has a definite social dimension.

There is nothing secular that should be excluded from the Catholic worldview. The marvelous contribution of Vatican II, especially in the document *Gaudium et Spes (On the Church in the Modern World)*, makes this very clear. This is the Catholic mentality needed by all Catholic educators (and by Catholic politicians). In this sense, we must indeed be political. We must be alert and aware of the issues. We must be able to debunk much in the secular media that would put the Church and faith experience on the sidelines of political, social, and economic life.

Pope John Paul II often addressed the pernicious dimension of secularism.

The ideology and mentality of secularism leads gradually in a more or less conscious way to the restriction of religious liberty to the point of promoting contempt or ignorance of the religious, relegating faith to the private sphere and opposing its public expression (Pope John Paul to a group of Spanish bishops, as reported by *Zenit*, January 24, 2005).

Writing in *The Catholic Register*, Michael Higgins, President of St. Jerome's University, asks, "When did religion become forbidden in honest and open debate?" He notes that faith is being short-changed in the public forum, and that the only religious data that surfaces are examples of the perversion of religion: division and wars, conflicts, and scandals. He concludes:

As a nation, we have concluded that religious conviction and denominational affiliation are *verboden* (forbidden) in the political market-place.

It is best reserved to the private sphere. (*The Catholic Register*, January 30, 2005, p. 19)

I value the great Protestant theologian Karl Barth's advice that the Christian should face each day with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. God's word must not be foreign to the newspaper or television or the Internet record of everyday life: social, political, and economic. Christians must have a faith view of what is happening in and around us. Christians must be open to discern how God continues to speak to us in the events of our times.

3. *The Challenge for Catholic Educators to Interpret Postmodern Culture*

Many young—and not so young—people are disconnected from their cultural, civic, familial, and religious roots. It is those roots that offer security and meaning during times of turmoil and rapid transition. The overpowering complexity of contemporary life leaves many young people hopeless, with little sense of the future, or enthusiasm for it. A Catholic high school principal in Newfoundland referred to an aspect of postmodern culture as “low-grade hopelessness and despair.” That seems to sum up life for too many young people.

Postmodern culture presents an urgent challenge to Catholic educators. It is a culture that must be interpreted for our students. “Interpret” is the key word. “Interpret” for the Catholic educator in the postmodern culture means “to heal”—to offer to our students the coherence and the meaning our faith in the Lord Jesus affords us; to help them find a sense of purpose in life, prodding them to discover their own unique call from God; to share with them our roots—the faith and values that ground us; to invite them to create their own meaning and personal worth in serving others, especially the poor and the weakest in society; and to encourage them to dedicate their lives, no matter what their career choice may be, to building up the reign of God. “Interpret” also means “critique.” Catholic educators help students acquire the values and skills that enable them to name the sin in the culture that devalues the human person and denies life, and to recognize and promote cultural attitudes that affirm the gospel of life. In Catholic education, interpreting the culture—both the healing and critiquing aspects of interpretation—has become the paramount challenge.

For young Catholic educators, especially those who are at the beginning of their careers, there is an added urgency to the special ministry of interpreting postmodern culture. Study the culture: know the videos, the Internet sites, the music kids listen to, and the shows they watch on television. Know the cultural values and attitudes these programs promote. Much of it is not of the gospel. Know the current trends regarding sexual relationships and sexual activity that are so leading in shaping the behavior of preteens and teens. This is an ongoing challenge, since the culture and its icons change so quickly.

Popular culture with its many attractions, reinforced by billions of advertising dollars, is by far the most influential shaper of the mindsets and behaviors of young people in our Catholic elementary and secondary schools. The ministry of vigilance leads to the ministry of interpretation. Relational behaviors, music,

Internet sites, television episodes, and situations that conflict with the gospel of life must be challenged. Students should be invited to reflect on cultural values in light of gospel values. This interpretive exercise produces some of the most effective religious education.

The important thing is that the culture and cultural values are critiqued and the gospel alternative proposed. Your classrooms may be the only time and place that many kids will experience such critique.

Further Challenges to a Work in Progress

The challenges to Catholic education posed by the trends and ideas of contemporary culture—that is, by neoconservative thinking, political indifference, and postmodern culture—are real. While some may argue about their rank in importance on the “to do” list in Catholic education, they must be taken seriously. The common ministry we share and the vocation we live make it imperative that we respond to each of these three challenges.

Challenges to Catholic Education Deriving from Practical Ecclesiology

1. Making Our Schools Distinctively Catholic

Churches have distinctive traditions and particular charisms. As Catholics, we participate in the Catholic expression of the Christian Church, and we must be faithful to our Catholic tradition. We do not serve the common Christian faith in the Lord Jesus and the one baptism all Christians share by watering down or underplaying what it means to be Catholic. The Catholic school cannot become a generic Christian school any more than a Christian Reform school or a Mennonite school would become generic Christian schools. They, too, must be true to their respective traditions.

The fundamental mission of the Catholic school is to hand on to Catholic students the faith and traditions that Catholics live and that continue to give Catholics meaning and purpose.

The ministry of teaching in a Catholic school . . . is recognized by Catholics as a participation in the saving mission of the church. Through this mission the church continues the teaching, healing and guiding work of Jesus. It is a task of proclaiming the gospel, making holy and guiding all men and women. Educators in a Catholic school share in this mission especially in their role as educators in faith. To teach in Catholic schools, therefore, is to give witness to the community’s understanding of its heritage, its culture and its tradition, its teaching and belief. (*Witnesses to Faith*, pp. 23–24)

To witness to what is distinctively Catholic, Catholic educators must understand what is distinctively Catholic.

The urgent challenge, then, is for all the partners in Catholic education to make our schools distinctively Catholic. Reading Father Dan Donovan’s *Distinctively*

Catholic: An Exploration of Catholic Identity (Paulist Press, 1997) is an ideal place to start. Father Donovan is a professor at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. His very readable book, written in large part for beginning Catholic educators, investigates and explains the rich tradition of Catholic Christianity: a faith community, a sacramental community, a structured community, and a community that experiences sin and reconciliation. It is these elements that give Catholic Christianity its originality and shape the Catholic education we offer.

Equally helpful in identifying the distinctive nature of Catholic education is Thomas Groome's *What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life* (HarperCollins, San Francisco, 2002). Groome, a renowned American religious educator, draws on eight distinctive or core convictions of Catholic Christianity:

- The positive understanding of the person
- The commitment to community
- A sacramental outlook and the sacramentality of life
- Catholics cherish scripture and tradition
- Catholics embrace a holistic faith
- The commitment to justice
- A universal spirituality and the fact that Catholics are catholic
- A devotion to Mary

Groome's book will deepen the Catholic educators' theological understanding of their own faith tradition. It also provides teachers in the Catholic school system with patterns, models and means for living out and handing on our faith to our students.

These books are just two examples that underscore what is distinctive in being Catholic. The challenge is to make our Catholic education distinctively Catholic. We do so not to satisfy Church law or the will of the bishops and the official Catholic community, although these are important and respectful considerations, but because it is very good to do so. A distinctively Catholic education is a relevant education, a more complete education, an education that is so much richer and more satisfying than the education described in ministry of education policies, guidelines, and circulars. A Catholic education is an education towards lifelong meaning. It is an invaluable, ongoing initiation into an adult faith community, both theoretical and experiential, that features ritual, prayer, creed, ethics, social teaching, and commitment to service. A distinctively Catholic education allows Catholic schools to make a unique contribution to the spiritual, social, and cultural welfare of Canadian life. Wider community of an extraordinary gift.

2. *The Challenge of Evangelizing the Unchurched*

The experience of contemporary Catholic education confirms that among teachers, parents, and clergy there are at least two notions of what it means to be Church. Some are restrictive in their understanding of Church. For them, the ideal should be the norm: all Catholics should be practicing Catholics; parents are the primary religious educators of their children; the Catholic education

triad of home, parish, and school guarantees the most effective Catholic education. Certainly few would quarrel with the elements of these ideals.

Most partners in Catholic education, however, know that reality is far from that ideal. Their experience and their reflection on that experience, influenced by their understanding of a loving, patient God, have led them to a more inclusive sense of our contemporary Church as including the unchurched! While not condoning, much less celebrating, present patterns of minimal practice and membership, these Catholic education partners know from experience that most Catholics are not at Sunday Eucharist regularly (current statistics suggest between 70% and 75% are not there); that Catholic parents are as likely to be divorced and/or in any number of new partnerships as non-Catholics; that too few Catholic parents exercise their duty as the primary faith educators of their children; and that, because of the diminishing number of priests and overextended parish staffs, most priests can no longer spend significant time in schools.

Labelling any student *unchurched* needs clear and compassionate understanding. *Unchurched* does not mean *not a Christian*, *not a Catholic* or even *a bad Catholic*. Most of the 70–75% of unchurched students in Catholic schools have been baptized Catholic and have received the sacraments of Eucharist, reconciliation, and confirmation. Many are in Catholic schools because of their parents' or their own instinctive sense of relationship and comfort.

Using the term “unchurched” does not place the blame for this situation on either the student or the student's parents or family. The term simply describes a sociologically observable reality. Recognizing the currently pervasive reality of unchurched students is critically important to discerning exactly what religious education or evangelization in Catholic schools could or should be offering these young people.

There is no room for nostalgia if Catholic educators are to engage in a critically important, constructive reflection on meeting the needs of unchurched students. It is an exercise in futility to try to turn back the clock to have things as they once seemed, when families were at Mass every Sunday and the parish was the centre of Catholic life. Even a generation or two ago, many Catholics were immigrants for whom the Church was not just a place of meaning—the universality of the Church allowed immigrants to find this identical place of meaning in a new country—but also a place that offered cultural protection and a sense of security. Society had not yet undergone the enormous secularization process that took place from 1960 to today. In our post-Christian culture, the Church has been relegated to the periphery of Catholic social life. Religion, like so many other institutions, has become privatized. While many of us might like to recapture some of the religious spirit and flavor that we remember from times past, it is not likely that the secular clock is going to stop ticking anytime soon.

Finally, when speaking of unchurched students, we must remember that most reflect the values, choices, and lifestyles of their parents. Yet, at the same time, both they and their parents are members of the Church. They are each on a personal faith journey, however attuned or unattuned they may be to it, and to

them as to all of us the Lord Jesus offers the same loving, relent less invitation to know his love and become more fully his disciples.

It may be helpful to Catholic educators to know that the teaching Church officially recognizes the unchurched students in our Catholic schools. The Ontario bishops have referred to the Catholic school as the primary place where young people now experience the Church. In *Witnesses to Faith*, they share their understanding of how challenging a task this is for Catholic teachers:

In a society with considerably increased numbers of “at risk” children and non practicing Catholics, our educators are called to bear an increasingly heavy burden. Since this is so, the broad Catholic community is called to accept a special responsibility to support and sustain those who teach. (pp. 22–23)

Perhaps the challenge of the unchurched for the local church and Catholic school is best summed up in the Vatican’s *General Directory for Catechesis* (1998):

Nonetheless, in considering today’s religious situation, the church is also obliged to take into account the extent to which Christians “have been shaped by the climate of secularism and ethical relativism.” A prime category requiring examination is that of the “many people who have been baptized but lead lives entirely divorced from Christianity.” This in fact constitutes a mass of “non-practising Christians” even though in many hearts religious feeling has not been completely lost. Re-awakening these to the faith is a real challenge for the church. (#25)

What is especially important to remember are the words “even though in many hearts religious feeling has not been completely lost.” The territory of the heart is the territory of the Holy Spirit. The evangelizing role for Catholic educators is to presume that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the hearts of our unchurched students and their parents.

It is important to recognize that “unchurched” does not mean lacking in spirituality, just as “churched” does not mean having spirituality. At the high school level we tend to concentrate more on the role of God in their lives and less on the tradition-theology of former years. This is not because traditional theology is not important or relevant but because that is generally not where the students are at. So, in this case, the unchurched are not ignored and actually have as much to contribute as the churched. (*Secondary school religious studies teacher, Alberta*)

More than anything else we need to give our kids a sense of the importance and value of their own spirituality. . . . In many ways unchurched kids offer a wonderful perspective for our classrooms. Many churched kids don’t understand why things are the way they are. Asking basic questions often leads to more in-depth theological reflections as to why things are the way they are. (*Secondary school religious education teacher, Greater Toronto Area*)

We need to provide opportunities for our young unchurched people to serve others. Let young people have an opportunity to serve Christ in the elderly, the poor, the sick. Let young people build the church. In doing things, you encounter Christ. This doing also gives young people a sense of belonging—of making a difference. It gives them a taste of community ... of church. (*Secondary school chaplain, Greater Toronto Area*)

The unchurched have chosen to come to our schools. This may be a statement of support for who we are and what it is we do. The parent may not be bringing the child to church, but coming to school is a start. I believe if we can impart that sense of awe or wonder we may kindle a future generation of believers. This task is not easy, but we can never know when the Spirit will move a person. (*Elementary school principal, southern Ontario*)

We are the church for these kids. We must provide the symbols and outward activities that are church: liturgies, Advent candles, gospel readings and reflections, but for these kids and all kids we must show that members of the church, believers in the teachings of Jesus Christ, act with respect and compassion for everyone. (*Elementary school principal, southern Ontario*)

Faith-oriented experiences within the school need to be presented time and time again without assumptions that everybody knows what this is about—and why! The explanation of the meaning of Ash Wednesday at our school liturgy this morning is a perfect case in point. It was education for those who do not deeply share our tradition. It was in the manner of the presentation, an invaluable retelling of the story for all of us who own it and a new, so important invitation to enter into it in a new, more mature, more wholehearted way. Students who are unchurched can be touched by teaching, by experience and by relationship. (*Secondary school guidance teacher, southern Ontario*)

If these young unchurched people experience the quiet witness of a body of believers whose lives reflect a daily effort to live the Christian ideal—even though they sometimes waver—they will be challenged to question their own values from the dominant culture and seriously consider the values, so different from their own, of these people called Christians. (*Retired Catholic educator Lorne Howcroft*)

The above testimonies make it clear that there is a spirit, a faith-filled attitude and definite strategies for evangelizing the unchurched in our schools. These strategies include

- Providing quality experiences of liturgy and prayer in which the young person might encounter Jesus
- Facilitating service projects that invite students outside of themselves to focus on the needy and the hurting

- Accompanying students through the different liturgical moments of the year, explaining to them the story and meaning of the symbols that help us remember our story
- Gently prodding them with the questions of the soul and being present to them as they grapple with the meaning of their own life journey
- Witnessing by our compassion, joy, and humor, as adult Catholic teachers, what faith means and who Jesus is for us

These attitudes and approaches must be welcoming and founded squarely on trust that the Holy Spirit will stir hearts and awaken or reawaken people to faith.

In addition to evangelizing strategies and a welcoming attitude, there is the need for periodic, systematic reflection on the part of the entire staff on questions such as the following:

- Who are the unchurched?
- How can Catholic schools better serve them?
- In what other ways might we share our own experience of Jesus and the meaning Jesus gives us as Catholic Christians? It really is a work in progress.

It remains a mystery for me each time I am called upon to present the beautiful ideals of the sacrament of marriage and our very rich understanding of love and sexuality in a Grade 12 religion class, knowing full well that this is not the reality for almost half of the students. These students' parents are divorced and in new living arrangements with new partners. The mystery of it all continues to lead me to believe that for this, and similar aspects of our work in progress, the Holy Spirit takes over.

Talk to an experienced Grade 1 teacher about the make-up of her class in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2005. She will confirm that each year the number of churched kids decreases. As Catholic educators, we need to accept the fact that this will be the dominant reality in our schools. But we need help. From theologians we need new theological understanding of the churched/unchurched phenomenon in our post-Christian culture. What should or could be the role of the Catholic school? From bishops and pastors we need fresh pastoral suggestions and approaches for our ministry to unchurched students and their parents. But immediately we need the deep confidence that comes from prayer that we are doing God's work in our time and place, and that somehow we continue to be instruments of God's tenderness, mercy, and love to the students in our care.

3. The Challenge of Praying and Worshipping in the Catholic School

The spiritual challenge that confronts us in Catholic education has to do directly with the education of the soul. The 1998 document from the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, situates the Catholic school at the heart of the pastoral work of the parish and the diocese:

By reason of its identity, therefore, the Catholic school is a place of ecclesial experience, which is moulded in the Christian community. However, it should not be forgotten that the school fulfills its vocation to be a genuine experience of Church only if it takes its stand within the organic pastoral work of the Christian community. In a very special way the Catholic school affords the opportunity to meet young people in an environment which favours their Christian formation. Unfortunately, there are instances in which the Catholic school is not perceived as an integral part of organic pastoral work, at times it is considered alien, or very nearly so, to the community. It is urgent, therefore, to sensitize parochial and diocesan communities to the necessity of their devoting special care to education and schools. (#12)

This applies especially to the ministry of priests and the role of teachers in worship, and liturgy in the Catholic school. I limit my comments to worship and liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist.

The spiritual welfare of students in the Catholic school presents a special challenge to *priests*. There are several aspects of this challenge to them:

- To work and minister collaboratively with Catholic teachers, encouraging them in their vocation as Catholic educators, and recognizing their skills in pedagogy and their sense of how students are developing in their young faith journeys
- To interpret the needs of students and decide how to adapt catechesis, liturgy, and evangelization so that the living word of Jesus might speak to their hearts
- To explore ways and means of reaching children's parents, many of whom are non-practicing and yet may be open to a reawakening to faith

I have worked with hundreds of Catholic educators. I know that the relationship between the Catholic school and the parish priest is absolutely critical (Review in Chapter 3 the litany of needs deriving from the conversation between the sympathetic parish priest and the committed Catholic educator). Where there is great respect for differing gifts and a collaborative ministry, the Catholic education experience becomes something very special. But when authoritarianism is inserted into the relationship—the priest's clerical or canonical position versus the school's educational prerogatives and expertise—fear and tension result. The tension is damaging because it deprives children spiritually. There are obstacles to spiritual growth aplenty in the post-Christian cultural context without fear and tension poisoning the parish-school relationship.

Very particular circumstances create tension for *high school liturgies*. Some of the unique challenges high school teachers face include the following:

- No easy access to a priest or to a priest comfortable with teenagers
- A large minority of non-Catholics in the school population
- No place large enough to gather the entire school community for liturgy

- No music program
- Too many unchurched kids who are unfamiliar with Mass

Here, too, fear frequently seems to rule when it comes to liturgies or school Eucharist. In these instances teachers fear how students will behave. I think one reason for this fear is not knowing how to go about organizing a school liturgy. A second reason is a lack of preparation. The good news is that with goodwill and a recommitment to quality liturgy, something can be done about lack of knowledge and poor preparation.

I have presided at a school liturgy for 350 students in a large, beautiful church, and it was a disappointing, flat experience for me and for the students. I have also presided at a school mass for 1,500 students crowded into a gym and seated on the floor, and it was a beautiful and memorable prayer experience, especially for the students. The difference? Knowledge and preparation.

In the first example, the students were only informed that morning that there would be Mass in the church that day. Teachers presumed that because it was at the church the kids would behave like adults on Sunday. The music was recorded, speaking neither to the theme of the Mass nor to the students' experience. There was little care in the preparation of this liturgy.

In the latter instance, the pastoral team had worked for two weeks to prepare the liturgy. The students were prepared, with several of them playing a role in the liturgy. The music was live and prayerfully relevant. A liturgical dance accompanied the offering of the gifts. PowerPoint slides and text on a large screen reinforced the homily and provided an atmosphere of reflection. All of the teachers on staff were involved in ushering and the maintenance of decorum.

We seem to be suffering from a real poverty of imagination when it comes to liturgy for our students. We suffer, too, from a poverty of time. We will spend hours and hours at practice or rehearsal to prepare for a league game or a Friday night performance, but we can only afford one period to set the gym up for Mass in the next period, and then only to do what we have always done.

The Eucharist should be a memorable faith experience for our students. Thus it takes time, thought and care, imagination, and coaching. It takes the type of sensitive and creative imagination Paul VI speaks of in *Evangelization in the Modern World* (1976), in which he elaborates on the urgent need to adapt evangelization to the language, culture, and needs of the people to whom it is directed:

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. (#63)

If it is true that the school has become the primary place where most young people encounter the Church, it is incumbent upon Catholic educators to provide these students with the richest prayer and liturgical experiences possible. This is the crucial spiritual challenge that is begging for time and imagination.

Immediate Challenges for the Catholic Education Community

1. The Question of Non-Catholics in Catholic Schools

This is a concern common to Catholic educators in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. To be fair, it is not so much a question whether non-Catholics should attend Catholic school, but rather *how many* non-Catholics and *under what conditions*. Large numbers of non-Catholics can certainly compromise the evangelizing efforts of staff and the quality of the Catholic education a school offers. Recall the example of the Catholic high school in the Greater Toronto Area with more than 2,200 students, 700 of them non-Catholic. The chaplain of that school is absolutely correct: “It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, let alone deepen, the Catholic character of the school with such a large non-Catholic population.” Why? There are many reasons. I will cite just a few:

- The mission of the Catholic school today is to evangelize Catholic students—to share the Catholic Christian story and allow them to acquire and deepen Catholic identity, perspective, and discipleship.
- Many individual Catholic schools have policies requiring non-Catholics who seek admission to accept all the major Catholic dimensions of the school program, including a compulsory religious education course each year and presence at school-wide, faith-related activities. The intent of such policies is to discourage non-Catholics from choosing a certain Catholic school only for personally beneficial reasons such as better academic or extra-curricular programs or better discipline.
- A school-wide Eucharist cannot be an evangelizing experience if, in one instance, possibly a third or more of the students are not Catholic and have no framework of experience that allows them to enter with reverence into the liturgy. What happens to the Catholic students who hope for more or for whom the teachers hope the experience will mean more? On the other hand, what happens to the meaning of school-wide liturgy if up to one-third of the school population is excused because they are not Catholic?
- The largest conundrum is that all of this is visited upon the religion teacher who is committed to an attitude of inclusion and respect for every student. When the non-Catholic population is significant, how can a teacher not be concerned about students sitting, day after day, through religion classes that are so far removed from their reality, not to mention from their interest? They are there because they have to be. How can a teacher, in the same religion class, help students who have an active faith to grow in knowledge and deepen in commitment, try to help the unchurched Catholic students discover new meaning in the church and faith to which they have definite but tenuous ties, and respect a significant number of students for whom Catholic faith is a foreign language they have no, or next to no, interest in learning about? Does the tendency to water down have a current, viable alternative?

The need for clear conditions under which non-Catholics are admitted to Catholic schools has never been so critical. It is not only easy, it is a pleasure to welcome non-Catholics who accept the Catholic vision of education and Catholic values, who perhaps even hope that Catholic religious education classes will foster their own Christian faith more than the secular-humanist content of public education, which is the best one can hope for in our increasingly pluralistic society. One Ontario principal puts it this way:

It is critical that the school board articulate a clear and unyielding policy on expectations for students and their parents who are not Catholic but who wish to attend our Catholic schools. In electing to come to our schools, these students must display a willingness to accept our value system. As Sister Clare Fitzgerald said on our faith formation day, “We must have an openness to all faiths, but we must have an openness with roots if we are to uphold our part of the conversation.

Trustees, superintendents, and directors of education must put themselves in the shoes of a committed school leadership team, the chaplains, and religious educators who are trying to offer the best Catholic education possible. Simply, to be good, education has to allow growth in knowledge, an increase in skills, and a deepening in matters of the mind and the heart. I have heard testimonies from very caring, very concerned teachers across Canada who are becoming concerned because impossible numbers of non-committed, non-Catholic students are seriously compromising the evangelizing strategy of their Catholic schools. The following comments are indicative:

- We are slow or too unconcerned to understand the implications of having non-Catholics present in our schools in such large numbers. (*Catholic trustee*)
- The critical mass of non-Catholic students in our schools has been reached. Now what? (*Eastern Ontario high school staff*)
- The demographics are quickly changing in our schools. It could be that soon Ramadan will be as big a feast as Christmas in our Catholic school. (*Chaplain, Greater Toronto Area*)

Because of a variety of open-access policies and provincial ministry regulations, trustees, and senior administrators will claim at times that the Catholic school must accept the non-Catholic student. They are more reserved about the pernicious trend, currently in place in all three provinces, of seeking out non-Catholic students because grants follow students. This practice, where it exists, is unconscionable. To pursue such a policy is folly. It poisons our already fragile relations with public school educators. More than that, by deliberately seeking non-Catholic students as a crass way to increase grants, the trustees, and senior administrators most responsible for the vision, quality, and distinctiveness of Catholic schools inevitably weaken the Catholicity of the school and demoralize school staffs, whether they realize it or not.

No one wants to do Catholic education in a ghetto. Calling attention to the fact that too many non-Catholics erode the quality of Catholic education we offer does not indicate a fortress mentality. It merely respects and honors our mission and our roots—the precious gift that is ours in Catholic education and our common vocation to care for this gift for the future.

2. *And If Another Referendum Should Come?*

I have tried to ground the vision for Catholic education in the concrete circumstances of our present social and political reality. Thus, the reason for so much emphasis on *practice* and the Catholic educator's reflection on lived experience. A careful reading of these testimonies makes it clear that there is a whole lot of God's grace at work in our school boards and schools. There are some very exceptional women and men in Canadian Catholic public schools who are busy living their vocation as a Catholic teacher in circumstances that are not always easy.

Bishops and priests, those especially charged with the evangelizing mission of the Church, should be very encouraged to have such committed collaborators. All Catholics in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario should thank God daily for the gift of public Catholic education.

Yet, as much as we would like it to be the case, shoulds and oughts do not always materialize in the way we would like. Perhaps some bishops and priests are not as enthused as we think they should be about Catholic education. Possibly, too many Catholics never give a second thought to public funding for Catholic education. The evidence clearly indicates that not enough Catholic educators are as committed as we need them to be to guarantee a vital future for Catholic education. When we put all of that in a mix we have the recipe for the demise of Catholic education. Such was the experience in Newfoundland.

We would be naive to think that there is no further threat to survival because our minority rights to Catholic education are enshrined in the Constitution. Newfoundland and Quebec both demonstrated that what was constitutionally done can become politically undone. It is sobering to keep in mind that while Catholic schools are legitimate constitutionally, in the eyes of the Supreme Court of Canada they violate the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; and in the eyes of many Canadians, and indeed in the eyes of the United Nations, Catholic school funding is discriminatory. So it is not unreasonable to think that a referendum could take place on the Catholic school question. If such a referendum takes place, what should we expect? It is a scary question. So the real challenge is to demonstrate to both the Catholic and non-Catholic public, the taxpayers, that Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario would become immeasurably impoverished without public Catholic education.

Bob Anderson, Director of Catholic Education for the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, claims that if Catholics are going to hang on to a distinctively Catholic education system, they have to make a case for it with the broad public. "Try to begin to look at Catholic education through the eyes of those in the public domain who are not Catholic school ratepayers," he says.

Does the public really see a difference? Do they see that we are living by the principles we like to talk about as our vision? His conclusion: the Catholic community is going to have to do a lot of work convincing the broad public that Catholic education is not only worthwhile but necessary for the common good of Ontario.

From my experience and research, I think that this task is going to become harder and harder. Why? Mainly because we seem to be getting further and further away from the roots and the inspiration of Catholic education. Too many of the teachers interviewed for this study have complained that we are living on our heritage, which we are using up the legacy of the past.

If the Catholic teachers continue to remain unsure about or indifferent to the mission of Catholic education and the role or vocation of the Catholic educator, then it is only a matter of time. We can start the legal negotiations now. Which properties and resources will remain with the Catholic Church, and which will go to the government for the new and expanded public school system?

What do we need to make a convincing case to the public that Catholic education is making a very significant contribution to the common good of our provinces?

- We need ownership of Catholic education on the part of all of the partners.
- We need strong and encouraging faith leadership from the top.
- We cannot take Catholic teachers for granted. The most urgent need is for the faith formation and development of Catholic teachers.
- Parents have to get involved.
- Sacrifice must be the order of the day on the part of the board, teachers, parents, and local church.

The Institute for Catholic education has specific expectations for Catholic school graduates: Discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community; effective communicators; creative thinkers; responsible lifelong learners; collaborative contributors; caring family members; responsible citizens. Once our students leave our elementary and secondary schools, how manifest in their behavior and attitudes are these principles that govern our education? Do our Catholic schools now make a discernible difference in the common life of Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Alberta? Are our schools and our students recognized as agents for justice and social change, as advocates for the poor and the marginalized in our communities, our provinces, and our world?

These are troubling questions, but they are the critically important ones.

3. Catholic Identity and the Challenge of Justice

The Catholic identity question is a question that must always be a major concern of every Catholic school board. If any institution calls itself Catholic, then there must be both an appropriate understanding of what “Catholic” means, and an affiliation with the bishop, the first teacher in a Catholic diocese.

In these postmodern and post-Christian times, as we have seen, the Catholic identity question is always challenging, as well it should be. Catholicism and

what it is to be Catholic are not static concepts. The Vatican II experience made it abundantly clear that Catholicism is a dynamic reality. Indeed, some of the difficulty encountered today in the Church derives from the fact that some would like to see much more dynamism, much more adaptation, and a much deeper renewal in the Church, at a faster rate than is presently the case.

In terms of professional qualifications to teach in a Catholic school, a pastoral reference is required attesting that an applicant is a practicing Catholic. Applicants are also required to keep a faith portfolio. As regards ethical and doctrinal content, the Catechism of the Catholic Church must be adhered to in curriculum and in classroom teaching. Should a teacher be in conflict with a church teaching on, for example, euthanasia or abortion, that teacher must check his or her opinions at the classroom door and teach the Catholic perspective, since he or she has accepted the responsibility of teaching in the Catholic school.

a. Catholic Boards and Catholic Social Teaching An Unsettling Disconnect

There is another, even more unsettling disconnect in contemporary Catholic education as practiced across Canada. There is a large gap between the social teaching of the Church and the actions, choices, and decisions of many Catholic school boards. I believe that this disconnect is much more damaging to Catholic identity than the actions of an individual, since this is a public, communal statement, or a collective choice on the part of board administration that puts it in direct opposition to the teaching Church.

In conversations with Catholic educators, this disconnect came up often:

- Catholic school boards indifferent to Catholic social teaching on the dignity of labor and rights of the workers regarding outsourcing of work and on the use of short-term contracts that pay less and require fewer benefits rather than do permanent contracts.
- Catholic school boards that refuse permission for pregnant teachers to take time off during school hours for medical tests on their unborn child who may have become vulnerable because of a virus rampant in the schools (the justification for this is that there is no provision for such time off in the labour code, which does not consider the unborn child a person).
- Catholic school boards that will not even consider a boardwide “social justice committee” made up of various partners in the Catholic education project who would be responsible for monitoring the board’s policies and decisions for their cohesion with Catholic social teaching.
- Catholic school boards that continue to use a low salary scale for chaplains.
- Catholic school boards that cannot find the necessary budget for religious education workshops and adequate coordinators with religious education expertise, faith formation, and faith formation animation.

These examples came up frequently in conversations with Catholic educators in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. Certainly, not every board can be accused of indifference to or of failure to apply Catholic social teaching to its *modus operandi*. Indeed, some boards exercise enlightened leadership and see the necessary

connection between Catholic social teaching and the Catholic identity of a school board. The fact remains, though, that all Catholic educators—trustees, administrators, and teacher associations—have major remedial work to do to take ownership of the social teaching of the Church intellectually and implement it with great heart and soul.

b. Reclaiming Principles of Catholic Social Teaching Catholic social teaching, is one of our great modern glories and remains an extraordinary conduit for advancing a just and compassionate social, political, and economic life. All Catholic educators do well to recall often the fundamental principles of this teaching as guideposts in our common vocation to read “the signs of the times”:

- The dignity of the human person
- The dignity of work
- The common good and the place of the person in community
- Rights and responsibilities
- The preferential option for the poor
- Solidarity
- The care for creation

These are the principles that should govern the public and the private “business” of every Catholic school board and professional Catholic teacher association. These are the principles that should inspire the way we relate to each other and that should inform all our curriculum.

c. Taking Catholic Social Teaching Seriously What would a Catholic school and a Catholic school board look like that take Catholic social teaching seriously?

There would be the following:

- A clear focus on the common good in all curriculum and in all aspects of a school’s or board’s administration and way of doing business.
- A genuine option to present to our students a critical education, challenging them to scrutinize our politics, economics, and culture through the lens of the beatitudes, clear-eyed about how a culture functions that is shaped by intentionally deceptive advertising and marketing.
- A decisive option on the part of the board to provide ongoing faith formation for all staff, especially a formation in prayer and in the social teaching of the Church.
- A generous investment in all aspects of education that are directed at the poor or little ones (e.g., special needs students, autistic students, the needs of First Nations, ESL students).
- The promotion of charity and justice in our Catholic schools by means of pilgrimages, walks, starvathons, and other fundraising activities.
- An endorsement of experiences during learning trips abroad—justice education in action—that deepen teachers’ and students’ awareness of international poverty and injustice, efforts being made there to combat it and the possibilities we have here to make a difference.

- Salary scales for chaplains consistent with the highest in the province.
- Active participation in food banks and other agencies in the community that work directly with the economically or developmentally disadvantaged to enable students to experience the Corporal Works of Mercy and the beatitudes in action.
- A clear and compelling promotion of the consistent ethic of life with participation in movements that defend the rights of the unborn, protest militarization and the option for war, and campaign actively against all types of violence.
- Prayer vigils and retreats that enable teachers and students to know better the God who loves the poor with a preferential love.
- Field trips to conscientize our students to the lives and struggles of the poor here at home, and to the efforts of individuals and organizations actively working here on their behalf on issues and causes that can bring greater justice and peace to our communities, provinces, and world.
- Courses and units that clearly present the social teaching of the Church whenever there are relevant connections; pedagogy that assures our students' familiarity with the application of that teaching in issues having to do with peace, justice, and care for the environment.
- An intentional linking or twinning of Catholic schools in a board with schools in the developing world (the globalization of solidarity) for mutual learning and exchange, exercising solidarity, and providing financial assistance.
- A strong social justice component based on "kingdom economics" integrated into every economics, business, and technology course whose textbooks are most often based on "the economics of the empire."
- A clear option against sweatshop-produced goods.
- Abhorrence at cutting costs by filling every possible position with a short-term contract worker when a permanent contract is possible or, at the very least, legally permissible.
- A reverence for the common good of the entire board with regard to all contracts.
- An effective social justice committee representing all partners on each board.

The challenge for Canadian Catholic educators today is to make more of these ideals a reality in the life of Catholic schools.

SECTION TWO

**CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING
IN LATIN AMERICA**

SECULARIZATION: CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN URUGUAY

Adriana Aristimuño

Introduction

This chapter will analyze the characteristics and the impact that secularization has made on a young Catholic schooling system. It proposes that secularization has represented a huge challenge for the Catholic Church worldwide since it began during the Enlightenment, but at the same time, it offers a major opportunity if school systems become aware of it and work hard for the spread of the Gospel with renewed energy and realistic goals.

It presents the case of a young country that became independent less than 200 years ago, whose society was built due to the input of thousands of European immigrants, and which has become an exception in Latin America, because it has no native population since the last Indians were killed in the 19th century. It certainly is a peculiar society in the context of a highly religious continent, due to an early institutional separation between the Church and the State that took place a century ago, an event that has strongly shaped its society, culture, and specially, its education.

The chapter is organized in three sections. In the first one, some contemporary challenges Catholic schools face today in the country are presented and analyzed, with a special focus on the impact and consequences of secularization; in the second one, some responses to these challenges are reviewed, in the context of the limitations Catholic schooling faces in this particular society; and in the third one, some research studies of Catholic schools are discussed.

The Challenge to Face: How Secularization Started and Developed

The term “secular” may be understood in different although related ways. At least two have to do with education:

- a. Secular as opposed to sacred
- b. Secular as privatization of religion

The struggle between the secular and the sacred belongs to a broader movement, which is that of Modernization. Since the 19th century, most European societies have experienced a progressive struggle between the Church and a liberal and modern world in the rise (Caetano & Geymonat, 1997). The progress of science, the strength of Positivism, the reign of Reason above any other force, are tendencies that have led to a decline of the power of the Church on the conscience of the people. Consequently, the Church and the State have struggled for public spaces, and education was one of the most strategic battlefields of this struggle. In Uruguay, this struggle was very visible in the last years of the 19th century and the first 20 years of the 20th century.

As early as 1877, the Common Education Law of August 1877 created a public, free, and compulsory primary education. It established a Christian optional education, which was a very fragile version of it. As years passed by, parents started to free their children from this optional activity, because they felt it was a weak spiritual education option.

The talent behind this law was a young businessman called Jose Pedro Varela, turned into pedagogue, strongly influenced by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's ideas (of great importance in the educational development of neighboring Argentina) and by one of the most renowned American promoters of popular education, Horace Mann. A long trip to Europe and the USA had made a strong impact on young Varela. He came back to the country convinced that education was the clue that explained the dynamic and prosperous growing society of the USA of the time. Varela asked himself: "What should we do in order to educate the citizens?" and he answered; "Educate, educate, educate." Varela's positivist ideas spread all over his projects and achievements.

But the secularization process had started much earlier. In fact, in 1861 all graveyards had been taken away from the Church's jurisdiction, and later, several other measures contributed to the process. In 1906 all religious symbols were removed from hospitals, and in 1909 the State eliminated any form of Christian education from schools by law.

This process attained its highest institutional moment when the new Constitution of 1917 established the complete separation between the Church and the State. Uruguay was one of the first institutionally secularized societies in Latin America.

Secularization then had attained some of the most important meanings it could attain: as opposed to the sacred, and as privatization of religion. Less than a century after the country had become an independent State (1825) freed from Spain, it had turned into a secularized society.

Several circumstances explain such a quick and radical process.

First, the Church in the country had started poor and small. Montevideo, the capital and main city in the country, had been founded 200 years later than Asuncion (capital city of Paraguay) and 150 years later than Buenos Aires (capital city of Argentina). Not until the beginning of the 18th century, the first missions started to establish: Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits. So, while modernization and secularization were struggling against strong and veteran

churches in Europe and the rest of Latin America, in Uruguay these forces faced a very fragile church in lands of mission.

Second, some historians consider that the strong immigrant flow that the country experienced during the second half of the 19th century, was a decisive factor in the process of abandoning religion. In fact, the country's population increased in the 19th century from 75,000 in 1830 to around 800,000 in 1894, most of them coming from southern Europe, and most of whom experienced a radical change, abandoning their commitments in terms of religion and cultural patterns. The need to belong to a new, plural, diverse and "neutral" society may have played a major role in this process. "Uruguay received people from Spain (Basque Country, Catalunya, Asturias, later from Galicia), from Italy (northern and southern), from France (Béarnais and Basque regions in the first flow), from England, Germany, and Switzerland. From the fusion between the locals and the immigrants from so varied places was born a new 'native people' that expressed in varied ways its religious spirit. The man that migrated, that left his land and people in search of new horizons, was tempted to abandon the social and religious rules that had been his standpoint and norm in his homeland" (Monreal, 2001, p. 137).

Third, the Common Education Law of August 1877, which culminated in the 1909 legal prohibition to teach Religion in public schools, meant that the sacred and every religious matter were to be expelled from the public education arena. During these years, an omnipotent and omnipresent State became the paternal figure every citizen looked to in case of need. In 1919, every religious feast (Christmas, Epiphany, etc.) was given a secularized name.¹ The calendar was no more ruled by the Church, as many other aspects of social and cultural life.

Fourth, and certainly not least, intellectuals were educated right from the beginning of Uruguay as an independent country, in a particularly anti-Church milieu. The only university that existed in the country since 1849 until as recently as 1985 was strongly influenced by rationalism and positivism. Victor Cousin, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer were the leading authors taught in its courses for decades during the 19th century. These ideas were far away from the Catholic Church's teachings of the times (Monreal, 2001). The intellectuals and professionals who have graduated from the university for decades have been agnosticist, positivist, believers in science, and in Reason above all.

These ideas certainly took the place of the sacred notions that had guided these professional's grandparents' lives, some of which had left their countrysides in Spain and Italy during the 18th and 19th centuries. The dialog between Faith and Culture was certainly not practised in those times.

An empirical confirmation of the decrease of Catholics in these early years of the nation may be found in the National Survey Census figures: in 1908 there were 25% less Catholics than in 1889, in spite of the general population increase (Caetano & Geymonat, 1997, p. 128).

¹ Christmas became "Family Day"; Epiphany became "Children's Day"; Holy Week—the one including Easter— became "Tourism Week" (Monreal, 2001, p. 140).

Secularization in Uruguay, then, had all the attributes Berger (in Grace, 2002, p. 11) proposes it should have:

- a. Sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions
- b. Areas previously under control of the Christian churches are evacuated from them
- c. The worldview of many individuals is affected so that religious concepts and discourse are irrelevant to everyday life, which leads to a kind of “secularization of consciousness”

Secularization then was a strong and visible process that occurred in Uruguay, that affected its society right from its start as an independent nation in the 19th century, as well as it certainly affected the country’s Catholic Church, and its education. Secularization led to a society that relegated religion certainly to the private sphere of life. But this does not mean that the sacred and religion are not present in society.

In fact, recent empirically based studies have shown a very different reality. For instance, Da Costa et al. (1996) have conducted a study in Uruguay’s capital city, which concentrates almost half of the country’s population, that sheds light over an important portion of the country’s contemporary religiosity.

The main finding of the study proposes that the people of Montevideo are much more open to religion than one could expect for such an early secularized society. An overwhelming 80% of the people asked, answer that they believe in God. The special difference this study underlines, with respect to other Latin American societies, is that in this society, religious feelings, and manifestations are kept in the private sphere of life.

According to this study, the Catholic Church is the most important religious agency in the country (p. 19). One-third of the persons surveyed answer that the Catholic Church has shaped their beliefs (p. 91). Nevertheless, the study also shows that the Catholic Church has not grown in the last decades, while other religions have been very dynamic in their capacity to develop, grow, and spread, specially among youngsters. These more recent religious manifestations are related to the Afro-Brazilian expressions, and the Pentecostal ones.² This represents an important challenge to the Catholic Church: a significant portion of the population declares itself as a believer in God, but at the same time, its non-Catholic competitors (Afro, Pentecostals) capture most of the young and promising believers.

² One of the movements that has captured more believers in the last years is the Brazilian worship of “Iemanjá,” a sea goddess that is believed to bring wealth, health, and long life. Every February 2nd, the beaches of Montevideo are full of worshipers who offer objects to the goddess, while dance and sing to the divinity. Another movement that attracts thousands of followers is that of “Waves of love and peace.” A more urban and mediatic cult, it offers services in big cinemas and theaters, using the media to attract followers, and pay special attention to fund raising activities.

Building a Response: The Creation of a Catholic School System in Uruguay

Catholic Education: Its Identity and Role in Contemporary Societies

Two threats appear to menace the consolidation and strengthening of Catholic education in Uruguay today: the impact of secularization, and a tension that exists between Catholic education's mission, aiming at the common good, and its social context of materialism, hedonism, and individualism.

We propose that these two threats may be linked to two major values that have shaped the history of modern and contemporary societies: "freedom," and "solidarity." "Freedom" has been one of the key principles defended by secularization's promoters. For instance, secular humanists such as White (1995, in Grace 2002) propose that secularization has freed the person from the idea of God, tradition, and social custom. As we have shown above, this need of freedom was at the root of the distance European immigrants put in relation to their ancestors' beliefs upon their arrival to the promised land of Uruguay. The temptation to free oneself from institutional cultural and religious anthropologies such as the one the Church provides was strong.

But this temptation does not necessarily lead to "freedom": neutrality is impossible, and every educational model implies a set of philosophical values and anthropology, as every educator knows. We agree with Grace when he proposes that there has not been, and cannot be any educational experience entirely autonomous, objective, neutral, or ideologically free (Grace, 2002). Contemporary Catholic educators have been trying to respond to the challenge of a secularized society. A question that may summarize their struggle is the following:

How can a Catholic schooling system make a contribution in this context of secularization, finding creative ways to spread the Gospel to children, families and society, in a way that freedom of choice is respected?

Solidarity has been one of the pillars of Catholic education worldwide. Be it the preferential option and service of the poor and the oppressed, or the education and formation of social justice awareness among elite students, this principle becomes a key one, in a world where poverty, exclusion, segregation, and segmentation are increasing. Uruguay is an example of a society that grew in the welfare State paradigm during most of the 20th century, to become a segregated-segmented society where half of the children are born in poverty conditions today, and 60% of primary public students belong to poor families.³

Since the issue of the 1977 document of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education called *The Catholic School*, Catholic institutions have been struggling

³ For recent empirical evidence of how childhood has become poorer in the last decades, see: Kaztman, R., & Filgueira, F. (2001). *Panorama de la infancia y la familia en Uruguay*. Montevideo, Uruguay: Universidad Católica del Uruguay. For a sociocultural description of public Primary students' families, see: ANEP-MECAEP (1999). *Estudio de los factores institucionales y pedagógicos que inciden en los aprendizajes en escuelas primarias de contextos sociales desfavorecidos en Uruguay*. Montevideo, Uruguay: ANEP; ANEP-MECAEP (2000). *Evaluaciones nacionales de aprendizajes en Educación Primaria en el Uruguay (1985-1999)*. Montevideo, Uruguay: ANEP; and Operti, Renato (2004). *Apuntes para refundar la Administración Nacional de Educación Pública desde la ciudadanía*. Montevideo, Uruguay: unpublished.

to achieve three regulative principles that supposedly were to guide their development: commitment to the common good, commitment to solidarity and community, and commitment to the service of the poor (Grace, 2003, p. 40). This is a very difficult task for educators, because as Gerald Grace has recently put it: “A tension appears: to be in rapport with young people’s interests, and at the same time to be against the spirit of the world. ... This places a considerable responsibility for discernment and professional judgement upon Catholic teachers and leaders” (Grace, 2002, p. 22).

Several attempts to face the challenge and respond to it, have been, in fact answers to the following question:

What do Catholic education systems say and do for solidarity in such a context?

The following paragraphs explore the different ways in which the Catholic school system in Uruguay has been attempting to answer these questions.

Foundation and Development

To build a school system led by the teachings of the Church was certainly a long and plural effort, especially in the context of a poor and small Church, where secularization had been a leading and early tendency in society and culture. Many religious orders landed in the secularized shores of Montevideo, from which they spread all over the country.

The first ones were the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and the Dominicans, which established themselves in the young country of the 18th century. A group of Jesuits was also established in the Portuguese strategic military plaza of Colonia as early as in 1680, but as elsewhere, they were expelled from the country in 1767. After these first orders, during the 19th century, came the Salesians—followers of San Juan Bosco—with their strong educational project oriented to the poor youngsters. Several sisters also arrived along the 19th century: Huerto sisters, Vicentine sisters, Dominicans of Albi, the Daughters of Maria Auxiliadora, and the Teresian sisters, all devoted to the cause of Catholic education, with the nuance of the different charisms (Monreal, 2001).

A recent survey of the Catholic formal school system (AUDEC, 2005)⁴ provides information related to its process of construction. Of the 163 institutions surveyed, 118 answered to this question. According to them, 25% were established in the 19th century, 30% were established in the first half of the 20th century, while 35% were established in the more recent decades of 1950 through 1980. The last years have been the least prolific: in the period that goes between 1980 and today, only 8.5% of the contemporary Catholic schools were founded in the country.

⁴ AUDEC (Asociación Uruguaya de Educación Católica), which means: Uruguayan Association of Catholic Education, is a private civic association, which can voluntarily be joined. Almost every formal Catholic school in the country belongs to it. AUDEC also has a section that congregates non-formal educational organizations. This section has strongly increased in number in the last decades.

Today, the Catholic pre-tertiary schooling system in Uruguay consists of 174 schools, including primary, secondary, and technical schools. Here we will refer to the 163 that participated in AUDEC's last survey, performed in 2005. These 163 schools serve 56,311 students all over the country.

The primary level is the one in which the participation of Catholic schools is bigger in the whole education system. In this level, of the 460,000 students that attend primary schools all over the country, including all forms of administration, 14% attend Catholic schools. The proportion is slightly above 10% at the secondary level (AUDEC, 2005). That is to say that the participation of Catholic schools in the complete schooling system of the country is, in quantitative terms, of a moderate relevance.

Recently, the Catholic schooling system has decreased in the number of students it used to serve. If we consider its recent evolution, taking 1991 as a basis value of 100, in 1995 the number of students was at a level of 89, and in 2005 it was at a level of 73 (AUDEC, 2005). The number of schools did not follow the same pattern, pointing to the fact that several schools are struggling to survive with less students. If we consider the number of Catholic schools existing in 1991 at a 100 basis, in 1995 there were 102, and in 2005 there were 97. So, the number of schools is similar as it was 15 years ago, while the number of students decreased in around one-fourth.

Catholic education has no State subsidy in Uruguay, although schools are exempted from paying a portion of the social security taxes and take advantage of some municipal benefits. But any family that wants to send its child to a Catholic school can only count on its own financial capacity. This determines that whenever the country faces an important social or economical crisis, Catholic schools lose students and consequently suffer a negative impact on their financial situation. This may explain in part the decrease in the enrollment capacity of Catholic schools recently.

This is especially true in poor contexts, where some Catholic schools are located. The situation of these schools is very similar to that of inner-city Catholic schools in the USA, where severe reductions in enrollment have occurred since the 1970s, and where they increasingly serve non-Catholic communities. Joseph O'Keefe (1996), from Boston College, has been developing several research studies that consider the future of Catholic education, given the fact that its schools are often located in poor urban neighborhoods, where they have been forced to shut down.

In Uruguay, one way to look at this challenge is to analyze the recent development of primary Catholic schools. As a matter of fact, the number of primary students has decreased significantly in the last 15 years. If we take 1991 as a basis value of 100, the number of students in 1995 was at a value level of 89, and in 2005, at 64 (AUDEC, 2005).

Certainly, the Catholic schooling system has lost its capacity to attract students at the primary level. One possible explanation to this may be the relative improvement public schools have experienced after two decades of externally funded reform. Families then may be thinking that public primary schools are good

schools, and if they have to choose where and when to pay, they prefer to do so at the secondary level, where public education has had severe problems of quality and school climate during the past years.

But there is no doubt that the Catholic schooling system has its own problems if it wants to survive, even if it is not compared with the public one.

Finally, another perspective from which to look at this problem is the relative increase/decrease of students in terms of geographic regions. From the AUDEC study, it becomes clear that the capital city of Montevideo is losing students, while the rest of the country increases its school population, specially that located in the last years of secondary studies. This level of studies increased 50% in the period between 1991 and 2005 in Catholic schools. Any strategic plan the Catholic education system may elaborate, should take into consideration these facts.

Catholic School: Main Features from a Comparative Perspective

What is it that a Catholic school offers that makes it distinct from other schools?

In Uruguay, this is a difficult question to be answered. There are few empirical studies that account for such an answer. When asked, National Director of AUDEC, Fr. Marcelo Fontona SDB (personal communication, August 31, 2005), affirms that today, the families that choose a Catholic school not necessarily do so for a matter of faith. He says these families choose four things when they chose a Catholic school:

- Academic performance
- Security and order
- A social status
- A set of values

Of the four aspects, only the last one may be related to some kind of philosophy that may be linked to the faith matter, and eventually the Gospel.

In a recent study conducted by the Salesians, aimed at the understanding of the characteristics of the students they serve, it becomes clear that to be Catholic is not decisive in the moment of choosing a Catholic school: only 13% of the families asked, affirm that they are Catholic (Sociedad San Francisco de Sales, Universidad Católica del Uruguay, 2002).

An important tradition of research, mainly in the USA, has recently focused on the supposedly “Catholic schools effects” (being one of its fundamental studies that of Bryk et al., 1993). Four critical factors explain these effects, according to Grace (2002):

- An academic structure and culture (bookishness)
- Internal community (social capital)
- Devolved governance (autonomy)
- Inspirational ideology (sense of mission and purpose)

The four are of different nature, but the first is one of the mostly assessed of all.

Standardized international tests are a useful source of information on academic performance, and Uruguay has participated recently in the OECD's PISA program, that assesses 15-year-old students' achievement in terms of reading, math, and science competencies.

The results Catholic schools students attained in this assessment operation have proved to be similar to those of any other private school in the country. The explanation of this similarity is simple: there were few Catholic schools serving 15-year-old students from poor settings that were included in the sample, because there are few of such 15-year-old students attending Catholics schools in general. The students included in the sample belonged mainly to the big, financially strong Catholic schools that serve middle- and upper-class students.⁵ As a matter of fact, to these contexts belong the majority of the students Catholic education serves in the country.

As Grace affirms (2002), more recent works point out that Catholic schools are now serving more middle-class families than in the past, and that they slowly abandon their commitment to the poor. As O'Keefe has showed for the USA (1996), the preferential option for the poor is weakening due to a significant closure trend (e.g., only during the 1992–1993 school year, 18 Chicago schools closed).

This is again a matter of solidarity, as Grace has accurately warned: “Just at the time when educational research has established the particular effectiveness of Catholic schools in urban areas, and just at the time when the American Catholic population has experienced its highest levels of social mobility and economic prosperity, the future of Catholic inner-city schooling seems in doubt, largely for financial reasons” (2002, p. 88).

The same may be said about the internal situation of Catholic education in Uruguay: recently the poorer schools, located in the more needy settings are closing or struggling not to do so, with no gesture of solidarity by part of the wealthier schools, located in the middle- and high-class settings.

The Response Revisited: Building a Vision for the Future

As was shown before, the challenges Catholic schools face in the country are enormous, complex, and—some of them—certainly not new. As elsewhere, materialism, a growing secularization, financial, and staffing problems, and the progressive decline of religious orders are present here, too. The “openness with

⁵ The majority of these schools are located in the coast region of Montevideo, which is the wealthiest in the city. Poorer context Catholic schools, located in the opposite geographical region, usually serve Primary students. These schools are less significant in number, and given their students age (K-12), they are not included in these assessment initiatives. Catholic education in the rest of the country is strategically very important, but of low numerical significance.

roots”⁶ McLaughlin et al. (1996) and Bryk et al. (1993) propose, demands local adaptations that make it feasible.

We propose that no matter what the concrete answers may be, there is one condition that must be present. This condition is to build a much more *political and strategic vision* by the Catholic schooling system’s leaders, than in the past. The segregated and isolated work of the different religious orders may have been functional in the past, but in the challenging context of today, it does not seem to be the appropriate. It seems that a congruent and organic view by part of the leaders of the Catholic schooling system may be necessary to face the complex and diverse challenges the system faces today.

An important element that should be present in the construction of this vision, not only for practical and strategic matters, but for moral ones, is *the issue of solidarity*. If the whole Catholic system is to be considered, there is no place for the closure of poor schools in poor settings or the permanent and chronic struggle of most of them to avoid closure: the powerful ones should come in their help. The idea of a system preserves the existence of every part, especially of the smaller and the weaker, given the moral mandate of solidarity that illuminates the Catholic faith.

Looking at more concrete issues, some tendencies the Catholic schooling system has recently showed, point to a possible agenda for it. According to Mgr Carlos Collazzi SDB (personal communication, September 7, 2005), President of the Catholic Education Department of the Uruguayan Conference of Bishops, the development of Catholic education in the future will take place in the preschool level, and no more in the primary one. Conscious of the growing levels of childhood poverty in the country, that have led to a decrease of such students in primary Catholic schools (these schools ask for fees), Mgr Collazzi points to the need to look for a new target in the strategy of Catholic schooling. Preschool education in the country has had an explosive growth in the last decade, being the one that grew the most, in an important effort the country made to expand educational opportunities. Catholic education should join this effort, Mgr Collazzi says, not only in formal institutions, but also in the growing nonformal educational sector. “This is where education grows, there is where we should be.”

Fr. Marcelo Fontona from AUDEC agrees, and adds that Catholic primary schools should include the preschool section, and should strengthen their curriculum. They should include a much more complete program that covers English, Computer Science, and a strong program in sports, so that the family does not have to look for these services outside from the school as it happens today.

Fr. Fontona also points to the strong increase the nonformal sector of Catholic services has experimented in recent times, especially in the poorer contexts. He illustrates this with a stunning figure: nonformal Catholic education has grown

⁶ This openness with roots implies the ability to discern the contributions of the secular culture, while maintaining fidelity to post-Vatican II religious revitalization. Consequently, Catholic schooling would be able to offer the opportunity to experience a viable mode of liberal education in the contemporary secularized context.

600% between 1990 and 1999 in the country. This represents a huge challenge for the Catholic Church in Uruguay, because this population rarely attends Catholic formal schools due to irregular family patterns or extremely poor living conditions. The classic vision that consists of a process of evangelization done mainly through the Catholic formal schooling system is being put into question.

Recent Studies of Catholic Schools

Research about the Catholic schooling system is scarce in the country.

Some interesting data have appeared in the past, as part of other studies aimed at the situation of public education.

Nevertheless, thanks to the initiative of a prominent bishop that has historically been concerned about the future of Catholic education in the country—Mgr Luis del Castillo SJ—a recent study aimed at the possible similarities and divergencies between public and Catholic at the junior high school level, appears as a distinct and empirically based contribution.

Ester Mancebo's "Public and Catholic Education: Meeting Points that Stem from the Public Secondary Reform" ("La educación pública y la educación católica: puntos de encuentro a partir de la reforma del Ciclo Básico") published in 2001, is a major contribution in the field.

The study had four main goals: identify the goals and the philosophy underlying the public reform; describe the main strategies and activities that were put into action during its implementation; present the goals and activities of a selected group of six Catholic schools that were implementing changes or had recently done so; and analyze the possible coincidences and differences between the two.

The public reform is summarized in a clear and structured way, by the description of its four major goals, strategies, and activities. Among them, a new "school management model" appears to be central in its design.

Catholic education, through the sample of the six schools selected, is pictured through its philosophy, its daily experimentation of autonomy (through a specific Principal's profile, the use of project management, and certain curricular flexibility), its concern about teacher professionalization; and its permanent work with the families and the community.

The study also provides information about the performance of students in standardized tests, showing that Catholic schools perform better than public ones, but worse than the group of private non-Catholic. Nevertheless the wise warning of Convey (in Grace, 2002, p. 82) is important here: whether catholic schools attain better results than public ones "is a question with a not conclusive answer," because of self-selection. Consequently, some observed differences between Catholic schools and public schools may be more a function of the type of student each one enrolls, than of the type of education each develops.

In fact, Mancebo gives empirical support to Convey's warning: in primary schools, the national mean of students' mothers who have completed secondary studies or more is of 25.5%, while it is 41.3% in the Catholic schools and 58.5% in the whole set of private schools (including the Catholic). Student performance in standardized

tests follows this pattern: on top rank the whole lot of private schools, immediately below appear the Catholic schools considered as a separate set, and in the lower place stand the public students results (Mancebo, 2001, pp. 29–30).

Finally, the study presents some of the meeting and the divergent points between secondary public and secondary Catholic education, as seen in the six schools empirically investigated.

The main meeting points are:

- A central role given to the attainment of quality
- A concern for the attainment of equity
- Central importance given to the improvement of teaching strategies
- Some shared practices: principalship conceived as a team function rather than an individual one, and based on instructional leadership; the key role of project management; importance given to in-service training of teachers and counselors; and an intensive relationship with parents
- A way of considering the school as a unit, with goals, means, and results, where everybody is involved and pursues a shared vision

The main divergencies are:

- Their tradition: public education refers to a positivistic-founded reform it experienced in the 19th century (mentioned above as conducted by Jose Pedro Varela); while the Catholic refer to their universal Catholic tradition.
- Moral issues: public education postulates moral neutrality while Catholic education proposes values-oriented education.
- Autonomy and pluralism issues: public education proposes a centrally driven system, while Catholic education asks for more autonomy and pluralism of models.

Research Agenda for the Future

As it may have become clear by now, some important research issues, if thoroughly developed, could make an important contribution for the future of Catholic education in the country. We propose some of these issues in the paragraphs that follow. We recall some of the current research traditions that are leading these studies today, and also propose new categories of research, that may account for some of the local research questions.

Strategic Research

The country's Catholic education system asks for urgent strategic definitions. As was shown, a system that has lost one-third of its students at the primary level in the last 15 years, urgently needs to ask itself where it is going to. Some research questions in this line of enquiry may be the following:

How could Catholic education develop a shared and strategic vision across the different religious congregations and orders in order to become a more attractive option for families seeking for their children education? Which is the content of such a shared strategic vision?

Should Catholic education develop more its non-formal sector? If so, how?

What would a Catholic pre-primary education project be like, given the country's contemporary social situation, where half of the children are born in poverty conditions?

Foundational Research

Here, it seems relevant to go deep in the specific strengths of Catholic education, given recent changes in family structure and the general context of hedonism and materialism that rules culture in society. Some research questions in this line of inquiry may be:

Why do families choose Catholic schools for their children today?

What is it that constitutes the specificity of Catholic education today, in this country?

Preferential Option Research

This line of inquiry also is related to the strategic one, mentioned before. To answer to this issue is central to the identity of Catholic education, as has been shown by Grace (2002) and O'Keefe (1996). The most important question here is:

How to develop an efficient Catholic education system in terms of solidarity, in which the richer institutions subsidy the poorer ones, and thus going back to its secular commitment to the poor?

Mgr Luis del Castillo SJ, has insisted upon this particular issue in the last years, with little success.

School Effectiveness Research

Surely, this is the kind of research that can more easily be done in academic circles. Nevertheless, it has had little development in the past. Some of this line of inquiry's results may also shed light on the "foundational research" line. Some of the most promising questions here may be:

Are there any specific "ways of doing things" in terms of instructional practices or type of educational project developed in Catholic schools, that account for different results in students performance (their achievement in tests but also broader concepts such as their global graduation profile)?

How can Catholic schools take more advantage of their strong community support networks, a typical advantage they have historically had over public education worldwide?

A final word should also be said about the general perspective of this research. First, it should be done on a comparative basis, learning, and exchanging from other contexts where it has been more intense in the past. Isolation is not recommended. Second, it should be empirically based, so that it gains a strong legitimacy in academic circles.

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A THEOLOGICAL-PEDAGOGICAL TURNING POINT IN LATIN AMERICA: A NEW WAY OF BEING SCHOOL IN BRAZIL

Danilo R. Streck and Aldino L. Segala

Introduction

There was a moment in the recent history of Latin America¹ that left a profound mark on society and the church in this part of the world. Various factors came together to give rise to a movement that spread throughout the region, although with different degrees of intensity and distinct tones. This chapter tries to apprehend and express some aspects of that moment that represented a new pedagogical and theological way of looking at Latin America. The Catholic Church as well as other Christian churches became important spaces where new proposals for society were generated on the basis of a new spirituality. A different way of being the church implied the belief that another society was possible, a society where everybody would get enough bread and the thirst for justice would be quenched.

Education was present as a mediating force in the struggles. Paulo Freire captured this moment very well when he wrote that the churches are not abstract entities, but—just like men and women—situated entities that are conditioned by concrete realities. Therefore, the education promoted by the churches must be conceived and realized on the basis of the people's history and culture. As he puts it, "the churches' educational task cannot be understood outside of the conditions of the concrete reality in which they are located" (Freire, 1977, p. 105). These words were written in 1971, when Freire, a Catholic who had been exiled from Brazil by the military dictatorship, was working at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, which is a fact that in itself illustrates the spirit that had taken over the Latin American churches.

This new practice entailed a profound break with the understanding that the church used to have of its educational ministry. Just as the social movements—

¹ Although this chapter takes Latin America as its general context, many situations refer specifically to Brazil.

of the youth, women, the struggles against colonialism in Africa—broke with patterns and conventions of the society of the beginning of the second half of last century, in the church one could hear voices proclaiming the liberation of the whole person, in soul and body, and of all persons, fighting the spiritualization of God's saving activity and challenging the church to create, identify, and nourish the signs of the kingdom of God that were already present on the path that the people was treading. The church as a pilgrim, as God's people underway, had an important role to play in the search for directions. Under the inspiration of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church in Latin America led a theological and pedagogical movement which is characterized as a turning point in this chapter. The bishops' conferences held after the Council disclosed the character and content of that turning point.

This reflection begins with a brief description of the historical context. The beginning of the history of education in Latin America is usually associated with the history of the church itself in the continent. Today there are historians who prefer to speak of a break rather than a beginning. According to Weinberg's (1995) analysis, the arrival of the Spaniards and Portuguese and the European culture that they brought with them broke with an educational practice that had made it possible to the indigenous nations, such as the Maya, Inca, and Aztec, to create conditions to survive or to build advanced civilizations in the continent. Our purpose is to understand the context in which there was created a climate favorable to the reception of the innovations proposed by the Second Vatican Council. In Latin America these innovations had a strong impact on the bishops' conferences in Medellín, Puebla, and Santo Domingo.

A second moment of the analysis reflects on the church base communities (CEBs) and their relation with popular education. The emergence of these communities entailed a thrust for renewal not only for the Catholic Church and other Christian churches, but also had repercussions on many areas of society. In the area of politics, it served the interests of redemocratization during and right after the military dictatorships of the second half of the last century. In the sphere of culture, it elevated the human being to the condition of subject and producer by valuing cultural expressions that had been previously repressed or neglected by the hegemonic culture. In the area of education it prioritized horizontal relationships between educators and educatees and gave rise to movements that are still alive today, such as the well-known popular reading of the Bible.² It is not rare to see common people learning Greek and Hebrew in order to better understand the Bible, thus breaking with the prejudice about the people's ignorance.

This is followed by an analysis of the school and the crossroads it experienced in this period and in a certain way continues to experience today. While at that time the dilemmas faced by the school were mainly of an ideological nature, today the difficulties have moved to the economic sphere, often affecting the survival of the school as an institution. The neoliberal political reforms carried

² In this popular reading of the Bible the Ecumenical Bible Center (CEBI) plays an outstanding role. It is active throughout Latin America and is characterized by an ecumenical spirit.

out in the last two decades challenge the Catholic schools and other confessional schools to redefine their role in society.

The conclusion discusses some topics for research. We point out a few areas that, in our view, deserve attention in these studies. Education is one of the constitutive elements of the Christian church since its origin with Jesus (who was also a teacher). At the same time, its educational practice takes place in history and must respond to the concrete challenges of the people without losing its faithfulness to the Gospel. The topics aim at pointing to the possibility of broadening the understanding of these challenges through research.

The Reading of the Context

The difficulty in dealing with this topic begins with the very understanding of the place. When one speaks of Latin America, it is difficult not to be overwhelmed by a feeling of ambiguity, since under this common name one finds very different histories, such as the histories of the Aztec, of the black people brought as slaves from Africa, of the old and new conquerors and of the immigrants; under this common name one finds cultures as distinct as the culture of the people of the Amazon forest and the indigenous people of the Andean region; there is a coexistence of violence in the large urban areas and the people's joy; Latin America means beaches, deforested land, and mountains. For all these reasons, to refer to Latin America presupposes an awareness of partiality and implies the constant challenge of shaping an understandable unity of this mosaic, of identifying the figures—some of them ephemeral—that are formed on this territory that once were called *Abya Yala*.³ In this sense there is no Latin America as a finished entity that can be fixed once and for all in some document or map.

We experience, as Octavio Ianni (1993, p. 125) puts it, “a reality searching for a concept.” We are constantly looking for an authentic and original thinking, but are not very successful in finding it. This feeling of living in a borrowed land that is represented with a borrowed language seems to accompany the history of ideas in Latin America. According to the Venezuelan philosopher, Ernesto Mays Vallenilla (1993, p. 423), this feeling is part of the search for a place in the context of universal history: “Isn't the very fact that one attempts such a passionate search for ‘originality’ in terms of gesture and work telling us that it betrays a deep *dissatisfaction*—or even more radically—a *radical insecurity* towards history? What other explanation can be given to a phenomenon such as the one pointed out except that one is looking for ‘originality’ (and even ‘originariness’) because one does not have it?” The same author also points out that this originality will not appear if one forces words upon reality, but that one should let oneself—as the artists and poets do—be patiently won over by the mystery of being that dwells in what is daily and familiar.

³ *Abya Yala*, meaning fecund land, is the phrase that the Kuna in Panama used to refer to the continent.

According to the theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez (1975, p. 78), “The history of Latin America can be delineated, to a large extent, as the history of the successive modifications of the situation of dependence, in the course of which the various societies in the region achieved various positions, but without being so far able to get out of this general mark (of dependence).” The historical roots for such a situation of dependence in Latin America lead us back to the period of Iberian colonization, since the continent entered the history of the world system as a society that was dependent on the Iberian colonization.

Latin America enters the decade of the 1960s under the stigma of underdevelopment. From World War II onwards there was an invasion of industrializing foreign capital in the Latin American continent, bringing about profound changes in its reality. This was the time when Brazil opened its borders to international capitalism, the automobile industry was created, the time of modernization, of fascination for television, the time when the development process took off, rhythms were accelerated, and the progress of 50 years would be achieved in five.

The advocates of the so-called developmentalism proposed industrialization as a means of liberation for Latin America and created a great optimism about the possibilities of achieving a self-sustained development. Others, not accepting the reformist ideas of the capitalist system, shared the view that transformation should be deeper. According to this line of reasoning, the technological and social revolution should go hand in hand with a political revolution. As Alfonso Garcia Rubio (1977, p. 23) puts it, “Rationalization and technical planning, intensive popular promotion and a government actually at the service of the common good are the elements considered capable of—in their dynamic interrelationship—actualizing a development that has man as its central goal.” For that purpose, scientific rationality should be allied to an active participation by the people.

The notion of dependence emerged as a key element to understand the contradictions existing in Latin American societies, where the gap between rich and poor was widening. According to Celso Furtado (1977, p. 35), “through a recolonizing industrialization or market internationalization” the big transnational corporations decided what was to be produced, who should produce it, with what techniques, and to where the products would be exported.

There arose an awareness of the connection between socioeconomic and political dependence, recognizing that both internal and external structures were marked by domination. Due to the implementation of military dictatorships in almost all countries, the wish for further participation of the people in the national destinies was frustrated. The authoritarian and antidemocratic military regimes took over political power, using the armed forces for repression purposes. Civilians were seen as ideologically incapable of finding solutions to the national problems.

At that time the world was divided in two blocks: on the one hand, the Western world, considered to be free and Christian, under the leadership of the USA, and on the other, the communist and socialist world, considered as oppressive and atheistic, under the command of Russia. As the Latin American countries were at the side of the West, they should align themselves to the Western world’s war strategy. It was the armies’ task to defeat communism,

which was supposed to be infiltrated through consciousness-raising, liberation struggles, populism, and the churches' progressivism. Dussel (1977, pp. 62–92) reminds that this economic and political dependence in Latin America also took place in the cultural and religious spheres, which were a legacy of the colonial world.

There emerged movements that, rejecting the developmentalist policy, struggled for the respect for human rights, for the lives of the poor population, for a balance between nature and civilization, for social justice. They tried to dispel certain illusions fostered by the dominating ideology. Alfredo Bosi (1995, p. 365) calls this reaction a “culture of resistance.” Latin American underdevelopment was not seen as a stage on the way towards development, but as a counterpart of the development of the dominating foreign powers. In this context, movements of rebellion against the dictatorships' authoritarianism emerged in various Latin American countries (cf. Paul Singer, 1999, p. 161). As for Brazil, one can mention the student movements in 1968, which were reproduced in Argentina in a movement that became known as “Cordobazo” and in Mexico, where demonstrators were massacred on the main square of Tlatelolco.

In the beginning of the 1960s large urban and rural mobilizations occurred in Brazil, particularly of student movements, popular culture, the nationalist movement, the campaign for land reform, of the Movement for Lawfulness in 1961, of the Peasants' Leagues, of bishop Helder Câmara's sociopolitical involvement, of the specialized Catholic Action,⁴ of trade unions and leftist parties, of the political movement of the so-called Catholic Action, of the Popular Culture Institutes and of the Base Education Movement.⁵ This environment created the parameters for the politicization of many citizens and the flourishing of innumerable educational activities that valued popular culture.

In the beginning of the 1960s there was an intensive effervescence of practices and ideas that aimed at building the new. New theories with a liberating perspective were generated; people spoke of a new outlook on history, for this time the story was being told from the other side of the world. José Honório Rodrigues (1981, p. 32) summarizes it in this way: “If we are interested in the people's ability to make history, we must reform our investigation, our method, our history. Due to the influence of socialism and the post-conciliar church, present history is more sympathetic towards the losers, the defeated, those who struggled and were defeated.”

The Cuban Revolution in 1959, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, overthrew the dictatorship of Fulgêncio Batista, that had been implemented in 1952, and nourished a new utopia in the life of the continent. This fact gave rise to a profound debate and Cuba began to represent the possibility of change

⁴ The reference is to the action with specific groups, especially youth, such as the workers, students, and peasants.

⁵ The Base Education Movement (Movimento de Educação de Base—MEB), a joint work of the Catholic Church and the government, was a very extensive project. Its pedagogical proposal was part of the movement that intended to value and retrieve popular culture and used radio as a means to reach the communities. In 1963 the movement involved 11 states with 59 systems (radio stations) and 111, 066 graduates.

(cf. Altmann, 2001). The figure of Che Guevara symbolized the ideals of freedom and the possibility of constructing a new humanism.

This led to an idealization of socialism by sectors of the progressive church. While there was a kind of collective enchantment with the socialist project on the part of broad Christian sectors, one must also recognize that there was an effort to maintain the perspective of Christian values and an attempt to remain faithful to the essentials. The theorists of liberation who were committed to Christianity usually did not present a particular social project, but a utopia that, on the one hand, combated the unjust society and, on the other, presented an alternative society both to the capitalist system and to Marxism itself.

Thus, in Latin America the end of the 1950s and mainly the 1960s and the following years were a very special moment within this process of search for a Latin American identity. The radical commitment to the poor of the continent and the continent's cultures was also taken up in church documents at the continental level, as at the Bishops' Conference in Medellín (CELAM, 1969) and in Puebla (CELAM, 1979) or at the level of the national conferences (CNBB, 1986a, b). There was an acknowledgment and affirmation of Latin American men and women as subjects and protagonists of their history.

In this context the pedagogy of the oppressed, liberating education, liberation philosophy, liberation theology, liberation ethics, liberation literature, and a new geographical perspective emerged; even a new scientific point of view was proposed (Lopes, 1978). According to Grace's (2003) analysis, this search was located within a broader context that in a way was present in all continents and corresponded to the displacement of the practice and concept of social charity to the practice and concept of social justice.

The Church Base Communities (CEBs) and Popular Education

Internationally, 1968 is remembered due to the student movement. For the Latin American church this was also the year of the bishops' conference that took place in Medellín, Colombia, and represented a new position taken by the institution that was deepened in Puebla (1979) with the well-known and controversial "preferential option for the poor." Dussel (1992, p. 142) thus describes that period:

The most glorious epopee in the history of the church in Latin America took place then, an epopee that can be compared to the persecutions in the early church and was experienced with the same "Spirit." Thousands of Catholics and Protestants, hundreds of priests, members of religious orders, dozens of bishops were persecuted, many of them were tortured and a significant number of them were "martyrized" . . . because of their commitment to the poor.

This was a very fertile period in the pedagogical realm, particularly in activities connected to popular education. The significance of this historical moment can be appreciated in the person of Freire, who is considered worldwide as one of

the great educators of this century. His classic, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) quickly spread in all continents as a tool that supported the struggles of women, students, workers, and anticolonialist movements, among others. In the preface to the American edition of this book the theologian, Richard Shaull, stressed that Freire's work was as important to the North American youth as to the deprived people in Latin America, reinforcing the idea that there was something in common in the struggles that were being waged in various fronts of that time's society and in various geographical spaces.

The Latin American Catholic Church was very actively present in these social struggles, that had as one of their foundations the search for a liberating education. One year before Medellín, in 1967, a seminar on "The Mission of the Catholic University" was held in Buga, Colombia. This meeting, that brought together experts in education, had a strong impact on the preparation of the Medellín conference, where the idea of liberation and liberating education was introduced for the first time in official texts (CELAM, 1968). The characteristics of such an education are summarized in the Puebla document (CELAM, 1979, p. 288):

- (a) To humanize and personalize human beings, in order *to create in them the place* where the *Good News* of the Father's saving design in Christ and his church can be revealed and heard.
- (b) To exercise the *critical function* inherent to true education, seeking to permanently regenerate, from the angle of education, the cultural principles and norms of social interaction that make it possible to create a new society that is truly participative, i.e., education for justice.
- (c) To *turn the educatee* into the subject of his/her own development and to put him/her at the service of the community's development: education for service.

It would be difficult to understand the church in Latin America, particularly the Catholic Church, and its involvement with education without paying close attention to the CEBs and their relation to popular education. In spite of the diversity of practices known under the name of popular education, the latter can be understood, according to Brandão (1986, p. 23), as the process through which "the community's knowledge becomes an instrument for its action that transforms society." It corresponds to the moment when the obstacles to a dignified life become *limit-situations*, respectively *limit-acts* (Freire, 1970, p. 92), directed towards their transformation.

In general terms three lines can be identified at the genesis of popular education. The first factor is a reaction against a highly deficient and conservative school education, which, besides leaving large population segments aside from the official education system, educated those who had access to the system to get accommodated to the status quo. This is the education that was denounced by Freire (1970) as domesticating or banking education. The second factor related to emergence of popular education has to do with changes in the production system. Industrialization requires new skills, including being able to read and write.

This explains the close connection between popular education and adult literacy programs that existed in the beginning. Concurrently there is the mobilization of the new trade unions of industrial workers and the growing organization of the rural population. The third factor is the church's protagonism, particularly through the CEBs.

Among the aspects of the CEBs that had the greatest impact on the educational project of the church and of Latin American society, the following ones should be highlighted:

"Mystique"—spirituality and social commitment: On the basis of the view that salvation history cannot be dichotomized from the real history in which men and women produce their existence, the CEBs broke with a tradition of religiosity turned towards the salvation of the individual soul. The word "mystique" began to express this new articulation between spirituality and social commitment. This articulation had fecund results in a double sense. On the one hand, there was a profound liturgical renewal, expressed, for instance, in the diversity of songs that animated the meetings for prayer, Bible reading and communal action. The liturgy began to incorporate the culture of daily life through the appropriation of gestures and products or goods that are part of people's daily lives. On the other hand, it ensured cohesion in the political and social commitment, turning the church into an important interlocutor in the process of overcoming dictatorship in most Latin American countries. At present "mystique" is still part of the experiences of grassroots groups, even when they are not directly connected to the church, such as the Movement of the Landless Rural Workers (MST).

The seeing-judging-acting-(celebrating) method: This method became the basic mark of the CEBs and other progressive sectors of the churches in Latin America. The educational practice starts from the reading of reality, which can be presented both through historical or statistical data and through codifications in the form of stories, narratives or role-playing. It has become a common practice to start training programs with an analysis of the present context. *Judging* corresponds to the reflexive moment, which is usually guided by the reading of the Bible and of texts that help to interpret this reality and to critically appropriate its representations. This process leads to action in this reality aiming at its transformation. These actions may have an immediate character, such as writing a letter or organizing a demonstration for the paving of a street, or a longer term character, such as planning the coordinated involvement of the community with agencies of the local government. Gradually the moment of *celebrating* was incorporated. It is often associated to the sharing of bread and wine. These moments are not isolated and should not be understood in a linear way. For instance, even if there is a special room for celebration, the latter pervades the whole process. *Acting* too is present from the very beginning, since it is from action that the situations or conditions emerge which are to be apprehended, judged in the light of the Gospel and changed (Brighenti, 1993).

Participation, democracy and leadership training: The CEBs understand themselves as democratic spaces, and since the beginning there were often tensions with the church hierarchy. An obvious sign of this is the fact that in some

dioceses they did not have the same expressions as in others, and in others they did not even come into being. A synthesis of a study on the CEBs in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Follmann et al., 1996, p. 39) reflects very well the character of these organizations that understand themselves as “small communities”:

- (a) the principle of community life is reinforced through collective practices and other actions organized by the community;
- (b) the possibility of holding lay celebrations is affirmed, in a relationship of autonomy towards the hierarchy;
- (c) there is an involvement in struggles related to basic needs (water, transportation, education, etc.) together with other organizations; and
- (d) the coordination is done by a council.

At the time of the military dictatorships the CEBs represented an important space of political expression and for preparing lay leaders. Many present political leaders in Brazil and other Latin American countries had in the CEBs the schools where they got their political training.⁶

The New Way of Being the School and the Struggle for Survival

According to Paiva (1986), to understand what happened with the Catholic school it is necessary to go back to the 1920s and the following decades, when the church launched a campaign in defense of the confessional school and religious education in the public schools against the liberals who had a laicizing proposal. Groups of intellectuals spread throughout the country put into practice this way of acting by the church. In accordance with it, indirect action and the church’s social doctrine were the marks of the new presence of the church in Latin American reality during a whole generation. At that time the church created a network of institutions of its own designed to make Christians identify with it and start working in these movements, instead of joining other social and political movements. According to Comblin (1977, p. 111), the authorities did not like Catholics to join movements that were not directed by the church, thus turning education into an important means for the religious and lay apostolate.

The control over education, viz., whether it should be offered by the state or by the church, was one of the points of intensive dispute. Besides the control, the whole project of education was at stake, including the university reform, the appointment of leaders and even of professors (Schwartzman et al., 2000).

The relationship between liberals and the Catholic leaders was a conflictive one. In the view of the liberals, with whom the pioneers of the so-called New School wanted to be identified, the state should not cling to any orthodoxy, neither a religious nor a political one. In their view, the establishment of religious education in the schools was a heresy that should not happen. On the other hand, according to the Catholic assumptions, the individualism that was spreading in society as a result of modernization was a motto of liberalism. According

⁶ Among them can mentioned Marina Silva, Minister of Environment; José Graziano, Minister for Food Security and Combat against Hunger; Olívio Dutra, former Mayor of Porto Alegre, Governor of Rio Grande do Sul and Minister of the Cities; Marisa Formolo, former Mayor of Caxias do Sul; Carlos Albertos Libânio Christo (Frei Betto), former special consultant to the President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Miguel Rosseto, Minister for Land Reform.

to Bomeny's (2001, p. 50) analysis, "in contrast with the liberal belief that society is built by the result of the contract established by free and autonomous individuals, the church shared the belief that the society marked by individualism becomes vulnerable to disintegration."

In the 1950s there was a campaign for the democratization of education, including public funding of private schools. This movement, led by the most advanced forces of the church, was joined by businesspeople in education. This brought about an expansion of private education with state subsidies. At that time, the traditional Catholic schools, which were more directed to the elite, stood out because of the quality of their teaching and even because of their clientele. They had good quality professionals and a liberal pedagogy. They also had a good structure in terms of services and equipment. In 1958, 80% of the high school students in Brazil were enrolled at Catholic schools. This education had to be paid for and could only be afforded by the middle and high classes in a country where the great majority of the population was illiterate (Beozzo, 1993, p. 69).

However, the expansion of the network of Catholic schools did not accompany the pace of the privatization of education. This was basically due to reasons internal to the church. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the Conference in Medellín (1968) and the Conference in Puebla (1979) caused a revision of the Catholic posture and doctrine. Already by the end of the 1950s Catholic intellectuals and students who adopted the perspective of the specialized Catholic Action and were influenced by Freire's literacy system got involved in nonschool education, often with public funding. This movement was integrated with the processes of popular education, as described in the previous section. This was, according to Góes & Cunha (1985, p. 19), "an alternative to the shut off university and in general to the formal, traditional elitist school."

On the one hand, this diminished the importance of the dispute between public and private schools. The Base Education Movement, created by the Decree 50,307 of March 21, 1961, is an example of the partnership that was formed between church and state in the area of education. On the other hand, there was a revision in pedagogical ideas, and education found other spaces in society besides the school, mainly in adult education.

Thus, the inner changes in the church (Vatican II, Medellín, development of the CEBs and lines of pastoral work), with a more progressive orientation, the influence of popular education, particularly through the dissemination of Freire's work among those devoted to school education, as well as the influence of the student movements and social movements caused a considerable number of schools and monasteries to be shut down, and the members of religious orders went to live and act with the poor. This movement from the center to the periphery strengthened the pastoral work at the grassroots level and the multiplication of the CEBs. There was also a reorientation in many schools that continued to offer formal education, but with a new pedagogical proposal influenced by the base movement, by nonformal education (Crespo, 1992; Paiva, 1986).

This corresponds to an identity crisis in the Catholic schools. The network of public schools underwent an expansion process, and at the internal level, already in the decades of 1950 and 1960, there was a gradual decrease of the number of members of religious orders in the schools. This crisis was intensified in the post-Medellín period (Crespo, 1992, p. 182) and progressive sectors of church and society began to challenge the work of school education connected to the church, since they saw it as being turned towards the rich families and privileged sectors of society.

The prophetic action launched at the Conference of the Latin American Bishops in Medellín (1968) encouraged the pastoral work in the perspective of the preferential option for the poor and the exercise of a transforming function in relation to the social structures. Latin American theology developed a deeper reflection on reality and led to a commitment to changing oppressive human structures. An important landmark of this theology was the publication of the book, *Liberation Theology*, by the Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, in 1971.

The influence of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) represents a real turning point in Catholic education. The church proposed principles, goals, contents, methods, and practices determined by the approach of an evangelical-liberating education (CNBB, 1986), and postulated a new presence of the church in the field of education. *A new way of being the church* becomes *a new way of being the school* in the field of education. Countless experiences emerged that serve as an inspiration for the church's social commitment through education even in the present.

Although retrospectively one can, according to Streck (2006, p. 32) criticize "the excessive confidence in modern rationality that permeated the interpretation of reality and the liberation projects," it is undeniable that this movement deeply moved the church and the schools linked with it. Perhaps it is still too early to assess the true impact of the processes that brought about a restructuring of people's consciousness and a new way of looking at the institution.

From the 1970s onwards, the private schools in Brazil, particularly the confessional ones, became gradually deprived from public subsidies and were consequently unable to devote themselves to a poorer clientele. This process was also a result of the defense of the public school system disseminated by education theorists, political parties, and politicians. In their view, only the public schools should be entitled to receive public funding. This intensification of the confrontation between the government's educational system and the private educational system persists up to the present. The private schools try to guarantee their own space for activities in the field of education with proposals that come from the tradition of the religious orders or from the confessional tradition and at the same time to ensure their sustainability.

Times have changed. As they live in a society of capitalist relations, the sponsoring institutions are forced to manage the schools like companies in order to survive, even if they do not seek profit. On the one hand, they try to maintain the autonomy, the confessional character and the public character of the educational institutions; on the other hand, they are placed within a rather competitive market that regards education as a commodity.

New and serious questions are being raised, such as these: to what extent will it be possible to ally economical survival with the maintenance of principles of social justice derived from the Christian doctrine? Are those who look for these schools and universities also interested in the quality and seriousness of the teaching that is associated with the tradition and values that are at the origin of these institutions? Or do these schools tend to become fashion labels in order to compete in a market that is ruled by a morality that is frequently incompatible with the Gospel's ethics? These tensions are well expressed in the words of the President of the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos), Marcelo Fernandes de Aquino, SJ (2006), when he asks in his inaugural address: "Which university is necessary to actualize our republican objectives, our confessional values and our strategic identity?" Further on the analysis points to the "economic-financial difficulties of sustaining our university project, oriented towards the mission, the creed, and the highest academic-scientific ideas." The words would be corroborated by most Catholic and other confessional school administrators.

Research Topics

To conclude, we point out a few topics that seem to deserve attention by research on education in the Catholic Church, particularly in the schools related to that church. One of the findings of this chapter is precisely the deficiency of empirical data about the Catholic educational institutions as well as of other Christian denominations. One often finds apologetic writings that are designed more for making propaganda than for making an assessment according to scientific criteria.

A major topic for analysis has to do with a deeper understanding of the transformations undergone by the educational institutions of the Catholic Church in the context of the political reforms and cultural changes. Due to the stronger presence of the state in elementary education, the confessional schools are forced to rethink their role and to reposition themselves within the whole educational system. As the goal of full coverage in terms of elementary school enrollment is reached, the confessional schools will stand before the alternative of either disappearing or finding other niches. To a somewhat different extent this will also tend to occur with higher education. What would be these new niches? What is the real meaning of the occupation of spaces in the school system within the understanding of mission in the various religious orders if one takes into account the theological-pedagogical movement promoted by the Second Vatican and the Latin American Episcopal Conferences in the second half of last century?

This is an important challenge for the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations insofar as historically the school was often seen as a kind of extension of the congregation. The school was the place where one could influence society through the training of the new generations and have access to parents and to the community itself. There is a need for a closer look at the actual impact of the Catholic schools and other confessional schools on the

educational scenario. Such an analysis becomes more urgent because of the growing transformation of education into a promising market in which, besides the public power and the religious institutions, there emerges an increasing number of lay companies that sell their educational services.

A topic connected to the former one is the role of religious education in the schools. Until a few decades ago there was little distinction between catechesis in the congregations and religious education in the schools. This reality began to change rapidly with the recognition of religious diversity. In the case of Brazil, national curricular parameters were created that establish a teaching that should not only be interconfessional and interreligious, but also an area of knowledge to be assumed by the state's management system just as the other disciplines, but with the actual participation of accredited religious entities.

The implementation of this proposal would be a significant advance in the sense of introducing children and young people to the multifaceted cultural-religious universe that surrounds them. On the other hand, it is a proposal that does not seem to find forces that leverage its application. Perhaps because of the controversy that surrounds the topic, several studies have appeared in this field that represent an important contribution for a better understanding of the relationship between church and state in the area of education. The book *Ensino Religioso: Memórias e Perspectivas* (Junqueira et al., 2005) discusses the advances and difficulties in this process in which the Catholic Church has been an important protagonist.

The Catholic Church is characterized by an enormous diversity of charismata expressed in the religious orders that are involved in education. One challenge in terms of research is to make more explicit to society the institutional identities and the contribution that each one of them has to offer. This is also important in order to prevent that the present search for confessional identity becomes an obstacle to the ecumenical advances and to interreligious dialogue in Latin America. For the Catholic Church, this implies that it has to situate itself in a society that is increasingly *post-Catholic*, i.e., a society that understands itself as culturally and religiously plural. A research exercise trying to identify the contributions of various Christian denominations in Brazil was carried out under the auspices of the Latin American Evangelical Commission on Christian Education (CELADEC). This study (Streck, 1995) reveals first and foremost the richness of educational views and practices within the Christian tradition and how a fraternal dialogue can help in terms of mutual correction and the establishment of common goals.

Finally, an important issue is to check how the recent changes in Latin American theology are being incorporated into educational practice. Liberation theology is not a remembrance from the past, but continues to be a living force in dialogue with the changing world. Among the emerging issues that deserve attention in the field of education, the following ones may be mentioned: the discovery of theological pluralism in the incorporation of indigenous, Afro and feminist theologies; the openness to public theology through the establishment of a dialogue with society around emerging issues, such as bioethics or the role of the new technologies in the lives of the communities; the new epistemological

perspectives for the grasping of the issues of the faith and the holy; religiosity in Latin America and the phenomena of the private appropriation of religion and the therapeutic role of religion.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN PERU: ELITES, THE POOR, AND THE CHALLENGE OF NEOLIBERALISM

Jeffrey Klaiber, SJ

Located in the heart of the Andes, Peru, with over 28 million inhabitants in 2006, is characterized by sharp geographical contrasts and a wide variety of cultures and languages. Almost twice the size of Texas, Peru has three clearly distinguishable regions: the Andes mountain range, the Amazon jungle, and the coast. The Andes build up from the coast and slope down into the Amazon jungle in the east. In the south, they stretch out and turn into a large flat altiplano that covers most of southeastern Peru and borders on Bolivia. Lake Titicaca is shared by both countries. Most of the Andean inhabitants speak Quechua, the lingua franca of the Inca empire. The other major Indian language of Peru is Aymara, spoken in the southern Altiplano and in Bolivia. The coast is a thin line running from Ecuador to Chile in the south. A largely barren desert, it is irrigated by rivers and streams that come down from the mountains. The coastal cities are largely white and mestizo. The capital, Lima, is a sprawling metropolis with over 7 million inhabitants. It has grown dramatically since World War II when it had around 600,000 inhabitants. The Amazon region comprises 61% of Peru's territory. It is home for a million and a half inhabitants who include colonizers from the coast and numerous native tribes which speak 12 different languages, unrelated to either Quechua or Aymara.

These geographical and linguistic factors help to explain many of Peru's educational problems. Quechua, Aymara, and the jungle languages are the mother tongues for 19% of Peruvians. The Andean region is also the poorest part of Peru, but this poverty extends to the coastal shanty towns where many highland dwellers have migrated. In 2005 only 27.2% of the population in rural and Andean Peru had finished secondary school, as opposed to 48.8% in urban areas.¹ The typical school in the Andes consists of a one story adobe building with tin shingles for a roof. Usually there is one teacher in charge of several

¹ Ministry of Education, *Plan nacional de educación para todos 2005–2015* (September 2005), p. 62.

grades. The school library consists of several books in a locked cabinet. Most of what the children learn is copied from the blackboard and memorized. School dropout is the highest in these areas.

But there are also problems which stem from a long authoritarian tradition in Peru. Even before the Spanish, the Indian cultures of Peru were based on a tight-knit community system which allowed little room for individual freedom. The Inca empire was a model of a paternalistic, authoritarian regime. The Spanish perpetuated this paternalistic and authoritarian tradition which lives on today. The majority of Peru's rulers after independence were caudillos who seized power, and in the 20th century there were five successful military *golpes de estado* (seizures of power) and two civilian ones. This tradition is reflected in the school system, especially in the state school system where the professors, especially male, impose their will on the students and frequently use corporal means of punishment. It is somewhat telling that the word used in Spanish for teaching a class is *dictar*: to dictate. Furthermore, students from lower class families, and especially in the rural Andes, are raised by authoritarian fathers, who are often absent from home and many are prone to drinking. They are raised to be submissive and, psychologically, many suffer from poor self-esteem which is compounded by the treatment they receive in many state schools.

Peru is comparable to Central America and Bolivia as far as government spending on education, and it ranks far behind Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. What is most noticeable to any observer are the contrasts: extreme poverty and wealth. Some 54.3% of the population lives in poverty, and 23.9% in extreme poverty.² Gender is another important factor: 6% of men and 20% of women in Peru are illiterate.³ Many private schools in Lima are as modern and well equipped as any first world school. But in state schools in outlying districts affected by poverty the level of education is considerably lower. State school teachers are poorly paid and motivated. Most belong to a Marxist learning national teacher's union, SUTEP (*Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores en la Educación del Perú*), which often organizes teacher's strikes to push their political agenda. But politics and lack of teacher motivation are not the only problems. Some 25% of all schoolchildren suffer from malnutrition.⁴ In 2004 approximately one-sixth (1,011,496 out of a total of 6,055,278) of all primary and secondary students in Peru attended private schools. Many private schools are partially financed by foreign governments (France, England, the USA, Germany) which also regularly send volunteer teachers to staff them. There are a number of Protestant schools, such as María Alvarado (known also as Lima High School), founded by Methodist missionaries, and many schools in Puno founded by the Adventists. The Jewish community in Lima sends its children to Leon Pinello. Within the world of private schools, Catholic schools are a minority,

² Consejo Nacional de Educación, *Hacia un proyecto educativo nacional* (August 2005), p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

with 951 centers in 2004 and a student population of 258,038, which is a little more than 4% of all primary and secondary students in Peru.⁵ Many of the best middle- and upper-class secondary schools in Lima and other principal cities are administered by religious orders and congregations. Nevertheless, Catholic education does not fall exclusively under “private” education: there are many Catholic schools partially financed by the state, and there are a number of state schools administered by religious congregations. In this sense, Catholic education runs the gamut from upper class to middle class to very poor.

The Evolution of Catholic Education

In colonial times (1532–1821) the church founded and ran most schools which were supported by church-owned lands. Formal education was provided only for males, although upper class women could receive private lessons in convents. For the vast majority of the Indian and black population formal education consisted of Sunday catechism classes. The exception to that rule were two schools for the sons of Indian chieftains run by the Jesuits in Lima and Cuzco. After independence (1821) the state set up an educational system which barely touched the countryside. Certain colonial religious orders provided some education in schools alongside their monasteries. The most important colonial educators, the Jesuits, had been expelled from Latin America in 1767 and did not return to Peru until 1871.

During the first decades of the 19th century, liberals tended to dominate the state schools and anticlericals passed laws to curtail many of the church’s colonial privileges. In response, the church took steps to found a separate Catholic school system, generally administered by European religious orders and congregations. In 1848 the French Sacred Heart sisters founded Belén, a primary and secondary school for young women, followed by the Jesuits who founded Colegio La Inmaculada (*colegio* in Latin America refers to preuniversity studies) in 1878, and the men religious of the Sacred Heart who founded La Recoleta in 1893. The government itself founded the first teacher’s school for women in 1878, staffed by religious of the Sacred Heart founded by Madeleine Sophie Barat in France. Many other religious congregations arrived to found schools: the Salesians, the Marists, the Brothers of La Salle, etc. Some schools were founded by new congregations born in Peru: the Dominican Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, known as the “Teaching Dominicans,” the Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception, known as the “National Franciscans,” etc. The first American congregation to come to Peru were the sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Philadelphia, in 1922. Their school, Villa María, became one of the best upper-class schools for girls. During the 20th century some

⁵ These data on Catholic education were provided by the Consortium of Catholic Educational Centers of Peru. Central Office, Lima (2006).

congregations left their home country for political reasons. The Ursulines, whose schools were expropriated by the Nazi government, arrived in Peru and founded another upper class girls' school.

These religious schools responded to certain social needs: the desire of the upper classes for a Catholic education with high standards which the foreign congregations guaranteed. Then, too, the foreign religious provided the possibility to learn the important languages of the day, such as French or English, without going to Europe. Also, the Catholic schools offered an alternative to liberal tendencies in state and Protestant schools. But the government also needed the foreign religious to staff the new normal schools for women. Finally, the government, especially under President Nicolás Piérola (1895–1899), aided religious congregations to set up schools in the largely neglected Amazon region. In 1929 these religious schools banded together to form an association, which was formally named the Consortium of Catholic Schools in 1939.

Liberals grudgingly accepted these schools because they represented quality education. But they resented them because they also represented competition to their own state schools. Well into the 20th century state officials sought to exercise some measure of control over private schools. For example, until the late 1960s final exams in private schools were supervised by state school teachers. Then, too, the military looked askance at the foreign religious educators because they were not considered proper role models to inculcate civic and patriotic virtues in the students. In all schools, state or private, premilitary instruction was an obligatory course always taught by an army official.

Reform and Revolution

In the 1950s and 1960s Marxism increasingly won the hearts and minds of state schoolteachers and university students. In Peru, student elections in the universities became sharply ideological: leftwing students versus Apristas, belonging to the Aprista Party, or APRA (Popular Revolutionary Alliance of America) founded by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, of a social democratic orientation.

After Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, the specter of wars of national liberation loomed over the horizon. That same year Hugo Blanco, a Trotskyite agitator organized peasant land takeovers in the Cuzco area and in 1965 a small guerrilla band established itself in the Andes, which the military promptly wiped out. The military especially were concerned about the growth of leftist sympathy in Peru. In 1962 they aborted an electoral process to make sure that Haya de la Torre, the leader of the Aprista Party, did not come to power. In new elections in 1963 Fernando Belaúnde was elected on a moderate reformist program. But in 1968 the military overthrew his government, not because he was successful but because he had largely failed to follow through on the promised reforms.

The military regime under General Juan Velasco (1968–1975), unlike rightwing military regimes in the rest of Latin America, set into motion a series of

major reforms which aimed to modernize Peru and, most of all, to include the majority of the poor in the democratic process. The military were reformists, but not communists. They proposed to create the conditions so that a real democracy could function. They put into effect a sweeping agrarian reform which wiped out the landed oligarchy. The expropriated lands were turned into cooperatives and turned over to the peasants who worked on the haciendas. In 1972 the government announced an educational reform which aimed to upgrade the level of formation for the teachers and put an end to traditional authoritarian practices in the classrooms. Unlike Cuba, the Peruvian military did not envision eliminating private education. Rather, they urged private schools to share their facilities with poorer schools. But most significantly, the military looked upon the newly renovated church as an ally. In fact, two Jesuits, Ricardo Morales and Romeo Luna Victoria, were architects of the educational reform. The word “conscientization,” a concept made popular throughout Latin America by Paulo Freire, became the cornerstone of the reform.⁶ In 1975 Velasco was replaced by his fellow military who named General Francisco Morales Bermúdez (a Jesuit graduate) as his successor. Over the next five years, in the face of rising discontent over military rule, Morales put an end to the reforms and steered the country back to normal civilian democracy in 1980. The Velasco reforms generated much enthusiasm, especially among the lower classes, but the authoritarian methods of the military also antagonized the middle classes and older political parties such as the APRA. The agrarian reform was criticized for being ill planned. The peasants were not prepared to run the cooperatives, and many of the expropriated haciendas, which had been very productive, now produced little. The educational reform was, in theory, very well thought out, but it aroused much opposition from the state schoolteachers who resisted the call to change. Needless to say, there was also much opposition from the private schools which resented the efforts to include them in the military’s consciousness raising programs.

Little remains of the reforms today. Nevertheless, most historians would agree that the Velasco regime represented a watershed in Peruvian history. Somewhat like the Mexican revolution, it put an end to an older elitist system of rule and politicized the vast majority of poor who were led to believe that they could be agents of change. A new left arose, much more attuned to the demands and sentiments of the lower classes than the older pro-Soviet Communist Party. But this increased radicalization also led to the emergence of the Shining Path, the terrorist organization that initiated a period of violence in Peru between 1980 and 1992, the year when the leader, Abimael Guzmán was captured. The internal war between the Shining Path, the police, and the military led to the death of 79,000 Peruvians. Significantly, Guzmán used the education program of the

⁶ For more on the church, the military, and the educational reform, see Jeffrey Klaiber, *The Catholic Church in Peru, 1821–1985* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), pp. 287–288, 342–347.

University of Huamanga, in the central Andean city of Ayacucho, as his base of operations.

This is the context in which to understand the growing division within the Catholic Church between progressive and conservative Catholics, a fact which is reflected in the Catholic school system: elitist schools versus schools for the poor.

The Emergence of Popular Catholic Education

The Latin American church experienced far reaching changes as a result of the Second Vatican Council and other movements and thought currents within the Latin American church such as liberation theology. In 1968 in the northern fishing town of Chimbote, Father Gustavo Gutiérrez first used that term in a talk. Soon, the concept made a deep impact upon progressive Catholics in Peru and the rest of Latin America. In 1968 at the second meeting of the Latin American bishops at Medellín, Colombia, the church took a strong stand for social justice and social-minded education. These changes coincided with the military regime of Velasco in Peru. Unlike the military in the rest of Latin America who were deeply antagonistic toward the newly emerging progressive church, the military in Peru, many of whom had graduated from religious schools, looked upon the new church with sympathy. Ironically, it was the military that opened the doors for the church to become involved in popular (lower class) education. The church in Peru had always run schools for the poor, but not on a wide scale. That changed in the 1950s under the military government of General Manuel Odría (1948–1956) when the Minister of Education, General Juan Mendoza, began providing state aid to the church to administer schools for the poor. Under the military Junta of 1962–1963 this aid was institutionalized by way of an agreement between church and state. According to the agreement the state would set aside a certain amount of the budget for education for church-run schools for the poor. The immediate recipient was ONDEC, the National Office of Catholic Education, founded by the bishops' conference in 1954. The Consortium represents all Catholic schools, whereas ONDEC was founded to coordinate all educational activities of the church, which included preparing teachers and producing textbooks for teaching religion in the state schools. Religion is to this day a required subject in public schools. The Consortium is in theory a dependency of ONDEC, but in the practice, ONDEC devotes a major part of its attention to church-run state schools or training religion teachers for the state system.

The availability of state money radically transformed the map of Catholic education in Peru. Religious congregations and parishes set about founding schools for the lower classes which normally would have sent their children to state schools. In the decade of the 1950s there were 497 schools run by the church in Peru.⁷ But with the influx of state aid funneled through ONDEC that

⁷ General Juan Mendoza, *Nuevo potencial para la educación peruana* (Lima, 1956), p. 229.

number jumped to 1,051 by 1971. Of that number, 342 were completely free and 626 semifree.⁸ Even before the educational reform of 1972 more than two-thirds of Catholic schools received state aid. But the church's presence was not limited to its own schools. In 1971 some 241 strictly state schools were administered by religious congregations.⁹ In this case, the state itself approves the congregations that will run the schools. The Velasco military government ratified all previous agreements with the church. In 1977 the government promulgated the *Statutes For Parochial Educational Centers* which stipulated that church schools which received state aid must "offer educational services to families of low income."¹⁰

Fe y Alegría

The Fe y Alegría ("Faith and Joy") schools constitute a special system within the world of popular Catholic education. Fe y Alegría was founded in 1955 in Venezuela by a Jesuit, José María Velaz. Velaz founded a school for the poor in Caracas with the aid of volunteers from Andrés Bello Catholic University. Within time he founded a number of similar schools with state aid. Soon the Fe y Alegría concept spread throughout the rest of Latin America. By 2005 Fe y Alegría administered 1,675 centers with over 437,000 primary and secondary students in 15 countries. Fe y Alegría was founded in Peru in 1966, and by 2005 it ran 64 urban schools, 97 rural schools, and two higher institutes for technical training, with a total of over 75,000 students.¹¹

Although Fe y Alegría in each country is independent, the schools all follow the same basic model. In each situation the Society of Jesus enters into an agreement with the state which assumes in part the cost of running the schools, usually by paying the teachers' salaries. The Jesuits, with the aid of benefactors and the donated work time of the parents of the children, build the school itself. The Jesuits themselves make up the national governing board, but each individual school is usually under the direction of a religious congregation. In Peru 37 different congregations run the schools, located throughout the entire country. The vast majority of the teachers and administrative personal (2,963 altogether) are lay. By agreement, the Jesuits reserve the right to name the teachers. And by agreement each school (like any state school) must accept all children from the neighborhood where it is located. Fe y Alegría's slogan defines its popular orientation: "Fe y Alegría begins where the asphalt ends."

Fe y Alegría does not fall under the category of "parochial schools" because it forms a network within itself and is not tied to parishes; nor are they

⁸ ONDEC (National Office of Catholic Education), *Centros educacionales dirigidos por religiosos: estudio de su distribución por diócesis* (1971), p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education, *Reglamentos de centros educativos parroquiales* (Lima, 1977), p. 1.

¹¹ Home Page of Fe y Alegría, Peru (2006).

exactly state schools, even though the curriculum may be the same, including religion class. The difference lies in the general atmosphere and tone of the school which is set by the ideals which Fe y Alegría upholds and which are translated into practice by the religious men and women who run the schools. The ideals reflect the 32nd general congregation of the Society of Jesus which emphasized the promotion of faith and justice as the underlying inspiration for all works of the order. In a typical Fe y Alegría school much emphasis is placed on solidarity and service in all school activities. Furthermore, the schools involve the parents in all activities. Most important, the Jesuits and the congregations involved strive to inculcate this idealism in the lay teachers. In addition, they offer special summer courses to update the teachers in certain areas. On a spiritual level, the Jesuits offer retreats to the teachers on a voluntary basis. The retreats themselves are oriented toward the ideals of community service. Finally, the Jesuits organize yearly national congresses or jamborees during which the students display their artistic, musical, and oratorical talents.

Fe y Alegría has established itself in Peru and the rest of Latin America as a model of quality education for the poor. In Peru, the Ministry of Education, with which the directors of Fe y Alegría must negotiate each year to determine how many teachers will be assigned to the schools, and hence receive state salaries, has often proposed Fe y Alegría as a model for the general state school system. Private donors look with favor on Fe y Alegría because the Jesuits and the religious congregations constitute a guarantee of order and solid religious instruction. At the same time, Peruvians of a leftist persuasion also look favorably on the schools because they foster the ideals of social solidarity and justice.

Divisions Within Catholic Schools

Soon the social and political tensions of the 1960s and 1970s drove a wedge between the Consortium and ONDEC. Within a short period of time Catholic schools for the lower classes outnumbered the older elitist schools for the upper classes. By 1975 only 40% of all Catholic schools recognized the Consortium as their official representative. Both of these Catholic offices took very different stands regarding a number of issues. In general, ONDEC was very favorable to the educational reform of 1972. But the Consortium schools viewed the law as an encroachment on their freedom. In 1973 the Consortium took out a full page add in *El Comercio*, Peru's leading newspaper, in which it denounced the reform law as an example of "stifling statism."¹² In 1975 the Consortium announced that it would suspend matriculation in its schools in protest over the law. The government backed down, in part because the more conservative

¹² *El Comercio* (Lima, May 24, 1973), p. 11.

Morales Bermúdez government had replaced the Velasco regime. Noticeably, the Consortium took these initiatives without consulting the ONDEC, which was presumably the official education office of the bishops.

Another issue which further divided the two offices was the question of textbooks for religion class. In 1973 ONDEC began publishing textbooks which were aimed to be auxiliary aids for the teachers, especially those who taught in the state schools. The textbooks, composed by a Jesuit, Eduardo Bastos, reflected the major themes of the bishops' conference at Medellín and decidedly favored liberation theology. The textbooks were roundly rejected by the Consortium. ONDEC, on the other hand, distributed them throughout the state school system and to private Catholic schools which functioned primarily among the lower classes.

Finally, two major teachers' strikes in 1978 and 1979 underlined the gap between the Consortium and Catholic schools affiliated with the state sector. The 1978 strike was organized by SUTEP, the national teachers' union and ended rather peaceably. But the 1979 strike, which lasted from June to September, paralyzed the state school system. The military government was determined not to back down. The Consortium schools had little to do with the strike and simply fired any of its teachers who joined the strike. But Catholic schools which received state aid could not take such an unambiguous stance because many of their teachers, whose salaries were paid in part or full by the state, joined the strike. The bishops were also caught in a difficult situation: to support SUTEP would mean condoning the pressure tactics used by the union to keep the teachers in line; but to remain indifferent to the teachers' demands would not be consonant with the new stand of the church in favor of social justice. Also, the bishops did not want to approve of a union which was controlled by Marxists. In the end, the bishops sought out the middle ground: they expressed sympathy for the strikers, but not for the union.

Although the two systems, ONDEC and the Consortium, parted ways, they continued to maintain cordial relations. Within the upper-class schools there is a wide spectrum, from a very traditional and pre-Vatican mentality to a progressive post-Vatican one. The schools run by Opus Dei, Lumen Dei, and Sodalicio clearly represent the former. Sodalicio de Vida Cristiana (Sodality of Christian Life) is an association of priests and laypersons founded in Peru in 1971 by Luis Figari, a layman. Sodalicio, which draws most of its members from the middle classes, holds very conservative and even fundamentalistic views on religion, the Bible, and sex. Needless to say, Sodalicio strongly condemns liberation theology. Jesuit schools (five in the entire country, not counting the *Fe y Alegría* schools) are on the other end of the spectrum. In those schools, besides upholding high academic standards, they also place heavy emphasis on inculcating social awareness in the students. At the *Colegio de la Inmaculada*, the major primary and secondary school of the Jesuits in Lima, students are encouraged to do voluntary work for the poor and last year students are required to perform some type of community service for the poor as a requirement to graduate.

Fujimori and Neoliberalism

The neoliberal wave began in Latin America in the mid-1980s and arrived in Peru during the administration of Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000), a Peruvian of Japanese ancestry. Unfortunately for Peru, although he was democratically elected, Fujimori increasingly used authoritarian tactics to perpetuate himself in power. In 1992 he ordered the military to close down congress and new elections were held in 1993. The new Fujimori-controlled congress promptly wrote a new constitution which favored his neoliberal tendencies. All of these political crises directly affected education. The constitution of 1979 expressly forbade education for profit. The new Fujimori-controlled congress eliminated that particular article, and in 1996 put into effect a law to “foster investment in education.” The new law aimed to attract private entities to enter the field of education and thus take some of the burden off the state. As a result, there was a proliferation of private universities and primary and secondary schools founded by private individuals, many of whom had little background in education. In the cases of the new universities the classrooms were filled with students who had few qualifications and in some cases were not even required to take an entrance examination. Unfortunately, given the lack of standards, there is no guarantee that the students will receive a good education. The Catholic schools for the middle and upper classes have suffered somewhat because of the increased competition with the new nonconfessional schools. For example, the nonconfessional schools emphasize learning English, but often provide little or no moral or religious formation. Catholic schools also teach English, but not with the same emphasis. As a result, many parents prefer the nonconfessional schools. Also, economic difficulties of the late 1990s forced many parents to withdraw their children from the middle and upper class Catholic schools and send them to less costly nonconfessional schools. Catholic schools for the lower classes, such as *Fe y Alegría*, are not affected by these changes and continue to flourish. Nevertheless, their future is always insecure because they depend on state aid, which is subject to changing political currents.

Current Achievements and Future Needs

Catholic schools in Peru face three general challenges: massification, rising costs, and a short-term mentality which prizes a technical education over a humanistic and religious formation.

In all Catholic schools the number of religious has diminished considerably since the 1960s, a result in part of Vatican II and changes in Latin American society. The groups which have suffered the most are religious congregations of women who teach in upper-class schools. Religious women in lower-class schools were less affected. Male teaching congregations such as the Marists and Salesians have also suffered. As a result, in a typical middle- or upper-class Catholic school there may be only three or four religious women, priests, or brothers, while

the great majority of the rest of the administrators and teachers are lay. Also, Catholic schools must compete increasingly with the private nonconfessional schools which came into existence during the Fujimori years. Many families, which ordinarily would have tried to get their children into a religious school, increasingly send them to the new private schools which, as we mentioned above, are often less expensive. Rising costs, coupled with the phenomenon of fewer religious women or men, who normally would have donated their salaries to the schools, make it difficult to maintain Catholic schools on a competitive basis with private lay schools.

This brings up a deeper question: what is the identity of Catholic schools in a third world country like Peru? As the number of students in Catholic schools shrinks in relation to the total number of students in general, the question is especially poignant.

For many Peruvians the fundamental purpose of getting an education is to secure a career. But widespread unemployment and underemployment have driven many Peruvians to immigrate to the USA, Europe, and Japan. For these Peruvians and those who are looking for employment, receiving a religious education is far less important than learning computer skills and gaining proficiency in English. Also, the discontent over Peru's apparent slow economic growth fuels this frustration over educational models which do not seem to meet immediate economic and social needs. In Peru's recent presidential election (June, 2006), 47% of the electorate voted for a political outsider, Ollanta Humala, an ex-military officer who proposed many of the same populist-nationalist measures as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia. Humala frequently evoked the era of Velasco when the government expropriated foreign companies. But, unlike Velasco who put into effect a major educational reform, Humala gave scant attention to education. The other candidate who won the election, Alan García, leader of the center-left Aprista Party, also gave education a low priority. For these politicians, promises to reform or raise the level of education do not attract many votes. Both, however, promised jobs for everyone. On one other issue both agreed, at least nominally: the need to put an end to endemic corruption. Corruption has always been a part of Latin American political culture. But only in the past years, especially in the wake of the Fujimori regime which was notoriously corrupt, has the public come to perceive corruption as a serious problem.

This shortsighted view of education poses a challenge to Catholic education. Catholic educators know that Peru's problems can only be solved by bringing a moral and a social sensibility to public affairs. In its document *Lineamientos y propuestas para el proyecto educativo católico*—"Orientations and Proposals for a Catholic Educational Project"—the Consortium of Catholic Schools proposes to "form good Christians and honest Citizens."¹³ Fe y Alegría's mission statement clearly reflects the influence of liberation theology: students should,

¹³ Consorcio de Centros Educativos Católicos del Perú, *Lineamientos y propuestas para el proyecto educativo católico* (Lima, 1996), p. 51.

among other qualities and habits, “have a personal experience of God who is Love and discover that He is necessary for one’s own personal liberation and that of the people.”¹⁴ These mission statements, the former somewhat conservative and the latter more attuned to the expectations of the lower classes, coincide in their perception that Catholic education must offer a type of integral formation which most public and nonconfessional private schools do not.

Very little research has been done on Catholic education in Peru. Government documents refer to schools in general but make no special distinction between private and state schools. The two major centers concerned with Catholic education—ONDEC and the Consortium—have published documents which contain statistics and general aims, but little analysis of the impact of Catholic education on their students and alumni. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus among Peruvians that Catholic education offers “something” which other schools do not. For example, there is a growing awareness that ethics and formation in ethics are important for government leaders, businessmen, the military, and the police. At the Jesuit university in Lima, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, the Institute of Ethics and Politics worked closely with the Ethics Committee of the Peruvian congress to help the latter formulate its code of ethics, and young members of the Aprista Party, which won the presidential election of 2006, are currently attending a seminar at Ruiz de Montoya on “ethics and politics.” On another level, in 2003 the Peruvian government published the nine volumes which contained the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was created in 2001 to study the causes, the history, and the consequences of the terrorist violence which wrecked havoc on the country between 1980 and 1992.¹⁵ The president of the commission, Dr. Salomón Lerner, was at the time the rector (equivalent of president) of the Catholic University of Peru. These examples underline the esteem in which Catholic intellectuals and Catholic centers of higher learning are held. In this sense, the most urgent task for Catholic education in Peru is to convince the general public that Catholic education offers an integral formation—intellectual, social, and moral—which the country needs and which non-Catholic schools do not provide.

Future Research

In Peru there are numerous studies on the quantity of education: how many schools, how many students, and how many live in conditions of poverty. But there are few studies on the quality of education. Naturally, it is presumed that students from upper-class private schools receive a better education than students at state schools. But beyond that type of generalization, it would be of great importance to study the impact of private Catholic schools as opposed to

¹⁴ Home Page of Fe y alegría, Peru.

¹⁵ Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, *Informe final*, 9 vols. (Lima, 2003).

state and non-Catholic schools. There are no studies in this regard, only general presumptions. Furthermore, among middle- and upper-class Catholic schools there are no studies on the values and social concerns of students in schools run by Jesuits, Opus Dei, and other congregations and Catholic associations. Also, the Fe y Alegría schools are greatly admired by the public in general, but there are no studies to show that, in fact, Fe y Alegría students do better than students from normal state schools. Another important area is the family. In third world countries many families place a high value on education, if not for the parents, for whom it may be too late, then for their children. A study on parental influence on children especially in lower-class schools would be important. For example, to what extent is the success of Fe y Alegría due to the system itself or to the fact that the parents who send their children to those schools are especially keen on getting their children educated? The answer will probably be both. The importance in carrying out these studies is not so much to reform church-run schools, but to influence policymakers who draw up plans for state schools. Church-run schools also need to undergo review, but not nearly as much as the state schools. One of the prime missions of Catholic schools is to be a beacon for the state schools or nonconfessional private schools which do not share the same values as the former. But as long as the studies do not exist, government planning will continue to be based on presumptions and at times prejudices. The ultimate purpose of these studies would be to establish beyond doubt that Catholic education, on whatever level, does make a difference.

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE CONTEXT OF INEQUALITY: THE CASE OF CHILE

Sergio Martinic and Mirentxu Anaya

Context of Educational Policies

In Chile, there is a decentralised and mixed education system. From the total of educational establishments, 53% are public (municipal governments); 40% are private subsidised by the government (there are schools where families contribute financially and others where education is free); and 6.6% are private paid by the families (see Table 1).¹

In the last 20 years, our education system has experienced two great periods of reform. In the 1980s, state education—which until then was depending on the Ministry of Education—was transferred to local government, and private education subsidised by the State was expanded.²

Within this system, the subsidy is paid via a “voucher” per pupil to the establishment or provider of education—whether municipal government or private—in accordance with the average monthly attendance of the pupils. Schools with more pupils receive more state subsidies. The basis of this mechanism is the competition between schools to attract more pupils, theoretically achieved by providing a quality service. The logic of the system is that families choose the best schools for their children, and, at the same time, schools are provided with incentives to select the best pupils through exams and other similar procedures.

With the return to democracy in 1990, a new period of educational reforms started. The new educational policies did not make substantial changes to the institutional model or the method of financing the sector. However, to balance

¹ Source: Department of Research and Development, Division of Planning and Budgeting, Ministry of Education, Chile. Statistics of 2006.

² The requirements of the law in order to set up private schools are minimal. The same is the case for the owners of a school who only needs to have completed his/her high school studies. Amongst private owners of the education system, there are different legal figures and motivations: private individuals or groups which constitute themselves as foundations, some not for profit and others for profit. This policy was implemented in the authoritarian context of the government of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1999) and allowed the introduction of institutional changes which, in a democratic context, are very difficult to make.

Table 1. Number of establishments according to administrative dependence 1990–2005 (absolute values) (From Ministry of Education National statistics, 2006)

Year	Total	Public	Private subsidised	Private	Delegated management
1990	9,811	6,286	2,694	758	73
1995	10,296	6,377	2,790	1,058	71
2000	10,610	6,255	3,217	1,068	70
2005	11,561	6,098	4,630	763	70

Table 2. Spanish and mathematics students from secondary school (10–11-year-old pupils) National score according to type of administration (1992–2002) (From Ministry of Education, SIMCE (National Evaluation for Spanish and Mathematics in Primary Schools) and Department of Studies)

Year	Spanish			Mathematics		
	Public	PSUB	Private	Public	PSUB	Private
1992	64	70	85	64	70	85
1994	65	71	86	65	71	86
1996	68	73	86	68	73	86
1996	238	255	292	238	255	292
1999	238	256	298	238	256	298
2002	235	254	298	235	254	298
2005	243	263	300	235	255	297

Notes: In 1996 there were changes in the evaluation system: from norms to items. The period 1992–1996 displays percentages of correct answers in the tests. The period 1996–2005 displays average score of success according to the item response theory.

the negative effects of market principles, changes in the regulation were introduced, as well as a set of policies oriented towards guaranteeing quality, particularly in establishments dealing with the poorest sectors of society.

The programmes implemented in the different fields of the reform have improved material conditions: the quality of the resources available for teaching (texts, didactic material, classroom libraries, and computers, among others) have been upgraded, as well as the assistance offered to children and young adults of the poorest families of the country (breakfasts, lunch, and health).

The measurements of the SIMCE³ from 1990 onwards show a clear improvement in the knowledge acquired by pupils in their fourth and eighth year of primary school.

This process of improvement is brought to a standstill during the period between 1996 and 2005, which shows that it is more difficult to achieve substantial changes once the schools cross the critical threshold (see Table 2).

³SIMCE: National Evaluation for Spanish and Mathematics for Children of Primary School.

Since 1996, and despite the efforts made, learning results do not improve substantially and severe disparities persist, which separate establishments according to the socio-economic level of their pupils. There is indeed a clear relationship between the dependence of the establishments, learning results, and the social sector pupils come from. The best achievements are obtained by paid private establishments who beat local authority schools in language and mathematics by more than 60 points. The problem is serious since it questions the relationship that has been established between equity and education.

In May 2006, a large social movement of school pupils developed, questioning the institutional model and the market principles which regulate the country's education system. This movement was led by pupils of municipal establishments, who demanded more resources and better teaching to get closer to the quality levels of private establishments. The movement received wide support from citizens, and was concluded by a series of government decisions which allowed more resources to address problems of social assistance (school meals, transport, and scholarships, among others) and led to the organisation of a presidential advisory commission. This commission was given a period of six months (July–December 2006) to make proposals for a new institutional design for national education (www.consejoeducacion.cl).

Objectives and Method

An intense debate on the quality and equity of education, and the factors that can guarantee them, has developed in the country. There is a wide consensus on the need to make changes to the Organic Constitutional Law on Education which regulates the system and the institutional model.

The Church, which has a major influence in the public debate, supports specific ideas on the subject. For Chilean bishops, the State should guarantee a plural education, based on quality and in accordance with the reality of each person and respectful of his/her moral and religious principles.

However, it is obvious that regardless of the incidence of the social conditions of the pupils in learning results, schools can be more effective and produce better learning results. In the framework of this discussion, it is interesting to observe that Catholic schools that work in low level socio-cultural environments and receive state subsidies have better results than similar schools that depend on local authorities.

In fact, as demonstrated by Edwards (1995), paid private high schools and subsidised private religious high schools have a more coherent educational plan which gives identity to the establishment. This plan facilitates the interaction and involvement of pupils and teachers by permeating educational practices.⁴ The results of a comparative study on the effectiveness of subsidised private education in Chile and Argentina (McEwan, 2000), which demonstrates that the

⁴ Edwards, V. Y., & Cerda, A. M. (1995) *El liceo por dentro. Estudio etnográfico sobre prácticas de trabajo en Educación Media*. Santiago, Chile: Ministerio de Educación.

schools of the church show higher academic levels than non-Catholic schools, also corroborate these findings.⁵ The results of the studies carried out in Chile are supported by international research on the topic, which has shown the effectiveness of Catholic school organisations (Bryck, 1993; Grace, 2002).⁶

If Catholic schools manage to differentiate themselves in low-level socio-economic sectors, what are the factors that guarantee their effectiveness? Recognising the characteristics of the educational processes which are carried out in these schools, and singling out the factors which favour better results, would constitute an interesting contribution on the part of Catholic schools to the public education of the country and to the current debate over the path to a quality education for all.

Our work hypothesis is that the identity of Catholic schools affects the interactions and educational practices which favour a community feeling, the participation of the family, and high learning expectations of teachers. All of this strengthens a proactive school culture, oriented towards the achievement of its pupils.

In this article, we shall explore this hypothesis through the analysis of the main factors associated with the results obtained by Catholic schools working in poverty-stricken sectors. This analysis is based on the study of four educational foundations (one of which has eight schools)⁷ and the interviews conducted with teachers, parents, and pupils of another 37 Catholic establishments which form part of the sample of the research project “A Diagnostic Test of Catholic Education in Chile” currently underway. The schools of the studied foundations are located in poor areas of Santiago and deal with families with scarce resources. They deliver a pre-school, primary and secondary education with technical–professional training, receive state subsidies and operate under a system of shared financing where the parents pay a small monthly fee. There are scholarships and differentiated fees for parents with more financial difficulties.

Description of Catholic Education in Chile

According to studies carried out by the Episcopal Conference of Chile,⁸ Chilean Catholic education represents 14.8% of the national education system. Within the field of private subsidised education, the registration of pupils in Catholic schools

⁵The author of the study proposes certain hypotheses which could explain how to offer pupils more opportunities to interact with their teachers, the availability of more resources in order to offer more financial support to families, a more effective distribution of these resources than in other schools and a greater selectivity in terms of the admission of pupils.

⁶Anglosaxon researchers who have carried out qualitative studies on Catholic education in the USA and England highlight the community organisation, the coherence between common academic goals, autonomy, and religious ideology as the principal characteristics which differentiate Catholic schools from others. Cfr. Bryk, A., Lee, V., & Holland, P. (1993). *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Grace G. (2002) *Catholic Schools: Mission, Market and Morality*. London: Routledge Falmer.

⁷Cases taken from the field study for Ph.D. Thesis in course: Effective Schools, the case of Catholic schools in Chile. Anaya Mirentxu (2005) Institut d'etudes politiques de Paris. During two weeks in each school, individual and group interviews (120 in total), observations of school classrooms and informal conversations were carried out. All of the institutional documents of the establishment were also checked.

⁸Pasalacqua, A. (2002). *Statistics of Catholic Education in Chile*. Santiago, Chile: FEDECH. Pasalacqua, A. (2006) How many are we and how do we do it? *Statistics of Catholic Education in Chile*.

amounts to 30.9%.⁹ Regarding social origin of pupils, statistic shows the Catholic schools in Chile are attended by children coming at 80% from medium and low social sectors, and at 20% from privileged sectors. These statistics break the common belief that Catholic education is restricted to the elites of the country (Passalacqua, 2006).

Catholic establishments belong either to a religious congregation (63.2%), to secular or private foundations (36.5%) or to a corporation of the archbishop. In recent years, more than 30 schools depending on foundations have been set up, and the number of schools belonging to congregations has reduced.

The owner of the establishment is a central actor in the organisation of the school. He/She is this person (or institution) who defines the basic infrastructure in which the establishment operates, as well as the educational plan which directs the academic and spiritual training of the pupils. The educational plans of all the establishments are very diverse and respond to different religious charismas. However, all of them have extensive autonomy from the State.

Quality Factors

Good Directional Management and a Social Support Network

In most cases, the foundations are set up by a small group of people, who generally belong to the middle or upper classes of the country, who are close to the church or form part of a think group.¹⁰

The social position of the members of the foundation and their professional skills favour the formation of a support network, which works mainly through the monetary donations of private companies and through the cooperation of volunteers for giving extra classes, workshops, technology, and English courses. These support networks with private companies allow the foundations to obtain external resources and permit the construction of a quality infrastructure, the acquisition of support resources—computers, videos, books, laboratories, etc.—and agreements with organisations where pupils can get work experience, repair services, and school maintenance, etc.

The donations from companies to schools are possible thanks to the existence of a law which grants company owners tax kickbacks if they put their profits towards educational projects (Law Number 19,247 of 1993).¹¹

⁹ However, not only is Catholic education important in terms of the number of admissions, it also stands out in terms of results. In the SIMCE test, Catholic schools fall among the establishments with the highest scores at a national level. Of the 50 best paid private schools, 23 have a Catholic religious orientation and 18 of the 25 best private subsidised schools are Catholic *Saturday Supplement*, *El Mercurio*, April 2006.

¹⁰ It is necessary to clarify that the studied foundations are not profit-making, that the members have parallel professions and jobs and that the motivation for the setting up of the schools is to deliver a quality education to children in vulnerable sectors of society.

¹¹ This law allows three mechanisms to channel financial contributions from companies into education: (a) donations for equipment and investment; (b) support in order to create a fund of which only the interest may be spent; and (c) the financing of operational costs for four years of an educational project of the establishment.

The quality of the infrastructure of the foundation's schools—which stands out in the places where they are located—and the extra human resources that come from the support networks, have a positive effect on the teaching, the self-esteem of the pupils, as well as the learning results, and encourage cooperation and good behaviour. Pupils in general are aware of the luxurious quality of the establishments and the cost of having to leave the establishment due to discipline problems, academic achievement, or lack of commitment,¹² for the alternative schools in these areas are materially very inferior. This last element, among others that will be explained, causes pupils to make an effort to study and fulfil what the school hopes of them.

Catholic Teachers Who are Committed to Their Pupils

Most Catholic teachers are motivated by a sense of justice and the need to struggle against poverty and to assume the message of Christ to help the most underprivileged. At the same time, in selecting their teachers, the schools give priority to associated skills and leadership over knowledge of their subjects, while also being rigorous in this aspect.

The schools, which have participative directive leaders, are concerned with transmitting a sense of mission and overcoming through training activities, conversations, spiritual retreats and above all “embodying Christian values” in their actions. This converts them into role models for the school community. At the same time, they promote proximity between teachers and the families of the children, favouring visits and direct contact with the parents when their children have school difficulties. “Touching” the material reality lived by their pupils sensitises and involves teachers. Teachers have high expectations regarding the learning of the children, focus the teaching on the creation of values and consider themselves responsible for the academic and emotional success of their pupils.

The interviewed teachers lay stress on the good material conditions of the school as a factor which encourages and facilitates their job. However, the main benefit they highlight is moral. In the interviews were identified three types of acknowledgements which give them job satisfaction: first, peace of mind knowing that their moral ideals and actions are coherent. In second place, social acknowledgement, not only for working in the best establishment in the neighbourhood, but also for their role as “saviours” of the poor, praise they often receive from colleagues who work for better-off schools. Finally, the most important acknowledgement according to the teachers is the affection and respect received from the children and their families. The expression of affect strengthens links and the cooperation of the children in the classroom and their parents at home.

Amongst the problems that affect them, the teachers highlight: overwork, emotional tension, learning difficulties of the pupils, and the conflicts that are

¹²The expulsion of pupils is not common in the schools, but it can happen following several conversations, agreements, and treatment with specialists in the case of pupils with extreme violent behaviour or of serious learning difficulties.

produced when new teaching is introduced. The teachers minimise the importance of those problems in comparison to the job satisfaction they enjoy. They highlight the fact that they knew the difficulties they would have to face when they applied for their jobs. However, they decided to work in this type of establishment out of a sense of vocation, despite the fact that their experience would have allowed them to work in more prestigious educational establishments.

As regards the work with the pupils, the teachers share the method of improving learning and behaviours starting with the emotions of the children. In and out of the classroom a relationship based on affect, friendship, and concern is struck up, which is used by teachers when the moment comes to demand work and discipline from their pupils. The knowledge and proximity with the children is facilitated by moments such as Morning Prayer, spiritual retreats, conferences, and many conversations in the corridor where they share their pupils' problems, family situations, and worries. For the pupils, the concern and affect of the teachers legitimise the discipline and effort they demand of them, which are justified more as acts of love rather than punishment.

The interaction between the teacher and pupil happens in a different register to the relationships that the majority have at home: a lot of dialogue, patience, respect, and never a shout. The creation of an emotional and respectful link generates in the teachers a feeling of protection towards their pupils and their families. This affective closeness is expressed via frequent visits to homes, accompanying pupils to the doctor, lending money and other acts of trust and support. The pupils, at the same time, feel protected and loved, rewarding teachers with good behaviour and cooperation in the classroom.

Good Interaction—Family and School

The Catholic school develops a sense of community and shared responsibility with the families of its pupils. Through training and frequent contact, directors and teachers affect the quality of internal communication of the family and the relationship that it has with the school. The school offers a model of communication, which, for family members, constitutes something different and which, in many cases, they adopt and reproduce in the family. New communicational relationships contribute to the respect and the affective link between its members.

How exactly does this transformation come about?

The parents who register their children in these schools are willing to make a financial sacrifice to give them a good education, which presents a first selection (self selection) of the type of guardian. However, the demand that many of these establishments have to cope with obliges them to select pupils privileging the motivation and concern of the parents regarding the education of their children as the main criteria (second selection).¹³ This process generates the basis of a

¹³ However, although parents nowadays are seen to be more motivated than parents at the outset, teachers continue having to confront family problems, such as financial difficulties, lack of education of the parents, problems of violence, etc.

strong link between school and family, which is very different from the link they may have with a public school.¹⁴

The description of the relationship between the family and the school shall be done from the point of view of the shortcomings of the families and how the establishment manages to overcome them and generate cooperation.

1. Lack of Affect

One of the main things the families lack greatly is affect due to their life histories: fathers who abandon their families, teenage single mothers, grandmothers who have to take on the role of guardian of their grandchildren, problems of domestic violence, etc. From the point of view of teachers, this causes difficulties in the relationship between parents and children where interactions are frequently based on verbal or physical violence and a lack of communication exists.

Faced with this reality, the school develops a completely different relationship. One of the clearest internal policies that is shared by all of the staff of the establishment consists of *welcoming* the families of the children. The structure of relationships between teachers and guardians is based on a strong presence and constant availability of the teachers and management. This position of the staff is developed in two ways: first, through an attitude of reception, where the problems of the parents are listened to, and second, through an attitude of movement where the teachers *go to* the parents and try to solve their problems.

The guardians value the welcome as one of the most important characteristics of the school where teachers and management are interested in their lives. Above all, those whose children have been to public schools are especially grateful, as they tell of directors of those schools that are distant and “untouchable,” and how the welcome depends on the social class of the mothers.

The teachers are particularly concerned with not stigmatising the children who have learning difficulties and try to understand the core problem of their pupils, at the same time showing an interest in their situation and family life.

Thanks to interactions based on presence, availability, welcome, and assistance, the teachers manage to build relationships of trust with the families which commit them to the academic achievement and emotional development of their children at the same time.

The extension of the relationships between teachers and parents to the heart of the family of the children causes consequences in the teaching processes. The experiences lived by the teachers strengthen their motivation and favour the action of the directors who want their teachers to be committed to the educational plan of the school.

The schools observed build a positive and affective interaction between all of their staff and the children. But, in addition, they carry out important work

¹⁴ This is one of the comparisons most frequently made by the guardians interviewed who had had educational experiences in public schools and the element that they most value about the establishments they belong to currently.

oriented towards rebuilding relationships and links between mothers and children. Through the different activities of the school, mothers and children establish relationships based on love, authority, and respect. Through pastoral care, retreats, and other activities, the school encourages acknowledgement of the family history, affective links, and expression—writing letters showing their love to their children, telling them in public how much they love them, conversations between parents and children, and the promotion of cooperation and solidarity between members of the family. The children have to be committed to helping with household chores and the mothers to dedicating time to helping them with their studies.

Another important issue is the reconstruction of the authority of the parents. The school's strategy is to give importance to the educational process of their children and not marginalise them from it. It is about demonstrating to the pupil that his/her parents know in detail what he/she does at school, his/her homework, marks, and discipline. This policy of information is highly valued by the parents, above all by those who have had experienced other educational establishments where they felt completely marginalised from the schooling of their children.

The teachers are paid to carry out individual interviews with the parents. On these occasions, they try to agree on commitments with the parents—signing of homework, advice on how to study with the children, need to supervise their children's homework—in order to solve learning difficulties or discipline issues.

2. Lack of "Social and Personal" Resources and Social Marginalisation

The school not only makes up for the lack of family relationship skills, but also their lack of socialisation. Given their family histories, coloured by violence and abandonment, the mothers show a lack of relationship skills when they arrive at the school: low self-esteem, an inability to express themselves orally, and great shyness. They occupy a marginalised place in society and have low social recognition because of who they are and what they do. The majority have a low level of schooling, in general due to premature pregnancies.

Through a variety of activities, the school, according to the mothers, gives them the possibility of becoming a "better person." This gives them dignity and a different position in society. There are different activities geared towards this: professional training—finishing school, hairdressing, cookery, IT, etc.—the possibility to work as volunteers in the school—as kitchen assistants, secretaries, nurses, teachers' assistants, pastoral activities assistants—and spiritual workshops—on self-esteem, the relationship with partners, the relationship between mother and child, prayer, and preparation of the first communion workshops.

The mothers claim to be very satisfied, above all with the voluntary work. Having a job in the school gives them a place in society for which they are recognised and compensated with the thanks of the scholar community and with admiration and respect of their children for the first time in their lives.

Finally, the school is transformed into the centre of social life for the guardians, a place of integration. There are sporting, cultural, and spiritual events for

the whole “school community.” Mass and evening events, such as bingo, music festivals, fancy dress, end of year and birthday parties, etc. are held. These types of activities are important for the mothers, since they offer moments of distraction from their daily problems and allow them to feel they belong to a community.

3. Lack of Material Resources

As has already been mentioned, the families of the pupils belong to a very vulnerable social class with low incomes, unstable, overcrowded homes, and a bad quality of life in terms of food, heating in winter, and general comfort. As regards employment, vulnerability also exists: casual work in construction, domestic work, and unemployment. The parents who have financial problems say they feel helped by the establishment their children attend. All the children in the school receive a free school lunch during the week, which is not the case in all the schools in the area where only a percentage of the worst-off receive meals. The school also offers material assistance to the worst-off families. In this way, they receive clothes for the children, food baskets, medicines, and presents at the end of the year.

However, the direct giving of goods is not the only thing valued by the parents. They recognise the good fortune of their children who are able to go to a luxurious school with infrastructure and work conditions incomparable with the other establishments in the area, while paying very little. They appreciate the quality of the education and the opportunities the children have, but, above all, they highlight the technical training given by the school as a very useful tool and a real opportunity to overcome their social class.

Conclusions and Challenges

The analysis carried out shows that it is possible to obtain good learning results in schools with pupils who live in conditions of extreme poverty or social vulnerability. Catholic schools constitute a good example of this.

The achievements of Catholic schools rest on factors which unite aspects and practices that are traditionally separated. First, there is the idea of an education based on knowledge in contrast to one based on the moral and emotional development of pupils. The educational plans analysed have an integral vision of education and try, with differing degrees of success, to translate this into interaction between management, teachers, and the assessment of pupils.

In second place, the schools are characterised by a good internal organisational climate which is possible thanks to the existence of directors who demonstrate leadership and legitimacy amongst their peers and motivated teachers who are committed to a quality education for the poorest sectors of society. Without this motivation, the interaction with families or the responsibility they assume when they aim to obtain the best possible results with their students would not be possible. The directors promote directions and commitments that go beyond their

duties. Through formal activities and other pastoral activities, communicative and cooperative relationships are established which favour internal trust, mutual respect, and coordination in order to fulfil a shared project.

Finally, the analysed experiences create a strong relationship between the school and the family. This is a substantial change in the school culture. Schools in the poorest sectors traditionally build distances from the families as they are perceived as not having much to contribute to the educational process due to their lack of culture. The Catholic school has a different policy and different practices. It builds a strong relationship with families on the basis of dignity which goes beyond their wealth and culture. The families are aware of a different treatment and a close link with directors and teachers which helps to construct effective cooperative relationships. Furthermore, the schools influence the way the family group interacts and their commitment to their children's education.

In this way, the institutional culture, the systems of interaction which are constructed there, the climate, and trust the members of the organisation feel turn out to be key factors in the change and achievement of the best results. In fact, the positive perception of the learning space and the relationships between pupils and adults favours interest and encourages learning.

The positive effect of these relationships is corroborated by several studies. In fact, research demonstrates that the schools are more effective when the directors organise reflective spaces, establish positive relationships with their teachers, promote the participation in academic decisions and the exchange of experiences and involve directors and teachers in the improvement of the teaching and the quality of results.

On the other hand, the links established both with pupils and families enrich affection, improve self-esteem and psychological security, a sense of freedom and respect. All of them are results, as pointed out by other studies, that generate possibilities of interaction with significant people, encouraging change, cooperation, and learning (Coyle & Witcher, 1992¹⁵; Lipham & Heck, 1981¹⁶; Rossmiller, 1992).¹⁷

It is important to highlight the interaction constructed between school and family. In a national context of severe social differences and everyday experiences of exclusion, the creation of affective and cooperative relationships achieves positive effects in the commitment of parents, pupils, and teachers themselves. Negative perceptions are changed and positive expectations of learning of pupils are favoured. This is a main difference between them and teachers who work in the public system where the majority of them have low expectations for the learning and the educational future of their pupils.

¹⁵ Coyle, L. M., & Witcher, A. E. (1992). Transforming the idea into action: policies and practices to enhance school effectiveness. *Urban Education* 26(4): 390–400.

¹⁶ Lipham, J. M., & Heck, R. H. (1981). Effective principal, effective school instructional leadership and school achievement: validation of a causal model the new England school effectiveness project: a facilitator's sourcebook. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 26(2): 94–125.

¹⁷ Rossmiller, R. A. (1992). The secondary school principal and teachers' quality of work life. *Educational Management and Administration* 20(3): 132–46.

As far as exclusion in the establishments is concerned, it is necessary to point out that for parents, pupils, and teachers, the great factor of exclusion from the system is the adaptation to the identity of the school community.¹⁸ The internal policy of the establishments tries to maintain all the pupils within the system, helping them and supporting them although they may be “critical” cases. However, it sometimes happens that in the process of building the community, some people are left out of the most direct spaces for interaction. For some, the school community is a closed system they cannot enter because they do not know or manage all of the codes or relationships that favour their integration. In these cases, the community is transformed into “moral pressure” which children, parents, and even teachers do not feel capable of tolerating and resign or feel expelled from the organisation. This is a complex problem as the effects for those concerned are deeper than a mere change of school.

In the current debate, the bishops of Chile defend the principle of liberty of educational projects, which can be taught by ministerial, municipal, and private bodies. For this reason, they say that “the faculty of conceding the privilege and the exclusivity of education of the poor cannot be granted to any educational sector, not even the State, without jeopardising important rights.” Education is a public service and all schools—independent of whether they be public or private—have a public character and should respond to society for the work they do.¹⁹

The experiences analysed demonstrate that the quality of education of the poorest sectors of society does not depend on who offers the service or manages the school, but is rather based on the educational plans and the directions which order the pedagogical practices inside the school and its practices with families and the community. In this way there are anthropological groundings of educational proposals which should be present in the discussion of current policies. As the bishops point out “in such a plural world, the concept of person and his/her dignity should be the starting point and ethical basis of any educational dialogue.”²⁰ For this reason, the discussion on effective schools in the context of poverty is not only a technical problem or a problem of teaching ability, it is also, fundamentally, a discussion on the concept of person and the direction of public education. The calling of the school is to integrate and dignify people in a society that is socially divided and constantly changing.

Catholic education in the country appears to be heterogeneous. For 28% of the pupils in Catholic schools, registration is free, which contributes to improve access to quality education for the poorest sectors (Passalacqua, 2006). These

¹⁸ A student with bad marks is supported by the teachers in the case of a child who follows the principles of the school, who makes the effort to improve, who participates in school activities and whose parents are concerned, and committed to the operation of the school. On the other hand, a child with average marks but a constant lack of discipline, indifference to extra-curricular activities, a lack of respect towards the teachers and parents who does not cooperate could be expelled from the school. It is worth mentioning that expulsion is not usual in these schools.

¹⁹ Comité Permanente de la Conferencia Episcopal de Chile. *Educación, familia y pluralismo*. Santiago, 17 julio 2006 Ref. Cech: 247 / 2006.

²⁰ Comité Permanente de la Conferencia Episcopal de Chile, 2006 op. cit.

establishments, as well as the academic offer they provide, are indeed considered as prestigious, and are highly recognised within the society, as it has been illustrated earlier in this article.

However, the mere fact that Catholic schooling is considered as a better-quality education is not enough. It is important but, as stated by Gerald Grace in his article “First and Foremost the church offers its educational service to the poor,”²¹ it is also necessary to assess the meaning of Catholic education and to evaluate to which extent it contributes to modify social inequalities existing in the country and to form individuals endorsing values of social justice.

In the 1960s, under the influence of the Medellín Conference, Catholic education used to promote a liberating education, with a strong emphasis on the development of educational communities and social integration.²² Besides, several informal experiences of Catholic education, inspired by Paulo Freire, joined base community movements in what would be called popular education.

Nowadays, the socio-cultural pattern is different in Latin American countries. Increasingly, societies are integrated into the global economy, and the market appears as a regulatory factor and a mechanism for social integration. However, the promises of growth and social equity remain unkept for the majority of the poor population in the country and the region. Inequalities have grown, and the states have shrunk in size and ability to regulate and induce changes. In this context, Catholic education requires new practices and a renewed vision of education in order to contribute to reducing inequality and bringing together distant social groups.

To achieve these goals, quality education for the poorest is a first and essential step. In today’s society, knowledge and cultural capital provided by education are key factors to social mobility.²³

However, quality education does not boil down to a mere cognitive achievement. In different opportunities, the Church has emphasised the anthropological reductionism of a vision of education which restrains the pedagogic task to teaching academic topics and preparing human capital for the market.

Accordingly, the current main challenge is to contribute to a change of paradigm in educational policies and in the meaning of education. Regarding the paradigm, it is necessary to promote comprehensive debating processes in order to convert the quality of education into a common good. It requires favouring policies guaranteeing quality education and social integration. In this view, the collaboration of the public and private sectors, on the basis of mutually agreed goals and control mechanisms, appears to be fundamental. But a change in the deep meaning of education needs also to be promoted. Indeed, Catholic education

²¹ Grace, G. (2003). First and foremost the church offers its educational service to the poor: class, inequality and catholic schooling in contemporary contexts. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 13(1).

²² Latin American Episcopal Council, Final Document of the Medellín General Assembly, 1968.

²³ According to national ratings (SIMCE), pupils from the lowest quintiles studying in Catholic schools show better learning skills than similar pupils in non-Catholic schools (Passalacqua, 2006).

should form individuals able to build a social order fairer for everyone and more human, and schools with Catholic identity should be the expression of a type of education centred on the individual and his development. "Accordingly, it is about (...) going against the stream and teaching within the value of solidarity, against the praxis of exacerbated competition and individualized benefit."²⁴

This is the second great contribution in the new national and regional context. It involves an action inducing the elaboration of a new paradigm of public education, understood as education for all and of everyone, with a focus on social cohesion and the formation of individuals according to their integral development.

Agenda for Future Research

Many other challenges exist from the point of view of the research. In the country, there is little educational research and there is no relation with the resources invested or the importance of the policies. The training of teachers and researchers in education will be a key task for institutions of higher education for a long time to come.

It is necessary to deepen the knowledge we have about effective schools, and particularly, those that work with the poorest sectors of society. In Latin America, and particularly in our country, this line of research is recent and underdeveloped. The studies conducted apply the models of developed countries and the measurement tends to focus on the aspect of learning. Studies that get back to the reality of our countries, characterised by severe social inequality and cultural diversity, should be carried out.

It is important to develop an integral concept of the quality of education. This requires, at the same time, the development and validation of new indicators of achievement. Cognitive indicators predominate in the assessment of schools and public policies which reduces the educational quality of the learning of subjects. There is a lack of indicators which take into account the formation of the person and the achievements related to cultural integration and social participation.

In our country there is a wide space for the Catholic school and the State does not limit its development. The experiences of working in networks, the creation of strong educational communities and the interaction with families constitute contributions of Catholic education which merit deeper study. Their conclusions, without a doubt, will be a contribution towards the achievement of a quality education for all and not only for a few.

²⁴ Vargas, H. (Obispo de Arica). *Acerca de la identidad de la educación católica*. Ponencia presentada en el Primer Congreso Nacional de Educación Católica Santiago de Chile, 18 de Octubre de 2006. <http://www.congresoeducacioncatolica.cl/docs1.html> (Retrieved December 10, 2006).

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION, STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ARGENTINA

Ana María Cambours de Donini and Carlos Horacio Torrendell

Introduction

The pastoral work of the Catholic Church in the field of education in Argentina has a long history which can be traced back to the colonization of the territory by the Spanish Crown. In the context of this long and rich tradition, we notice nowadays situations of qualitative and quantitative progress and regression according to the levels of the educational system, the relations between different types of educational institutions¹—of the State and of the civil society²—and the situation of the dioceses, the religious congregations, the Church movements, and so on, which are worth considering in this chapter. This heterogeneity, and its historical roots, has not yet been studied exhaustively by the research centers of the Catholic Church in Argentina. Thus, the analysis and perspectives which

¹ In Argentina the traditional and ordinary use classifies educational institutions into *public* and *private*. Public institutions are those governed by any of the State levels—national, provincial, or municipal—whereas private institutions are non-state-governed. Private institutions can be for profit or non-profit. Non-profit institutions can belong to: (a) associations, cooperatives, trade unions or foundations, and (b) religious affiliated organizations and churches, including the Catholic Church. The *Federal Law of Education (Ley Federal de Educación)* N° 24.195, promulgated on April 29, 1993, establishes that all formal education is public, subdivided into state and privately managed. The *Law of National Education (Ley de Educación Nacional)* N° 26.206, promulgated on December 27, 2006, which repeals the former, keeps this same classification, though this is not stated explicitly. In any case, the traditional classification continues to be the most widely used.

² From our viewpoint, even if all formal education is public, it does not seem appropriate to reduce non-state education to education of private management. Thus we prefer the following classification:

- a. state-governed and state-managed public education;
- b. society-governed and society-managed public education—if founded and managed by members of the civil society—which can be subdivided into institutions of:
 - b.1. for-profit private initiative and management;
 - b.2. non-profit initiative and management of civil associations, foundations, cooperatives and trade unions;
 - b.3. non-profit initiative and management of religious affiliated organizations and churches. Obviously, Catholic education is placed within this group.

are nowadays shared by a number of main leaders of Catholic education are the results of partial reports, of observation, and of informal and sporadic studies, as well as of the exchange of experiences of educational leaders. As it will later be explained, there have not been any sustainable policies for the elaboration of systematic studies in the field. This restricts the picture of the situation and, as a logical consequence, the scope of this chapter.³

Nevertheless, with these considerations in mind, we have collected the scarce existing information in order to serve the purpose of the Handbook. Our intention has been to present the development of Catholic Education, from its origins to the present day and to conclude considering some of its future challenges in Argentina, within the context of the secularization process of the Argentine society. To achieve our goal, we have focused on three relevant matters:

1. The relations among Catholic education, the State and the civil society
2. Popular education
3. The development of educational research

Thus, we will provide some elements to understand the historical development of Catholic education in Argentina, its current features, and coming perspectives.⁴

Catholic Education, State and Civil Society: A Historical View

From the beginning of the Colonial period, the relations among the State, the Catholic Church and the civil society regarding education have been characterized by a strong role of the State. In some occasions, the State behaved as an ally of the Church; in others as a contender or, at least, as an uncomfortable competitor.⁵ According to our analysis and considering the different features of these relations, it is possible to identify four distinct “periods” in this relationship.⁶

The monopoly of Catholic education. The first period develops between the 16th century and the beginning of the 19th century and it is characterized by the close

³ It is worth noticing that the Catholic Church in Latin America requested in 1968 (*Documento de Medellín*, Part 4, N° 25), within the context of the world movement for public policy planning, that local churches develop organic information systems for the decision-making processes. Nevertheless, in spite of the time elapsed, this challenge has never been taken consistently and firmly by the Catholic Church in Argentina. This must be understood in a country which has little culture in the research and circulation of reliable information, especially in the educational system. Since the 1990s, this problem has started to partially reverse, thanks to State statistics, the work of research centers and other initiatives arising from Catholic institutions. Nevertheless, these results have not yet been valued or used by the ecclesiastical authorities. This issue will be developed further below.

⁴ We specially thank the discussions and contributions of Carlos E. Ezcurra J.D., colleague of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, which substantially improved this chapter.

⁵ The great majority of the Argentine population regards itself as Catholic. According to the last survey of the National Statistics and Census Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos –INDEC–) 87.2% of the Argentine population (38,200,000) declared itself Catholic.

⁶ For an overview of the history of Argentine Catholic education: Albergucci (2000), Furlong (1957), Martínez Paz (1979), Morduchowicz (1999), Ramallo (2002) and Sánchez Márquez (1998).

relations between the State and the Church. The Spanish Crown undertook to evangelize and civilize the peoples of America. Moreover, due to the “Patronato” (Patronage),⁷ the Monarchs governed the Church directly in America though on the most important decisions they had to come to an agreement with the Holy See. Therefore, there was no separation between Church and State. Within this context characterized by a religious monopoly encouraged by the State, all colonial education was Catholic: there was no freedom of religion and it was illegal to teach other religions or atheist or agnostic ideas. In the territory which later became Argentina, the development of education was much slower than in the central regions of the Spanish empire in the Americas, such as in Mexico and Peru. During the Hispanic period, Argentina—which would later become worldwide famous for their agricultural and livestock richness—and Chile were considered *finis terrae*, a remote possession of lesser economical and political significance. It was only when the Portuguese Crown started to expand its Brazilian borders toward the South (current Uruguay) that Spain in 1776 granted the region the status of Viceroyalty of the River Plate. Buenos Aires, a city founded for the second time in 1580, naturally became its capital and acquired political importance only near the dawn of Argentine independence (1816). The poverty of the land was renowned and in comparison with other pre-Hispanic civilizations did not have relevant native cultures or cities. Moreover, its indigenous populations were divided into numerous but small nomadic groups without any sort of unified command and power.

The native’s education was limited to the elementary level unless they were admitted to ecclesiastical life. Contrary to what happened in other regions of the empire, the region lacked secondary schools for the native elites simply because there were no civilizations considered of significant development. In some cases the Crown submitted the native populations to “Encomiendas” or entrusted them to the famous Jesuit Missions in Paraguay which were founded through the colonial State. The political and social aim of these actions was always the same: to settle the natives in a territory—to sedentarize, to Christianize, to “civilize”, or “Europeanize”, to make them economically productive and subject to the Crown.

On the other hand, the education of the Spaniards and their descendants—including the “mestizos”—was organized according to the Catholic European school model. Only the colonial State could foster, order, and authorize the establishment of any type of educational institution. In all cases, the foundation of schools was financed or supported by the State. In 1622, the Jesuits founded

⁷ In general terms, this legal institution lied in the ecclesiastical right or benefit which the Holy See conveyed to any who would build, found or endow a church to present or nominate a person who would benefit of the usufructs, for example, the priest responsible of the administration of the church, who would then be appointed officially by the Pope or the Bishop. In Hispanic America patronage outgrew itself to the point of reaching most of the aspects of ecclesiastical government, including the control and policy of all education levels. This fact caused permanent tensions among the different parties involved (Crown, Church, and civil society). See Zuretti (1972) and Di Stefano and Zanatta (2000).

the University of Córdoba and were also entrusted the secondary schools in the cities of Córdoba, Santa Fe, and Buenos Aires. Moreover, the Society of Jesus also managed all the diocesan seminaries in the region. The other religious orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, Mercedarians—also run secondary schools for their novices and occasionally received other students. Finally, the elementary education was in the hands of monasteries, the King's Schools (*Escuelas del Rey*)—dependent on the “Cabildos”—⁸ parish schools, and individual teachers. In all cases these schools would always include the teaching of the catechism.

The general balance of the period shows that the school population was scarce and that the illiteracy rate was very high—more than 80%—due to the territorial difficulties but also consistent with the characteristics of the time. Until they were expelled in 1767, the Jesuits led the secondary and university educational offer. Their departure strongly weakened the region's education as a whole though other orders and the secular clergy were called to replace the Jesuits. The colonial educational system, like the rest of the administration, was decentralized. During this period, the Church, through its different agents, had a prominent role in educational matters, but we must not forget that education was always fostered, authorized, and financed by the State. Additionally, the Regalist ideas⁹ which strengthened even more in Spain with the arrival of the Bourbons in the 18th century also implied more extensive prerogatives of the State over the Church and the conscience of the faithful.

Tensions between Catholic education and the State. The second period extends from 1810 to 1880. The main political highlights of the period are the following: in 1816, Argentina became independent and started a period of political turmoil which would begin clearing with the Constitution of 1853 and would end definitely with the consolidation of the national State in 1880. The Constitutional Assembly of 1813 (*Asamblea Constituyente del Año XIII*) is also a relevant turning point as it proclaimed the freedom of religion. Consequently, immigrants of other Christian denominations first and free-thinkers later founded their own schools and broke the Catholic monopoly on education. Bourbon Regalism that had strongly affected not only the political authorities but also the local ecclesiastical authorities entered the new independent state as a “National Patronage”.¹⁰ The ecclesiastical and political consequences of these developments were: (a) The national State and the preexisting Provinces, due to the lack of communication with Rome and the influence of the Gallicanism, exerted their power over the life of the Church and its schools. (b) As the national State and the Provinces still considered themselves Catholic, the numerous provincial primary schools were also Catholic. In higher education, for instance, the University

⁸ A specific Spanish colonial municipality or City Hall.

⁹ The Regalism affirms that the Crown attributes on ecclesiastical issues are inherent to the exercise of its sovereignty and therefore not dependent on pontifical concessions (Di Stefano & Zanatta, 2000, p. 52).

¹⁰ The “*Patronato Nacional*” was the new national legal instrument empowering the state to assume the ecclesiastical privileges of the Spanish Crown.

of Buenos Aires (UBA), founded by the same Province in 1821, had a Department of Sacred Sciences (Catholic). (c) However, the situation was less than uniform: the new university had an atmosphere of academic freedom and the national secondary schools founded by a strong state initiative after 1860 would not impart any religious teaching. The picture of education at the time shows that complex, incoherent, and ambivalent situations and ideologies were coexisting.

During this phase, it was made evident that the Provinces wished to acquire a greater role in the provision of elementary education. Nevertheless, the country and its provinces experienced alternatively periods of peace and political stability with political turmoil and civil war. During times of prosperity, the Provinces created schools, hired teachers, and the student enrollment increased; but whenever the money allotted to education was reduced and gratuity restricted due to political unrest the society and Church-managed schools improved their enrollment in detriment of state education (Newland, 1992). At any rate, this period showed a parallel and gradual increase of educational institutions belonging to the Catholic Church, to other sectors of civil society and to the State at its different levels. Since 1860 the national and provincial administrations experienced an important growth and progressively imposed itself as the major education provider of the country. In this context, the new Centralist State understood itself as “educator” and regarded the non-state education as of a relative value, but nonetheless submitted to its power. At the same time, many Catholic leaders thought that the weakness of society and the Church justified a key and direct engagement of the State in education. The difference was that for the secular liberals the State had to be, by its own right, educator as well as neutral in religious matters. Conversely, for the Catholic liberals, the State had to assume education in a subsidiary and temporary way as long as the Church and civil society could not undertake this task; but since the vast majority of the country’s population was Catholic so should be the state-governed schools too. Moreover, for the former, the rising national State had to be the main responsible for education and exert this power in a centralistic way. For the latter, the national State’s educational mission was to promote the progressive responsibility of the municipalities, provinces, civil society, and the Catholic Church itself.

The “Educator” State and the growth of Catholic education. The third period starts in 1880 and ends in the middle of the 20th century. The national State imposes itself over the provinces and obtains profuse resources to discipline society. The secular liberalism settles itself in the national State and sanctions that state-governed schools will no longer be confessional but neutrally religious. This was put into practice by several provinces but not by all of them. Simultaneously, the national State doubles the number of primary and secondary schools throughout the country. Furthermore, it nationalizes all universities founded by the provinces and prevents the foundation of non-state universities. The central State successfully leads a process of massive school attendance placing Argentina at the forefront of Latin America. The progress of enrollment during this stage shows that: at the university level, all the enrollment remains in the state system, either provincial or national; at the secondary level, the enrollment of society-managed schools—most of which

are Catholic—increases from less than 10% to a steady 25%; and at the primary level, society-managed schools—most of them Catholic too—start the period with an enrollment close to 30% which shrinks to a 7% (Morduchowicz, 1999). Though it was a period of substantial quantitative expansion of Catholic institutions, the state-governed institutions increased even more.

Between 1880 and 1950, the social and academic prestige is clearly placed in state-governed education. The non-state-governed educational institutions, with some exceptions, had fewer resources, paid lower salaries and served the needy or the students with weaker academic performances. State-governed education clearly turned to be non-confessional though at the end of this period—in a postliberal ideological context—Catholic religious education was introduced in state-governed schools. This lasted just for a short time: from 1943 to the beginning of 1950. In short, this phase shows a leading role of the national State in all aspects, the strengthening of laicism—with a short discontinuity by the end—and an important deployment of Catholic schools with a greater proportional impact at the secondary level—even if these institutions could not compete with the state educational initiative. By the end of the period, after three decades of regaining space with respect to secular liberalism in all aspects of social Argentine life, the Catholic Church organized itself and achieved two major accomplishments. The first, quite ephemeral: the return of religious education to state-governed schools. The second, with a long-lasting duration: the state financing to non-state-governed schools, a fact which also gives the way to the following period.

The consolidation of freedom of education and the Catholic education subsystem. The fourth period runs between the mid-1950s and the beginning of the 1990s. In these years for the first time the Church obtains a major economic support from the national State not only for Catholic education but also for all schools of social initiative. The funding would be assigned for the payment, in total or in part, of the teacher's salaries. The degree of assistance would be proportional to the tuition fees charged by each school. This support arrives simultaneously with the progressive deterioration of state-governed education, the decay of the Welfare State and the rise of cultural pluralism, all of which turns the task of a central administration more difficult and fosters the quantitative and proportional growth of Catholic education in Argentina. Thus, non-state-governed secondary schools grow from 25% to 30%, non-state-governed primary schools increase from 7% to 20%. These increases are even most relevant in a context of total inclusion of the primary level and nearly an 80% of the secondary level. In this way, the Church obtains a new configuration of the State's role which assumes—partially at the least—a subsidiary function in education but still keeping a central position. Conversely, all state-governed education becomes irreversibly non-confessional. Another important success of the Church—of which the non-Catholic sectors of civil society were beneficiaries—is the state recognition of the freedom to found non-state-governed universities for the first time in history. Immediately, the Jesuits founded the “Universidad del Salvador” in 1956 and the Catholic Bishops founded the “Universidad Católica Argentina” in 1958. At the same time, other society-managed universities were founded. Nowadays, there are more than 40. However, this achievement had a price: contrary to what

happened at other levels of the system and to mitigate the rage of the numerous supporters of Statism in education, non-state universities would not receive any state funding. This lack of public resources, worsened by the gratuity of most state universities which implies, even today, the need to fix low fees for non-state universities, has a negative impact on the development of full-time faculty staff, postgraduate programs and long-term research projects.

This period shows a quantitative increase of Catholic education at all levels. The Church makes a definitive option in its educational policy: to develop an own subsystem outside the State's but with its support in the context of a plural society. The freedom of education is boosted not only by the opening of more non-state universities, but also because the gradual regulations of the lower educational levels promote more autonomy of the schools of social initiative. The Catholic Church was also able to consolidate the National Council of Catholic Education (Consejo Superior de Educación Católica—Consudec) founded in 1925. It is in this phase that Consudec acquires full splendor becoming a genuine coordinator of the pastoral action in the field of education and an excellent negotiator with the national State.¹¹ Catholic education will reach its high point in 1985 with a Church doctrinal document—theological, anthropological, political, and historical—widely appreciated both by Catholics and non-Catholics for its post-conciliar and pluralistic perspective: *Education and life project (Educación y Proyecto de Vida)*.¹² The text has been extensively used for the elaboration of institutional projects of Catholic schools in Argentina. It also became a key instrument for the Catholic participation in the public debate during the National Pedagogic Congress (1984–1988), which was organized by the national State to reach social consensus on central educational issues after the country's return to democracy. In spite of the many internal problems that rose in the Church after Vatican II, possibly this period was the richest for Catholic education both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Current Situation

We can affirm that the 1990s mark the beginning of the current period for Catholic education in which a new configuration of the State, Church, and civil society relations was framed. Firstly, the national State initiated an educational reform which, under the influence of international organizations and neoliberal ideology, promoted a radical deconcentration of the national educational system. Therefore, the national State schools and the subsector of social initiative educational institutions under state supervision were transferred to the provincial jurisdictions within a few years. This process not only led to a number of general equity problems but

¹¹ Consudec also provides Catholic schools with doctrinal, legal, technical and pedagogic assistance through a periodical journal and important professional meetings (Annual Conference for Head Teachers —Curso de Rectores).

¹² Document issued by the Catholic Bishops Education Commission (Equipo Episcopal de Educación Católica) of the Argentine Conference of Catholic Bishops (Conferencia Episcopal Argentina).

also specifically generated a radical change in the relations between the Church and the State. Catholic education no longer had to deal with one counterpart, but with each one of the 24 provincial administrations. The change blurred the role of Con-sedec and enhanced the function of the provincial Catholic Education Councils (Consejos de Educación Católica). Deconcentration, alternatively, did not mean a true decentralization since the provinces reiterated the traditional centralism of the national State, now replicated in each territory, with lower professional level, lesser economic resources, and a greater eagerness of control.

In contrast, as never before, many non-Catholic sectors of society—within a more pluralistic and secularized environment—developed a steady trend to create educational institutions, most of them non-confessional. Confessional and non-confessional universities, many of them of high prestige, multiplied, and began to compete with traditional Catholic universities that were used to receiving students without any recruiting effort. Moreover, in recent years, the post-secondary technical–professional education also increased hand in hand with non-Catholic social initiatives, which also created—at slower pace—preschools, primary and secondary institutions. The following chart summarizes the current quantitative situation of Catholic schools within the different levels of the educational system in terms of student population.

Catholic education incidence in the Argentine educational system¹³

	Number of students in Catholic institutions	Catholic education enrollment rate within education of social initiative (%)	Catholic education enrollment rate within the education system (%)
University level	80,000	38	5.5
Post-secondary higher education level (technical- professional and teacher's training institutions)	60,000	27	12
Secondary level	270,000	61	20
Primary level	890,000	84	14
Preschool level	195,000	51	15
Total	1,495,000	66	14

¹³ These data are approximate and have been calculated by the authors of this chapter using the following resources: the *2004 Annual Projection (Proyección Anual 2004)* by the National Statistics and Census Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos—INDEC), and *2004 Annual Survey (Relevamiento Anual 2004)* by the National Bureau of Information and Assessment of Educational Quality (Dirección Nacional de Información y Evaluación de la Calidad Educativa—DINIECE). We would like to express our gratitude to Lorena Fernández Fastuca, researcher of the Research Center on Education (Centro de Investigaciones en Educación—CIE) of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina for searching and compiling this information.

In brief, within a framework of deterioration and dispersion of state-governed education, deepened by the impact of the recent socioeconomic crisis in 2001, Catholic education had a weaker impetus than non-confessional education in the growth of the social-initiative education subsector. Based on information gathered from quantitative surveys, formal and informal meetings with Catholic leaders and visits to institutions we can trace the state of affairs of the Catholic education in Argentina. Firstly, as most of the religious congregations are undergoing a wane in the last years they have been forced to transfer the control of their institutions to lay people or dioceses. This is one of the reasons why parish-institutions have proliferated within the Catholic education. The current situation also brings a new challenge to the secular clergy, which until not so long ago, was rarely involved in school management. It should be highlighted that parish-institutions generally serve the popular sectors of society. This change also implied a greater participation of lay people, although in many cases their doctrinal and spiritual formation was insufficient. In this context a strong process of secularization within Catholic schools is evidenced, among other things, by a basically emotional and rarely consistent catechetical teaching. In third place, the 2001 crisis in Argentina awakened a greater solidarity and social awareness in Catholic schools, which translated into numerous projects of service-learning. At the same time it encouraged Consudec and Catholic schools in general to endorse with stronger conviction the student formation for political and social participation (Cambours de Donini, 2003, pp. 78–79).

Another situation evidenced by a recent research (Ocampo, 2004) shows that educational institutions frequently transmit a partial religious vision which is associated to their corresponding social group. This generates very different ways of understanding the Gospel message in each stratum, something which does not promote social integration, rather the opposite. Ideology and social belonging brings an internal fragmentation of the Catholic faithful which is hard to overcome. This also hampers the formation of social awareness in the elites attending Catholic schools. Finally, our universities show that theology, Christian philosophy, and the social teaching of the Church fail to question and to integrate into the scientific curriculum. Often the curriculum is also ideologically biased, generating an “academic schizophrenia” naturally received and accepted by the student population, as it also happens in other countries. Therefore, the Catholicism becomes a ritual and spiritual veneer which impacts personal, family, and social morality to a lesser or a greater extent. Professionals and scholars who graduate from the Catholic universities do not attain, generally, a first coherent synthesis between faith and life and faith and culture.

Popular Education

In order to refer to *popular education* in the context of the Argentine Catholic education, it seems appropriate to consider first the historical evolution of the concept of “popular education” in Latin America. In the late 19th century, when

politicians and intellectuals talked about popular education, they would refer to the need of expanding the educational system to include the poor social sectors: the majority of Argentine Creole population (*criollos*) born in these lands, both urban and rural, the immigrants' children and the natives, in order to integrate them to the cultural and economic benefits of the new society.¹⁴ The consolidation of the national States and the achievement of culturally integrated societies required an appropriate schooling system to “educate” the people in order to make true citizens (Martinic, 1992). In this sense, Dominzo F. Sarmiento – the “father” of Argentina common education and the country's 4th president would use the expression “to educate the sovereign”.

Within this context, there was a decisive contribution from the many European religious congregations which settled in Argentina in the late 19th century, whose main mission was to serve the needs of the disadvantaged. In a more specific sense, during the first 20 years of the 20th century, the social concern of the Argentine Catholics in favor of the emerging working classes led to the birth of associations such as the worker's guilds, the Christian Democrat League (*Liga Demócrata Cristiana*) and the Argentine Social League (*Liga Social Argentina*). Their aim was to educate the social leaders and popular sectors in the social Christian doctrine and its praxis (Auza, 1984). In the rest of Latin America, the term “popular education” also acquired a deeper meaning referred to the educational initiatives developed inside the newly born worker movement. Therefore, popular education was associated then with practices that promoted alternative values and knowledge, in contrast with those taught in traditional elitist schools, and with the shaping of the popular groups' identity.

More recently, however, it is not the target group that defines the term “popular education” but rather a particular educational perspective inspired by the thought of Paulo Freire. The movement for adult education and literacy achieved great importance during the 1970s in various countries of the region, introducing a vision which understood education as “liberating”, “dialogical”, “consciousness-raising”, “critical”, “participative”, “Latin-American”, and stressing the social need of the “integration of autochthonous cultures” (Libanio, 1989). These and other associated ideas gave popular education a new political meaning that was incorporated and critically analyzed in several Inter-American Conferences of Catholic Education called by the Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education (*Confederación Interamericana de Educación Católica—CIEC*) (Iantorno, 1992a, b). The theme of the 1986 Inter-American Conference that took place in Buenos Aires was “Education of the people through its culture”. Moreover, the VI Conference of Catholic Education, organized by the Consudec in 1988, had for the first and last time a session to study the problems of popular education in Argentina.

In Argentina, like in other Latin American countries, the Church's educational mission and the help to the needy—which is part of its charitable tradition—are

¹⁴ José Manuel Estrada (1842–1894), a well-known Argentine Catholic author, developed this vision in his work *Memoria sobre la educación común en la Provincia de Buenos Aires* published in 1870.

shown through the multiplication of orphanages and the expansion of educational institutions. Consequently, we can affirm that, in the first part of the 20th century, the educational and social action of the Church related to the popular sector was not merely an adaptation to the system: it made a critical reading of the social conditions of the people through the social teaching of the Church. This interpretation was principally oriented to criticize the liberal capitalism and its abuses, and, at the same time, to fight against anarchism, communism, and socialism all of which were competing with the Church to attract the popular sectors. During the 1960s and 1970s, the critique would develop a different turn due to the post-Vatican II currents of thought and the Latin American Catholic Bishops Conferences (*Conferencias del Episcopado Latinoamericano*) of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) which encouraged a commitment for justice, the denunciation of the “structures of sin”, the “preferred option for the poor” and a “liberating education” for the Latin American peoples:

An evangelizing education assumes and completes the notion of liberating education with the following characteristics: educates for service; humanizes and personalizes; integrates itself with the Latin American social process; educates for Justice. (Puebla, 1979)

In the 1980s, popular education takes a broader meaning as the result of the crisis of the political and ideological systems and the establishment of authoritarian governments. Actors and social movements revalue culture and the everyday life of the popular groups and in this field actions are focused on the promotion of social transformation. These experiences are regarded as a special political practice aimed at the construction of an alternative culture (Martinic, 1992). Differently from other Latin American countries, experiences of popular education have not had a central position in the agenda of Argentine Catholic education, whose most representative official organizations—the Catholic Bishops Education Commission (*Comisión Episcopal de Educación Católica*) and even *Consudec*—have not incorporated this issue. Thus, the progresses and failures have been limited to movements connected with some religious congregations, such as Faith and Joy (*Fe y Alegría*), or with lay organizations like New Earth (*Nueva Tierra*), the Schools of the Agrarian Family (*Escuelas de la Familia Agraria—EFA*), and *INCUPO*, which, furthermore, undertake the task to train popular educators through the attendance to periodical workshops and seminars. The Paulo Freire Institute, whose activities started in Argentina some years ago, assumed as its mission to spread the thought of the Brazilian educator in dialogue with other currents and experiences of popular education. An area in which the action of the Church in the formation and training of popular leaders made a very rich and enlightening contribution is the Base Christian Communities (*Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*) and the Biblical Groups (*Grupos Bíblicos*) which were organized in many Latin American countries. In Argentina, although these groups are working in many dioceses, they have had neither a strong support nor visibility and influence in the pastoral and educational life of the country.

Nevertheless, is worth pointing out the initiative of the Sacred Heart Institute of Higher Education in Buenos Aires which, for many years, has been offering a Teacher's Training Program directed to popular educators. This has been a pioneering experience in the country since generally this training developed outside the formal system and through the initiative of social groups and communities.

During the 1990s, popular education acquires other characteristics. In most of the countries, democratic governments consolidate promoting, with different degrees of effectiveness, the people's participation in their development problems solution. This scenario presented new challenges to the popular education experiences which were carried out by Christian and non-Christian groups. Popular education had to improve its quality acquiring a greater pedagogic specialization and, as in many countries, assume some form of institutional organization. In some cases, it had to generate a working relationship with the State in order to achieve a more extensive and national coverage (Mealla, 2002). In others, the popular education experiences had to redefine their focus to continue the advancement of methodological innovation and the quality of the educational processes. Such challenges had, and still have, a series of theoretical and practical consequences which have modified the formal speech of popular education, its methods, and techniques and have added new topics to the discussion agenda.

Educational Research in Catholic institutions

A recently published exploratory research (Torrendell, 2004), shows a complete characterization of "Catholic educational research" in Argentina. This term is defined here as any study on education with basic scientific standards, theoretical or empirical, generated in Catholic institutions.¹⁵ In our country, the Catholic academic writing on education has a significant tradition dating back to the 19th century. Since then and until the 1950s, numerous essays and theoretical works dealt with the philosophical, political-legal and historical issues.¹⁶ Later there were further productions, but less flourishing. On the other hand, from the late 1960s to the onset of the 1970s, researchers gathered in the Education Research Center (Centro de Investigaciones Educativas—CIE) of the Society of Jesus carried out studies on sociology of education. This experience failed to consolidate due to the ideological conflicts of the time. Eventually, the educational research produced by Catholic institutions will resume during the 1990s, in spite of the many limitations, which will be referred to later.

¹⁵ This characterization does not disregard the work of Catholic researchers on other institutions. We have left their academic production aside because the Church cannot be responsible in any way for it unless an official Catholic organization supports it, something that does not really happen. On the other hand, there is no evidence of significant Catholic academic groups arising from the faithful or some sort of base communities in Argentina.

¹⁶ This academic activity may or may not have been developed in Catholic institutions.

However, before explaining the current situation, it is necessary to answer this question: why a socio-empirical educational research work could not develop, at least to a minimal degree, in Argentina as it occurred in other Latin American countries? As evidenced by historical research referred to the intellectual production of Catholic scholars (Zanca, 2006), the answer is related to two problems: firstly, in our country the Thomistic philosophy, which prevailed in the Catholic thought during the 20th century, stood openly against empirical research. This fact, together with the post-Vatican II ideological problems, strongly weakened the development of human and social sciences—with the exception, as already mentioned, of the historical production that already had a long tradition and was not regarded as suspicious—ideologically speaking. Secondly, the financing of the research on non-state institutions was extremely scarce. This problem has already been pointed out and will be dealt with later on.

How could the state of affairs of Catholic educational research be characterized? Currently, the Catholic institutions which generate some kind of research on education are: universities, pastoral organizations, teacher's training institutes, and other research centers. Catholic universities produce most of the research. However, these institutions are mainly oriented to "professional formation" more than to academic or research work. All of them have departments or areas of education which offer undergraduate degrees. Graduate studies on education—PhDs, master's, or specializations—are rare and academically very weak.¹⁷ A review of the staff of the departments of education of Catholic universities in Argentina reveals that just 5% of the faculty has doctoral degrees and only 20% has any graduate study. Since the 1990s, thanks to the general reform of the educational system which was implemented and to the enactment of the Higher Education Law (*Ley de Educación Superior* N° 24.521), which created the National Committee of Assessment and Accreditation of Universities (*Comisión Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria—CONEAU*); the universities have been under pressure to develop areas of research. This, however, has not exerted a strong influence due to the lack of tradition, financing and institutional academic policies. At present, universities keep some professors who are partially devoted to research, who carry out short-term projects focused on didactical, social, and institutional issues, related in many cases to problems within the same institution where the research project takes place. The financing of research and publications keeps coming from fees paid by students, which are generally quite low. In most recent years, the State has allowed non-state-governed universities—among which the Catholic universities are included—to

¹⁷ The only university that, compared to the rest, has given more PhDs in education (around 25) is the Catholic University of Córdoba, a Jesuit institution. This university is the national head office of the Latin American Network of Information and Documentation on Education (*Red Latinoamericana de Información y Documentación en Educación—REDUC*) founded by the Society of Jesus in Chile. The goal of the network is to strengthen the community of researchers in education and to produce and spread the relevant information to improve the educational systems in Latin America. It has developed an important regional database which includes research papers and publications.

receive state funding for research projects. Nevertheless, Catholic universities have submitted almost no projects in the area of education. Furthermore, in Argentina there is a national career for scientific researchers which depends and is funded by the National Council on Scientific and Technical Research (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas—CONICET). These researchers can be based both in state and non-state universities, and in other centers. This incentive has been disregarded by Catholic universities, especially in the field of education. Few researchers of CONICET belong to Catholic universities, for which reason not only this financing is lost but also the Council's social prestige, support, and accreditation. In terms of education publications, Catholic universities mainly edit texts to support undergraduate teaching; few books carry research outcomes. Only the Catholic University of Cordoba has a scientific journal, *Diálogos Pedagógicos (Pedagogical Dialogues)*, published since 2003. Finally, we would like to emphasize that in 2004, the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina created the Research Center on Education (Centro de Investigaciones en Educación—CIE). This initiative has gathered a group of junior researchers with the aim of training them and launch new topics of study. At present, the Center is developing a quantitative and qualitative study on Catholic teachers training in Argentina that may prove extremely useful.

The pastoral authorities and organisms of the Argentine Church are not really demanding research and have not produced any either. Only the Consudec publishes some relevant data in its Internet site as a first step towards a national census on Catholic education. However, this information and the used methodology results insufficient to reach scientific standards. Also the different commissions of the Catholic Bishops Conference related to education have not promoted or requested any research. This problem has been brought up in numerous meetings of these committees for some years now, but there has been no definition of policies or incentives.

State policies have also required Teachers Training Institutes to develop action research programs, rather than scientific research. Due to the disarticulation of this subsector, there is no reliable information as to the impact of this request. However, given the economic crisis of these institutions, the absence of state financial support, and the reduced number of publications, it is reasonable to think that efforts are very limited and have little scope.

The educational research produced in other Catholic centers is also very scarce and essay-like. The Center of Research and Social Action (Centro de Investigación y Acción Social—CIAS), again a Jesuit institution, has the Reflection and Educational Action Center (Centro de Reflexión y Acción Educativa—CRAE), which states that it develops research projects on three areas: educational quality and equity, values in the educational practice and educational management. CRAE is publishing its initial results in *Revista del CIAS*. Moreover, the Argentine Ecclesiastical History Board (Junta de Historia Eclesiástica Argentina—JHEA) is an institution which was created in the early 20th century by the Catholic Bishops. It congregates researchers devoted to the study of Church history, operates as an academy and publishes *Archivum*, a review which

periodically includes some research papers on Catholic education history.¹⁸ Finally, the *Servidoras* lead the Center of Philosophical and Cultural Anthropology (Centro de Investigaciones en Antropología Filosófica y Cultural—CIAFIC), associated and partially funded by CONICET.¹⁹ Some of its fields of research are philosophy of education and didactics of sciences. Undoubtedly, although it is barely known, this center has a relevant academic production. Within the Thomistic tradition pointed out at the beginning, its research is scientific and less essay-like. Furthermore, it has developed an important academic database on education.

Challenges and Perspectives

In the light of the historical development of the relations between the State, the Church and the civil society in the field of education and of the current state of affairs, characterized by a certain institutional confusion and weakness of Catholic education, we propose some challenges and lines of possible pastoral action.

Firstly, it is considered of great importance that Catholic education should become aware of the significance of educational research and scientific theoretical reflection. This is not an ornament or a luxury for Catholic education to enjoy after accomplishing its mission but the very impetus to reach its end. It is necessary to recover and update the theoretical tradition of the Catholic educational doctrine which should not be reedited within the perspectives of the past. Without abandoning tradition and Church magisterium, it is crucial to establish a dialogue with the contemporary philosophical currents. Furthermore, Argentine theology should begin to enlighten education, both scientifically and spiritually: up to the present, almost nothing has been made in this regard. This also implies connecting the social teaching of the Church with the equity, freedom, and quality problems at the different levels of the educational system. It is also vital to begin the study of the Catholic educational subsystem. The creation of a systematic and periodical survey system with relevant and reliable quantitative information is necessary. The development of socio-qualitative research should be set up in order to understand the identity problems of Catholic institutions—especially in the context of a secularized world, its relations with the different social strata, its institutional profiles, its successful experiences, etc. The didactical and disciplinary studies must be strengthened too. This body of research will allow a better grasp of the situation and also effectively help

¹⁸ The Center for Research and Promotion of Education (Centro de Investigación y Promoción de la Educación—CIPE) founded in 1962 by the Salesians closed recently. Its research focused on history of education, catechism, and psychology and educational psychology.

¹⁹ The CIAFIC does not officially recognize itself as a Catholic institution. However, we have included it here since the *Servidoras* is a feminine institute of apostolic life of pontifical right, founded in 1952 by Father Luis María Etcheverry Boneo, a priest of a great intellectual and spiritual predicament in Argentina.

institutions regarding their pedagogic, community, ecclesial, social and management concerns. Additionally, such an initiative will train young researchers and educational leaders more efficiently to fully undertake their Christian identity, in an open but critical dialogue with the world.

Secondly, it is necessary to rethink the educational pastoral work of the Church, revitalize organizations such as Consudec and encourage Catholic educational community networks towards pedagogic and pastoral innovation. Last decade's education system deconcentration requires different *ad intra* and *ad extra* Church strategies and articulation. These organizations should also support the dioceses, the religious congregations, and the ecclesial movements to make a real effort to identify the locations and organically plan the establishment of new Catholic institutions. A policy restricted to passive survival is impracticable. Thus, it is necessary to highlight the valuable institutions, to transfer and socialize the most significant experiences. To achieve these results it is also essential to promote the search of financial resources to support Catholic education, something the Church was able to do in the past. In this sense, the Church should organize itself in order to obtain state funding for its research projects and the training of doctoral students. There is no serious research project in the world that does not use these resources.

Thirdly, there is another challenge for the Argentine Church: to renew the evangelization of the lower social strata as well as the medium and higher ones. To reach the disfavored sectors further to multiplying popular education and the preschools and primary schools, it has to strengthen its attention to the technical-professional education at the secondary and postsecondary levels. There is a tradition of Catholic institutions in this area, although they have not been especially supported. Apart from this, there has been a significant loss in the field of higher education. As far as the medium and higher strata are concerned, it would be necessary to discuss how to develop social Christian awareness in an unfair and fragmented society. To achieve this, universities and high schools should reflect upon the critical analysis of neoliberalism—frequently incorporated as “common sense” by these social groups and of neo-Marxism and poststructuralism due to their strong presence in the human and social sciences. Without this critical purification it will be hard to promote an incarnated Christian humanism.

Finally, we need to summarily comment on the Catholic teacher's training carried out in postsecondary institutions and universities. The general assessment evidences that these establishments, especially the former, fail to generate accomplished graduates, as far as Catholic identity and professional excellence are concerned. Another pending challenge would be to improve the articulation of universities with postsecondary institutes to strengthen their academic and pedagogical performance.

As it has been evidenced in this chapter, Argentine Catholic education has a long and rich tradition which has been the result of a remarkable effort of several generations of educators and the generosity of hundreds of members of European religious congregations. The current state of affairs, consistent with

the general situation of the Church, is one of a disconcerting *impasse*, which does not imply a devaluation of the merits of these many people and institutions. However, a great deal of the past dynamism has been lost, and this is shown both qualitatively and quantitatively. Will the Argentine Church become aware of this situation? Will it be able to follow some of the innovative paths which have been considered here or others that might be also opened? Will the Church allow the Spirit of Truth and Love to enlighten her in the third millennium? The answer to these questions will probably be given many years from now by the future historians of Argentine Catholic education.

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SECTION THREE

**CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
IN EUROPE**

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS: ISSUES FACING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Aidan Donaldson

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

(Prov. 29: 18)

Questioning of Catholic Schools

It is no exaggeration to state that Catholic education in Northern Ireland today faces some very serious challenges. Not that there is anything unique or novel about this. The role and very existence of the Catholic schooling system has been questioned and contested by many powerful social forces since the first Education Act was enacted in Ireland in 1831. Such is the significance that education has played in Ireland over the last three centuries that almost every serious academic or even lightweight journalistic analysis of the “Irish problem” contains a section on or reference to the issue of Catholic schools; and not without good cause. In a divided society such as Northern Ireland, it is only natural and correct that the role of education should be closely scrutinised and monitored to assess how effective schools are in promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, and the common good. For some, Catholic schooling is an anathema and an anachronistic aberration, which should be consigned to the dustbin of history. Some educationalists and other academics have flocked to the side of those who suggest that if Northern Ireland is to become a pluralist, accommodating, and tolerant society at peace with itself, then it must embrace and foster educational visions and structures, which will help to deliver this inclusive society. For such thinkers this aspiration is synonymous with the promotion of the integrated sector. The (not always) unspoken corollary is that faith-based schools—specifically Catholic schools in the context of Northern Ireland—are in some way inferior, backward, and even dangerous in so far as they, so their critics claim, contribute to division and the continuation of sectarian attributes. The Professor of History

at University College Dublin, Roy Foster (1988), sums up this attitude when he asserts that “if the idea that antagonistic attitudes and cultural apartheid are sustained by separate schooling is a liberal cliché, it is a liberal cliché because it is true” (p. 21). Nor is such reasoning or secular marginalisation restricted to academics with an obvious interest in the Irish Question. In the *Times Educational Supplement* of 23 January 2001 the noted writer, atheist, and trenchant critic of religious belief, Richard Dawkins, makes a most serious claim that “sectarian religious schools serve only to promote prejudice, confusion and division ... [that] religious violence as seen in Northern Ireland schools is stoked by segregated schools ... [and that faith-based schools] can be deeply damaging, and even lethally divisive” (p. 17). Professor Dawkins, who views religion as a form of child abuse, recently reiterated these sentiments. When writing in the *Telegraph* of 8 October 2006, he expresses the belief that “it is not an exaggeration to say that the Troubles in Northern Ireland would disappear in a generation if segregated schooling were abolished.”

In the context of Northern Ireland the term “religious schools” is interchangeable with the term “Catholic schools” as it is only this sector which is referred to when the issue of faith-schools and socio-religious division is discussed. This in itself is highly significant and speaks volumes about how Catholic schools are viewed since *all* grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland are—and have been since the founding of the Northern Irish state—both de facto and de jure faith-based Christian schools as by law they have to provide religious education from a Christian perspective as part of the statutory curriculum. This is the position not only in the Protestant-controlled and Catholic-maintained sectors but also in the integrated sector and in the Irish-medium *Gaelscoileanna*.

Professor Gerald Grace (2003) takes issue with Dawkins’ accusation that the faith-based school system in Northern Ireland is a major causal factor in community conflict in that society. Grace points out that such claims are made without perceived need of evidential support based on objective research. According to Grace “such claims represent an ahistorical, decontextualised, and oversimplified view of the causes of such conflict” and that this amounts to “a form of intellectual prejudice (perhaps in some cases of ethnic and racial prejudice) where arguments are based upon distorted or partial knowledge” (p. 151).

Dawkins is not alone in making sweeping condemnations of faith-based schools without any need for substantive evidential support. Professor Julia Neuberger’s intervention into the debate on faith-based schools in Northern Ireland is another example of this type of reasoning. Speaking on Radio Ulster’s *Talkback* on 16 April 1997 at the opening of a new integrated school Baroness Neuberger, then Chancellor of the University of Ulster suggested that “evidence suggests that sectarian education is actively harmful. It can lead to sectarian tensions, as Northern Ireland has shown.”¹ Professor Neuberger then went on to demand that non-integrated schools should be

¹ These comments were carried the following day in the *Irish News* (17 April 1997).

deprived of all public funding. What evidence Neuberger was drawing her conclusions from remained undisclosed despite challenges from organisations such as the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) to produce it. What is of significance here, as in the case identified by Professor Grace in relation to Richard Dawkin's claims earlier, is that the received wisdom is so self-evidently true that it does not need to stand in defence from any objective research. And so this assault on faith schools continues unabated and has been articulated on numerous occasions on an increasing basis by a wide range of public figures including senior politicians such as the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the late Mo Mowlam, and Lord Baker, the former Education Secretary.²

Not that such attacks on Catholic schools are limited to academics and politicians. It seems that in today's increasingly secular society a breathtaking arrogance exists within some opinion formers, especially in sections of the media, who do not in any way feel constrained by a lack of wisdom, experience, research, or even basic knowledge when it comes to commentating on Catholic schools and their outcomes. No reputable editor would think of sending his/her football columnist to cover a flower show, nor would he/she request the political correspondent to do a report on tourism. Yet when it comes to commenting on issues concerning Catholic schools in Northern Ireland everyone—including many who have never read a single teaching of the Church in relation to education or studied a single report of the effects of faith-based schooling on academic, personal, or social outcomes—appears to be an expert on the subject and certainly does not feel constrained by ignorance, lack of knowledge, or even humility. In the context of the politically charged nature of Northern Ireland such unsubstantiated assertions and the use of ideological language such as “educational apartheid,” “sectarian schools,” etc.—ironically coming from those who claim to espouse inclusiveness, tolerance, pluralism, and the celebration of diversity—feeds into a mindset, which would carry such views beyond the theoretical or academic debate. After all, it is only five years ago that people throughout the world were shocked by images of primary school children—some as young as five years of age—being attacked in the most hideous manner by sectarian gangs as they walked to Holy Cross Primary School in Belfast. As police and media looked on, the girls, their parents, and the priests who accompanied them over a traumatic 12-week period were subjected to sectarian abuse, sexual taunts of the vilest nature, and pelted with stones, urine, and even a bomb. Curiously, many of those “liberal” voices who are among the most vocal and prominent supporters of integrated education were strangely restrained or even silent on the issue of the rights of the children of Holy Cross.³

² On Lord Baker's opposition to Catholic schools in Northern Ireland see Hansard Text for 18 July 2006 (1188).

³ On the Holy Cross dispute see the excellent work by Anne Cadwallader, *Holy Cross: The Untold Story* (2004).

Education in Northern Ireland, a Rich Diversity

The current schooling system in Northern Ireland, although relatively small, with around 340,000 students receiving statutory education involving 970 primary, 166 secondary (non-grammar and comprehensive), and 70 grammar schools, demonstrates a remarkable diverse range of schooling types and systems. According to the Department of Education the religious background of students attending grant-maintained schools in 2006 is as follows, 50.2% Catholic, 40.6% Protestant, 2.1% other Christian denominations, 0.3% other world faiths, and 6.8% no expressed/stated religion. In addition to the two main sectors—mainly the Catholic-maintained and Protestant-controlled/state, within which 94% of school pupils are educated—there also exists the small but growing integrated sector. This system—coordinated and promoted by the government-funded Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)—now educates approximately 18,500 pupils (5.3% of the total school population) in 27 primary and 17 secondary schools. Furthermore, the past few decades have witnessed the rise of the Irish-medium sector—*na gaelscoileanna*—with eight Irish-medium schools receiving government funding. In many ways this sector is similar to the Welsh language sector in Wales and *Gaelic* language schools in parts of Scotland, as well as, obviously, the Irish-medium schools in the Republic of Ireland. What marks the Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland off from the other examples of minority-language schools above is that in Northern Ireland this sector does not have the advantage of being established in an existing, long-standing, and predominant language community. In many ways the Irish-medium schools in Northern Ireland are leading a revival in the Irish language and not simply reflecting social, cultural, and linguistic practice. Furthermore, this sector is also not only parent-led but also community-supported and is strongest in working-class Catholic areas. Indeed, it seems that much can be learned for this small sector in relation to the importance of inspirational ideology and community involvement in the educative process. There are also ten independent Christian schools associated with the Free Presbyterian Church, which do not receive government funding due to their refusal to follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum, particularly in the areas of science and religious education.

Unlike the rest of the UK in which the educational reforms of the 1960s and 1970s abolished academic selection and replaced the grammar/intermediate divide with the comprehensive system, Northern Ireland still retains academic selection at post-primary level. This remains the method of transfer from primary to post-primary for approximately 90% of students in Northern Ireland, the remaining 10% avail of alternative transfer arrangements, usually of a local nature (Gallagher, 1995). Through this method of transfer approximately 40% of pupils in Northern Ireland are awarded a grammar place with the rest going to secondary schools.

Finally, Northern Ireland has a high degree of single-sex schools with more than 30% of students attending schools of a single gender. This figure tends to be higher in the Catholic sector in which religious orders such as the Christian

Brothers have traditionally educated young males—especially in working-class areas—and the Sisters of Mercy and the Dominican Order have done likewise with young females.

A Brief History of the Emergence of Formal Education in Ireland

From Penal Laws to the 20th Century

The earliest educational acts and laws concerning formal education and schooling in Ireland were directly linked to the aims and practice of the Penal Laws—the anti-Catholic laws and legal restrictions, which prevailed from the end of the 17th century until Catholic emancipation in 1829. The expressed purpose of these laws was to eliminate all forms of Catholic opposition to the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland with the destruction of the Catholic religion in Ireland as the ultimate goal. It was no accident that the framers of these restrictions identified education as a principal area of attention and means by which “the children of Popish natives may be so won by affectionate endeavours that the whole nation may become Protestant and English” and that the newly formed (1709) Charter Society Schools might “rescue the souls of thousands of poor children from the dangers of Popish superstition and idolatry and their bodies from the misery of idleness and beggary.”⁴ Significantly, not only did the very first set of Penal Laws contain the decree that “no person of popish religion may publicly teach or instruct youth” (Corish, 1981, p. 79)—along with stipulating penalties such as imprisonment and/or transportation for those who broke this law and disinheritance for those who were sent abroad to receive their education in Catholic systems in Europe—anti-Catholic legislation in the sphere of education actually remained in force in Ireland for more than a century after the end of the Penal Laws in 1795. Indeed, legislation proscribing or restricting the Catholic teaching orders such as the Christian Brothers remained in force until the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Little wonder that the historian P. J. Corish points out that, given the significance of the schoolteacher in society, “the law tried to suppress him perhaps even more completely than the priest” (p. 79).

History often throws up examples of nations and societies in which religion not only survives but also prospers under persecution. Ireland during this period is a case in point. The Education Act of 1831, which established a national school system for the first time in Ireland, can be seen as a watershed in the dispute between the Catholic Church and the authorities over education and certainly has lessons for today. The most significant and far-reaching statement in this area of contention was that made by E.G. Stanley, the Chief Secretary of Ireland, on the proposed aims of the new national education system. In a letter to the Duke of Leinster, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Stanley stated that “one of the main objects must be to unite in one system children

⁴ Cited Crilly (1995, p. 38).

of different creeds”⁵—an aim which emerges from time to time in the schooling debate and which today has found favour once again in the thinking of some extremely powerful elements of society. Despite the best efforts of the Church to come to an accommodation with the authorities on the new schooling system, in the hope of securing adequate conditions for the education of its children, it found itself continually let down. As McCann (1993) points out “at almost every turn . . . they were frustrated by sectarian prejudice and a pervasive proselytism” (p. 137). Furthermore, the religious ethos of the Catholic school was not recognised or accommodated under the 1831 Act with the crucifix and other devotional images, the making of the sign of the cross and other devotional prayers, as well as Catholic religious instruction and sacramental preparation banned in the National School system. More than five decades of intense struggle and sacrifice took place between the Church and the authorities ending, ultimately, in success for the Catholic Church. By 1883 the Church authorities had secured the right to train and appoint teachers, to exercise control over boards of management, to put in place programmes of study for religious instruction as well as management of its inspection, and have all restrictions of worship and symbols lifted. At last, it seemed, the education question in Ireland had been settled.

From Partition to the 21st Century

For 40 years this was, indeed, the case. However, the partition of Ireland and the creation of a northern (unionist-dominated) state in 1922 placed the education question back centre stage again. All of the gains secured by the Catholic Church in relation to the autonomy, funding, and ethos of Catholic schools, as well as the teaching and inspection of religion, had, once again, to be fought for. Successive education acts were aimed at undermining the position of the Catholic Church in the educational sphere. The 1925 and 1930 Education Acts effectively guaranteed Protestant clerical interests in the key areas of trusteeship, education committees, training and appointment of teachers, the right of access by clergy and religious instruction, and the display of signs and symbols. For the Catholic authorities, however, no such guarantees were given—in fact, the opposite proved to be the case as every aspect of school life and the education system reflective of Catholic interest and ethos—once again including the display of Catholic symbols—was denied to the Catholic authorities.

The price Catholics—especially the laity—had to pay for the provision of a Catholic education for their children was considerable indeed. Schools which refused to transfer to Departmental control—i.e., Catholic schools—found themselves considerably disadvantaged in relation to the receipt of both capital and non-capital recurrent costs. Catholic schools—and parishes—faced an enormous challenge as the Catholic authorities found their capital funding cut by half at the founding of the state, amended to 65% in 1947, 80% in 1968 and 85%

⁵ Cited Farren (1995, p. 3).

in 1975. Full capital funding for Catholic schools was only achieved as recently as 1994 after a series of studies carried out by the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights (SACHR, 1993). Parents who chose to send their children to Catholic schools had to accept that their children would experience an inferior physical school environment. Overcrowded classrooms, inferior quality of school buildings, poor heating, and lack of educational resources were among the many difficulties which the Catholic community had to endure.

Religious Education in Northern Ireland

Disputes over the display of religious symbolism in Catholic schools in the 1930s—contentious as it was—was not the sole or, indeed, even the major reason why the Catholic authorities found it difficult to transfer their schools to Government control at that time. During this period the issue of religious education (or “instruction” as it was then) became a barrier to the Church’s full participation in the education system. The right of religious instruction enshrined in the Education Act (NI) 1925 obliged all public-funded schools to provide simple Bible instruction based on the Holy Scriptures. This was interpreted by the Ministry (1925) as “excluding instruction as to any tenet which is distinctive of any particular denomination.” While this satisfied the Protestant state sector, with its different denominations and churches, the exclusion of faith-formation and sacramental preparation, as well as a failure to accommodate the distinctive Catholic view of the centrality of the spiritual in all aspects and areas of the curriculum and other parts of school life, proved impossible for the Church authorities to accept. According to David Harkness (1983) the implication—as well as the intention—of this clause “was to skate over one of the great dividing lines of the Reformation (the Protestant interpretation of Scripture by private judgement as opposed to the Catholic insistence upon a Church interpretation) so that to the Catholic community, the whole measure rendered that state school network, Protestant in character and inappropriate for Catholic children” (p. 80). The Catholic authorities, unsurprisingly, resisted such measures, and encouraged Catholic schools to follow a distinctive Catholic programme of religious education, which was (and is) monitored and supported by Church-appointed diocesan advisers. That it was able to do so lies in the peculiar fact that in Northern Ireland—unlike any other part of the UK—religious education is legally under the control of the four main Christian denominations (Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, and Methodist) and not the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. Furthermore, although Religious Education is a compulsory element of the Northern Ireland curriculum for all grant-aided schools, it is the Churches that proscribe and monitor the programmes of study in line with their respective denominational needs. In what was seen then as a dramatic and unprecedented move ten years ago, a core syllabus for Religious Education, drawn up by the main Christian Churches, was made compulsory for all pupils from September 1996. While the core syllabus is Christian in content, it is intended to comprise around half of the teaching time for RE, allowing schools

scope to include study about other world religions if they so wish, or to extend to any RE-related subject matter that the school considers relevant for its intake of pupils. This core syllabus has recently been revised by a Working Party set up by the Churches' leaders and its recommendations, approved by the Church leaders, have been accepted by the Department of Education. Significantly the Church leaders have recommended the new core syllabus will now include as a compulsory element, the study of other world religions. This in no way suggests that the Churches' leaders favour reducing religious education to a comparative study of world religions. The inclusion of the study of other major world faiths is fully in line with a Christian-based religious education programme and is the natural outworking of Christian engagement with others. Indeed Catholic schools in Ireland have long studied the beliefs other major world religions as well as the main Protestant denominations as an integral part of its religious education programmes. To do otherwise would be to compromise the Christian spirit of openness and ecumenism.

Before accepting the proposals of the Church leaders the Department of Education carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) upon them. This legal requirement seeks to ensure that all bodies receiving public funding must take into account age, religion, ethnic minority, and gender issues. The results of this EQIA were published by the Department in November 2006. In a key finding the Report (2006a) concludes that "very few of those responding to the consultation identified adverse impacts and most thought the proposals would promote good (social) relations" (p. 11). This conclusion is significant and challenges the secularist and humanist argument and perception that the majority of people in Northern Ireland view the teaching of religious education in schools there as exacerbating social and religious division.

Challenging Times for Catholic Schools

If one had thought that the issue of faith-based schools in Northern Ireland had been settled for the foreseeable future at least, one would have been seriously mistaken. Education in Northern Ireland is, once again, centre-stage as a number of different factors have come together at approximately the same time, which will undoubtedly have considerable impact on the future of the schooling system. A serious demographic downturn of student numbers, the vexed issue of academic selection, and a revised curriculum for post-primary schools—all of which are taking place in the context of an extensive review of public administration—has ensured that all schooling sectors face difficult challenges. For the Catholic education sector—with its distinctive ethos, practice, and structure—these challenges are not to be underestimated.

Falling Rolls

The number of students attending schools in Northern Ireland has been declining markedly over the last decade with currently 54,000 spare school places and a

projection of this rising to more than 80,000 by 2015—a considerable amount of spare capacity given that the current school population for Northern Ireland is approximately 340,000. Falling rolls present challenges to all sectors and clearly schools with small pupil numbers are under greatest pressure. In particular it is the smaller primary and post-primary (non-grammar) schools, which face the most serious problems. In the case of the latter it is the process of post-primary transfer by academic selection—i.e., the grammar system—which has exacerbated and augmented their problems. In reality the selection test, or “the eleven-plus” as it is commonly referred to, is not an objective academic examination; rather it is a means by which a certain quota of students fill a finite number of grammar school places. If the required quota of grammar places is not filled by students achieving the higher grades allocated through the selection test, the surplus is filled by students who have not achieved a top grade. The selection test enables the grammar sector always to fill its full quota of places and, increasingly, this results in the schools in the secondary sector competing against each other for the remainder of a much-reduced cohort. The negative effects on educating students who were deemed “failures” at the age of eleven was identified by The Northern Ireland Economic Council (1995), which highlighted “the apparent polarisation in attainment between grammar and secondary school leavers . . . [as] a result of the de-motivation of students who are assessed as academically less able because more able students, whose presence may help raise the attainment of less able students, are educated separately” (p. 73).

An End to Selection?

When the then Minister of Education for Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness, announced in June 2002 his decision to end academic selection as a means of transfer from primary to post-primary education in Northern Ireland from 2008 onwards, it seemed that this system would be consigned to the past. Immediately all within the education community examined the implications of such a decision. For many, including every major player in the Catholic sector including the trustees (bishops and religious alike), CCMS, the Catholic Secondary Teachers Association, and the Catholic Heads Association (the principals of the Catholic grammar schools), the idea of separating children in such a manner is unfair and unjust. Professor Martin O’Callaghan, the Principal of St. Mary’s University College Belfast and a leading cleric, states that “the issue of selection is a social justice issue. That truth cannot be avoided” (*The Irish News*, 5 March 2002). According to O’Callaghan selection “diminishes children’s life-chances, perpetuates social disadvantage and social division and advantages a minority of [richer] children.” He goes on to point out that the selection system contradicts official Church teaching on education contained in, for example, *The Catholic School* (1977), citing the relevant sections of this definitive work including paragraph 58, which stresses that education must work for a just society and put the needs of the poor first and foremost, and paragraph 62 which points out that education must work for the common good. The Catholic Bishops’ welcome to the main recommendation in the Report by the Post-Primary Review Body chaired

by Professor Gerry Burns in 2001 (generally referred to as *The Burns Report*)—that academic selection should be abolished—is indicative of a stance, which links education with justice, respect for human dignity, and the promotion of the common good. In addition to expressing their support for informed parental election rather than academic selection, the bishops concluded by stating their definitive vision of Catholic education. Given that it is this rich and value-based form of schooling that is under threat, it is worth quoting the bishops' vision in full,

The Catholic Bishops wish to contribute to the creation of a first-class educational system for all young people in Northern Ireland. A vision based on core principles such as community, forgiveness and justice enriches everyone. In a unique way, faith-based education corresponds to the deepest needs of the human heart and nourishes the human spirit. In education the sacred and the secular can be combined to the detriment of neither, and to the benefit of both. (Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, 2002a, p. 6)

The radical response by such a major constituency in education to the debate concerning the issue of academic selection had a huge impact. Effectively the trustees of the Catholic grammar schools endorsed the end of academic selection and the promotion of parental election. This was not done due to any pressure due to the Burns Report; rather it was seen as a visionary statement by the Catholic Bishops based on Gospel values and, especially, that of justice. CCMS immediately came in with an endorsement of the bishops' position as did the principals of the Catholic sector. Within the Governing Bodies Association (GBA) —the group which represents the interests of the grammar sector and which is made up primarily of the principals of the grammar schools—major division emerged as to how to respond to this proposal with the principals of the Protestant grammar schools on the one side wishing to retain academic selection, while the overwhelming majority of their counterparts on the Catholic side are advocating the opposite.

While it had been universally accepted that the final decision on selection had been taken by the 2002 announcement of its abolition in 2008, the crucial importance of the education debate in the politics of Northern Ireland has once again emerged, this time as a bargaining issue in the efforts to restore a devolved power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland. In an attempt to encourage Unionist politicians to go into such a form of government with their political opponents, *Sinn Féin*, the British Government placed the issue of selection back on the table again by promising that its abolition could be overturned if a reconvened Northern Ireland Assembly withheld cross-community support for its abolition. Given the opposition of the two main Unionist parties towards the abolition of selection, it seems highly likely that, following the establishment of a power-sharing administration in March 2007, Unionist parties will use their position to retain academic selection and secure the continued existence of the grammar sector. If this proves to be the case, the Catholic authorities will have to

decide whether they will accept the current unjust system or will they go ahead on their own to develop a schooling system that does not incorporate transfer by academic selection. This will require great vision, wisdom, and courage and will require considerable evidence from research that any new system of Catholic schooling is not only more just and in line with Gospel values and the model of Catholic education but also does not leave its students disadvantaged academically compared with those who attend grammar schools.

The Revised Curriculum

In addition to the challenges outlined earlier the education system in Northern Ireland is also experiencing considerable curricular changes. The new revised curriculum, outlined in the Education Order (NI) 2006, was begun to be implemented in the academic year 2006/7 and is scheduled for full implementation by 2010. In particular, the developers of the revised curriculum, both DENI and CCEA, view the existing curriculum as heavily prescriptive, content-driven and paying insufficient attention to the preparation of young people for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life. CCEA seeks to address the concerns of some, especially within industry that young people may not be being fully prepared for the “world of work,” by making employability skills such as enterprise and entrepreneurship, career management, awareness of local and global economics central to the statutory curriculum entitlement. While awareness and appreciation of the world of life and work is undoubtedly important, it could be argued that there is a danger that a one-sided and uncritical adoption of such market values may reduce education to simply preparing individuals to compete in the job market on which “skills” are traded for egoistic advancement. The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2002b) explicitly recognise such a danger when they point out that “the Catholic vision of education stands in marked contrast to that of the pure ‘market-driven’ model . . . The goal of Catholic education must be, above all else, the formation of the student. The needs of ‘the real world’ must be taken on board, but not at the expense of the human needs of the young person” (p. 6). They go on to argue that schooling must be “a humanising and incarnational activity and experience . . . [through which] Christian people of competence and conscience [are formed], people who can play a full role in society with a Christian vision and value system, a concern for their fellow humans and a deep desire to put their talents at the service of others” (p. 7).

Completing the Context—The Review of Public Administration and the Creation of an Educational Skills Authority

In February 2002, the Government announced its intention to review all areas of public administration in Northern Ireland. The implications for education are enormous. Under the review of education provision it is envisaged that all

aspects of the delivery of education would be scrutinised including educational administration, the role of trusteeship, and school estate. This would be guided by the vision enshrined in the 2005 document *A Shared Future* which would shape government policy and strategic planning for the promotion of good community relations in Northern Ireland. In this document the Government acknowledged that “the exercise of parental choice is central and both *integrated and denominational schools have important roles to play in preparing children for their role as adults in a shared society*” (p. 25). The document goes on to suggest that ways might be explored for greater sharing of scarce resources in a climate of demographic downturn and falling rolls.

The idea of a shared future poses no threat to Catholic schools. The Catholic sector is not a “ghetto” education system, building walls against the world—be it secular or other. Catholic schools are not sectarian institutions nor divisive in any way. Indeed, the Catholic notions of solidarity and the common good, which underpin the Catholic vision of education set no limitation, are fully inclusive and involve an identification with the other as expressed so profoundly in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk10: 25–37) and by Pope John Paul II (1992) who reminds us that all people are “living images of God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit” (p. 40). The Catholic school system in Northern Ireland—like the network of Catholic schools throughout the world—is simply a concrete and praxical expression of this radical view of humankind and an inspirational ideology which embraces a reaching-out, an other-directedness and genuine solidarity towards the larger community of one’s fellow men and women. The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2001) place these values of reconciliation, justice, social cohesion, inclusiveness, and celebration of diversity at the centre of their educational vision and practice. Such values and goals are intrinsic to Catholic education as they conclude in the firm belief that “Catholic education will continue to be an active partner in building a just, cohesive society which facilitates reconciliation, pluralism and human dignity” (p. 6).

The Government’s vision of education and the shared future was hinted at by the Secretary for State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain (2006) when he claimed that the segregation of the schooling system in Northern Ireland “comes at a high price” and that new ways of eliminating duplication of resources and integrating educational provision must be explored and identified. He announced a strategic review of education, led by Sir George Bain, the former Vice-Chancellor of the Queen’s University of Belfast, which would “examine the funding of the system and focus on the strategic planning and organisation of the estate taking into account curriculum changes and falling rolls” (p. 6). He went on to note that “an important element of this review will be to consider how best to meet our duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education” (p. 7).

Professor Bain’s *Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education* was published in December 2006 and contained many far-reaching and challenging proposals. It warned that with one-third of schools—440 in total—not having

a required minimum number of pupils, the current status quo could not prevail. Schools would face closure or amalgamation. It also recommended that the minimum school enrolment requirement should be increased across the board. Furthermore, Bain recommended that schools should be planned to cover the needs of a geographical area rather than the present parental choice system in which a range of different schools can all exist within one area. While not overtly advocating forced integration, the Bain Report recommended the availability of additional resources for schools that take a more inclusive approach to integrated education (p. 38).

The creation of a new government-run body known as the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) in 2006 represents a further threat to Catholic schooling. This body is tasked to take over the functions currently carried out by the Education and Library Boards and CCEA, as well as some tasks of the Department of Education. Crucially, as far as Catholic schools are concerned, it is envisaged that the CCMS will be downgraded from being a non-governmental statutory body with administrative powers over the Catholic nursery, primary, and secondary schools to being simply a consultative body, and that its decision-making and employing authority will be transferred to the new ESA. This development has enormous implications for Catholic education. The mechanism and procedure for appointing teachers in Catholic schools, as well as the development of leadership within the Catholic sector, has been the remit of CCMS in its schools and the trustees in the other diocesan and religious order schools. These bodies have been able to nurture and promote the distinctive ethos that reflects the faith, values, and outlook of the Catholic sector as well as make appointments which they feel would support the Catholic school ethos. It is difficult to see, with the transfer of so much related to education to a government-run body such as the ESA, along with the other proposed structural changes, that this distinctive vision and practice will be unaffected. Little wonder that the Catholic authorities would look at these developments with some degree of concern.

Facing the Challenge—Facing the Future

The Response of the Catholic Authorities

Within days of the publication of the Bain Report the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland issued their reply on the impact the proposed changes in new educational structures would have on Catholic schools. The bishops expressed their concern that “the draft policy papers for new structures of educational administration in Northern Ireland... pose a serious threat to the right of parents to choose a Catholic Education for their children” (2006). They went on to reinforce in clear and unambiguous language their warning of the danger and threat these proposals present to the current system of Catholic schools, established by the efforts of the entire Catholic community over generations:

The proposals will radically undermine a long-cherished Catholic education system, which has been recognised for the strength of its distinctiveness and the richness of its tradition and diversity as contributing to the raising of school standards and the promotion of a culture of tolerance and understanding. Over the years the Catholic community in Northern Ireland has built up, at enormous self-sacrifice, a network of Catholic schools with their own distinctive religious identity and ethos. As Catholic Bishops we have the obligation to provide the service of educational leadership to this community and to ensure the effective management and planning of Catholic schools. These proposals limit our capacity to do so. (*ibid.*, p. 1)

The depth of concern and degree of opposition to the proposed changes can be seen in the concluding statement of the bishops:

We are satisfied that we have made every effort to engage positively with Government and the Department of Education to develop arrangements in the best interests of all the educational partners and which would provide quality education for all the children of Northern Ireland. On this occasion, however, we feel compelled to say that we cannot in conscience commend these proposals to parents, teachers and all involved in Catholic education. (*ibid.*)

This is dramatic language and was followed up immediately by a statement issued by all of the Irish bishops at their December General Meeting supporting their Northern Irish colleagues. CCMS (2006) similarly expressed its concerns about the new proposed structural arrangements, in particular their implications for undermining the ethos and character of Catholic schools and the right of parents to choose a distinctive Catholic education for their children, concluding that “the draft proposals would undermine the entire Catholic education system.” Indicative of the seriousness with which the Catholic bishops view the threat to Catholic schools is their announcement of a campaign to fight for the right of faith-based education. As a first step in this struggle the bishops will be asking parishioners throughout Northern Ireland to register their objections to the proposed changes with the Government.

Agenda for Further Research

Despite considerable socio-economic disadvantage, Catholic schools in Northern Ireland—like vision-led Catholic schools throughout the world—produce outcomes significantly in excess of what might have been expected. DENI’s own research suggests that, despite the considerably greater socio-economic deprivation among the Catholic community compared to its Protestant counterpart, Catholic schools perform at a level otherwise than may have been predicted. When considering the results of the selection test taken at the end of Key Stage 2, the Department concludes that when schools with similar levels of socio-economic standing are compared “pupils from schools under Catholic management are more likely to achieve a grade A than their counterparts in schools under other [forms of]

management” (1996). Nor is this trend limited to the early years of learning. Professor Tony Gallagher (1995) points out that since 1973 there has been a marked and significant increase in the proportion of university entrants in Northern Ireland from manual backgrounds and that religion appears to be a hugely significant factor with more than 40% of Catholic university entrants from working class homes compared to less than 25% of Protestant entrants (p. 52). These findings are in line with research from a wide range of world renowned educationalists including Andrew Greeley, James Coleman, Anthony Bryk, Patrick Fahy, Marcellin Flynn and Helen Paretz, which, Greeley (1998) claims, provides compelling evidence that Catholic schools “by every imaginable measure are superior to their public counterparts, even when all appropriate background variables have been taken into account” (p. 182).

Nor is the contribution of Catholic schools to the common good limited to standard universally accepted academic criteria. The late Professor Dan Murphy (1998), in research on the effect of Catholic schooling in Northern Ireland, concludes that, in addition to value-added outcomes of academic achievement, “pupils in Catholic schools are less prejudiced in religious matters than those who attend [non-Catholic] schools.”⁶ In a divided society such as Northern Ireland in which the existence of Catholic schools is seen by some as a contributing factor to social division, this claim is one which demands further exploration.

In spite of these outcomes of Catholic schooling, it seems that those in control of education in Northern Ireland are determined to undermine that system. In response to these attacks the Catholic authorities and others who value this unique schooling system need, as a matter of urgency, to engage in and promote qualitative, objective, and systematic research into the distinctive vision of Catholic education and its outcomes both in relation to the moral, spiritual, academic, and social formation of the individual and to its contribution to the common good. This should be carried out with the openness, clarity, and ecumenical outreach which has characterised the Catholic Church’s engagement and dialogue with the secular world since Vatican II. Advocates of Catholic education should be confident that the outcomes of Catholic schooling will not be found wanting when judged according to universal academic and other educational criteria. Qualitative and systematic research will uncover the value-added outcomes in terms of academic results, pastoral care, contribution to the common good, and individual formation resulting from such a value-laden and driven vision. Finally, research needs to be carried out into the catechetical role which the Catholic school plays (and increasingly must play) in the spiritual formation of the youth—especially in the increasingly secular society in which the traditional Catholic model of the Church–family–school triangle is being undermined. Indeed, this refining of the role of the school as a principal agent in the evangelising of the youth—as distinct from simply reinforcing the values, faith-commitment and practice of the family—will be a challenge in itself as

⁶ Dan Murphy, ‘International Trends in Denominational Schooling’; extracts from this paper have been published in *Parent and Teacher* (Dublin, Oct/Nov 1998), pp. 18–20.

teachers in Catholic schools may also be asked to become Catholic teachers in the fullest sense of the term as described in the Conciliar document *Gravissimum Educationis* as “inspired by an apostolic spirit [and] bearing testimony by their lives and teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ” (para. 8).

Surely it is a peculiar form of pluralist society that denies many of its citizens access to schools that reflect their needs and values. To advocate the destruction of such a value-driven Catholic system of Catholic education and subsuming it into a bland valueless secular model would be an act of pedagogical vandalism that would have enormous negative consequences on those who will experience such a system as well as society as a whole. Perhaps those engaging in this crucial debate might take courage from Christ himself whose final exhortation and instruction is both a clear challenge and a comfort to all Catholic educators, parents, and students. As he leaves his disciples for the final time Jesus tells them to “Go and teach! And I will be with you always” (Matt. 28: 20).

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES: NEW CHALLENGES

Fr. James Gallagher, SDB

In the context of England and Wales, disputes about the role of religious belief in state-sponsored education have a long history. Catholic schools, however, have been a feature of the educational scene for over 150 years. It is possible and legitimate to speak of a rich legacy or heritage of Catholic schooling, which has been created, preserved, and developed over the last 150 years but not without, at times, heated discussion and debate. A report on the educative task of the Catholic community (1981) spoke of the need for “critical solidarity” in the context of working with government agencies in education: any developments should be viewed in the light of Christian beliefs about the human person and human destiny (p. 7). The process of critical solidarity still continues as the Labour Government sets out yet another major proposal for education reform. In the aftermath of recent terrorist attacks at home and abroad, many now argue forcefully against the existence of “faith-based schools” as being of their very nature divisive in a multicultural, multi-faith society. Within the Church there are critics who maintain that contemporary Catholic schools are failing in their prime mission of educating the young in the faith in such a society. The rich legacy and heritage of Catholic schools is facing many serious challenges on several fronts, both within and beyond the Church, in the rapidly changing socio-cultural conditions of post-modern Britain. In what ways are those involved in Catholic schooling responding to the challenges? What research is called for in order to explore more fully the mission of Catholic schools in today’s changed circumstances and the ways in which Catholic schools might best respond to the needs and challenges? In order to appreciate the challenges, the responses and any research that may be called for some historical understanding of the education system is necessary.

Catholic Schools: Partners in a Dual System

In 1847 the Catholic Poor School Committee was founded and became the agency for negotiations between the Church and State in matters of education. The Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales was restored in 1850. In 1852

the bishops met in synod to decide pastoral priorities for the new situation and declared the first necessity to be “a sufficient provision of education for the wants of the poor.” The establishment of good schools should be preferred to every other work: “we should prefer the erection of a school, so arranged to serve temporarily as a chapel, to that of building a church without a school.” In addition to secular instruction a good Catholic school should address the religious and spiritual needs of pupils: “we consider sound faith, virtue and piety by far the most important elements of education.” The bishops’ concerns were both religious and social. They sought to ensure the preservation of the faith of Catholic children in the secular and anti-Catholic climate of the time and to provide sound education for those deprived of the opportunity of such education. The majority of Catholics lived in poverty and great hardship, particularly the many Irish Catholics who arrived in the cities at the time of the potato famine of 1845–1847. Schooling was then a voluntary activity. Catholic elementary schools were established and catered for children from the age of five years until the compulsory school leaving age. They were very much parish schools and often served also as social centres serving the needs of the poor in the parish. Today Catholics in England and Wales make up 8% of the population. Catholic schools account for 10% of state-maintained schools.¹ Catholic-maintained schools are formally designated as voluntary aided schools and retain particular privileges in law, which safeguard the Catholic life and ethos of the school and the provision of religious education in accordance with Church teaching as set out by the local bishop.

The ‘Dual System’

As the state became more involved in education, a number of Acts of Parliament (1870, 1902) gradually set up what is known as the “Dual System” with two different types of schools within the national system. Local authorities provided neighbourhood schools and maintained them by means of government grants and local rates. Other schools designated as voluntary or non-provided schools were funded, mainly, by Christian denominations and maintained by them with the assistance of some Government grant, not local rates. The Catholic community has had to raise considerable sums of money towards the cost of building schools. Over the years the state support has risen from 50% of capital costs to the present 90%. With regard to the funding of Catholic maintained schools, parents who choose Catholic schools for their children contribute to that education as tax and rate payers; in addition governors liabilities must cover 10% of the costs, which now run into well over £20 million per year in relation to building works.² It has to be remembered that many Catholic schools were built at the time when the Catholic community had to pay 50% of the costs. This is a fact

¹ These figures are quoted in *Catholic Education: A CES Position Paper on Catholic Schools and Colleges* (2004), p. 10.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

that is often overlooked by those who criticise Catholic schools for providing faith education funded by the State. This payment of 10% capital cost also provides Catholics with a useful bargaining tool in discussions with the State.³

Distinctive Features of Catholic Maintained Schools Facing New Challenges

The trustees⁴ of Catholic schools have the legal right to appoint an overall majority of the governors. These are known as foundation governors and are appointed to ensure that the religious character of the school is preserved: the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deeds; the religious education curriculum is in accordance with the bishop's policy. Foundation governors are appointed by the bishop or by a religious order to represent their interests and those of the Catholic community. These rights and responsibilities are recognised by the Government. The governors of Catholic voluntary aided schools are responsible for drawing up their own admission policy in accordance with diocesan guidelines and in consultation with the Local Education Authority and other schools in the authority. This enables governors to admit pupils first and foremost on religious grounds, the first and main criterion for admission being that the child is a baptised Catholic. Many critics claim that this amounts to a form of social selection of more able and articulate pupils with good family support and works to the detriment of other schools. However, Catholic schools generally have a good record in admitting pupils from among poorer, more deprived families and across the ability range.⁵ Many pupils are nominally Catholic and are not from families with strong religious practice or commitment. Increasingly in a number of schools there are pupils from families who belong to other Christian traditions or other faiths. Just over 18% of all pupils in Catholic schools are not baptised Catholics.⁶ The Bishops and the Catholic Education Service support the government ban on interviewing parents and pupils before admission. Not all Catholics agree with this.⁷

Catholic schools also have important rights regarding employment of staff. Head teachers, deputy head teachers, and those with responsibility for religious education are baptised and practising Catholics. Other leadership posts should, whenever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are

³ See Grace (2001) for a detailed account.

⁴ Under Canon Law, it is the duty of the diocesan bishop to ensure that there is proper provision of Catholic schools for the children and young people in his diocese. Most Catholic schools—and the land they are built on—are owned by the diocese. They are held in trust by diocesan trustees appointed by the bishop. The role of trustees is to safeguard the interests of the Catholic community as a whole within the diocese and to serve its needs. There are other Catholic schools, mainly owned by religious orders, which have their own trustees. However, all Catholic schools are under the authority of the bishop.

⁵ See *Education in Roman Catholic Schools*, OFSTED 2003.

⁶ *Catholic Education: CES Position Paper on Catholic Schools and Colleges* (2004), p. 7.

⁷ In London and the South East where many Catholic schools are oversubscribed, applicants are usually asked for evidence that they are practising, normally a priest's reference. Only one or two Catholic schools still interview pupils and their parents. Elsewhere dioceses tend to ask only for a baptismal certificate.

committed Catholics. Not all teachers in Catholic primary and secondary schools are Catholic, in some secondary schools these can amount to almost half the teaching staff.⁸ However, all teachers are made aware of the aims and objectives of the school as a Catholic school and expected to respect and support them. Teachers' contracts used in all Catholic schools include the clause which states "You are expected to have regard to the Catholic character of the school and not do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same." This too can at times raise difficulties and controversial issues. The recruitment and retention of Catholic members of staff, especially for leadership responsibilities, is currently a very crucial issue and one that is a major concern in all dioceses. The governors of Catholic schools have to face these issues and make crucial decisions. They are generally a dedicated group of people who take on the task voluntarily and without payment. In the rapidly changing circumstances in education it is vital that there is a programme of ongoing formation for them, updating them not only in government policy, but also in developments outlined in Church documents. All dioceses organise some training for governors. Future research into their needs and into the value of these programmes would provide useful information at national and diocesan levels.⁹

Challenges and Dilemmas in a Market Culture in Education

A number of aspects of recent Government policy, both of the last Conservative Government and of the present Labour Government, are causing considerable disquiet among the bishops and Catholic educationalists. In a statement in November 2003 the bishops expressed concern "that some government initiatives in education, even unwittingly, have the effect of undermining the Catholic contribution to education." In a recent address (2005) Archbishop Nichols, Chairperson of the Catholic Education Service, talked of "engaging in partnership with a State which only partially understands, or permits itself to display only partial understanding" of the faith vision that makes Catholics so committed to education. Many teachers feel overpressurised and harassed when faced with a constant stream of government initiatives which, however well intentioned, add more demands on time and energy and heighten the stress factor. The continuous demands for more and more administration and consequent paper work as well as numerous meetings beyond school time are among the chief reasons why there is a dramatic drop in the numbers of those applying for headship and other leadership roles in schools.

⁸ Details for individual schools are provided in the basic data presented in the *Self Evaluation Form* in preparation for the Section 48 Inspection of the Catholic Life and Ethos of the School and the Religious Education Provision. Details for each diocese are given in the statistics provided by the CES *Census 2002/2003 Report 12: Analysis of Teachers by Religious Status* (2005).

⁹ A start has been made with the current doctoral research of Christopher Storr at the University of London, Institute of Education.

Academic Targets and League Tables

The bishops and others have been highly critical of an educational philosophy in England, which is centred on individual autonomy and exercised through competition and controlled by the market. An example of this can be found in the importance given to the “league tables.” Academic standards and targets are set nationally for children at certain ages in all schools. Pupils are tested and assessed and the results are published nationally in league tables. Parents and others can compare and contrast the results of different schools. While this may seem to aid parental choice of schools, many see these as crude and often incorrect comparisons. The league table mentality can lead to a market culture in education with stress on visible, measurable academic success being regarded as the almost exclusive criterion for judging a “good” school. Many schools, including Catholic schools, may well be driven by the desire to “play the market” by seeking to score maximum points on the league table of academic success. In doing so the rights and needs of pupils, especially of the most vulnerable and weak pupils, may be overlooked because they do not feature positively on the league table measurements. This has practical consequences for admission policies and policies regarding expulsions. To accept and retain academically weaker pupils and those who may be less highly motivated, without support of stable family relationships or who, for a variety of reasons, may be somewhat disruptive, runs the risk of falling enrolments as parents decide to choose other schools rated higher in the academic league tables and, therefore, generally acknowledged to be better schools.

Tensions and Dilemmas

In this climate of market forces and league tables, it is not easy to take up the inspiration and challenge outlined in Church documents on education. Those with leadership roles in Catholic schools are faced with moral and professional tensions and dilemmas as they seek to hold in a delicate balance the exhortations given in Church documents and the understandable desire to rank high on the league tables. There is the clear exhortation of the Second Vatican Council in the *Declaration on Christian Education* (1965) “to show special concern for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith” (n. 9). This is reiterated in other documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education since the Council. The document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium* (1999) speaks of the Catholic school as “a genuine instrument of the Church, a place of real and specific pastoral ministry.” It paints a fairly sombre but realistic picture of what such pastoral ministry might entail.

Young people can be found again among those who have lost all sense of the meaning of life and lack any type of inspiring ideal, those to whom no values are proposed and who do not know the beauty of faith, who

come from families which are broken and incapable of love, often living in situations of material and spiritual poverty, slaves to the new idols of a society which, not infrequently, promises them only a future of unemployment and marginalisation. To these new poor the Catholic school turns in a spirit of love by offering the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, and of human and Christian formation. (n. 15)

Some consider such a description of pupils in Catholic schools as too dramatic, more relevant to the “developing” countries. Many teachers, however, in different parts of England and Wales, especially in large inner city council estates, recognise the description as being true to their experience of pupils in their classrooms. Grace (2002) explores some of these key issues. He combines an original theoretical framework with research drawn from interviews with 60 Catholic secondary schools in urban areas of London, Birmingham, and Liverpool. He raises and discusses such issues as the meanings of academic success, tensions between market values and Catholic values, threats to the mission integrity of Catholic schools, and the spiritual, moral, and social justice commitments of contemporary Catholic schools. In his view, the picture which emerges has more positives than negatives and the mission integrity and distinctiveness of these schools appears to be relatively strong, given the challenges which they face in an a-religious and materialistic society and given the specific urban dislocations, which characterise many of the communities which they serve. At the same time he expresses a very real anxiety:

Nevertheless, there is also the sense that their mission of spirituality, Catholicity, morality, and justice is vulnerable. It is maintained by the professional and faith commitment of a particular generation of lay vocations. Will this be maintained and renewed in the next generation?

It is maintained against the curriculum and assessment pressures and constraints of an interventionist secular state in education. Will such pressure work to undermine Catholic school distinctiveness in future? (p. 235)

This is a concern for all involved in Catholic schooling and much thought is now being given to the course of action that needs to be taken

The Bishops and “The Common Good” in Education

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference (1996) published the document *The Common Good*. It is a reiteration of Catholic social teaching concerning the dignity of the human person made in the image of God and the rights of individuals within a community or society in which they also accept their full share of responsibility for the welfare of others, for the common good. There is a clear emphasis on the option for the poor, on the need for commitment “to those experiencing any sort of hardship or suffering, especially the disadvantages caused by poverty, social exclusion or lack of education. The Catholic Church in these islands is no stranger to the desperately poor” (n. 10). The Catholic Education Service

(1997) published a document, which stressed that the Church's social vision should be evident in the organisation and management of the classroom and in the relationships between and among staff and students. There is an unambiguous option for the poor: "the poor and the disadvantaged—in financial, social, academic or spiritual terms—must be our primary concern, so that they can live their lives to the full" (p. 7).

The market philosophy in education is criticised because in a mainly market-driven system the individual good is being realised at the expense of the common good. The text stresses that education is a service provided by society for the benefit of all young people. It is a noble and ennobling vocation, which is diminished by the constraints and language of the marketplace.

The pursuit of excellence is intrinsically good when it is seen as an integral part of the spiritual quest and not simply as a matter of competitive league tables. Competition is, of itself, neither good nor evil, but when it is used to brand children or schools in a way which limits their freedom or potential, it is damaging to human flourishing. It also carries the danger of communicating to children and young people—and, indeed, the wider community—that a person's value is measured solely in terms of academic, sporting or financial success. (p. 13)

Grace (1998) expresses succinctly the tensions and difficulties experienced by those who are responsible for Catholic schools in these circumstances: "a competitive market culture in schooling is making it much more difficult to be at the service of the poor, the troublesome, the alienated and the powerless" (p.195).

Schools in Disadvantaged Inner City Areas

The Catholic Education Service document is critical of the fact that unrestricted market forces often reduce the ability of dedicated teachers working in poor inner city areas to achieve high rankings in the test league tables, despite all their dedicated and valiant efforts. It is unfortunate that league tables are frequently considered by local and national media as the evidence of the success of the school. They are, in fact, only of limited value as an indicator of good teaching and learning since they take no account of the nature of the pupil intake of schools.

The Bishops' Conference (1997) published the report of a consultation on Catholic secondary schools in urban areas entitled *The Struggle for Excellence*. Twenty-seven schools in different regions of England participated in the consultation. It was an exercise in listening to head teachers and others. The report depicts a rich and complex picture of the emerging diversity within the Catholic school system. In his foreword Bishop Konstant states: "the nature and the scale of the problems which many of these schools face are almost unknown in more affluent areas. Their struggle for excellence against this background is documented here. It is imperative that we do not leave them alone in the struggle." The schools in the study were different yet the report states that "what stands out is that they are beacons of hope in their co-ordinated efforts to create the sort of

school that children in urban poverty areas need—a safe haven that provides a challenging and stimulating learning environment” (p. 34).

The Current Debate on Faith-Based Schools

Since the beginning of the dual system of education in 1870 there has been state funding for schools with a Christian foundation, mainly Church of England and Catholic. The 1944 Education Act provided funding for some Jewish schools. The present Labour Government is extending the range of state funding within the dual system to schools sponsored by other religious groups such as Muslim and Sikh. It is argued that justice and fairness demand that the rights of all citizens should be upheld in the modern multi-faith, multicultural society of contemporary Britain. The Government has a very positive attitude to faith-based schools. Among the reasons for this is the belief that they will raise educational standards due to their distinctive mission and ethos. Yet there is a considerable reaction to the Government's policy regarding faith-based schools. Many people are now vehemently against the idea of such schools. The debate has intensified in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in the USA, in London, and other places and of the recent race riots in several English towns and cities. The arguments for and against are debated in the press and media. An extremely strident article in the Independent newspaper linked the riots in Birmingham, Britain's second largest city, with the building of more faith schools because, in the author's opinion, segregating children according to their parents' superstition (sic) is a great way to make a volatile town. Simplistically put, the claim is that faith based schools are divisive while community schools integrate. The issue is a good deal more complex and calls for more balanced and well-founded judgements. Trevor Philips, Chairperson of the Commission for Racial Equality, in a speech in September 2005 had words of praise for Catholic schools in this context.

Data shows that when we look at the ethnic mix of schools, Catholic schools tend to be far more mixed than local authority schools. A healthy mix might be a school with a proportion of ethnic minority pupils somewhere between 5% and 40%—where these children neither predominate, nor are they isolated. Among state schools about a quarter (25.6%) fall into this group. But amongst Catholic schools, a third (32.5%) would fit this description. So the passion being spent on arguments about whether we need more or fewer faith schools is, in my view, misspent.¹⁰

Arguments for and Against Faith-Based Schools

The British Journal of Religious Education dedicated the entire volume of Spring 2003 to the faith-based schools debate. In that issue Jackson presents a review of the arguments. He maintains that those who oppose the state funding of faith-based

¹⁰ The speech was to the Manchester Council for Community Relations. This passage is cited in a CES letter dated 23 September 2005 to Diocesan Commissioners and Advisers.

schools put forward a variety of arguments: they restrict the personal freedom of pupils by presenting a narrow view of the particular faith; they use state funding to proselytise; they cause divisions in society by separating people of different religions and non-religious backgrounds; they disadvantage other schools by means of selection procedures that cream off the most able pupils and those from stable families. Supporters of faith-based schools claim that they promote justice and fairness for children, parents, and religious communities; offer education of a high quality; promote social cohesion and the integration of minority communities and they provide a positive response to racism. Having reviewed the argument Jackson concludes: “that the undesirable practices referred to by opponents are not intrinsic to a faith based education and that all schools should promote social justice (including religious tolerance), knowledge about religions, the development of pupils’ skills of criticism, independent thinking and also dialogue and interaction between pupils of different backgrounds” (p. 89).

There is no doubt that all schools, community schools, Catholic schools, and all schools with a religious character, must take care to ensure that the practices outlined by Jackson are features of the education they provide. While one cannot guarantee that all Catholic schools fulfil entirely satisfactorily all of these requirements, official statements from the Bishops’ Conference, the Catholic Education Service and diocesan agencies encourage them to do so.¹¹ There is evidence that in practice it can be claimed that many do; it would be good to be more certain of this by undertaking some further research.

Catholic Schools and Pupils of Ethnic Minorities

The Catholic Education Service published a research study *Ethnicity, Identity and Achievement in Catholic Education* (2003). The study is concerned with the well-being of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Catholic secondary schools. It provides an overview of the ethnic diversity of these schools, records the views and experience of pupils, and examines some initiatives that have been taken to support these schools. Catholic schools in England and Wales are, on the whole, ethnically diverse communities, reflecting the variety of the worldwide Catholic community. Catholic secondary schools, on average, have only slightly smaller percentages of ethnic minority pupils than other schools. Data supplied by the Office of Standards in Education for 2001 show that Catholic secondary schools had 11.6% with other maintained schools having 12.1%. Given that Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi pupils (being largely Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim) are significantly under-represented in Catholic schools, the percentages of minority ethnic pupils are surprisingly close to national averages. Catholic secondary schools have higher percentages of black pupils of Caribbean, African, and other ethnic backgrounds. Minority ethnic pupils are not evenly distributed among schools. The schools with higher percentages of these pupils tend to be located in deprived urban areas.

¹¹ See *Ethnicity, Identity and Achievement in Catholic Schools*, London, CES.

As part of the Catholic Education Service's study, 483 such pupils were asked their views, perceptions, and experiences. Reflecting the make-up of many Catholic schools, just over half of the pupils were Catholic, a quarter from other Christian backgrounds, and just under a quarter were from other religious traditions or none. The study concludes that, on the whole, despite some ambivalence about feeling at home in a Catholic school, the majority of the pupils felt that the schools were creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, supporting them personally and preparing them to go out into a world where they might not have an easy time. The authors of the study acknowledged that the sample covered in the research was limited and quite small; they, therefore called for further research.

Catholic Schools and Other Faiths

In certain localities there has been an increase in pupils of other faiths seeking admission to Catholic schools. The Bishops' Conference (1997) published a consultation paper on *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths*. The text is written in response to the questions arising from the multicultural and multi-faith context of British society today and from the desire of some faith communities to benefit from the good service offered by Catholic schools. Members of the consultation had expertise and experience in different but relevant disciplines. The working party met over a period of two and a half years. Initially there were serious disagreements regarding fundamental principles relating to the work of Catholic schools concerning other faiths. There was frank discussion and debate resulting in a significant broad consensus. The consensus established principles, which were offered for serious consideration "as being the foundations that, in the light of the developing multi-faith and multi-cultural situation of our society, should underpin Roman Catholic relations with Other Faiths, particularly in respect to Catholic schools" (p. 3). The text recognises the complexity of the history and current background of Catholic schools in England and Wales. It also acknowledges that Vatican II inaugurated profound developments in the understanding of what it means to be Catholic when considering our relationship with other denominations and other faiths. There are also developments in the understanding of the nature and role of the Catholic school. The *Declaration on Christian Education* expresses esteem for Catholic schools, which "contain large numbers of non-Catholic students." While this has a clear reference to the so-called missionary countries "where the Church is newly established" (ns. 8–9), later documents relate this need to a much broader context. An example of this can be found in the 1991 document *Dialogue and Proclamation*.

Special attention must be given to young people living in a pluralistic environment, who meet the followers of other religions at school, at work, in youth movements and other associations, and even within their own families. (n. 88)

Two of the most common influences leading Catholic schools to admit pupils of other faiths are demographic changes and the falling number of applications from

baptised Catholics.¹² The consultation paper insists that the schools should have a clear rationale for admitting these pupils. This rationale should be expressed in its policies and practices and in the life of the school.

Catholic Education Service's Guidelines and the Need for Further Research

The Catholic Education Service (1997) published the *Guidelines* for the study and implementation of the consultation paper. These guidelines set out measures appropriate for all Catholic schools whether they are fully subscribed with Catholic children or in a situation where they are admitting pupils of other faiths. The *Guidelines* are not to be understood as proposing a new concept of "open enrolment." Rather they seek to assist Catholic schools, which "see themselves as serving both the Catholic community and the wider community, with a concern for all people, especially the poor and marginalised, and for the spiritual and moral development of each individual" (p. 9).

The consultation paper was intended to encourage further study and discussion on the issues involved. It would seem that no such serious study has yet taken place. The national data of the Catholic Education Service concerning the religious affiliation of pupils and teachers has only two categories: Catholic and non-Catholic/Other. There is no breakdown of those within the "other" category. When asked, only very few dioceses can give an accurate breakdown of the figures. There is surely a need to be more aware of the numbers of those from different Christian denominations and of those from other faiths if we are to be more responsive to their particular needs. The consultation document recommended that research be undertaken to identify the numbers of pupils and staff of other faiths in Catholic schools, into the reason for the presence of pupils of other faiths and into their expectations. It also recommended that there be further research into detailed areas such as curriculum practice, teaching materials, forms of worship and assembly, school rules and discipline as well as diet. The consultation also called for further study to be undertaken that would enable the development of practical guidelines, appropriate teaching approaches, and appropriate training for existing and prospective teachers. At best any progress in this regard would seem to be patchy, occurring only in certain places. As yet it would seem that there has been no follow up of the consultation paper with any serious, coordinated national study or research.

Joint Catholic and Anglican Schools

There are now three primary and nine secondary "joint schools" with Catholic and Church of England pupils. Some Catholics do not approve of such a development and have written to the relevant Vatican congregation expressing their concerns. The Roman congregation wrote to the Cardinal Archbishop of

¹² *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths*, p. 23.

Westminster requesting an explanation for this development. The Catholic Education Service drafted an unpublished response in July 2005. They state that in some areas demographic trends had forced them to examine how best to retain the offer of a Christian and Catholic education to the young in areas where the Catholic population may have fallen significantly. One solution was to establish a joint school with another Christian church—most commonly the Church of England—which allows Catholic young people to enjoy the benefits of a Catholic and Christian education. It is claimed that this development is welcomed both by Christian parents and the wider Catholic and Christian communities. Dioceses are investigating whether it might be appropriate to enter into partnership with the Church of England in order to establish a small number of Academies in the inner cities. Academies are designed to replace secondary schools in more deprived areas of cities in an environment of particular economic hardship. One joint Academy has been established in Liverpool.¹³

In these joint schools the structure of the governing body will ensure that the Church continues to enjoy its present rights and responsibilities for the schools. The response to Rome points out that it is clear from inspection reports that the schools are fully committed to the Gospel values, and are able to offer a high quality of education and worship, which is led and supported by senior staff and chaplains. It also states that dioceses monitor their progress carefully and express confidence as to their value. The response concludes that rather than seeing these as a diluted experience of Catholic education, it would be more accurate to understand them as a strong experience of Catholic education, located within a broader ecumenical community where it is unlikely that there would be any Catholic or Christian education provision. It is doubtful that those Catholics who wrote to Rome will be totally convinced. Here again we have an area which will call for more research.

Differing Views on Issues About Catholic Schools and Religious Education

The concern of the bishops gathered at the first synod of Westminster in 1852 was to provide a sound education for all Catholic children, an education which sought to preserve and promote the faith of the pupils. They preferred the building of a school to that of a church: “it is the good school that secures the virtuous and edifying congregation.” Now in the early years of the 21st century, pupils in Catholic schools come from a variety religious experiences and backgrounds.

¹³ The Academy of St Francis of Assisi which opened in September 2005 has replaced Our Lady’s Catholic secondary school. The Academy is cosponsored by the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool. The Church of England raised funds from benefactors and the Archdiocese has contributed by way of transfer of equipment and the proceeds of the sale of the site of the original school. There are 50% Catholic admissions with priority to parishes, which served the original school and 50% Anglican admissions with priority to the local community. Twenty-seven Academies opened in September 2005. The Academy of St. Paul, Greenwich, is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Southwark.

There are pupils from committed, practising families; many are baptised but have little experience or knowledge of Church and religion. Some are from other Christian traditions and increasingly in some areas there are children of other faiths. Some Catholics question whether Catholic schools are fulfilling the mission outlined by the bishops in 1852. Arthur (1995) argues that the original ideals have been abandoned. Others say that the schools are seeking to fulfil the mission in a very different religious and cultural setting. Lombaerts (1993) outlines aspects of this phenomenon in a European context: crisis in family life, the decline in religious practice and of allegiance to parish and Church, the increase in religious indifference, Christians who vacillate between different value systems and ways of thinking. Many argue that it is now more a question of the school providing for many pupils an environment in which the Christian faith can be presented and, within certain limitations, promoted. At a time when there was still a fairly cohesive Catholic subculture, schools may have been able to provide an environment in which the faith experienced in the home and celebrated in the parish could be preserved and deepened. Long since gone are the days when the majority of pupils and their families were actively committed to the faith. In this context many urge that Catholic schools must respond to the call in the document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium* “to these new poor the Catholic school turns in a spirit of love by offering the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, of human and Christian formation” (n.15). Inspiration for such a view can be found in John Paul II’s exhortation to the Church in Europe (1999).

Catholic schools are sometimes the sole means by which the Christian tradition can be presented to those who are distant from it. I encourage the faithful involved in the field of primary and secondary education to persevere in their mission and to bring the light of Christ the Saviour to bear upon their specific educational, scientific, and academic activities. (n. 59)

In a very different socio-cultural and religious context from that of 1852 Catholics debate the questions about who are our schools for and about their true purpose in contemporary society. Cornwell (2004) suggests that the question that hangs over Catholics is not “How can we protect our communities of faith?” but rather “How can these communities of faith serve a broken needy world?” Others would claim that it is a question of holding these two in a delicate balance. There are differing opinions and emphases expressed on how the balance might be achieved.

Bishops’ Statement on Religious Education

Over many years there has been and there still is diversity of opinion among Catholics, often expressed in heated and bitter controversies, concerning the relationship and distinction between catechesis and religious education in the school context. There has been different interpretations given to the statement in the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* “there

is a close connection and at the same time a clear distinction between religious instruction and catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message” (n. 68). The Bishops (1996) published the document *Religious Education: Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools*. In January 2000 they hosted a Symposium entitled *Expectations of Religious Education in Catholic Schools*. In a statement published in May of that year they speak of the distinctive ethos of education in Catholic schools, which are inspired and challenged by the Christian faith vision and, within that context, they summarise the overall aims and precise objectives of classroom religious education:

Religious education in a Catholic school is the comprehensive and systematic study of the mystery of God, of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the teachings of his Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life, in a manner which encourages investigation and reflection by pupils, develops the appropriate skills and attitudes and promotes free, informed, and full response to God’s call. The outcome of religious education is religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding, and skills—appropriate to their age and capacity—to think spiritually, ethically, and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. (n. 5)

They recognise that the levels of pupils’ response will vary. For some, classroom religious education will deepen and enhance their personal faith; for many it may well be the first presentation of the Christian beliefs. They state that “the criteria by which it is to be judged are educational,” and that “classroom religious education will be a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teachers and the authentic subject material.” *Catechesis in Our Time* (1979) states that freedom of conscience must be respected and that there should be no burdening of consciences “by exerting physical or moral pressure, especially in the case of the religious activity of adolescents” (n.69). The duty of providing “a challenging educational engagement” as outlined in these and other texts is hardly the “proselytising” so simplistically assumed and understood in much of the media and press. However, there still are tensions and controversies among Catholics in the way they understand these issues and their practical consequences for Catholic schools in the changed cultural context in which they now seek to fulfil their religious and educational mission.¹⁴

It would be useful to have serious research into what schools are presently doing in seeking to achieve the aims set out in Church documents. The document on the religious dimension of education states that schools assist and promote faith education, as well as the spiritual, religious, and moral development of all pupils whatever their religious background. The document speaking of Catholic

¹⁴ I discuss some of these issues in *Soil for the Seed* (2001) especially in chapter 14 ‘Catholic Schools: a pastoral and educational ministry’ and chapter 15 ‘Educating to and in the faith in our schools: catechesis and religious education’.

schools in the new millennium encourages the school “to share responsibility for the social and cultural development of communities and peoples to which it belongs, participating in their joys and hopes, their sufferings and difficulties, their efforts to achieve genuine human and communitarian progress” (n. 5). It would be helpful to have the findings of a carefully prepared survey of what is being done and research analysis into what can and should be done in order to address these aspects of the mission of Catholic schools.

Leadership in Catholic Schools

A major concern of those with responsibilities for Catholic schools is the decline in the number of those applying for headships and deputy headships. Catholic schools often face more difficulty in recruitment than other schools.¹⁵ A higher percentage of Catholic primary and secondary schools fail to make an appointment at the first interview. Frequently they have to readvertise the job several times. London has the greatest problem but it is a national issue. The causes are many. Despite increased financial rewards, there are increased burdens in administration; there are the constant changes and developments in government policy; there are demands of accountability with the risk of receiving blame rather than affirmation. All of this saps energy, increases stress, and results in long working hours with considerable less time with family or for recreation. In the Catholic sector there are added difficulties. In Catholic schools there is the religious, faith dimension of education, which should permeate all aspects of the life and ethos of the school. In interviews a number of candidates find it difficult to articulate what is meant and implied by such a faith dimension. Some find themselves less than confident in taking on this aspect of leadership of a faith-based school in the secularised culture of society. They are unsure of theological developments in Church teaching and feel themselves inadequate as leaders of an educating community inspired and challenged by the Christian faith vision and Gospel values. The reduction in the number of Catholic colleges of Higher Education providing for teacher training means that many newly qualified teachers have not been through the Catholic system and, as a consequence, will not have undertaken any studies reflecting on the distinctive nature of Catholic education. Each diocese provides teachers in Catholic schools with the opportunity to take the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Many schools insist that teachers complete this course.

In an article, Pyke (2005) indicates other issues. Dioceses and governing bodies expect the figure at the helm to be a practising member of the Church. There are a large number of teachers who are not Catholic or not regularly practising. The result is that only a fraction of the experienced staff in any Catholic staff room is eligible for a leadership role as Head or Deputy. He sees the changing nature

¹⁵ See CES statement sent to dioceses 28 October 2005 ‘Summary of Houson Report on the State of the Labour Market for Senior Staff in Schools with Reference to the Catholic Sector’.

of personal relationships as another factor in making it difficult for those who interview candidates. It is unlikely that they are willing or feel able to promote a teacher who is divorced, remarried, or living with a partner, even if they regularly attend Mass. He suggests, as do others, that Catholic schools may have to reconsider their restrictions particularly when it comes to a candidate's domestic arrangements. This is, of course, a complex, delicate issue and while there can be no unnecessarily lowering of standards, some question whether the ideal is fully achievable in today's society. This is yet another controversial issue facing the bishops and Catholics in education. It would certainly seem useful, even imperative, that some serious research be undertaken into the reasons why many long-serving and dedicated teachers do not apply for these leadership posts in Catholic schools.

Recruitment and Formation of Leaders for Catholic Schools

The recruitment of suitable candidates for these leadership posts is a major concern at national and diocesan levels. At the instigation of the Catholic Education Service "The Nurturing Future Leaders" group has been set up to look into the situation. The group brings together representatives from the dioceses, the National College for School Leadership, and the Catholic Education Service and takes up the challenge "to ensure sufficient candidates of quality to provide leadership and witness to lead our Catholic schools." The members of the group will promote innovation and will disseminate good practice within dioceses and information of courses and programmes. They will work with the National College of School Leadership and other agencies by seeking to include in the courses they provide some elements for Catholic leadership and will seek accreditation for courses provided in dioceses. The work of the group is still very much in the initial stages and, consequently, it is not yet possible to give any assessment of its progress and achievements. The National Professional Qualification for Headship is now mandatory for all first-time head teachers in the maintained sector. It does not, however, have elements that relate specifically to leadership in Catholic schools.¹⁶

Individual dioceses or several dioceses working together within a region of the country are undertaking valuable work in this regard. There are residential courses and training sessions for aspiring head teachers, for aspiring deputies, and others in middle management. The Salford diocese, for example, is in the early stages of setting up the Growing Catholic Leaders Project. It focuses on a personalised approach through a process of individual coaching sessions based on real life issues and joint problem solving and placements in other Catholic schools. Other dioceses have similar plans. Much still needs to be done if we are to ensure future leaders of the right quality and with the sense of self confidence

¹⁶ St. Mary's College, Twickenham, runs a programme M.A. in Catholic Leadership and several dioceses and other colleges are in discussion with relevant bodies to provide elements of Catholic leadership in courses already running.

in the face of the issues that constantly face leaders in Catholic schools in a time of rapid changes in society and the Church. The work of Professor John Sullivan in setting up programmes while in St. Mary's College, Twickenham, and currently in Hope University, Liverpool, and his writings, for example *Catholic Schools in Contention: Competing Metaphors and Leadership Implications* (2000), provide useful recourses in this important task.

The School's Self-Evaluation and Professional Development

Catholic schools are designated as schools "with a religious character." As a consequence, while Government appointed Inspectors from the Office of Standards in Education (OFSTED) have the right to inspect schools, it is the right of the local bishop to establish the curriculum for religious education and this is inspected, along with worship and the Catholic life of the school, under arrangements made by the diocese. Dioceses nominate and train people with experience and expertise in Catholic schooling to undertake these inspections. In accordance with the latest *Framework for Inspection of Schools in England* (2005), great importance is given to the school's self-evaluation and this forms the basis of discussions between the inspectors and those with responsibilities in the schools. Dioceses have drawn up guidance for the self-evaluation of key features of Catholic education and also guidelines for inspection procedures. The process of self-evaluation is an ongoing process, not a one-off exercise. It should enable all involved in Catholic schools to reflect on and articulate more clearly and with greater confidence the basic principles and motives, which inspire the Church's involvement in education and to draw up practical policies and strategies that ensure that these underpin all aspects of the life of the school. As far back as 1977 the document *The Catholic School* encouraged schools to undertake the task of self-evaluation in a time "when the job of the Catholic school is infinitely more difficult, more complex" in rapidly changing circumstances in the Church and secular life (n. 66). Properly undertaken, the school's self-evaluation together with the diocesan inspection can be useful tools in furthering the professional development of staff in leading and managing Catholic schools. Once this process is more established, it would be useful to undertake a survey to ascertain the impact it has had on the leadership and management of the Catholic life and ethos of schools.

The Recruitment and Retention of Diocesan Advisers

Another related issue or difficulty is the recruitment and retention of diocesan advisers who can support leaders in Catholic schools. The make up of diocesan teams varies greatly depending on the size of the diocese and the number of schools. Financial restraints can lead to the reduction in diocesan advisers. Those who were serving teachers frequently take a drop in salary when they undertake this diocesan service to schools. The drop in finances, the travel involved as well as the unsociable hours demanded by the job add to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining diocesan advisers. Yet the theological, educational and pastoral

support which diocesan advisers offer leaders in Catholic schools would seem, now more than ever, to be necessary. If schools are seen as an essential part of the Church's mission to the young, to families, to society and indeed to the Church itself greater care must be taken in the setting of priorities. Dioceses would do well to recall the statement of the bishops after the National Pastoral Congress held in Liverpool in 1985, just 25 years ago, when all the bishops gathered with 2,000 Catholics, some clerical but the majority lay, for three days of reflection and discussion.

The Catholic school, both primary and secondary, is of inestimable value to the life of the Church in England and Wales. Whatever new educational priorities may emerge we must neither belittle the contribution, which schools have made in the past, nor underestimate their potential for the future.

The Catholic school should be so inspired by the Gospel that it is seen to be an alternative to other forms of schooling. There are many questions which we need to ask about the Catholic school if it is to fulfil its role as a Gospel inspired community. (n. 134)

A Recent Research Project and Invitation to Consultation

The Department of Education and Formation of the Bishops' Conference (2005) commissioned an in-depth study and research into this whole area of the Church's mission in contemporary society. The study was undertaken by the Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics, and Public Life and published by the Catholic Education Service. The authors see it as a contribution to a process, not an end product. It is intended to begin a process which will lead to new resources and the development of effective responses to the questions that emerge. It is a dense document, "dense to the point of opaqueness" and "unclear about its target group," as one critic put it and, as another critic points out, "schools barely make an appearance in the study." This makes it difficult for diocesan advisers and others to use it with various groups. There have been some efforts made to provide more approachable guidelines for use with those involved in Catholic schools and parish catechesis. It is a challenging document, which certainly opens up many key questions. Already a consultation process has begun. There have been a number of conferences and seminars organised by different groups. Responses are invited and are being collected and collated from parents, priests, teachers, catechists, and theologians. The document is divided into three parts: "Significant Elements in Contemporary Culture," "The Theological Context," and "Resources and Responses." It has become a focus for those involved in Catholic education, catechesis and formation and will be the basis for much of their reflection and discussion. A central theme is that of the "crisis of transmission" of the Christian faith in a postmodern culture—a crisis experienced in homes, schools, and parishes. While it is not an easy read, it spells out a challenging but hopeful message.

The Church's engagement with contemporary cultures is not optional. It cannot be avoided in practice and its mission is to enter into dialogue with all whom it encounters. We have indicated how this may be done confidently and with imagination and courage. That requires that the community is also ready to take the risk of "translation" and to recognise that if we desire to create a living language, then we will also make mistakes. That is in the nature of any educative process. However, this is not a game of survival nor a struggle for power and influence. It is the dialogue of life; the life of grace, which we are given for others. It is life which we simultaneously possess and to which we are always on the way. (p. 69)

It remains to be seen how the consultation will develop and what practical results may come from reflection and discussion on the issues raised in this text. However dense the text, it attempts to place in a contemporary cultural context some of the key challenges facing the rich legacy of Catholic schools and Catholic education in the 21st century in England and Wales and seeks to encourage appropriate responses and further study and research.

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CELEBRATING THE PAST: CLAIMING THE FUTURE

Challenges for Catholic Education in Ireland

David Tuohy, SJ

Introduction

Education in Ireland is unique in being a “state-aided” system rather than a “state-owned” system. All primary schools and the majority of secondary schools are privately owned and managed, mostly by church groups. They receive state support in respect of capital expenditure, teacher salaries, and running costs. Approximately 60% of secondary schools pupils attend schools owned by a religious congregation. The Education Act (1998) enshrined the right of the patron of the school to define “the characteristic spirit” and to appoint Boards of Management to run the schools according to that spirit. Ironically, this power has come at a time when religious congregations are considering their future in education. They no longer have the personnel or the resources to manage the schools from within, and the changing secular culture raises questions about the state’s dependence on Church patronage for its schools. The religious congregations are conscious of the gospel mandate to preach the gospel, even in unfavourable or hostile conditions. To date, the schools have been a privileged place for evangelisation. The congregations are committed to preserving Catholic education as a strong, viable option within the national system. They are seeking ways of handing over the enterprise of Catholic education as a vibrant and desirable concern.

As part of the process of ensuring the future of Catholic education, many congregations have been preparing to set up new trustee structures. Part of this process involves clarifying the Catholic identity of the school. Until recently, that identity has been taken for granted and was interwoven with many other perspectives, some supportive and some contradictory, arising from the partnership with and dependence on government. Recent initiatives in the governance of Catholic schools have revealed strong cultural forces, which must be overcome in order to ensure a viable future. This chapter examines some of these challenges and outlines a number of current and future responses. The last section examines trends in educational research on Catholic education in Ireland.

Challenges

To understand the current challenges in Catholic education in Ireland, it is necessary to understand the cultural factors that shaped the identity of Catholic schools. The main issues can be associated with three historical periods. The first of these relates to the *foundation* of the system, and covers the 19th century until the establishment of the Irish state in 1922. The second period goes to 1967, when free education was introduced, and reflects a consolidation of Catholic education. The third period deals with developments from 1967 to the present and reflects the integration of economic and social welfare perspectives into the education system.

Foundation

At the beginning of the 19th century, Catholic life was recovering from a period of severe repression under the Penal Laws of the mid-17th century. It was only with the *Relief Acts* of 1782 and the *Catholic Emancipation Act* of 1829 that it was possible to openly practise as a Catholic and to establish charitable works in the name of the Church. One response to this new freedom was the establishment of native religious congregations.¹ Their growth was spectacular. In 1800, there were approximately 120 women in Irish convents. In 1850, their numbers had increased to 1,500 and by 1900 there were 8,000 sisters as well as 1,100 teaching brothers. This growth took place in post-famine times, when the overall Irish population declined by more than 50% (Maygray, 1998; Corish, 1985).

According to Maygray (1998), the women who founded and joined the new congregations emerged from an energetic middle class, who were accumulating wealth as merchants. They were part of an articulate Catholic class that grew in leadership stature through the restoration of civil and political rights in the middle of the 18th century. Many came to the convent with control over a large inheritance or dowry, which they used to establish institutions for philanthropic purposes. These women had cultural status and authority that gave them autonomy in decision-making and commanded the respect and cooperation of local bishops and clergy.

The congregations set up schools, hospitals, orphanages, reformatories, and workhouses (Clear, 1987). Their work in primary education soon became subservient to the demands of the bishops, who were a growing political force. When the state (the Protestant government in London) tried to set up a national primary education system, the proposal was for a non-denominational system, with integrated secular education and separate religious instruction. The system was to be managed locally through cooperation of the Churches. Suspicious of previous attempts at proselytising, the bishops strongly opposed this

¹ The native congregations include the Presentation Sisters (1775), the Christian Brothers, the Patrician Brothers and Brigidine Sisters (1808), the Sisters of Charity (1815), the Loreto (1820), and Mercy Sisters (1827).

system. In practice, cooperation was token and the system soon became a denominational system managed by the local clergy (McElligott, 1981; Coolahan, 1981; Ó Buachalla, 1988; Hyland & Milne, 1992). In effect, the religious congregations left the political element of primary education to the bishops and concentrated on the management of the schools.²

The state system grew rapidly. In 1860, there were 5,632 schools associated with the National Board, with 804,000 pupils in attendance. Religious congregations ran their own monastery and convent schools. Most of these were aligned with the National Board and accepted the curricular and inspectorial conditions under which they could receive grants. By 1910, approximately 500 primary schools were run by religious congregations. Of these, 110 schools were outside the national system, run mainly by the Christian Brothers who had strong ideological objections to the national system.³ The majority of Catholics were therefore in national schools under lay teachers but managed by diocesan clergy.

In the field of secondary education, on the other hand, the majority of Catholic schools were managed by the congregations. The *laissez-faire* approach of government meant that any investment in education beyond primary was the responsibility of the individual. The opportunity was therefore open only to those who could afford it. Those schools were dependent on private endowments and on the slender fees that pupils could afford. In 1910, there were approximately 270 secondary schools attended by 40,000 pupils. Of these, 164 were controlled by religious congregations.⁴ Even at an early stage in educational provision, there was a distinction between congregations as to their clientele, with some congregations more definitely associated with upper middle class groups. A further 44 schools were Catholic, run as diocesan minor seminaries or by private individuals. To a large extent, the bishops have left the running of secondary education to the religious congregations. It was only in 1965 that an Episcopal Commission on secondary education was set up to liaise with the religious congregations. The Commission has been concerned mainly with the development of religious education services within schools, rather than with governance issues.

Catholic education developed from a philosophy of schooling rather than a philosophy of education. At primary level, the National Board incorporated many features common to all English-speaking countries into the organisation

² At the time, the bishops also formalised their authority within the Church. They took a greater interest in the internal workings of the religious congregations, especially the female ones. They sought control over the direction and financial management of congregational works. Some of the congregations developed a diocesan governance structure, and it was only recently that the Presentation and Mercy Sisters established a national network.

³ Although they initially placed a number of their schools under the Board, the Christian Brothers withdrew them in 1836 regarding the Board's regulations as undermining their educational ideals. These focused mainly on the teaching of religion as a separate subject. The Christian Brothers saw religion as a pervasive element in the pattern of school life, rather than a separate, self-contained subject. They remained outside the national system until 1925.

⁴ The major providers of secondary education were the Christian Brothers, the Presentation, and Mercy Sisters. Other orders included the Jesuits, the Holy Ghosts, the Loreto, and Brigidine Sisters.

and methods of the schools. The congregations accepted the educational philosophy of the dominant power, and ran specifically Catholic religious education alongside these demands. Religious Education was monitored by diocesan inspectors. At secondary level, the National Board of Commissioners instituted a system of public examinations, and school fees were payable to managers in respect of pupils who made 100 attendances in the year and passed these examinations. This “payment by results” placed an undue emphasis on examinations as schools tended to select for presentation only such students on whose examination results they could depend. The curriculum and performance objectives of schools were set by the entrance examinations of universities and of various government agencies, especially the colonial Civil Service.

This history has given rise to a situation that influences reactions to Catholic education today. The development of the system in such strong sectarian terms has had major implications for the imagery of the Catholic Church as an institution in the national consciousness. The involvement of religious congregations in a wide range of works, including orphanages, reformatories, and workhouses, has also become part of a national folklore about nuns and brothers. These images have persisted, despite the historical developments of a new nation, and reforms both in the Church and in the education system. Recent revelations about harsh conditions and abusive treatment in these institutions have revived these images, and they are promoted in the popular press.⁵ Therefore, in developing a future for Catholic education, the religious congregations have to deal with strong negative emotional reactions dating back to perceptions of the 19th century. There is a need for healing and also of re-education.

Consolidation

The Irish state was established in 1922. The new government maintained a similar laissez-faire approach to secondary education, with a “hands-off” approach to the management of the schools. The requirement for opening a school was that the patron would provide the land and buildings, and that they would meet certain curricular requirements. The role of the government was to set these standards and approve the schools. There was a gradual expansion of the secondary system between 1922 and 1965 when there were 583 secondary schools catering for almost 100,000 pupils. Of these, approximately 500 were run by religious congregations.

The Church as institution (Dulles, 1977) was the dominant model operative at the time. In education there was a clear focus on providing an education *for Catholics*, with a strong emphasis on Catholic doctrines and the sacraments. The marks of the institutional church of the time were clerical, juridicist, and triumphalist. There was a clear distinction between the Church sanctified

⁵ There are ongoing revelations of the treatment of young people in reformatories, and the report on abuse in the Diocese of Ferns (2005) revealed cases of abuse in secondary schools.

and sanctifying, the Church taught and teaching. Although the rhetoric was that parents were the prime educators, it was assumed, and even demanded, that they entrust their children to the legitimate teaching authorities. Catholic schools lived out of this authoritarian model and incorporated the nationalist aspirations of re-establishing a strong Gaelic culture through the school system.⁶

Although the religious congregations were involved in only a small proportion of primary schools, they had a major influence on that sector through their work in teacher training. In the middle of the 19th century, the bishops forbade Catholics to attend the Model School training offered by the state. They turned instead to the religious congregations who had set up schools to train their own members. As a result, in 1883, colleges were set up in Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick to train Catholic lay teachers, and these continued in the new system. A religious language developed whereby young people were “called” to training as primary teachers, a language that persisted until recently.⁷

All secondary schooling was conducted in fee-paying institutions. The students were mainly from professional and merchant classes, as well as established tenant farmers. Parents aspired to the professions or public service (Lee, 1989). The curriculum was “a grammar school type—humanistic and intellectual in character.” Hogan (1983) claimed that the curriculum that operated in individual schools, the code of discipline practiced, and the didactic style of pedagogy predominantly in use, signified a resolute censorship of the imagination by school authorities. This was achieved by a segregation of the sexes, an emphasis on sexual morality, a Spartan approach to games and corporal punishment and censorship of what was to be read and studied. From autobiographical accounts, it is clear that schools varied hugely in the relationship that existed between teachers and pupils. Some people clearly thrived on the education provided. Others thrived despite it (Quinn, 1997).

Organisational structures provide evidence of censorial attitudes. The vast majority of schools were single-sex, and they were small. In 1960, 65% of secondary schools had less than 150 students. In many small towns, there were separate boys, girls, and vocational (mixed) schools. Secondary school buildings varied hugely, from fine boarding schools in splendid parkland settings of old estates to converted dwelling houses. In 1965, 237 secondary schools catered for boarders and one-third of all secondary pupils attended as boarders. Students went through routines of classroom tuition, study, prayer, and recreation—routines that often reflected those of a religious community. Many boarding schools were isolated from the life of the wider community. There was a strong emphasis on academic achievement. The curriculum was book oriented, requiring a minimum of overheads or teaching aids (Tussing, 1978). If science was taught, it was taught

⁶ The government promoted a Gaelic revival by making the Irish language a compulsory subject for recognised status and giving extra grants for schools teaching subjects through the medium of the Irish.

⁷ Many of these institutions were run along the same principles as a novitiate or post-novitiate house of a religious congregation. The timetable for students included obligatory Mass and devotions.

without laboratories. Language study was mainly written with little emphasis on oral skills. In line with the clerical tradition and general university requirements, most males studied Latin. By contrast, only 31 schools provide Latin as a subject today (Coolahan, 1981; Mulcahy & O'Sullivan, 1989; Ó Buachalla, 1988).

The effects of this period still have far-reaching effects on the perception of Catholic schools. Stories of schooling in these days are still part of the experience of parents and teachers in today's schools. Catholic education is still associated with the presence of nuns and brothers, and with images of closed, paternalistic, and authoritarian approaches not just to education, but to human living. The emphasis on congregational ownership of schools has added significance for lay teachers, who were often regarded as "helpers." They were not consulted on any decisions and had little involvement in the regular running of the school. The teaching career was also coloured by the fact that they could not aspire to promoted positions such as principal. These decades saw the growth of teacher Trade Unions, with a focus on security of contract and working conditions. Attitudes to management, as well as procedural structures that emerged from these sometimes turbulent negotiations have been embedded in the teaching culture. As religious congregations now ask lay teachers to embrace the management of core values of the school, they are likely to meet resistance and even apathy resulting from a time in the not-too-distant past when lay teachers were excluded from this sphere.

The paternalistic structures remained firmly in place until the mid-1960s, when external forces gave rise to a new understanding of religion and patriotism. With these changes came new demands about the role of education, and new responses from government at a system level and also from individual schools.

Integration

The late 1960s saw a dramatic change in Irish society. The newly formed Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) made strong recommendations on the reorganisation of the education system (OECD 1965, 1969). Education policy moved from a cultural paradigm to a human capital or a mercantile (market-driven) paradigm (O'Sullivan, 2005). The government aimed to raise the participation rates in secondary education and to develop a new curriculum that prepared students for an industrial and scientific age, rather than an agricultural economy. The national response was immediate and positive. Within a decade, the numbers in secondary schools had doubled, from 76,843 in 1961 to 157,234 in 1971, although the number of schools remained the same. There was a similar increase in numbers in vocational schools.

In responding to these changes, two factors merit special attention for their effect on the role of the religious congregations. The first refers to changes within the Church arising from the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), and the second result from the changed involvement of government in educational investment.

Vatican II asked congregations to return to their founding charism. Many congregations questioned the institutional works they were engaged in and changed

priorities, with individuals opting for work at community level in solidarity with marginalised groups in society (CORI, 1997). This change in direction, as well as the fact that many members left the congregations to embrace a more positive theology of work, marriage, and the laity, meant that there were fewer religious available to teach in the schools. In 1965, almost half the teachers in secondary schools (2,033 out of 4,235) were clerics or religious. In 1985, there were still 1,800 religious teaching, but by then the total teaching force in this sector had reached 16,000. The number of religious actively engaged in apostolic work has continued to drop dramatically. The decade between 1989 and 1999 saw the number of religious in secondary schools decrease from 1,711 to 528. The total number involved in all education ministry dropped from 4,091 to 1,669 (CMRS, 1972, 1973; Breen, 2001).

It is generally accepted that the period immediately after Vatican II was a period of confusion. In the wake of doubts cast on the institutional certainties of the past, there was a rejection of confessional apologetics in religious education syllabi. The operative model of Church in this period was that of community. There was a focus on the personal development of the individual. This entailed a shift from the *ex opere operato* approach to religion, where the effects were deemed to occur by virtue of the ritual, to an *ex opere operantis* approach, with a greater focus on the disposition and experience of the pupils. The approach emphasised a spirituality that proclaimed solidarity with humankind and promoted images of an immanent rather than a transcendent God. In classrooms, there was a greater emphasis on discussing moral issues than on learning formal doctrine. This focus on the individual was paralleled in the abandonment of traditional orthodox practice and the rejection of Church authority by many adults.

The 1970s and subsequent decades saw a growth in an anti-ideology movement in Ireland, where attempts were made to keep both Church and state at a distance. One example of this in the education sector was the changing role of parents. At one level, parents took the initiative in developing multid denominational schools at primary level. They came together to run schools as a cooperative, without external patronage. In general there was no antagonism to a faith dimension in the schools. The number of these schools continues to grow, as do a number of non-denominational schools set up under the same governance structure (Hyland, 1989). Many parents might now embrace a non-denominational system if it were available to them⁸ (Kellaghan et al., 2004).

The changed proportion of religious working in secondary schools affected the perception of ownership of the enterprise. This was also reinforced by increased

⁸ In a general survey of all levels of education, four questions on denominational schooling were put to respondents. The results showed some confusion over the current status of denominational schools. Unfortunately, the results are not analysed to highlight differences between primary and secondary education. On the rights of parents to be provided with separate schools to reflect cultural or religious views, 45% were in favour and 45% against. 61% indicated that some schools should be non-denominational. When asked if schools should be non-denominational but provide religious instruction, 61% agreed and 25% disagreed. When asked if schools should be non-denominational and religious instruction be provided outside school hours, 50% agreed and 35% disagreed.

government investment in schools in terms of both capital development and also at the operational level. To cope with the expansion of numbers, the government offered capital grants of 90% for new and refurbished buildings. Where demographic distributions required new schools and no religious congregation could provide the site, the government set up a new type of Community School, which was fully financed by the state. Although the ownership of the schools was different, the governance model involved trustees, who were appointed to a Board of Management along with different community interests. Where these schools have been formed as an amalgamation of existing schools, the religious congregations who were involved originally were often invited to act as trustees. In new “green-field” situations congregations were also invited to act as trustees. It seems that parents wanted some link with the value dimension of the Catholic tradition, while availing of the improved financial benefits of the new Community School structures. It also suited the congregations not to be involved in the burden of administering property, and to work at influencing educational values at Board of Management level.

The government promoted access to schooling by making it freely available. Schools were offered an extra “grant in lieu of fees.” Most congregations entered the free education scheme and agreed to abolish school fees. However, a number of schools, mainly in Dublin and some boarding schools, stayed outside the scheme. They continue to charge fees well in excess of the grant available to schools within the scheme—thus creating a two-tier system even within Catholic education.⁹ They attract pupils from the upper middle classes whose parents have the ability to invest in school fees. These schools are perceived to provide better facilities and opportunities for their alumni, a factor which may reflect more the social capital of the intake than the quality of the educational process. The demand for private, fee-paying schools reflects the privileged origins of the Catholic school system and is now a major stumbling block to developing an inclusive vision for Catholic education.

Table 1. The percentage of students in the different School types who attend fee-paying schools

	Nationally		Dublin Area	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Total Schools	9.2%	6.4%	21.0%	17.1%
All Voluntary	17.4%	11.3%	37.4%	28.6%
Catholic Voluntary	12.3%	6.6%	29.5%	21.6%

⁹ In 2002–2003, there was a total of 57 fee-paying schools in the voluntary sector. Of the 380 Catholic schools 34 were fee-paying, 28 of them in the Dublin area. Of the 24 non-Catholic schools 23 were fee-paying, but they avail of a special block grant that is distributed to protestant students on a means-tested basis. The provision of fee-paying education is illustrated in the Table 1. This shows the concentration of fee-paying schools in the Dublin area, and the more general focus on provision for boys. It should also be noted that many Catholics attend the fee-paying non-Catholic schools. Indeed, it is questionable whether many of these schools could survive without Catholic participation. As well as these “official schools,” there are a number of private “grind schools” providing full-time tuition. A significant number of students attend these schools for the final two years of their schooling.

The introduction of free education at post-primary level gave rise to a major influx of new students. Many of these students came from backgrounds that had no experience of post-primary education. This meant that secondary schools were meeting a very different calibre of student, one which they had traditionally avoided in the dual academic–vocational arrangement. The initial high failure rates soon made it apparent that the traditional academic education on offer was not helpful, and so began a series of curricular initiatives to link more with student experiences and needs. Allied with this, schools developed pastoral care initiatives to help students. Many religious were part of this development, especially retired teachers who worked alongside the school visiting and providing a social backup to families. This development fitted neatly with the pastoral orientation of many congregations, especially those that were founded in a philanthropic paradigm to deal with the poorer sections of society.¹⁰

With the second OECD report (1991) there was an increased emphasis on a more equitable distribution of education benefits. This has led to a new social welfare paradigm in education provision and legislation, which extends to those who live in disadvantaged conditions due to poverty and to those who have special educational needs. The government has also promoted the market concept of parents as consumers, and promoted their involvement in the system. There is now an increased investment in third-level education, and performance in secondary school is a means of selection to third-level courses. This means that second-level education is often regarded in utilitarian terms—as a means of entry to prestigious career pathways. This puts extra pressure on secondary schools in terms of academic results. In line with this consumer approach, there has been a growing demand for data on school performance “to help parents make appropriate educational choices.” Normally, the demands are for crude measures of examination success rather than performance on personal development policies (Walshe, 1999).

The shift from an institutional to a community model of church was ambivalent. Most people responded positively to the new spirituality, although many were confused by the lack of a unifying identity as religion was recast as a humanistic rather than an eschatological value system. In education, the response of some religious congregations whose members moved out of schools, cast doubts on formal education as a valid apostolate, and this was perceived negatively by lay teachers. Not everyone embraced the move from an academic to a “comprehensive” culture. Later development which saw amalgamation of schools and a definite government preference for coeducation, reinforced a nostalgia for an academic past. Some Catholic schools resisted the change through selection policies and controlled pupils by allocating them to different academic streams. There was a real tension between the espoused rhetoric of an inclusive Catholic school and the practice of maintaining the reputation of the school as

¹⁰ Many Congregations developed approaches to pastoral care with retired sisters working with parents or deprived families. The Presentation Sisters and the Mercy Sisters also made special provision for Traveller Children in their schools.

a competitive academic enterprise. All the time, there was a growing sense that schools were more and more responsive to external government initiatives and the demands of ambitious parents than to the religious managers.

The social welfare paradigm sits uneasily alongside the human capital and mercantile paradigm that has a strong grip on the education system. Schools struggle with the demand to produce high academic achievement and also to welcome pupils who find it hard to adapt socially and behaviourally to a schooling culture foreign to their experience. The tension created between these paradigms is a key issue in shaping the response of religious congregations to planning their role in the future of Catholic education.

Challenges

Religious congregations have responded to the changed circumstances in many different ways. They have developed programmes both within the schools and within local communities that witness to the Catholic inspiration of the school. In this section, I will focus on three areas of response to governance concerns—leadership succession, ownership, and identity.

Leadership Succession

Initial responses within congregations to the changing context of schools were very defensive. The congregations saw the schools as a “family firm,” over which they had ownership and control rights. They tended to see political developments as attempts at a hostile take over of the family business. As their numbers decreased, they held on to key positions of authority as principals and managers of the schools. However, as vocations decreased dramatically, congregations found it difficult to find high-calibre individuals among their members to fill key positions. Gradually, lay teachers were appointed to key leadership positions.

The rationale behind developments was ambiguous. Congregations realised that partnership was a more authentic approach to the new way of thinking within the Church. They set up Boards of Management with representation from parents and teachers. However, they were also under pressure from teacher trade unions on the rights and roles of lay teachers and their promotional opportunities. There was a suspicion that many congregations embraced the changes out of necessity rather than conviction. A similar suspicion exists today as congregations invite lay leaders to take on the spiritual leadership of the school. There is a tension between the positive theology of baptism and the pragmatic need of the congregations as their numbers dwindle.

The effects of the secular society impact as much on teachers as it does on pupils and their families. In Ireland, it would appear that many teachers have not made a conscious decision to teach in Catholic schools because of the mission of that school. There was a limited choice between these schools and the vocational schools, and they were familiar with the values of these schools through their

own education. This has major implications for leadership succession in Catholic schools. In general, the schools have been blessed by the first generation of lay principals, those who taught alongside religious and imbibed by osmosis the value systems. However, the pace of change in Irish education has been so fast that the second generation of lay principals, raised immediately after Vatican II, will have a very different grounding in Catholic education.¹¹

Most teachers do not find any incongruence between the academic and pastoral values of the Catholic school and their own philosophy of education. However, they do not see or talk about their work as an explicit Christian mission. They see themselves as good people who try to develop human values in their pupils. This is part of a culture where lay people in Ireland have not been nourished on a theological level, particularly in a theology that reflects on professional experience. Theological reflection is still not part of public discourse, where there is often confusion between paradigms of engagement and indoctrination; between discourse and confrontation. Theology is not a subject in universities, and has only recently been available as part of adult education programmes.

Lay principals comment regularly that their religious formation finished at the end of secondary school and they feel very inadequate in leading the spiritual dimension of the school (Feheny, 1998; Tuohy et al., 2000).

Theological training was initially aimed at providing catechists for the schools. The courses have not yet impacted on educational leadership to any great extent. Religious congregations have done little to provide for, or to develop a capacity for spiritual leadership among their lay colleagues. Some congregations have established Education Offices that provide opportunities for principals and Boards of Management to reflect on gospel issues.¹² However, this approach depends on getting good people into position first, then giving them in-service. The challenge is to introduce the key concepts of Catholic education to teachers early in their careers, so that the personal, professional, and spiritual dimensions of their lives grow in an integrated way. With an increased fluency in theological reflection, they will then be more confident leaders of the Catholic school. This is not just a concern for schools. It will be impossible to ask lay people to lead the future of Catholic education when they have no role in the wider Church. What is required is a deeper renewal of the Church to give voice to the priestly, prophetic, and royal charism each person receives at baptism.

Ownership Structures

Leadership succession is not limited to roles within the school. Many congregations are facing their demise and are currently preparing for a succession in

¹¹ See Grace (2002) for a description of a similar situation in England.

¹² Originally religious congregations committed their own members to education offices to support their schools. In more recent years they have employed lay people to work in these offices. They hold regular meetings for principals and board members. Tuohy (2005) is a resource book of gospel reflections arising from work with the Presentation Congregation in Ireland.

trusteeship. In this context trusteeship refers to the ownership and stewardship of property for the mission of education, and also responsibility for the characteristic spirit or ethos of the school.

One response to the issue of ownership has been to invite the bishops to become trustees of the schools run by congregations. In some cases, bishops have accepted the schools, but in most cases they have refused. Many bishops feel overburdened with their role in primary schools, and there is reluctance on the part of parish clergy to serve on Boards of Management. Their decision reflects the historical distance of the bishops from secondary education; the growing complexity of the legal responsibilities of trustees under new legislation, and also the financial realities of supporting schools where government funding remains inadequate for the service expected.

Some congregations have set up Trust Boards, which have a separate legal identity from the congregation. In this transition period, these Boards have both religious and lay trustees. Other congregations are in the process of setting up such Boards.¹³ There are still a number of congregations which have not yet committed themselves to new structures for the future. As well as setting up Trusts as a service to the individual schools, there has also been discussion on setting up Association of Educational Trusts (AET). This AET would have representation from the bishops and the different school trusts. Its aim would be to negotiate with government on trustee issues and to be an advocate for Catholic education. Whereas most people admit the need for political expertise in promoting Catholic education in the emerging multicultural Ireland, others have reservations about the creation of such a bloc. The strategy of the last 20 years has been to influence government by the authenticity of the values espoused in the schools. For many, the AET means reverting to power politics. There is a delicate balance between protecting the existence of Catholic schools that give the opportunity to witness to gospel values, and insisting on preserving the present structure of school governance in a changing culture. Particularly where the only obvious systemic initiative has been to put power structures in place, there is some unease as to the future of Catholic education.

In Church, in politics and in education we have inherited models of governance that are hierarchical and bureaucratic. The struggle is to find ways of ensuring the mission in a way that is faithful to the past yet bears integrity to the core message of the Gospel. The temptation is to try and copper-fasten the role of the school by a strict definition of how it will be run—to define the Catholic school as a product or a franchise, rather than a living and evolving reality. The call is to live with hope in an uncertain future and not seek to make the Holy Spirit redundant and to deny his or her continual activity in history.

¹³ The Loreto and Spiritans have Trust Boards in place. There are three other Trusts in an advance stage of design: Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST), dealing mainly with Christian Brother schools; Catholic Education – Irish Schools Trust (CEIST), consisting mainly of schools run by the Presentation and Mercy sisters and LE CHÉILE, an Irish term meaning “together,” where 14 congregations are exploring a new form of collaborative trusteeship.

Handing over responsibility for Catholic schools is complex. At one level, there is an invitation to lay people to be involved in a central mission of the Church. At another level, the congregations are seen to be engaged in a last-ditch effort to preserve their influence. Concerns have been raised that both the content of the charters and the monitoring structures are burdens that the congregations themselves did not have to deal with in the past. The congregations established and developed their schools in a very stable Catholic culture. This is not the situation that most Catholic schools face today, and in the period since Vatican II, issues have become complex rather than been simplified. The rush to make explicit the principles by which schools will move to the future, and the monitoring of the operation of these principles is seen as both a necessity and an imposition. These principles are core to the future of Catholic identity in Irish education.

Catholic Identity

The period of economic expansion since the late 1960s has had major effect on the Irish economy. The “Celtic Tiger” growth over the last ten years has been spectacular. As well as contributing to an increased standard of living, there has been a major shift in cultural values. For many commentators, Ireland is well on the way to being a post-Christian, secular, and materialist society (Cassidy, 1996; Gallagher, 1997). This is not unique to Ireland and reflects a globalisation of value systems. In a country used to emigration, there is now an issue of integrating new cultures due to an increasing international profile in the population. Schools find themselves introducing pupils to Catholic values, sometimes with little or no home support, where normally these values would have been assumed. Both the Church, and Catholic schools, are struggling to develop a new sense of identity based on the model of Church as herald or evangelist (Dulles, 1977). There has been a shift from seeing schools as a means of *educating Catholics* in closed, protected environments to giving a *Catholic education* for all. The emphasis here is on the value dimension of a school that both proclaims the Word of God and witnesses to it in a way that engages in a dynamic dialogue between faith and culture. However, this is a contested area in Catholic understanding. Some see the future of Catholic education as *an option* within a more secular state system. They are in favour of handing over control of a number of present schools to the state, and running a smaller number of schools, with a very definite Catholic character. The struggle here is to find a balance between a defensive building up of the ramparts, developing an open dialogue with the emerging cultural paradigms, and avoiding a position where the message of the gospel is swamped by a secular culture in such a way that it becomes ineffective.

Part of this debate has been to ask what does the term “Catholic” *add* to a school. In many ways, this has been a divisive exercise. Catholic schools will be the same as *all* other schools, *some* other schools and *no* other schools, all at the same time. They will share many concerns with schools involved purely in a humanistic approach to education. A key area for Catholic schools will be to make explicit the role of faith formation in the dynamic of education.

New alliances need to be forged in developing a faith formation programme with explicit partnerships between home, school, and parish. There is a danger that the Catholic school becomes an isolated, self-referring religious experience, where young people develop a taste for the spiritual. If there is no follow-up outside the school, then it will be difficult for young people to sustain that spirituality in the transition to third-level studies or the world of work. They then begin to think of their school experience as a nostalgic factor of childhood that they have outgrown. These support elements can no longer be assumed and need to be actively forged.

A key element in the future of the Catholic school is the commitment of teachers to the mission. One approach is to see the “Catholic” dimension as an added extra to the school—a kind of icing on the cake. The school runs its own powerful dynamic, but also incorporates rituals that reflect Catholic values. These rituals are organised by a core element of committed faith leaders. They are almost an optional extra, in that those who do not like the icing can leave it on the side. A second approach is to see the Catholic dimension as the leaven. It is a pervasive presence in the school, informing all aspects of the school. At curricular level, it is not just the preserve of the Religious Education programme. It is something that informs all subjects. There may not be a Catholic mathematics, but there may well be a Catholic way of teaching and learning the subject. This has implications for a whole-school approach to Catholic education. Heretofore, this has developed at the implicit rather than the explicit level.

If the fears of the congregations in the previous period was of a hostile takeover, the fears in the current age are those of aged parents who need to hand-over the family business to their children, and they are not sure what values the children may bring to the enterprise. As congregations define mission statements for the future, and appoint lay trustees to carry on their mission, they are struggling to find new structures to promote and support discernment. They are trying to avoid putting new wine into old skins, with disastrous consequences. Whereas some congregations may see themselves as writing a last will and testament, others are taking the opportunity to rewrite a covenant for education. This covenant points back to gospel values rather than congregational ownership. The inspiration for the founders of the different congregations was the teaching of Jesus, and it is important not to confuse the sign and that to which the sign points.

Research

Somewhat surprisingly, there is no tradition of research on specifically Catholic education in Ireland. The Catholic dimension of education has remained, until recently, unproblematic. The values dimension of the Catholic school has been taken for granted in the conceptualisation of education in Ireland and has not been the subject of specific analysis in research. There are no overarching studies such as those of Flynn (1985) in Australia, Convey (1992), Bryk et al. (1993) in

the USA. Despite the contribution of the Irish Church to the development of Catholic education in Australia, the UK, and the USA, there is no analysis of Irish education in McLaughlin et al.'s (1996) comprehensive overview of Catholic education in the UK and the USA. Broadly speaking, three areas of research—historical, psychological, and sociological—contribute to building up a picture of educational trends and inferences can be drawn from these studies as to role of Catholic education.

Historical Perspectives

From a historical perspective, one of the recurring themes in reviews of Irish education has been a commentary on the influence of the Church both in Irish society and in education. The declining influence since the 1960s has been well documented. In general, the Church has been treated as a monolithic power, and little differentiation has been made as to the role of different congregations (Whyte, 1971; Wall, 1982; Inglis, 1987; Lee, 1987; Nic Ghiolla Phádraig, 1995). In general, this research has focused on inputs rather than outputs. It describes the actors rather than the effects on pupils. The focus has been mainly on the provision and control of educational facilities. Specific research on religious congregations in education focused on personnel issues and consequences for future provision (CMRS, 1972, 1973; Breen, 2001). Other research has attempted to describe changes in approaches to governance structures over the past quarter century (Doyle, 2000; Keating, 2006). This research is mostly of interest to those who wish to trace changes in governance structures and approaches to management.

Little attention has been paid to the Catholic nature of the education provided. When religious congregations have reflected on their own contribution, the focus again has been mainly on inputs. Most of the research has been historical—capturing the founding values of the congregation in hagiographical terms. It is only in the last ten years that there has been a serious attempt to grapple with the nature of the Catholic school from a visionary perspective. The Conference of Religious of Ireland (Brennan et al., 1991; CORI, 1996), Mater Dei (Lane, 1992; Hogan & Williams, 1997), the Christian Brothers (Furlong & Monaghan, 2000; Prendergast & Monaghan, 2003) and some individuals (Feheney, 1998) have published reflection papers on the development of a Catholic ethos. The research has tended to be descriptive or inspirational (and occasionally prescriptive), rather than evaluative. The focus has been on what has been done, or needs to be done by schools (inputs) rather than on an analysis of the effectiveness of interventions on pupil outcomes.

Psychological Perspectives

Researchers have paid very little attention to the psychological engagement of students and teachers with the value dimension of Catholic education. Where such research exists, it has tended to be qualitative rather than quantitative. The

Youth 2K project (Tuohy & Cairns, 2000) commissioned by Marino focused on the values of young people, and included a major section on the experience of faith development in schools. The *Beyond Nostalgia* project (Tuohy et al., 2000) commissioned by the Presentation sisters focused on faith perspectives of principals and catechists. These have given rise to a number of smaller but unpublished research projects as part of postgraduate studies. To date there has not been a comprehensive study on parental attitudes to and satisfaction with Catholic values in education.

The research community in Ireland is gradually beginning to focus on the student voice in education. *Primary Voices* (Deegan et al., 2004) is a collection of essays and shorter research projects that gives voice to parents and students in primary schools. It includes reflections of parents from minority religious groups on their experience of school choice. Research from the ESRI has focused on the differences in school experience for students at secondary level (Hannan et al., 1996; Smyth, 1999). Although not focusing directly on Catholic schools, this research has distinguished different approaches to schooling within the Catholic sector, particularly with regard to streaming and discipline. The ESRI is currently engaged in a longitudinal study of student experience in secondary schools (Smyth et al., 2004, 2006). Researchers such as Lynch & Lodge (2002) have focused on the dynamics of power in the classroom. Lyons et al. (2003) have applied some of these insights to the mathematics classroom. There has been no similar systematic approach to religion in the classroom.

At primary level, there has been some reflection on the role of religious education for faith development (Kieran & Hession, 2005). At secondary level, the focus has mainly been on the introduction of RE as an examination subject (Devitt, 2000; Byrne, 2004; Cunnane, 2004). Mater Dei Institute is the main provider of catechists to the secondary sector, and there are a number of unpublished theses that describe student responses to the Religious Education programme. Other authors have focused on issues related to Catholic ethos—Conaty (2002) on Home, School, and Community Liaison, Norman (2003) on chaplaincy and Feheney (2002) on pastoral care. Most of these publications are based on aspirational or anecdotal, rather than descriptive and analytical of current practice.

Sociological Perspectives

Since the advent of free education there has been a marked change in educational discourse as researchers focused on the consumption of education (Hannan et al., 1983; Greaney & Kellaghan, 1984; Whelan & Whelan, 1985; Hannan & Boyle, 1987; Lynch, 1988, 1999). They pointed to major inequalities among those who benefited from the education provided and to the existence of middle-class elites whose agendas dominate the organisation of schooling. They point to the continuing and constant level of alienation within the system (Hannan & Shortall, 1991; Boldt, 1997). These studies have not focused on Catholic education per se, although by virtue of the demographics of Irish education, it has challenged

thinking in Catholic schools. A particular feature of this challenge is the history that Catholic secondary schools selected students into their academic programmes and left the less academic student to the vocational system. With the abolition of the curricular distinction between schools, schools in general have become more inclusive. However, there are still mechanisms in place whereby certain schools retain a de facto exclusivity, particularly at a local level. Having a name for being inclusive frequently attracts less academically inclined students, leaving other schools to reap academic rewards. The research describes these mechanisms in terms of class and economic power related to school choice. In effect, it poses a major challenge to a common vision of Catholic education as an inclusive system, working from an ethic of service to all. This is particularly true when a sizeable number of Catholic schools align themselves with the more exclusive fee-paying sector.

As part of its response to this challenge, the education desk of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors set up its own research projects. They replicated the studies on access and provision, and interpreted them in the light of a Catholic mission in education (CORI, 1988, 1989a, 1989b, 1992, 1998, 1999). They also acted as advocates for the disadvantaged in policy debates.¹⁴ To the extent that national education policy has responded positively in developing a social welfare paradigm alongside the strong mercantile paradigm that had been established (OECD, 1991), Catholic education has had a pronounced influence on that development.

A Research Agenda for Catholic Education

As Catholic education in Ireland faces the future, it will probably become a minority system. For some time yet, the growing non-denominational system will be influenced by Catholic traditions and by the commitment of Catholic teachers in these schools. In this context, formal Catholic education will need to be more explicit about its mission. It seems to me that this gives rise to three core issues for a future research agenda.

1. Identity

Given the changing context of educational policy in Ireland, schools face the identity issue on three levels—as schools; as schools that are Catholic; and as schools that are Catholic in the Irish context. *All* schools face identity challenges in the culture of globalisation of the curriculum and the “commodification” of educational qualifications. They must deal with a growing individualisation from students and parents in the demand for educational services. These trends pose particular challenges for Catholic schools that espouse a community and

¹⁴ The publication list of the Education Commission of the Conference of Religious of Ireland includes responses to the Education Bill and the Education Act, the Points Commission, and other issues relating to assessment, Regional Education Councils, and Local Education Committees.

humanitarian dimension to both the content of what they offer and also in who they serve. It brings the Catholic school into a unique dialogue with the changing culture, and at times the school may have to offer countercultural witness to values that insist of a better quality of life rather than a higher standard of living. In Ireland, this educational dialogue will focus on three strategic issues. The first of these can be termed product leadership, where the aim is to maintain a high quality “output” from schools in order to keep Ireland in a highly competitive position in terms of economic development. The second issue relates to operational efficiency. Government demands for accountability, and the systems in place to monitor schools, make strong demands on schools to be compliant rather than innovative. In that regard, there is a danger that the vision of Catholic schooling may be colonised by consumerist approaches to education that are at variance with the core vision of Catholic education. The third strategic goal can be termed customer intimacy and reflects the quality of service offered to students and parents. This has implications for inclusive schools in a developing multicultural society. The challenges are seen in helping students develop an identity that reflects a new multicultural Ireland, and integrates elements of the historical culture with a European and international identity.

The research challenge is in developing indicators around that identity, and finding ways of measuring these indicators and discussing the implications of them for Catholic identity. We have seen the development of educational indicators at OECD and EU level. Even at national level, the inspectorate has developed indicators for school evaluation. It is time to focus on some equivalent in terms of Catholic schools as base-line data against which developments can be monitored and debated. Of course, the bigger agenda will be to remain faithful to a Catholic identity in the face of any research findings. This agenda gives scope to comparative research projects with other countries, where Catholic education has already forged an identity as a minority group in a larger state system—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA to mention English-speaking countries. Ireland has much to learn, and contribute, to this agenda.

2. Charism

Charism is linked to identity. The research agenda is to map the transition from a charism that has been embedded in the religious congregations to a charism of being priests, prophets, and kings that we all share baptism. Here, the focus will be on people in the system, rather than the institutions.

The charism of any religious congregation is a gift firstly to the Church, and in a particular way to the members of the congregations. It is in terms of the recognised gift to the Church that the congregations are now making explicit that charism and promoting structures to continue it into the future. However, just as the dialogue with culture shapes how the Church understands the gospel, so also the experience of charism, with a reduced influence from the congregations, will change the concept of the charism. This process gives rise to many opportunities

for action research in school and leadership development. The aim of such research projects will be to build capacity for spiritual leadership and professional theological reflection. The agenda needs to move beyond structures and aspirations, and focus on the dynamics of integrating professional concerns with a personal and corporate spirituality. For leaders, the focus will be on communicating vision and empowering others. For teachers, it will mean an exploration of their subject area as a revelation of God's creation, and their contribution to a whole-school Catholic ethos. For students, it will be an invitation to see their present and their future as a participation in God's bigger picture.

The changing context within Catholic schools and the changing context of Catholic education within the national system, provide unique opportunities to engage in this type of research. In terms of understanding and developing capacity, the agenda is urgent. The action research dynamic, with cycles of review, design, action, and evaluation, offers a fruitful way of engaging with this agenda.

3. Impact

There is a tendency in research to focus on describing and analysing inputs. This is an important service. There is also a need to develop an evaluative mindset, where the focus is on the impact of education. The aim of such research would be to establish a clear description of what actually happens in Catholic schools in terms of their impact on students and families. If the Catholic school aspires to a sacramental dimension—where the community in some way encounters Jesus in a more personal way and individuals are invited to commitment—then there needs to be an evaluation that goes beyond nostalgic anecdotes about schools. This means grappling with the religious sensibility of young people and their engagement with the world of spirituality—their relationship with God, with the gospel message as a way of life and the church as a community of believers. This poses major challenges in terms of methodologies, especially in developing methodologies that give voice to those who are the subject of the research. For such research is not an objective laboratory observation. It is participatory and emancipatory. From a Catholic perspective, the search for meaning in the lives of young people, their parents and teachers throws a new light on the current reality of the school, and challenges the participants to develop new ways of relating to one another that are both an evangelisation of the school community, and also a celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit alive and active in the world, bringing creation to completion. The research agenda is, in common with the general research agenda, to document people's experience of schooling and their engagement with the values espoused by schools. The challenge for research in Catholic schools will be to link the analysis to the positive and holistic anthropology of Catholic education. This research may well help participants to see a deeper dimension to their human experience and to name it as spiritual. It should also facilitate the schools' responsiveness to the challenges they face in integrating gospel values into their work.

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THE EDUCATION BATTLE: THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE SPANISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Maria del Mar Griera

The Catholic Church has played and continues to play a key role in the evolution and configuration of the Spanish education system. Today, more than 21% of compulsory education pupils study at Catholic schools and this figure does not appear to be falling. In this article, after a few short preliminary notes on the role of Catholic institutions in the education system, we will focus on an analysis of the challenges being faced today by the Catholic Church and the responses offered by the various Catholic institutions.

First, we focus on an analysis of Church–State relations. The consolidation of the role of the Church in the education system has been the subject of one of the most virulent controversies in Spanish society over the last century. Opposition between the conservative sectors (with which the Church has mainly been identified) and the progressive sectors of the political and social sphere has turned the educational field¹ into a major scenario for confrontation. The Second Republic and Franco's Dictatorship that followed were the most decisive moments in a confrontation that has calmed somewhat in times of democracy. However, although arguments today are not as heated as they were of old, disputes between the conservative and progressive sectors continue to affect both the educational policies and configurations of the Spanish governments. These constant ideological battles make it difficult to establish a climate for dialogue in which the situation of education can be approached from within a stable political and social climate. Today therefore, Catholic institutions are facing the challenge of creating a climate for dialogue capable of promoting improvement in education that reaches beyond its most immediate interests.

Second, we focus on an analysis of the challenges facing moral and religious education in a plural and secularised society. The process of Spanish secularisation has been violent and conflictive. From 1939 until the end of the 1970s, Spain

¹ Defined in Bourdieu's terms (1991).

lived under a dictatorship that granted the Catholic religion a moral monopoly over the country. The fall of the Dictatorship obliged the Church to quickly restructure both itself and its discourse in order to make these compatible with the new democracy. Moreover, at the turn of the century, this need for adapting the practices and discourses of the Catholic Church has had to readdress itself again with the increasing arrival of immigrants from other religions and cultures, and the increasing presence of non-Catholic pupils in Catholic schools. Rethinking the religious and moral education offered by educational institutions is the second major challenge facing Catholic institutions.

Third, and more briefly, we focus on an analysis of the challenges being generated by Vatican Council II, and the demand for the “option of the poor” highlighted in its conclusions. Catholic schools in Spain during the 18th and 19th centuries mainly centred their attention on educating the well-to-do classes. Vatican Council II proposed the need to revise this. Currently, the neoliberal context and deregulatory strategies of public services are generating new uncertainties with respect to the role of Catholic institutions in contributing to the common good.

Finally, we briefly review the state of educational research into these issues in Spain today.

Preliminary Notes on the Role of the Catholic Church in the Current Education System

Democracy and balance between educational agents has led to the creation of a dual public education system. Two different school networks provide compulsory and free education: state schools and private state-subsidised schools (most of which are Catholic). Finally, there is a third group which is the independent private schools, some of which are Catholic as well. Therefore, the Catholic Church in Spain is a part of both state and private educational networks. The percentage of students in Catholic schools can be seen, by level of education: in Table 1.

If we look at Table 2, we can see that, in the levels of compulsory education—primary and secondary (3–16 years old), Catholic schools have a higher proportion of students (21.60% and 22.70% respectively) than in the non-compulsory levels. The presence of the Catholic Church in the compulsory educational stages is larger than in the other stages. That is because the Government finances schools in those levels so that free education is provided. The percentage of the subsidised levels (financed with public funding) of Catholic schools can be seen: in Table 2.

Therefore, some schools can be regarded as public or private depending on the level of education which we look at. State funding in all levels has been constantly claimed by Catholic schools.

The ownership of Catholic schools is distributed among different organisations. Religious orders and congregations predominate with 74% of the schools, followed with a far lesser proportion by foundations and other Catholic organisations (11.3%), followed by dioceses and parishes (8.5%), and finally a group of a few schools administered by Catholic Cooperatives, Parents Associations, etc. Among

Table 1. Students classified by level of education in Catholic schools and percentage within the entire education system (From FERE, 2006)

Levels	Total students education system	Students in Catholic Education	
		Absolute Figures	% on the whole
Total (non-university education)	6,968,168	1,393,549	20.00
Nursery Infant Education	1,419,307	261,832	18.50
Primary Education*	2,494,598	538,624	21.60
Secondary Compulsory Education*	1,876,322	426,526	22.70
Post Compulsory Secondary Education	632,154	102,549	16.20
Occupational Training	466,474	60,443	13.00
Special Education	29,283	3,675	12.60
Total (University Education)	1,462,771	132,197	9.00
TOTAL	8,430,939	1,525,846	18.10

* Compulsory Education

Table 2. Total or subsidized levels in Catholic schools, classified by level of education. Course 2004/5 (From FERE, 2005)

Levels	Total Units (1)	Subsidized Units (2)	% 2/1
Nursery Infant Education	11,497	6,808	59.22
Primary Education*	22,150	22,090	99.73
Secondary Compulsory Education *	15,641	15,549	99.41
Post Compulsory Secondary Education	3,812	1,521	39.90
Occupational Training	2,679	2,495	93.13
Special Education	423	417	95.58
Total (Non-university Education)	526,202	48,880	86.97

* Compulsory Education

the Religious Congregations, although there are not exact figures, the Company of the Daughters of Charity together with Carmelite Missionary are the feminine orders with more students. Salesian Fathers and The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) are among the masculine. (FERE, 1999).

In Spain, different organisations represent Catholic education. First of all, there is FERE-CECA (Spanish Federation of Religious of Education), the organisation that embraces almost all Catholic Educational Centres in Spain. It is a federation of holders of Catholic schools with a statutory-connection to the head office in Rome. It is aimed at dealing with the Government, creating spaces for debate and training, etc. 77.9% of Catholic centres belong to FERE and it has federations everywhere in Spain except in Catalonia² (FERE,

² In Catalonia, because of its own national nature and its education system's history, there is an organisation called *Serveis Educatius de Catalunya* (Educational Services of Catalonia) which embraces most of the Catholic centres. Nevertheless, in spite of its independence this organisation has a good relationship and many communication means together with FERE-CECA.

2005, p.14). FERE-CECA created in 1989 the organisation EyG (Education and Management), which manages Catholic centres and gives technical, legal, and economic advice to FERE-CECA centres. Within the Catholic map there is the CONCAPA (Catholic Parents Association)³ and represents more than 3,000,000 parents.⁴ The teachers of Catholic educational centres have no trade union of their own, although most of them gather in the trade union FSIE (Spain's Independent Trade Unions Federation).

Finally, before concluding this brief background about the role of the Catholic Church in the Spanish education system, we cannot ignore the role that the Church has on the teaching of Religion in all schools. That is, starting from the Agreement between the Vatican and the Spanish Government in 1979 and the agreements of the Spanish Constitution (1978) every school in Spain must offer a subject on confessional religious education which is optional for students and non-evaluated. The selection of teachers and the contents of this subject are dealt with by the Spanish Episcopal Conference. The figures on the students taking this subject vary depending on who offers it. This way, according to the Spanish Episcopal Conference 88.3% of the students study this subject in Primary Education and 66.9%⁵ in Secondary Education (Conferencia Episcopal Española, 2005). On the other hand, the platform for Public Education⁶ or the trade union STES stated that these figures are very oversized.

So, the Church has a very prominent role in the Spanish education system, whether it is because of the large amount of students it embraces or for its presence in every school with the subject of Catholic Religion.

Church—State Relations: A Chronicle of Ambiguous Relations

According to Calero and Bonal (1999) there has historically been a wide division on education issues between conservative sectors (which include the Catholic Church) and progressive sectors, a division that still exists today. This division has led to educational controversies being focused more on ideological questions (the role of the subject of confessional religion, role of catholic schools in the public network, etc.) than on matters of pedagogy, innovation and quality. All experts on educational matter claim there is a need to find a consensus in the question of education that can establish legislative stability and a social and political climate from which the needs to improve the education system can be approached in greater serenity. Constant ideological disputes make it difficult

³ In Catalonia there is also a Catholic Parents Association which is independent from the State Association.

⁴ Nevertheless, the data have often been argued about.

⁵ See on Spanish Episcopal Conference (2005). Retrieved on November 2005 from http://www.conferenciaepiscopal.es/actividades/2005/febrero_14.htm

⁶ See, as an example, CEAPA (2005). Retrieved on November 2005 from http://www.ceapa.es/textos/notasprensa/notas_120.htm

to establish an education system that is focused on strengthening education for everybody, avoiding school failure and improving teaching quality. Catholic-Church institutions have a huge responsibility for achieving this stable climate and improving the situation of public education in a way that reaches beyond their own specific and immediate interests. This is one of the challenges facing the Catholic Church at the start of the new millennium.

Background to the Conflict

The confrontation between the Catholic Church and progressive sectors cannot be understood without appreciating the evolution of the role of the Catholic Church in the education system throughout the last century. Today's disputes are the consequence of a history of persistent conflicts, the Spanish Civil War and other confrontations.

The Catholic Church has played a key role in the political and social history of Spain and in the conformation of the education system. Until the mid-19th century, the Catholic Church almost held a monopoly over secondary education in Spain,⁷ and despite the numerous struggles it had to face, it was in a hegemonic position until the arrival of democracy. However, the coexistence of the Church with its detractors was not easy, as education was the privileged battlefield for the struggles between confessionalists and laicists throughout the 20th century.

The confrontation came to one of its most decisive moments in the Second Republic (1931–1936) when the laicist and left-wing sectors came to power and decided to restructure the education situation, taking drastic measures that were detrimental to Church actions. Plans were made to replace the Church's role in education though a state network of schools and a law was promoted that would prohibit the educational activity of religious congregations in Spain. The controversy that followed was so strong that even Pope Pius XI intervened with the Encyclical *Dilectissima nobis* (3/06/1933) that tackled the Spanish problem, stating:

From all this, alas, appears too clearly the purpose they intend to achieve with such regulations, namely that of educating new generations in a spirit of religious indifference if not anticlericalism, tearing from the young souls the traditional Catholic sentiments so deeply rooted in the good people of Spain. Thus it is sought to make laic all teaching which hitherto was inspired by religion and Christian morality. In the face of a law so injurious to ecclesiastical rights and liberties... we believe that it is precisely the duty of Our Apostolic Ministry to reprove and condemn it (Tineo, 1996, p. 76)

⁷ There was a difference between the positions of the Church in the different education levels. Despite the Church had the monopoly of Secondary School the State Schools were predominant on the Primary level (Tineo, 1996).

However, the change of political forces following the 1933 elections put a halt to the offensive against the Catholic Church, and although there would be further moments of major tension, the confrontation over educational matters calmed down somewhat. All the same, the conflicts between conservative sectors (with the Catholic Church at the head) and progressive sectors would reach their height with the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). In the years of the Civil War, education was considered an ideological weapon and in those areas where the Republican army was in the majority, all religious schools were suppressed, leading to the creation of Workers Institutes and anarchist-oriented schools, etc. Meanwhile, in areas dominated by Franco's troops, Catholic Schools were strengthened and all laicist-oriented initiatives were suppressed. All religious schools closed ranks around the hierarchy's decisions, while the progressive sectors identified the Church as one of the most serious problems in Spanish society. Discussions about educational questions were a zero-sum game, in which some groups won and others lost. There was no room for cooperative strategies.

The end of the war and the start of the Franco Dictatorship returned the Catholic Church to its preponderant role in the education system. The Ministry of Education was headed by Catholics and the union between religion and politics in education was promoted. The situation of the Catholic Church in the educational field was consolidated by the signing of an Agreement between the Spanish State and the Holy See on August 27, 1953. An Agreement that according to the *l'Observatore Romano* did not stipulate

putting an end to a state of discord or closing a period of tension, but rather corroborating and stabilising an already existing state of fact (Tineo, 1996, p. 83)

1953 represented a decisive point in the positive relations between State and Church. Education was developed on the basis of Catholic dogma and religious teaching was imparted in all schools, public, or private, and at all levels, even at the University. It also granted “the Church hierarchy the right to inspect Education, at all teaching centres, in order to ensure the purity of the faith, proper behaviour, and religious education. Moreover, it had the power to prohibit texts were considered detrimental to Catholic doctrine, and to determine what was anti-religious, anti-Catholic or immoral” (Tineo, 1996, p. 85).

The following years brought about the start of a slight economic improvement and the industrialisation of Spain. Meanwhile, opposition to the Franco regime began appearing in greater force. In the 1960s, a process of distancing by the Church from the regime began, which in the 1970s would lead to open hostility. It was also at this time that proposals were made to remodel the education system in order to confront the period of social modernisation and economic growth.⁸ The *Libro Blanco de la Educación (White Paper on Education)*

⁸ In 1960 only 6% of the adult Spanish population had completed mid-level educational studies (MEC, 1969, p. 37).

was published in February 1969 to set out the bases for future educational reform. This was to be a reform based on the need to establish compulsory free education to the age of 14, to overcome inequalities between urban and rural environments, the establishment of professional training, etc. The Church was ambiguous in its attitude to these reforms but, on the issue of a dual education network in which state schools would be free and Catholic schools would be paid for, it uncompromisingly took on the establishment. Finally, the General Education Law was passed on 4 August 1970. The death of the Spanish Dictator Francisco Franco (1975) and the arrival of democracy put the debate over education on the table once again. Controversy surrounding issues of education was at the forefront of both the constitutional debate and of relations between Church and State. After intense discussion and public controversy, a consensual agreement was reached between the Church and the different social and political forces that were to be known as the Moncloa Pacts and the 1978 Spanish Constitution, respectively.

It was then that the polarity between the two sectors (conservative and progressive) began to blur, due to two simultaneous factors. First, the influence of Vatican Council II obliged Catholic institutions in Spain to rethink their situation in light of established agreements, and generated the need to adopt more conciliatory positions (Seglers, 2005). Meanwhile, the perception by all of the factions involved of the evident need to modernise the education system obliged them to put their ideological differences to one side.⁹

Agreement was easy in such areas as the right to education, free and compulsory basic education, the responsibility of public authorities for inspecting, and validating the education system and the autonomy of the University. However, as Bonal (2000) puts it “both groups had to renounce at least some of their principles to achieve an agreement. Thus, if left-wing parties accepted a significant presence of publicly financed private education, parental right to choose religious education for their children and a significant margin of parental school choice, the conservatives had to accept some type of control over the subsidised private sector: the non-compulsory character of religion in the curriculum, the academic freedom of teachers and the participation of the educational community in school decision-making” (p. 204). The agreements reached introduced sufficient ambiguity for subsequent legislative measures to be linked to the political orientation and ideology of each government. It is this ambiguity that explains how, from the time of the Constitution to the present, six general laws have been passed in reference to the education system. Each change of government has implied the passing of a different law depending on the political colour of the ruling party and the correlation of the forces at that given moment. Fluctuation between the privilege for freedom or for equality in the education system has significantly affected the development of the Spanish education system.

⁹ In this “school pact” a relevant role was played by the fact that the state was obliged to turn to the support of Catholic schools (almost the only ones that enjoyed a certain quality and prestige) in order to modernise the education system and to facilitate swift increase in education indexes.

Table 3. Components of educational interests (From Bonal, 2000)

Conservative Positions	Progressive Positions
Free Schooling (Educational Market Intervention)	Educational equality (State)
Private Education (Subsidiary Role of the State)	Education as a Public Good
Religious Education	Secular Education
Corporate Interests	General Interests

During the democratic period, the education question has continued to be a platform for the struggles between the left and right. The most conflictive questions that have divided both sectors are summarised in Table 3.

Is Consensus Possible?

Despite the manifest desire of groups for there to have been consensus during the transition over the years into democracy, conflict regarding the education question has appeared in all legislatures. Moreover, “most of the educational actors’ interventions in the educational policy process ... are reactive rather than active” (Bonal, 2000, p. 214). In other words, the strategies opted for have included demonstrations, legal demands, manifestos in the media, etc. all of which has contributed to greater visualising of the conflict and thus to having a major impact on the general public. This has generally contributed to heightening the conflict rather than to the promotion of cooperative strategies.

However, in the last years, in two separate events, certain Church institutions have abandoned their maximalist positions and have opted for cooperation in the education field. On the one hand, the need to establish a truce between the conservative and progressive sectors on educational matters led a neutral Spanish Foundation (Fundación Encuentro) to create a forum for debate between all agents in the field of education in order to establish some basic directives for agreement (1997). It was the first initiative designed to nullify the conflict between the groups involved and to establish a climate for effective coexistence between different groups having an interest in the education issue. However, when it came to signing the final declaration, the Episcopal Conference refused, and the conservative *Partido Popular* opposed it.¹⁰ Meanwhile, during 2005, in debating the later law promoted by the state (with the socialist party at the head) most Church institutions initially opposed its approval. The protest was

¹⁰ As Marchesi (2000) has explained: [T]he Ministry of Education, when it perceived its isolation, opposed the declaration. The Episcopal Conference also exerted pressure on Catholic organisations not to sign. But the Bishops’ reasons were very different to those of the Ministry: they considered that the joint declaration did not show enough respect for the Catholic Church’s rights and insisted that it should include acceptance of the agreements between the Spanish State and the Holy See. The corporative blindness shown by a sector of the Bishops was allied in this case with the more ideological and political opposition of the Ministry of Education. The final independence of Catholic organisations from the Ministry and the Episcopal Conference says a lot in favour of them and their directors” (p. 29).

extremely strong, and the organisations opposing it went as far as holding a joint demonstration in Madrid (11 December 2005). However, the FERE-CECA and EyG organisations (two of the most important Catholic institutions in the field of education) decided to work of their own accord and did not oppose the law in any kind of violent way. According to the assistant secretary of FERE-CECA and E&G, these organisations “decided that it was more intelligent to opt for a strategy of dialogue rather than starting a campaign to discredit the government. We can achieve more things by negotiating” (Carlos Díaz Muñiz, personal Communication, January 2006). Their actions led to a public confrontation with CONCAPA¹¹ and other more conservative Catholic organisations.

If we analyse the development of relations between the Church and State throughout democracy, it is obvious that, as Grace (2001) observes, it is difficult for us to consider the Church as a monolithic entity that acts in unitary fashion, using the same strategies.¹² The Catholic Church does not act like one single body in the field of education; rather, it is a network of actors that often have shared strategies, but where one organisation (or more) often break the consensus. The loss of the “Catholic monopoly” and the development of a secularised society have heightened this diversification of Catholic positions in the field of education. To a certain extent, since the onset of democracy and in the wake of the results of Vatican Council II, the Spanish Church has witnessed a break-up that is even more present today. Some sectors of the Church, which are highly influenced by the “*aggiornamento*” of Vatican Council II, opted to accept the loss of religious monopoly, rethinking their strategies for action in a secularised society, and resigning themselves to becoming one more pressure group within the game of democracy. But other sectors continue to maintain their strategies for violent confrontation,¹³ with a desire to regain religious monopoly; these sectors consider the struggle in the field of education to be part of a wider strategy aimed at avoiding the Church’s loss of influence in all areas of society.¹⁴

About Moral Education in a Secularised and Varied Context

Throughout the 20th century the laicist sectors have criticised Catholic schools for becoming the Church’s means for ideological control and transmission of authoritarian, dogmatic, and old-fashioned values. Nevertheless, moral and

¹¹ In accordance with the new profile of the president of CONCAPA (part of one of the most conservative sectors of the Church), their strategies were maximalist and strongly opposed to any proposal coming from the Socialist Party.

¹² Neither can we consider the State to be a monolithic body (Dale, 1989), since, on the basis of its strategies, which depend on the party in government (PP or PSOE), the decentralisation of the education system into Autonomous Communities adds new elements to the debate.

¹³ Among groups that defend Public schools, we also find this division. There are certain groups that accept Church Institutions as one more pressure group within the definition of the education system, and others that consider it guilty of the existing problems in the field.

¹⁴ These are the positions that Gauchet (1985) would identify as intransigent.

values education has always been the aim of Catholic schools and institutions. For the Catholic sector, the danger is identified with the will of the progressive sectors to subdue the school to the control by the State.

The second challenge of today's Catholic schools is to overcome the tensions between laicist and confessionalist sectors because of this issue and to find answers to a more and more secularised and cultural and religious varied school context.

Background of the Conflict

In Spain the conflict regarding moral education differs from countries like the UK, where Catholicism has been a minority option since the defence of moral education has not been restricted to their own schools but has spread out to the whole education system. That is, the Catholic Church has had the will to monopolise moral education both in its own schools and in public or private schools. In 1913 an intense debate on this issue took place when the Government wanted to modify the decree on compulsory "catechism" in Primary Schools. The debate was intense and both sectors (confessionalist and laicist) argued fiercely. Some considered the reduction of the catechism's weight as a first step towards education laicisation that helped making progress towards the social and political modernisation. Some others considered it a direct attack to the Catholic Church and the consequence of a "Masonic and left-wing conspiracy" that wanted to attack on Catholicism. With respect to this issue, the Cardinal Almaraz, Archbishop of Seville, stated:

Giving way to free choice of the subject of Catechism and Religion means, without a doubt, that there is the will to start introducing laicism in all aspects of national life, and consequently the loss of the Catholic faith which is the most precious gift for the person and the greatest blessing for the people's moral and material prosperity. (Redondo Garcia & Vergara Ciordia, 1996, p. 156)

At the end, the issue could be solved by having catechism compulsory but allowing students whose parents were not Catholic not to attend those classes. The controversy kept on periodically until the Franco regime started. Then, with the union between the political regime and the religious hierarchies, the catechism as an ordinary and compulsory subject was imposed in every school—public, private, or Catholic. Furthermore, the Church was granted the right to ecclesiastical watchfulness on every educational centre and every textbook used in schools.

The democratic transition totally changed the rules of the game and the issue about moral education became a controversial element. For the progressive sectors, Democracy had to guarantee a secular school without confessional religious education. For the conservative sectors, making use of the Concordat of 1979, teaching religion in public, Catholic, and private centres was a matter which could not be given up. Finally, a consensus took place with which nobody was

satisfied. It was promulgated that all compulsory educational centres—primary and secondary—must offer the subject of confessional religion. Nonetheless, this subject would be optional for students and not evaluated in the academic curriculum.

The reply of the Church to the solution adopted was not as violent as it had been at the beginning of the century. That was because Vatican Council II had facilitated a more open view in accordance with the new times in which moral education was not totally identified with the transmission of undisputable dogmas, but with a moral education with Christian values of a wider but less dogmatic nature. Towards this trend, the *Secretaria Nacional de Catecismo* (National Catechism Secretariat) of the Spanish Episcopal Conference—founded in 1957—edited a new catechism which was closer to the bases established at the Council. It is the Catechism 4, which included the human experience in the transmission of faith. It was the first catechism that did not have the word “school” next to it, because a review of the criteria was taking place that would lead to the differentiation between *catecismo* (lessons on catechism) taught in churches and the confessional education taught in schools.¹⁵ Therefore, it was one of the first steps towards the acceptance of the Church’s accommodation to a new secular society.

The debate about moral education, though, was not only reduced to the subject of confessional education in schools, but also came with a large controversy about the level of autonomy allowed to the Catholic centres on the establishment of their own ideology. Catholic institutions understood school state-control as a will of interference in a scope they considered their own. This autonomy remained secure in the first laws established by the conservative Government. Later on, nevertheless, the approval of the new Education Reform Act (*Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación/1985*) by the socialist Government led to a far larger controversy with demonstrations in the streets, legal appeals, etc. The Law introduced the educational centre’s democratic running with the establishment of a School Council constituted by parents, students, and teachers. The reply of the Catholic hierarchy was very strong and every Catholic organisation objected to it firmly. Throughout the years, though, the objection has lessened. In fact, nowadays, many Catholic centres think of the School Council as a positive element for the well-functioning of centres.

A Secular and Varied Context

For the last few years, new elements have introduced new nuances in the debate on moral and religious education in the school field. On the one hand, Spain has experienced in the last two decades an increase of migratory flows which

¹⁵ Nonetheless, this change of perspective did not take place in every school and nowadays there are some minority schools where the subject of confessional religious education still follows dogmatic methods and catechisms that have not included the pedagogical changes promoted by the Vatican Council II.

has entailed an essential growth of religious and cultural diversity. On the other hand, the prestige of Catholic centres has made many parents choose these schools for their children regardless of their own religious affiliation. These two questions force Catholic institutions to rethink the role of moral and religious education in the Spanish education system.

Firstly, with regard to the subject of confessional religious education, the growing diversity and the religious minorities' demands entailed the State in 1992 to sign agreements with the Jewish, Muslim, and Protestant minorities in order to guarantee a teacher for those schools in which more than ten students asked for that subject¹⁶ (Muslim, Protestant, and Jewish confessional religion). Some isolated Catholic voices declared themselves against this measure, though most Catholics respected it.

Secondly, a debate took place on the suitability of segregating students depending on their religiousness in the public school. As a result of the growing religious diversity, some progressive sectors have chosen to defend the possibility to eliminate the confessional religious education subjects and have suggested implementing a new subject on "Religious Culture" that would deal with all religions from a non-confessional point of view. According to its promoters, this subject would be more coherent with the situation of plurality and diversity generated as a consequence of international migrations.

This way, for example, Enrique Miret Magdalena—chairman of the *Asociación de Teólogos Juan XIII* (association of Theologists Juan XIII)—stated "Religion shouldn't be taught in public schools, because schools cannot pass a faith on, nor divide students. Education has a different duty, educational and cultural, not confessional." Meanwhile, he suggested the creation of a subject called "History of Religions" (La Clave, 2002, p. 51).

This possibility has been disregarded by both Church hierarchies—which advocate the confessional religious education subject—and also by more progressive sectors—which suggest the complete elimination of confessional religion from the academic curriculum.

Nevertheless, every time different religious sectors have suggested this issue, the hierarchies and the most conservative sectors have objected fiercely. The initiative of promoting a subject on religious culture in school is not new. According to Professor Bada¹⁷ "in the eighties, an agreement between political parties was favoured in Catalonia; it compromised those parties to get involved in a bill which defended the compulsiveness of teaching Religious Culture in schools. However, the Episcopacy withdrew the authority to carry on with that agreement; therefore, that project faded. Likewise, in 1981 the Salesian finished the editing process of a number of volumes devoted to religious culture in schools. However, the Catholic hierarchy forbade its publication" (Bada, Seminar on Religious Culture in School, 2005).

¹⁶ Nonetheless, although students have theoretically the right to take these subjects, the introduction of these subjects has had several problems and nowadays there are still many obstacles.

¹⁷ Professor in the Catalan Theological University and in the University of Barcelona.

Despite the prohibition, several religious organisations have chosen to follow the choice that they consider most advisable—teaching religious culture and not confessional religion—instead of following the hierarchies' instructions.¹⁸ Even Mrs. Noguera, chairwoman of the *Associació de Professorat de Religió de Catalunya* (Catalonia's Religion Professors Association), stated that 89% of the religion teachers (which she represents) carry out this option already in public schools¹⁹ (Noguera, Seminar on Religious Culture in School, 2005).

It looks as if the trend towards a more secular and plural social context will unavoidably lead towards the replacement of the confessional religious education and implementing the knowledge of religions that may promote dialogue, mutual respect, and tolerance. For the time being, though, neither the ecclesiastic hierarchies nor the most conservative Catholic organisations²⁰ are prepared for the acceptance of this change, nor is the Spanish Government prepared for initiating this controversy that would imply a review of the Agreement between the State and the Vatican in 1979.²¹ Furthermore, in every discussion about the role of the subject of religion in schools the hierarchies defend the need to evaluate this subject and, therefore, to reckon it at the academic curriculum. So, for the time being, the consensus on this issue still has a long way to go.

Secondly, concerning the ideology of the Catholic centres, the turn into the new century has also generated new challenges. According to a survey made by Pérez-Díaz, et al. (1996), nowadays there is no positive correlation between the parents' religiousness and the choice of a religious or a non-religious school for their children.²² According to this survey, the criterion for choosing a school has nothing to do with its religious nature, but with its prestige. Therefore, each day more non-Catholic students can be found in Catholic schools. Also, this loss of student homogeneity in Catholic centres increases with the arrival of new groups from ethnic and cultural minorities. The number of immigrant students in Catholic centres is around 4% in the compulsory levels—that means that some centres located in Barcelona or in Madrid have more than 20% of immigrant students while others have none (FERE, 2005).

¹⁸ As Grace (2001) observed regarding the UK “some Catholic Parents and school governors ... were not prepared to accept the voice of the hierarchy as the definitive voice on this issue” (p. 496).

¹⁹ We do not have data about Spain. The situation of the subject has been more debated in Catalonia since the Catalan Government has encouraged a serious social debate about the issue by organising an international conference to get to know how the process of replacement has been carried out in other countries such as Sweden, Ontario, Quebec (in process), etc. in order to try to implement it in Catalonia. Nevertheless, without the Spanish Government's and the Spanish ecclesiastic hierarchies' support, the Catalan Government does not have enough competences to carry on with such a reform (see Forteza, 2005).

²⁰ This way, for example, CONCAPA states in their ideology that they promote a subject about confessional religious education and declare themselves against the acceptance of a subject about religious culture as a replacement.

²¹ Nonetheless, the socialist Government has made the first step forward in the last general law by changing the statute of the religion teacher. Until now the hierarchies had the authority to expel because of “moral” criteria. Last years, the “moral criteria” used for expelling some teachers were, for example, to be divorced, to belong to some kind of Unions, to go out at night, and so on.

²² Only in case of parents choosing a non-religious private school the religiousness rates are lower than the average. (Pérez-Díaz et al., 2001).

This new situation in Catholic schools generates new challenges when defining the school's Catholic specific nature. The new situation has attracted the attention of FERE-CECA as well as of most orders and congregations that deal with education. There were many debates on this question in FERE-CECA's congresses, Congregation Orders reflexive assemblies, and so on. For the time being, every school chooses its own solutions. As an example one member of the Order of Piarists (*Scholae Piae*) said, "we are trying to build a school, not for Christians but Christian; that is, based on the person and the respect towards this person" (Pallaroles, J., *Seminar on Religious Culture in School*, 2005). With regard to this matter, the assistant secretary of FERE-CECA stated that "schools are adapting themselves to the new situation. FERE-CECA has the priority to go deeply into the intercultural nature in our schools and treat non-Catholic people or people from other religion with the maximum respect. We organise so many seminars, conferences and courses around this issues. There are so many teachers interested to think about it and propose new ways of accommodation for the school in a diverse society" (Díaz Muñiz, personal communication, January 2006).

Therefore, with regard to moral and religious education, most of the Catholic organisations that deal directly with students' education choose conciliatory positions which make the Church's task easier in the new social context. Nonetheless, the hierarchies still want a more traditional model of transmission of the faith. As mentioned in the previous section, regarding moral education we can see again a division between Catholic institutions and a diversification of their strategies to adapt themselves to a secular and varied society.

"The Option for the Poor"

The Catholic Church in Spain, just like it happens in many other countries, has repeatedly been accused of being an instrument of social reproduction for the wealthy social classes. This has been a constant criticism throughout the 20th century. Even today, many social agents accuse Catholic schools of being of an elitist and mercantile nature; despite Catholic education institutions professing the intention of doing "the option for the poor." In relation to this question, Alfredo Serrano (spokesperson of Teacher Union STES) stated that "In spite of some exceptions, Catholic Schools are placed in a middle or upper class areas. In addition, Catholic Schools are collecting fees through foundations, parents associations, etc. We argue that they have established a system of pupils selection which, obviously, is not coherent with the 'option for the poor'" (Alfredo Serrano, personal communication, May 2006).

Their specific situation (to be private schools involved in the state network) in the neoliberal context generates new challenges in order to make their role as corporations compatible with their role as Church's institutions aimed to the lower social classes.

Background

The Catholic School in Spain during the 18th and 19th centuries was mainly addressed to the wealthy sectors. Public Schools—of a low quality and hardly existent—were addressed to the lower classes. The publication of *Rerum Novarum* (1891) generated new thoughts in the Church's institutions and some of them decided to reconsider their task and dedicate more efforts to the less privileged sectors. That is how a social mission began directed to educate the more underprivileged layers of society. Nonetheless, it was reported on several occasions that Catholic institutions carried out a double policy: high-quality schools for the wealthy classes and welfare and charitable schools for the working class (Gómez Molleda, 1996; Vinyes, 2005).

In spite of some exceptions, this situation persisted until the Vatican Council II. The publication of the Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* made again clear the need to build an inclusive school addressed to the least privileged sectors of society. According to the assistant secretary of FERE-CECA and E&G and chairman of ECNAIS (European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools), this situation led Catholic centres “to accept the State-control which entailed receiving funds from the Government” (Díaz Muñiz, personal communication, January 2006). That is, obtaining Government funding and becoming schools belonging to the public network would allow religious institutions to provide schooling to every single social sector. However, the incorporation into the public network had as compensation the increase of the social control by the State. Still, they were ready to accept it in order to be able to provide “the choice of the poor” claimed by the Vatican Council II. This time the Catholic organisations “disobeyed” the hierarchies again. Even though a call not to accept Government funding was made as a pressure measure against the socialist Government, most Catholic schools decided to come to an agreement with the State in order to receive funds and be able to provide schooling to a wider range of students. Today, as we have seen in the introduction, almost every Catholic school has Government funds in the compulsory levels of education.

This will of promoting the creation of a school, closer to the aims of the Vatican Council II, led FERE-CECA to leave the CECE (school proprietors' organisation of the private centres). FERE-CECA argued that “it is a contradiction to solve the entrepreneurial aspects of Catholic schools using a management style that has nothing to do with the pastoral and educational goals of these schools and from a non-confessional position” (quoted from Boix, 1992, p. 151). The creation of an organisation of their own was a step forward in trying to make their role as a corporation compatible with their will of building an inclusive school.

“The Option for the Poor” in a Neoliberal Context: New Paradoxes

The progressive sectors have repeatedly accused Catholic schools of concealing funding systems that are used as a filter in order to avoid increasing the percentage of students from the working class. Villarroya (2000) proves that 30%

of the funds of Catholic schools come from fees charged to parents through foundations, extra activities, etc. Schools defend themselves by saying that those are voluntary fees and that the State funding is not enough for the fulfilling of their task. However, several empirical reports have proved that the collection of fees, the higher geographical concentration of Catholic schools in wealthy neighbourhoods and so on acts as a students selection mechanism and generates an “informal educational market” (Bonal, 2003). That is, even though in Spain an educational market has not formally taken place—as has been the case in New Zealand or in some US states—the implicit mechanisms of students’ selection in Catholic schools²³ (Pérez-Díez et al., 2001) have similar effects on the Education System. Therefore, a students’ distribution takes place, characterised by the parents’ social and economic background (Rambla, 2003). Catholic Schools bring together a larger proportion of student from middle and upper social classes. Therefore, public schools tend to be the first ones which provide “the option for the poor.” However, there are quite a number of exceptions like some schools from Salesian Fathers or from Scholae Piae (Faubell Zapata, 1996; Miranda, 1996).

Finally, we must take into account that Catholic schools have acted in Spain as a pressure group in order to favour the deregulation of the education system. Catholic institutions have been brought to public debate because of the on going controversies on the centres’ autonomy, the public funding of private schools, parents’ free choice of centre, the promotion of the introduction of the school voucher, etc. However, these claims have several characteristics in common with the demands of the conservative parties and the lobbies of private schools that expect to encourage the establishment of an education system based on neoliberal criteria of efficiency. This way, paradoxically, even though it has not been deliberate mostly, the demands of Catholic institutions have been useful as legitimacy mechanisms of the neoliberal policies promoted by different governments. As we have seen in other countries, those policies are most unlikely to favour “the option for the poor.”

Research in Catholic Education: Current Achievement and Future Needs

Despite the importance of Catholic schools in Spain, “much of the political and public debate about faith-based schooling is conducted at the level of generalised assertion and counter-assertion, with little reference to educational scholarship of research” (Grace, 2003, p. 149). That is because the research about Catholic Education in Spain is hardly existent.

The academic research about education has not dealt with the issue of Catholic education in a direct way. Therefore, we can find references about religious

²³ The State has not developed an effective system of state control over subsidized schools. Is that absence of state control which has generated some scandals related with the state funding to elitist and sexist schools. That has prejudiced the reputation of the Catholic Schools.

education in research about education policies (Bonal, 1995, 2000; Bonal & González, 1999; Bonal & Rambla, 2001; Bonal et al., 2004; Sánchez Ferrer, 2002, 2004), about funding (Calero & Bonal, 1999; Oroval, 1996; Villaroya 2000), about school choice (Pérez-Díaz et al., 2001), etc. These researches taken into account Catholic Church as one of the main providers of education in Spain. Their main findings are related with the role of Catholic Church as a pressure group in education policies design since democratic transition to nowadays and with the effect of Catholic Schools on the public school system. Nonetheless, only a few researches have been made based on Catholic education as a main object of study.

There are a few exceptions to the mainstream. We could emphasise the collective work on history of Catholic education in Spain directed by Bartolomé Martínez (1996), the forthcoming book about “Religious Culture in the School” (2006) and the monographic works about the educating action of a specific religious institution (Boned Mozota, 1996; Faubell, 2000; Del Valle, 1996). In addition, in Catalonia there are a group of researchers linked to Catalan Studies Institute (IEC) who have been working extensively on history of Catholic schools in Catalan speaking areas.

Taking into account the lack of research in this field and the magnitude of Catholic education in Spain, the task of creating an agenda for research about Catholic education becomes an enormous challenge. However, it would probably be a priority to concentrate on the following fields:

- (a) The influence of Catholic institutions on the design of the education policy. Past, present, and future perspectives
- (b) Catholic schools and the challenge of secularisation: accommodating strategies in a secular society
- (c) Catholic schools: between a corporation and a nongovernmental organisation (NGO)
- (d) The specific nature of Catholic schools: pedagogy and moral education

Nevertheless, it is fundamental to face this task without prejudices or corporative interests.

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CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL RELATIONS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION: CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN PORTUGAL

Joaquim Azevedo, António M. Fonseca, and Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo

Introduction

This chapter examines the issues related to the Catholic school in Portugal. It is divided into three parts. The first contextualizes the situation of Portuguese Catholic schools, the second presents the challenges that the Portuguese Catholic school faces today, and the third proposes a more profound role of the Catholic school in developing personal identities in education for citizenship of its students.

First, a summarized situation of the Primary and Secondary Education in Portugal is presented. Its purpose is to contextualize the action of the Catholic school in the wider framework of the national educational system. Second, a historical evolution of the Portuguese private educational system from the second half of the 20th century till today is presented, with a particular focus on its constitutional and legal framework starting from the revolution of 1974.¹ Third, the results of a study are presented that attempted to understand what impression the young Portuguese people have of school and of God, in order to situate the action of the Catholic school in the context of the young people it serves. Lastly, the funding situation is discussed. The importance of this issue is derived from the fact that funding is an essential part of the relationship between Catholic school and State. For some years now the lack of public funding in private education has reduced this type of education to an elite and socially exclusive school. To conclude the first part of this chapter, we state what we consider to be the main challenges that the Portuguese Catholic school faces at the beginning of this century.

¹ Contemporary schooling in Portugal began shortly before 1974. It was then that the state invested in opening schools all over the country in order to allow that every child went to school. This was especially true in the years following the revolution. Besides this, the contemporary legal framework of state and private schooling in Portugal was built after the revolution. Therefore, we opted to consider only this period following the revolution in our analysis.

In the second part, each one of these challenges is analysed. Its purpose then is (i) to deepen the associative relationship between the Catholic schools, creating a strong movement that defends and promotes the improvement of the group; (ii) to create awareness about the reality of the Portuguese Catholic school, namely promoting a collection, analysis, and dissemination of information that characterizes the schools, the students, their families, the teachers, and the non-teaching staff; and (iii) to reinforce the capacity of the Catholic school to attract and maintain investment (public or private) as a means to open itself to the entire community it serves and participate in the national goal to fight against school abandonment and failure.

In the third part, we believe that one of the privileged missions of the Catholic school in Portugal is to help its students build life projects that are meaningful and contain values, as well as to educate them for the contemporary civic realities, making them aware of the life experimented by their peers, learning to look at the world, and at others with true *catholic eyes*.

Part 1

The Catholic School in Portugal: Reality and Challenges

1. An Inside Look at the Current Situation of Education in Portugal

At the beginning of the 21st century, Portugal maintains a considerable educational deficit. In spite of the enormous efforts made in the last quarter of the 20th century, the situation continues to be very worrying: the overall quality of the educational system is not good and we are in a terrible position in the European plan, despite public funding being within the average of the OECD countries. As can be seen in Table 1, there is a heavy historical inheritance that penalizes us, but the recovery of the delay has been slow, much lower than the other countries that have meanwhile caught up (e.g., Spain, France, and Italy).

There continues to be a high rate of school abandonment and failure (Table 2), found mainly at the secondary level. Not only do these results convey one of the lowest rates of nine-year school completion in Europe, they also indicate a disastrous situation at the secondary level. This fact causes the weak results found in Table 1, as well as a real impossibility to enhance an adequate growth of higher education—polytechnic and university. As long as the existing problems in these three grades (10th, 11th, and 12th) are not overcome, it will be difficult to positively make the Portuguese educational system evolve.

Besides the aspects already mentioned, we can also add the weak performance on the national and international exams by analysing the results of our students (4th, 9th, and 12th grades) in the core subject areas, such as Mathematics, Mother Tongue, and Science.

Table 1. Population that has reached at least secondary education (12th grade) in 2003 (percentage per age group) (From OCDE Education at a Glance, 2005)

Countries	Age group				
	25–64	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64
Germany	83	85	86	84	78
Australia	62	75	64	58	47
Austria	79	85	83	75	69
Belgium	62	78	68	55	43
Canada	84	90	86	83	71
Korea	73	97	83	55	32
Denmark	81	86	82	80	74
Spain	43	60	48	33	19
Finland	76	89	85	73	55
France	65	80	69	59	48
Greece	51	72	60	44	28
The Netherlands	66	76	71	62	53
Hungary	74	83	81	75	53
Ireland	62	78	67	52	38
Iceland	59	64	62	58	48
Italy	44	60	50	39	24
Japan	84	94	94	82	65
Luxembourg	59	68	61	54	50
Mexico	21	25	24	18	12
Norway	87	95	92	85	76
New Zealand	78	84	81	76	64
Poland	48	57	49	46	40
Portugal	23	37	22	16	10
UK	65	71	65	64	57
Czech Republic	86	92	90	84	77
Slovak Republic	87	94	91	84	70
Sweden	82	91	88	80	69
Switzerland	70	76	72	68	61
Turkey	26	33	25	21	16
USA	88	87	88	89	85

A big paradox is also found as far as the qualifications of the Portuguese population are concerned: on the one hand, the active population presents very low levels of schooling (67% only has a maximum of 6th year schooling) and, on the other hand, the number of unemployed university graduates has frighteningly increased.²

² This paradox is founded on the fact that a large sector of the Portuguese economy is based on low wages to keep production costs low. This is the case especially in economic sectors that are run by employer who, themselves, have low levels of schooling. Therefore, the educated labour force produced by universities is frequently unemployed.

Table 2. Retention and dropout rates in primary and secondary education (total, public, and private education)

Academic year	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
1994–1995	15.9	9.2	15.8	12.5	11.7	19.4	16.6	13.6	27.9	9.9	29.6
1995–1996	16.6	8.7	14.6	14.9	11.7	21.3	18.2	15.3	39.7	19.2	37.5
1996–1997	19.2	9.4	14.6	16.0	13.9	22.2	19.1	19.6	38.5	19.5	48.9
1997–1998	17.0	9.3	13.1	14.2	13.4	21.7	16.8	16.2	35.8	20.4	49.2
1998–1999	16.4	8.4	11.8	14.0	13.0	20.8	16.4	15.4	36.4	20.3	49.7
1999–2000	15.8	7.8	10.7	13.7	12.5	20.1	16.3	14.8	36.9	20.8	49.8
2000–2001	14.8	8.7	10.2	12.6	12.8	21.2	17.2	15.8	39.4	24.4	52.5
2001–2002	14.9	8.1	9.8	15.1	16.1	22.3	18.0	16.7	38.9	21.9	48.8
2002–2003	13.8	7.5	8.4	14.9	14.6	24.4	17.0	15.3	34.8	19.2	45.3
2003–2004	12.3	5.8	8.0	14.0	13.9	22.8	16.4	13.1	33.4	17.8	48.7
Average	15.7	8.3	11.7	14.2	13.4	21.6	17.2	15.6	36.2	19.3	46.0

Within the framework of the society of knowledge, which is highly competitive, this panorama is certainly disturbing because it helps to foresee enormous future difficulties not only in the area of accessing knowledge but also in the area of accessing information (pertinent and opportune).

It is in this context that Portuguese Catholic schools struggle to make a difference.

2. *Historical and Judicial Framework*

The contemporary history of the Catholic school in Portugal is confused with the history of private education in general.

In the past, the majority of educational establishments were of religious initiative (congregational or diocesan), as well as the only possible education existent. Big private schools only emerged throughout the country when the Republic was established in 1910. These were found not only in big cities but also in small towns (Cotovio, 2004). Up until the 1960s, private education of religious initiative was predominant both in the mainland and the islands. In 1968/69, of the 274 Portuguese districts, only 227 had secondary schools. In 184 districts there were only private schools available, in 2 districts there were only public schools available and in 41 districts there were both private and state secondary schools available (Cotovio, 2004).

At the beginning of the 1970s, with Minister Veiga Simão, the period of expansion of state run schools begins. His goal was to provide access to education for the entire population. With this expansion, financially supported by the State Budget and, after the revolution of 25 April 1974, applauded by the collective and anticlerical revolutionary ideology,³ state run education became the norm and private education took a secondary role. Private schools

³ During the years following the revolution of 25 April 1974, power was seized by the communists allied to Moscow. For this sector of society, state schools should replace all private schools. Especially Catholic schools.

were tolerated only because if they were needed until the state run schools covered the entire national territory.

Illustrative to this purpose are the interventions of some members of the Socialist Party in the constituent Assembly of the Republic (parliament) at the time when the constitutional article on private education was discussed. The Socialist Party member Laura Cardoso stated:

[I]t is urgent that the Government take measures so that the educational establishments [the private establishments] are put at the service of the working people of our country . . . contributing so that these schools stop being, as they have been until now, another factor of social discrimination, that cannot be tolerated in a society in transition to socialism. (Gonçalves, 2004)

And her colleague Manuel Ramos concluded:

[T]he ideal would be –will be! – that such establishments [private schools] would not be – are not! – necessary [but] . . . as long as we do not live in a society we aspire for—and which we fight for—we can not spare certain institutions [the private schools]. (Gonçalves, 2004)

In this context, in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976, it was declared the obligation of the State to create a network of official educational establishments that covered the needs of the entire population (no. 1 of article 75). The only reference to private education was its complementary character and its subordination to the State: “The state supervises private education, complementary of public education” (no. 2 of article 75).

The attribution of a minor role to private education is in accordance with the revolutionary ideal that dominated the legislative and executive power in Portugal during the post-revolution time.

This situation was only altered at the end of the 1970s, beginning of the 1980s, when the Marxist tendency lost its strength and the country started to live within the democratic normality. In 1979, the Assembly of the Republic (parliament) approved Law 9/79, of 19 March, that established the basis of private and cooperative education. This law acknowledged that the freedom to learn and teach was a necessary instrument of the fundamental right of all citizens for their personal development (no.1 of article 1) and that private education was, in this context, an equally worthy option to state initiative education.

Since then, private education won a legislative statute that was consolidating. In October 1979, a Law was passed (Law 65/79) about educational freedom. In 1980, the Decree-Law no. 553/80, 21 November, created the Statute of Private Education and developed the principles already expressed in Law 9/79. In 1982, during the constitutional revision, a number 4 was created in article 43, which established: “The right to create private and cooperative schools is guaranteed.”⁴

At the beginning of the 21st century, the existence of private and cooperative education and its autonomy are an undeniable reality. According to the official

⁴ Cooperative schools are schools owned by cooperatives. Cooperatives are not for profit legal entities whose stakeholders are the workers (teachers and other staff in the case of education cooperatives).

numbers of the Ministry of Education regarding 2004/5, of the 1,339,935 students enrolled in primary and secondary education, 12.4% attended private education. Of the 17,507 existing schools in the entire country, 2,534 are private, that is, 14.7%.

As far as the Catholic school is concerned, acknowledging the Catholic school as a school dependent of the ecclesiastical authority and oriented towards the secular youth (*Congregação para a Educação Católica*, 1988), statistics with a level of necessary detail for a reliable description of its dimension do not exist. Therefore, we only present the data available by the Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools that indicates a universe of 173 schools. These are the schools that asked for the status of Catholic school to the competent Bishop. Here lies one of the challenges of the Catholic school in Portugal: acknowledging itself as a group (Antunes, 2005).

The results from the analysis of this list of Catholic schools indicate that 70 have more than one cycle of primary education. Therefore, the universe of Catholic schools compares not with the total universe of private schools (2,534) but with the universe of 501 schools that offer more than one cycle of primary education (1,689 only have pre-school, 58 only have the first cycle (grades 1–4) of primary education and 286 have these two cycles of education). Therefore, the Catholic schools represent approximately 14% of the comparable universe of private schools in Portugal.

To conclude this brief contextualization of the Catholic school in Portugal, we highlight that, as opposed to what happens in many countries, with special focus on the case of the USA, in Portugal there does not exist a “religious question” in education.⁵ The law explicitly foresees that the education provided by public schools is not religiously oriented, but there is no limitation in the case of private schools, even in the case of those that receive, directly or indirectly, state funding. Consequently, the Catholic school in Portugal is not denied the right to declare itself as a religiously oriented project, nor has such fact kept this type of school from being funded by the State.

3. *The Portuguese Students*

Given the legislative and political context in which the Portuguese Catholic schools finds themselves today, we will now observe their human context, especially in regards to the students. Little is precisely known about the young Portuguese people, especially their relationship with school and with God. Nevertheless, the results of a study performed in 1997 by the Society of Jesus in Portugal are presented next. This study aimed to obtain data about what the young Portuguese

⁵ In many countries, schools owned by religious bodies are treated differently from other schools. For example, in the USA most states ban religious entities from creating charter schools and there are legal quarrels (with the intervention of the courts) about state funding of schools owned by religious entities. In Portugal, schools owned by religious entities have the same rights and obligations as any other private school and state funding for private education is granted with no regard as to who is the owner of the school. This is so even in the case of private schools that substitute state schooling (e.g., the association contracts described in this chapter).

school-aged people think and how these students compare with those from the three Jesuit schools operating in Portugal (that have a total of nearly 3,500 students).

The results of this study were taken from a questionnaire given to a representative sample of young Portuguese people residing in the mainland, between the ages of 13 and 18. The sample of students from the Jesuit schools is a sample of convenience made of a total of 1,742 students (GRACOS, 2002). It is now presented, for contextualization purposes, that 87.1% of those questioned in the national sample stated they were Catholic, 11.3% another Christian religion, and 11.2% agnostic, atheist, or without religion.⁶

Satisfaction with the School

At the level of global satisfaction of young people with school, 89.6% of the national sample and 91.7% of the private schools sample stated they were satisfied with their school. The main factor of satisfaction with their school is the companionship with classmates (81% and 79.8%, respectively). The second most relevant factor of satisfaction is the relationship with teachers (27.1% and 36.1%), the third what they learn (24.1% and 27%), and the fourth, the teachers' competence (10% and 15.7%).⁷ The young people's development of satisfaction towards school does not vary significantly throughout the age groups.

What clearly stands out from these results is the central role of human relations in school. Young people like school because of their friends and the relationship with their teachers. It is not about what they learn in school (24.1% and 27%) or about the technical competence of the teachers (10% and 15.7%). It is the human relationships that touch them and give them a sense for school. Once again, it is noted that there were no relevant differences found amongst the two groups of young people who responded.

Impression of the Subjects

Curious data appears when searching to know what young people think about the different subjects they have in school. The subject most valued is Physical Education (42.1%), followed by Mathematics (31.3%), by Foreign Languages (31.9%), and then by Portuguese (31.3%). Moral and Religious Education appears as one of the subjects less appreciated, with a mere 1.2% of the national universe and 5.7% of the private school students.

⁶ 0.3% of those questioned in the national sample stated that they were of a non-Christian religion.

⁷ Though these are low figures (10% and 15.7% for teacher's competence), they are not surprising. Bearing in mind the students' ages (13–18), it is natural that teachers' competence is not the main factor of satisfaction with school. These results do not permit to conclude that students find teachers incompetent. The conclusion is only that teachers' competence is not a main factor of satisfaction with school.

When the question is asked differently—which subjects do you least favour—the answers are almost a mirror of the previous. Thus, the subject least valued is Mathematics (49.4%), Foreign Languages (33.6%), and Portuguese (27.7%). As far as Moral and Religious Education is concerned, only 4% of the national universe questioned responded that it is amongst the three less liked, a percentage that increases to 12.6% in the case of the private school students.

If the fondness for Physical Education it is not surprising, the unusual relationship young people have with Mathematics, Foreign Languages, and Portuguese is curious. What also stands out in these results is that there is a lot to be done in improving the approach to Moral and Religious Education, especially in the case of the Catholic schools studied, although the results in other Catholic schools may not differ much. This result is even more disturbing when “the results of organic education of faith and of Christian ethic depend in large part on the teacher of religion: on what he is and on what he does” (*Congregação para a Educação Católica*, 1988).

Relationship with God

The relationship young people have with God was another issue researched. Whether or not they believe in Him, what is His importance and if He accompanies them.

Thus, 89.1% of young people believe in God (95.1% in the sample of the private schools). For 97.5% God is important (99% in the sample of private schools) and for 96.7% God accompanies them on a daily basis (98.7% in the sample of private schools).

These results are consistent with those of previous studies in Portugal (GRACOS, 2002), accentuating nevertheless the fact that Catholicism in Portugal is not associated with a regular liturgical practice.⁸

However, given that we are dealing with young people, there is a predisposition here for religion that should be faced by Catholic schools as an opportunity to explore with intent to accomplish its goal: to help young people “grow according to the new creature they become due to baptism” (*Congregação para a Educação Católica*, 1988).

In addition to the aspects focused on in this part, Portuguese students are young Europeans (or residents in Europe) that, like the others, live in a global, constantly changing, and unstable society (Antunes, 2005), that confronts them daily with relativism and disbelief, as well as with diversity and possibility. Portugal is today a country in which “the seed of life and the seed of death” live together (*Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa*, 2002).

⁸ Most Portuguese say that they are Catholic but do not go to Mass on Sunday. People say they believe in God but do not believe in the Church.

4. Funding

Today, the issues around funding of private schools are a central question of discussion on the future of Catholic schools in Portugal.

Central because on the answer to this question depends (i) the maintenance of an important number of Catholic schools that serve the entire population of its surrounding area and not only the young people who belong to a high socio-economical status, and (ii) the maintenance of a minimum percentage of Catholic (and other private) schools in the Portuguese educational system that guarantee that there is not a state run monopoly of schools.

In Portugal, the legal context of private education and school choice is very favourable to the existence of a strong private sector and of a relevant Catholic offer. Nevertheless, successive governments have acted insufficiently in the field of financial support for parent's choice and therefore limited the possibilities enormously.

Consequently, education is free for all students attending public education and is paid for students who opted for private education.

The only exceptions to this rule are some mechanisms of public funding of education in private and cooperative educational establishments; these are (i) the association contracts, and (ii) simple contracts.

This situation has not gone unnoticed to the Portuguese Church, which has explicitly manifested itself about the issue of funding in education: "For its viability (of the Catholic school) it is necessary to find the adequate instruments of State support, in accordance with the different situations and means, for parental choice" (Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, 2002).

Association Contract

The association contract was created by the Decree-Law no. 553/80, of 21 November, in regulation of Law 9/79, of 19 March.

It is based on two factors. On the one hand, the necessity of the State to promote the existence of a network of educational establishments that could cover the entire national territory. On the other hand, the fact that there exist educational establishments located in areas where no public school is found and that have suffered a drastic decrease in the number of students, not only due to socially derived changes of the post-revolution years, but also to the fact that the cost of the monthly payments is superior to what the family income is able to pay.⁹ As a result, these private schools were at risk of closing, even though all around them the populations lacked educational offer.

The solution found was the association contract. The methodology had already been tested in 1972, with a Jesuit private school located in Caldas da Saúde, Santo Tirso. This school (Colégio das Caldinhas) was in an unfeasible

⁹ In Portugal the minimum wage is around €4900 per year. In Portuguese cities, tuition in private schools is over €4400 per year.

situation due to the loss of students and therefore the people in charge of the school informed the Minister of Education that it was for sale. The Minister called the Director Priest and proposed that the State would bear the expenditures of the functioning of the private school as long as the Jesuits promised to receive the children of the local families. Thus, the first association contract was honoured even before its legal authorization.

Small details of history related to this issue are noted here: in 1974, having the revolutionary forces arrived at the private school to take it over and expel the Jesuits, they were received by the population who, barricading the passage, questioned “when the private school was only for the rich the priests were useful. Now that it is for the poor they are no longer useful?” The revolutionary forces withdrew and hence a take over of the school was avoided. Ever since, the school has provided valuable services to local education and today a population of 1,300 students benefit from it.

Because this contractual type received legal authorization, it was then possible to honour contracts with private schools that were in a similar situation.

According to the data available, of the 94 private schools that have an association contract, approximately 20 are Catholic schools.

According to the information available by the Coordinator Council of Private and Cooperative Education, the association contract had a quantitative development that is summarized in Table 3.

As can be seen from this data, the number of schools with an association contract have maintained stable since the 1997/98 academic year. Nevertheless, the number of students included in this contract started to decrease in 1999/2000. The total loss in the period is relatively insignificant—1.6%—but the tendency registered since 1999/2000 is not, verifying a loss of 6.37% in five years.¹⁰

Table 3. Quantitative development of the association contract

	Schools	Students	Expenditures (€)
1997–1998	92	55,846	135,914,150,48
1998–1999	96	57,591	149,350,581,44
1999–2000	96	58,718	161,184,433,42
2000–2001	97	58,428	170,288,800,08
2001–2002	96	58,283	185,140,160,48
2002–2003	94	57,819	193,334,116,14
2003–2004	94	56,941	200,571,313,34
2004–2005	94	54,974	206,933,419,51

¹⁰ This loss is due to state interference. In order to control state costs with education, the Ministry of Education has diminished every year the number of students that may enrol in these private schools and benefit from free private education.

Simple Contracts

The simple contract appears in a different logic of the association contract and even, though with a full legal basis (including constitutional), in dissonance with the dominant thinking in Portugal as to the role of the State in education.

In fact, this type of contract has as its objective to maintain the “*functioning of private and co-operative schools, in order to progressively guarantee the equality of conditions of attendance with public education at the free levels and lessen the existing inequalities at the paid levels*” (article 6, no. 2, line d) of the Law 9/79, of 19 March). That is, by means of a simple contract, the State attempts to lessen the financial inequality between the students of public education with those of private education. We are dealing here with recognizing that the cost of education should not vary according to the legislative nature of the school, or better yet, of recognizing that the freedom of the parents in choosing their children’s school can not be dissociated from the financial cost of such an option. As a matter of fact, the simple contract is honoured with schools located in “sufficiently equipped areas of public establishments” (article 8 of Law 9/79, 19 March). Moreover, and contrary to what happens in the case of schools with an association contract, the schools with a simple contract do not have any specific restriction at the level of criteria of acceptance of students. Therefore, they are able to establish the rules that they want within the general framework of the Portuguese legislative order.

To sum up, schools with simple contracts have a legal situation equivalent to that of schools that do not have, or wish to have, any kind of contract with the State (e.g., some international schools or elite schools).

If we add to this the fact that the State financial aid follows the student if he changes school, it can only be concluded that the simple contract is, substantially, a school voucher. The majority of Catholic schools that do not have an association contract have a simple contract. According to the information available by the Coordinator Council of Private and Cooperative Education, the simple contract had a quantitative development that is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Quantitative development of the simple contract

	Schools	Students	Expenditures (PTE)	Average cost (PTE)
1997–1998	419	27,487,00	18,826,041,74	684,91
1998–1999	426	28,936,00	20,636,073,74	713,16
1999–2000	421	30,312,00	22,987,780,43	758,37
2000–2001	427	30,721,00	23,286,166,79	757,99
2001–2002	422	30,168,00	22,896,079,13	758,95
2002–2003	424	28,291,00	21,477,812,98	759,17
2003–2004	405	26,086,00	19,792,025,96	758,72

As can be seen in Table 4, and opposed to what happens with schools with association contracts, the schools with simple contracts have decreased in number throughout the years. Despite this decrease being insignificant—3.3% between 1997/98 and 2003/04—it is in dissonance (i) with the growth of relative weight of private and cooperative education in the Portuguese educational system, and (ii) with the objective of gradual equalization of conditions of attendance of private and state run schools. Also, the number of students included in the simple contracts began to decrease in 2001/2, having the total loss of the period reached 5%, a result that already has some meaning.

5. *The Contemporary Challenges of Catholic School in Portugal*

In the context described, the situation of the Catholic school in Portugal is one of relative serenity. It benefits from a correct legislative contextualization, it is not victim of ideological persecution, it serves the school population for those for whom God is Father and, not least importantly, it serves a Country with low levels of schooling—which represents a challenge to its capacity of creating educational offer—and with high levels of failure—which represents a challenge to continue improving of its educational proposal.

However, this relative lull is apparent and may be the forewarning of difficult times for the Portuguese Catholic School. In fact, given the budget difficulties that Portugal is going through, there is constant pressure from the Public Administration connected to education and from some syndicates to terminate the association contracts honoured by the State and private schools in general, which would have a devastating effect on the Catholic schools.

Furthermore, it is exactly these schools that have an association contract that affirm the social plurality of Catholic schooling and its openness to everyone, builders of men and women for others, and an important component of social cohesion.

To respond to this challenge, the following is necessary:

- To deepen the associative relationship between the Catholic schools, creating a strong movement of defense and promoting improvement of the whole
- To create awareness about the reality of Catholic schooling in Portugal, promoting the gathering, treatment, and dissemination of information characteristic of the school, students, families, teachers, and non-teaching staff; as the Congregation for Catholic Education states, “*the exact awareness of reality suggests the best educational behaviours*” (Congregação para a Educação Católica, 1998)
- To reinforce its capacity to attract and maintain investment (public or private) as a way to open itself to the community it serves and participate in the national goal of fighting against school abandonment and failure, even placing itself in the front of this struggle for schooling the Portuguese people.

Part 2

The Catholic School's Response to the Challenges It Faces

1. Deepening the Associative Movement of Catholic Schools

In Portugal there exist at least five associations representative of schools from private and cooperative education. Of these five, the more relevant ones due not only to their prestige, but also to their history are the *APEC—Associação Portuguesa de Escolas Católicas* [Portuguese Association of Catholic Schools] and the *AEEP—Associação de Estabelecimentos de Ensino Particular e Cooperativo* [Association of Private and Cooperative Education Establishments].

These two associations, the later with a broad character because it is made up of all the schools belonging to private education, and the former more restricted because it is only open to Catholic schools, have had an important role throughout the years in defending private schools in general and Catholic schools in particular. It is important to note, given the relevance of the issue in relation to the Catholic schools in Portugal, the fact that the Presidents of the Board of Directors of AEEP were, since the beginning and with rare exceptions, Catholic priests and principals of Catholic schools.

Nevertheless, this associative movement still has to develop more and build a true community of schools, not only in the areas of intervention with the State and other social partners, but also in the area of promoting pedagogical and organizational innovation. Both of these associations promote training courses, evaluation projects and improvement of schools, but the real impact of this effort in the Portuguese society has not been what is desired.

2. Creating Awareness About the Reality of Catholic Schools in Portugal

Due to the previous issue, or possibly originating from the challenge that is mentioned there, in Portugal there does not exist detailed and relevant information about Catholic schools. Who are their students, families, teachers, and non-teaching staff; what are the results of their educational action, their contribution towards fighting school abandonment and failure. This fact is especially serious, because, again, it is undeniable that “*the exact awareness of reality suggests the best educational behaviours*” (Congregação para a Educação Católica, 1988).

A considerable number of studies and works about the different charismas and educational projects of the congregational and diocesan Catholic schools exist. There also exist some studies that were comprised of small universes of students/Catholic schools, generally resulting from Masters Dissertation research. However, extensive qualitative and/or quantitative studies concerning the sector of Catholic schools in Portugal are not known. This absence not only harms the action of each specific school, but also makes the action of the associative movement almost inefficient, since it does not know, with the demanded rigour, the sector (paraphrasing a well-positioned OECD employee, “*if you don't have data, you're just another person with an opinion*”).

3. *Capacity to Attract and Maintain Investment (Public or Private)*

As was previously mentioned, many Catholic schools in Portugal benefit from an important state aid. Not because they are Catholic, but because they are in the true public service of education. This situation leads to a unique opportunity of expression of the educational project of the Catholic school in more unfavourable social contexts (or in less benefited ones), converting these contexts in one of its preferential environments of action. However, it is necessary to guarantee that the “*temptation to create a State monopoly in education*” (Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, 2002), associated since some years ago with the argument that Portugal is in a difficult financial situation, does not put at risk this state of things. In this way, each Catholic school individually, the ecclesiastical authorities and the representative associations of schools have developed an intense effort along with the successive governments in the area of defending freedom of education. Despite this effort, there have been some losses that, though not very noteworthy, may be very significant in its future consequences. Namely, the suspension of new simple contracts to be honoured with private schools and the restriction of the number of classes in association contract at the beginning of the cycles of education (which has a multiplying effect with the passing of the years).

If we take into consideration the statistics of education previously presented (the vast number of young Portuguese that leave school and the disturbing number of young people whose school success is poor), it is asked of the Catholic school to double its capacity of intervention in society, not only by creating new educational offers, but also by obtaining the necessary funding so that its offer can truly be “*inclusive and comprehensive*” (Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, 2002). For this, “*one has to find the adequate ways of state support, in harmony with the diverse situations and means*” (Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa, 2002) so that the parents can choose their child’s school, including, if they wish, a Catholic school.

Part 3

Educating Children and Young People for the Community: A Portuguese Catholic School Mission

1. *Building Personal Identities and Projects*

In a possible synthesis, Zabalza (1992) mentions two major functions that education should develop: (i) developing the subject’s personality, and (ii) establishing the parameters of the relationship between the subject and others.

Schools cannot continue to regard their students (whatever their age) as passive elements and Catholic schools are no exception. We urgently need to reinforce pedagogical models that stress student’s active role, stimulating initiatives that encourage them to take responsibility, coping with things that are different, challenging previous balances, and promoting the emergence of richer thoughts and more conscious action. The programmes adopted and the pedagogical practices

used by Catholic schools should respect the goal of nurturing people's autonomy and developing skills that enable them to enjoy the collective reality around them (i.e., the cultural, ecological, and relational heritage that supports life in common).

The process of building personal identities and life projects is an excellent way of acquiring this knowledge. When thinking about what role Catholic school should play in building personal identities and projects, we must remember how important it is for young people to have a feeling of control over their environment. In as much as people act according to their own idea of themselves (abilities, motivations, preferences, interests, and values), it is possible to estimate the importance of school and place it in the heart of the process of building their individual life projects and in the construction of their personality.

But building personal projects cannot be regarded only as an individual task resulting from psychological and vocational development. It is inevitably linked to changes that occur in the family and in social and economic settings. One of the most difficult situations that young people have to deal with in contemporary society is defining their personal projects. Never before have young people had so many opportunities at their fingertips, but never before has the competition for these opportunities been so fierce.

The emergence and implementation of personal projects necessarily mean a certain degree of involvement in considering the maximum number of variables as deeply as possible, thus reducing the risk of error. If schools do not provide the young person with these conditions of analysis, a new form of inequality may appear between those that can and those that cannot solve the problem of drawing up life projects. In this field, Catholic schools must be a context where individuals must assume responsibility, allowing students to get a critical view of the obstacles standing in the way of their projects, to understand the historical movement in which they are involved and their real opportunities. Students have to make choices that will gradually build their personal identities and schools are a part of the process.

Regarding the relationship between young people, their families, and Catholic schools, we find that "the school matters" and is of critical importance in the relationship between parents and children. In spite of the importance of friends as favoured conversation partners, matters related to school life are still one of the main subjects of communication between parents and children. On the other hand, school is undeniably a factor of supreme importance in modelling relationships between parents and their children. For many young people, the quality of the family environment often depends on their success or failure at school. It is therefore important to encourage all kinds of action on the part of Catholic schools to bring parents closer to their children's school life.

2. Education for Citizenship

Finally, we cannot think about the missions and functions of Portuguese Catholic School in contemporary society without relating them to citizenship. Education for citizenship will have to be education for complexity and openness

to diversity (Fonseca, 2001). It is not, however, an easy task, mainly due to two reasons.

The first is a certain inability of Portuguese schools in general to accept the cultural diversity of the population, which the recent influx of immigrants has accentuated.¹¹ Even today, the relationships between schools and the urban population and between schools and the rural population are still blocked by their difficulty in perceiving society as a cultural mosaic and diversifying their curricula.

The second has to do with the relevance of intercultural education. However, it does not seem possible to regard contemporary society(ies) in any other way than from the point of view of diversity. And this diversity is growing: the multiplication of national and ethnic origins and the polarization of values and behavioural standards that affect men and women today. This situation has obvious repercussions on the school system. Our education system is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic and is having trouble accommodating the situation.

According to Azevedo et al. (2001), it is essential to educate new generations in three directions: (i) in the knowledge of social rights, promoting active insertion in a society that welcomes and values them; (ii) in the qualification of the concept of fulfilling rights, in the sense of valuing initiative and insertion; and (iii) in opening the way for enunciating and realizing rights as responsibilities, gradually freeing them from their reduction to the state.

Being so, teaching values is going to be a central concern for educators in general and for Catholic school educators in particular. Catholic schools must be able to transform young people in citizens capable of participating actively and intelligently in society, to ensure the ongoing construction of civilization and a fairer world. The moral education of citizens is at the heart of the act of educating in Catholic schools. It is true that this viewpoint stresses the central role of teachers. Each group of students needs to be monitored by teachers to adopt work methods, capable of monitoring and nurturing the emergence of the human realities within the students, open to its social environment, and capable of building bridges with the diversity of sources of information available.

Every Catholic school should be a social institution with an identity, with goals, and with the ability to stress its results, oriented by a climate of social responsibility.

This must serve as a reference for the organization of all Catholic schools, for motivating teachers and for the human development of each student. School education as a way of preparing new generations for social life is now joined by an urgent need to pay attention to the development of each individual student as a separate personality, with a sense of social responsibility and a range of skills that go far beyond school practices and teaching.

The construction of such a personality is only possible within a network of civic oriented practices based on the values of social inclusion, participation,

¹¹ From the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, driven to a large degree by the country's increasing demand for labour, Portugal became a more attractive destination for non-EU citizens, resulting in the emergence of an immigration cycle. The result was a continuous increase in the number of foreign residents, dominated by Africans (mainly from Cape Verde), Brazilians, and Western Europeans (mainly from Ukraine).

mutual respect, guaranteed rights, acceptance of differences, justice and equality, solidarity between people and groups, and implementing internal psychological processes such as listening, expressing opinions, negotiating, solving conflicts, and sharing common objectives.

All this is not only an opportunity but also an increasingly pressing need for reevaluation of Catholic school and school work in contemporary society.

Part 4

An Agenda for Research for the Future

From what was presented in this chapter it is possible to define three main themes for future research that will help in understanding the role of Catholic schools in Portugal and may also prove useful to win the challenges Catholic schooling faces today.

Firstly, it is necessary to create a battery of indicators to characterize each school and community in order to collect relevant data about Catholic schools in Portugal. This group of indicators should be accompanied by indicators of school performance, in order to allow the realization of reliable quantitative analysis about what the Portuguese Catholic schools are in fact doing.

Secondly, if catholic schools are to “produce” citizens capable of participating actively and intelligently in society, it is vital that they understand how to develop ethically and morally mature students. Although independent subject areas obviously have their own part to play in the curriculum, students want to have competent, active, enterprising, demanding teachers that encourage them to be independent and take personal responsibility, adults that are capable to promote students’ development. How do we prepare teachers for this challenge? How can we teach values under a Catholic framework of life understanding?

Thirdly, because personal identities and life projects can only be demonstrated and built within an organizational environment and a network of democratically oriented practices, it is necessary to study what will be the main values for this organizational reevaluation of Catholic schools and Catholic school work. What will be the importance of practices of social inclusion, participation and joint decision-making, mutual respect, guaranteed rights, acceptance of differences, justice and equality, solidarity between people and groups, etc.? How will we be able to implement democratic processes such as listening, expressing opinions, negotiating, solving conflicts, sharing common objectives, encouraging collective involvement, etc.?

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN FRANCE: UNDERSTANDING “LA GUERRE SCOLAIRE”

Fr. Hugues Derycke

The Principles of Secularism and National Education

(a) A Reality Little Known Both Inside and Outside France

Surprisingly, France has one of the largest Catholic education systems in the world. In fact, of the 10 million students in school in France, more than 2 million attend one of the country's 8,500 Catholic educational establishments. One out of three young people will attend a Catholic school at some point in their education and one out of two families will send their children to a Catholic school during their education. More than 140,000 teachers and nearly 50,000 nonteaching salaried employees serve these students. But even more surprising to foreign observers is that most of the 140,000 teachers are paid directly by the Ministry of National Education based on their unique status as “contractual agents of the State.” Their status is different than that of civil servants. They are salaried employees of the State under the supervision of the principal of their institution, which in most cases, is private. This situation, which may seem paradoxical in a modern France known for its rigorous implementation of the principle of secularism, is the result of a long historical quarrel between two types of schools: public schools and private Catholic schools. This dispute is known in France as *la guerre scolaire* or school war. This situation also involves extremely diverse regional realities, since in some departments and cities, the Catholic system educates the majority or near majority of students, while in others, it is virtually nonexistent.

The situation of the higher Catholic education system is noticeably different since, unlike the elementary schools, in *collèges* (middle schools) and *lycées* (high schools) teachers are not paid by the State; these schools generally fund themselves, receiving less than 20% or 30% in public funding in the best of cases. While public elementary, secondary, and university education is free or almost free, the tuition at Catholic universities is about the same as it is at European universities and university centers. These differences in status and cost have made Catholic tertiary education much more tenuous (50,000–60,000

students out of more than the 2 million young people enrolled in higher education).

Tuition at Catholic primary and secondary schools is still moderate: a few hundred Euros per year at most and some elementary schools are almost entirely free. The average ranges between €500/year per student in middle school and €700–800/year per student in high school.

The relatively low tuition has allowed all social classes to have access to the Catholic education system and, for those in serious financial difficulty, there are opportunities for scholarships and free tuition.

(b) The Principle of National Education

Before returning to recent history, which will make it possible to understand a situation that in many ways seems paradoxical to outsiders, it is important to keep in mind the special features of the French context: France is the country that has most rigorously implemented the principle of secularism. To understand and fully grasp this paradox, you must understand the principle of the French national education system. Whatever political regimes have governed it, monarchy, republic, empire, and republic again, France has always been noted for the close cohesion of the nation and the State, which is considered the centralizing force in maintaining national unity. The national unity achieved by the monarchy in the 16th and 17th centuries and then maintained and developed by the French Revolution and the empire fostered the creation of a centralized administration. Where education was concerned, the situation made it appear obvious that there had to be a principle of national education.

The purpose of the schools, initially intended as part of public instruction, then as part of National Education, was to forge the soul of the nation. That meant fostering a feeling of belonging to the nation in every citizen. Schools educated the nation, which was one and indivisible. Schools were where local languages gave way to one homogenous language: classical French and its culture. The principle of national education seemed to be directly associated with the republican motto: liberty, equality, fraternity.

Contemporary France has inherited this principle of centralization. It designs and implements its unity through a national education system that promotes equal opportunity for all and whose mission is to give everyone greater access to its culture. But this ambition has its price. It has led to a huge and complicated system. Over the years, the Ministry of National Education has become one of the country's largest centralized personnel management organizations. Within the European context, France has been implementing a decentralization policy that rehabilitates local and territorial communities and restores some autonomy to the regions. At present, however, this policy applies rarely or not at all to national education.

(c) The School War and the Issue of Secularization

What is now known as the “school war” began in the 19th century as a conflict between the State and religion, specifically, Catholicism. In the 18th and

19th centuries, male and even larger female teaching orders flourished in France. They developed primarily in rural France, providing instruction to all but especially to the poorest in remote valleys and throughout the countryside and later in working-class neighborhoods of cities. After the Revolution of 1789, the Empire in 1800 and the Restoration in 1815, the Republic reappeared at the end of the 19th century and promoted national unity around the unifying concepts of public instruction and national education. Gradually, the principle of secularism appeared. The republicans, as the heirs of the revolutionaries, felt it was necessary to free citizens from the church's influence and create the public school by expelling the religious orders, especially the teaching orders, from France. National Education was to be a uniform reality.

The expulsion of the religious orders at the beginning of the 19th century occurred in a context of great violence between the anticlerical and Catholic forces. In 1905, the law separating church and state finally ended the most radical activities of both camps. Today, over a century later, that law is considered to have been one of appeasement. However, at the time, the Holy See had to discreetly but surely pressure the hierarchy of the Church of France to recognize the republic as an authentic and legitimate democratic government, and at the same time the State had to agree to implement the principle of freedom, so dear to republicans, in the area of school choice. It took time.

World War I caused its share of pain and suffering but in the mud of the trenches, reactions cooled. Still, public and private schools confronted each other for nearly 50 years. The vast majority of private schools, over 90%, were and still are Catholic educational establishments. The religious teaching orders, allowed to return, provided the administration, management and for a long time, also most of their teaching personnel. Catholic diocesan education also developed. Although the conflict was no longer direct, it persisted. People were from one of the two schools, the local priest's or the lay teacher's. Naturally, this led to many subtle distinctions.

(d) Educational Armistice

French secularism developed slowly, or more precisely, matured gradually. Not to the extent that it would return to the most radical principles of the 19th century, but it developed in a complex reality. Certainly, there were minorities still longing for the most violent anticlerical principles. There was secularization, and then there was the secularization based on strict abstention, banning all religious references in public places. Secularization based on strict abstention seems unrealistic, given the history of France and its cultural references. But with the emergence of a new religion, Islam, it remains a real temptation for some and can lead to a violent impasse, denying Islam any public manifestation. Catholicism has learned to recognize the legitimacy of secularization properly understood, one which occurs as a mature human awareness and not as a structure antagonistic to religious traditions.

Over the years, the school war would become less intense. However, tension remained in the minds of many Catholics, who were divided between choosing

the public system for their children and for themselves as teachers and researchers and the system resulting from maintaining and promoting Catholic schools. When General De Gaulle came again to power and created the Fifth Republic in 1958, he felt the need to strengthen national unity around his personality. To do this, he implemented constitutional reforms that led to the election of the President of the Republic by universal suffrage. He especially needed to consolidate national unity in anticipation of the daunting challenge of decolonization. This reflected one of those French paradoxes: the Republic had one of the principal colonial empires. On December 31, 1959, the French government ended the school war with the law proposed by Prime Minister Michel Debré. Basically from then on, private establishments, which were mostly Catholic, could choose to be associated with the public system through what was called an “association contract.” This was successful because there was a need to deal with an education system that had massively expanded, due to the large number of school-aged children born after World War II and the public desire to raise the school-leaving age from 14 to 16. And it was successful because the Catholic Church did not have the funds to pay the lay teachers who were increasingly replacing clergy and priests. Competition between the two school systems then noticeably shifted from ideology (even if it persisted in some places) to excellence and was based on results in school-leaving examinations (*baccalaureat*), admission to universities, preparatory classes for the *Grandes Écoles*, as well as more subtly on successful entry into the job market.

One final event would revive the school dispute. In 1984, the socialist government of François Mitterrand attempted to create a single education system, integrating all public and private institutions. The Catholic hierarchy protested against such assimilation. Parents of students at private Catholic schools demonstrated in favor of freedom of school choice. The path opened in 1959 had to be continued, as it harmonized the principle of freedom so dear to the Republic and the French people with the concept of national education. The Catholic educational establishments were then fully recognized as private and, if they wished, they could freely associate with the public education system. What made this all the easier was that these establishments hired lay teachers for their faculty and it was possible for them to act positively as Christians in accepting the Second Vatican Council. These institutions were thus entirely open to all students without distinction, both by law (Debré Law of December 31, 1959) and by conviction (Vatican II, 1962–1965).

That is how this transformation, exceptional, and unique in many respects, gradually occurred, creating not strictly denominational Catholic schools that are open to all and fully associated with the public education system and attended by 20% of the students in France. The balance achieved may seem hard to understand to those unfamiliar with the unique history of French secularism, who might be tempted to criticize, suggesting that Catholic educational establishments in France are no longer true Catholic schools, their participation in the public system is a mere façade, and in reality they are primarily elitist establishments. And it is likely that among the 8,500 establishments, there are examples that would support such criticisms.

But outside these special or exceptional cases, a different kind of balance has been struck: it is the balance of educational institutions perfectly adapted to the logic of proposing faith, as explained in the pastoral letter from the bishops of France: *Proposing faith to French society*, Letter to the Catholics of France, Lourdes 1996.

Institutions in Full Agreement with Proposing Faith in French Society

1. The Church of France Almost Lost its Catholic Educational Institutions

French Catholic schools would not have separated themselves from the Church on their own, but because during the initial reception period of the Second Vatican Council, many Christians, priests, clergy, and bishops, felt that the era of Catholic education had past. The educational mission of the Church was then thought of as supplemental, with the time come to return all of this mission to society and the State and instead refocus Church resources on other internal and missionary areas. This quiet yet insidious debate made its way through the teaching orders and diocesan establishments. It was muffled by the especially painful crisis in vocations and departure of priests and clergy.

The 1984 demonstrations provided an opportunity for readjustment. What did the Church plan to do with Catholic education in France now that families had just successfully mobilized to maintain it and, at the request of the President of the Republic, the proposed combined public education system had been definitively abandoned?

2. The New Catholic Education Statute Of 1992

With the General Secretariat of Catholic Education, the bishops of France began to work on a new statute, which underwent a number of amendments and was finally accepted by a formal vote at the bishops' conference in Lourdes in 1992. It acknowledged a mission of the Church, called its pastoral mission, with two key figures in the structure of Catholic educational establishments: the Diocesan Director (*directeur diocésain*) and the Principal (*chef d'établissement*):

- The Diocesan Director, because he is the key interface with the bishops, supervisory committees, religious orders, and academic authorities. In 2006, all diocesan directors (except in Corsica) became lay. They are the main contacts of the bishops who appoint them. They are regularly associated with the various committees of the bishop or diocese.
- The Principals, who are essential to the reality of Catholic education. The establishment is a homogenous entity, legally independent of the State and freely associated with the public system, whose faculty has the status of public employee under the supervision of the principal.

This personification of responsibility in the organization is the basis of the strength and appeal of Catholic educational establishments and, where it is ineffective, their weakness. It is not generally known that in 1984, national education leaders in charge of negotiations with the Catholic education system, in view of integrating into a single system, tried to extend these characteristics of independence and responsibility to all public establishments of the Ministry of National Education.

Under the supervision of the principal, the school is an educational community that includes students, teachers, support staff, those in charge of more specifically pastoral activities, parents, and managers (since these schools are private nonprofit associations governed by the law of voluntary associations). Furthermore, the principal asks the bishop to appoint a school priest, and he makes efforts to create a real bond with the parish or young people's ministry in the diocese. These duties can be delegated by the principal to a pastoral associate called a pastoral animator. The titles may change, depending on the size of the establishments and dioceses, but in the spirit of the statute, the Christian example is first embodied in the Principal as an educational mission to serve all and as a mission of the Church recognized by the bishop.

3. The 1996 Letter to the Catholics of France: Proposing Faith in Modern Society

I have freely borrowed the title of this final section from a key document prepared ten years ago by a team of theologians assembled by Mgr. Claude Dagens that, in 1994 and 1996, resulted in two interim reports widely discussed and amended in various Church structures: dioceses, parishes, movements. These consultations resulted in drafting a pastoral letter that was ratified by all bishops in France: proposing faith in modern society (Assembly of the French Episcopal Conference, Lourdes, 1996). This text chose to start from an observation broader than just the Church and clearly concluded that there was a "general crisis in the transmission of values." The risk of secularization and of weakening the Christian offering, with a potential crisis in the catechesis looming in the background and, more importantly, a crisis in the transmission of values. These are the challenges and difficulties that the educational community of Catholic educational establishments must meet.

Despite its shortcomings, the current model is actually more dynamic and responsive than it might appear. It is first a model of balance and of an acknowledged mission. It is the principal who is ultimately responsible for the establishment. He or she must engage a wide range of constituents; oversee and encourage the engagement of parents, ensuring that they understand the limitations of their role as educators, and to lead the faculty. The school is not the property of the administrators, the parents, or the teachers. It is this broad view of education that is guaranteed by the responsibility of the principal. Its autonomy is well known to the partners in the Ministry of National Education and often envied by them, not in terms of power, but rather in terms of the potential for quality

in implementing educational responsibility and the fact that innovative teaching is encouraged.

Is this constructive balance in line with the Christian faith and its potential to transform society? In 1996, the Church of France took a hard look at itself, the reception of the Council, its difficulties and its opportunities. It agreed to consider its pastoral activities not in sociological terms but in accordance with its evangelical foundations. This meant venturing into open, deeper waters by unifying two key moments of Christian life: mission and communion. Astonishingly, the authors of the Letter to the Catholics of French had little knowledge or experience of Catholic education. But upon receipt of the Letter, the bishops and the heads of Catholic education quickly discovered that they had the same intuitions: offer everyone, regardless of faith, an educational opportunity based on the Gospel. It was the renewed perception of this evangelical foundation that justifies offering everyone an education that also includes an offering of the Christian faith. The catechism of France would include this refocusing in its own publication: *Aller au cœur de la foi*, [Going to the heart of faith] in 2002.

At this stage, one can sum up this huge movement and inspiration by saying that Catholic education is offered and not imposed. One phrase can recapture its impetus: "Proposing faith to modern society." A very similar form of this expression occurs in the opening homily of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII. It involves thinking simultaneously and jointly of the mission of Catholic teaching in the Church and in society. We have moved from an obligatory system to one that is offered. But this system is now public. The Church, in expressing this offering, has integrated both Vatican II and French secularization. It has not tried to oppose them. It seeks to develop and promote renewed public involvement by the Church in French society. Because the Church is urged to constantly refer to its foundations, it believes that the coercive and obligatory forms are no longer appropriate for a more mature world able to make choices, even if we clearly perceive its contradictions and shortcomings. Offering does not mean that we refuse to be ourselves. On the contrary, we choose to do so by entering public debate.

This movement to propose faith in public is bound to resonate from within, given the gradual and historical transformation of Catholic educational establishments and their three conditions: affirm a Christian character, be open to all, and respect freedom of conscience. The close correlation of what has historically become Catholic education and the intuitions implied in the Letter to the Catholics of French should be emphasized.

In 2005, the Church of France at the French Episcopal Conference at Lourdes decided to focus its deliberations on Catholic education: the mission of education in the Church and in society. The goal was not in order to readjust schools to their Christian mission, but rather to renew the implication of the various stakeholders, the educational community and local churches in a possible joint mission: proposing the faith in modern society by taking into account the real social impact of Catholic education in French society, especially in the academic and educational domain. Thus if one out of three young people now attend Catholic

establishments, the missionary and spiritual challenges to the Church and society are evident. Education has once again become a major political issue, due to the new challenges from the culture clash and the mastery of technology and sciences in a globalizing civilization. This political issue is at the center of concerns about the real ability of immigrants and the disadvantaged to integrate.

In what we have often analyzed as an inevitable process of secularization, we have no reason to despair of the Holy Spirit. It can open doors we thought were locked. The renewed and totally original form of Catholic educational establishments is an example. Let us not waste this gift, which is the result of French history, changes in French secularization and changes in the Church of France.

Perspectives, Questions, and Ongoing Research

1. Teaching About Religion

(a) The Debray Report: "Towards a Secularism that Understands Religious Culture"

The Debray report,¹ requested by the Ministry of National Education from the agnostic philosopher Régis Debray in 2001, conveyed both expectation and disquiet. The disquiet shows how difficult it is for French secularism to deal with the question of religious culture. The expectation comes from teachers concerned with responding to the crisis of cultural transmission, discussed here in its relation to the particular issue of religious memory. How can Pascal be understood without referring to Christianity and Jansenism? How can the structure of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals be analyzed without noticing the symbolism drawn from the Old and New Testaments displayed in the sculptures and frescos that decorate them?

This report, published in 2002, brought to light a new way of looking at and understanding secularism itself. With respect to religious culture, it is no longer possible to encourage and work for a secularism based on strict abstention from all religious references. Little by little, a distinction is being made between a secularism of understanding and a secularism of ignorance—if the foreign observer immediately reduces French secularism to secularism in general, he will easily miss this productive distinction at work in the midst of secularism itself. A century after the separation of Church and State, their relationship needs to be imagined in terms of the reciprocal understanding of two realities that have each found their legitimate autonomy rather than from the perspective of ignorance and the struggle for power.

The "widespread crisis of the transmission of values" concerns religious culture in particular. How can the foundations of this religious culture be taught in public schools, as well as in Catholic ones, while still respecting the principles

¹ Report by Debray, 2002.

of secularism? This concern has been discussed in numerous meetings, conferences, and think tanks in both the public educational system and the private Catholic educational system since the end of the 1980s (report by the Rector Joutard, 1988).

The Debray report led to the creation of a “European Institute of Religious Sciences” within the Ministry of National Education. The purpose of this institute is to train teachers to teach religious culture. The Catholic educational system has undertaken its own research based on the work of the Catholic universities, which have founded numerous institutes of religious science and theology (The ISTR of Paris, Marseille, and Toulouse) or equivalent chairs (Lyon, Lille, Angers), and in particular on work of the Catholic University Center of Burgundy (Dijon) in relationship with the University of Louvain (Belgium).

(b) Teaching Religious Phenomena

The same difficulty has been encountered in both the public and private Catholic educational systems: “How can the question of religious phenomena be discussed without the interior implication of the teachers involved?” How can the liberty of conscience of the teachers and students be respected?

The context of French secularism only makes these questions more pointed. They reveal a deeper question, the question of the public place of religion in French society. A range of personal difficulties can be found among the teachers, who express their apprehension about involving themselves in these issues—either because a lack of relevant knowledge or because a fear of not knowing which position to take. The work of reflecting on how to distinguish between a position of ignorance and a position of understanding has begun, but its implementation has been slow because it concerns the evolution of people’s attitudes.

At the same time, however, students are noticeably interested by these questions, and their interest is deepened by the international news from the Middle East or by the relatively new presence of a religious plurality in France that includes Islam. Within the European Community, France is both the country that has most rigorously applied the principles of secularism and the country that contains the largest Jewish and Muslim communities (on the order of 4 million believers). In 2003, the presence of “Islamic veils” in school gave rise to a fierce debate that led to the approval of a law forbidding the wearing of ostentatious religious symbols in public educational establishments (2004).

In 2001, the Secretary General of Catholic Education created a mission for the teaching of religion. There has been a proliferation of initiatives, especially in the western regions where Catholic education is traditionally strongly represented, with percentages ranging from 35–45% of all students in the different dioceses with a spike of over 50% in the Vendée.

(c) A Preliminary Summary

It is difficult to “summarize” activities that are still ongoing. Nonetheless, several elements can be distinguished:

- First there is a “megatrend” in both public and Catholic education toward using an interdisciplinary approach to teach religious phenomena, notably in literature, history, philosophy, life sciences, etc.

This education is meant to be integrated into each discipline within the framework of the standard, required class schedules.

- Catholic establishments are experimenting with units in religious culture, which, open to all students and clearly distinguished from catechism, are taken in addition to normal courses. It is not a question of creating a new academic discipline, but a way to take advantage of interdisciplinary teaching in an appropriate way. More so than when religious phenomena are taught within the disciplines, these sorts of classes offer a space for the religious themselves to give their “testimony.”
- Finally, one should mention the many books and studies meant to give teachers the means to deal with the fractures in religious cultural memory themselves or to prepare themselves to be open to new religious cultures in the larger context of globalization.
- However, a deeper question remains: how can spiritual experience be distinguished from religious phenomena? How can education avoid neglecting the spiritual dimension that becomes culture or, more precisely, “also creates culture?” Once again, we rightly have to repose the delicate question about the possible relationship between spiritual experience and educational experience.

2. *Catechetical Renewal*

- (a) The Catholic educational system clearly understands the question of the distinction to be made between teaching religion and catechesis, but also wonders how the two could possibly be connected while respecting differences in conscience. There is a work of discernment here that must be carried out within the specific field of Catholic education. How can opportunities to propose a better understanding of the Christian faith (like the death of John Paul II, major religious festivals, or more directly, the relevant content found in the traditional framework of history and literature programs) be seized while avoiding confusion? It is still too early to take into account the multiplicity of experiments and tests being conducted, but the very number of projects being proposed shows a renewed interest in these questions.
- (b) In terms of catechesis properly speaking, a distinction must be made between what is done at the primary level and what is sought at the secondary level (middle school and high school). The question must also be considerably nuanced with respect to the dioceses, the different congregations responsible for teaching, and the local parish communities. With due prudence, some of the more remarkable developments can be noted here.
At the primary level, catechism is taught for 1 hour per week (the 25th hour) and is normally the direct responsibility of the teacher. The teacher’s competence in this regard is developed through specific training in the context

of the former Catholic teachers' schools (*écoles normales catholiques*) which have become pedagogical training centers (*centres de formation pédagogiques*) (CFP) and are directly administered by the authorities of the Catholic educational system. From time to time, teachers may ask to be excused from this responsibility, but this remains the exception. It is important to emphasize the involvement of parents and the different types of collaboration with parishes, notably as they have been enlarged and reorganized over the last ten years following the numerous diocesan synods.

- (c) A period of comprehensive reflection begun by the bishops of France in 2002 with the publication of a widely read document, “Go to the heart of the Faith,” resulted in a text recognized by the Roman authorities in 2006. This text allows catechetical activity to be understood more broadly as the responsibility of the entire Christian community. In this renewed framework, the Catholic educational system is called to be recognized as a privileged partner. Here, too, it is too soon to see the results of this new dialogue between the local churches and the Catholic educational system. To give a sense of the general climate, we can say that the developments that have taken place on both sides are now being recognized and that a new practice of cooperation and dialogue is developing in contexts where the memory of reciprocal ignorance is still present.

New signs are appearing that are at the same time encouraging and extremely perplexing according to the old analytical models. How can we fully appreciate the fact that in a department in the west of France almost 10% of the students in the 6th and 7th grades in the Catholic educational system ask to be baptized at some point during these two school years? How can we understand the implications of the way the Catholic educational system, public school chaplaincies, and diocesan youth services have collaborated in holding large gatherings of middle and high school students and facilitating the participation of older students in the World Youth Days? Many old distinctions and separations in the Church are now being questioned.

3. The Implications of Social Diversity

(a) The “Fracture Sociale” (Social Chasm)

It has become a banality to say that France, like the rest of the world, is experiencing renewed tensions between the rich and the poor—that gaps or *fractures sociales* have opened in French society. Immigrants and descendants of immigrants live in difficulty and have seen their prospects for rapid integration sharply decline. These issues, whose causes are both internal and external to French society, fuel ideological, and political tensions. Christianity cannot remain indifferent to them without breaking faith with the renewed calls to have the eyes of the “good Samaritan.” The Christian is a “heart that sees” (Benedict XVI, Encyclical “*Deus est caritas*”).

The absence of social diversity concerns in particular the two extremes of society: the richest and the poorest. The policy of the Ministry of National

Education has for a long time been to promote social diversity through the *carte scolaire* (the school map), which obliged public educational establishments to accept as a priority students from their immediate neighborhoods. The Catholic educational system, exempt from these obligations, acquired the reputation of being a selective educational system, and therefore an educational system linked to social class or the rejection of excessive social diversity. But the *carte scolaire* led to situations quite opposed to its initial project: the “ghettoization” of rich and poor neighborhoods. The policy has effectively created a total absence of social diversity, completely contrary to its original intention.

As an illustration of this, we could say that in general certain Parisian neighborhoods achieve little or very little social diversity and that the disadvantaged suburbs only bring together students who live in their immediate vicinity. These students come from families affected by unemployment. Many of them are the “only ones working at home!” It is easy to see that these situations bring external tensions into school and create new sources of exclusion.

(b) Concrete Accomplishments

The politics of school choice within private Catholic educational establishments have become more nuanced over the years as careful thought has been given to opening them to the wider public through supervisory boards and location. Thus middle schools and high schools in the suburbs of Paris, Marseille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing are sometimes attended primarily by first or second generation immigrants and in certain cases have a majority of students of Muslim tradition. Similarly, because of the economic crisis in the north and east of France, many schools in those regions have seen a considerable change in the social background of their students. The teachers have been able to adapt to these new populations by learning to issue the challenge to excel to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. In short, the question of social diversity has become a question that cuts across French society and through both public and private educational establishments. In the public educational system, this diversity is thought of in terms of an obligation (the *carte scolaire*). For its part, the Catholic educational system, with the families of its students, has made a conscious choice to respect and endorse social, cultural, and religious differences.

(c) Financial Obstacles

These policies, broadly supported by the supervisory boards and the diocesan directors, have run up against some concrete difficulties: they require the transfer of old sites to new neighborhoods. Even though the Debré law finances the salaries of teachers, it forbids the State and the local governments (regions, departments, and municipalities) from directly financing the building costs of the Catholic educational system. Some arrangements can be made, notably in the case of technical education, but these administrative difficulties have inhibited the Catholic educational system from moving as much as it would have liked from the city centers toward the suburbs. With due reserve, an image can be

used here: in each large city, an attempt should be made to move one Catholic educational establishment from the city center toward the periphery.

(d) New Projects

One concrete project underway is the creation of “networks” connecting the teachers of multiple Catholic educational establishments. These networks allow a more equitable, shared response to questions of real estate and facilitate the pedagogical choice to provide student housing by taking on the expense of maintaining one residence for the whole district. (*This sentence is unclear in French.*) In this way, broad networks in northern and southern France have been able to follow the evolution of large urban agglomerations by shifting one or more rural middle schools toward the city. These flexible and innovative adaptations, motivated by a real sense of solidarity, give witness to the vitality of the associative structure of Catholic educational establishments when guided by a project of evangelical quality.

It is also little known in France that the technical and agricultural education of the Catholic tradition has always closely followed the changes in industry and offered the possibility of real social integration for many students. It is fair to talk about a real responsive quality here. The number and success of these projects only makes the fact that the Catholic educational system has not been able to position itself closer to the suburbs and the so-called difficult neighborhoods more regrettable.

4. The Training of Teachers and Principals

By now it should be clear that the Catholic educational system is not directed from the top down on a national level, but by inviting all of its people and institutions to find their place within the breath of fresh air of an educational plan founded on the Gospel. This is why the current secretary general of Catholic education, M. Paul Malartre, began the series of *Assises* conferences in 2000 to invite the different “educational communities” to return to the foundations of the Catholic educational project.

Within this context, a reorganization of the training of teachers and principals is in order, especially in view of the fact that one-third of teachers and one-half of principals will need to be replaced within the next ten years. The sense of belonging of those who are called to play the most important role in Catholic education needs to be developed.

(a) Training of Teachers

Teachers are trained within the framework of the contract with the State, and for the middle and high school teachers, within the shared framework of the Institutes of University Education for Teachers, *Instituts de Formation Universitaire des Maîtres*, (IUFM) where they study side by side with their colleagues from the public educational system. Future Catholic school teachers also complete additional training units specific to the Christian character of the institutions in

which they will work. This training is placed under the authority of the diocesan directors of the different regions. This clearly means that it is neither possible nor desirable to make discriminatory choices about the religious convictions or beliefs of future teachers. They are first judged on their knowledge of their discipline and their pedagogical skill. Nonetheless, these teachers do make a conscious choice to work in the Catholic educational system and thereby commit themselves to respecting its “particular character.”

The importance of internalizing the pedagogical project of Catholic education, understanding its evangelical foundations, and justifying it being open to all students must be emphasized during both initial and ongoing training. It is clear that this issue touches on personal attitudes and the evolution of these attitudes among the younger generations of teachers. Within the space of a few years, these attitudes have moved from excessive indifference or criticism of the Christian character of Catholic education to an adherence, more sentimental than rational, to a Christian faith seen as a bulwark against a frightening modernity.

If there are no grounds for obliging teachers to be Christian, Christian teachers do need to be free to be authentic Christians within the context of a service performed as a double vocation, both pedagogical and Christian. For the younger generations of teachers, this means helping them learn what the religious and Christian tradition is, to know something of its history, especially the history of the teaching congregations, and to understand that Catholic education has both its inherent worth and, by being open to all, is of benefit to the common good and a public service. Obviously, this type of training must be revisited throughout a teacher’s career as a serious dialogue between the teacher and his instructors.

(b) Training of Principals

Since 2004, the training of principals has been the direct responsibility of the office of the secretary general. It is clearly of another scope than the training of teachers: it means training those who hold the most important role in Catholic education, who bear direct responsibility for the schools, and to whom the bishops and supervisory boards have given a “pastoral responsibility.”

The oldest educational traditions favor the selection of principals from the teaching body in order to respect and above all understand the specificity of this educational mission, which is neither primarily technical nor commercial.

With rare exceptions, the principals of Catholic schools are of the Catholic confession. The exceptions come with the recognition of unique ecumenical situations and depend on the sole authority of the local bishop, who, in dialogue with the interested party, asks that person to take on a pastoral responsibility despite being of Orthodox or Reformed confession.

Two paths have been favored in the past: one in which the training is provided by the principals’ peers (that is, more seniors principals who are already in the field) and another more professional type of training dealing with the specificities of the profession and its exercise within the context of Catholic education. These two paths have been brought together in a new training institute, which

has been placed under the direct responsibility of the secretary general of Catholic education in order to assure the coherence of the project, to take advantage of the experience of more senior principals, and to provide the professional training needed to keep up with developments in the field. With this goal in mind, an institute to train the administrators of the Catholic educational system has been founded, the IFCEC (*Institut de formation des cadres de l'enseignement catholique*). The vocation of this institute goes beyond the training of principals. But this mission, along with the training of new diocesan directors, is a priority within its ecclesial mission.

The training model is to prepare future principals on a part-time basis (4–5 sessions a week) during the two years before they take their new position while insisting that they continue exercising the teaching profession. This allows time for personal discernment and the approval of the supervisory boards in charge of the schools. This training continues for at least two more years after the principal takes his new position.

This reorganization of the training of school principals has also permitted the realization of an older project, a direct collaboration with the schools of theology of the different Catholic institutes and universities of France that offer school principals a direct understanding of the foundations and justifications of Catholic education and a true appreciation of the Catholic tradition.

Conclusion: Service to Society and the Church

1. Service to Society

Because of its history but even more importantly because of its current impact, Catholic education is deeply rooted in the landscape of French society. In a secularized society, it inspires a sympathy that goes beyond an explicit belonging to Christianity. It is important here to understand how Christian educational outreach and its spiritual foundation are understood by contemporary society. We do not necessarily have the words to describe this reception, but we can say that there is both an understanding of and a longing for something of a spiritual experience and its potential to be a foundation on which to educate about truth, ethical questions, and the liberty of conscience.

The significant contribution of Catholic education to the public good has made it an institution that is much more than a simple laboratory of innovation or new pedagogical experiments. It is an effective partner in the implementation of the principle of a national education for all, and can fully play the role of a force that proposes and questions. It is constantly driven to rework its dynamic capacities in order to remain true to itself and justify its place in service to society.

The recognition of Catholic education as an educational institution open to all cannot be justified if it does not remain true to its foundations, which are explicitly and profoundly evangelical and Christian. Catholic education must then constantly move between its explicit foundations and its reception, which

is broader than French society's feelings toward Christianity and the Church in particular.

Without pretending to be the only spiritual tradition engaged in educational activity, it is a spiritual tradition that is essential to the goals of national education. Now, the questions of the foundations and the justification of a national education have once again become a political question in the strong sense of the term. It is a question that touches the very purpose of French society and its relationship to its own identity in the midst of a process of globalization that is reemphasizing regional identity and has to face the challenge of integrating the most disadvantaged populations, especially those coming from immigration. Working with the Church and in service to society, Catholic education has become a real force for political innovation.

2. *Service to the Church*

The profound transformation of Catholic education in 50 years of secularization has not caused it to disappear but rather transformed it into an essential player in the national educational plan. At a time when it is difficult to balance public finances, Catholic education is an attractive, low-cost component of the plan. In fact, the Catholic educational system only consumes about 15% of the national education budget while serving 20% of all primary, middle, and high school students.

This evolution must be understood within the context of the Church itself. Many older models have been turned completely upside down: how to think about and accept an educational community placed under the pastoral responsibility of a school principal but broader than a community of believers. The French Church is tracing out a new and hereto unknown role for itself in society. This role cannot be played from the edge of society or in the private realm, but must be played in partnership with the National educational system in service to an essential responsibility: the future, because, in the end, education works toward the possibility of a shared future and the need for each student to be respected and develop as he is called to grow as a free person responsible for himself and his society.

Using more traditional language, Catholic education has become a missionary service as well as a service to the community. Imagining and accepting it as such is an opportunity for the Church to open itself to new ways of imagining the place of the Christianity in society. This article was written with a desire to allow a foreign observer to discover Catholic education from the inside. In conclusion, I hope this observer would concur in saying that Catholic education in France is a great opportunity for society and for the Church.

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THEOLOGIZING WITH CHILDREN A NEW PARADIGM FOR CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BELGIUM

Annemie Dillen

Introduction

In Flanders (Belgium), religious education is a compulsory subject for all children and adolescents, from the age of 6 to 18 in all Roman Catholic public schools. Students who do not want to follow the courses of religious education in public schools can replace this course by one in moral education. This arrangement means that a large number of young people follow some form of religious education in Flanders, mostly Catholic religious education. The educational system in Belgium is different in the northern part (Flanders) from the southern part (Wallonia). As I live and work in Flanders, I discuss the situation here in Flanders. Nearly 60% of the population identify themselves as members of the Catholic Church, while 37% say they do not belong to any church. A small minority belong to other religions, like Protestantism, Islam, Judaism, etc. (Dobbelaere & Voyé, 2001, pp. 117–152). Of the people who say they do not belong to any church, there are still a few who would prefer a Catholic funeral to a secular one or who send their children to Catholic schools. About 75% of children and adolescents go to a Catholic school. Nearly 85% follow Catholic religious education in Flanders (Pollefeyt, 2004, pp. 44–45). These statistics show that reflection on religious education in Belgium usually starts from a Catholic perspective. This is also the case because religious education both in public and in Catholic schools is taught from a confessional perspective and is not seen as a neutral subject introducing pupils to the study of religions. Catholic religious education, however, is also different from catechesis, as it does not presuppose the faith of students and because its primordial aim is not to deepen the faith of the pupils, but to help them to form a religious identity of their own in dialogue with, firstly, the Catholic faith and, secondly, other religions and worldviews as well.

Catholic religious education in Flanders faces many different challenges today. We are confronted with pupils with different religious backgrounds who follow Catholic religious education, since many students who do not call themselves Catholic also go to Catholic schools.¹ This situation, which is very clear in particular areas, leads to the need for a reflection on what interreligious learning actually means. Another challenge also arises from the diversity in the school population. In Catholic schools there is a lot of variety in worldview, not only on the part of pupils, but also of their teachers. This leads to the question what the Catholic identity of the school means. What is “Catholic” in a country which is traditionally Catholic, but which is nowadays thoroughly secularized? Catholic schools are also confronted with political and social themes that demand a response from the school. In the summer of 2006, the issue of church asylum for illegal refugees became very urgent in Flanders and as a consequence some schools took the initiative to organize a school asylum.² Furthermore, we are from time to time witness to discussions about the social inclusiveness of Catholic schools and their openness to children with fewer possibilities and children living in poverty.

Another challenge comes from the actual praxis of teaching religious education. How can Catholic religious education be taught in the contemporary de-traditionalized context, where churches and believers are searching for their identity? We are confronted with, on the one hand, a new focus on the Catholic identity in many areas of the Church’s activities, reflected in the religious commitment of some adolescents and teachers, and, on the other hand, a longing for personal choice, freedom and a refusal of definitive and long-lasting engagements from many young people. Religious education is confronted with these tensions and needs to find a way to deal with both the question of “identity” and the desire to teach people the content and the richness of the Catholic faith, and with the longing for personal choices and a rationalist approach to religious themes. Precisely this tension forms the background for the methodological approach I wish to describe in this chapter.

Besides this existent but also theologically relevant question about the relations between “identity”/“tradition” and “freedom”/“rationality”, there is another question that brings us to the main content of this chapter. How should Catholics see children and what does this mean for religious education? “Child” is a broad term that can be used both for children from zero to 18 years (minors)

¹ In a survey of 2003 by 1,218 students of an average age of 17 years, 57% said they were educated as Catholics, 25% said they were educated as Christians, 18% said they were educated in another way: Muslim (2%), Protestant (0.25%), without religion (10%), with a combination of different religious elements (2%) or atheist (3.75%). Of those students, 25% called themselves believers, 37% said they did not know if they believed or not, and 38% said they did not believe. (Pollefeyt et al., 2004, p. 258).

² Since the fall of 2005, many illegal refugees went to churches and claimed church asylum. Many demonstrations for a more humane asylum policy took place in Belgium during the spring of 2006. During the summer of 2006, some schools offered school asylum. The chair of the Catholic education office in Flanders, Mieke Van Hecke, reacted in a positive way and said that these initiatives were inspired by Christian ethical motives and social engagement.

and for smaller children, up to the age of 12 for instance. In this chapter both meanings are possible, as most of what will be said is true for children under 12 as well as adolescents, but the content of the chapter is most relevant with regard to children in primary education (in Flanders from 6 to 12 years). The question about how to see children is of current interest, as seen in many recent debates about, for instance, children's rights. Human sciences have discovered the theme of children as a research subject some three decades ago, and since that time we have witnessed a significant increase in "childhood studies": studies that start from the perspective of children and that take children seriously for themselves. In 1997 David Todd Whitmore wrote that "it appears somewhat odd that Catholicism does not have a developed teaching on what children are and why we should care about and for them, particularly given that church teaching historically has often identified the bearing and rearing of children as the primary purpose of marriage" (Whitmore & Winright, 1997, p. 161). Ten years later, we can see an increase in Christian studies about children and theology. We could mention studies concerning children's spirituality (Yust, 2006; Hay et al., 1996, pp. 47–72; Hay & Nye, 2006), the theology of children (mainly in the German literature about religious education) (Bucher, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005; Büttner, 2002; Büttner et al., 2002), children in the Bible (Ebner et al., 2002), and children in historical and systematic theology (Bunge, 2001; Devries, 2001). The theme of children's rights and Christian ethics is today being discussed in increasing amounts (Marshall & Purvis, 2004), although it is not always with a positive perspective toward children's rights (Anderson, 1996, pp. 31–52; Hafen & Hafen, 1995, pp. 18–24). Specific Catholic studies about children are still very rare. As this fundamental theme of how to look to children is a growing area of research and a focus in the Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium (K.U. Leuven), I would like to discuss the way of seeing children in relation to religious education and against the background of the tension between identity/tradition and rationality/free choice expounded above. The guiding question for my reflections in this chapter is: "What does theologizing with children mean and what are the conditions for this particular approach of religious education?"

Philosophizing and Theologizing with Children: Similarities and Differences

Theologizing with children is an approach similar to philosophizing with children. Doing philosophy with children (Matthews, 1980, 1984) is becoming increasingly popular today and is already used as a method in several Flemish schools. The basis for this approach is the idea that philosophical questions can be discussed with children and are not for academics only. Questions like "is this shoe real" and what does "real" mean, or "can you classify people" can be discussed with children and usually lead to amazingly deep insights from which even adults can learn. Doing philosophy with children does not mean that the classical philosophical theories are explained to children in an easy way. It is a method of stimulating children to be astonished about the world, to think for themselves, to search for answers and new questions. Philosophical thinking with

children is a way to help children to experience themselves as “spiritual beings” if we use “spirituality” in a broad sense. “Spirituality” can be seen as “relational consciousness”, which contains three main elements, namely “awareness sensing” (focusing, feeling oneself one with nature), “mystery sensing” (wonder, awe, imagination) and “value sensing” (the sense of meaning and the experience of the ultimate goodness of the world) (Ratcliff & May, 2004, p. 9).

In the context of religious education, it is more appropriate to speak about “theologizing with children” than about “philosophizing with children,” in order to prevent “philosophizing with children” being seen as a substitute for religious education—a political decision some would like to take in order to diminish the influence of Catholic religious education in schools. Theologizing with children refers mostly to the same techniques as philosophizing with children, but differs in the content of what is being discussed. Religious themes, such as biblical stories or rituals, are dealt with explicitly and elements of religious traditions are discussed. Theologizing with children is aimed at stimulating children’s Christian spirituality, where spirituality has a more specifically religious meaning. “Theologizing with children” typically offers a religious tradition not as something that has to be easily accepted by children, but rather as a valuable legacy that can be explored in different ways. This “open” way of speaking about religion is not self-evident—in comparison to philosophizing—not only as related to the question of children’s competences, but also because the “orthodoxy” of the tradition prevents many people from accepting the value of theologizing with children. Theologizing with children offers a way to deal with the above mentioned tension between tradition and identity on the one hand and rationality and free choice on the other hand. Opponents of this method, nevertheless, would argue that theologizing with children only stimulates the second pole. Further research on the method of theologizing with children and the tools to apply this method in religious education in Flanders is necessary. In spite of this, in the next section of this chapter I will discuss some insights that have arisen already from the perspective of childhood studies, children’s theology, and other recent areas in theology and religious education that clarify the validity of theologising with children for religious education in Flanders and in an international context.

Conditions for Theologizing with Children

In investigating the possible conditions for “theologizing with children,” I will distinguish three major parts. First I will develop a theology about children, then I will speak about a theology of children or children’s spirituality and eventually I will explain the challenges of theologizing with children in confrontation with other models of religious education.

1. Theologizing About Children

Thinking about the conditions for theologizing with children calls for a reflection about who children are and what the aim of their education should be. A variety

of concepts of children are present in our society. Childhood studies and the children's rights movement advance the idea of children as "competent subjects" with a certain degree of autonomy. Children are not just passive receivers and objects of care and protection by adults, but they have an "agency" and are able to act in significant ways (Pufall & Unsworth, 2004). This also means they can have ethical and religious insights which are, although influenced by parents, teachers, and other significant others, not only a copy of what others say, but a testimony of a personal and autonomous view of the world. Some authors criticize the presupposed autonomy of the child and fear that children's rights might harm the authority of parents, teachers, and other adults and the harmonious and cohesive cooperation of children and adults in families and classrooms (Moreau, 2002, p. 78; Hauerwas, 1986, p. 125; Anderson, 1996). These critics of the "agency and autonomy view of children" focus on the danger of "rights talk" and propose the idea that parents and adults most often act in "the interest of children." Some authors suggest that it would be a sign of mistrust of parents if one focused on the "rights" and "autonomy" of children. Ideas of "participation," "agency" and "rights," however, do not necessarily need to be seen as the promotion of an individualist and Hobbesian anthropology contrasting with a communitarian approach. Although overstressing the "autonomy" of children does happen in certain forms of the children's right approach, the image of the child as a relational being does not stand in opposition to the children's rights discourse. From a Christian personalist point of view³ focusing on human beings as beings created by God to live in relationships with due regard for each other (cf. Gen., 1–2; Janssens, 1990; Selling, 1988), the idea that children are agents appeals to adults to respect the child's dignity as a child (and not only as not-yet-adults) and therefore his or her need to be given the opportunity of expressing his or her own voice as very valuable. Nevertheless, however, this idea needs more explanation and theological ethical research to show Christians that this image of the child, partly promoted by the children's rights discourse with its strong appeal to respecting the dignity of children, is relevant both for children and for adults. We will explain this further, but first I will refer to another kind of critique on a contemporary view of children.

³ Personalism is an important model and method of ethical reasoning that has been developed by many philosophers and theologians. In *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), one can also find references to the relevance of the (dignity of the) human person. In Belgium, the moral theologian Louis Janssens had a big influence on the development of personalist thinking and developed a view about the human person "integrally and adequately considered." Janssens speaks about eight components of the human person. The human person is (1) a subject (2) with a certain freedom and responsibility, who lives as "body" "in the world," and is influenced by materiality and temporality. The human person is (3) no abstract soul, but needs to consider his/her limitations as well as those of others and the world. Human persons are (4) related to a concrete other, a "you" (second person), but they also (5) live in structures and institutions and are therefore confronted with yet another (third person). Human persons (6) have the capacity to be open to transcendence and God. (7) Historicity is also a characteristic of the human person. This historicity refers to the individual life as a global history. We can also state that each person is (8) equal, but is also a unique and original subject with specific characteristics to be taken into account. (cf. Selling (1998), cf. Selling (1988)).

The Catholic ethicist Todd David Whitmore (1997) argues that, next to the autonomy of children in the rights discourse, the liberalism of the market economy and capitalism create enormous risks for children today, and influence the image of children. In order to develop a Christian perspective on what children are and why they should be cared for, he describes three ways in which children are treated in a society dominated by the market economy and then he develops an alternative Christian view. Children are treated by society as commodities and as consumers, on the one hand, or as burdens, on the other hand (Whitmore, 1997, pp. 170–175). They either have an instrumental value (as commodities or consumers) or no value at all (as burdens). In contrast to the instrumental value of children, we can speak about the intrinsic value of children (Devries, 2001, p. 164) and show how the Christian tradition makes it possible for us to defend this intrinsic value. The Bible is rather ambivalent about children,⁴ but the general idea that every human being—which obviously also includes children—is created in God’s image and needs to be respected offers a key argument for Christians to defend the intrinsic value of children, which means that children should not be treated as cheap labor, soldiers, or consumers, but as persons-in-relation with a value of their own. The story of Jesus who places the children in the middle and takes them as an example for adults (Mk 9: 35–37) is first of all a critique on existing social values—the neglect and marginalization of those at the borders of society, such as the poor, slaves, and children. This story can also be interpreted as a critique on the attitude of reducing children to the profit they offer to society—Jesus does not take into account the productivity rate of people, but shows people and also children very clearly that they have the right to exist. The idea that children are created in the image of God means also that children are fundamentally relational beings as images of a Trinitarian God. This relational and Trinitarian understanding of children makes it impossible to propose an “either-or” view which opposes the agency and autonomy of children to parents’ rights and authority. Further on, we will explain how the two “poles” can be considered together.

In addition to the idea of children as the image of God, centrally placed by Jesus, Whitmore offers alternatives to the instrumental view of children by referring to the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. He speaks about children as gifts (in faith) (and not commodities), as a hope for the future (and not just consumers) and as people who call for responsibility (in love) (and not only people who are a burden). These three alternative theologically inspired views on children take the intrinsic value of children seriously, but focus primarily on the protection and the socialization of children and do not take into consideration the participation of children in a significant way. Children can

⁴ In the New Testament, we read about Jesus and the children, and Jesus’ special attention to children. Jesus places children in the middle and uses them as an example (see, e.g., Mk 10: 13–16, Lk 18: 15–17, Matt. 19: 13–15). Besides these and other texts that witness to a positive view of children, children are presented in the Bible as victims of abuse, ritual offerings, not-yet-adults to be socialized, if necessary by beatings (see e.g., Proverbs 13:24). For an overview of the many different images of children in the Bible, see Carroll (2001).

however be seen both as “gifts” and as “giving,” as “hope for the future” and as “active subjects living now,” as “calling for the responsibility of parents” and as “taking responsibility” and “calling for the responsibility of the whole society.” Christian views on children, if they are developed, often stress the vulnerability of children as a reaction to either children’s social abuse or to pedagogical and sociological arguments on the autonomy and rights of children. I want to focus on a “fair” giving of the child, in reaction to enforced giving as well as a rather passive conception of children as “gifts,” “future adults” or “objects of care.” The idea of the “giving child” from the Hungarian-American therapist Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986) functions as a “Fremdprophetie” (Schillebeeckx, 1968, p. 29), a prophetic insight coming from outside the Christian tradition. Nagy shows us that children can give a lot to adults and need recognition for this giving. Recent psychological and pedagogical studies show that children should not be perceived as “not-yet-adults,” but can instead be seen as “competent subjects.” The idea of children as hope for the future, put forward by Whitmore, stresses the need for the socialization of children as an alternative to the view of children as mere consumers. The critique of the “instrumental use” of children is very valuable, but seeing children primarily in terms of “socialization” can also be seen as a kind of instrumentalization: children should be socialized in order to fit into society or to be new and future active members of the church. Children, however, cannot and should not be “molded.” When seeing children from the perspective of “socialization,” there is a tendency to see children as “pedagogical projects.” Instead of seeing children as “little adults” as happens in society when children are approached as commodities and consumers, children are then “held down” in order that they can be “raised up,” as the Dutch historian Lea Dasberg (1975) expressed it. The alternative would be to see children as persons, not so different from adults, but with special needs—the way in which children are presented in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. “Special needs” refer to the idea of responsibility for children, seen as an expression of love by Whitmore, perceived as a burden by some people in society.

The idea of children’s participation and their giving, and the value of their lives as children and not as “nearly adults” is put forward by different human sciences that point to an underdeveloped area in Christian thinking on children. The Christian ideas about creation and eschatology, however, as partly expressed in Whitmore’s reference to children as gift and hope for the future, also contain an important element of focussing on the “participation” of children. Both creation theology and eschatological belief make clear that children are a gift to human beings that cannot be possessed. Children should be respected as they are, with their own contributions to the lives of adults and other children, and one should not claim to possess their thoughts and acts. Creation theology shows us that humans do not create others themselves, but experience life and other human beings as a gift that should be fully respected. Humans have the ethical task to take care of others, as responsible stewards—we also learn from Whitmore in his reference to the virtue of love.

The creation and the gift of children asks for conscientious care, but childhood studies make us aware of the fact that this care can very easily become a kind of paternalistic care which does not take seriously the participation and the personal contributions of children. The concept of “stewardship” is therefore important because it criticizes the will to possess the child and to neglect his or her own voice and will. Christians more often refer to the idea of creation as a gift and the necessity of “responsible stewardship” in the context of bioethical questions, both concerning biomedical as environmental issues. We note that in the context of biomedical decisions on issues of life and death, the idea of the child as gift is used as an argument against abortion, in vitro fertilization and so on by certain Christian groups.⁵ In the context of relationships with children and not only when dealing with foetuses or babies, the ideas of the child as a gift and responsible stewardship, however, are also important but not yet fully explored in Christian thought because of the “natalism” which characterizes the Christian tradition (Whitmore & Winright, 1997).⁶ Nevertheless, the idea of stewardship has also been criticized in theological bioethical contexts recently for being an all too passive model that suggests that humans may not change nature too much. Some bioethicists propose the model of “created cocreatorship” as an alternative that allows for a much more active role for human beings in such matters (Peterson, 2004).

In the context of relationships with young and older children, this model of created cocreatorship does not necessarily mean progress compared to the stewardship idea, as cocreatorship would put more emphasis on adults’ active shaping role and could leave less room for recognizing the personal influence and contribution of children. However, when focusing on the aspect of “createdness” and when broadening the idea of “created co-creatorship” to children—who are themselves created cocreators—this idea could incorporate the “participation” idea.

Not only creation theology, but eschatological faith also presents possibilities for recognizing the personal contribution of children and their value “as child.” Eschatological faith teaches Christians that in the end they are dependent upon God’s grace and they cannot “mold” other human beings. Karl Rahner’s ideas about children and eternity (1983) offer even an additional insight into the value of childhood and the necessity of respecting children’s dignity. The Catholic theologian Mary Ann Hinsdale (2001, p. 422) writes about the Rahner’s vision:

[E]ternity is not a final “stage” toward which we advance in time but the enduring validity of human existence lived in freedom. The goal toward which we advance (eternal life) is not “something added on” to this life. It is a gathering up of the totality of one’s life.

⁵ See for instance the papal encyclical of 1995 *Evangelium Vitae*, number 44 about the worth of the unborn child as related to the Old Testament idea of the child as a gift (http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/_INDEX.HTM).

⁶ The term “natalism” refers to the focus on the birth of children. Natalism is often seen in actions against the decline of birth rates and against abortion and contraception.

This idea of eternity implies that childhood is not just a temporary phase but is important as such, in the light of eternity. In the light of contemporary thought about children, this theological view offers a basis for a strong reaction against theories that consider children as not-yet-adults or not-yet-fully-human beings.

These theological ideas about creation and eschatology form a strong basis for the pedagogical and didactical ideas about theologizing with children. Children's own contributions should be respected and adults should not try to mold children. An open and hermeneutical approach to religious learning can find its basis in a child image, partly based on a theology of creation and eschatology, partly based on the *Fremdprophetie* of the childhood studies and Nagy's idea of the giving child.

I want to avoid a one-dimensional Christian perspective on children and education that tries to realize Jesus' vision by socializing children in Christianity as a moral guarantee against the evil of the world (Miller-McLemore, 2003, pp. 57–105). A Christian view of children should focus on the relevance of care for children, and taking children—in their own individual characteristics and in their giving—seriously as such. Children should not be seen as mere passive objects that need socialization. In such a case theologizing with children would be impossible, as religious education would take the form of teaching, whereby children should memorize important ideas and integrate them into their lives. If children are, on the contrary, seen as active subjects, theologizing with children is relevant as a way of integrating their own ideas and questions into the process of religious education.

2. Theologizing by Children

The second condition for theologizing with children is to try to understand the “theologizing by children.” Recent research on children's religious thoughts (Büttner & Thierfelder, 2001; Eckerle et al., 2001; Klein, 2000) confronts us with the question of whether traditional models of religious and cognitive development are still valuable today. The traditional models of faith development by Fowler (1981) and Oser and Gmündner (1982) are challenged today, not only because the different stages included in their theory may be too deterministic and universalistic, but mainly because they focus on the not-yet perspective and thus have built into their model the implication that the child is immature.

I have already put the idea of the child as not-yet-adult under a theological critique (cf. *supra*). My position in this is also supported by recent theories of developmental psychology. Recently, psychologists have increasingly looked for the potential communication opportunities of young children, precisely because the concept of phases and terms of what children cannot yet do prevents this communication (Koops, 1997, p. 48). Scientists discovered that babies and small children display significantly more skills than we usually think (Mussen, 1983). Small children are able to perform a certain number of cognitive operations and are able to mentally create some kind of a symbolic representation and abstraction. Young children are therefore not so fundamentally different from adults when it comes to the structure of their thinking.

At the age of 3, children are able to distinguish mental and physical worlds (Koops, 1997, p. 52) and they comprehend that people react on the basis of their own subjective presentations and not so much on the basis of objective facts (Koops & Terworgt, 1994; Rieffe et al., 1996; Koops, 1997, pp. 52–53). On the basis of simple tests, it can be demonstrated that children are able to do much more than they are usually credited. When, in an experiment, four-year-old children are confronted with a cookie jar that contains pencils instead of cookies, the children most often say, after opening the cookie jar, that they thought there would be cookies in the jar (Rieffe et al., 1996, p. 222; Koops, 1997, p. 53). Young children are, certainly from the age of 4, able to see different perspectives and interpretations of reality.

Van den Bergh argues that the tests used mostly for measuring children's self-image are not apt for children under eight-years old because the tests are too abstract (Van den Bergh, 2003, pp. 18–19). If children do not succeed in this test, one cannot conclude that they have not yet developed a self-image. Neither should one look for a global self-image in children under eight-years old on the basis of the prejudice that they "would not have this self-image." Instead, when one uses adapted methods of questioning, competences of very young children can become apparent.

If we apply these insights to the traditional models of children's religious development based on stages of faith, it becomes clear that these models have their weaknesses—although they still retain their value as a means of preventing teachers from asking too much of children. The new developments in children's spirituality research also challenge the traditional models because they are focused on cognitive development and thus neglect the experiences of children (Ratcliff & May, 2004, p. 11). I will soon present new research-in-development on children and their opportunities for "theologizing"—where we do not use a developmental stage model, but where we refer however only to "thinking about" faith and not the experiences of religion and spirituality in the broad sense.

At this moment in Belgium, a quantitative research project is being conducted which investigates the cognitive belief styles of children from ten- to 14- years old.⁷ The study makes use of an adapted version of the post-critical belief scale (Hutsebaut, 2000; <http://ppw.kuleuven.be/religion/religion.htm>) to "measure" children's spirituality. This scale consists of four main axes, namely "orthodoxy" and "second naiveté"—two dimensions that refer to a certain engagement with faith—and "external critique" and "relativism"—two dimensions referring to a certain distance from personal faith, a kind of "unbelief." Relativism and second naivete are both dimensions that can be characterized by the term "symbolic thinking," while external critique and orthodoxy refer to "literal thinking." From a Catholic theological point of view, taking "hermeneutics"

⁷ This research project is being conducted at the Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen in cooperation with the Faculty of Theology, K.U. Leuven. The supervisor is Reinhilde Henckens and cosupervisors are Prof. dr. Didier Pollefeyt and Prof. dr. Dirk Hutsebaut. The author of this chapter is engaged in the research project as an advisor.

as a method for doing theology, we see second naiveté⁸ as the most preferable belief style (Hutsebaut, 2004, pp. 337–353). We want to investigate whether children in Catholic schools gravitate more to an orthodox or a second naivete style when they identify themselves as believers. We would like to know if symbolic thinking is possible for children of 11 years old because until now, the post critical belief scale has only been used for research with adolescents and adults. If an 11-year-old child can think in a symbolic way (and score high on second naivete), this would entail that at least at that age one of the conditions for theologizing with children is fulfilled. One can investigate different possibilities for discussing religious questions rather than sticking to one, simple, and literal answer, because these children are open to symbolic interpretations of reality. In a first stage of the research with 1,916 pupils of 11 years old, it was indeed found that these children score the highest on the symbolic scales, as second naiveté and relativism,⁹ although it is evident that caution is called for when it comes to the interpretation of the empirical differences between the styles in the earliest phase of the study, which will be continued during the next years with other groups of children. The consequences for religious education could be various. The fact that children score rather high on second naiveté could mean that they think symbolically and that teachers should do more to support children's symbolic thinking, for instance by using the method of theologizing with children. On the other hand, the second naiveté score can also be the result of an already existent cultural and religious climate in society and education which the children have picked up, which means that in our contemporary Belgian society religious education is not focused on literal interpretations of religion. This second interpretation, however, can also lead to the conclusion that symbolic thinking can and should be stimulated in classrooms.

The (provisional) empirical results also show that for children the choice does not so much lie between “symbolic” or “literal” thinking, but rather between “believing” and “not believing”—in this they differ from adults. The most important question for children seems to be the question whether they believe or not. This means that there are also a lot of children who say they do not believe. This shows us that children are not automatically “open to religion” or “oriented towards God,” as a first reading of Rahner's essay on children (1966) would suggest. Children are—as humans—hermeneutical beings (Pollefeyt, 2004, p. 141), but this “openness to interpretations” does not automatically mean that children are also “open to God”—there can be many factors in life that hinder

⁸ Second naiveté is a philosophical term used by Paul Ricoeur. It refers to a symbolic way of thinking that goes beyond a first naivete, as it is a retrieval of faith after being confronted with critiques of a naive form of faith. Dirk Hutsebaut sees “second naiveté” religion as the most mature form of faith. Second naiveté is a form of “restorative interpretation” (Hutsebaut, 1996, p. 50). It is believing “despite the critique.”

⁹ Children generally score highest on “relativism” (2.87 on a 4 point scale), which is symbolic thinking—but in a nonengaged way. The difference of score between this and second naivete is rather small (2.82 on a 4 point scale). On the literal scales (orthodoxy, 2.07, and external critique, 2.22) the scores of children are lower. This means that children at the age of 11 are able to think in a more symbolic way about religion and do not take all religious elements literally.

a child's belief.¹⁰ This is an element that should be taken into account when theologizing with children: not every child has an elaborated image of God. When reading Rahner more closely, however, we discover that he, first of all, suggests that every child "could" have an approach to God by his or her own experiences and that the relationship with God is not a privilege for adults. A relationship with God is given by grace (Hinsdale, 2001, p. 428), but that does not mean that everyone is a conscious believer. By expressing these insights about children's "infinite openness to the infinite," which is Mary Ann Hinsdale's summary of Rahner's view on children (Hinsdale, 2001), we note a relationship with Rahner's famous and controversial theory about "anonymous Christians,"¹¹ which we will not explore further here, but to which we remain rather sceptical because this kind of inclusivistic thinking does not fully take nonbelievers seriously. Rahner's main insight concerning children, however, which is attested by our empirical data, is that children should not be seen as "not-yet-fully-believers."

Research on the "theologizing by children," as well as our theological reflections on who children are, show us that the classical paradigms of developmental psychology (Piaget et al.) should not form the only and absolute basis for thinking about children today (Martens, 2005, p. 19). Classical developmental psychology sees children in terms of "not-yet," whereas both our theological and empirical research teaches us that children are able to reflect about and to experience religious elements, although this is not an automatic process.

3. *Theologizing with Children*

In the third section of this chapter I will discuss the method of "theologizing with children" in relation to other paradigms for Catholic religious education. Whereas the reflections developed above relate to theology, ethics, and spirituality, the idea of theologizing with children is developed in the context of reflecting on religious education, mostly in schools. We can also apply the model to the context of parishes, congregations, and families. Theologizing with children is a way of speaking about a form of religious education, that is mainly developed in Germany and Austria (Büttner et al., 2002; Bucher et al., 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). I will place this idea alongside a model from the Netherlands (participatory learning) and a Belgian model (hermeneutical-communicative religious

¹⁰ Children who are not educated about faith and who do not receive Christian formation have less chance of becoming believers. However, it is possible that they may think in a "symbolic" way about faith and may say, for instance, that one need not take the Bible literally and that it contains only nice stories. Some children never learn that these stories can mean more for people nor that one can also be a believer (cf. second naiveté) if one does not believe that all religious expressions must be taken literally. Factors such as experiencing the death of a loved one, a parental divorce or a fundamentalist religious education, can also hinder the development of a child's belief.

¹¹ The term "anonymous Christians" is a term that is often used as a summary of the "inclusivistic" vision of Rahner. In short, this position holds that people who do not believe in Jesus Christ can be seen as anonymous Christians, since Christ will save them even if they do not recognize it. People who do not know the message of Jesus Christ are not condemned, but as anonymous Christians they can be saved by the grace of Christ (see Rahner, 1965, pp. 545–554).

education), also accepted in a broader international context. I will show to what degree the personal voice, spirituality, and “theological” reflection by children is integrated in these recent models of religious education.

In pedagogical literature, the concept of participation is often used to measure to what extent children are given a voice, for instance in the family. Participation of children means: having the possibility of expressing one’s personal opinion. Varying degrees of participation are possible, from the knowledge that adults will take care of the child and will try to do what is best for the child, to the act of actually making decisions together. I prefer to use the word participation in the context of having the opportunity to express a voice that is heard and, if possible, also taking into account in the decision-making process. The Dutch religious education scholar Chris Hermans uses the word participation in the context of religious education. He speaks about “participatory learning” and—with this concept—reacts against a model of religious learning that is all too cognitively oriented (Hermans, 2001, pp. 284–295). He argues that, in the context of religious education in primary schools, it is important to give children the opportunity to participate in religious activities, in the sense of “taking part in.” Religious education is not only a matter of thinking, but also of experiencing and feeling. Keywords for this model are “participation in significant activities and practices,” “learning in a specific context,” “learning as a social process” and “developmental orientation” (Hermans, 2001, p. 292).

This model of participatory learning is much more complex than can here be addressed, but I would like to make clear the basic meaning of participation in this model, namely taking part in. This is a very important concept, as “experience” is central. However, I propose using the concept participation in its double sense, namely both as taking part in and as “having a voice that is heard.” Religious education, following the above suggested image of the child as an active subject, should aim at activating children’s concrete experiences, their thinking and expressions of their own religious ideas.

While the model of participatory learning as it is developed by Chris Hermans mainly focuses on “taking part in meaningful religious activities” and “learning by experiencing and reflection on the experiences,” our remark on having a voice that is heard could still point religious education in another direction which has its own difficulties. When religious education is seen mostly as talking with children and primarily listening to children’s own ideas, it is unlikely that children will be taught the traditional religious practices, symbols, and beliefs. This danger is related to a certain form of theologizing with children, which focuses strongly on the personal ideas of children and challenges these by questioning them, but which is not involved with any critical material, texts, or stories that can be incorporated to confront children’s ideas. It does not suffice to enable children to have religious experiences, to allow them to express themselves and to listen to their ideas. Children also need concrete insights against which to confront their own ideas. It is important that there are both inductive and deductive poles in religious education. This means that seeing the child as a “competent subject” does not necessarily hold that a child should find out everything about

religion itself, on the basis of its own competences. It is important that education enters into a critical and challenging dialogue with children.

We find this deductive and inductive approach combined in the hermeneutical-communicative model of religious education (Lombaerts & Pollefeyt, 2004; Maex, 2003; Pollefeyt, 2004). This model is developed at the Catholic University of Leuven in the context of the research concerning teacher training for secondary schools. The term “communicative” in the hermeneutical-communicative model of religious education refers to the idea that religious education is not unidirectional. For this model, the communication between teacher and student or adult and child is central. Religious education is not simply a “faith transfer.” Learning from each other does not imply that a child does not need guidance. Children have a right to religion, argues the German theologian Friedrich Schweitzer (2000). He states that it is important that children get the tools and frameworks to deal with the questions they might have, such as questions about life and death, morality, God or different religions. It is therefore also important that teachers actively offer some kind of a religious education that enters into dialogue with the child. This “right to religion” and the “dialogue with the child” are central in the Belgian approach to religious education. In the curricula of Catholic religious education, the hermeneutical-communicative view is integrated and teachers are encouraged to discuss religious and existential themes with children. Hermeneutical-communicative religious education takes into account the position and the view of each child, but also offers each child the possibility to reflect on the meaning of Catholic faith. This possibility is offered to all children, from the age of 3 to the age of 18, in the obligatory course of religious education (two or three hours a week, or integrated into a general educational model in Kindergarten) in Catholic schools, and for those who choose the course of Catholic religious education in other schools (from the age of 6 to the age of 18).

The term “hermeneutical” implies that the Christian tradition, in its different interpretations, is also present in religious education. It is not only communication, whereby children and adults freely express what they think about religion, but also includes a critical interpretation of the Christian tradition and the many religious elements which the participants in the religious education process have already integrated into their own worldviews. Religious education in schools should not take the form of indoctrination. In Western Europe many parents are afraid of indoctrinating their children when offering them a religious education, in schools or at home. Religious education, however, is possible in an open and critical way when adults and children can search in dialogue with each other, with other people and with traditional Christian elements to reach a personal appropriation of the Christian tradition.

We can ask, then, how to deal with a religious tradition in a hermeneutical-communicative way when theologizing with children or, in other words: how can the idea of theologizing with children that takes children really seriously be improved by the insights of the hermeneutical-communicative model?

The teacher can bring religious elements into the discussion, and use religious elements as material for theologizing with children as, for instance a painting of Christ, a movie with religious elements, the sign of the cross, a biblical, or other religious text. Theologizing with children by using clear references to the Christian tradition, however, presupposes that one does not see the tradition as “fixed” and “closed,” but as an “u-topia,” a good place (from u coming from the Greek eu and topia from the Greek topos) or without fixed place (from u as the Greek ou, with means no or a negation) (Cornu & Pollefeyt, 2003). Tradition should be seen as open to change, and continuity is only possible if change and adaptation are also possible. Theologizing with children can have an influence on the religious tradition itself when theology takes into account the new area of “child theology” to which the theologizing with children can contribute.

(a) *Implications for Catholic Schooling* Teachers in Flanders are more and more formed by the hermeneutical-communicative model of Catholic religious education. Since the year 2000 there are new curricula that integrate this model and in the schools for teacher training (both university and other schools, for academic and professional degrees) students of education and student teachers are more frequently confronted with the model of hermeneutical religious education. However, a great deal of schooling is needed for teachers. Therefore, the organization that coordinates Catholic schools in Flanders (Vlaams Verbond voor Katholiek Onderwijs), organizes study days on the hermeneutical-communicative model. There is a collaboration between different partners of Catholic education in Flanders and the Faculty of Theology of the K.U.Leuven, where the model of hermeneutical-communicative religious education is developed and studied. At the Faculty of Theology (K.U.Leuven), a website is developed which offers teachers and all other persons related to Catholic education materials for hermeneutical-communicative religious education. This website (www.godsdiensonderwijs.be) is consulted by many teachers and is used widely in Catholic religious education.

Theologizing with children as such nevertheless requires more training. It is not enough that teachers learn the theoretical presuppositions of the hermeneutical-communicative model and that they have tools to integrate this model in their lessons. They also need communicative competences, to enter into dialogue with pupils and to ask good questions, to recognize deeper layers in their pupil’s answers, and to reach religious depth in their dialogues. These competences can be learned, but therefore more specific training is necessary.

Critical hesitations toward the method of religious education discussed in this chapter can be expected from parents, teachers, pupils, priests, believers, or other people concerned with religious education who do not accept an open way of discussing religion. People who think in a dogmatic and literal way about religion are often also those who think that pupils should first learn what Catholic religion means and who are not much open to dialogue. In a recent empirical study, we found that there is a significant correlation between the style of teaching religion

in primary schools and cognitive belief style. Those teachers who believe in a literal way¹² (and score high on the orthodoxy scale) are on average more directed toward an educational style that gives children security and clear Catholic messages (significant correlation of .35). Those teachers that think in a more symbolic way about religion or who are directed more toward stimulating children's reflections will also more likely be open to theologizing with children.¹³

In our research with secondary school religious teachers, we found that teachers who believe in a literally engaged way (and score high on orthodoxy in the postcritical belief scale) have in general more doubts about a dialogical type of religious education, in which there is much attention paid to pupils with other beliefs. These teachers focus more on the relevance of Catholic initiation and socialization before they might begin to have dialogue or even interreligious learning.¹⁴ These empirical results teach us that critiques of theologizing with children can be expected from both theological and pedagogical perspectives and will usually be given by those who believe in a literal way. These results also show us that teacher formation as regards theologizing with children needs to integrate reflection in theology as well as training in dialogue. In teacher trainings, teachers can learn to see that Catholic faith does not contradict theological ways of thinking where religion is not the answer to every question, where there can be open questions that ask for further reflection and dialogue. At the same time, they can learn that dialogue—in opposition to top-down ways of teaching and socializing pupils—is not only relevant and interesting for the educational process, but also for the theological content of what is taught and discussed. Dialogue and hermeneutical reflection go together. This element is the biggest challenge for teacher formation.

(b) *Agenda for Further Research* Theologizing with children is a method to be used in Catholic religious education, because it takes seriously the voices of children, because it respects children in their dignity, and because it enables children to learn to know the Catholic tradition and to ask critical questions that deepen

¹² Some items of the orthodoxy scale—referring to literal thinking—are: “I think that Bible stories should be taken literally, as they are written,” “Only a priest can give an answer to important religious questions” and “Ultimately, there is only one correct answer to each religious question” (see: <http://ppw.kuleuven.be/religion/adobe/PCBSenglish.pdf>).

¹³ In the research of Henckens and De Boeck, conducted under the guidance of Pollefeyt and Hutsebaut (see endnote 7), there was a significant correlation between thinking in a second naiveté way and trying to stimulate personal reflection and dialogue with students (0.34). This research about primary school teachers and their theological and didactical options will probably be published in a volume in 2008.

¹⁴ There is a correlation of 0.35 between “orthodoxy” and “conditional dialogue” and a correlation of -0.42 between “orthodoxy” and “dialogue.” This means that teachers who think in an orthodox way or believe literally about religion and who are not very open to symbolic interpretations of faith focus more on the conditions for dialogue, namely “initiation in Catholic faith.” These teachers state, for instance, that the aim of religious education is to generate or to deepen Christian faith and that pupils first must learn about their own Christian tradition before they can be confronted with pupils of other beliefs. These teachers generally score more negatively on items such as: “Religious education is more a service to the humanization of young people than a service to the Church” and “Religious education has to teach pupils to grow up in a multicultural and multireligious society.” These items are part of the dialogue scale and are related to the dialogue presented in the hermeneutical communicative model (Pollefeyt et al., 2004, p. 170).

their insight and their engagement. In this way, children can learn to make informed choices and know the Catholic tradition as something that is valuable in our postmodern world where “questioning,” “change” and “doubt” are central categories.

However, theologizing with children calls for much more research. Most literature about this new approach is written in German, whereas most fundamental research about children and theology and children’s spirituality is done in the USA and is written in English, mostly from a Protestant perspective. There is an urgent need to take the theme of “children” and “theology” seriously in Catholic theological research, preferably in such various disciplines as religious education, ethics, dogmatics, spirituality, and so on. The main questions then are, for instance, what can Catholic theology and Catholic theologians offer to the further development of research on child images that respect children’s dignity? How does this research influence Catholic religious education? And how can the Catholic magisterium take children seriously? In the summer of 2006 the German bishop of Erfurt, Mgr Joachim Wanke, wrote a letter to children. This is one example of seeing children as real participants in the church. However, theological research on children could stimulate further initiatives that also listen to children’s voices and their “theological” insights, and that enter into dialogue with children. Future research on religious education should try to explore ways to deal with the double tension between tradition/identity and rationality/free choice on the one hand and socialization/initiation and personal voice of children on the other hand. The relevance of recognizing this second tension has become clear in this chapter. Children are not just passive objects of socialization that have to accept the religious tradition, but they are also competent subjects with their own basic theological insights. It is important that existing materials and practices of religious education are investigated within the framework of four poles (tradition/free choice/socialization/one’s own voice), in order to bring forth new material, improve existing material, and stimulate the training of teachers in Catholic religious education.

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Appendix: Some Numbers About Flanders and Education

Education is since 1989 the full responsibility of the regions (Flanders et al.).

The following numbers are numbers for Flanders.

There are three levels of education in Flanders.

1. Basic education

Kindergarten (2.5–6 years)

Primary schools (6–12 years)

2. Secondary education (12–18 years)
3. Higher education (18 years and older)

(a) Professional bachelors

(b) Academic education Academic bachelors and masters in schools and in universities

Between the age of 6 and 18 years, children are obliged to learn (they are not obliged to go to school: parents can educate their children at home).

Percentage of Catholic Schools (2005–2006)

Primary education = 62%

Secondary education = 66%

Children in Catholic education in relation to the total number of children going to schools

Primary education = 64%

Secondary education = 75%

In Flanders, there were nearly 1,400 Catholic primary schools in 2005–2006.

During the school year of 2005–2006, 729,086 children were registered in Catholic schools in primary and secondary education (in general pupils between 3 and 18 years)

In primary education, more than 240,000 children go to Catholic schools.

Percentage of children in public education following the subject roman-catholic religious education (2004–2005)

Primary education = 64%

Secondary education = 32%.

TOWARDS A PARTICIPATIVE IDENTITY: CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS IN SEARCH OF A NEW APPROACH

Aad de Jong

One of the big challenges for Catholic education in the Netherlands results from the coming of so many Muslims in our country. Even in Catholic schools the number of Muslim pupils is growing, not only in the big cities like Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the western part of the country, but even in the smaller towns and villages elsewhere. This development is the source of big discussions—and tensions—in our society about integration and segregation, especially about the possible segregative effects of faith-based schools. From inside the developments in religious education on the Catholic side we meet a challenge with the same content. Many people there call for a form of “multireligious” or “interreligious” learning. That evokes the question, how we can legitimate that in Catholic schools? How is interreligious learning unifiable with the Catholic identity of Catholic schools?

This kind of questions is one of the important motives behind a quite fundamental reconsideration in the Netherlands about the identity of Catholic schools, especially of the religious education in these schools. That concerns particularly the social dimension of this identity. With that I mean the relation between “we” and “them,” between “self” and “other,” “own” and “strange,” “special” and “general” in the foundation of Catholic education. But here is also the more fundamental question whether these notions and approaches as such are satisfying enough in view of the new developments in and around the Catholic schools in our radical plural societies. Is it maybe better to think in another terminology and conceptual framework, for example with notions like “part” and “whole,” “alone” and “together,” “particular” and “collective?”

In this chapter I want to show the fundamental meanings of the traditional identity-oriented approaches and why some scholars in the Netherlands think that these approaches are not satisfactory (par.1). But the main goal is to show what new approaches they try to find and why these possibly are more satisfying. I mean the new, more participative approaches (par. 2). And I want especially

give a look at the far reaching implications of these approaches for the fundamentals of interreligious education in Catholic schools (par. 3.)

Traditional Identity-oriented Approaches of Catholic Education

First of all I want to describe the fundamental characteristics of the more traditional identity-oriented approaches. I call them traditional, because also the participative approaches are in a certain way identity-oriented, but identity then in the sense of participative identity. In contrast with this are the more traditional identity-oriented approaches more self-oriented instead of oriented to other people, to bigger communities, and to collective actions.

To clarify the fundamentals of these approaches it is useful to take a look at how the notion of identity has evolved in Western thinking. It is none too clear how far the term “identity” dates back in Western thought. What is known is that the concept already played a crucial role in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and even before that. And when it comes to the problem considered in this chapter, it is noteworthy that both these godfathers of Western philosophy linked the term with the concept of participation (Berger, 1963). This situation continued for a long time. Thomas Aquinas likewise regarded the identity of separate beings as participation in a greater whole (Te Velde, 1991). After the Middle Ages, however, things changed. In Cusanus’s thinking, for example, it is already evident that the issue of identity would increasingly be approached from the angle of human beings and their cognitive powers, and that in the process the accent would shift from the relation between part and whole to that between self and other (Beierwaltes, 1980). In Locke’s thinking this development reached a kind of precocious zenith, in the sense that identity is conceived of as individual self-awareness and conscience (Thiel, 1997). Later on this concept of identity was applied to groups of people as well and one hears about social and collective identity, although often in association with the personal identity of individuals. Here social identity still meant a body of characteristics of individual persons, more especially characteristics pertaining to membership of a particular group or cultural circle (Jenkins, 1996). Thus one finds references to the identity of social classes, groups, and organisations per se. And here identity actually implies an essence that has to be preserved in the processes of renewal, or the cultural pattern that characterises and distinguishes a social system (Laeyendecker, 1974). In contemporary functionalist approaches, however, group identity is increasingly regarded as self-definition (Hendriks, 1996, p. 63). In effect this means that identity coincides with the beliefs held by dominant people in these groups about the cultural pattern that should be conserved in that particular social system. That is the sense in which the concept of identity usually features in what I call traditional identity-oriented approaches to Catholic education. The Catholic identity of Catholic schools is in this approach the faith of dominant people in these schools about the cultural pattern that should be conserved in them.

Of course, that does not mean that there is something like a definitive identity-oriented approach to Catholic education. Nonetheless there is a certain “family likeness” between the various approaches in which identity is a focus of attention. That is my concern here. And in the extension of the evolution of the concept of identity as described above, most identity-oriented approaches typically focus on people’s key religious beliefs and the reflection of these in the truisms that constitute a kind of cognitive *vorverständnis*. At the very least beliefs are regarded as the core of religious identity (Van der Ven, 1993, 144ff.). Often these refer to religious beliefs that one shares with other people. Thus Catholics’ catholic identity consists in the body of beliefs that they have in common with other Catholics. In this sense of shared beliefs people refer to the identity of Catholicism, the Catholic faith and Catholic education. In the same sense people speak about the identity of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In all these instances we are in fact dealing with the social or collective identity of particular religious groups and their individual members.

Because identity is always about the distinctiveness of something or somebody, traditional identity-oriented approaches are mainly interested in the beliefs and cognitive truisms that are peculiar to the relevant individuals and groups. This applies both to people’s personal beliefs and the distinctive beliefs of their group, and to the beliefs of other people and other “religions” or “world views.” That is why comparison is such an important feature of these approaches. People like to look for similarities and differences. Hence traditional identity-oriented approaches to Catholic education are mainly comparative in nature. And the fundamental questions invariably asked in the framework of these approaches are questions regarding what are known as (in)compatibility and (in)commensurability.

Usually the aim of this education in relation to Muslims or other non-catholic people is recognition of the other’s otherness, and in that sense cultivating mutual tolerance and respect. Proponents of this approach are consistently wary of syncretism and relativism and tend to point out the risk of loss of identity in all contacts with non-catholic people. In this sense traditional identity-oriented approaches to Catholic education are largely conservative and literally intent on self-preservation. True, in recent times it is increasingly found that identity is no longer conceived of as something static. People like to point out that identity is constantly evolving and in a sense is located in the future rather than in the past. This gives rise to a less reticent approach to Catholic education. But again Catholic identity is sought primarily in the religious beliefs that distinguish Catholic people and groups from non-Catholics.

Why is that not satisfying as the fundamental approach in our new situation, where so many pupils (and teachers) with other religious backgrounds find a place in Catholic schools; and where our society is becoming so multicultural, multireligious and multi-ethnic? The main reason is simply that they do not do enough justice to what being and becoming human is or should be, namely a really social being with collective desires, intentions, beliefs, memories, and perceptions. The traditional identity-oriented approaches lack a satisfying theory of the complex

character of collective faith of Catholics and non-catholic human beings as well. That is the reason, why they are strongly inclined to reduce this faith to either the collective components or the particular components of it. They are sometimes collectivistic, but nowadays mostly very particularistic. Before I explain this more extensively I first have to describe the fundamental features of the new approaches, which we can call more participation oriented. For it is precisely this theory about collective faith, that makes these participation-oriented approach more satisfying in our radical plural society (and catholic church!).

A Participative Approach of Catholic Education

That is also the reason, why some scholars in the Netherlands nowadays look after this more participative approach. What are then the fundamental characteristics of it?

In general participation-oriented approaches are more concerned about cooperation with others in activities that cannot be performed by individuals on their own. Of course, participation need not merely imply making a personal contribution to the realisation of collective intentions, also of religious character or religiously motivated. It could also imply participating in collective experiences, memories, and beliefs. In this sense participation can have both a receptive and an active connotation. Both connotations are important in the context of Catholic education. But just as traditional identity-oriented approaches put the accent mainly on cognitive forms of intentionality such as beliefs, so participation-oriented approaches tend to accentuate more volitional orientations such as intentions, plans, and desires. Here it is not so much a matter of knowledge of intentions, or of beliefs underlying plans, or of other cognitions that might influence volitional forms of intentionality. The concern is rather with the actual intentions (and their realisation in collective activity). In everyday practice, of course, cognitive and volitional forms of intentionality rarely occur in an unadulterated form that is unrelated to other forms of intentionality. But to prevent people from simply reducing volitional intentionality to cognitions or cognitive intentionality it is helpful to make a clear distinction. Only then one can discern accurately that participation-oriented approaches to Catholic education focus more on volitional forms of intentionality and their realisation, whereas traditional identity-oriented approaches are more concerned with cognitive forms of intentionality.

Consequently traditional identity-oriented approaches are more interested in truth and truth issues, while participation-oriented approaches attach greater importance to other forms of fulfilment, such as the realisation of intentions and the execution of the plans people make. To exaggerate the difference somewhat, one could say that traditional approaches are more interested in who God is and what images accord best with him, whereas participation-oriented approaches consider it more important to find ways of (co)existing with others as God wants us to do. Of course, this is a matter of emphases, not of mutually exclusive differences. And these are not even the most important differences in emphasis.

Far more crucial, in fact, is the above mentioned difference between the two approaches. The participation-oriented approach is interested mainly in complex forms of intentionality like faith and their realisation, while traditional identity-oriented approaches are exclusively concerned with simple intentionality. To explain what this means one can make use of the analysis of collective intentionality of Searle (1995, pp. 23–26). Good cases in point here are a football match, a concert, or a church wedding. None of these is an activity which individuals can perform on their own. From a different vantage point one could say that a football match is played by 11 individuals, not by a team. It is not a team that plays football, but its members. It is not a couple that gets married, but a bride and a groom. It is not an orchestra that plays music, but the members of the orchestra. The same is the case with the pupils of a class or the members of the teaching staff in a Catholic school. True, they have to do so together with others; and their individual activities always refer to each other and to the collective. But that collective resides in the minds of the individual members in the form of a collective intention. The hallmark of such a collective intention is its complex structure. In the mind of each member the collective intention comprises two components: a particular and a collective component. After all, if the centre forward does not want to score any goals to win the game along with his team, he has no collective intention. Hence the relation between the particular and the collective component is that of a means to an end. This applies only to collective intentionality of a volitional nature. In the case of collective beliefs and other collective forms of intentionality of a cognitive nature the relation between the particular and the collective component is that of cause and effect. In addition such collective intentions and other forms of collective intentionality are only feasible if people have an adequate we-awareness, a sufficiently cooperative attitude and adequate social and communicative skills to provide the background, framework, hermeneutic horizon, or frame of reference to make their intentions attainable. So much for collective intentions. But there are also collective beliefs and collective memories. And again it does not mean simply shared beliefs and memories as such, but memories and beliefs relating to situations of all of us together, which, like collective intentions, comprise a particular and a collective component.

Relevant for the catholicity of Catholic schools is also the fact that individual people not only have complex intentions or complex beliefs of a collective nature. At a given moment they may also have complex intentional states of a historical nature, with both a present and a future component. For instance, by performing an activity now they want to accomplish something that will serve as a means of effecting a change that will continue into the future. Thus they may have historical beliefs in the sense that they believe that what happens now forms part of ongoing evolutionary processes. Hence just as the collective character of collective beliefs and intentions does not consist in diverse people having the same beliefs and intentions in common, so the historical character of historical beliefs does not consist in people in different ages sharing the same beliefs and intentions. Sometimes people think, that Catholicity is nothing else than this kind

of sharing with “tradition.” But that is a mistake. Historicity is not the same as continuity or permanence. For example, we in our present-day history may try to establish better relations between Muslims and Christians in our country, which in the long run may help to bring about world peace. In this process historical belief may be relevant, in that the history of our relations to date has had the result that we are still full of prejudices about each other. One could look at the complexity of religious intentions and convictions in the same way. They are composed of a secular component and a religious component, interrelated in a way comparable to the interrelationship of the individual and collective components of collective intentions and the present and historical components of historical intentions. Thus a religious yearning for God’s kingdom and his justice could comprehend a secular component, consisting in a desire for a more just distribution of worldly goods, for instance in the case of the rich North-West and the impoverished South. This involves all sorts of issues regarding the relations between religion and politics, everyday life and religion, religion and reason, and nature and grace. Many of these issues are more readily resolved if one conceives of religious faith as composed of a secular and a religious component, each influencing the other in a particular way.

This analysis is particularly necessary to indicate more exactly what is meant by participation and participation orientation. In this perspective participation in an active sense simply means making (or wishing to make) a particular, concrete, secular contribution to the realisation of collective, historical, religious intentions at this particular time in this terrestrial world. And in a receptive sense participation implies getting a particular share in collective, historical religious beliefs here and now in this world. Religious participation, then, means seeking to contribute, here and now, to what has been called divine life. Or it means participating in religious beliefs, memories, and perceptions.

Thus a participation-oriented approach to Catholic education is primarily a matter of complex forms of intentionality and their realisation. The difference from traditional approaches is not that the latter are totally indifferent to collective, historical, and religious intentionality in this complex sense. The point is that they pay too little or no attention to this complexity, which often effectively reduces them to simple forms of intentionality. That could entail reducing collective components to particular ones, historical components to present ones, and religious components to secular ones. The reverse may also happen: individual components may be reduced to collective ones, present components to historical ones, and secular components to religious ones.

For Human Happiness

This brings us again to the question why a participation-oriented approach to Catholic education would work better than, and hence merits preference to a traditional identity-oriented approach which disregards complex intentionality. In this section I want to examine two kinds of arguments in favour of a participation-oriented approach. The first is a philosophical-anthropological argument

relating to the human condition as I mentioned already. This human condition is the key value on which also Catholic education hinges. A participation-oriented approach does greater justice to what being and becoming human are or should be. The second type of argument concerns the truth question, which always crops up when one engages in Catholic education. A participation-oriented approach is better able to resolve the concomitant issues than a traditional identity-oriented approach which disregards complex forms of intentionality.

Why does a participation-oriented approach to Catholic education do greater justice to people's human condition and their growth as human beings? Actually I already answered the question to some extent when I said that a participation-oriented approach is less inclined to lead to reduction of the human condition. I want to explore this in more detail with reference to the three aspects mentioned above.

The first is the social aspect. Comparative sociologists of culture makes a distinction between egocentric and sociocentric cultures. The difference, they say, is that in egocentric cultures the individual takes priority over the community, while in sociocentric cultures the community takes priority over the individual. Nevertheless people of all cultures will probably agree that humans are social beings. But this statement is little more than a slogan unless one is able to do full justice to the subjectivity and freedom of each individual person on the one hand, and at the same time take proper account of the fact that people are interdependent and have to collaborate to achieve aims that they cannot achieve without the help of others. Their social nature also means that people need others to learn about events and developments that they could not get to know about on their own. For these purposes mere recognition of the distinctiveness, subjectivity, and freedom of other individuals is inadequate. Hence sociality cannot be reduced to inter-subjectivity, encounter, and I-you relations. One has to include I-we relations, cooperation, and collectivity in the approach. This is the only way to prevent an individualistic-liberal reduction, which conceives of collectivity simply as the aggregate of individual orientations and their realisation. It is also the only way to avoid a collectivist-communist reduction, which regards individuality simply as a component of collective orientations and their realisation. This also applies to the Catholicity of Catholic schools, for Catholicity consists of collective faith with irreducible collective and particular components.

In an analogous way one can demonstrate how a participation-oriented approach to Catholic education is less likely to lead to a reduction of the second aspect of the human condition and human growth. That is the historical aspect. Apart from being social beings, humans are also historical beings. But this claim, too, rings somewhat hollow unless one can explain how it is possible to maintain roundly, on the one hand, that every person lives in a particular time here and now, and on the other gives due recognition to the fact that their present existence forms part of history, which is made up of ongoing developments and processes that they cannot fully realise or understand at the moment. To do so it is not enough simply to assume that every age is different and that development also entails non-simultaneity. Historicity cannot be reduced to

sequence, transition and past–present–future relations. One must also consider the relations between the short and the long term. This is the only way to prevent the actualist-modernist reduction, in which historicity is seen simply as a concatenation of momentary desires and instant fulfilment. It is also the only way to avoid the conservative-traditionalist reduction, in which everything is conceived of in terms of eternal truths. The Catholicity of Catholic schools has also to avoid this reduction.

There is a third point. The human condition and human growth has a third aspect. Although it is closely linked with the social and historical aspects, one needs to make the distinction. It concerns the religious aspect of human nature. People are also religious beings. In the context of Catholic education the point is obviously crucial. But this statement is even more open to misinterpretation than the statement that people are social and historical beings. Hence it calls for even greater circumspection. And here, people believe, a participation-oriented approach definitely helps to prevent or overcome possible reductions. Thus one must in no way detract from the sober fact that people live nowhere but in this terrestrial world and are themselves part of it, their physical lives being in many respects constrained by all kinds of natural laws and their religious orientations, too, being wholly this-worldly and even naturally explicable. On the other hand, it is equally part of the human condition that in this earthly life people can participate in a greater whole, in which they may rightly perceive the execution of a divine plan or some comparable ultimate meaning that enables them to live happy human lives. To recognise both aspects simultaneously it is not enough merely to refer to different spheres of reality such as the sacred and the profane. Religiosity cannot be reduced to the sacred, totality, or relations between nature and the supernatural. One has to include relations between the world and God in one's approach as well. That is the only way to prevent the secularist reduction, in which religiosity is seen merely as imbuing secular desires and their fulfilment with a sense of totality. But it is also the only way to avoid the religionist reduction, in which the secular is regarded simply as the embodiment of religious intentionality and their fulfilment. For the Catholicity of Catholic schools this is a very important point.

Truth and Fulfilment

The preference for a participation-oriented approach is not only because of arguments regarding the human condition. It is also based on reasons to do with the question of truth, which constantly crops up in the context of catholic education. What are these reasons?

To clarify the point we first need to explain exactly what people according to this approach understand by truth. It is, in the first place, an attribute of a particular category of propositions and intentional states—cognitive ones. After all, this does not mean that an intention or desire is or may be true or untrue; but people say it about a belief, memory, or perception. And when they do, they usually mean that the propositional content of the psychic representation corresponds with

the reality that it represents. One could also say that the representation “tallies,” “suffices” or “is successful.” “Success” may also be ascribed to a plan. By the same token one can speak of the “fulfilment” of a desire or wish. Hence “truth” appears to be a sub-species of “satisfy,” just as “realisation” is another subspecies. What is the difference between them? One can call a cognitive intentional state true if it corresponds with the objective situation in reality, which the cognition represents. One will say that an activity has been realised if it corresponds with the intention or some other volitional intentional state represented by that activity. If the cognitive representation is false or untrue, that is attributable to the representation, not to the reality represented. In that case the concepts or other predicates are not appropriate. If a volitional representation does not succeed, the failure lies, not in the intention or plan, but in the realisation, hence in the activity represented by the plan or intention. In that case the predicates are appropriate, but not the activities to which they refer. Naturally a plan can also be unrealistic. But then it is a matter of its feasibility, not of its realisation. That is something else and is not relevant in the context of the truth question. After all, when it comes to truth people are not asking whether or not propositions *might* be true, but whether or not they *are* true.

If one applies this distinction between two kinds of “satisfying” or “sufficing” to issues relating to truth in the context of Catholic education, it helps to explain in a more analytical fashion what W. C. Smith meant when he concluded, in his *Questions of religious truth*, that true propositions are important and worth striving for, but that they are not as important as true lives (van Stekelenburg, 1998, p. 73). Because a participation-oriented approach is not only concerned with religious beliefs, that is cognitive intentionality, but also with volitional intentionality like religious longings, plans, and intentions, there is less danger that the question of fulfilment and salvation will be reduced simply to questions of truth. Then questions regarding successful action are at least equally important. Besides, then education is not just a matter of learning words, concepts, and judgements with a high truth value, hence more in accord with the reality one is trying to know. It is at least equally important to try and actively accomplish that which is more in accord with what we are collectively seeking to achieve, and hence to look for courses of action with a high fulfilment value. For the Catholicity of Catholic education this means that the criterion for that not only lies in the truth value of the convictions of people in Catholic schools, but also in the realisation of religious motivated intentions and plans.

Another important implication is the following. Because of the complex character of a participation-oriented approach, questions of truth and other questions regarding fulfilment are much more subtle than in simple identity-oriented approaches. After all, it is possible for the individual component of collective intentions to be realised but not the collective component. Thus a left back may play a brilliant game of soccer, yet this will not necessarily win the match for his team. And a discussion between a Muslim and a Christian may not be altogether successful, even though both of them, to their own minds, articulate exactly what they mean and both, moreover, are right. Even when there is sufficient goodwill

on both sides and the parties genuinely want to understand each other, dialogue may break down. This may not even be due to unfamiliarity with each other's protocol or metaphors. It could simply be due to a lack of dialogue routine or some other psychosocial reason. The point is, success of the particular component does not guarantee success of the collective component, and vice versa. What applies to the fulfilment of collective intentionality applies equally to the fulfilment of historical and religious intentionality. What is true right now need not be true for ever. And what is successful in this world does not necessarily contribute to happiness in a religious sense. What is important is that one should take into account both the truth and fulfilment value of the respective components, and the participatory value of fulfilment of both these components. By that I mean the extent to which the parts contribute actively to the whole, or the extent to which they in fact participate in the whole. Translated into Christian theological terms, this could be, for example the question: to what extent do our actions here and now contribute to fulfilment of the biblical injunction first to seek the kingdom of God and his justice, and to what extent will this mean that all the rest will be given to us here and now?

In summary: the point of departure and the goal orientation of the participative approach of Catholic education is not in the first place, that people share their religious faith or that they agree with each other in their religious convictions. The main point is that they (learn to) cooperate and live together on the basis of their own faith, that strongly can differ. The junction does not exist primarily in the head of somebody, who makes comparisons but in reality to which different people are directed, everybody in his or her own way. Even sharper formulated: the point is not sharing faith, directed to different realities, but different faith, directed to sharing the same reality. Necessary condition for this is to depart from a vision on collective intentionality of people, which is less reductive than in former approaches of catholic education.

Towards a Participaton-Oriented Form of Interreligious Learning

How do people try to elaborate this participative approach to religious education in Catholic schools? The most consequent elaboration is the real participation-oriented form of interreligious education. This starts with three fundamental choices. First, the conviction that the promotion of interreligious communication should be a major goal of religious education in society today, also in Catholic schools. It should not merely be a didactic or pedagogic method for achieving other, non-communicative goals such as knowledge of other religions. Often communication with Muslims or Hindus, or communication about Islam or Hinduism, is seen as a suitable means to this cognitive end. Of course, there is nothing wrong with knowledge about Hinduism or Islam, but in this approach people prefer to see such knowledge functioning to further communication rather than communication functioning to further knowledge. Surely learning need not be confined to acquiring knowledge, as people are inclined

to think. Besides, interreligious communication does not happen as a matter of course and cannot simply be harnessed as a method. Communicating with people whose religion differs from our own is extremely difficult, so one first has to learn how to do it. To learn that one clearly needs to communicate. That requires such things as explanations and examples. And in interreligious communication, too, one learns by doing. The point is that learning to communicate about religion—also with people of other faiths—should be a major goal of religious education today.

The second premise is closely related to the first. It concerns not the goal but what is known as the goal orientation of religious education and hence of promoting interreligious communication. Here it is important to distinguish clearly between the goal and the goal orientation of religious education. By goal or objective one means that which people want to achieve in the education process with pupils at school. It is the practical result one seeks to achieve, and at the end of the process one must be able to measure to what extent it has been achieved. Goal orientation, on the other hand, refers to more remote states of affairs to which one seeks to contribute via the results achieved in the education process. If so, goal orientation is the answer to the question what one has in mind when enhancing people's ability to communicate interreligiously. What is interreligious communication good for? According to this approach people see the goal orientation of religious education in Catholic schools not just as personal identity but also as participation, that means participation in building a religiously pluralistic society. By participation one means both active and receptive participation. People should be able to make a personal contribution to the collective activities and social contexts they choose to belong to, also in a religious or spiritual sense. And they must be able to receive their share of the wealth these contexts have to offer them. In this view, then, interreligious communication in education and teaching should be aimed at such participation.

In addition there is a third premise in this approach that is equally fundamental. It actually concerns the notion of communication per se. In religious pedagogics communication is sometimes restricted to the receptive aspect, that is, comprehending what others are saying or understanding texts from the Bible or other religious scriptures. But communicating also has, primarily, an active aspect: that of making oneself comprehensible to others. Particularly in the case of interreligious communication it strikes the promoters as vitally important that people should learn not only to understand one another but to communicate their own beliefs comprehensibly to others.

On these three premises there are three important principles for interreligious communication in teaching and education within this approach. The first is that also communication is a form of collective activity. You cannot communicate on your own. There has to be at least one other person. And one has to collaborate with the other to realise a collective aim, that is to say, a complex aim comprising a particular and a collective component. The particular component in this case is the intention to articulate the meaning one has in mind by means of oral or written signs. Linguistic analysts call this a locutionary act. The collective

component is the intention to communicate meaning to another party by these means, in the sense that the other will recognise my intention couched in the oral or written signs. That applies to interreligious communication as well.

Another important point is that communication like every form of collective activity has to comply with three preconditions. First, participants in collective activities must have an adequate “we”-feeling. The dialogue partners in interreligious communication cannot have even a collective intention to communicate with each other if they do not take it for granted that the other is “one of us.” Second, participants in collective activities must have a cooperative attitude towards those with whom they engage in the activity. Interreligious communication is only possible if the participants are sufficiently inclined to cooperate with those they seek to communicate with. Third, participants in collective activities should have adequate social and, more especially, communicative skills. Dialogue or other forms of communication stand a chance of succeeding only if the participants in interreligious communication are actually able to consort and communicate with adherents of other religions.

Our Western culture has problems in each of these areas. At a moral and religious level many people grow up in the midst of a strong individualistic trend. To many religion and world view are a strictly personal affair. In addition non-Muslims regard Muslims as “others,” “foreigners,” hence as “them,” just as Christians are to non-Christians and Jews to non-Jews. That probably applies even more to Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs. Cooperation with them, especially religious cooperation, is in no way self-evident. And people who have grown up in a Western setting, whether religious or not, do not automatically have the social and communicative skills to consort with Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

That is why these three areas represent the first task of teaching and education aimed at promoting interreligious communication. But cultivating a “we”-feeling towards adherents of other religions is a long-term enterprise that cannot start early enough. It is also arduous, since it goes against the cultural trend. Hence there is a lot to be said for starting to lay this foundation in primary education. The same applies to a cooperative attitude towards adherents of other religions and the development of communicative skills in relations with these people. It is also a strong argument in favour of an open admission policy at Catholic schools. In this respect a study we conducted at Catholic schools in and around Venlo a few years ago on relations with foreign students is illuminating. Significantly, it appeared that relations between Dutch and foreign pupils flourished best in classes made up more or less 50–50 of children from Muslim backgrounds and “Catholic Limburg” backgrounds (Steijns & deJong, 1997). The fundamental conditions for interreligious communication as a real form of collective activity are met only when Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, and Protestants take each other for granted as part of “us,” people they spontaneously want to get along with as well as they do with everybody else and whom they have learnt to get along with.

But communication is a special form of collective activity. That brings us to a second important point in this connection. Like all communication,

interreligious communication is a form of collective activity in which people link two levels of intentionality. The first is the intention to communicate; the second is the psychological state they want to communicate, such as a belief, desire, memory, plan, or emotion. Interreligious communication can only take place if people have the intention to communicate such psychological states to adherents of another religion.

Hence people must have something to communicate that one could call faith, religion, or world view. To what extent this is true of people growing up in our secularised society is a big question. Will religion still exist in 2050 in our culture? Of course, a great deal depends on definitions. But one can hardly deny that present-day people generally in our Western European countries—partly as a result of the spiral of silence in regard to religion in our culture—are less and less religious minded. So if one wants to promote interreligious communication in teaching and education, one would in any event have to ensure that people have something to communicate at this level. To some extent this is to concede the point of those who maintain that children should first construct their own religious identity before one can even think of starting interreligious learning. On the other hand it is a known fact that confrontation with adherents of other religions helps to make children more aware of their own faith and to grow in that faith. But how to nurture religious growth is not the main point here. Important is to stress that it has to be nurtured if one wants to enhance interreligious communication.

Another point in this regard is that the psychological states to be communicated do not have to comprise just images and concepts. The most minute unit of meaning is a fully fledged psychological state, which usually consists of a proposition plus at least an intentional state. This also applies to what is known as content of faith.

Apart from having a religion to communicate, interreligious communication also requires an intention to communicate that religion to people of a different faith, or a desire to understand their religious communication. That, too, is less and less common as a result of the spiral of silence and individualisation of faith and religion. Besides, the intention to communicate is not just an intention to express or present psychological states, but to *communicate* them. That entails something more, and in its turn cannot be reduced to informing or persuading. It boils down to making others understand one's beliefs, no more and no less. So if one wants to promote interreligious communication one has to stimulate the will to communicate faith. It cannot be done directly, since that would be contrary to free will. But it is well known that freedom increases when one has more and better reasons at one's disposal. Hence it is meaningful that teachers in secondary education should make it their business to provide sound reasons for interreligious communication.

There is a third point relating to interreligious communication as communication. Communication is a rule-governed activity. Its intentions can only be realised if people present and understand the psychological states they wish to communicate according to conventional rules of conveying meaning. For instance, if one

wants to ask a Muslim why she does not want to call God father, one should not say, “Surely you can just call God father.” It would not strike the Muslim as a question, because a question has to be phrased differently and because one must want to find out something from the other when asking the question. In addition there are rules not only for full communicative acts such as questions, directives, assertives, emotional expressions, etc., but also for any references or predications that form part of communicative acts. Thus one can only refer to God if there is something or somebody of whom the word “God” is an identificatory description, or if one can supplement the word “God” with an identificatory description of the something or somebody that the word refers to. There are other rules that apply to predication. For instance, one can only predicate the quality of mercy to God if he belongs to a category that makes it logically possible for “mercy” to be true or false when applied to God. For a statement about God, or about anything or anybody else for that matter, does not communicate a truth claim, as some philosophers—Habermas for one—wrongly maintain. What such a statement communicates is the intention to question the truth or falsehood of a predication.

Religious communication often contravenes the rules of intelligible communication. Predications are commonly confused with references. Directives are frequently reduced to assertives, as is evident in the fashion of reducing the Ten Commandments to ten wise words. And in interreligious dialogue there is a tendency to reduce all communication to truth claims and truth questions. That may even be the main cause of a lot of miscommunication between believers and non-believers. In view of this it is a major task of teaching and communication in the field of interreligious communication to teach the correct application of the ordinary meaning-rules governing communication. Often it will take the form of correction, but correction is indisputably one of the tasks of education. Such correction is needed especially in the receptive form of communication that we call understanding. Understanding is nothing but the recognition of communicative intentions based on the same rules of intelligibility. Hence understanding should not be confused with interpretation or the verification of a theory about the meaning of physical forms of communication, as Davidson and others have led some scholars to believe. In that case one needs to correct not just the communicative practice but also the communication theory underlying the approach to the enhancement of interreligious communication in teaching and education.

All the principles discussed so far relate to the common ground between interreligious communication and all other forms of communication. But it also has specific attributes, which have implications for teaching and education in Catholic schools. One is that interreligious communication is religious communication. After all, what is communicated is religious belief.

Insofar as that belief has propositional content it is an experience of the observable and more, as Ian Ramsey put it in the 1950s, to which one can add, “and an experience of the doable and more.” For the disclosure experience Ramsey refers to does not have to be purely cognitive; it can also be volitive, maybe even emotive. At all events, the “odd” character of religious experience

in a sense requires a strange form of communication, in which one uses models from the observable, doable world but with qualifications.

Thus people say that God is almighty or that Brahman is infinite. They use the model of power or finitude, and qualify it by prefixing it with “al-” or “in-.” This is typical of the kind of propositions made in religious communication. A major difficulty, however, is that in our technological, scientific culture we do not quite know how to deal with such religious propositions. Present-day people prefer to test the meaningfulness of propositions against their empirical verifiability. They tend to attach less value to statements whose truth cannot be measured against observable reality. That is a big barrier to religious communication generally and to interreligious communication in particular, at any rate in our Western culture.

But if despite this one still wants to enhance communication in teaching and education, one would have to go to some trouble to break down or at least diminish the barrier. In her thesis some years ago Clemens Mendonca rightly propounds a symbolic didactic approach to interreligious education in India, on the lines of Panikkar’s symbol-oriented theology of religions. Breath as the symbol of life in the universe, bread as the symbol of fellowship among people and dharma as the symbol of integration—it sounds lovely, to be sure. But what does it tell a Dutch pupil at a technical college? It might be advisable first to explain to such a pupil that this kind of religious statement works on associations of comparability, just as scientists liken the structure of DNA material to a spiral-staircase type of structure composed of beads.

But the difficulty of religious communication does not stem only from the specific contents of the propositions. These propositions always form part of communicative acts, which are often peculiar to religious communication or for which people have a predilection in religious communication. Confessing and witnessing are examples. Inasmuch as communicative acts also occur in ordinary communication between people one need not devote special attention to them in teaching and education. One learns as a matter of course how to perform such acts and to understand other people’s. But inasmuch as it is less commonplace it is wise, especially with a view to interreligious communication, to teach the rules for intelligibility of such communication. Take *da’wah* in Islam. In terms of a traditional Christian concept of mission it is readily misunderstood to mean “persuading others of Islam.” In fact it is an invitation to listen to the message of the Qur’an and heed Islamic injunctions. Well, inviting a person is very different from persuading a person of something. And for interreligious communication to be fruitful it is important to be keenly alert to these differences. Some communicative acts are so peculiar to the religious domain that they actually need to be explicated, for example, blessing, baptising, consecrating, and excommunicating. These are declarations, in which the declared state is realised by virtue of the fact that the declaration is made by a person who has been duly authorised to do so. One first has to learn the rules of intelligibility governing them before one can understand these communicative acts.

In the case of these examples it is not all that difficult, but there are communicative acts at a religious level where it poses more problems; a vow, for instance, or an oath. The trickiest of all are those acts in which one is actually performing two communicative acts simultaneously, ones with both an explicitly religious and a seemingly profane purport. This applies, for example, to religiously motivated protests, such as Job's protest against the wrongful legitimization of suffering, or the *Bekennende Kirche's* protest against the Nazis. Such protests are both condemnations of what is going on and guidelines for doing things differently or better. In the case of such dual and complex communicative acts one has to learn to observe the relevant rules of intelligibility carefully, both to understand the acts properly and to perform them properly oneself. Also in Catholic education it is important that interreligious communication should become more Protestant in this sense, and that one could inculcate it in teaching and education.

There is another feature of religious communication. It often entails the use of fictional communication, for instance parables and myths. That is fairly obvious, since fictional communication is often the only or at any rate the best way to convey something that is totally beyond our understanding, or that is not sensorily perceptible in any way, or that is experienced but hard to capture. Desires for as yet non-existent states of affairs that one wants to achieve are often conveyed in fictional language. Although nowadays films, novels, and all sorts of communicative forms make lavish use of fiction and people have no trouble grasping their meaning, in the case of religious fiction they appear to encounter difficulties. They tend to think that these texts are "just inventions" and, therefore, valueless. The solution does not lie in demythologising or re-mythologising, but in a reappraisal of imagination in the religious sphere and in explaining that fiction is not a lie, but that its logical status consists in meaningfully acting "as if."

To this end one could use the classical myths and other fictional texts of various religions. Hence there is a lot to be said for familiarising people with the texts, stories, and images of other religious traditions with a view to enhancing interreligious communication. Thus it is difficult to communicate at a religious level with Hindus, for example, if one is totally unfamiliar with the great Hindu myths. In teaching and education, moreover, it would be a good idea to stimulate children and youths to invent new myths and other forms of fictional communication of their own. The importance of fantasy and imagination in life as a whole can hardly be underestimated, and that applies even more to the religious domain and interreligious communication.

Interreligious communication involves people who actually have different religions and to some extent communicate their faith differently. They use terms and forms of non-verbal communication whose meaning others often do not know and hence cannot recognise or may easily misunderstand. Obvious examples are the Muslim jihad, the Buddhist nirvana and the Christian sacraments. It is not just a matter of words and notions. Often there are major disparities in codes of courtesy and respect, which may have all kinds of implications such as avoidance of direct forms of communication and a preference for more indirect forms.

To communicate effectively with people from other religious backgrounds, therefore, one has to learn these codes, rules of intelligibility, and meanings. To this end translation and explanation are desirable, if possible. But it often requires fairly detailed description, since otherwise one is too inclined to assign meanings from one's own interpretive framework that in no way fit the other party's intention. So this is a major task for teaching and education aimed at enhancing interreligious communication in Catholic education, which is participation-oriented.

The biggest complication is that people from a completely different religion also have different backgrounds. By background I mean the totality of practices, assumptions, and capacities that people take for granted and are barely aware of, but which nonetheless make meaningful communication possible. A clear example is the difference between Christians and Muslims on the issue of revelation. To Muslims it is self-evident that Allah reveals himself directly in the Qur'an. Christians see it differently. To them God reveals himself in history and in his creation, more especially in Christ, and the Bible attests this revelation in a special way. Note these assumptions are not conceptions in the sense of psychological representations of reality. They are self-evident truths of a non-representational nature. That is why they are often difficult to pinpoint and bring up for discussion, and even harder to account for when communicating with adherents of other religions.

Nonetheless it seems that the most crucial part of teaching and education with a view to interreligious communication is exactly that: familiarising people with the specific religious backgrounds of others. That is not easy. But experience teaches that confrontation with Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists helps to make both parties aware of these backgrounds. Besides, one could expect teachers of religion and other religious educators to be fairly conversant with the backgrounds of other religions and able to inform their pupils—although in this approach teacher training could devote more attention to this aspect than it has done so far.

Still the best way of finding out what others mean is simply to ask questions. That may seem obvious, but it happens so rarely. Simply to keep asking the ordinary question, "What exactly do you mean?" does not come easily. Walter Ong and Deborah Tannen have shown that this is a result of our Western upbringing and education. Ever since Plato's day, people in our culture have been encouraged to communicate adversarially. Their book, published in 1997, is not entitled *The polemical dialogue* for nothing. Debating, refuting, winning, or losing verbal battles—we have been taught to dispute. We have to unlearn that. Both in China and in India disputes have always been frowned upon, because they are considered incompatible with harmony and decorum. There the aim is not "getting the better of an adversary" but "explaining something to one who asks." Maybe it is the best motto for interreligious communication in teaching and education in catholic education, that wants to be participation oriented.

In this way religious education in Catholic schools can really contribute to the "integration" of both Muslims and Catholic, and of people from totally other

backgrounds in our dutch society. But maybe the whole terminology of “integration” and “segregation” is wrong in this context. For the main orientation does not have to be integration in our culture and faith nor the self-oriented identity of all the religious groups as such, but the free participation of all the people in the history of our society, also in the religious dimension of it.

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SECULARISATION AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

James C. Conroy and Michael McGrath

Another useful secret of invincible authors is to intersperse contempt of pedantry and of the clergy. These damned pendants have got a trick of reading many authors, observing the sentiments of the greatest men in all ages; and acquire an impertinent facility of discerning nonsense in the writings of your easy genteel authors, who are above perplexing themselves with the sourness and intricacies of thought. (Hutcheson 1750)

Francis Hutcheson is one of the number of key 18th-century Scottish Enlightenment figures to have shaped modernity. His famous commentary on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* is one of many well-known texts which fashioned the Scottish Enlightenment. His charge here is that commentators are too easily swayed by the easy virtue of the *bon mot*, the illusions of what Bonhoeffer might have called "cheap grace."

It might be suggested that much recent discussion of religion in the media has been prey to the superficial attractions of such "easy virtue." In being so attracted some commentators have been inclined to regard religion as responsible for a remarkably comprehensive list of social ills. Some of the most virulent of these charges are to be found not in the headlines of populist journalism but in the pages of some of our most revered public news institutions. Muriel Gray, a regular columnist in the pages of the *Sunday Herald*, offered a peculiar perspective on the nefarious influence of the religious in public life claiming that it was by and large the source and cause of much of the misery to be found in the contemporary world. Religion is deemed by Gray to be "dark ages nonsense" standing in opposition to:

The age of enlightenment [which] freed reasoning humans from the shackles of crudely hewn anthropomorphic gods, leaving these man-made deities to serve those who wished to keep them alive for the purposes of comforting self-delusion, social control—particularly the control of women—and the validation of power, violence and aggression. For the government of a secular country such as ours to treat religion as if it had real merit

instead of regarding it as a ridiculous anachronism, which education, wisdom and experience can hopefully overcome in time, is one of the most depressing developments of the 21st century. . . . [W]e have debates on TV news shows between hardline Muslim scholars and moderate Muslim politicians without any intervening voice of scepticism suggesting that the whole darned thing might be just as invented as virgin births and Mormon tablets. (Gray 2005)

Interestingly, a debate which had historically been rooted in local claims about religious sectarianism, and which may be seen to have drawn together the unlikely bed fellows of the liberal commentators and the forces of religious bigotry, has, in recent years, begun to consume the public conversations about such matters more widely in Britain. Most recently, columnist Polly Toynbee offered a robust, not to say, abusive comment on both religious faith and the expansion of religious schooling. Like Gray she believes that religion is a demonic force likely to endanger the palpable strides forward of a civilisation predicated on the intellectual and material goods of *The Enlightenment*. Thus a comment on religious schooling in Northern Ireland suggests that “While Northern Ireland struggles with sectarianism festering in religious schools, this is no time to foster yet more segregation.” (Toynbee, 2005) Interestingly for those who eschew the religious, both Gray and Toynbee are apt to draw heavily on the peculiar and inflated rhetoric of a Manichean imaginary. It is certainly not self-evident that the association of religion with the dark side of this Manichean divide is subject to any carefully constructed critical underpinnings but appears rather to offer a convenient repository for all the ills of the world. Religion is cast as intrinsically evil and religious people are, either directly or by association, contaminated. Because religion generally wishes to offer certain kinds of authoritative propositions into the public discussion as to what might constitute appropriate and inappropriate social and personal behaviour it tends to be confused with authoritarianism. Of course the more religions offer a hierarchical structure for the establishment of the sense of the faithful, the more they may be likely to be regarded as demonic. But is all this coherent? The *National Secular Society* is quoted by Toynbee with approval as a “lone voice” standing as a bulwark against the forces of darkness and as an agent of good, unveiling the growth of religiously denominated schooling. But again, coherence is everything. One might at least raise the question as to whether or not the *National Secular Society* is any less committed to the promulgation of a particular, ideologically loaded, world view than any of those religious bodies or political leaders with religious affiliations so decried in its various contributions to the public debate. While decrying the proselytising tendencies of religious groups it may not be immune from the self same charge.¹

Despite being ourselves, children of *The Enlightenment* and inheritors of its many benefits, we are nonetheless acutely aware of some of its less than happy products and consequences, which have emerged in late modern history as its

¹ See <http://www.secularism.org.uk/>.

contorted and distorted offspring. Not least among these bastard progeny we might number *The Great War* and *The Holocaust*.² Moreover, certain kinds of nationalism and proletarian tyrannies have their origins in not only Marxism but, more importantly here, in *The Social Contract*, where Rousseau (1968) argues that the will of the generality of the people must take precedence over that of the individual and that allegiance to the state as the embodiment of this will must eclipse all other forms of allegiance. But we know too well that the will of the generality of people may itself be no more than a mirror image tyranny of that made all too manifest in the Regal despotism of 16th- and 17th-century Europe. Similarly the desire of such as Gray to erase religion from any and every public space in Scotland may be seen as a form of tyranny which certainly places more weight on a certain conception of justice which must, to some extent, stand in contradistinction to an ethic of love, which itself is the issue of a Judaeo-Christian anthropology. But *The Enlightenment* just will not do the work that Gray, Toynbee, or for that matter, Dennett (2006) or Dawkins (2001) wish it to do because it is too complex, too nuanced, and too refractory, simultaneously giving rise to the Rights of Man and the Jacobin terror.³ While possibly appearing a little oblique with regard to Catholic education in Scotland, these brief and guarded musings on the emergence of an Enlightenment mythology as a fix-all for social ills and intercultural/religious strife are crucial to developing any serious understanding of the place of Catholic education in 21st-century Scotland. After all, Gray claims that her opposition to the continued existence of religiously denominating schools is in defence of freedoms bequeathed us by *The Enlightenment*.

Moreover, it is clear that, whatever her merits, Gray is hardly a “lone voice” in Scotland. On a regular basis public commentators line up to abjure the continued existence of Catholic schools. From the television commentator, Kirsty Wark, through the retired general secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland, to politicians such as the Deputy First Minister of Scotland Nicol Stephen,⁴ there is quite widespread antipathy towards the continued existence of Catholic schools as anachronistic, and perhaps more importantly, injurious to civil well-being. One of Stephen’s⁵ earliest public comments after being elected leader of the Liberal Democrats was to suggest that the debate on Catholic schools needed to be reopened and that he could understand the argument that faith schools are divisive. It is, he suggested, “a difficult and a very emotive issue and an important issue for Scotland in the future.” He then proceeded to suggest that

² A number of important commentators have pointed us towards some of the more atelioated forms of the enlightenment self. Such commentaries include Isaiah Berlin and Peter Gay. See Berlin (1993), Burleigh (2005), and Gay (1966, 1977).

³ In a brief opinion piece in the *New Statesman*, Gray (2006) likens liberal attachments to the enlightenment as no less a return to faith in the face of world insecurity than might reasonable be claimed of some religious attachments.

⁴ For further details on some of the discussions around these popular/populist commentaries, see Conroy (1999, 2001, 2003); Conroy and McCreath (1999).

⁵ Also, at the time of writing deputy first minister of Scotland.

he favoured a closer understanding between schools.⁶ Here we need to pause to ask some important questions:

1. Why, we might ask, does the debate need to be reopened?
2. Is there evidence that it has ever been closed?
3. Is there some extraordinary clamour from the people?

In response we can only observe that there appears to be little enough comment apart from that of the kind of liberal commentator already under discussion here. Consequently, it would be reasonable to conclude that it is Stephen's own agenda and not one that is exercising the political imagination of the Scottish electorate, who may be likely to spend more time questioning the quality of their political leaders! When Stephen suggests that he can "understand the argument that faith schools are divisive" what exactly does he mean? I can understand that some people subscribe to a theory that the earth is flat, or that space travel is no more than a trick perpetrated by the US military on an unsuspecting populous, or again that eugenics is merely the logical outworking of an enlightened people purifying their gene pool, but it hardly means that I have, as a consequence, to treat such beliefs with any degree of intellectual seriousness. Of course Stephen's point is precisely to make the continued state funding of Catholic schools an issue. His claims are emblematic of that position in Scotland which is irritated by the existence of Catholic schools as an affront to the inexorable march of progress. The object of this opening section has not been to lay claim to the necessary superiority of the religious over the secular world view but to question the claim that one standpoint represents some clear and unequivocal natural standpoint for the liberal while the other is axiomatically benighted. In liberal pluralist democracies a variety of world views are, or should, necessarily be represented in the *agora* if it is to truly engage with the vibrant complexity of human communities. There is little sense that this is a widespread belief in Scottish political and educational life. Rather, it is more generally held that the continued existence of Catholic schools is a residue from a previous age which militates against the sustaining of a cohesive and egalitarian society. In this way particular Enlightenment values have been appropriated by secularists who conveniently ignore the deep religious convictions and provenance which underpin key Scottish Enlightenment figures including Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith. However, in avoiding what can appear to be a pathologically defensive stance with regard to the public debate it is important to note that in the 21st century, as in the 19th there are voices (albeit a minority) outside the Catholic community enthusiastically supportive of Catholic schooling. In recent years, and standing in some contradistinction from earlier incumbents, the Rev Andrew McClellan, then Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, spoke in 2001 of the value of Catholic schooling with its commitment to teaching tolerance and respect.

⁶ Quoted in a column by journalist Paul Hutcheon 5 March 2006, *Sunday Herald*, sundayherald.com/54450. Downloaded 24 June 2006.

Moreover, he argued that the open-minded and enthusiastic teaching of religion in the Catholic school he knew best to be a very impressive model for other schools. He went on to suggest that “It is the very existence of Catholic schools which has done most over the last 30 years in Scotland to break down sectarian divisions, because Catholic schools have done most to help Roman Catholics to be better educated, more confident and more able to break out of the poverty and exclusion which was their lot.”⁷

Behind such arguments for equality there lurks a new form of establishment, the establishment of the secular which prohibits the intrusion of religious convictions in public debate (Ferguson, 2004, p. 187). Now it is at least arguable that Scotland is in the throes of a thoroughgoing secularisation, though this is hardly likely to distinguish it from other late industrial liberal democratic polities.

It is certainly difficult to rebut the claims of Scottish sociologist, Steve Bruce (Bruce et al., 2004) that Scotland (in common with the rest of Europe) is in the throes of an irreversible decline in religious practice. Whether or not this may be easily translated into a decline in religious belief is of course another matter. In any event, notions of religious decline in Scotland are more complicated than may on occasion be admitted. It would appear from a recent analysis by Voas (2006) that the rate of decline is, somewhat surprisingly, not uniform across Scotland. In the 2001 Census, reported levels of the absence of any religious affiliation are proportionately higher in the North and East of Scotland than in the West. One important reason suggested by Voas is that Catholicism remains more culturally entrenched in Glasgow and its environs, producing, what Voas refers to as, a “pronounced neighbourhood effect” (ibid. 115). This apparently greater resilience may be traced back to population size—in the West there is a much larger Catholic population offering something like identity reinforcement. To this we might add that the interconnections between religion and football may also play a role here. Celtic Football Club has long represented a touchstone for religio-cultural identity and affiliation for Scottish Catholics of Irish origin. Developed in tandem with the emergence of Catholic schooling, it remains an iconic agent for identity reinforcement. While it enjoys a broad fan base across Scotland, its heartland remains the metropolitan area of Glasgow and its satellites.⁸ But, even where there is evidence of variegated Church membership and attendance this cannot disguise the very real and substantial decline in the traditional affiliations of those who still in some senses see themselves as culturally Catholic. If we are to measure actual allegiance rather than notional attachment, then it is clear that the rate of decline in formal religious attachments amongst Catholics is significantly steeper than that

⁷ McLellan offered these observations during an interview with the BBC on Saturday, 14 April 2001, 11:11 GMT <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/1277049.stm> Downloaded 12 May 2006.

⁸ For further discussion on the relationship between football and religious identity in Scotland, see Bradley (1995).

amongst other Christian traditions including the Church of Scotland.⁹ Given that Catholic identity and Catholic schooling has been inextricably linked since the late 19th century it is difficult to see how, over a number of generations, support from the Catholic community for Catholic schools can be sustained.

On occasion, the arguments about Catholic schooling spill over into litigation. Most recently this has been seen where an avowed atheist secured a legal victory against Glasgow City Council on the grounds that he had been refused the right to seek promotion in a senior pastoral care position in a Catholic school (St. Paul's High School). The ground for his claim was that he had been refused consideration since the post was, what the education authority deemed to be, a *reserved* post (that is, reserved for communicant members of the Catholic Church). The employment tribunal found in the litigant's favour because neither the term *reserved* post nor the practice of reserving posts had any legal status. Rather it had evolved as a flag of convenience for the city, against the advice of the Church, because the actual legislation was deemed too difficult to enforce. The legislation, rooted in a 1918 Act of Parliament¹⁰ made no reference to such posts instead stipulating that, in exchange for transferring its schools with all their policies to the state, the Church would retain the right to determine the religious curriculum and to approve all teachers with regard to "religious belief and character."

The emergence of reserved posts may be seen as a somewhat underestimated but subtle important response to demographic change. It would appear that, as Catholics became more integrated into the mainstream politico-cultural life of Scotland, so too Catholic schools began to be regarded as less exclusively Catholic in terms of both staff and student populations. And, as Catholics increasingly laid claim to middle class identity with its emphasis on academic success and an ethos of aspiration, the taken-for-granted claim that one would expect to see Catholic teachers teaching Catholic students in Catholic schools may be seen to have been weakened. Given that Catholic schools in Scotland are legally designated as State schools, financed and maintained by government, they are not immune from the same performative imperatives as every other school. Consequently some head teachers may be disposed to appoint those teachers who can be best seen to deliver on these imperatives, rather than on the religious. A second significant feature of the establishment of reserved posts is their demonstrable capacity to act as a lightning conductor for Catholic energies. If particular posts are assigned a reserved status then they may be likely to be

⁹ The 2001 census provided some small surprise in that many more respondents indicated that they continued to see themselves as Christian than many liberal commentators, or even sociologists of religion, imagined. As Brierly (2004) points out "Earlier editions of Religious Trends had estimated the percentage as 63% in 2000. . . . The British Social Attitudes Report had put the figure at 53% in 1998 and European values Study estimated it at 66% in 1999." The actual figure for Christians was 72%. This however needs to be set against actual communal and community participation and the figures here are quite different. Indeed, for the Catholic community they are sobering; whereas the cumulative decline in church attendance among all Protestant communities between 1984 and 2002 has been some 27.5%, the comparable figure for Catholics has been 41.5%.

¹⁰ For full details and a commentary, see Strong (1919).

Table 1. Scottish education statistics 2005¹¹

School type	No. of schools	No. of pupils	No. of teachers	No. of RC teachers
Primary				
Catholic	336	68,790	3,978	3,552
Non-denominational	1,858	321,470	18,895	579
Secondary				
Catholic	58	53,719	4,250	2,539
Non-denominational	327	262,121	21,363	800
Special Needs				
Catholic	7	364	101	62
Non-denominational	183	6,776	1,807	224
Total				
Catholic	401	122,873	8,329	6,153
Non-denominational	2,368	590,367	44,364	1,603

construed as the most important posts in the school with respect to identity. This in turn, at least implicitly, downgrades other positions as being not quite so central to the maintenance of a Catholic ethos, identity, and purpose. These posts can then be filled with teachers who are not required to demonstrate such an explicit commitment but exhibit their technical and pedagogical competence. The potential loss of critical mass may yet have very significant consequences for Catholic schooling in the years to come. This is particularly so given the modest number of Catholic schools in Scotland which can be seen in Table 1. A sub-system with *c.*400 schools representing some 20% of the total is inevitably going to be under pressure in an age of falling school rolls. Demographic economics add inevitably to the challenges facing Catholic education as a voice in the midst of the polity.

Sex Education: One Example of Catholic Education Contending with Secularisation

One very particular refraction of secularisation, as it manifests itself in Church–State relations in Scotland, can be vividly seen with respect to the evolution of sex education in schools wherein the legislature perhaps understanding has fairly consistently promulgated a secularist doctrine with respect to the normalising of a public discourse around the tropes of human sexuality. This normalising imperative appears *prima facie* to be energised by a desire to embrace the other (in this case Catholic) and bring them into the fold where their awkward, angular, difficult ontologies, and theologies are at best erased and at worst privatised.

¹¹ It is worth noting that the final column is not reliable. Sources: Teachers in Scotland, Statistical Bulletin Education Series, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 28 February 2006 and Pupils in Scotland, Statistical Bulletin Education Series, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 28 March 2006.

In Scotland the challenge for Catholic education of maintaining a religiously orthodox¹² view on such matters as human sexuality is compounded by the perception that it is a lone voice articulating profound onto-theological reservations about a constellation of social practices around the tropes of human sexuality. It might be expected that a relatively numerically strong sister Church such as the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) would have the capacity to collaborate in proclaiming a Gospel message on the dignity of the person with respect to speaking out in support of an alternative view on human relations. This expectation may be predicated on an assumption that two denominational traditions with much in common might make common cause in the defence of a range of core beliefs about the person based on incarnational claims. However it is by no means self-evident that this actually is the case. More often than not, the Church of Scotland adopts what appears as a more conciliatory approach in the conversation with the State. As the historically embedded church *in* Scotland, the Church *of* Scotland has been closely allied to the evolution of modern Scotland. This can be seen in the appearance of the “Rights of Man” philosophy in and through the Scottish Enlightenment (Turnbull, 2003¹³; Hutcheson, 1750; Beattie 1779), which itself gave rise to modern political forms of Scottish identity. As such, it has often determined the state’s interests as its own and vice versa. As a result of this historic interweaving of identities, the Church of Scotland frequently exercises a kind of self-censorship departing only at the margins from the dominant ideologies.

In 1999, during the early months of Scotland’s first parliament in 300 years, there was a spectacular and significant explosion of public opinion around the emergence of a government policy which sought to adopt an overtly secular position on one area of sexual morality. The new Scottish government—as one of its first legislative actions—planned to repeal Section 28 (or 2A) of the 1986 Local Government Act which banned local authorities from intentionally promoting homosexuality, including “the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.” While proponents of the 1986 Act saw it as necessary to ensure the protection of children from “gay propaganda,” opponents thought it prejudicial, unjust, backward-looking and unnecessary. The Scottish Executive planned to repeal the 1986 Act when it introduced the Ethical Standards Bill in early 2000.

In January 2000 the Catholic Primate of Scotland Cardinal Thomas Winning and devout Christian and millionaire businessman, Brian Souter joined forces to mount a defence of what they deemed to be family life and defeat the proposed legislation. This campaign was carried on in newspapers and television studios and led to a referendum of Scotland’s 3.9 million voters, funded wholly by Souter. The Referendum’s results, published on 30 May 2000, were interpreted by some as a public rebuke to Scotland’s politicians when, with a response of

¹² Here the use of the term orthodox is intended to imply that there are a set of teachings and doctrines which broadly adhere to the traditional formulations of a given religious institution.

¹³ Originally published in 1742 by J. Millar, London.

32% of voters—higher, it was pointed out, than the turnout in European elections, local council elections and the recent London mayoral election—87% of the poll's respondents opposed repeal of Section 2A.¹⁴

Under significant pressure, the Scottish Executive amended its proposed legislation and included in the Ethical Standards Bill a new section which put a duty on councils to have regard to “the value of a stable family life in a child's development” and “the need to ensure that teaching and learning are appropriate to the child's age, understanding and development.” In February 2000, it established a working group, chaired by Mike McCabe (a director of education in a Local Education Authority), to review the range of curricular advice and support available to teachers on sex education specifically in the light of the repeal of Section 2A of the 1986 Act. The repeal was not enacted until the work of this group was concluded. In June 2000 the McCabe Report recommended the provision of new guidance from the Scottish Executive Education Department on the conduct of sex education in schools and this was published, in the form of Circular 2/2001, in March 2001. The circular was explicit in its statement that the purpose of sex education was “to provide knowledge and understanding of the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction within the context of relationships based on love and respect.” It highlighted the need for teaching materials to be selected with care and sensitivity to the age and understanding of pupils, and for pupils to be made aware of the value placed on marriage and of the moral implications and risks of certain types of behaviour.

This extended political row over sex education in Scotland's schools demonstrated the particular sensitivities which have come into play in public discussions of sexual morality, particularly when they relate to the welfare of children. It illustrated how a range of unlikely partners—a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, an Evangelical Christian, and the Free Church of Scotland—could be united under one banner to fight against what they collectively perceived to be an erosion of moral standards in society, and the promotion of a lifestyle which they regarded as morally inappropriate. It also illustrated how it could be that politicians may wish to promote a particular set of ethico-social practices but, pragmatically, tend to back track where it might appear that their choices and decisions had outpaced popular moral sentiment. Despite the evidence that fewer than 40% of Scots regularly participate in religious ceremonies, 72% described themselves as Christians in the Census of 2001, and three out of four adults expressed a belief in a God of some kind. For some Scottish politicians, the debate and antagonism over Section 28 (2A) represented a significant challenge to their assumptions about Scotland's moral compass. However, in matters of human sexuality we find deeply embedded oppositions in a liberal democratic

¹⁴ Of course a different interpretation might be placed on these figures which suggested that most people were actually indifferent. But if there was such indifference this itself might be interpreted as the people not being in tune with the government's more proactive stance. Nonetheless, British democracy is not conducted in accordance with the plebiscite tradition.

polity and it was inevitable (as events turned out to show) that the debate would soon resurface, albeit in a slightly different guise.

The issue of Scotland's sexual health has been a cause of concern for many years, with soaring rates of sexual infection,¹⁵ including HIV/AIDS, unwanted teenage pregnancies, and abortions. Arguably, Scotland's record in terms of sexual health is among the poorest of all Western European countries. In an attempt to address the problem, in August 2002 Scotland's Minister for Health and Community Care appointed an expert Reference Group to draw up a strategy for improving sexual health in Scotland. Among those invited to join this group and contribute to its deliberations was Vice-President of Scotland's Catholic Education Commission, Joseph Chambers.¹⁶ On 29 June 2003, prior to the group's publication of its final report, Father Chambers published an open letter in which he set out his reasons for refusing to sign and endorse the report because, he claimed, it did not adequately reflect much of the debate which had taken place during the group's deliberations. In particular, he objected to the report's failure to take due account of the views of most faith groups in Scotland and to its disregard of an overt moral perspective in the area of sexual behaviour. This action provoked outrage among critics of the Church who claimed that it was attempting to impose its own moral viewpoint on the polity as a whole.

In September 2003 the Scottish Executive published the proposals of the expert Reference Group under the title *Enhancing Sexual Wellbeing in Scotland* (Scottish Executive 2003) as a draft Sexual Health and Relationships strategy. Comments on this draft strategy were invited by the Scottish Executive up until February 2004. In response to this invitation, the Catholic Church submitted a significant number of responses from the hierarchy, from dioceses, from various Church commissions, schools, and agencies. Common to these responses was the view that the authors of the draft strategy seemed to be interested only in the medical aspects of the country's sexual health, concerned with treatment rather than with any efforts to change behaviour which could be seen to be damaging to both individuals and society. Indeed, the Chair's introduction was explicit in its determination to avoid ties to any particular moral standpoint, thus actually adopting a moral position which regards all sexual behaviour as morally neutral and deserving of respect. (Of course if all human behaviour within a particular domain is morally neutral then there is actually no imperative to respect any particular position even that of assumed benign neutrality.) Despite such claims to neutrality as between competing positions the document embraced certain values in its overall approach, some of which would be deemed inimical to a Christian perspective on human sexuality. These included the promotion of "safe sex" approach. Such an approach might be considered by the Catholic

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of the increase in STIs see Scottish Health Statistics at http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3.jsp?pContentID=358&p_applic=CCC&p_service=Content.show&Downloaded 7 August 2006. One example is Chlamydia, where infections rates between 1996 and 2005 have risen from about 800 to over 4,000 reported cases.

¹⁶ A Parish Priest and former Vicar Episcopal for Education in the Archdiocese of Glasgow.

Church as implicitly encouraging promiscuous lifestyles and the celebration of diverse forms of sexual expression. Despite the Chair's commitment for the strategy to be sensitive to Scotland's "diversity of beliefs, values and moralities," the document repeatedly contradicted this in its assertions that a faith perspective can "cause or reinforce social inequalities which will affect sexual health," that "religious attitudes to sexuality and marriage can pose tensions" and that religious faith can be a "cultural barrier" to effective sex education. Despite these assertions no evidence was offered as to how religious affiliation might be seen as such a barrier.

Moreover, the draft strategy appears to have adopted a position which runs counter to not only religiously grounded teachings but United Nations Declarations on the pre-eminent rights and responsibilities of parents as the "first and foremost" educators of their children about relationships. It also appeared to misrepresent the value of educating young people about the value of abstinence. Its ideological stance—for instance, its frowning on "heterosexism"—was recognisably hedonistic and inimical to people of religious faith. In an instructive example of the besetting problem of late industrial cultures, pluralism is confused with relativism and the draft report consistently confused the legitimate rights of all in the polity to be respected as persons with an insistence that all lifestyles and actions be equally respected. The consultation period closed at the end of February 2004.

In a newspaper article published on 29 August 2005,¹⁷ Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien took issue with Scotland's Sexual Health policy, claiming that the Scottish Executive's strategies were signally failing, as statistics showed rising rates of sexual infection, teenage pregnancies, and abortions. He condemned suggestions to extend values-free strategies which were exacerbating the problems and suggested that this could be interpreted as "state sponsored sexual abuse of minors." He also suggested that the Executive was proposing to cave in to health workers' demands to teach sex education to pre-five children, and to issue condoms and "morning-after" abortifacient pills to teenagers in schools. He predicted a moral backlash from parents which would be greater than the Section 28 row. Politicians were quick to respond. First Minister Jack McConnell and Health Minister Malcolm Chisholm¹⁸ offered public assurances on the "morning after" pill and on pre-five education, insisting that respect would be at the heart of any relationships education policy in Scotland. Individual schools, it was pointed out by Ministers, would be able to interpret general guidelines and to deliver programmes which were appropriate to their own values.

¹⁷ The original appeared in an opinion piece in the *Sunday Times*. Follow-up pieces appeared in *The Times*.

¹⁸ For details of McConnell's reply, see <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=1015062004>. In one sense it matters only a little that charge and countercharge are accurate in every detail, or that the particular construal of such events may differ as between the parties since the political imaginary around the issues of Catholicism education in Scotland is created out of these public comments.

On 27 January 2005 the Scottish Executive published “Respect and Responsibility,” as its Strategy and Action Plan for Improving Sexual Health in Scotland.¹⁹ In some of the Scottish media, the prelude to the launch of the strategy was dominated by conspiracy theorists who claimed that Scotland’s senior politicians had “caved in” to the Church by allowing Catholic schools to opt out of sex education. It was suggested that ministers had revised earlier drafts of the strategy document to ensure that it was “cardinal-proof,” a reference to concerns about Cardinal O’Brien’s public comments.²⁰ A former health minister was quoted as expressing alarm at these suggestions and attacked the “narrow fundamentalism” of the Catholic Church. When the public commentary died down it became clear that the final strategy did demonstrate a change of direction in some aspects of Scotland’s sexual health strategy. The document explicitly stated that sex education programmes in all schools should be characterised by an “abstinence plus” approach. It underlined the existing guidance to schools on the conduct of sex education which guaranteed the role of the head teacher as the final arbiter of what was appropriate for each school. And it also abandoned plans for easier access to abortions.

For some politicians the final strategy, which was the outcome of five years of debate and consultation, was a disappointment, particularly because it failed to impose one single consistent approach on all schools. Ironically, some who had accused the Church of trying to impose a moral viewpoint were infuriated at their inability to impose their own moral viewpoint on all children in all schools. This led to one member of the Scottish Parliament—who claimed to be spokesperson of his political party—calling for an end to the funding of Catholic schools in Scotland if they refused to deliver a single common approach to sex education. He argued that “the Catholic church cannot resist [the legislation]. That would be against the rules of the state system. Either you are in the state system or you are not. If you are in the state system you obey the rules. If the church wishes to ratchet this up, if it defies the authority of the local education authorities then you are in a different ball game. It cannot have its cake and eat it.”²¹ While this may be deemed a somewhat inflammatory remark full of the high rhetoric of contemporary parliamentary politics, it does indicate not only the passions aroused on all sides but also the stakes in this ongoing contest about how the Scottish polity should conduct its affairs.²² It also resurfaces the interesting questions about

¹⁹ The full text may be seen at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/01/20603/51177> Downloaded 8 August 2004.

²⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4210857.stm>.

²¹ These comments were made by Liberal Democratic MSP Mike Rumbles and are reported in *The Times*. For details see <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,2764-1463294,00.html>. Downloaded 5 August 2006.

²² It is unlikely that the accommodation reached here does any more than paper over the fissures between the legislature and the Catholic Church over matters of schooling and identity. It is more probable that low intensity skirmishes will continue unabated, irrupting occasionally into more public conflict. Even at the time of writing further engagements have taken place. See Camillo Fracassini’s article in the *Sunday Times* (Scotland) entitled, “Church: gay law is threat to freedom” 16 July 2006.

the nature of liberal democracy in a late industrial polity and the relationship between individuals/groups and the “will of the people” as manifest in the particularities of politicians. It is a question to which we return in the next section.

Meanwhile, and for now, Catholic schools in Scotland follow guidelines first offered by the Catholic Education Commission on the teaching of relationships and moral education in 2002. In August 2005, the Scottish Catholic Education Service established the “Called to Love” project, funded by the Scottish Executive, to develop appropriate materials and support for the delivery of relationships education to young people in Catholic secondary schools. This represents something of a compromise and, in the context of a liberal democratic polity, a reasonably just one.

Research and the Future of Catholic Education

Until relatively recently there was very little scholarship into Catholic education in Scotland. What scholarship there was tended to be historical with the *Innes Review* playing an important role in providing a platform for Catholic scholars to ponder the early travails of Catholic education. We might reasonably ask why, say from 1944 onwards, there has been such a paucity of writing on Catholic education which was directed towards its social and cultural significance, as well as the personal and civic effectiveness of Catholic schooling? The answer is unlikely to be straightforward but we might tentatively suggest that historic scholarship offered a seemingly safe haven, a form of nostalgia which served the psycho-therapeutic function of enabling Catholic scholars to give voice to their religious and cultural identity and attachments without thereby challenging the political establishment. Arguably, it was an impulse consonant with the wider political instinct which saw Catholics invest their aspirations in the Scottish Labour party rather than establish anything like a separate Catholic identity.²³ The *Innes Review* has served as an important platform for discussion of Catholic education. Significant historical pieces have been penned by a number of scholars including Aspinwall (2000), Fitzpatrick (1986, 1995), Treble (1978), and Skinnider (1967). While Treble offered one of the first pieces on the history of Catholic education we wish here to deal briefly with the work of Aspinwall and Fitzpatrick as exemplifying two contrasting approaches. Fitzpatrick’s work included two monographs focused on the contribution of Catholic education to the developing identity and social progress of Catholics in south-west Scotland. The second of these monographs is an account of the contribution

²³ Of course this needs to be also seen in the light of the position held widely amongst Catholic church leaders throughout Britain. Most were opposed to the continental tendency at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries of establishing separate political parties and trades unions. See Conway (1997).

of the Catholic Teachers College to Catholic education²⁴ (the first of the two Catholic teachers' colleges founded in Scotland). Both pieces reveal a careful and attentive scholarship but, while not quite hagiographical, they nevertheless lack the deployment of a critical heuristic. Directed towards the Catholic community, they may be reasonably regarded as an attempt to preserve cultural memory, rather than an exploration of the political and cultural vicissitudes of Catholic schooling

Interestingly two apparently unrelated events have precipitated a marked shift in the scholarly focus and approach in Scotland. The first of these was the publication of *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* by Bryk and his colleagues in Chicago. The second was when teachers' colleges, which had a virtual monopoly over initial teacher education, became more closely allied with and eventually merged into universities; most especially when St. Andrew's College merged with the University of Glasgow. Let us take these in order. The publication of the Bryk et al. volume gave rise to a seminal invited conference hosted in Cambridge jointly by St. Edmund's College and Boston College. Here the most substantial and systematic evidence was to be had of the enhanced social capital provided by Catholic schools. Research had been emerging in other places, including Scotland (Patterson, 1991; Willms, 1992) that this was indeed so but in the particular case of Scotland this was barely known in the public spaces and even more scarcely acknowledged. At a lecture given to the Catholic Secondary Head Teachers' Conference in May 1996, Professor Lindsay Paterson of the *Moray House Institute* in Edinburgh suggested that Catholic schools in Scotland were indeed making a positive contribution to the academic and social success of the Scottish polity; this was the first high profile public acknowledgement of the efficacy of Catholic schooling. However, it was followed in 1999 by a much more controversial episode when a lecture, given at the Edinburgh International Festival, by Scotland's foremost composer (and a communicant Catholic), James MacMillan, provoked a somewhat robust backlash in the Scottish media. At the heart of the lecture, entitled "Scotland's Shame," was a claim that Scotland suffered from pronounced if residual anti-Catholic bigotry. This lecture was to ignite a ferocious debate in Scotland with many lining up to condemn MacMillan (though not a few to support him). In an ensuing volume entitled *Scotland's Shame* (Devine, 2000) MacMillan's claims were subjected to substantial commentary, where a discussion of the role of Catholic education was to be central. While there were no definitive conclusions in the volume, the furore surrounding MacMillan's lecture at least hints that there remains a deep socio-political insecurity in Scotland with respect to both Catholic schooling and Catholicism more generally.

²⁴ Scotland had two teachers' colleges, the first and oldest was Notre Dame, founded by Archbishop Eyre in 1895 and placed under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The second was founded in 1919 as St. Margaret's Training college (later Craiglockhart). Under the authority of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart it was created to meet the needs of Catholics in the east of Scotland. During this period there was a Marist hostel for male students in Glasgow who attended Jordanhill College. In 1981 the two women's colleges merged to become St. Andrew's college and were, at their stage, Co-od.

With regard to the second, the subsuming into the University of Glasgow of the last Catholic College of Education has been an event of quite some significance. In the late 1990s a policy decision (though never publicly articulated as such) to integrate teachers' colleges into universities meant that separate provision for the education of Catholic teachers disappeared and the publicly avowed intentionalities that framed teacher education for Catholic schools had to be rethought in the context of a major civic university where the resourcing of, and attention to, the imperatives of Catholic education had to hold their own alongside a raft of competing interests; interests often somewhat hostile to the continued existence of Catholic schools. While the University of Glasgow accepted the charge from the then Secretary of State for Scotland, to continue the historic mission of St. Andrew's College, this has not been uncontroversial. Despite the well-documented difficulties associated with this change,²⁵ the effect was to force those explicitly involved with and responsible for the preparation of Catholic teachers to a much more cogent and explicit articulation of the vocational aspects of Catholic education. Indeed, the appointment of a lecturer in teacher formation has thrown up a rich seam in thinking about the spiritual and vocational nurturance of young teachers.²⁶ More than this, Catholic teacher educators have had to undergo a significant transformation with respect to a scholarly engagement with issues surrounding Catholic schooling and education. Prior to merger, there was little beyond the historical scholarship discussed earlier apart from one edited collection²⁷ which drew together a set of papers from local and international, internal and external voices in an attempt to respond to the challenge of locally instantiating the kind of issues raised in the McLaughlin et al. (1996) volume and by Gerald Grace (2002). More recently, new work has emerged dealing with some of the important cultural issues in and surrounding Catholic education. These have included work on the ideals of Catholic student teachers²⁸ and work on teacher development. In addition, historical material has taken a rather more analytic approach than may historically be seen to be the case in the work of O'Hagan.²⁹

The Future of and Research Possibilities for Catholic Education in Scotland

As elsewhere in Britain and large regions of Europe, Scotland faces the prospect of reducing school-aged populations which has already seen the number of Catholic secondary schools decline from 63 to 56 in recent years, with further

²⁵ For an account of these and the public/press reaction, see Conroy and McCreath (1999).

²⁶ Currently a volume is in progress and is to be published by Veritas, on the pastoral formation of beginning catholic teachers.

²⁷ See Conroy (1999). The public professional lectures out of which this volume emerged as a result of some uneasiness with the lack of serious discussion and reflection about Catholic education and a concern that the one higher education establishment in Scotland should be doing more than it was to promote such a debate.

²⁸ See in particular DeRuyter and Conroy (2002); DeRuyter et al. (2003a, 2003b).

²⁹ For some of this work, see O'Hagan. (2006). Further work is imminent in the Innes Review.

decline inevitable. As this trend continues the reduction in critical mass may have some effect on the sustainability of a coherent and cogent catholic school system. More likely, challenges may arise from the sustained pressure of a strongly embedded anti-religious school liberal secularist discourse, along the lines discussed earlier, and the gradual but inexorable decline of communicant Catholics. There is of course a third possibility; that as Catholics become increasingly homogenised and loose their distinctive cultural and religious attachments, there will be insufficient committed Catholic teachers to not only serve the needs of students but maintain a coherent and sustainable Catholic educational identity. From the kinds of public speculation, discussion, and comment raised during and after the consultation on sex education this is clearly the hope of some commentators and politicians.

As things stand, it is difficult to discern which of these three pressures may end up being most potent, though it is difficult not to muse on the likelihood that the absence of widespread involvement of a communicant Catholic community is apt to be the most undermining. The secularist liberal discourse is likely to take at least two forms. On the one hand, there is the robustly antipathetic comment discussed at the beginning of this essay; comment that simply challenges the continued existence of Catholic schools as inimical to a grown up late-industrial and post-religious society. On the other hand, there is the pressure placed on Catholic schools as instruments. Conform to its the pedagogical, cultural, and juridical imperatives of the state. This is where indeed the 1918 legislation itself, and despite its apparent safeguards, is likely to be the source of this challenge in so far as Catholic schools continue to be “held, maintained and managed as a public school by the education authority who . . . shall have in respect thereto the sole power of regulating the curriculum and appointing teachers.”³⁰

The phrase “as a public school”, which already carries great potency, is likely to be further emphasised in the future as states maintain a collective identity in the face of the increasingly fissiparous tendencies of polities. Such tendencies arise from the simultaneous expansion of globalising energies coupled with localised reactions³¹ where globalised economic and cultural traffic occasion a reaction and consequent search for the particular in religious and cultural associations. Just as the liberal pluralist instincts of the Netherlands have been called into question by the pressure of migration and anxiety about the place of migrant communities within its borders,³² it is likely that the presence of significant Muslim communities, desirous of expressing and giving voice to their historic cultures through the claim to separate schooling, will put increasing pressure on government to construct common schools as the necessary common ground for the creation of citizenship. “After all,” it might reasonably be argued, “why should we have Catholic schools and not permit Muslims schools?” If we do, the argument

³⁰ P.51 Scotch Education Department 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, Edinburgh: HMSO.

³¹ See in particular Chap. 1., Conroy (2004).

³² For a short account of some of the issues here see Conroy (2006).

proceeds, we will simply fragment and ghettoise the public spaces. Alternatively, one might argue, Muslims should be permitted their own schools as a means to offering them the necessary secure base out of which they can move confidently into the wider political spaces.³³ It is, after all, a move that has served the Catholic community, and in turn the polity, reasonably well (despite the issues discussed earlier) for over a century. But this is unlikely to be the desired answer for either the liberal secularist salon or the officers of public administration. We have already explored some of the issues around the concerns of the former. As regards the latter, the continued existence of publicly funded separate schooling might be seen as a question of administrative inconvenience, any extension of this is likely to be seen as simply compounding an extant difficulty. Undoubtedly there is some overlap as between the two perspectives.

Despite these challenges there are significant positive developments for Catholic education in Scotland. The creation, within the University of Glasgow, of a robust and growing Department of Religious Education has seen some important developments in research and scholarship in Catholic education³⁴ and the creation of innovative programmes in leadership development in Catholic education. This scholarship offers both the Catholic, and, more widely, the Scottish education community new and more cogent resources by which they might judge the arguments for, and the efficacy of, Catholic schooling in terms that meet their particular needs. Perhaps some of the most significant scholarship, to which we will return momentarily, being carried out is not centred on establishing philosophical and empirical arguments for the appropriateness of maintaining publicly funded Catholic schools, but on the attitudes, dispositions, and ideals³⁵ of Catholic teachers since they are a central resource for Catholic education and the key to its success.

A second significant development has seen the Bishops' Conference of Scotland establish a professional Catholic Education Service (SCES) in 2003 as a sign of an ongoing commitment to Catholic education. Under its first director, Michael McGrath, SCES has provided a public face for the work of the Catholic Education Commission and offered a focused³⁶ voice for the Church's view on all education matters. Working in partnership with other Church agencies, it offers practical support and resources to teachers, schools, and parishes. Further, SCES has reinforced and helped the Catholic educational community articulate for itself coherent justifications for Catholic education which are both

³³ Conroy, J. (2006) The new challenge to state orthodoxy. *Times Educational Supplement*, 17 March, p. 21.

³⁴ These include work by new and upcoming scholars including Coll and McKinney. Recent publications of the former include Coll (2002). Among McKinney's recent work is included his contribution to the work of the team who explored student-teachers' ideals as detailed below. Other relevant works include McKinney (2004, 2006).

³⁵ De Ruyter and Conroy (2001), De Ruyter et al., (2003).

³⁶ It might be argued that this voice is not only focused on but also respected in governmental and other political circles as a coherent professional voice that is intended to offer both a central means of communication and advice.

situated in the discourse of public education and embody the Church's philosophy of education. A particular example of this focus is the publication of *A Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland*,³⁷ a statement of ten key features which the Bishops of Scotland expect to find in every Catholic school. While referring to the school's commitment to such features as "an ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person," and to upholding "the moral teaching, faith tradition and sacramental life of the Catholic Church," it also adumbrate the explicit expectation that, "All staff appointed to a Catholic school are expected to support and promote the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school, as illustrated in this Charter." The publication of the *Charter* was, itself, not uncontroversial, giving rise to some concerns that the Bishops had no right to raise such expectations of all teachers working in Catholic schools. It continues to be used, however, both as a public statement of what the Catholic Church expects and as the basis of self-evaluation by schools of their adherence to their Catholic mission.

Of course mention of commitment, ethos, and expectation surfaces important research and normative questions about and for Catholic education. The historic research tradition in Scotland, such as it is has been, as we have already suggested, focused on the safe ground of history or on the politics of Catholic schooling. There has been, with only a couple of exceptions, little attention paid to the beliefs, values, and practices of both teachers and students. This lack of attention may be explained by a dearth of research expertise in the Catholic community. However, an equally plausible explanation might be that attention to such matters may be viewed by some Catholics as exposing to their schools to further insecurity and unwelcome political interrogation on the premise (if this be the case) that the ontological and epistemological grounds of Catholicism are not widely shared in either classroom or staffroom. Despite such perceived dangers, it is important to grapple more precisely with the status of belief and practice in Catholic schools as this may facilitate the planning of increasingly cogent and effective curriculum and pastoral interventions. Indeed the curriculum itself and its concomitant pedagogical practices need to become a site of focused investigation with regard to both its educational and pastoral efficacy. Rhetorical claims about current practices in religious education need to be tested. It may not be sufficient, or even sustainable, to claim that current or planned curricular approaches and materials will effectively promote an attachment to theological or ethical virtues much less stem the haemorrhage of the young from ecclesial communities.

The energies that have precipitated a wholesale flight from both belief and church may be related to tectonic shifts in how adolescents and young adults in particular conceptualise themselves. Such self construction is nurtured in a late industrial climate where both social and epistemic ties and loyalties are placed under increasing strain. Unable to secure immunity from the substantial and fissiparous impulses of late industrial and information driven social forces there

³⁷ *A Charter for Catholic Schools* can be downloaded from <http://www.sces.uk.com>.

is much serious, and overdue, work to be done in understanding the shaping of multiple selves in contemporary Scottish culture and the possible impact of this on the theological and social practices of education.

Although much is understood informally about teachers' attitudes much more needs to be formalised so that a sharper and more focused awareness is cultivated with respect to teacher needs and support (Coll, 2006). Given the increasing detachment of teachers from a traditional and historically rooted discursive practice there is a need to understand the sources of such detachment and possible strategies of recovery and redress. Such research is likely to include studies on teachers' beliefs and attitudes on entering the profession as well as longitudinal studies of how such beliefs and attitudes evolve over, say the first ten years of the teacher's professional life. Allied to this is research on the pastoral care and formation of both staff and students. While it appears that certain behavioural and attainment outcomes among students of Catholic schools are consequential on the religious and ethical values as well as the cultural and academic expectations of the school, we nevertheless understand little enough about the dynamic interplay between staff and student attitudes and behaviours and an explicit Catholic-Christian ontology and epistemology. Such issues are not susceptible to quick, indeed we might suggest cheap, research but require considered and careful longitudinal study.

Given the enduring public interest in the claim that Catholic schools are *ipso facto* divisive, and given that such claims find an echo more broadly in Britain (Short, 2002) and elsewhere (Holmes, 2005) there is a pressing need to test the claims that Catholic (or indeed other faith) schools are likely to conduce to divisiveness. Indeed, the argument is usually put in such a way that the vices of Catholic schools are to be measured in contradistinction to the virtues of multiculturalism. We have little enough empirical material on the outcomes of Catholic schools in these respects. Are students of Catholic schools less likely than students in other schools to be antipathetic to multicultural intent in both attitudes and social practices? There is a need for rigorous interrogation of such questions with the possibility that advocates of Catholic schools may have to revise their claims. In any event, such studies need to be longitudinal and take cognisance of formal positions, actual attitudes, social practices, and long-term behavioural and social patterns.

To conclude, Catholic education is unlikely to benefit from calm seas and a fair wind in Scotland. Indeed, matters may be taken out of the hands of the Catholic educational community, given the major shifts in thinking about the nature of religion, which seemed so recently dead according to a large number of theorists in the sociology of religion³⁸ but now appears very much alive. Nonetheless, if they can muster the capacity to continue to make both an innovative and thoughtful contribution to public education and effectively articulate the philosophical and empirical grounds for its value both in its own terms and

³⁸ Bruce (2002) offers an interesting perspective on secularisation though it is not entirely clear that he still holds this position.

in those of public political discourse, then Catholic education in Scotland may thrive after all.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLING AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN: PERSPECTIVES FROM MALTA

Mary Darmanin

Christian Women and Change

The content and methods of the education of girls in Catholic schools have changed to serve the new demands societies place on women. It is, however, worth remembering that Christian women have long served God, and humanity, through their lives. In *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), Pope John Paul II not only hails St Teresa of Jesus and St Catherine of Sienna, but also Monica, mother of Augustine, Olga of Kiev, Matilda of Tuscany, Hedwig of Silesia, Birgitta of Sweden, Joan of Arc, Rose of Lima, Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Mary Ward, amongst others. In the *Letter to Women for Beijing Conference* (1995) thanks is given to the host of women through whom the “great works of God” have “throughout human history been accomplished.” Others, such as Radford Ruether (1985/1996, p. 175) had recovered for history, the many women mystics, prophets, ministers, healers, church founders, and apostles “who have carried out their vision of redemptive community, inclusive of women.” Miriam, the priest and prophet; Deborah the judge; Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles; Perpetua and Felicitas, martyrs are all Radford Ruethers’ (1985/1996, p. 175) “foremothers of WomanChurch.” Saints of the early Church such as Saint Monica remind us that women have long-lived difficult and challenging lives.¹ Their courage, intelligence, and spirituality led not only to sanctity but also to social change, as with Middles Ages heroine, Saint Catherine of Sienna who, amongst other things, managed to persuade Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon (Curtayne, 1929, p. 93) and was made a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI. Studies of the medieval “mothers of the Church” (Borresen, 1993) also attest to this female attitude to change. Lieblich’s (1994) account of the lives “of

¹ For a brief history of saints and martyrs: <http://www.Catholicism.about.com/cs/saints/a/stmonica03.htm>

devotion and defiance” of the four Catholic religious sisters, and their associates, is as much about nuns as it is about political activists. These women work with the poor in Latin America; they militate from the cloister to save a community; they defy governments to assist men and women flee persecution, they “reclaim a church rooted in the radical principles of Catholicism.” Casey (1993, p. 29 *passim*) similarly celebrates the “existential discourse” of Catholic women religious teachers “working for social change.” The biographies of the founding mothers of the Catholic girls’ schools established in Malta, as in other missions, also testify to this continuing vocation of women to work for the poor, for justice and for love, with intelligence and courage. Long before the advent of equality discourses, as Pope John Paul II acknowledges in his gratitude to them in the *Letter to Women for Beijing* (1995), these women recognised the liberating/redemptive power of education for girls. This chapter will explore what this mission offers to girls and women today.

On Women

The *Letter to Women* (1995) is a remarkable document. Apart from the very generous thanks to all women, which is evident also in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988, section 27) which extends from gratitude to “perfect” women, to all Christian women for their “significant impact on the life of the Church as well as of society,” this letter is a very positive, even progressive, evaluation of the “vocation” and “genius” of women. In the opening section thanks is given to mothers, daughters and sisters, to women who work, and to consecrated women, as well as a special thanks to all females by virtue of the “simple fact of being a woman.” The document recognises that women “were frequently disadvantaged from the start, excluded from equal educational opportunities, underestimated, ignored and not given credit for their intellectual contributions.” Pope John Paul II laments that women have been valued more for their physical appearance than “their skill, their professionalism, their intellectual abilities, their deep sensitivity.” This is a leap of faith away from *Mulieris Dignitatem* [*MD*] (1988), which only marginally refers to situations where women have been disadvantaged or discriminated against, such as in marriage (section 10). Since the oppression of women, and gender conflict in general, is presented in *MD* as a result of original sin, women are therefore also held responsible for their own oppression! In *MD*, “equality” is discussed in its “essential” dimension, as deriving from Christ’s attitude to women (section 16) and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit (section 22). Where social equality discourses challenge Vatican sexology (Borresen, 2004) and its pre-modern concept of natural law, and the “immutable truths” or “many realities which do not change” (*MD*, 1988, section 28) then appeals are made to women to correct this vision of equality, especially anything that would “lead to the ‘masculinization’ of women . . . contrary to their own feminine ‘originality’” (section 10). Daly (1985) argues that this has been a persistent theme in the Church’s condemnation of the emancipation of women, even in *Casti Connubi* (1930). *MD* (1988), however, is vital in its emphasis on the equivalence of men

and women as “*imago Dei*” created in God’s image; of the presence of “woman” through Mary, mother of God, in the “central salvific event”; portraying a God with attributes that are both “masculine” and “feminine,” who is “free of ‘masculine’ bodily characteristics” (section 8); of Christ and his “opposition to that tradition which discriminated against women” (section 12) in whom “there is neither male nor female” (section 11); and of the constant promise of sanctifying grace (section 16) for women as well as for men. However, this anthropology of equivalence and partnership has not fully superseded an anthropology of subordination and complementarity, and this most profoundly in the arguments against the ordination of women. Apart from reminding us how very recent the present interpretation of the Church’s universalist, soteriological egalitarianism is, Radford Ruether (1991) demonstrates how the issue of the ordination of women is especially serious since it leads to a position where women are seen to be equal to men in creation but not in grace. In the position presented in both *Inter Insignores* (1976) and *MD* (1988), “women are said to be fully equal to men in the image of God, and yet incapable of imaging Christ” (Radford Ruether, 1991, p. 13). This leads to an incoherence where the female “cultic impediment” to the priesthood is seen to derive from a divine androcentrism, in which women apparently have a “God-given cultic deficiency” (Borresen, 2004).² Feminist theologians have found the continuing anthropology of the complementarity of the sexes, with its spousal symbolism and essentialist discourses of “natural” difference, a challenge for an inclusive Christology (Johnson, 1991). In this Christology there is greater significance “in the maleness of Christ than the central fact of his humanity” (Daly, 1985, p. 187). Whilst claiming for feminism also, a valid epistemology of difference (Graham, 1995), including between females themselves, the feminist claim rejects the essentialist basis of the Church’s anthropology. It retains, instead, a place for an acknowledgement of many common experiences amongst women of different times, places, classes, “race” and ethnicity, dis/ability, sexuality, and others (Zappone, 1991). This position does not reject an embodied concept of sex and gender, but it does reject the type of biological determinism that these essentialising, “personalist” discourses of Catholic “complementarity,” can imply. The most recent *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church* (2004) on “active collaboration” of men and women in the Church and in the world, is addressing a long superseded feminism with many arguments of a dated theology of women. Where Pope John Paul II thanked the “women of goodwill who have devoted their lives to defending the dignity of womanhood by fighting for their basic social, economic and political rights” (*Letter to Women*, 1995, section 6), the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine for the Faith launches a retrograde philosophical and social attack on theological and other feminisms. In stressing only those “feminine” values of

² Borresen, 2004, explains the *impedimentum sexus* by referring also to the fact that according to Vatican statistics for 1998, the number of nuns in the Catholic Church (814,779) doubles the number of priests (404,629) and non-ordained monks (57, 813).

motherhood and caring, this letter of the Congregation, forgets women's other vocations such as to work, to intellectual and artistic activity, to leadership and to others, which Pope John Paul II so courageously and generously praised in the *Letter to Women* (1995). An element of hope should be retained, not only that the *Letter to Women* (1995) will continue to inform Church teaching and praxis, but that *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church* (2004) intimates at least one positive development. This in the appeal to "active collaboration," which is resonant of the Northern European partnership model where men and women collaborate in all fields "because of, and not despite, their sexual difference" (Borresen, 2004, p. 12). Here, difference is understood in the positive sense of an approach "which highlights the connected interaction between psychophysical sex and socio-cultural gender" (Borresen, 2004, p. 12).

And on Education

Regarding the education of girls, there has been a perceptible, though slow, shift in vision since *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929, no. 68) found that co-education, especially of adolescents, is "false" and "harmful" to Christian education, arguing that this is based upon "naturalism" and the denial of "original sin." Also considered erroneous in co-education, are the ideas of a "levelling promiscuity" and "equality." According to this document, it is only in matrimony that there should be a "perfect union of the sexes." Moreover, it is nature which "fashions the two [sexes] quite different in organism, in temperament, in abilities," which leads to the conclusion that there ought not to be equality "in the training of the sexes." There is concern regarding sex education (no. 65) seen as "a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction," which does not recognise that "evil practices" do not arise out of "ignorance of intellect," but from "weaknesses of will." Though articulating a more expansive vision of the lives of the young, and the demands of social progress, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965) reiterates that the inalienable right to an education is to be "in keeping with their ultimate goal" (of salvation) as well as "of their abilities, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country" (no. 1). This principle is developed further in the discussion on the Catholic School, where teachers are called to "work as partners with parents and together with them in every phase of education give *due consideration to the difference of sex and the proper ends Divine Providence assigns to each sex in the family and in society*" (no. 8) [my emphasis]. At the same time that separate curricula and formation are envisaged for boys and girls, and even for pupils with different inclinations (as with the proposal for separate professional and technical schools, no. 9, or to "conduct schools of every type and level," no. 8), it is argued that the school is important because "between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding." A considerable shift in emphasis regarding Catholic schools is evident by 1977 with *The Catholic School*. Retaining the foundational pillar stone of faith, the "educational value" of the Catholic school (no. 3) is now of central concern. Its service is both "civic and apostolic." The school's

task is the synthesis of faith and culture (no. 37), repeated also in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997, no. 14) where there is no separation between “time for learning and time for formation.” The turn to culture is evident in the recognition that each church, and its schools, will deal with local problems in its own social-cultural context (no. 2), will respond to the total educational needs of young people today (no. 4), will provide an encounter with a “cultural inheritance” (no. 25) and others. Stressing the reality in which the school operates, it is argued that a school without the characteristics of a school, including that it stimulates pupils “to exercise intelligence” (no. 25), that it reviews its content and methods (no. 28), has as its aim “the total formation of the individual” (no. 36) and takes account of new pedagogical insights (no. 67), is not a school. Here, there is no distinction made between the educational programme for boys and the one for girls. Both are to be beneficiaries of this renewed vision, with its commitment to quality education. Indeed, in section 24, the social aspects of schools “today” which “place greater importance than ever on the specific function of the school,” are specifically named, and these include “parental participation, increased democratisation, equality of opportunity.” Though not necessarily referring to gender equality, each of these has a gender dimension, as do all the proposals, cited above, which are seen as normative for schools regardless of the sex of the pupils. This vision has been amplified in the 1982³ treatise on lay Catholics in schools. Firstly, that “every person has a right to an integral education” (no. 3) reiterates basic rights for each pupil, without distinction. Secondly, the role of the school in “the renewal of the temporal order” (no. 8) reinforces the engagement of the Catholic schools with civil society. The school is to cultivate: intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties; correct use of judgement; just attitudes and prudent behaviour; awareness of the cultural patrimony (*sic*); *preparation for professional life* [my emphasis] and the encouragement of a friendly “interchange between students of diverse cultures and backgrounds” (no. 12). Lay Catholics are to promote a Christian concept of the person, which includes a defence of human rights (no. 18), as well as helping students discern “a vocation to marriage or to celibacy” (no. 33). An interesting shift away from gender exclusive, with the male generic, to gender inclusive language in the use of the plural, and the reference to men and women, such as in the solicitation that lay Catholics will respond to the vocation “to form men and women who will be ready to take their place in society” (no. 19) has been sustained since. There has been no shift, however, in the interpretation of Christian anthropology, reinforced by Pope John Paul II’s “personalist” theology of the body, its sexual ethics (Sowle Cahill, 1989) and the complementarity of the two sexes. In the educational sphere, this is most fully articulated in *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (1983), which is “inspired by a specific conception of man and woman” (no. 21). The body contributes to

³ *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.

the “revealing of the meaning of life and the human vocation” (no. 22), which “is the gift of love” (no. 23). The argument is made that men and women are “diverse,” but “equal in nature and dignity” (no. 25). There is no acknowledgement that this diversity can be interpreted to mean incompleteness, as the phrase “diverse in reciprocal completion” (no. 25) implies. From this position it is possible to argue, that one sex (usually female) cannot, therefore, singly function in all spheres of social life, nor can it take roles which appear to belong to the other sex. The document states that education in the affective life should be “proper to each sex” (no. 33). In this document, homosexuality is considered a problem “which impedes the person’s acquisition of sexual maturity” (no. 101).

In the 1980s a profound concern with youth in a changing world that has become urbanised, industrialised, characterised by a high standard of living and complex communication systems led to a reevaluation of the religious dimension (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988). Common characteristics of youth were seen to include being in environments of radical instability, or devoid of truly human relationships; uncertain futures; loneliness and a turn to alcohol, the erotic and the exotic; and religious indifference (no. 19). When the school is “excellent as an academic institution ... but does not witness to authentic values” (no. 19) renewal is called for, not only in religious instruction but in the whole process of formation of the school. Here, a sustained accent on the importance of intellectual development is formulated within the need for a mature faith “to reject cultural counter-values which threaten human dignity” (no. 52). Calling on the religion teacher to discover the Church as the People of God “composed of women and men just like themselves” (no. 77), the discussion on Christian anthropology, with examples from the Gospels, the Acts and the Apostolic letters, then misses the opportunity to recover the lost history of women in the Church (Fiedler, 1998). These teachers are also to prepare students for marriage (no. 87) and “the depth of Christian love between men and women,” with no recognition of the needs of homosexual youngsters. No limits are set on the curricular programme for either boys or girls (no. 58/72). On the contrary, the Christian formation process is based on “the gradual development of every capability of every student” (no. 99). On the threshold of the third millennium, a circular letter on the Catholic school⁴ (1997) provides another incisive account of the new socio-political and cultural context today. Describing a world dominated by the media, extreme pluralism, moral relativism, and nihilism (no. 1); the gap between the rich and the poor; the ensuing large scale poverty; the “fragility” of many families even in wealthy nations; the “new” poor with no hope, and with futures “of marginalisation and unemployment” (no. 15) are of major concern. Educational systems which are reduced to “purely technical and practical aspects” are also seen to contribute to a spiritual poverty in a “society characterised by technical and scientific skill” (no. 8). The school is the

⁴ *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997.

“meeting-place for the problems which besiege this restless end of the millennium” (no. 6) and it is with “courageous renewal” (no. 3) that is “to go towards men and women wherever they are” (no. 3). Whilst girls are included in the gender neutral description of youth and the battery it faces, it is disappointing that there is no specific mention of the particular challenges that girls and women have to face globally, not least being discrimination in society and in the family, and as subjects of sexual exploitation. This issue is, however, addressed in *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* (2002) and the special section on the dignity of woman and her vocation (no. 64). Couched again in the “complementarity” perspective of sexual difference, with reference the “single-dual dimension of the human person” (no. 64), an insistence on the “mystery of man and woman,” the dimension of reciprocity, and a warning against “the illusion of freeing oneself from all dependency” (a veiled dig at feminism), there is an affirmation of the “dignity” of woman. This is achieved “in various parts of the world” by Catholic schools which “are active in assuring that women are guaranteed access to *education without any discrimination* [my emphasis] and that they can give their specific contribution to the good of the entire community” (no. 64). The consecrated person who is ready to go “to the ends of the earth” in his or her mission, is educating for coexistence, also between peoples, and “for active and responsible citizenship” (no. 76).

Section Two: the Catholic Schooling of Girls in Malta

Methodology

This chapter is based on triangulation between a literature review, ethnographic interviews and observation, and documentary evidence. I have also drawn on my 25 years of experience as a teaching practice tutor of students placed in these schools and on my own ethnographic research (1990a,b;1995). For this chapter, ethnographic interviews were held with 11 Heads of school who also kindly showed me around the schools, introduced me to teachers, and in some cases, to pupils. Lesson time was spent in some of the classrooms, where my own students were on teaching practice. Out of the 11 schools in which girls are educated from primary through to secondary level, eight Heads of school were interviewed. A further two interviews were held with Headmistresses of the junior schools of two convent schools educating through to secondary level, and another one with the Head of a primary school in Gozo, which also took boys. Of the Heads, only one was a lay person (female), and another a male, a priest responsible for the Bishop’s Conservatory, Gozo. All other Heads were nuns of the religious order running each school. The Director of Services in Education in Church Schools and the President of the Association of Parents of Children in Church Schools were also interviewed. All interviews are attributable. Narrative analysis and analysis of narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995) are the qualitative research methods applied in analysis. School documents such as annuals, reports and development plans,

as well as timetables, circulars, programmes of activities, lists of subject options that students can choose, and others, were also examined.

The Maltese Context

Malta is the smallest EU member state⁵ with a population of 402,668 persons (NSO, 2005). The Constitution of Malta entrenches the Roman Catholic religion as the religion of Malta. As a result, it is the Minister's duty to provide for the teaching of the Catholic religion in State schools, to establish a curriculum for religion, "according to the wishes of the Bishops of these islands in this regard".⁶ Parents of minors have the right to decide whether their children should receive religious instruction or not,⁷ though no provision is made in State schools for the teaching of any other religion, despite the growing numbers of children of other faiths, mainly Muslim. State schools are generally Catholic in orientation, though not Catholic schools in the sense of not being run by the Church. The Education Act (1988) gives every citizen a right to receive education and instruction "without any distinction of age, sex, belief or economic means."

The State retains the right to regulate education, which includes the establishment of a national minimum curriculum of studies and national minimum conditions for all schools. It also has the right to secure compliance with these for all schools. Regarding Church schools, a section within the state Division of Education⁸ is responsible for monitoring compliance as well as liaising with schools regarding funding, INSET and others. In recognition of the right to free choice in education (Darmanin, 1995a), rights to establish schools are granted subject to conformity with current regulations. The Act (8: 2) states that licences will be granted where "the applicant is the Catholic Church or any other voluntary society, religious or otherwise, of a non-profit making character" subject to school conformity with national minimum conditions. Other sections of the Education Act, 1988 show the special consideration afforded to the Catholic Church, such that even in the determining of a national curriculum, this will be "without prejudice to the specific religious nature of any school" (section 47c).

Zammit Mangion (1992) provides a brief account of the schools set up by different religious orders in Malta since the 1800s, which indicates that the 19th century was, as in the rest of Europe, a time for expansion in Catholic education. Novitiates, run by the Dominicans and the Jesuits date back to the mid-15th century, whilst a Cathedral school is known to have existed before 1461 (Zammit

⁵ Since 2004, with an area of 316 km sq.

⁶ Education Act 1988, Cap. 327 of the Laws of Malta, Part III, 20.

⁷ Education Act 1988, Part III, section 20: 4.

⁸ The Non-State Schools section is within the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education, Division of Education, Malta, <http://www.education.gov.mt>

Mangion, 1992, p. 285 *passim*). The local church opened a lower seminary schools in both Malta and in Gozo during the 18th century. Zammit Mangion (1992, p. 287) remarks that the orders of nuns, especially, expanded their services into a number of towns and villages, creating a network of schools of the same order. The Sisters of Charity (established 1868), for example, were operating seven different schools at the time of review (Zammit Mangion, 1992). The Church schools have had two recent periods of growth. In the 1950s, the Malta Association of Private Schools [MAPS], composed of 13 important, mainly church, private secondary schools, was involved in closely monitoring the expansion of State secondary education (Darmanin, 1991). Fearing that the new provision, including of whole-day schooling till age 14, in State schools would lead to their substitution (Archer, 1979) this organisation established close contact with the Director of Education, with a view to both modernising the schools and benefiting from some form of State aid. This was to be achieved through a scholarship system, based on merit at 11-plus, for supposedly low SES pupils. The schools were thereby able to receive financial assistance, whilst also creaming off able working-class pupils. Because of the schools' uneven educational standing, many scholarship recipients chose places from within a narrow range of schools in the scheme (Darmanin, 1991). During the period of state planning for the extension of secondary education for all, and the raising of the school leaving age, MAPS continued to lobby for increased state support for these schools. By the 1960s, the schools were in receipt of a capitation grant for each pupil in the school, without having to offer any scholarship places to pupils coming from the state sector. They were also permitted to concurrently charge fees. This capitation grant subsidy allowed them to lower fees, to make capital and other investment and to consolidate private schooling (Darmanin, 1991). A second period of growth followed a turbulent and damaging confrontation between the Church schools and the state, with the Malta Labour Party in government. Following a poorly implemented plan for a comprehensive school system in State education in the early 1970s (Zammit Marmara, 2001), and an exodus (of about 500 pupils in the mid-1970s) from the state sector to the private Church schools, there was concern also about the growing cost of the capitation grant for these schools. Public taxes were funding the education of pupils in schools with socially selective intake procedures, and which also charged fees. The government was also keen to regulate that section of Church property, which had dubious title, as well as that acquired through "pious legacies" (DOI, 1983; Zammit Mangion, 1992). The Labour government was pushing for reform of the education system, which included the raising of the school leaving age and comprehensive education. Since the state was now moving away from selection, and providing full secondary schooling in its own schools, the scholarship system was discontinued in 1972, followed by the removal of the capitation grant in 1978, and the freezing of school fees by 1981, all leading to financial difficulties for the schools, and the situation described in Zammit Mangion (1992), with schools closing for a period of months in 1984. By 1983, an agreement had been negotiated with the Vatican on the devolution of church property (Act X of

1983), followed by a 1985 agreement with the Holy See on the church schools (Zammit Mangion, 1992, p. 478). It was agreed that pupils in Church primary schools would proceed to the secondary schools without sitting for a selective examination at 11; that an accord would be reached regarding criteria for entry to the schools; that a system of free tuition be introduced in the schools, starting with two classes in 1985, and then extending to more classes in the next years; that the Church be allowed to collect “the offerings of the faithful” to support the schools; and that the identity and autonomy of the Church schools remain intact. In 1988, the Archbishop announced a ballot (or lottery, as it is known in Malta) system for entry into those Church schools with kindergarten or primary school entry, thereby introducing some social equity and transparency into the entry criteria for these oversubscribed schools, but permitting selection at 11 for the boys’ secondary schools. There was resistance to this from sections of the middle class, such as the Federation of ex-Students of Private schools, Parents’ Associations and others (Darmanin, 1995a). No conditions regarding entry criteria had been imposed on the Church in the 1991 “Definitive Agreement.” The change in government (1987) brought a more favourable agreement for the Church schools, subsequently administered at the central level by a Secretariat, now Director for Services in Education in Church Schools. There has recently been established a Council of Church Schools, in which all the Provincials of orders with schools, are represented. It appears that this Council is now responsible for policy direction, whilst the school Head retains autonomy in implementation. Only one Head actually referred to this Council voluntarily in interview. She was in close collaboration with the Mother Provincial, and together they submitted documents and ideas for discussion. The Head felt that it was important for the Church to have a common and cohesive direction, which in her case, was a very progressive one. When asked, another Head argued that it would have been better to have a Council of Church School Heads, rather than Provincials. In a number of cases the Provincial would not have been in the teaching ministry, nor have direct knowledge of the school. This was even more problematic when the Provincial was not a past pupil of the school and had not been immersed in the education charism of the order.

The 1991 Agreement, held *inter alia*, that the criteria for admission to the schools “are freely established by the competent ecclesiastical authorities”; that the Church schools are free of charge (extended to primary and kindergarten classes); and that the schools are to be financed by the Church and the State (Zammit Mangion, 1992, p. 482). By virtue of this agreement, the Church alone became responsible for maintenance and extension of school buildings, for remuneration to spiritual counsellors and professional persons not forming part of the ordinary teaching or non-teaching staff, and others. Such finances could be raised also from “free donations from parents.” The Church and the State became jointly responsible for salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, and general expenses at 10% of total of salaries. However, the State bound itself to make good for any financing corresponding to the difference between “their total cost and the contribution of the Church.” This clause has led to a very substantial increase in the State contribution, from Lm 1,641,000 or 16.32% of

the total Education vote in 1991, to Lm11,750,000, or 23% of the total Education vote in 2006 (Ministry of Finance, 2006). The present arrangement can, with some qualification, be said to be consistent with what Grace (2003, p. 40) calls the three regulative principles of Catholic education, namely: commitment to the common good; to solidarity; and to the service of the poor. The qualification is necessary because it is still the State which is disproportionately funding the schools; because the selectivity in the boys' schools makes them less than solidaristic; whilst even with the ballot system, the inability to pay donations may make parents select themselves out of the schools, since, as O'Keefe (1996, p. 179) found regarding payments in the USA, these may "be beyond the range of many." To these, one would add the cost of textbooks, the school uniform, and others. In this sense, the option for the poor is not being fully lived.

Currently, 27.4% (or 17,859) of all Maltese pupils age 3–16 (65,045) are in Church schools. Of the Church school pupils, 53% (or 9,418) are female, making this group 14.5% of all Maltese pupils age 3–16. Within the Church schools, 957 girls are in the kindergartens, 4,530 in the primary schools, and 3,931 in the secondary schools (NSO, 2005). The majority of these girls would have entered the schools on the basis of the ballot system, either at kindergarten or year 1, depending on the intake policy of school they attend. In effect, the girls' schools now have a more socially and academically mixed intake than they had prior to the 1988 ballot system. Two of the three schools that are selective at 11+ , give the girls the opportunity to repeat year 6 of their junior school, so as to sit the competitive examination at a later date. With this social and academic mix, the girls' Church schools are consistently achieving very good results in the end of cycle SEC examinations, achieving on a par with the girls who enter the State selective Junior Lyceum at age 11,⁹ as well as with comparable boys (MATSEC, 2005, 2006). There is also evidence that when choosing between sitting for the more challenging Paper II A rather than Paper II B in the SEC (age 16) examinations, girls in Church schools are more likely to choose Paper II A. This indicates not only a high level of achievement, but also an expectation of success on the part of teachers and parents, evident in the girls' school cultures.

The Education of Girls Today

There is evidence of remarkable commitment to the full development of girls in a global society. Many of the schools have embarked on extensive capital projects, building new schools, gymnasias, halls, computer laboratories, and

⁹ Any child can enter State education kindergarten level at age 3, or primary school at age 5. In the State sector streaming (tracking) is introduced in year 5 of the primary school (age 9–10). Pupils then sit for a competitive 11-plus examination and are thereafter sent to either the grammar type Junior Lyceum schools, or the general Secondary schools. The secondary schools are single-sex. The Church schools also hold a competitive examination for most of their boys' secondary school, which are oversubscribed. Some of the girls' schools have excluded poorly performing students. Some of them have a policy of either asking a pupil to repeat a class or "persuading" them to leave the school, though this is not widespread.

others. These “millennium projects” have seen large and completely new junior and senior schools for both the Augustinians (St Monica, Gzira) and the Dorotheans’ (St Dorothy, Zebbug) open by year 2000. The Franciscans (St Francis, Sliema) have bought adjacent houses and gardens and expanded considerably. The Sisters of Charity (Immaculate Conception, Tarxien) have taken over the old Community building to add new classes, whilst the Bishop’s Conservatory, Gozo has added floors to its existing structure as well as digging underground for a new gymnasium. The Convent of the Sacred Heart has built a 600 seat auditorium, and a multi-purpose hall as well as upgrading computer laboratories. Indeed, each of the eleven schools reviewed including the small St Theresa kindergarten and primary school in Kercem, Gozo, had made considerable investment in ICT with computers in classrooms or in laboratories. The School Development Plans¹⁰ [SDP], though varying in detail and in planning, exhibit the future orientation of the schools and their ability to combine curriculum development with the personal development of pupils and staff. Many of the schools also have handbooks with information for parents, staff, and pupils, such as on discipline, homework policy, and even on handwriting. The most outstanding feature of the Catholic education of girls, is, as intended, the synthesis of faith and culture. This is actuated through the integration of the charism of the foundress with school organisational policies, including for inclusion of children with special needs; parental involvement; curriculum innovation and enrichment; spirituality and pastoral care; and the reaching out to others and the world, in the full development of the pupil. In the following section, examples of how the schools are working to achieve targets in each of these areas will be discussed. For reasons of length, examples have been chosen from amongst those which best illustrate the range and scope of the activities the schools are engaged in.

The Charism of the Convent Schools and Their Characteristics Today

In this short introduction to the schools, vignettes of a few of the schools are offered in a form of “analysis of narratives” to get a sense of what it is like to be a pupil in a particular school, whilst in other sections “narrative analysis” (Polkinghorne, 1995) of themes emerging from the multi-site ethnography will be discussed.

St Joseph, Sliema: The first house of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition was opened in Malta in 1842 by St Emilie de Vialar when, on her way to Syria, she was, like St Paul, shipwrecked on Malta. The order runs three girls’ schools in Malta today.¹¹ A school diary for all pupils has a daily motto from the writings of St Emilie, whilst school notepads are letterheaded with her wise

¹⁰ Larger schools, with very well-qualified staff, had the most sophisticated plans. Two schools did not have any plan at all.

¹¹ The order also run a working hostel for young female who do not have a family, a retreat house, a home for children, as well as the provincial house.

words, such as “Go and with what you have and will receive, do all the good you can.” St Joseph School in Sliema, a major urban town, has both a junior and a senior school. Both Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Clare, Headmistresses of the junior and senior school respectively, are energetic over 60-year-olds, with a vision for the school, which includes hoping to move from the currently cramped premises. An assistant Head, also an old girl, would like students to know more about “the globalisation of St Emilie,” who in today’s language “built a franchise.” In another St Joseph school (Mater Boni Consilii, Paola), one finds the office of Sr. Lucienne, who has been a National Coach of the Handicapped, and who for all her 70-plus years, still contributes to the national organisations for disabled persons, travelling all over the globe to attend meetings and events. Prominently displayed in her office, is a poster with “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” A Green Flag flies outside the school entrance, awarded in recognition of the schools’ environmental policy. Sr. Lucienne tells me how “In two days I decided I wanted a Home Economics room” and then set about getting this immediately. Teachers ask her what she dreamt the night before, knowing that every day brings something new.

St Francis, Sliema: Sr. Edmondina proudly tells me the story of the life of the Gozitan¹² foundress of the Franciscan Order of the Heart of Jesus. The order spread from the tiny village of Kerzem, Gozo to Corfu, Italy, Ethiopia, Australia, Pakistan, and Brazil. The main mission remains “to look after young people” and to “make reparation for the sins of our times.” Despite dwindling numbers, the order has kept most of its apostolate.¹³ In school, each year is dedicated to one theme. This year, the theme is “A better community begins with you: be a volunteer.” A number of activities encourage pupils to do things for others, or to work to fund raise, rather than to just throw money at a cause. A guiding principle is “Where faith and knowledge meet, peace will prevail.” The school has a successful programme to encourage vocations, such as inviting the Association of Past Pupils to watch a video on the Order today, or combining talks about religious vocations with marriage as a vocation. There are two new novices working in the school and it is hoped that as young teachers, they will attract others. Sr. Edmondina tells me she “does the work of a fisherman” and is “always on the alert.”

St Monica, Gzira: This newly built school of the Augustinian order founded by Sr. Theresa Spinelli, is one of the schools established in Malta over a 100 years ago. On Friday, 2 December 2005, all the girls are in the school hall hearing mass for First Friday. Some nuns are giving communion to the girls. Outside the hall, hang large, attractive banners with the founding principles “Everyday better” and “Living one heart and one soul.” A crib exhibition, including nativity scenes in an old hollowed-out computer monitor, in a loaf of bread and others, is on

¹² From the sister island of Gozo.

¹³ Which include looking after the personal needs of the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo, of seminarians, and also at the Curia.

display in the entrance hall. Two altar girls walk into an ante-room and change out of their robes, folding everything away with their bell and cross, in little cases. The six year old is wearing a badge “Council Member.” The Students’ Council has been inaugurated today. The school has the youngest Headmistress of all the convent schools. Sr. Johanna is articulate about her vision for Church schools. She has authored dissertations on both the life of Theresa Spinelli, and on School Development Planning.¹⁴

The Curriculum Today: “Believe and Achieve”

“Believe and achieve”¹⁵ is a suitable motto for all the girls’ church schools, as the work in curriculum development, the culture of enrichment, and spiritual development testifies. All the schools follow the minimum requirements of the Education Division and the National Minimum Curriculum syllabi. However, most of them are committed to curriculum development and extension. Their autonomy allows them to make additions, chose new texts, trial new schemes and develop new pedagogies. Education Division specialists are often invited to support school INSET staff development. At the secondary level, the schools follow the local practice of offering a core curriculum for Forms I and II, following which student make a choice between groups of options. There is some variety in the core curriculum, though all schools teach English Language, Maltese, Mathematics, Religion, integrated science, one foreign language (usually French or Italian), history, geography and social studies or environmental studies, Physical Education [PE], Personal and Social Development [PSD], Art, and the European Computer Driving Licence [ECDL] course. Some also have Home Economics for this age group, whilst others run Media Studies, Needlework, and Craft courses too. All the schools prepare both student and their parents for subject choice at the end of the Form II scholastic year. The schools differ in both the core curriculum and the subject groupings that each Form III–V student will follow for the three years leading to SEC matriculation at age 16. The core includes Religion, English language, Maltese, Mathematics, either Environmental Studies or Social Studies, one foreign language, one science subject, ECDL, PSD, and PE. In the case of the foreign language, one of the smaller schools offers French only, whilst the other schools give a choice between French or Italian from Form I on. Another school obliges students to learn both French and Italian, whilst the Bishop’s Conservatory offers Spanish or German from Form III. Regarding science, the usual obligatory one science is Physics (dating from a 1980s national policy), however, some schools now let girls choose biology

¹⁴ Gatt, J. (1991) *Theresa Spinelli, educator and foundress: a servant of God in children and youth*, unpublished B. Ed. (Hons.) dissertation, University of Malta, and Gatt, J. (2003) *School development planning: a justification and a process put in action*, unpublished dissertation, Diploma in Educational Administration and Management, University of Malta.

¹⁵ This is the school motto of Mater Boni Consilii School of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition.

instead, an option which has become popular since University courses such as Psychology, demand it as an entry requirement. A few of the schools also keep an Art component running through the entire secondary course and one also keeps Media Studies for the duration. One example of the range of subjects taught in the core Form III–V classes, is the programme at St Joseph, Sliema, which apart from the basic subjects listed above, includes also Maltese history, Social Studies, General Knowledge, Spoken English, and Dancing.

Regarding the junior schools, again every school offers a core primary level curriculum, which is nationally recognised. In addition, schools autonomously extend the curriculum into areas of special interest or need. For example, the Convent of the Sacred Heart junior school has a new phonics component in English, and is developing its Maltese language curriculum further. Describing how “we are not slaves” to the National Minimum Curriculum, the Headmistress talks about the handwriting policy of the school, and its well-known early literacy strategies. In addition, these young girls have classes with specialist teachers in media studies, music, arts and craft, and computer awareness. Field trips are organised regularly and these supplement classroom teaching in History, Geography, and Media Studies. St Theresa, a small mixed primary school in Gozo, also follows the National Minimum Curriculum [NMC]. It has made a considerable investment in ICT, with computers alongside special interest corners, book and toy shelves, and others, even in the kindergarten classes. A small computer laboratory is available for older children, and work on the computer is timetabled into the weekly programme. An aerobics teacher is paid by the school, whilst a new playing area has been designed for kindergarten pupils.

A Culture of Enrichment

A consistent feature of the Catholic education of girls is the investment in a “culture of enrichment” (Pring, 1987, p. 293; Darmanin, 1995b), which in keeping with the original charisms to provide a holistic education for girls, and the repeated emphasis on the total formation of the person, is made possible by two main resources. The first is the strong commitment of nuns, teachers, and parents who are ready to work voluntarily, and often out of school hours or without payment, to provide pupils with extra curricular opportunities for human development in a host of different areas. The second is the availability of funds, where these have been needed, even to build new auditoriums and others, since the 1991 Church–State agreement, and the donations that parents make to each school. A culture of enrichment is evident in all manner of actions, which serve to extend the development of the girls, giving them an edge over pupils who do not have these same opportunities. For example, a number of schools such as St Dorothy’s and the Monicas’ have introduced student councils this year (2005–2006) giving students opportunities for leadership training, for developing a programme of activities and for learning how to be critical, as well as how to articulate a set of valid suggestions and demands. Other forms of enrichment include special assemblies, apart from those celebrating religious

feasts (of which more below), where the girls prepare visual, audio, and other material on a theme and then lead the assembly themselves. Even in the junior schools, themes range from the religious, like St Joseph's year 3 class who are working on the theme of "Our Father," to last year's theme on the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Malta (CHOGM). This school, like a number of others, is involved in national and international environmental projects such as "One World," receiving a Gold Award for its work. The schools offer Drama, both as a school subject and also through the very sophisticated plays, musicals, and talent shows put up from time to time.

Spiritual Development and Pastoral Care

In keeping with their Catholic mission, the schools are committed to the pastoral care of their students as well as to their religious formation and spiritual development. Some of the ways of professing the faith have been carried over from the past, such as the celebration of the feast day of the foundress and the keeping of other holy days, such as the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Other important dates in the liturgical calendar are kept by all the schools, such as Advent as a preparation for Christmas, and Lenten exercises in preparation for Easter. In addition, most of the schools have regular mass, usually on a rotating basis, given that most school chapels are too small to take the whole school. On the first Friday of the month, most schools have mass in a larger hall or auditorium. At St Joseph, Sliema junior school, each week, one of the year groups hears mass, whilst there is confession for the different grades. On the first Friday of the month there is mass for the whole school. Pupils follow spiritual exercises during Lent. One morning a year is set aside for staff spirituality, for example, on the charism of St Emilie, or on the Bishop's Synod, held to mark the millennium. For the Year of the Eucharist, a week of Daily Assembly on the theme was held, with the Chapel open every day. The whole school, parents, and the neighbourhood were invited to a Penitential Celebration at a nearby parish church. At St Dorothy's senior school, prayers groups are held every day during break, led by two teachers in one case, and by the altar girls in another. So successful is the voluntary attendance programme that girls ask to attend mass at school during the holidays. Apart from religion and Personal and Social Development classes, the school has a counselling room, and pupils can get a note from their teacher to allow them time out of class if and when they need counselling support. In preparation for leaving the school, the Form V girls have a whole day of prayer together. The Convent of the Sacred Heart has a counsellor (male), paid for by the Secretariat of Church Schools and a social worker provided by the Division of Education. Like a number of other schools, the Headmistress spoke about the increasing pastoral care requirements to deal with growing numbers of broken families, and in some cases of neglect and even abuse. Case conferences take up a considerable amount of time. The school counsellor is in school twice a week and is also present during Parents' Day. This school celebrates a number of

Society of the Sacred Heart feast days such as the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the feast of Saint Madeleine Sophie, of the Immaculate Conception and others. The girls themselves, a class at a time, prepare for the Eucharist, which is held once a month. Once a month also, a priest hears confession, whilst the younger children are prepared for their First Holy Communion. This is the practice in those schools with girls this age, though Headmistresses lament that just a week after the First Holy Communion, many families would not have taken their children to Sunday mass. At the Sacred Heart, there is no special programme for the encouragement of religious vocations, though there is a "Growth Group" which promotes spiritual growth throughout the years of schooling and after. One school which unlike many others, has two new novices, has a more traditional religious and spiritual dimension, as well as having a special programme for vocations. Moreover, it is still a convent school, with nuns living within the school space. St Francis, Sliema organises a number of talks about vocations, including the vocation of marriage; it invites missionary nuns to talk about their work; mass is said daily though classes attend by roster, allowing them one mass a week for Form I and II and once a month for the older girls. There is also a "quiet room" where pupils can withdraw to pray. After school hours, pupils can join a group, which is like a prayer group, but which deals with contemporary challenges too. The St Monica schools are also very active in encouraging spiritual development and vocations, and have new novices. They have kept the teaching charism alive and their convents are an integral part of the school building. At the Birkirkara school there is mass said daily before classes start for those who want to attend, given that school transport often drops pupils off long before class time. Daily prayers are said during Assembly, and these are usually connected to the theme of the week, giving a Christian dimension to even the most secular of themes. A Vocation Room is separate from the Counselling Room, and every Friday after school, a prayer and vocation group meet. Most of the vocations come from ex-pupils. In the Gzira school, a similar programme is run and the Vocational Centre has 150 members, including Old Girls. The after-school Friday meeting has a programme for both the junior and senior school girls and includes outings, live-ins, visits to the cinema, to the seaside and prayer meetings followed by a "ftira"¹⁶ night. The programme runs through the summer, on a weekly basis, and serves to keep the girls highly immersed in the school culture and charism during the long summer holiday.¹⁷ Apart from a Pastoral Care Team and the teachers of religion, interest in the spiritual dimension, is maintained by the formation of a Music Ministry, for girls with musical talents, who meet once a week during the break, to prepare animation for spiritual and other activities.

¹⁶ This is a Maltese snack based on a local unleavened loaf which is filled with tomatoes, olives, capers, and olive oil amongst others. It is a cheap and popular food usually had on a picnic or at the seaside.

¹⁷ Which in Malta runs from the end of June through to the end of September.

Many pupils are awarded prizes for their commitment to this ministry, just like the girls in other schools, such as St Joseph, Sliema who are awarded certificates for displaying specific values. This year¹⁸ St Monica, Gzira, is including parents from the school Parent Teacher Association in its pastoral care team. The goal is the spiritual formation of the whole family.

With and for Others and the World

As members of a universal church, and with founding orders with a missionary charism, most of the Catholic schools in which girls are educated have long had an orientation to the "Other", which extends from "love thy neighbour as thyself" to a commitment to love all others wherever they are, which now also includes a disposition to the protection of the world environment for the benefit of all, including future generations. Girls today are still being educated to value charity. This is now, slowly, being linked more to justice than it has been previously. Democratic values are learnt through the establishment of student councils as well as participation in debates, and in transnational, mainly EU, projects. Girls are also being urged to consider the impact of environmental degradation on their own lives and on those of less fortunate others. At St Monica, Gzira junior school, the student council has "adopted" a child from the Missions and fund raise to send her Lm25 a year, at the same time that these girls take part in European projects, and as their school keeps regular contact with past pupils, including by having a celebratory mass for those who have graduated from the University. Sr. Doreen, of St Dorothy's, finds that children are less generous now than they were, partly because some are excessively spoiled, whereas others come from broken families and are indeed poorer. However, the school makes one good collection a year, at Christmas time, which is then divided between Maltese charities, the Dorothean's mission in the Philippines, and also to families of their own pupils who are in financial difficulty. Form III girls visited the sick and the elderly at a St Catherine's home. This type of activity is repeated annually. Other classes have done environmental work, cleaning up two areas in Malta. During Mission Week, in keeping with the theme "A Better community begins with you: be a volunteer," Sr. Edmondina insists that girls work for the money they send abroad. Last year Lm800 was raised for the mission in the Philippines, which will be opening a school for street children. Participation in European projects is common across the schools; the Bishop's Conservatory is in its third year of a Comenius project "One School for All," whilst Mater Boni Consilii is engaged on another, on "Team Spirit" which is promoting leadership, sport and healthy living. This latter school is also a Green Flag school, meaning it has ongoing participation in a trans-school environmental project; and is one of the "Let me Learn" schools.¹⁹ On Mother's Day every

¹⁸ 2005–2006.

¹⁹ An international project on differentiated teaching and pupil learning style.

year, the grade 3 class of St Monica, Birkirkara go to an Old People's Home to sing and recite poetry. During the Christmas period the secondary school girls visit both the Home for Retired Priests, as well as the Eden Foundation (for persons with a disability), where they sing carols and take gifts. Throughout the year collections are made for the school's regular Mission charity, as well as *ad hoc* collections, for example, following the recent tsunami in Asia. Other ways of being open to the world are more local and instrumentalist in orientation. For example, the school invites Form VI students from the University Junior College to address the Form V girls. Other invitations go to the Local Council and to local businesses, introducing girls to the world of work. Visiting nuns from the Philippines and Brazil give talks about their work. Pupils also meet past pupils who have recently graduated from the University, at the latter's celebratory graduation mass, held in the school. This gives girls plenty of positive, female, adult role models, apart from the nuns and teachers in the school. According to Ms Pace, the one lay Headmistress in these schools, in this way, "the charism is propagated." The virtue of charity is encouraged from a very young age. The year 2 St Joseph girls who are making their First Holy Communion age 6–7, give some of their own gifts to the children of a comparable age, who are in a children's home. The school has twinned with a State primary school²⁰ and with an independent mixed school²¹ working on the topic of "Numbers." In this way, pupils are working with pupils from other schools, fostering a spirit of openness and sharing. In the senior school, older girls can join a Mission Club, which combines the disposition to give, with the development of leadership skills, also encouraged in the newly set up Student Council.

Challenges for the Future

In educating girls, Catholic schools face a number of challenges that are also present in the education of boys. These include the need for more space to set up new teaching spaces, such as classrooms and laboratories that new and changing curricula in science, IT, and Design and Technology amongst others, demand. For smaller, older schools in built-up urban areas, this may mean selling the present site and developing a new one. Funds for such projects have come from different sources such as the founding order's overseas province, or from parents locally (through donations and other fund-raising). The donation system has made it possible for some schools to find funds for new subjects, but smaller ones, with a less prosperous clientele, are struggling to develop existing building stock. Sr. Giovanna, of the Immaculate Conception school, thinks that parents self-select when they indicate a preference for a school in the ballot system. Those from certain areas of Malta, firstly try to get into nearby schools. This then

²⁰ Mellicha primary school.

²¹ San Anton Parents' Foundation.

creates a socio-economic status difference across the schools. In telling me of her own biography and the generosity of the school toward her family in the 1950s, she remarks that she never presses any family for the donation, and helps poorer families in a number of concrete ways. Her school is now short of funds, despite having new rooms which could be completed had she funds for furniture and equipment. In schools that are very well resourced, it is surprising that some Headmistresses regard families who do not make a donation unfavourably, this even when they are clearly hard up. Others, like Sr. Johanna at St Monica, Gzira are adamant that the Church must not give up on the preferential option for the poor “we must be living our identity as Church schools.” But she also finds that financial constraints limit the help she can give, particularly, to the most disadvantaged children. Sr. Edmondina, of St Francis, Sliema has no external source of funds to finance the new Design and Technology course she wants to introduce, but believes in providence. The Bursar is 79 years old. Between them, they are working hard to raise funds.

For most of the schools, the main challenge is to do with dwindling vocations and questions as to who will take over the running of the school, when there are no more religious in the school. Sr. Lucienne, a sprightly 70-plus nun, worries “not because I cannot do it” but because there is nobody to take over. There are 200 St Joseph of the Apparition nuns in Europe, and more worldwide, but there are no new vocations locally or in Europe. Three of the largest girls’ schools, have set up Foundations or Boards of Governors, to take over the administration and management of the schools. One major change here is the shift from female-only administration, usually with close knowledge of the charism of the order as religious, or as past pupils, to the new boards with a substantial number of males. These seem to be appointed for educational, legal, management, and even architectural expertise. In each case there is also representation from teachers, and from the PTA, but in the latter case, fathers (with no experience of education in a girls’ school) are likely to be on the governing boards. At St Monica, Birkirkara, despite having a healthy amount of religious, including teachers and novices, the Headmistress is a lay person. With years of immersion in the school culture as a teacher, and with assistance from a religious as an assistant Head, and the constant presence of other nuns in the school, it is clear that a properly prepared lay apostolate will be able to continue the church school vocation.

Other challenges have appeared with the socially mixed intake that the ballot system produces. Schools that previously had mainly English-speaking pupils, now have to introduce further support for both spoken English and literacy. Social change has meant that more girls come from separated families, which bring both emotional and other problems. In some cases, the youngsters are spoilt by each parent, whilst being deprived of affection and education. They lack self-control. Many Headmistresses are disconcerted that the new generation is somewhat “rude,” and even selfish, so that it is a struggle to instil the values they wish to transmit. At the same time that the schools have to deal with increasingly challenging behaviour, they are learning to be understanding with new social cases. When, through no fault of their own, girls come without

part of the uniform, or having left books in one home, and not found support from a parent to go and pick them up, or not been able to do their homework due to lack of parental support, the schools try to sort the problem out and are less intransigent about such misdemeanours than they have been in the past. One assistant Head is dismayed that to get at an ex-spouse, a father may be willing to spend money on expensive “toys” for his daughter, but not replace an outgrown school uniform. This same lay assistant Head is concerned that there is not enough “relationships education” in the schools. Little distinction is made between sex and love, even in Personal and Social Development classes. Given the amount of broken marriages, and as a mother herself, she feels that the Church schools should be doing more to prepare girls for relationships, marriage, and motherhood. Finally, all the schools refer to the challenge of keeping abreast with developments in education, such as differentiated teaching, IT, and others. This challenge is most welcome. The Headmistresses, of whatever age, were excited by the innovations they would be required to make to constantly develop the curriculum and modernise pedagogy.

For the Development of Girls Today

The vision the schools have for girls today is one which is indeed informed by the Church’s teaching, discussed above. The schools “have characteristics of a school today,” with the Catholic synthesis of faith and culture. In the schools there is a seamless integration of the academic programme with the development of values and of the spiritual dimension with the development of the personality of each girl. This is the result of vision, good planning, and the considerable commitment of both the consecrated and the lay staff. The mission statement of the St Joseph schools sums this up:

Inspired by Gospel values and the teachings of St. Emilie, our schools aim at creating a team of dedicated professionals to give our girls a holistic education, developing their individual, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, creative and physical potential to the full, in the knowledge that such gifts come from a loving God who asks us to use them for our good and that of others.

Sr. Doreen, of St Dorothy’s, talks about wanting the girls to have “self-esteem” and about how she sees the school’s role to be “mentoring the girls to be the leading people in society in the future.” Fr. Gauci, of Gozo talks about forming girls for “society, not only for the mind, but an integral formation,” in which academic preparation is important because “the world is challenging.” Writing on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Malta, Sr. Katie Mifsud,²² lists the “qualities we are trying to instil in our girls.” These, she writes, are “a strong faith, a sense of justice,

²² In the 2003, 100th Anniversary Issue of *The Link*, Convent of the Sacred Heart, St Julian’s, p. 9.

sensitivity toward those in need, a love of learning, leadership” which to achieve, demand “dedication, determination, and a strength of character from all concerned, whether at the giving or receiving end of the education process.” The Calendar of Events that schools publish each term, illustrates how these goals are blended together in daily activities, to provide an interesting, meaningful, and integrated education.

Conclusion

How typical is the Maltese case of the Catholic education of girls? The major characteristics of Catholic schools, categorised by Bryk et al. (1993) in their in-depth study of seven American Catholic schools and other national data sources, is more than evident in the education of girls in Church schools, in Malta, as across the globe. These are “an unwavering commitment to an academic program for all students, regardless of life expectations, and an academic organisation designed to promote this aim; a pervasive sense, shared by both teachers and students of the school as a caring environment and a social organisation deliberately structured to advance this; and an inspirational ideology that directs institutional action toward social justice in an ecumenical and multicultural world” (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 10). Reviewing this classic study, Grace (2003, p. 44) adds that “the Catholic school effect” is achieved not only through the “bookishness” culture, but also through the ability to tap into internal and external community networks (social/functional capital), through devolved governance (autonomy), and the leadership qualities and ethos of service modelled for, and encouraged in, the young. O’Donnell’s (2001) recent exploration of “the special character” of Catholic schools in New Zealand, found that Mercy College for girls was marked by a reputation for academic achievement, matched by a personalised education, as well as personal standards of good behaviour. As with the Maltese girls’ schools, the temporal congruence between the past and what is done now, is important. The stability derives from the way the founding tradition is preserved, from the personal philosophy of the individual members of the culture, from the identity of the schools as Christian (which permeates every aspect of school life) and from the school as a “safe place” (O’Donnell, 2001, p. 89). O’Donnell (2001, p. 117) considers that the transmission of the “special character” is possible through: Catholic practice, such as formal worship, prayer, and retreats; school organisation; special events; symbols; teaching; environment, including the physical and the emotional climate; role modelling, both structured and unstructured and relationships of care, concern and affection. Each characteristic of O’Donnell’s (2001) grounded model is consistently found in the Maltese girls’ schools, though it appears that more emphasis is put on some characteristics rather than others. Academic achievement, leadership skills, and “being for others” are dominant features, which, as discussed above, are inseparable from other characteristics. In terms of academic achievement, there is evidence that because of the changed social composition of the girls’ schools,

girls may be performing less well compared to the boys in the Church secondary schools, which are academically selective. However, in the majority of basic subjects sat at SEC level,²³ these girls are performing at a par, or above the national average (MATSEC, 2006). What is remarkable about these girls, is their persistent high aspirations. A recent study of girls across all school types (Galea, 2006) found that 85% of girls from the Church schools compared to 70% in Independent schools and 19% in State schools, intended going to University. Moreover, 94% of the girls in the Church schools say they want to combine work with family life. Whilst the Catholic schools of the past offered the sexes a very different preparation as Bryk et al. (1994) find, the schools of today prepare both girls and boys in more or less²⁴ the same, full range of academic subject, to the highest possible level, and in preparation for work and public life. In research on a national sample of Scottish School Leavers and high attainment, Tinklin (2003) has found that females do better in all social class categories except those with fathers in unskilled occupations. She argues that this supports the theory that boys and girls experience different peer pressures, which influence school attainment. In the literature on the gender gap in American Catholic schools, Riordan and Galipeau (1998) make a number of important points. First, by 1992, there was no longer any evidence for a one-way gender gap favouring males, though females lost a gender-gap advantage in homework and in part-time work, now doing less homework and more part-time work. Comparing females to males in both the single-sex and co-educational Catholic schools, Riordan and Galipeau (1998, p. 16) found that “females in coeducational Catholic schools have made greater gains relative to their male counterparts.” Riordan and Galipeau (1998, p. 19) consider it remarkable that girls in single-sex schools “have lost significant achievement ground to boys in single-sex Catholic schools over the past 20 years” whilst at the same time increasing their “selectivity.” Girls in the co-educational schools made greater strides in gender equity than those in single-sex schools, contrary to the findings of earlier research (Bryk et al., 1993) but consistent with LePore and Warren’s (1997) work on Catholic schools in 1990s USA. Here, sector differences were due to pre-enrolment differences in measured background and prior achievement rather than effect of school type. Riordan and Galipeau (1998) also find that when controlling for home background characteristics, in comparing females in public and in Catholic schools, then gender-gap advantages

²³ The Secondary Certificate Education, of the MATSEC Board, University of Malta., the age 16 exam for entry in to the VI Form Colleges ,of the MATSEC Board, University of Malta. To give one example of difference; the schools are fast introducing new subjects, such as Computer Studies for girls, though both take up and performance are lower than for boys in comparable schools, with 200 girls compared to 479 boys taking the subject at SEC. Of the boys, 85% achieve grade 1–5, which is higher than the national average of 80 % of the cohort achieving these grades. Only 61.5% of the girls in the Church schools sitting the examination got these grades.

²⁴ One areas of concern is the Technology area, where in the boys’ schools, 242 boys sat the SEC examination in Technical Design/Graphical Communication but there were no female candidates (MATSEC, 2006). The Bishops’ Conservatory , Gozo offers Graphical Communication in Form III.

for females in Catholic schools disappear. It is argued that single-sex effects are now limited to females of low socio-economic status (Riordan & Galipeau, 1998, p. 25). In her review of single-sex education, Haag (1998) finds some differences between girls in single-sex schools and in mixed schools regarding self-concept and also the stereotyping of subjects. The “advantages” for single-sex schools are specific to contexts and group characteristics such as socio-economic status. It is suggested that whilst what the schools are doing is different, it “may be reproducible in the coeducational context.” Clearly, there is much scope in the co-educational schools to promote equity. Indeed, in their study of the effect of change, from a Jesuit boys’ school to a co-educational school, including the effect on girls’ single-sex schools in the district, Brody et al. (2000) initially found some loss of the distinctive gender cultures both in the Jesuit Xavier College and at St Theresa of Grove High. The former tried to make its curriculum and instruction gender neutral, whilst the latter “sought to eradicate remnants of the all-female school that it believed would offend or turn away male students” (Brody et al., 2000, p. 135). A third school, St Elizabeth’s, retained single-sex status. Here, the girls chose the school because of its academic excellence, its lack of social distractions, and that it was a “safe place” where girls were allowed “to speak out and be themselves” (Brody et al., 2000, p. 136). The study was not intended to evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of single-sex or co-educational education. However, it found that certain girls thrive at Xavier whilst others felt that St Elizabeth was too restrictive. Six years after the 1992 fieldwork, Brody et al. (2000) returned to find that all three schools had adapted well to institutional changes. The importance of the unique and clearly identifiable culture in each school, with sex equity dimensions, meant that for girls, it was this that would ensure success, more than whether the school was single-sex or not. However, it does seem that to be successful, students need to be matched to school cultures. Since Xavier had retained its “masculine” academic competitive culture, despite “softening” in other respects, the students most likely to be attracted to this school and thrive in it, are those who do well in a competitive environment. It was not clear whether the valuing of femaleness, which had been found in the previous single-sex girls’ schools, was present in the coeducational schools, so many years later. This valuing of femininities, is what seems to be offered distinctively in the education of girls in Catholic schools, especially the single-sex schools. In our times “the specific genius of women,” with its expanded meaning, is genuinely valued by the Church. Every dimension of school life is lived by pupils and teachers in girls’ single-sex schools as if there should be no difference between the future aspirations of women and men. At the same time, females are free to develop their own “communities of practice”, which might differ from the masculine cultures of boys’ schools. A key element here is “the provision of more successful role models” (Riordan, 1994, p. 52). Recently, there has been interest in the promotion of “role models” in relation to boys. Researchers (Carrington & Skelton, 2003) have argued that the literature on the salience of “role models” shows a weak correspondence between what is expected of the model and what benefits result. Most young people do not identify with their teachers. Moreover, it is

only teachers who win the respect and admiration of their pupils, who are recognised as role models. Brody et al. (2000, p. 82) give an example: when the Catholic schools in their study became co-educational, both male and female students tended to view leadership as male, whilst the remaining single-sex girls' school provided a counterexample. The girls' school had a collaborative form of leadership. Recently, Paechter (2006) has applied Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) concept of "communities of practice" to discussion of masculinities and femininities. This conceptual framework has also been used by Walford (2001) to illustrate how identity is established in Evangelical Christian schools in the Netherlands. Other studies of the aims of religiously affiliated schools and of the role of teachers in nurturing inculturation (Anthony, 2003) contend that the teacher creates openings for students "to encounter and receive the gift of personal (religious) identity formation" (Miedema & Biesta, 2003, p. 81). In his study Walford's (2001) finds that mutual engagement, investment in the joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire, are all aspects of community that are essential to its formation. These aspects are highly visible in the girls' schools, where, together with female teachers and administrative staff, girls learn how to be not only full participants in the Catholic, female tradition but learn also "how to be" (Paechter, 2006, p. 17), as well as, through a learning trajectory, learning what "sort of person they wish to become" (Walford, 2001, p. 140). In single-sex Catholic schools, the school is a community of practice for the incubation of young females in what can be called the three Ps of their future as Catholic women in a changing global society. These Ps are to be **p**rofessionally prepared, **p**ersonally empowered and **p**redisposed to service for others. There are, however, omissions, that suggest other Ps need to be added to the three. Firstly there is a very tangible distance from the "genius" of motherhood, or the fourth **P** of parenthood, which at least in the Maltese case study, seems to now be replaced completely by preparation for professional life. Though not necessarily deriving from lack of socialising into maternity, the decline in fertility is very marked, and voluntary childlessness is increasing not only locally but also globally. Related is the omission of preparation for relationships, especially sexual ones, which is usually dealt with through the national Personal and Social Development curriculum, rather than as part of an integrated formation of the person. This separation in many ways reproduces the international institutional approach to sexual education which has, ironically, been criticised by the Church regarding international programmes, but which Paechter (2004) finds is a legacy of a Cartesian dualism of mind/body, consonant with much Catholic theology, leading to a contradictory positioning of sex education in schools. Finally, the major gap in the preparation of girls is for what should be the fifth **P**, the **p**riestly ministry. O'Keefe (2003, p. 105) comments on the waning of the mission to be of service to others, asking "will women remain active in the Catholic Church as it is currently structured?" In re-imagining the Catholic school, Chittister (2003) makes an impassioned plea on behalf of girls and women, to be allowed into the priestly ministry. This is supported by a vision of the Church as a liberation community from patriarchy, which can be achieved through the praxis of ministry as a

discipleship of equals (Radford Ruether, 2005). This would lead to a feminist, global, interreligiously connected and justice-seeking ministry (Hunt, 2005). Chittister's (2003, p. 27) vision for Catholic education and the changing role of women, is one in which educators will lead girls "to where all the women of the world wait today at wells gone dry for them, to become visible, to have their questions heard, to have their answers listened to, to hear a word of theology that ennobles them, too, and to be sent, as the Samaritan woman was, to evangelise the cities where, as scripture says clearly 'Because of her thousands were converted that day.'"

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN ITALY: CHALLENGES, RESPONSES, AND RESEARCH

Maria Luisa De Natale

The Changing School System in Italy and Catholic Education

In the past few years the Italian school system has been characterized by a revolutionary reform, known as “Moratti reform” from the name of the Minister of Education in the Berlusconi Government, which is formalized in the law 53/2003. The Italian school system today is based on Christian principles supporting the value and uniqueness of each human being, the importance of parents’ cooperation in the school’s educational mission, the autonomy of each school, and the necessity to promote relations in the geographic area in which the school is located. It is evident that Catholic parents and teachers in the public school are working together to stress this reform, which, on the other hand, has been opposed by many left-wing teachers and trade unions. To understand the role of the Catholic school in this changing system, one should go back to the first document edited by the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) in 1983, titled “The Catholic school today in Italy,” in which there is a reference to the document edited in 1977 by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. In its very beginning, the 1983 CEI document focuses on the general presence and participation of Christians in schools, and describes the Catholic school as having two aims:

1. The education of students
2. The promotion of a Catholic culture supporting an intercultural dialogue in a pluralistic context

Only later in the document, at number 11, we read that the Catholic school is a support and a medium for fulfilling the mission of the Church, which can be obtained through “the essential relation between the announcement of faith and the promotion of the person.”

The 1977 Sacred Congregation document defined the “Catholic” character in the educational project as a synthesis between culture and faith, and faith and

life, adding that “such a synthesis is possible by integrating the different chapters of the human knowledge in every field of knowledge, in the light of the Gospel and through the specifically Christian virtues” (37).

The CEI document, more than being an educational project, asks the bishop to find “other criteria for guaranteeing the Christian inspiration.” As it has been suggested in a recent work by G. BOCCA (2003), this implies that the educational project by itself is not enough, and also that there are no common criteria, because each bishop can find his own. Regarding the educational project, the CEI document underlines some general guidelines, and among these: to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to the Church’s teachings on different human, social, and individual problems; and to be loyal to the scientific method of the cultural research as a fundamental condition to be a school. There is no reference to the search for truth as it was clearly expressed in the document of the Sacred Congregation, in 1977. More emphasis is instead stressed on the dialogue between this project and the local and ecclesial community, and on the respect for the tradition. The Catholic school must be rooted in the civic society and must add value to the educational traditions of the institutions derived from the particular charisma of the founder of a religious family. The Catholic school and its role has to be understood in this context.

The Christian education, meaning the teaching of the religion, is taking the place of the education of faith, which was written in the document of 1977. The teaching of religion refers to the Italian agreement (Concordato) that regulates the relations between Italian State and Vatican State. In other words, a synthesis between faith and culture is the fundamental basis on which the cultural project of the Catholic school is founded, and in this light must be understood as the cultural change of the society. The educational community focuses on the original meeting with Jesus Christ and his Word, about which everyone in this school must have some experience because it is the true spirit of the school.

In the last decade of the last century, the problem of the Catholic school became a priority for the Italian bishops gathered in the CEI. In 1992, a very important symposium was opened, regarding *The presence of the Catholic school in Italy*,¹ because it was evident the need to change something in a context that was changing. Four theses were discussed during this meeting:

1. In the ecclesial perspective, just like the Church, the Catholic school is oriented to save the people.
2. The mission of the Church is based more and more on education: both the Catholic school and the ecclesial community are becoming conscious of this reality.
3. The importance for the school of having a cultural project in which reality and society are presented in the light of faith.

¹ CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE ITALIANA, *La presenza della scuola cattolica in Italia*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1992. In this book you can also find the questionnaire used to prepare the meeting with all the Catholic schools in Italy.

4. The acknowledgement that the Catholic school is important also because of its civic action.²

The Pope Giovanni Paolo II underlined the link between the Catholic school and the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Teacher who indicates to men the way to God, how to serve the Truth, and the promotion of human being. This is the same aim of the school: because the school is the cultural space under the direction of Catholic education where to serve the Truth and promote human being.³

It is interesting that Cardinal RUINI (2000) in his lecture presents together the way of the ecclesial community and the Catholic school. The Catholic school is a value for the whole community because it is a cultural expression and therefore it is valuable for everyone. The faith, as it was underlined by Cardinal Tettamanzi, offers a different criterion: to see with Jesus Christ's eyes, and to act with Jesus Christ's heart, a criterion indicating that Christian people must participate in the reality and must act in it; and it is through the education that the Faith becomes culture, presence and force in every expression of human life.⁴ The aim of the school is to put Gospel into the culture while keeping an open attitude to collaboration and exchange with other cultures.

The Catholic school is not only an institution, but first of all, it is a community, because it is the expression of a community of believers, and also as a community it has specific educational purposes.

After this meeting, in 1995 the Centro Studi per la Scuola Cattolica (CSSC) was founded, to understand problems and to promote hypothesis for solutions, a place from where to observe and where to begin deep discussions in pedagogical, theological, and spiritual perspectives. In the same year, the Consiglio Nazionale Scuole Cattoliche (CNSC) was also founded, grouping together all the associations active in the Catholic schools.⁵

In 1995, an important event in the life of the Italian Church was the ecclesial meeting in Palermo, in which it was stressed the idea that it is necessary for the Catholic Church to promote faith in all cultural expressions, and to work towards a union between faith and culture.

Charity is the fundamental origin of Christian faith, and it is the Gospel of charity which wants to give responses to all the concrete questions of the social and cultural life. In Palermo starts a new important work for the Italian Catholic people, named *Progetto culturale orientato in senso cristiano (Christianly oriented Cultural project)*, aimed at underlying the link between faith and all the expressions of human culture.

In this project, however, there is no particular place for the Catholic schools, which are not mentioned for their own role; but rather they are mentioned among

² Ivi, pp. 11–18.

³ Ivi, pp. 54–55.

⁴ CENTRO STUDI SCUOLA CATTOLICA, *Il servizio del Centro studi alla scuola cattolica, un cammino sistematico di ascolto e di promozione*, Roma, 2002.

⁵ C. RUINI, "PROLUSIONE" in CENTRO STUDI SCUOLA CATTOLICA, *Per un progetto di scuola alle soglie del XXI secolo, Scuola Cattolica in Italia, II rapporto*, Brescia, La Scuola, 2000, pp. 56–58.

all educational institutions. However, some new directions of work are emerging: charity is seen as a new mean for cultural production, and there is the necessity to make the Gospel live in all human cultural expressions, under the commitment of serving the Truth.

Until the end of the last century, many changes have characterized schools and pedagogical reflections all over the world. It is sufficient to think to the need of a European perspective and the engagement to build a European culture in the spirit of the white book of M.me CRESSON (1995) and of J. DELORS. The need to think in terms of lifelong education in a learning society, the different vocational trainings and the changing of the work's world (also as consequences of technological improvements), the role of the school in the social networks, and the need to cooperate, the effort to empower human resources, the new emergencies, especially relative to immigrant people, the real life and need of young generation, the Italian law which makes each school autonomous from an economic point of view, organizational and juridical (law Bassanini n.59 of 1997), the school system's reforms, which were opened by the Minister of that period, L. Berlinguer.

All these problems came up in the second National Assembly in 1999, *For a new project of school in the incoming XXI Century: the Catholic school in Italy*. In this assembly, the Catholic school was defined as a school opened to give its soul to the new Europe, to stimulate people spiritually, for strengthening Christian Memory, Consciousness, and Project. The Catholic school should be a place where the real needs could be listened so that it could become like a laboratory where the synthesis among faith, culture, and life could characterize the education of young people and also the life around the school, mostly through the family. This is a view of a school open to the real world, willing to interact with the world, in the spirit of the Catholic faith, post-Vatican II.

The Catholic school must become able to produce cultural synthesis: therefore, it is necessary to give value to its educative tradition, which makes it rare and different from the public schools. As Card. Ruini expressed: "the educational engagement of the Catholic school crosses the engagement of the Church and its pastoral way in the Christianly oriented cultural project: it is the engagement to act in the area of ideas and of ways of life, to give an unique contribution to elaborate today's and tomorrow's culture, and to give new force to ethic lifestyles in the country, in a constant dialogue with civic society."⁶

The conclusions of this assembly were expressed by E. Antonelli,⁷ who mentioned some areas where more work is needed in the new century:

- The Catholic school must always be "a cultural place aiming to provide education as a service offered to the student".
- The urgent need for a new cultural mediation, oriented towards the humanistic tradition, that aims at giving attention and value to the educational

⁶ E. CAPORELLO, *Conclusioni: prospettive di impegno*, in *ivi*, pp. 283–288.

⁷ CSSC, *Conclusioni operative*, in *ivi*, pp. 309–323.

training, and that must have the same dignity in a cultural and educational perspective and must live together with the Catholic school in a new integrated system.

- The Catholic school, like school of the civic society, needs to be able to realize its autonomy through its particular educative project.
- The Catholic school must be integrated in the public school system because it expresses the culture of the ecclesial community, that is to say it expresses the living worlds which are in the local environment.

The goals for the Catholic school in this new century are:

- The definition of its own educative project taking into account, in the subsidiarity spirit, all contributions which could come from people and institutions engaged in education in the civic society, and who play an active role in the place where the school is.
- The realization of a circle joining the three fundamental aims of the schools: education, instruction, socialization.
- To be part of the Italian Church's Christianly oriented cultural project. The request was and is to recognize Catholic school as equals to public schools, so that Catholic schools can receive public money, being in this way opened to all families regardless of their economic resources.

Just to synthesize, the CSSC writes: "the Catholic school must be seen as a Cultural subject, a social subject, and as an ecclesial subject; and the pedagogical reflections must consider these three directions to innovate the Catholic Church in this new century."⁸

Pedagogical principles remain always the same, in my perspective. This means to hold in the centre the student and his/her family, and to build an educating community through the dialogue among all the subjects involved: students, parents, teachers, leaders, administrative workers, and local subjects engaged in educational projects. The aim remains to educate to a responsible freedom, to values, to be engaged in the research of Truth, and to become able to testify it.

It is important to underline that in Italy the Catholic school, starting from 1942, during the fascist period, when G. Gentile first, and then later Minister Bottai, recognized the diploma that this school offers, was organized according the model of the national public school.

The different frame was only in the importance of the Catholic religion. In this recent period, however, there are new reflections which enable us to think about this school: (1) like a Catholic one; (2) like a school, as an expression of the ecclesial community; and (3) like a public service providing instruction and education.⁹

With reference to the first point, being "Catholic" means not only giving origin to a Christian culture, but also means to live in a communion of spirit.

⁸ G. BOCCA, pp. 68–86.

⁹ EPISCOPATO ITALIANO, *Comunione e Comunità, documento pastorale*, 1981, in *Enchiridion Cei*, Bologna, Edizioni Dehoniane, 1986, pp. 346–347; cit. in G. BOCCA, *ivi*.

The Italian bishops underline the duty for the schools to verify their existence on the criteria of real ecclesial quality, because communion is a gift from the Holy Spirit and through this gift men are not alone, because they take part of the same communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this way each person feels him/herself engaged to live according the Christian life, as a condition to receive the Gospel, God's words.¹⁰ In this communion, which originates from the Spirit, takes place the "Discernimento comunitario" (Community Discernment),¹¹ that is to say "the dynamic expression of the ecclesial community, method for spiritual training, for understanding history and for pastoral plans."

So, in order to be Catholic it is necessary to refer to the Communion, which is like self-consciousness in the heart of the church.¹² In the Catholic school there is a real "pedagogy of communion"¹³ because the communion is the basis for the community.

With reference to the *second point*, the school as an expression of the society of believers, the school is necessary because it has the aim of preserving its cultural heritage, interpreting it, and passing it to the new generations. The Catholic school must be in a constant dialogue with that ecclesial community which has expressed it like an instrument to open community's members to its values and cultural dynamics. In the same ecclesial community there is a place for different schools and each of them can refer to its unique, and still the same, Catholicity. If there is the Catholic identity, it is possible to find many different ways for Christian inspiration of culture, according to the different ways of cultural analysis which could be active at the same time in the exercise of the same faith.¹⁴

This is true, although from the point of view of the ecclesial community today it is said that the school must be first a school and then a Catholic one, according to the Concilium Vatican II which underlines the educative Christian instruction among the numerous possible human educative solutions.

With reference to the *third point*, the Catholic school has already been recognized as a provider of education and instruction by the canonical codes (the law of the church), which specify that access to the school has to be open to all members of society, and not only to the members of the ecclesial community. This is possible because the ecclesial community belongs to the society of its time and it is in this frame that must be used the Christian discernment, in a rich synthesis between culture and faith, oriented to form persons with a responsible freedom. According to the principle of subsidiarity, "a system which is above another one should not intervene in the life of the latter and take off its competencies, but

¹⁰ CEI, *Con il dono della Carità dentro la storia, la Chiesa in Italia dopo il Convegno di Palermo*, 1996, n. 21.

¹¹ CONGREGAZIONE PER LA DOTTRINA DELLA FEDE, *Lettera ai vescovi della Chiesa Cattolica su alcuni aspetti della chiesa intesa come comunione*, 1992, n. 1.

¹² *Comunione e comunità*, cit., n. 20.

¹³ G. BOCCA, cit., p. 79.

¹⁴ PIO XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931, n. 80; cfr. also, GIOVANNI XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, 1963, n. 48; GIOVANNI PAOLO II, *Centesimus annus*, 1991, n. 15.

rather should strengthen it when necessary, help it coordinating its action with other social actors, aiming at the common good.”¹⁵

In a pluralistic society, it is important that there are some cultural subjects who, in the spirit of their particular values, can offer an useful educative proposal to members of the same society.

Therefore in a Catholic school we could distinguish:

1. The people who want to take initiative based on their charisma
2. The teachers
3. Pupils and their families
4. The ecclesial community
5. The local society

On this basis it is obvious that it is impossible to have only a single type of Catholic school in the country. There are indeed many models, reflecting the variety of personal charismas, the different possible cultural synthesis of faith and life, and their degree of being integrated in the local community.

Today we know in Italy there are 7,366 Catholic schools and among these, 5,019 are associated to FISM, an association which is for pre-schools and primary schools, and 2,347 are associated to FIDAE which is particular for secondary schools. These schools serve 599,550 students (330,172 the schools referred to FISM and 269,378 the schools referred to FIDAE); there are 51,992 teachers and 15,691 workers in these schools.

It may be interesting to observe that 4,692 schools are in northern Italy, 1,173 in central Italy and 1,501 in southern Italy.

Responses To the Challenges for Catholic Schools

The Centro Studi Scuola Cattolica was planned in 1995 and began to work in 1997 after a written statute, in convention with the Papal Salesian University in Rome (UPS), under the direction of G. Malizia. The response to the changing life in the schools was an important point: to recuperate, for the Catholic school, its natural educative subject: a faith community.

Therefore it was important:

1. To build an institutional and cultural core
2. To make training courses in order to educate to this aim the different subjects involved in Catholic schools and to put together “reason and faith” and “reason and life.”¹⁶ The new ground is that there are values and original rights of people which are the basis for the school and these are at the origin,

¹⁵ CENTRO STUDI SCUOLA CATTOLICA, *Il servizio del Centro Studi alla scuola Cattolica. Un cammino sistematico di ascolto e di promozione*, Roma, 2002, pp. 6–7.

¹⁶ Ivi, p. 8.

the institution must not only recognize them but also promote them for the common good.

This is a new pedagogical perspective for three reasons:

1. The change of the Catholic school concerns the people who live in it and who must become able of creating new culture.
2. This culture finds its origin in the concrete life and must cross traditional scholar plans and the Christian inspiration of the school.
3. It is important within this culture to listen to everything happens in a community.

The idea was, through this centre, to organize the Catholic schools in a horizontal system in a continuous development, like an “internet system,”¹⁷ rather than in a vertical one.

The effort of CSSC was going therefore in two important directions:

- With reference to the different subjects in the school system, to go deeper and to find connections among subjects and living worlds in order to help the learning process and make it more significant
- With reference to the school institution, to promote a change from the state system to the schools of civic society, according to the principle of subsidiarity

On this second level there is an urgent request to recognize Catholic school as being equal to the public schools, and this is very much stressed because it means to recognize the important public function of the Catholic school. This means, like Card. Ruini says, “to give value to all resources of our society, in the perspective that citizens and families could express a real freedom in choosing their own educational avenues.”¹⁸ Also, as don J. Vecchi says, “the right for education pertains to the human person, regardless of any belonging, so that the real natural subject is the human person. The State, the Church, congregations, and institutions are complementary and must offer different services to the person, so that she/he can become able of expressing her/his self.”¹⁹

The work of this study centre has been very intensive in these past years: first of all, from 2001 to 2004 it was decided for a cultural renewal and therefore decided to face the most significant problem: to be able to synthesize these two messages: God has revealed Himself, and it is possible to measure nature. It is necessary that the experience of salvation, typical of a community of faith, could live with the traditional culture of the school system, bringing innovation

¹⁷ CSSC, *Per un progetto di scuola alle soglie del XXI secolo. Scuola Cattolica in Italia*, Secondo Rapporto, Brescia, La Scuola, 2000, p. 61.

¹⁸ J.E. VECCHI, *Duc in altum*, Strenna 2002, Roma, Edizione Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice, p. 2002.

¹⁹ CSSC, *Il servizio del Centro Studi alla Scuola Cattolica, un cammino sistematico di ascolto e di promozione*, Roma, maggio 2002, pp. 31–32.

to cultural subjects. Some particular problems concerned the changes in the Italian school system, with particular attention to Christian training education, to all subjects living in the schools, to the relation among Catholic school, Christian community and community.

From 2003 until now, the attention has been given to epistemological problems: how to produce cultural arguments which could be used in the Catholic school through:

1. Teachers in these schools who need some arguments grounded in the relation reason-faith, reason-life, so that they can put them in the curriculum to serve their own subject,
 2. The directors or people who take the responsibility of the school (managers) who have to put together the charisma of the founder with the cultural identity of their school,
 3. All people taking part in the school system need to bring together their cultural experience and make it an expression of their being Catholic people.²⁰
- The idea has been to reinforce a central identity of the subjects working in schools, so that this culture could become a critical way to judge the reality in which we live.

A second aim has been to produce cultural elements in order to help Catholic schools to build a coordinated network of relations. The situation today is that there are many associations who have the role of making pedagogical promotion but there is a problem of coordination among all these schools, because there is a relevant difference between Catholic schools and schools with a Christian inspiration. The efforts of these years have been oriented in this direction: each Catholic school must have a *quality indicator*, in order to make two synthesis: from a cultural point of view, the promotion of cooperation in an educational perspective, so that the different charismas could joint in the engagement for a cultural mediation at different expressions of rationality; and, from a structural point of view, to represent a new expression of the third sector, that is to say a different way to be in the civic society.

With reference to the research on quality of education in the Catholic school, it is important to underline that it has its roots in the law which makes the schools autonomous (L. 59/97), in the law which gives the opportunity to make some experience on it (D.M. 251/98), and in the law on the reform of public administration (law Bassanini). Each school can evaluate itself, and also there are some institutions which are recognized for the evaluation, because in the Italian system there are three levels required for evaluation: the evaluation made by the school itself, the evaluation made at the regional level, and the national one. In this framework, we could also think about the law that introduces equality among schools (62/2000). This law recognizes that private schools offer

²⁰ CSCC, *Il servizio del Centro Studi alla Scuola Cattolica. Un cammino sistematico di ascolto e di promozione*, op. cit., p. 45.

a public service; while the national school system recognizes the pluralistic character of public system of education so that each institution must be considered in its own and specific character. In this perspective, also the Catholic school is invited to define its own role and to verify its own role and the quality of its educative offer.

It is evident that this new situation concerns the entire Catholic school system, which is active with schools from nursery to secondary schools, and also with the system of training. This latter refers not only to teachers but also to all people involved (parents, students, associations and federations, religious people ...), so the CNSC was involved for its role of national coordination among all Catholic schools. The CNSC is an expression of the Church through the bishops. It is the CSSC (Centro studi scuole cattoliche) which started to work in this direction, first of all by discussing what it meant by quality: the concept is taken from "Total quality management" (TQM) used in the world of production and although it is not so common to use this idea in the educational world, it seemed to be necessary for many reasons:

1. It gives the opportunity to define some rules in the market of educational services, because it is necessary that all the organizations which ask to conduct these schools must be accredited in the respect and interest of people.
2. There must be some minimum requests even in centres for educational training, because the role of teacher must be considered a public function;
3. It is necessary to guarantee Catholic schools to students and parents, giving them the possibility that their needs are listened to, and to guarantee that the school service is in the direction of excellence.²¹

In the past few years, the CSSC has been working in this direction, in order to:

1. Suggest some indicators which could enable schools to make evaluation by themselves (self-evaluation) on the basis of a systemic approach.
2. Offer criteria to evaluate the quality comparing Catholic schools (monitoring).
3. Offer some models in the direction of certification and support for educational training centres.

The hypothesis considered here is that, among schools belonging to the same community, there could be an effort in the direction of improving quality that is coming from the institutions to which schools belong. It has been considered also the external funding, because the school must be evaluated by the National Ministry of Education through the certification known as ISO 9000, which is a system for a periodical monitoring. The monitoring process has been based on a quantitative and quite simplistic method, and offered to the Catholic schools.

With reference to an internal funding, the idea has been that this could be a voluntary decision taken by a federation or association in order to verify the

²¹ Ivi, pp. 46–48.

existence of the requirements recognized by the organizations being necessary in order to improve the mission, the charisma and the quality of the service offered by the institution. This accreditation for the association is like a quality stamp, an agreement among people that can strengthen the Catholic school and the Christian education.²² The quality certification of the school is given by a third subject (the first subject is the school asking for certification, the second the organization who offers educational training, and the pupils and their families) and this third subject is an organization which must be recognized by the National System as being autonomous and qualified to give credits to organizations—SINCERT.

The certification is a declaration that the school works according to the rules which have been recognized like the ones that are good to realize a system or an organization, with a structure that can guarantee the quality of services. This certification, in the praxis, pertains to methods of working and to the definition of some standards in the educational process.²³

The Catholic school system is today oriented towards a cooperation with the organization of the bishops, the CEI, to produce particular cultural contents for people who work in these schools, and some cultural elements to coordinate schools among themselves so that they can become a ground for a system of Catholic schools in Italy. A particular attention is given to the effort to put schools and educational training in contact with the work-culture evaluating practice in the school curriculum.

The training centres must be seen as places in which it is possible to define an educational project based on a culture that comes from real experience. It is important that this culture that comes from the work world can have a place in the school curriculum, both humanistic and scientific one, and could become a criterion to verify other forms of education. That means that it is necessary to think in terms of an integrated educational system in which together with the schools, one must consider all the different forms of educational agencies, in accordance with what is suggested by international European documents.

Research on Catholic Schooling in Italy

The researches on the Catholic schools have been made systematically in these recent years by the CSSC. From 1999 until 2005 seven research reports have been produced, which offer us a complete framework of the situation of the Catholic school in Italy.²⁴ The first, 1999, *Scuola Cattolica in Italia*, in 342 pages offers a view of the situation in Italy in the beginning of a new century, putting the schools in the context of the Italian society and of the soon to

²² *Ivi*, p. 48.

²³ All these reports are published by Editrice La Scuola, Brescia, and could be bought in all Italian libraries.

²⁴ E. CAPORELLO, *Saper ascoltare la scuola cattolica per capire ciò che essa ci chiede*, pp. 6–7.

come school-reform. The book poses some theoretical questions as well as some practical questions in order to gain consciousness of the real problems in the school's everyday life. There is something ambiguous referred to the education in the Catholic school, in Italy: this is the conclusion of experts, from one point of view, a going back in terms of engagement for values, from another point of view, the research for "indicators", which could give security in the school's life. The project for the Church is then to stress its educational proposal, that is to say that knowledge and science are based on Something which is beyond the science itself.

The second report, published in year 2000, *Per un progetto di scuola alle soglie del XXI secolo. Scuola Cattolica in Italia* (p. 333), concerns the National Assembly in Roma, in 1999, and starts with the conclusive meeting with S.S. Giovanni Paolo II in Piazza San Pietro. As Mons E. Caporello says in the introduction "the Catholic school in the Assembly has showed itself like a place able to give back the past, to work in the present and to introduce what is completely new in a positive form."²⁵

The third report, 2001, *Per una cultura della qualità, promozione e verifica* (p. 377), offers the results of three years of research in the direction of the quality project, with its articulations in the different fields of the Catholic school system, with the explanation of the instruments used in the research, some conclusions and perspectives. Mons. Nosiglia underlines in this report that the CSSC has not a predefined idea about quality for the Catholic schools, but its aim is to promote a method which could be adapt to evaluate the quality which must be expressed by all people who are in each Catholic school.²⁶

The fourth report, 2002, *A confronto con le riforme, problemi e prospettive* (p. 449), focuses on the identity of the Catholic school and it underlines the education in the Catholic school as being both a relation with the person of Jesus Christ and with the universality of rational sciences, so to offer to students a real freedom. "In the changing Italian society, the civil society is increasing its place and the school must propose itself with its own particularity. The CSSC is an institution to observe, an instrument for this political development of the Catholic school in Italy, in an European research perspective."²⁷

The fifth report, 2003, *Genitori, oltre la partecipazione* (p. 351), is a national research on the presence of parents in the Catholic schools, and it is interesting to read how parents are moving from a simple participation in the direction of different forms of full participation and sharing of the responsibilities. "The fundamental idea of this report is that the educational service in the Catholic school is not only a professional choice but a vocational one that is to say a call from our GOD and a job in the name of church to save ourselves. The freedom to choose for parents is a constitutive element for the educational identity of the Catholic school."²⁸

²⁵ C. NOSIGLIA, *Il progetto qualità nella scuola cattolica*, p. 6.

²⁶ C. NOSIGLIA, *Il cammino di Emmaus della scuola cattolica*, p. 8.

²⁷ C. NOSIGLIA, *La presenza cooperativa dei genitori per un progetto di scuola cattolica*, p. 6.

²⁸ P. DE GIORGI, *Ragioni e prospettive per una nuova funzione dirigenziale nella scuola cattolica italiana*, p. 309.

The sixth report, 2004, *Dirigere e coordinare le scuole* (p. 400), analyses the first experience of work in the field of education for people responsible for the Catholic schools. This project was promoted by the Ministry of education on the basis of the changing role of the leadership in the schools, according to the reform's innovations. "It is important for the Catholic schools to move from a governmental action to a 'governance' able to reach what is out of the school and has its effect on the education in the school."

The seventh report, 2005, *Educazione religiosa* (p. 345), offers the results of a national research on the subject of religious education, which has been stressed by a document *Insegnamento della religione cattolica nella scuola cattolica* expressed by the Consiglio Nazionale della Scuola Cattolica CNSC. The religious education is a fundamental perspective for each school and educative institution because is oriented to put together science and life and to introduce a new wisdom.

All these researches offer a very clear framework of the difficulties in which the Catholic school is living in Italy, and underline the urgent request to be recognized by the State from the funding point of view, because the economic problems of families make it more and more difficult for them to pay the fees for a Catholic school even when they need to choose it for their children and even if they are very active in cooperation with parish and bishop in the places where they live.

The CSSC has promoted these official reports and researches, and also some periodical seminars, where to discuss particular problems, like the problems of identity (2001, *Scuola cattolica, finalità educative e identità distintiva*), the role of parents in the Catholic schools (2003, *Il ruolo educativo dei genitori nella scuola cattolica*), and some innovations related to the Moratti's reform (2004, *Profilo dello studente e piani di studio personalizzati*). For this autumn, in October, is planned a seminar for the 40th anniversary of the *Gravissimum educationis*.

This very intensive activity of CSSC is following the changes of the political and social situation in Italy: nowadays we have a national government which is against the school reform introduced by Ministro Moratti (L. 53/03) and we hope that the Catholic school in Italy could defend better and better its identity and its role.

Agenda for Future Research

The agenda for the future is referred to the need to go on to define the identity of the Catholic schools, in a European and intercultural perspective.

A second need relates to the teachers in these schools and their training curriculum involving Catholic and non-Catholic universities.

To go on to find "good practices" on the theme of relations of parents and schools.

To think over the CSSC and relations among this Center and Federations which are responsible for the schools.

To think about new “laical ministries” and their contribution to the Catholic school.

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CHALLENGES FACING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: A VIEW FROM ROME

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB

Introduction

From ancient times the Church has everywhere fostered the setting up of schools. They were first established close to cathedrals and monasteries, thanks especially to the initiatives of bishops and monks. The pope's role was initially limited to encouraging such endeavours. Later, the papal approval of religious congregations, which included among the education of youth their apostolic works, also demonstrated the Holy See's concern for schooling. During the 19th century, faced by States which claimed exclusive rights over schooling, the popes began to formulate more explicitly their teaching on education, expressing their concern for the integral formation of the whole person. Since then the Apostolic See has zealously supported the establishment of Catholic schools, defended their independence, recalled the rights of parents to choose such schools for their children and promoted their Catholic identity.¹

Papal solicitude for education is rooted in the Petrine ministry of leading, teaching, and pastoring the universal Church. In carrying out this demanding responsibility which Jesus entrusted to Peter and his successors (cf. Mt 16: 18–19; Lk 22: 31–32; Jn 21: 15–17), the popes have sought the help of others. For this reason, the successor of Peter has collaborators who constitute the administrative apparatus at his service: the Roman Curia, “an indispensable instrument for the pope in carrying out the enormous burden of this ministry.”² The Curia assists the pope in his duties, including his responsibilities in the area of schooling, a task entrusted today to the Congregation for Catholic Education.

¹ In his 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* Pius IX condemned those who denied the Church's right to educate children (nn. 45, 47, 48). See also Leo XIII's encyclicals *Sapientiae Christianae* (1890) and *Affari Vos* (1897), and Benedict XV's letter *Communes Litteras* (1914). With his encyclical *Divini Illius Magister* (1929), Pius XI established the foundation of Catholic teaching on education.

² John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals and Roman Curia (28 June 1984), 2: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition 29 (16 July 1984), 6. The 1983 Code of Canon Law succinctly describes the Curia's function in canon 360: “The supreme pontiff usually conducts the business of the universal Church by means of the Roman Curia, which fulfils its duty in his name and by his authority for the good and the service of the churches.”

Congregation for Catholic Education

The origins of the Congregation for Catholic Education go back to the special papal commissions created in the mid-15th century for maintaining vigilance over the universities in Rome and the Papal States. Then, in 1588, as one of Sixtus V's forceful measures to carry out the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), he restructured the papal administration to advise him and to execute his commands more effectively. One such executive body or “congregation” was entrusted with supervising higher studies in Rome and elsewhere. Schools, however, were not yet included under the jurisdiction of this *Congregatio pro Universitate Studii Romani*. In 1824, Leo XII established the Congregation for Studies which oversaw schools and universities in the Papal States. After the loss of these States in 1870, that Congregation took over supervision of universities in Rome and, to some extent, in other countries as well.

The Second Vatican Council's declaration on Christian education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965), called for a special commission to be set up that would further develop the fundamental principles of Catholic schooling for the universal Church.³ This commission concluded that a permanent body in the Holy See should be entrusted with this task. With the apostolic constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae* (1967), Paul VI established an office for this specific purpose within the newly named “Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.”⁴ The Pope assigned to this office the task of overseeing all Catholic schools at the primary and secondary level, except for those under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.⁵ Competency for the catechetical and the religious instruction of the faithful belongs to the Congregation for the Clergy.⁶ John Paul II confirmed this supervisory role over Catholic schools in his apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia, *Pastor Bonus* (1988). According to this papal document, which still remains in force, the Congregation is to make “every effort to see that the fundamental principles of Catholic education as set out by the magisterium of the Church be ever more deeply researched, championed, and known by the people of God. It also takes care that in this matter the Christian faithful may be able to fulfil their duties by striving to bring civil society to recognize and protect their rights.”⁷

With nearly 52 million students in more than 200,000 Catholic schools worldwide,⁸ the Vatican does not deal directly with individual schools; they fall

³ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, introduction.

⁴ The term “sacred” was dropped as a modifier of the curial congregations in John Paul II's 1988 apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus*.

⁵ Cf. Paul VI, *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, article 79.

⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, article 94.

⁷ John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, article 114.

⁸ Statistics for the school year 2004–2005 provide the following data about the number of Catholic school students in the different continents (in millions): Africa, 16; North and South America, 12.7; Asia, 11.7; Europe, 8.7; Oceania, 1 (Secretariat of State, *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae 2004: Statistical Yearbook of the Church 2004* [Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2006], 290).

under the authority of the local bishop or, in many cases, of a religious institute. The Congregation, however, “sets the norms by which Catholic schools are governed.”⁹

The internal structure of the Congregation is made up of the cardinal prefect, archbishop secretary and undersecretary.¹⁰ About 20 officials and eight support staff help in carrying out the work of the dicastery, divided into three offices: seminaries, universities and ecclesiastical faculties, and schools.¹¹ These collaborators are assigned specific areas of competence, determined in large part by language.

When bishops from around the world come to Rome for their *ad limina* visits every five years, they routinely meet with officials from the Congregation for Catholic Education to discuss matters of mutual concern, including schools in their pastoral care. This dialogue provides the Congregation with the opportunity to ask questions, prepared on the basis of the bishops’ quinquennial report, and to make recommendations on how the Catholic schools in a given country could better fulfil the mission entrusted to them. Likewise, the bishops query the Congregation about the Holy See’s concerns.

On a day-to-day basis, the Schools Office prepares reports for papal nuncios when they assume a new post, and draws up documents for the universal Church on various questions affecting primary and secondary education.¹² These official publications deepen and apply knowledge of the principles of Catholic education to schools, especially in light of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

It is the plenaria—the general meeting of the board of cardinals and bishops which make up the “congregation” in the narrow sense—that determines, upon the recommendation of the Congregation, which documents it is opportune to publish. The original idea could come from the pope, the prefect or, more usually, from officials in the Schools Office who follow developments around

⁹ John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, article 115.

¹⁰ In June 2007 Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski (Polish) served as prefect; Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (Canadian) as secretary; and Monsignor Vincenzo Zani (Italian) as undersecretary.

¹¹ In June 2007 officials and staff from the following countries worked in the Congregation: Austria, Belgium, Columbia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Scotland, Spain, and the USA.

¹² By periodically publishing documents, the Congregation fulfils *Gravissimum Educationis*’s charge to develop more fully the declaration’s affirmations on the principles of Christian education and the specific mission of Catholic schools. It does so with a growing awareness of the challenge posed by increasing secularization and other obstacles. *The Catholic School* (19 March 1977) was issued on the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Schools Office by Paul VI in 1967. *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (15 October 1982) recognizes the enormous decline in priests and religious teaching in schools, and formulates in positive terms the vocation of the lay Catholic educator in both Catholic and non-Catholic schools. *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Guidelines for Sex Education* (1 November 1983) places sex education within the general framework of all Christian education. The fruit of a long consultation, it wished to respond positively to parental concerns about sex education in the schools. *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (7 April 1988) is a response to secularization and its effects on the young. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (28 December 1997) discusses some contemporary challenges to the distinctiveness of the Catholic school and its contribution to the Church’s evangelizing mission. *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools* (28 October 2002), following the previous document on the laity, reaffirms the importance of the educational apostolate for consecrated men and women.

the world. The texts themselves are the result of a collaborative effort between the Congregation for Catholic Education's officials and experts, who may be, but are not necessarily, chosen from among its official consultants. A first draft is prepared. Comments and observations are then sought from other experts, consultants, and officials, and sometimes from other Congregations, if it is a matter which touches a competency assigned to them. The Schools Office reviews this input, as do the Congregation's superiors: the prefect, secretary, and under-secretary. Finally a draft is submitted to the plenary assembly for its approval. As a result of this meeting, further suggestions are usually made and integrated into the text. If such changes are relatively minor, then the document is published after seeking the pope's approval (*in forma commune*), though it is signed by the prefect and secretary. However, when the plenary assembly requires major revisions, the document is resubmitted to the plenaria before publication.

As part of its mandate the Congregation for Catholic Education also expresses the Vatican's concern for schools by maintaining contacts with international Catholic organizations and non-governmental organizations such as the Catholic International Education Office, the European Committee for Catholic Education, the World Union of Catholic Teachers, and the World Organization of Former Pupils of Catholic Education.¹³ Moreover, the Congregation follows

¹³ The following contact information on these institutions might prove helpful:

Catholic International Education Office–Office International de l'Enseignement Catholique (OIEC)

718 Avenue Houba de Strooper

B-1020 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: (322) 230-72-52

Fax: (322) 230-97-45

E-mail: oiiec@infoiec.org

Web site: www.infoiec.com

European Committee for Catholic Education–Comité Européen pour l'Enseignement Catholique (CEEC)

Avenue Marnix, 19 A/ 6

B-1000 Brussels

Belgium

Tel: (322) 511 4774

Fax: (322) 513 8694

Web site: www.ceec.be

World Union of Catholic Teachers–Union Mondiale des Enseignants Catholiques (UMEC)

Palazzo San Calisto, 16

00120 Vatican City State

Tel: (3906) 698-87286

Fax: (3906) 698-87207

E-mail: umec@va.org

World Organization of Former Pupils of Catholic Education–Organisation Mondiale des Anciens et Anciennes Élèves de l'Enseignement Catholique (OMAEC)

Rue de Richelieu, 48

F-75001 Paris

France

Tel: (3314) 2608.903

Fax: (3314) 7033.903

the educational programmes of international organizations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the European Union, and the Council of Europe.

Among the principal sources for the Holy See's teaching on Catholic schools are the documents of Vatican II, especially *Gravissimum Educationis*; the 1983 Code of Canon Law (canons 796–806); the pope's encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, *ad limina* addresses to bishops, speeches to State and political leaders, discourses to ambassadors on presenting their letters of credential; and other papal messages and addresses to various groups. Using this material, my article presents eight major challenges and concerns addressed by the Roman magisterium in recent years: (1) subsidiarity, (2) accessibility, (3) Catholic identity, (4) Catholic vision across the curriculum, (5) service to charity and justice, (6) spirit of community and communion, (7) vocation and witness of teachers, and (8) cooperation between religious and laity.

1. Subsidiarity: Church, Family, and State

Education is a community responsibility which involves the Church, the family, and the State. The pre-eminence of the Church's role rests on her divine commission to "teach all nations" (cf. Mt 28: 19). Thus, she has the right and, even more, the duty to be "a teacher for mankind."¹⁴ At the same time, the Catholic Church recognizes the family's primary role in educating children and, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the secondary role of the State.

(a) Church's Concern for Schooling

"The problem of instruction has always been closely linked with the mission of the Church."¹⁵ Magisterial statements never tire of repeating the message that educating youth is an ecclesial responsibility: "The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ."¹⁶ Fidelity to this mandate demands that the Church be interested in the whole of human life, including its secular dimension. For this reason, "she has a role in the progress and development of education."¹⁷

Catholic schools participate in the Church's duty to evangelize.¹⁸ To carry out this responsibility, "the Church has the right to establish and to direct schools for any field of study or of any kind and grade."¹⁹ Indeed, she "establishes her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed."²⁰ The Apostolic See forcefully defends this right to provide

¹⁴ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), n. 70.

¹⁵ John Paul II, Address to UNESCO (2 June 1980), 18; *Insegnamenti*, 3/1 (1980), 1650.

¹⁶ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 3.

¹⁷ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, introduction; cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 794, §1.

¹⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 33.

¹⁹ Code of Canon Law, canon 800, §1.

²⁰ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 8.

an education that involves “the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society.”²¹

Like a good mother, the Church offers her help to families by entrusting to Catholic educators a role in the integral formation of children. She watches over the entire educational programme of the young, “in all institutions, public or private, not merely in regard to the religious instruction there given, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned.”²² The Church, then, places her educational expertise at the service of families. Because Catholic schools are “the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out,”²³ they are “the principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education.”²⁴

(b) Parental Rights

The family is the primary subject of every educational project. Parents have the principal moral responsibility of educating their children to adulthood.²⁵ Catholic teaching understands the child as an integral member of the family and therefore holds that the State’s involvement in education follows upon the natural rights and duties of parents. In keeping with a basic tenet of Catholic social doctrine, the principle of subsidiarity (which affirms that a society of a higher order must not assume responsibilities belonging to a lower order, depriving it of its competence, but must sustain it in cases of necessity²⁶) should govern relations in educational matters among the Church, families, and the State. As John Paul II wrote in his *Letter to Families* (1994):

Subsidiarity thus complements paternal and maternal love and confirms its fundamental nature, inasmuch as all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization.²⁷

Church teaching, constantly reiterated in magisterial documents, maintains that parents and those who take their place “have both the obligation and the right to educate their children.”²⁸ They are the first educators of their children, and have the original, primary, and inalienable right to educate their offspring in conformity with the family’s moral and religious

²¹ Code of Canon Law, canon 795.

²² Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magister*, 23.

²³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 11; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 9; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 33.

²⁴ Code of Canon Law, canon 796, §1.

²⁵ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

²⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 48; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1883; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), nn. 185–187.

²⁷ John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 16.

²⁸ Code of Canon Law, canon 733, §1.

convictions.²⁹ That right does not derive from other rights; it is not subordinate to any other entity; nor can it be legitimately usurped or fully delegated to others. Parental rights are also guaranteed by international law.³⁰

At the same time, the parents' right and duty to educate their children according to the dictates of their conscience is not exclusive. They are the first, but not only, educators of their children.³¹ Because the family, on its own, is less and less able to provide all that is needed, "the presence of the school, then, becomes more and more necessary."³² The vast majority of parents share their educational responsibilities with other individuals and institutions, primarily teachers and schools.

(c) *Opposition to State Monopoly*

While the State is obliged to respect the natural rights of the Church and family to provide children with a Christian education, its role is necessarily subsidiary. The Church's right to establish her own schools rests on the principle that she is an institutional reality independent of civil authority, and thus with the right to educate her adherents.³³ Some countries today deny this right, a situation that presents the bishops and faithful with a serious challenge.

²⁹ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 3, 6. Benedict XVI defends this parental right. Typical is his comment that "Parents are the first educators of their children and enjoy the natural and legal right to choose the kind of education they desire for them" (Address to His Excellency Mr. Iván Guillermo Rincón Urdaneta, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Holy See [25 August 2005]; *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 36 [7 September 2005], 3). Cf. Benedict XVI, Address to Mr. Francisco Vázquez Vázquez, Ambassador of Spain to the Holy See (20 May 2006); *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 23 (7 June 2006), 4: "The Church also insists on the inalienable right of individuals to profess their own religious faith without hindrance, both publicly and privately, as well as the right of parents to have their children receive an education that complies with their values and beliefs without either explicit or implicit discrimination"; John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 36; John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 16; John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 71; John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 33; John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals and Roman Curia (28 June 1984), 8; *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 29 (16 July 1984), 7, 12; Code of Canon Law, canon 793; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2229; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 12; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 20; Pontifical Council for the Family, *Charter of the Rights of the Family* (22 October 1983), 1–3; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), n. 239; General Assembly of the United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (10 December 1948), article 26.

³⁰ Cf. General Assembly of the United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (10 December 1948), article 26, §3: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children"; General Assembly of the United Nations, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (16 December 1966), article 13, §3: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

³¹ Cf. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 40; Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), n. 240.

³² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 13.

³³ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, 13.

Furthermore, because of these ecclesial and family rights in the educational realm, it follows that, “in principle, a State monopoly of education is not permissible, and that only a pluralism of school systems will respect the fundamental right and the freedom of individuals—although the exercise of this right may be conditioned by a multiplicity of factors, according to the social realities of each country.”³⁴ Roman documents affirm that the State must honour the principle of subsidiarity and renounce any claim to a monopoly in the field of education. According to John Paul II, “It is particularly important and urgent to arrange for a scholastic and educational system that has at heart the family and its freedom to choose.”³⁵ Since the State has a subsidiary role with respect to the family, the Church upholds “the principle of a plurality of school systems in order to safeguard her objectives.”³⁶ Consequently, citizens and intermediate groups have the right to set up and run their own schools. Whenever and wherever the principle of subsidiarity is ignored or compromised, the Apostolic See forcefully defends the Church’s right to establish schools for the integral education of the faithful.

2. Accessibility

A pressing problem for the Church in many countries, which is also of major concern to the Holy See, is ensuring the accessibility of Catholic children to affordable schools. Unfortunately, this desire is very often thwarted by the lack of State financial assistance to families. All Catholic young people have a right to a Christian education, not just those whose families have the financial means to provide for it or those who are intellectually gifted.

(a) *Preferential Option for the Poor*

Since Vatican II, the Roman magisterium has been acutely sensitive to the question of accessibility to Catholic schools, aware of the criticism that they disproportionately serve children from wealthier families or those who show academic promise.³⁷ The principal reason why a certain elitism may sometimes be the case is the high tuition that frequently must be charged to families because of the lack of government aid.³⁸

³⁴ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 14; cf. Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magister*, 35; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 6: “But it [the State] must always keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity so that there is no kind of school monopoly, for this is opposed to the native rights of the human person, to the development and spread of culture, to the peaceful association of citizens and to the pluralism that exists today in ever so many societies”; John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 71: “State monopoly in this area must be condemned as a form of totalitarianism which violates the fundamental rights which it ought to defend, especially the right of parents to provide religious education for their children”; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 16.

³⁵ John Paul II, Address at the Prayer Vigil of Families (20 October 2001), 6: *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 43 (24 October 2001), 3.

³⁶ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 13.

³⁷ Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Catholic International Education Office (5 March 1994), 3: *Insegnamenti*, 17/1 (1994), 617.

³⁸ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 21.

Rome holds the view that schools ought to accept their obligation to embrace the option of preference for the poor³⁹ in ways suitable to their particular role within the Church's mandate to evangelize. According to the Congregation for Catholic Education, this means that "when the preferential option for the poorest is at the centre of the educational programme, the best resources and most qualified persons are initially placed at the service of the least. This is the meaning of evangelical inclusion, so distant from the logic of the world."⁴⁰

Throughout the Church's history, Christian communities have developed numerous support structures to sustain the weak and the marginalized in areas indifferent to authentic human development. This desire to serve those in need has very often driven the founding of Church schools. It is of utmost importance to recall that "a distinguishing feature of Catholic education is that it is open to all, especially to the poor and weakest in society."⁴¹ Catholic schools, known in many regions for their academic excellence, should therefore heed "the Gospel imperative of serving all students and not only those who are the brightest and most promising. Indeed, in accord with the spirit of the Gospel, and its option for the poor, they will turn their attention particularly to those most in need."⁴²

For the Holy See, service to the poor must be taken to heart in the mission of every Catholic school. It has always been and should remain "a school for all."⁴³ First and foremost, the Church offers its educational ministry to "the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith."⁴⁴ Education is a key factor in improving the social and economic condition of disadvantaged individuals and peoples. Consequently, "if the Catholic school were to turn its attention exclusively or predominantly to those from the wealthier social classes, it could be contributing towards maintaining their privileged position, and could thereby continue to favour a society which is unjust."⁴⁵

Everywhere Church schools are to take the steps necessary to include minority and underprivileged pupils in their student body. They should also give particular

³⁹ Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 43; John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* 57; John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 51; John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 38; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2444; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, *Libertatis Conscientia*, 68: "those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a love of preference on the part of the Church."

⁴⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 70.

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 33; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 58.

⁴² John Paul II, Address to Catholic Educators, Newfoundland (12 September 1984), 8: *Insegnamenti*, 7/2 (1984), 479.

⁴³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 15.

⁴⁴ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 9.

⁴⁵ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 58; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 15; Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 69–72.

attention to pupils with special needs, whether those needs result from natural weaknesses or family difficulties. To remain faithful to their calling “of offering to all, and especially to the poor and marginalized, the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, of human and Christian formation,” Catholic schools must continue to manifest “Christ’s love for the poor, the humble, the masses seeking for truth.”⁴⁶ The Apostolic See endeavours to support all attempts directed to making a Catholic education affordable and accessible to every Catholic girl and boy.

(b) Right to State Assistance

Parents have the right freely to choose for their children a school which conforms to their religious convictions. Nor should the State call this right into question by making it financially impossible for them to make such a choice. Vatican documents and papal statements champion the parents’ right to choose the school best suited to their children and to receive government aid for that choice. Typical in this regard is the statement of Benedict XVI: “I cannot but express the hope that the right of parents to choose education freely will be respected, and that in so doing they will not have to bear the additional burden of further expenses.”⁴⁷ Rome recognizes that lack of support “places an almost unbearable financial burden on families . . . and constitutes a serious threat to the survival of the schools themselves.”⁴⁸

At the Second Vatican Council, the fathers declared that “the public power, which has the obligation to protect and defend the rights of citizens, must see to it, in its concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are paid out in such a way that parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children.”⁴⁹ Moreover, the Code of Canon Law affirms that civil society should recognize the freedom of parents in their choice of schools, even providing them with assistance “in accordance with the requirements of distributive justice.”⁵⁰ Vatican documents do not, however, favour any particular technical means—for example, direct or indirect subsidies, vouchers, or tax credits—for meeting this demand of justice.

It is not enough for the State to recognize the plurality of school systems if, at the same time, parents are penalized by having to pay taxes to support a public system while bearing the full financial burden of the school of their choice. Justice requires that the State provide financial support for Catholic

⁴⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 15.

⁴⁷ Benedict XVI, Address to the President of the Italian Republic, His Excellency Mr. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi (24 June 2005): *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 26 (29 June 2005), 3.

⁴⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 7.

⁴⁹ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 6; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, 5: “Government, in consequence, must acknowledge the right of parents to make a genuinely free choice of schools and of other means of education, and the use of this freedom of choice is not to be made a reason for imposing unjust burdens on parents, whether directly or indirectly”; Code of Canon Law, canon 793, §2.

⁵⁰ Code of Canon Law, canon 797.

schools because of the enormous contribution that they make to the common good. Like State schools, Catholic schools fulfil a public role by educating a nation's citizens. In addition, they guarantee a society's cultural and educational pluralism.⁵¹ "That Catholic schools help to form good citizens is a fact apparent to everyone. Both government policy and public opinion should, therefore, recognize the work these schools do as a real service to society. It is unjust to accept the service and ignore or fight against its source."⁵² The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004) affirms that "the refusal to provide public economic support to non-public schools that need assistance and that render a service to civil society is to be considered an injustice."⁵³ By stressing the public nature of Church schools and their service to society, the Vatican strives to combat the inequality of treatment that makes them inaccessible in some countries to families of limited financial resources.

To be sure, many States fulfil this obligation in justice.⁵⁴ Their governments give Catholic schools financial assistance, in some cases up to 100%.⁵⁵ Even so, much remains to be done "to ensure the recognition of a genuine freedom of education and equal juridical standing between State schools and other schools."⁵⁶ John Paul II frequently called for public funding to support Catholic schools. "Governments have the responsibility," he affirmed, "to ensure the freedom of ecclesial communions to have appropriate educational services with all that such a freedom implies: teacher training, buildings, research funding, adequate financing and so forth."⁵⁷

For the Holy See, the securing of some measure of government funding should be a priority task for Catholic laity in their striving for social justice. In no way does such assistance compromise the legitimate lay character of the State. Too often Catholics fail to grasp that they have a right to financial support for their schools which serve the common good.

3. Catholic Identity

In meeting contemporary problems, the Church, with its vast network of schools, can be a great help. Such assistance will be truly effective, however, only if these schools are faithful to their specifically Catholic heritage and mission. As John Paul II believed, "One of the greatest contributions our educational facilities, and all Catholic institutions, can offer society today is their uncompromising

⁵¹ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 16.

⁵² Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 46; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 19.

⁵³ Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), n. 241.

⁵⁴ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 81–82.

⁵⁵ Among the countries which provide substantial financial assistance from public funds for Catholic schools are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada (some provinces), England, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, Spain, Uganda, and Wales.

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 59.

⁵⁷ John Paul II, Address to Catholic Educators, Newfoundland (12 September 1984), 9: *Insegnamenti*, 7/2 (1984), 479.

catholicity.”⁵⁸ It is imperative that the Church’s schools “be genuinely Catholic: Catholic in their self-understanding and Catholic in their identity.”⁵⁹ Church schools are not institutions where religious instruction is added to the curriculum but where the entire educational programme is fully Catholic in its human, academic, and religious dimensions. Unquestionably, “it is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its original characteristics and its ‘structure’ as a genuine instrument of the Church.”⁶⁰

The principal task for the Church’s schools is, therefore, to hold fast to and strengthen their Catholic identity—an appeal repeatedly made in Vatican statements. Their distinctive character is “based on an educational vision having its origin in the person of Christ and its roots in the teachings of the Gospel.”⁶¹ This Good News is undoubtedly “the soul of the Catholic school, the norm of its life and teaching.”⁶²

(a) *Proposing a Supernatural Outlook*

Genuine education is a process which forms the whole child in light of his or her transcendent destiny. The purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, and also citizens of the world to come.⁶³ Catholic schools, then, have a clear goal: to nurture the intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual, and moral growth of pupils who love God and neighbour.

In a speech addressed to Catholic educators, John Paul II presented them with:

the pressing challenge of clearly identifying the aims of Catholic education, and applying proper methods in Catholic elementary and secondary education. . . . It is the challenge of fully understanding the educational enterprise, of properly evaluating its content, and of transmitting the full truth concerning the human person, created in God’s image and called to life in Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

Concern for this full truth of the human person, above all his or her spiritual dimension, is indispensable today. Unfortunately, far too many in government, business, the media, and even the educational establishment itself understand education as an instrument merely for the acquisition of information which will

⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Ad limina* Address to the Bishops of India (6 September 2003), 3; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 38 (17 September 2003), 3.

⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Ad limina* Address to American Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Portland in Oregon, Seattle and Anchorage (24 June 2004), 1; *Origins*, 34:14 (16 September 2004), 220–221; cf. John Paul II, Address to the Catholic International Education Office (5 November, 1985), 4; *Insegnamenti*, 8/2 (1985), 1200–1201. Such statements are also found in the *ad limina* addresses of Benedict XVI; for example, *Ad limina* Address to the Bishops of Zimbabwe (2 July 2005); *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 28 (13 July 2005), 3.

⁶⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 11.

⁶¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 71.

⁶² John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals and Roman Curia (28 June 1984), 7; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 29 (16 July 1984), 7.

⁶³ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 29.

⁶⁴ John Paul II, Address to Catholic Educators (12 September 1987), 7; *Origins*, 17:15 (1 October 1987), 270.

improve the chances of worldly success and a higher standard of living. The Holy See relentlessly disputes such an impoverished view of education.

(b) Founded on a Christian Anthropology

Emphasis on the supernatural destiny of students requires a profound appreciation of the need to perfect children in every area of their lives as images of God (cf. Gen. 1: 26–27). Catholic theology teaches that grace builds on nature. Because of this complementarity of the natural and supernatural, the Vatican expects Catholic educators to have a sound understanding of the human person, a view that addresses both the natural and supernatural perfection of the children entrusted to their care. The question put by Benedict XVI to educators about which image of the person they present to their students is on the mark. Do they promote, he asked, “an individual withdrawn into the defence of his own interests, a single perspective of interests, a materialistic perspective, or a person who is open to solidarity with others in the search for the true meaning of existence?”⁶⁵

The Holy See’s teaching repeatedly emphasizes the need for an educational philosophy built on the solid foundation of a correct anthropological vision:

In today’s pluralistic world, the Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the magisterium of the Church. It is a concept which includes a defence of human rights, but also attributes to the human person the dignity of a child of God . . . It calls for the fullest development of all that is human, because we have been made masters of the world by its Creator. Finally, it proposes Christ, Incarnate Son of God and perfect Man, as both model and means; to imitate him, is, for all men and women, the inexhaustible source of personal and communal perfection.⁶⁶

All this says confirms the text from *Gaudium et Spes* so often quoted by John Paul II: “it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.”⁶⁷

A Catholic school, therefore, cannot be an institution just for acquiring information and learning various competencies designed to serve society’s needs. Nor is it for “clients” or “consumers” in a competitive marketplace that values academic achievement above formation in virtue. Education is not a commodity, even if schools equip their graduates with useful skills. Rather, “the Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons.”⁶⁸ It accomplishes this by imparting

⁶⁵ Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants of a Seminar on European Higher Education (1 April 2006): *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 17 (26 April 2006), 5.

⁶⁶ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 18; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 63; Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 35.

⁶⁷ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 9.

⁶⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 9; cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 71; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 18.

a quality education from the technical and professional standpoint, but above all by attending to the integral formation of its pupils.

Vatican documents insist that, to be worthy of their name, the Church's schools must be founded on Jesus Christ the Redeemer. He himself, through his Incarnation, is united with each student. Christ is the school's centre and fulcrum, the light enlightening every pupil who comes into the school (cf. Jn 1: 9). The Congregation for Catholic Education has stated:

The Catholic school is committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the perfect man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the one who ennobles man, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils.⁶⁹

The person of Christ and his Gospel are to inspire and guide the Church school in every dimension of its life and activity: its philosophy of education, curriculum, community life, activities, selection of teachers, and even its physical environment. "Catholic schools are called to form the minds and hearts of the younger generation," said John Paul II, "by taking their inspiration from the model of humanity offered by Christ."⁷⁰

Christ is the Teacher in schools that embody his provocative memory. The Roman magisterium calls upon Catholic educators to avoid the trap of a secular success culture, which puts the Christological focus and its accompanying understanding of the human person in second place, where Christ is "fitted in." Rather, he is the school's vital principle, and "Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others."⁷¹ Educators should recognize Christ and his understanding of the human person as integral to a school's catholicity. He is "the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school,"⁷² and the principles of his Gospel are its guiding educational norms:

In a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus the "Master" who, today as always, is with us in our journey through life as the one genuine "Teacher," the perfect man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate.⁷³

⁶⁹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 35.

⁷⁰ John Paul II, Address to Italian Educational Institutes (24 November 1998), 3: *Insegnamenti*, 21/2 (1998), 1052.

⁷¹ John Paul II, Message to the National Catholic Educational Association of the USA (16 April 1979): *Insegnamenti*, 2 (1979): 919–920.

⁷² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 34; cf. 55.

⁷³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 25.

(c) Sacramental Environment

In a distinct and visible way the school's physical environment ought to embody the values of the Catholic tradition. Since the school is rightly considered an extension of the home, it should have "the amenities which can create a pleasant and family atmosphere."⁷⁴ This includes adequate facilities, equipment, and pedagogical materials. Most notably, this "school-home" should be immediately recognizable as Catholic: "From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics."⁷⁵

The Incarnation, which emphasizes the bodily coming of God's Son into the world, leaves its seal on every aspect of Christian life. The very fact of the Word made flesh recognizes that the created world is the means whereby God communicates his life to man. What is human and visible can bear the divine. For Catholic schools to be true to their identity, they should suffuse their environment with a delight in the sacramental and respect for the sacred. Accordingly, they should express the visible, sacramental signs of Catholic culture through images, symbols, icons, as well as practices of popular piety. A chapel, classroom crucifixes and statues of Mary and the saints, liturgical celebrations, and other visual reminders of Catholic life, including good art that is not explicitly religious in its subject matter, should be present in the school. Such signs reinforce its Catholic identity.

Prayer should also be a normal part of the school day, so that students learn to pray in times of sorrow and joy, of disappointment and celebration, of difficulty and success. Such prayer teaches pupils that they belong to the communion of saints, a community without bounds. Moreover, the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation ought to mark the rhythm of school life. Mass should be celebrated regularly, with the students and teachers participating appropriately. Traditional Catholic devotions as well should have their place: for example, praying the rosary, singing hymns, reading from the Bible, recounting the lives of the saints, celebrating the rhythm of the Church's liturgical year (with Christmas and Easter holidays rather than winter and spring recess), holding days of recollection and retreats. The sacramental vitality of the Catholic faith is expressed in these and similar acts of religion which belong to everyday ecclesial life and, as such, ought to be evident in every Church school.

4. Catholic Vision Across the Curriculum

The Roman magisterium frequently asserts that the "spirit of Catholicism" should permeate a school's entire life and programme. Instruction ought to be authentically Catholic in content and methodology throughout the curriculum. The school's distinctiveness cannot rest solely on the shoulders of its religious education programme. Such a view fosters, whether deliberately or not, a fatal

⁷⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 27.

⁷⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 25.

misunderstanding: that faith and life can be divorced, that religion is a private affair confined to an isolated and merely personal area of life.

Catholicism, on the other hand, has a particular vision of reality that should animate every aspect of a school's educational project. While the Vatican says nothing about lesson planning, the order of teaching various subjects or the relative merits of different pedagogical methods, it does provide guidelines designed to inspire the overall content of the curriculum.⁷⁶ The Holy See encourages a curricular orientation that focuses on the moral and spiritual dimension of the human experience; it wishes pupils to experience an authentic human and Christian formation. For a Catholic school to provide its students with an integral education, it must foster love for wisdom, passion for truth, and the integration of faith, culture, and life.

(a) Love for Wisdom and Passion for Truth

Recent popes frequently recall that the human mind, however limited its powers, can indeed come to a knowledge of truth.⁷⁷ Indeed, "man's unique grandeur is ultimately based on his capacity to know the truth."⁷⁸ What is more, "in the education of the new generations," as Pope Benedict has stated, "the question of the truth can certainly not be avoided."⁷⁹ Catholic educators cannot afford to be confused about the nature of truth. Unlike sceptics and relativists, they share a specific belief about truth: that to a limited but real extent it can be attained and communicated to others. Church schools take up the daunting task of freeing young people from the insidious consequences of what Benedict XVI has called the "dictatorship of relativism"⁸⁰—a moral totalitarianism that cripples all genuine education. Catholic teachers are to cultivate in themselves and develop in their pupils a passion for truth which challenges moral and cultural relativism. They are to educate "in the truth."

The Apostolic See insists that education is about both natural and supernatural truth: "The school considers human knowledge as a truth to be discovered. In the measure in which subjects are taught by someone who knowingly and without restraint seeks the truth, they are to that extent Christian. Discovery and awareness of truth leads man to the discovery of Truth itself."⁸¹

Even though Catholic schools must often conform to government-mandated curricula, they are to implement their programmes with an overall Catholic vision, "integrating the content of different areas of human knowledge in the light of the Gospel message."⁸² Such a perspective includes criteria such as

⁷⁶ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 51–65.

⁷⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Fides et Ratio, passim*; Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (10 February 2006): *Origins*, 35:39 (16 March 2006), 654.

⁷⁸ Benedict XVI, Address to the Diplomatic Corps (9 January 2006): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 2 (11 January 2006), 4.

⁷⁹ Benedict XVI, Address to the Ecclesial Convention of the Diocese of Rome (5 June 2006): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 24 (14 June 2006), 7.

⁸⁰ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Homily for Mass *Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice* (18 April 2005): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 16 (20 April 2005), 3.

⁸¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 41.

⁸² Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (Vatican City: Vatican Press: 2004), n. 133.

“confidence in our ability to attain truth, at least in a limited way—a confidence based not on feeling but on faith... [and] the ability to make judgments about what is true and what is false.”⁸³ An unwavering commitment to truth is a mark of every genuinely Catholic school.

(b) Faith, Culture, and Life

As well as upholding the joy of searching for truth, fostering a Catholic world view in children entails teaching them to transform culture in light of the Gospel. “The specific mission of the school, then, is a critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith and the bringing forth of the power of Christian virtue by the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living.”⁸⁴ Schools should prepare students to relate the Catholic faith to their particular culture and to live that faith in daily life. In this regard, the Congregation for Catholic Education has commented:

From the nature of the Catholic school also stems one of the most significant elements of its educational project: the synthesis between culture and faith. The endeavour to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation, and coordination, bringing forth within what is learned in a school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture, and of history.⁸⁵

Catholic educators are to form students within their own culture, teaching them an appreciation of its positive elements and fostering a more profound inculturation of the Gospel in their particular situation. Faith and culture are intimately related, and young people should be led, in ways suitable to the level of their intellectual development, to grasp the significance of that relationship. “The world of human culture and the world of religion are not like two parallel lines that never meet; points of contact are established within the human person. For a believer is both human and a person of faith, the protagonist of culture and the subject of religion.”⁸⁶

In a way appropriate to their age, young Catholics must also learn to make judgements based on religious and moral truths. “We must always remember that, while faith is not to be identified with any one culture and is independent of all cultures, it must inspire every culture.”⁸⁷ They should be taught that the

⁸³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 57.

⁸⁴ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 49.

⁸⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 14.

⁸⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 51; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 64.

⁸⁷ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 53; cf. John Paul II, Letter to Cardinal Agostino Casaroli establishing the Pontifical Council of Culture (20 May 1982): “The synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith.... A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out” (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 26 [28 June 1982], 7).

Catholic faith provides them with the essential principles for such an evaluation.⁸⁸ Encouraging this kind of critical reflection is to be a priority for teachers.

The educational philosophy guiding Catholic schools should also seek to ensure that they are places where “faith, culture and life are brought into harmony.”⁸⁹ Central to the Church school is its mission of holiness, of saint-making. Mindful of man’s redemption in Christ, educators aim at fostering the theological and moral virtues in their pupils and thereby enable them to play their role in serving society and the Church. The school strives to develop virtue by integrating culture with faith and faith with life. In other words, “the Catholic school tries to create within its walls a climate in which the pupil’s faith will gradually mature and enable him to assume the responsibility placed on him by baptism.”⁹⁰

A primary way of helping Catholic students to become more committed to their faith is by making available solid religious instruction. To be sure, “education in the faith is a part of the finality of a Catholic school.”⁹¹ For children such instruction entails both teaching the fullness of the faith and fostering its practice.⁹² According to John Paul II’s post-synodal apostolic exhortation on catechesis, a Catholic school “would no longer deserve this title if, no matter how much it shone for its high level of teaching in non-religious matters, there were justification for reproaching it for negligence or deviation in strictly religious education. Let it not be said that such education will always be given implicitly and indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils.”⁹³

Even when non-Catholic students are admitted in significant numbers, genuine catechesis belongs in the regular curriculum of every Catholic school.⁹⁴

5. Service to Charity and Justice

The Holy See expects Catholic schools to contribute to the well-being and transformation of society in light of the Gospel. They are ideally suited to foster the building of a civilization of love, fraternity, solidarity, and peace.⁹⁵ The popes mention the contribution of the Church’s schools to national life in nearly every

⁸⁸ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 20.

⁸⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 34; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 44; Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (Vatican City: Vatican Press: 2004), n. 133.

⁹⁰ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 47; cf. Vatican II Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8.

⁹¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 43.

⁹² Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 50–51; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 66–69.

⁹³ John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 69.

⁹⁴ Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Catholic International Education Office (5 November, 1985), 4: *Insegnamenti*, 8/2 (1985), 1201.

⁹⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Participants in the International Congress of the Catholic Schools of Europe (28 April 2001), 2: *Insegnamenti*, 24/1 (2001), 804.

discourse to political and State officials, and to ambassadors to the Holy See when they present their letters of credential.

Although Vatican and papal interventions always affirm the primacy of the Church's supernatural role, they likewise insist that the teaching of social doctrine pertains to her evangelizing mission. This doctrine is essential to the Christian message, since it embodies the direct consequences of the Gospel message for life in society. The new evangelization, in which schools have a key role to play, includes among its requisite elements the proclamation of the Church's social teaching.⁹⁶ The Catholic school, then, has the role of forming its students as advocates for justice.

In Church schools, social doctrine is a subject to be taught as part of its programme. Such teaching will help students understand that "the Church's social doctrine has become a set of fundamental guidelines that are valid even beyond the confines of the Church."⁹⁷ But concern for social justice should also take concrete shape in fostering activities which lead pupils to assume personal responsibility for the world. John Paul II affirmed that "charity towards one's neighbour, through contemporary forms of the traditional spiritual and corporal works of mercy, represent the most immediate, ordinary and habitual ways that lead to the Christian animation of the temporal order, the specific duty of the lay faithful."⁹⁸ Elsewhere the same Pope wrote:

In the face of the beguiling influence that the consumer society exercises today, the Catholic school, under the guidance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, must show young people that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, that a person's worth is based on what he or she is, rather than on what he or she has.⁹⁹

As institutions founded on Jesus Christ, Catholic schools should be permeated with the Gospel spirit of love, going beyond the demands of justice.¹⁰⁰ According to Pope Benedict, the school, like every ecclesial community, "must practice love. Love thus needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community."¹⁰¹ Students are to be taught this "social charity"¹⁰² so that they will carry it out of the school with them. Bearing witness to love in and of itself is a great service to the wider community. It reminds the world of the hidden power of transcendence that truly humanises society.

⁹⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41; John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 5, 54–55; Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 26–27; Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2004), nn. 66–68.

⁹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 27.

⁹⁸ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 41.

⁹⁹ John Paul II, Letter to the Secretary General of the Catholic International Education Office (23 January 1982): *Insegnamenti*, 5/1 (1982), 892.

¹⁰⁰ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8.

¹⁰¹ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 20; cf. Benedict XVI, Address to the Ecclesial Convention of the Diocese of Rome (5 June 2006): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 24 (14 June 2006), 7: "Proposing to children a practical experience of service to their neighbour is therefore part of an authentic and complete education in the faith."

¹⁰² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1939.

In recent decades, many Church schools around the world have developed programmes fostering social justice as an integral part of their curriculum and activities. Students are called to serve both within their schools and in their communities. Benedict XVI recognizes the value of such volunteer work, fittingly sponsored by Catholic schools, often even as a requirement for graduation. “For young people,” he has written, “this widespread involvement constitutes a school of life which offers them a formation in solidarity and in readiness to offer others not simply material aid but their very selves.”¹⁰³ Volunteer and service projects prepare students to serve the common good with critical intelligence, moral integrity, and Christian charity.

6. Spirit of Community and Communion

Vatican documents routinely stress that the Catholic school is called to manifest a spirit of community and communion, a spirit that opposes many values inspired by an individualistic and competitive society. Church schools are not places merely of shared values but also of a communion of life rooted in belonging to Christ through baptism. They are charged with the mission of handing on and reinforcing a sense of community, mutual concern, and the acceptance of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. The transition from the school as an institution to the school as a community is one result of the Church’s new self-awareness of being a “communion.” This concept was widely appropriated after the Second Vatican Council. The study of the Church as a mystery of communion has led her increasingly to recognize herself as “the body of Christ, the members of which are in a mutual relationship with each other and with the head.”¹⁰⁴

Recognizing the school as community is rooted in understanding the Church as “the home and the school of communion.”¹⁰⁵ That the Catholic school is an educational community “is one of the most enriching developments for the contemporary school.”¹⁰⁶

The Holy See describes the school as a community, as a particular instance of ecclesial communion, in three areas: the teamwork among all those involved; the cooperation between educators and bishops; and the interaction of students with teachers.

(a) Teamwork

Educators “should try to create a community school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life. Those responsible for these schools will, therefore, do everything they can to promote a common spirit of trust and spontaneity.”¹⁰⁷ As products of both human and

¹⁰³ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 30.

¹⁰⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 22; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 31; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 40; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 41.

Christian communities, educators should develop a real willingness to collaborate among themselves, working in a spirit of communion so as to form a similar attitude in their pupils. Moreover, students belong to the school community as “active agents” of their own education.¹⁰⁸ Teachers, together with parents, trustees and pupils, are to work as a team for the school’s common good.¹⁰⁹ This spirit of communion will help all parties to make choices that foster “overcoming individualistic self-promotion, solidarity instead of competition, assisting the weak instead of marginalization, responsible participation instead of indifference.”¹¹⁰

Ensuring the appropriate involvement of parents in schools is key to every fruitful educational programme. The Code of Canon Law states that “there must be the closest cooperation between parents and the teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated. In fulfilling their task, teachers are to collaborate closely with the parents and willingly listen to them; associations and meetings of parents are to be set up and held in high esteem.”¹¹¹ Collaboration between school and family is “especially important when treating sensitive issues such as religious, moral, or sexual education, orientation toward a profession, or a choice of one’s vocation in life. It is not a question of convenience, but a partnership based on faith.”¹¹²

Now, even more than in the past, teachers and administrators must often encourage parental participation in school life. “It is therefore necessary for Catholic schools to give special care to the formation of parents, so that they can become aware of their tasks and specific responsibilities. The organized presence of parents within Catholic schools is a basic element for the realization of their formative project.”¹¹³ Such a partnership is directed to dealing with academic problems, strategic planning, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s mission and Catholic identity.

(b) *Educators and Bishops*

Roman documents encourage the fostering of communion between bishops and Catholic educators: they are to help one another in carrying out the task to which they are mutually committed. Insofar as a school has received a mandate from the local bishop, it should operate in complete harmony with him. Personal relationships marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and ongoing dialogue develop a genuine spirit of ecclesial communion.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 32, 105–106.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 60–61; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 78; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 39.

¹¹⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 46.

¹¹¹ Code of Canon Law, canon 796, §2; cf. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 40; Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 47.

¹¹² Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 42; cf. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 34; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education*, 69–75.

¹¹³ John Paul II, Address to the Italian Association of Parents of Catholic Schools (6 June 1998), 2: *Insegnamenti*, 21/1 (1998), 1311.

Educators and Church authorities are also exhorted to cooperate closely in founding schools and nurturing their catholicity. Educators recognize that the bishop's pastoral leadership is pivotal in supporting the establishment and ensuring the catholicity of schools in his pastoral care. His responsibility for Catholic schools comes from the office of teaching (*munus docendi*) conferred at episcopal ordination.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, "only the bishop can set the tone, ensure the priority and effectively present the importance of the cause to the Catholic people."¹¹⁵ The Code of Canon Law reminds pastors that they have "the duty of making all possible arrangements so that all the faithful may avail themselves of a Catholic education."¹¹⁶ As John Paul II straightforwardly affirmed, "Bishops need to support and enhance the work of Catholic schools."¹¹⁷

With regard to Church schools, episcopal responsibility is twofold. First, the bishop must integrate a plan for Catholic schools into his diocese's pastoral programme. Second, he is to oversee the teaching within them.

Because of his pastoral mission the bishop must see to it that the principles of Catholic doctrine guide the overall educational programme in his schools. He has the duty of vigilance to guarantee that schools under his jurisdiction maintain and foster their Catholic identity. This vigilance also includes schools established or directed by members of religious institutes.¹¹⁸ The *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (2004) calls upon them "to ensure that schools directed by religious institutes provide a formation fully in accordance with their Catholic identity, by visiting them from time to time either in person or via a representative."¹¹⁹

The bishop's particular responsibilities include overseeing that teachers are sound in their doctrine and outstanding in their integrity of life.¹²⁰ It is crucial for the bishop to be involved in his schools not only by exercising veto power—for example, regarding textbooks, curricula or teachers—but also by taking an active role in bolstering his schools' Catholic ethos. In an *ad limina* address to a group of bishops, John Paul II told them that "the Church's presence in elementary and secondary education must... be the object of your special attention as shepherds of the people of God."¹²¹ In particular, pastors should set in place specific programmes of formation to educate the laity as teachers and leaders in their Catholic schools.¹²²

¹¹⁴ Cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 375.

¹¹⁵ John Paul II, *Ad limina* Address to American Bishops (28 October 1983), 7: *Insegnamenti*, 6/2 (1983), 891.

¹¹⁶ Canon 794.

¹¹⁷ John Paul II, *Pastores Gregis*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 806, §1; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 42.

¹¹⁹ Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (Vatican City: Vatican Press: 2004), n. 100; cf. n. 133.

¹²⁰ Cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 803, §2; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 73.

¹²¹ John Paul II, *Ad Limina* Address to American Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Portland in Oregon, Seattle and Anchorage (24 June 2004), 3: *Origins*, 34:14 (16 September 2004), 221.

¹²² Cf. John Paul II, *Pastores Gregis*, 51.

(c) Teachers and Students

Direct and personal contact between teachers and students has always been a hallmark of the Church's schools. Consequently, the magisterium is attentive to the quality of interpersonal relations in the school community. Such concern safeguards the priority of the student as a person whose intellectual growth goes hand-in-hand with his or her spiritual, religious, emotional, and social development.¹²³ Because education is a matter of the heart, authentic formation of young people requires the personalized accompaniment of a teacher. "During childhood and adolescence a student needs to experience personal relations with outstanding educators, and what is taught has greater influence on the student's formation when placed in a context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, lifestyle and day to day behaviour."¹²⁴

The school's learning atmosphere should encourage the proper befriending of students. In measured terms the Congregation for Catholic Education describes the reciprocity between students and teachers:

A personal relationship is always a dialogue rather than a monologue, and the teacher must be convinced that the enrichment in the relationship is mutual. But the mission must never be lost sight of: the educator can never forget that students need a companion and guide during their period of growth; they need help from others in order to overcome doubts and disorientation. Also, rapport with the students ought to be a prudent combination of familiarity and distance; and this must be adapted to the need of each individual student. Familiarity will make a personal relationship easier, but a certain distance is also needed.¹²⁵

Catholic schools recognize the primacy of the person, both student and teacher. Additionally, they foster a suitable friendship between them, since "an authentic formative process can only be initiated through a personal relationship."¹²⁶

7. Vocation and Witness of Teachers

In its teaching the Apostolic See carefully attends to the vocation and witness of teachers in the Church's evangelizing mission. Most certainly, "it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose."¹²⁷ The Second Vatican Council defined the educator's mission as follows:

¹²³ Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 61.

¹²⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 18.

¹²⁵ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 33; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 110.

¹²⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 62.

¹²⁷ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8; cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 26; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 19.

Splendid, therefore, and of the highest importance is the vocation of those who help parents in carrying out their duties and act in the name of the community by undertaking a teaching career. This vocation requires special qualities of mind and heart, most careful preparation and a constant readiness to accept new ideas and to adapt the old.¹²⁸

For Catholics, the educational profession cannot be geared simply towards making a living. Rather, it is a “supernatural vocation”¹²⁹ and a ministry that builds up the Church and transforms society.

(a) *Teaching as a Vocation*

Like all Christians, educators share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, carrying out their vocation to holiness precisely as teachers.¹³⁰ Since educators live their calling in a distinctive way, they must be formed so as to appreciate that their apostolate is integral to their growth in holiness. It is their “share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational mission of the Church.”¹³¹ A reflection offered by the Congregation for Catholic Education gives the reason why the educator’s vocation is a blessed one: “Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of man’s most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings.”¹³²

Those responsible for forming the next generation of Catholic educators are, therefore, to make every effort to imbue them with a profound sense of the dignity of their calling. Bishops and priests, as well as parents and professors in faculties of education, should help teachers to “become fully aware of the importance, the richness, and the responsibility of this vocation. They should fully respond to all of its demands, secure in the knowledge that their response is vital for the construction and ongoing renewal of the earthly city, and for the evangelization of the world.”¹³³

(b) *Teaching as a Profession*

The vocation of a Catholic teacher is also lived in the world as a profession. First-class training in the area of one’s discipline as well as in pedagogy is necessary for the educator to be a true professional. Poor teaching, resulting from insufficient preparation of classes or outdated pedagogical methods or inattentiveness to student needs, seriously hinders a student’s integral formation.¹³⁴ In this regard John Paul II affirmed:

In order to accept the numerous challenges that they must face, educational communities must place an emphasis on the formation of both religious and secular teachers, so that they may acquire an increasingly

¹²⁸ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 5.

¹²⁹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 37.

¹³⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 32.

¹³¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 24.

¹³² Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 19.

¹³³ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 37.

¹³⁴ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 27.

vivid awareness of their mission as educators, combining professional skill with a freely made choice to testify coherently spiritual and moral values, inspired by the Gospel message.¹³⁵

Catholic teachers should be assiduous in complying with professional requirements, though always with a critical eye, especially if they study in non-Catholic institutions. In short, they need a formation in educational philosophy provided by those with a Catholic world view, one which understands the human person in light of Christ. Such study is best done in a Catholic university where scholars are “engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos*, as the centre of creation and of human history.”¹³⁶

While Catholic teachers are generally aware of the need for good professional formation, they require more than this. All Catholic educators, regardless of the grade level or subject area they teach, should have a solid, organic, and comprehensive formation in the Church’s faith. This requirement follows from the school’s concern to give a Christian formation not only to its pupils but also to teachers, staff, and parents of its students.

For teachers to be effective bearers of the Church’s educational tradition, they must have a “religious formation that is equal to their general, cultural, and, most especially, professional formation.”¹³⁷ This entails a spiritual preparation which leads them “to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others.”¹³⁸ Whether lay or religious, Catholic educators need to recognize the value of such a doctrinal and spiritual formation and must take steps to pursue it on an ongoing basis.¹³⁹

It is up to the ecclesial community to guarantee that such formation is required and available to all Catholic school educators: those already in the system and those preparing to enter it. In this regard Catholic universities have the obligation to assist educators in meeting their duty. As part of their service to the Church, they should offer teacher training courses and programmes founded on the Christian understanding of integral human formation. Catholic universities should, as well, be attentive to providing opportunities for ongoing teacher formation by sponsoring courses, seminars, conferences, and other occasions for professional, theological, and spiritual development. The Church’s institutions of higher learning share the responsibility of preparing school personnel for their educational ministry.

It is critical that the religious and moral formation of teachers be lifelong. In every dimension of the Church’s life the Holy See encourages continuous

¹³⁵ John Paul II, Address to the Participants in the International Congress of the Catholic Schools of Europe (28 April 2001), 3: *Insegnamenti*, 24/1 (2001), 804.

¹³⁶ John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 16.

¹³⁷ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 60.

¹³⁸ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 31.

¹³⁹ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 61–70.

formation as a way of fostering effective evangelization. No Catholic who works in a school can ignore this present-day appeal for ongoing *aggiornamento*. “To do so would be to remain locked up in outdated knowledge, criteria, and attitudes. To reject a formation that is permanent and that involves the whole person—human, professional, and religious—is to isolate oneself from that very world that has to be brought closer to the Gospel.”¹⁴⁰

(c) *Teaching as Witness*

Roman statements highlight the right of students in Church schools to receive the good example of teachers and others responsible for their formation: “the witness of adults in the school community is a vital part of the school’s identity.”¹⁴¹ Children will learn far more from the example of their educators, especially in the practice of Christian virtues, than from masterful pedagogical techniques. “The central figure in the work of educating,” asserts Benedict XVI, “is specifically the form of witness. This witness becomes a proper reference point to the extent that the person can account for the hope that nourishes his life (cf. 1 Pt 3:15) and is personally involved in the truth that he proposes.”¹⁴²

The prophetic words of Paul VI ring as true today as they did more than 30 years ago: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”¹⁴³ What educators do and how they act are more significant than what they say inside and outside the classroom. By their imitation of Christ, teachers “reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behaviour.”¹⁴⁴ Example is the teachers’ chief way of evangelizing: “The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person [Christ] that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated.”¹⁴⁵ No effort should be spared in encouraging the presence of such daily witness in every school.

In order to fulfil their mission of bearing witness to the Gospel, educators in Catholic schools should be practising Catholics committed to the Church and living her sacramental life. Exceptions to this requirement should be infrequent and limited to certain subject areas. John Paul II called attention to the reasons for implementing such a policy:

The identity and success of Catholic education are linked inseparably to the witness of life given by the teaching staff. . . . School staff who truly live their faith will be agents of a new evangelization in creating a positive

¹⁴⁰ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 70.

¹⁴¹ Congregation for Catholic Education John Paul II, *Ad limina* Address to Bishops from Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin (30 May 1998), 4; *Origins*, 28:5 (18 June 1998), 77; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 32, 40.

¹⁴² Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants in the Ecclesial Diocesan Convention of Rome (6 June 2005): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 24 (15 June 2005), 7.

¹⁴³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 43.

¹⁴⁵ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 32.

climate for the Christian faith to grow and in spiritually nourishing the students entrusted to their care. They will be especially effective when they are active practising Catholics, committed to their parish community and loyal to the Church and her teaching.¹⁴⁶

Despite the difficulties sometimes involved, all those responsible for hiring teachers must see to it that these criteria are met. Principals, pastors, school board members, parents, and bishops share in the grave duty of ensuring that teachers are hired who meet the essential standards of doctrine and integrity.¹⁴⁷ The reason for such concern about teachers is straightforward: authentic Catholic education can take place only when the Christian witness of educators is transparent.

8. Cooperation of Religious and Laity

Since the Second Vatican Council, the magisterium has paid particular attention to encouraging cooperation between religious and lay people who work together in schools. Each plays a special role in the shared mission carried out in a spirit of ecclesial communion.

(a) Mission of Consecrated Men and Women in Schools

For generations, religious, especially women, have been the backbone of the Catholic school system around the world. Their sacrificial apostolate has contributed to its establishment and flourishing. “The Church is indebted to consecrated persons for the marvellous pages of holiness and dedication to the cause of education and evangelization they have written, especially during the last two centuries.”¹⁴⁸ The popes frequently extol the valuable gifts that religious bring to the Church’s educational apostolate:

Because of their special consecration, their particular experience of the gifts of the Spirit, their constant listening to the word of God, their practice of discernment, their rich heritage of pedagogical traditions built up since the establishment of their institute, and their profound grasp of spiritual truth (cf. Eph 2: 17), consecrated persons are able to be especially effective in educational activities and to offer a specific contribution to the work of other educators.¹⁴⁹

Unfortunately, in many countries, the number of consecrated men and women engaged in educating youth has been declining. The reasons for this “alarming decrease” is both fewer vocations and the “serious misunderstanding which

¹⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 33; cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 231: “Recruit teachers who are practising Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school’s Catholic identity and apostolic goals... While some situations might entail compelling reasons for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practising Catholics.”

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 803, §2.

¹⁴⁸ John Paul II, Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education (4 February 2002), 5: *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 7 (13 February 2002), 2.

¹⁴⁹ John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, 96.

induces some religious to abandon the teaching apostolate.”¹⁵⁰ Many Vatican and papal interventions appeal to religious to continue their apostolate in schools. Indeed, the Holy See frequently addresses the need for consecrated persons to remain committed to their institute’s charism in the sphere of education. John Paul II, for example, invited “members of institutes devoted to education to be faithful to their founding charism and to their traditions, knowing that the preferential love for the poor finds a special application in the choice of means capable of freeing people from that grave form of poverty which is the lack of cultural and religious training.”¹⁵¹

What religious offer is the bringing of “the humanism of the beatitudes to the field of education and schools.”¹⁵² As experts in communion honed by their experience of community life, they know how to foster the human and spiritual bonds that promote the mutual exchange of gifts among those committed to the same apostolate. In the words of a Vatican document, “Consecrated persons are thus leaven that is able to create relations of increasingly deep communion, that are themselves educational. They promote solidarity, mutual enhancement and joint responsibility in the educational plan, and, above all, they give an explicit Christian testimony.”¹⁵³ Religious are needed in schools because they bear radical witness to evangelical values and so inspire a Gospel spirit in lay teachers and in their pupils.

The Holy See especially invites consecrated persons to share the fruits of their own religious formation with the laity. An increasing number of lay men and women are expressing an interest in appropriating aspects of the spirituality and mission of a particular religious institute, including those dedicated to education.¹⁵⁴ This calls for consecrated persons to pay particular heed to the lifelong formation of the lay educators with whom they work, and to ensure the truly vocational dimension of the teaching profession as a genuine lay ministry in the Church.

(b) *Mission of the Laity*

For at least a generation, in most parts of the world, there has been a shift away from religious to lay teachers and leaders in Catholic schools. While Church documents frequently lament the diminishing role of religious, the Apostolic See also recognizes this change as one of the “signs of the times” which brings

¹⁵⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 13; cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 74–76; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 3.

¹⁵¹ John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, 97. This echoes the Code of Canon Law, canon 801: “Religious institutes which have education as their proper mission are to keep faithfully to this mission and earnestly strive to devote themselves to Catholic education”; cf. John Paul II, John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals and Roman Curia (28 June 1984), 9; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 29 (16 July 1984), 12; Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 36.

¹⁵² Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 6.

¹⁵³ Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines*, 46.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh from Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium*, 31.

a wealth of blessings. In no way are the laity second-class Catholic educators. Quite the contrary, they present a fresh opportunity for the Church, one full of promise and hope.

In light of Vatican II's teaching that "lay people have their own proper competence in the building up of the Church,"¹⁵⁵ teachers, precisely as members of the lay faithful, have their own charism. Theirs is an authentic ecclesial ministry rooted in the sacraments of initiation and supervised by ecclesial authority.¹⁵⁶ This lay charism is independent of that of any particular religious congregation. While the Vatican encourages the handing on of the educational charism of a particular institute, what is more important is that teachers be committed to preserving a strong Catholic ethos in schools, a mission dedicated lay educators are equipped by the Holy Spirit to carry out.

Agenda for Future Research

Further study and research would undoubtedly serve to strengthen the mission of Catholic schools around the world. Indeed, John Paul II entrusted the Congregation for Catholic Education with making "every effort to see that the fundamental principles of Catholic education as set out by the magisterium of the Church be ever more deeply researched."¹⁵⁷ In 1988, the Congregation for its part recommended that "further study, research, and experimentation be done in all areas that affect the religious dimension of education in Catholic schools. Much has been done, but many people are asking for even more."¹⁵⁸ This remains just as true today as then. Such research should be carried out as collaborative endeavours between the schools themselves and departments of human and social sciences or faculties of education, above all in Catholic universities. Through their research Catholic institutions of higher learning are expected to assist the Church in her duty to evangelize. As affirmed by John Paul II, "by offering the results of its scientific research, a Catholic university will be able to help the Church respond to the problems and needs of this age."¹⁵⁹

Since research should serve the human person, it is altogether fitting that the Church's institutions of higher education take up the pressing challenge of fostering serious studies that further the common good of Catholic schooling. This research should include longitudinal, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary

¹⁵⁵ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 25

¹⁵⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 46: "Therefore the Church of the third millennium will need to encourage all the baptized and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the Church's life. Together with the ordained ministry, other ministries, whether formally instituted or simply recognized, can flourish for the good of the whole community, sustaining it in all its many needs: from catechesis to liturgy, from the education of the young to the widest array of charitable works."

¹⁵⁷ John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, article 114.

¹⁵⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 115.

¹⁵⁹ John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 31.

studies that enable educators to gain a more international and empirically based perspective on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges faced by Catholic schools across the globe. In dealing with the complex issues of Catholic education, the Church's universities should foster cooperation and common research projects among various academic disciplines and institutions from different continents, as well as with other private and governmental bodies.

What follows are some personal suggestions about the kind of research that I believe would benefit Catholic schools as they strive to carry out their mission in the third millennium. These and other studies could provide reliable information which could support a renewed effort by local bishops and episcopal conferences to publish their own documents on various aspects of Catholic schooling.

1. Holy See and Schooling

A serious historical study of the popes' oversight of Catholic schooling and the Holy See's contribution to the modern school from early on to the present day, in an international perspective, would be very useful for all concerned with the Church's contribution to education. Likewise, empirical studies on the extent to which Vatican documents published in the last thirty years have been "received" in various countries would be helpful in judging their effectiveness in communicating magisterial teaching on education and schools.

2. Benchmarks of Catholicity

Since the Catholic identity of schools is the Holy See's primary concern, clear indicators of catholicity should be identified across cultures and countries. Such performance indicators in every area of the school's life could then be measured in a variety of quantitative and qualitative ways. These benchmarks would be of enormous benefit to school administrators, trustees, teachers, parents, bishops, and religious communities in systematically measuring key catholicity indicators and in providing a data-driven foundation for strengthening the identity of Catholic schools throughout the world.

3. Schools and Family

With the weakening of the family in many areas, studies on successful cooperative ventures between parents and all other educators could benefit the new evangelization. How well do Church schools in different countries carry out their role in helping families meet their educational responsibilities to their children? To what extent are schools around the globe "a perfect educating community"¹⁶⁰ comprised of parents, teachers, students, pastors and consecrated men and women?

4. Service to the Disadvantaged

While research demonstrates the high levels of academic achievement in Catholic schools, the reason for this success in different countries requires more study. Is it

¹⁶⁰ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 40.

the result of selective recruiting among elites or the successful retention of better students at the expense of serving the disadvantaged? In addition, the Church's success internationally in living out her option of preference for educating the poor and the marginalized merits further inquiry. The degree to which educational solidarity is realized both within and between local churches would also be a fruitful area of study.

5. Contribution to Society

Research on Catholic schools might also consider the various ways in which they serve the common good in different societies. How well is the Church's pressing appeal that social doctrine be taught and social justice be practised in her schools carried out? The results of such studies could serve to convince the Catholic community and society at large that Catholic schools are an invaluable societal resource that merit increased financial assistance.

6. Community Spirit

Church schools nurture strong communities, but additional research needs to be done to learn more about how this community spirit works and how it could be fostered even more. Studies on the most effective measures used by the local bishop to promote Catholic education would also be useful. Of particular importance as well are questions about the integration of non-Catholic pupils in schools, especially those from Muslim families. In many countries, especially in Europe, Africa, and Asia, solid empirical research on how the Catholic school serves as a laboratory for life in a pluralistic and multicultural society is required. Because of the universal nature of the Church and the international character of so many religious institutes, how can Catholic schools serve as a model for intercultural education? How successfully do schools with a large number of non-Catholic students embody their Catholic identity in all aspects of school life: for example, staffing, curriculum, religious education, worship, and so on? Have recent best practices been identified that could be shared throughout the universal Church?

7. Fostering Faith

Because Church schools are established to pass on the Catholic faith so that it can be understood and integrated into the whole pattern of the pupils' learning and life, ongoing inquiry on the extent to which they accomplish this evangelizing mission remains necessary. Such investigation should take into account not merely the teaching of religion but also whether and how a Catholic vision, which emphasizes the positive influence of Christianity on society and culture, is taught throughout the curriculum.

8. Witness of Teachers

Well-grounded studies on the different factors involved for a teacher to be an effective witness of Christ would be very helpful to the international educational community. To what extent does a teacher's sacramental life, theological

knowledge, spiritual formation, and love for the Church contribute to fostering human and supernatural virtue in the student body?

9. *Lay Leadership*

Now that lay men and women make up the vast majority of teachers in Catholic schools, how can their effectiveness be measured? Are there instances of successful attempts to preserve the charism of a particular religious institute when its members no longer direct or staff a school? Could these best practices be replicated? In different countries, what kinds of formation programmes have proved to be most effective in training lay teachers and leaders for their ministry?

10. *Solidarity and Service of Charity*

Benedict XVI teaches that the Church, as a community, must practise love, and that such love needs to be organized.¹⁶¹ The research question raised is straightforward: how do Church schools throughout the world fulfil their commitment to this ministry of charity and justice? Moreover, in our globalized world, do Catholic schools show—by collaborative efforts, partnerships, volunteer activities, service projects, and other means—a concern for others that transcends the confines of their local and national communities? Is international educational solidarity a mark of the Church's vast network of schools?

Conclusion

From her origins the Church has been dedicated to the education of young people, an apostolate recognized by the Second Vatican Council to be of paramount importance for personal, ecclesial and social progress.¹⁶² Today, in an era of global communication and technology, Vatican and papal teaching continue vigorously to promote Catholic schools that recognize the primacy of the human person, teach openness to truth and foster goodness in their students.

The Church has a divinely mandated educational responsibility—"Go and teach" (cf. Mt 28: 19)—which she fulfils in a specific way through her worldwide system of schools. Despite the many challenges, the Holy See regards Church schools as irreplaceable instruments in carrying out Christ's command. Catholic schools are truly a gift to the Church, local communities, and the world.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 20.

¹⁶² Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, introduction; Benedict XVI, Angelus (30 October 2005): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 44 (2 November 2005), 1.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN GERMANY

Wolfgang Schönig

This article not only outlines the meaning of Catholic schools in Germany within the state school system from an educational theory standpoint, but also explores the special challenges these schools face in light of societal changes. In order to understand the special challenges these schools are facing, it is necessary to first provide an overview of the development of private Catholic schools. In so doing, problems that are developing in this sector of education will come to light. Following this overview, I will explore the special educational mission of non-vocational Catholic schools, which are having problems legitimising themselves on the basis of Christian principles. It will thereby be shown that private Catholic schools are being challenged by societal changes to create a new identity that can bridge the gap between religious tradition and openness to the plurality of the life experiences young people make. This gives rise to a series of questions pertaining to the development of teaching and school in general. Furthermore, it will be shown how the current paradigm shift in the practice of quality development and assurance in the state school system forces private Catholic schools to develop their own standards of quality, which is a particular problem for these schools. Finally, some conceivable development trends and research projects will be discussed.

Private Catholic Schools: Insight and Overview

Internationally, the development of modern school systems is marked by highly differentiated school settings, a variety of schools and the increasing independence of individual schools. Due to this pluralistic development of schools, it therefore comes as no surprise that private schools in general, and private Catholic schools in particular, are developing their own profiles and educational concepts and are becoming increasingly popular. This profiling of a relatively small sector of private schools is being carried out relatively quietly against the background of a broader discussion about the quality of the state school system, which has been provoked by the publication of PISA test results. The position

of Catholic schools appears to be strengthened by the poor test results received by German school children (Baumert et al., 2001; Prenzel et al., 2004). At any rate the German media self-assuredly point out the high achievement rate of Catholic schools.^a However, two factors must be considered when looking at this claim. First, there is little empirical data that offer reliable information about the actual achievements and social make-up of the pupils who attend private Catholic schools. Second, it remains unclear exactly which schools are meant. As the following overview of the Catholic school setting points out, these schools differ greatly depending on the individual sponsor of each school.

The stocktaking of the “Arbeitskreis Katholischer Schulen in freier Trägerschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” which is carried out every five years in cooperation with the “Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz,” is highly informative when examining Catholic schools in Germany. The most recent data, and the focus of the discussion at hand, stem from the 2002–2003 school year (Dikow, 2004). But to understand the data we must first determine which schools this quinquennial study looked at.

When people speak of Catholic schools in Germany, they could essentially be speaking of three different groups of schools. First, there are denominational primary schools, “Volksschulen” and “Hauptschulen.” These schools are sponsored by the municipality and have a homogenous staff and pupils, as they are organised according to the principles of a particular faith. Even teacher’s training for these schools is carried out according to denomination. Moreover, the educational practice of these schools is aligned with the ecclesiastical calendar, the liturgy, and church festivals. But the number of these schools has drastically declined and only a few states offer such diverse types of schools. One such example is North Rhine-Westphalia, where approximately 250,000 pupils attend public Catholic denominational primary schools and 20,000 pupils attend public Catholic denominational “Hauptschulen” (Dikow, 2004). In some states, such as Baden-Württemberg and Lower Saxony, the decline of denominational schools is being countered by similar arrangements for private primary schools and “Hauptschulen.” The second group of Catholic schools in Germany consists of health services’ schools, which are largely responsible for vocational training to become a nurse or paediatric nurse. As a general rule, these schools answer to the “Arbeitsministerium” and “Sozialministerium.” The final large group of Catholic schools is particularly interesting because it consists of non-vocational private Catholic schools, which are fully recognised as alternative schools in accordance with Article 7, Section 4 of the German Constitution. These schools are largely sponsored by dioceses, religious orders or by “Schulwerken” and “Schulstiftungen” (especially in southern Germany).

^a An article written by Jan-Martin Wiarda, that appeared in the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* Nr. 8 on 16 February 2006 on page 81 was entitled thus: “Frohe Botschaft. Warum konfessionelle Schulen die besseren Schüler haben”—A Happy Message: Why Denominational Schools Have Better Pupils. Wiarda supports the idea that parochial schools outclass state schools in school performance without being elitist. Andreas Verhülsdonk emphasises: “Unsere Schulen sind schon da, wo die staatlichen erst noch hinwollen”—Our schools have already reached the point that state schools are striving for. Thus Verhülsdonk is primarily thinking of the greater freedoms-afforded Catholic schools, which allows them to be on the offensive.

The above-mentioned survey and the following observations refer exclusively to this group of non-vocational Catholic schools.

A total of 531 non-vocational private Catholic schools existed in Germany in the 2002–2003 school year, of which 207 were “Gymnasien”; 162 were “Realschulen” (including two “Mittelschulen” or “Sekundarschulen” in the new states); 114 were primary schools, “Hauptschulen” and “Volksschulen”; 16 were independent “Orientierungsstufen”; 7 were “Gesamtschulen”; and 23 were “Abendschulen” and “Kollegs.” As would be expected, states with a Catholic tradition have the highest number of these schools: Bavaria has 129, North Rhine-Westphalia has 123, Baden-Württemberg has 66, Lower Saxony has 61, Rhineland-Palatinate has 43 (furthermore, Hesse has 20, Berlin 23, Saarland 11, Schleswig-Holstein one and the western German city-states Hamburg and Bremen have 26 and 11 respectively). The number of these schools in eastern German states has doubled to 40 since the last survey was taken in the 1997–1998 school year. Within this period of time, 293,584 pupils attended Catholic schools. If Catholic “Sonderschulen” and Catholic “Berufsbildende Schulen” were added to this number of non-vocational private Catholic schools, there would be more than 1,100 schools, according to Marion Wagner (Wagner, 2001a, V). This corresponds to a share of just under 3% of all pupils in Germany. Moreover, if the pupils of the approximately 800 non-vocational Protestant schools, Protestant “Förderschulen” and “Sonderschulen” as well as Protestant “Berufsschulen” were added to this number, the share of pupils would be 6% (see also overview from Klaus Klemm and Peter Krauss-Hoffmann, 1999 about Protestant schools).

Even if exact numbers diverge between individual authors, it should be noted that the demand for pupil placement in the sector of non-vocational Catholic schools exceeds the supply by roughly 25% (Dikow, 2004; Wagner, 2001b). In fact, within the course of five years the number of pupils in these schools increased by 33,199 pupils, or 12.75%, and when compared to the 1992–1993 school year, this means an increase of nearly 20%. The everwidening gap between demand and supply not only demonstrates the appeal of Catholic schools, but also indicates a number of difficulties. For despite rising numbers of pupils, the total number of Catholic schools has remained relatively stable. The quantitative increase of pupils therefore comes at the cost of the expansion of individual schools, especially “Gymnasien.” Apparently, the economic power of church-based sponsorship has been so exhausted that no new schools can be founded, a fact that affects parents and pupils alike. If such a high number of interested (and potentially committed) parents must be turned down, then the question of selection criteria becomes highly controversial. This must also be considered in light of the background that the composition of the pupils is continually changing. The problem for pupils is that “eine Chance nicht wahrgenommen werden kann, mehr jungen Menschen einen Dienst zu leisten und dem Wirken der Kirche in der Gesellschaft eine größere Resonanz zu verschaffen”¹ (Dikow, 2004, 15).

¹ Translation: more young people cannot be served while creating a greater effect of church on society.

A further problem arises when school sponsors and personnel are taken into consideration. The percentage of religious order schools has been reduced to nearly half within 15 years. These schools are run by dioceses, “Schulstiftungen” and “Schulwerken.” However, the problem remains unsolved concerning the drastic decline of jobs in religious orders and the ratio of members of religious orders to teachers of non-vocational Catholic schools, which constituted a mere 3.11% in the 2002–2003 school year (Dikow, 2004). Consequently, monks and nuns are rare even in religious order schools, and the special character of such schools must give way to other school cultures. Noteworthy is the fact that there are a number of “Gymnasien” that belong to this type of school and a high percentage of girls, roughly 65%, attending them. It should therefore be realised that a tradition is being continued, for Catholic schools gave girls access to higher education before state “Gymnasien” did. Following PISA, however, we must ask ourselves what characteristics this clientele have because PISA has proved the close relationship between social standing and school attendance at the various types of schools. It is unknown whether a parent’s choice for a Catholic “Gymnasium” corresponds to his or her affiliation in a specific occupational field or social class. But Catholic “Gymnasien” must ask themselves how far they favour girls from a strong educational background (see also Leschinsky, 1999), in other words, they must ask themselves how open they are to that particular group of youths which PISA named the educational losers, namely boys from a migrational background (Baumert et al., 2001).

An intermediary conclusion shows that private Catholic schools are enjoying increasing popularity. Of course, external data do not say anything about the quality of work done in schools. They do however signal challenges which arise due to structural change and the process of secularisation and which need to be more clearly defined. Due to the conflict that arises out of the increasing appeal of Catholic schools for parents and out of the qualitative challenges for the educational organisation of these schools, Wilhelm Wittenbruch and Ulrich Kurth ask in the title of their book *Katholische Schulen: Nachfrage steigend—Bildungswert fallend?* if the increasing demand of Catholic schools leads to a diminishing value of the education received there (Wittenbruch & Kurth, 1999). Before discussing the question about the educational mission of Catholic schools, however, we must first look at how Catholic schools explain their educational efforts and wherein parents see the appeal of these schools.

The Educational Mission of Private Catholic Schools and How They See Themselves Against the Background of Christianity

Parents are motivated to choose a Christian school for two different, yet overlapping reasons. The first reason stems from school criticism. Public state schools are accused of favouring rationalised learning, which does not penetrate to the core of young people because it neither corresponds with their search for a meaning in life nor answers their unavoidable questions about the reason of being. Moreover, school generally refers to secularised school. Critics say that school in

this sense of the word does not heed its educational task because it is too focused on symbolical and abstract learning, thereby not allowing for room to mould pupils' positive attitudes and values. Regardless of how overgeneralised such a critique of "the" state school may be, disappointing PISA results have led to an increased tendency of the public to criticise state schools and of parents increasingly to choose Catholic schools (Dikow, 2004).

The second reason why parents choose a Christian school is primarily related to anthropological and educational theory motives. This rationale is fed by the desire to choose a school that finds its strength in Christianity because such schools know how to interrelate the various dimensions of what it means to be human in order to help individuals cope with a world that is becoming increasingly complex. As for the "Proprium," or the undeniable character of Catholic schools in particular, parents expect Catholic schools to foster the development of their children's unique personalities, to hone social skills and to forge an educational community with the families.

Bearing parents' motives for choosing a particular school in mind, modern Catholic schools are trying to legitimise their pedagogical programmes based on a Christian view of humanity. It therefore goes without saying that both the Christian message of salvation and the unconditional acceptance that man is created in God's image underlie the personal definition of Catholic schools. This led Joachim Dikow to accentuate in a seminal article, that the Catholic Church is founding schools to fulfil its role of salvation (Dikow, 1988, 50). Catholic schools hereby assign themselves the task of creating a space for learning and living which allows for instruction according to the principles of the faith. One central goal of this plan, is to have the Church be experienced as a community that allows each individual pupil the freedom to make a well-founded choice of faith. But what exactly are the core Christian values that these schools support?

In accordance with the ancient Christian understanding of church as a community of Christ's followers, Hermann-Joseph Meurer highlights the following central ideas of the Christian community: "leiturgia," "martyria," and "diakonia" (Meurer, 2003). In a narrow sense of the word, "leiturgia" refers to worship services as a celebration of the Eucharist and praying. More broadly, however, it means service to God's creatures, including service to young people. Serving adolescents as beings created in God's image honours the Creator. "Martyria," on the other hand, means preaching Christ's words and deeds. Young people should therefore come to understand the message of the Gospel, that God, wants to give all humankind a fulfilled present and future. Finally, "diakonia" is targeted specifically at young people; it refers to the service provided for the spiritual welfare of the members of the Christian school community in answer to the questions, concerns, and problems which invariably arise when growing up in a complex world. Moreover, "diakonia" recalls the picture of an "organism" in which all parts of a community are codependent, an understanding that has a special status. However, this basic concern cannot be realised in the classroom alone, rather it is realised further in a cross-disciplinary educational concept at the level of individual schools. Accordingly, Catholic schools have recently

begun using various new forms of debate in the discussion about life problems. Noteworthy of mention are the projects of the “Schulpastoral” in some dioceses, which are carried out by specially trained experts for “Schulpastoral” to directly help pupils overcome life crises. The compassion projects established in some states at the beginning of the 1990s should not be forgotten either. These are social internships in institutions outside of school in which social skills such as helpfulness, cooperation and solidarity are fostered (Kuld, 2002).

Looking at the discourse about educational practices in Catholic schools more closely, the close connection becomes apparent between arguments that are critical of modernity, arguments based on educational theory, theological arguments, and arguments based on religious education. On the other hand, critics say that conventional state schools blindly follow the structural patterns of the modernisation of society, such as the dominance of economics over education, secularisation, acceleration, and rationalisation of learning, and relativising values (Fischer, 2000; Pongratz, 2000; Rekus, 2004). In a nutshell, the critique of neoliberal modernisation strategies look thus: while searching for their personal identity in the postmodern world, individuals take themselves to be the measure for freedom and see themselves as the originators of an outer reality. Accordingly, life is seen from a viewpoint that only suggests meaning and security in a “Geflecht des Faktischen”² (Kluge, 2000). The world’s development, marked by technical rationality, which gives man the authority to dispose of and steer through these self-created facts, feeds a dangerous illusion of omnipotence (Pongratz, 2000); the individual alone creates the myth of a “säkularen Selbsterlösung”³ (Anhelm, 2000). From a theological standpoint, man is not indebted to himself, rather he is dependent upon his Creator: life is a gift of God; man’s freedom is a “verdankte Freiheit,” a freedom for which all men are eternally indebted to God as the Creator and Preserver of the world. In this sense, man is bound to an absolute being that is outside himself and this requires certain forms of interpretation. Interpreting oneself and the world in the mirror of Christianity while at the same time making the interpretation clear to oneself—this would be Christian faith with practical meaning for life (Anhelm, 2000; Dressler, 2000).

Against this background and with Catholic schools in mind, Volker Ladenthin (2001) shows that conventional schools set the processes of generating knowledge in such a way that the dimension of religiousness itself is left unconsidered. According to him, conventional schools do not test the circumstances under which technical and scientific findings can be made and must therefore shield themselves from an “erkenntnistheoretisches Vakuum,” or gnostic vacuum, which is inevitably born when the nature of things is the centre of discussion. Ladenthin sees one of the central tasks of Catholic schools to be that they expound precisely those problems which other schools circumvent, namely the difficulty of absolute justification and the problem of creating a gnostic vacuum.

² Translation: weave of facts.

³ Translation: secular self-deliverance.

Therefore, he says, Catholic schools must insist that all knowledge is limited and conditional (Ladenthin, 2001, 45). Ladenthin furthers his argument by calling Catholic schools a “Stachel im Fleisch der Gesellschaft, die von sich glaubt, sie wüßte schon oder in absehbarer Zeit alles über sich und die Welt,”⁴ an idea that is absolutely contrary to a concept of a rationalised school and society (Ladenthin, 2001). As far as this issue is concerned, Ladenthin’s viewpoint concurs with that of Friedrich Schweitzer who demands that religion is a key problem⁵ (Schweitzer, 1999, p. 125), an idea that corresponds with Wolfgang Klafki’s concept of key problems (Klafki, 1985) in (Protestant) schools. Clearly, the question of religiousness directly affects individual schools.

But what is the parents’ opinion of such a fundamentally critical position and of the theological justification of Catholic schools’ educational mission? What is so important to them about Catholic schools? Dikow’s survey shows the following: the majority of parents do not see Catholic schools as “Glaubenschulen”⁶ (Dikow, 2004, p. 28). While roughly 54% of all surveyed parents find that “Glaubensfragen in der Schule eine Rolle spielen,”⁷ this aspect is of utmost importance for a mere 28.3% (Dikow, 2004, p. 26). An analogous result was found for “Einführung in eine heute mögliche Glaubenspraxis”⁸ (Dikow, 2004, p. 26). It therefore appears, that the self-conception of Catholic schools, and the orientation of parents diverge. Parents choose a Catholic school primarily because they can count on a good teaching staff that encourage pupils to dedicate themselves to social causes and that cultivate the entire individual in his or her developmental process. Furthermore, it is important to parents that the school “sich um die Erziehungsgemeinschaft von Elternhaus und Schule bemüht”⁹ (Dikow, 2004, p. 26). This is understandable because in contrast to state schools, the educational mission of Catholic schools is derived directly from the tasks parents assign the school (Dikow, 1988). The high expectations placed on the power of Catholic schools to educate pupils by no means preclude the demand for a high expectation of performance (see also Sennekamp, 2001b). Thus it may come as a surprise that roughly 28% of parents hold high levels of performance for very important and approximately 60% of parents hold this for important, while only a few parents see a problem with the performance pressure placed on schools. It is therefore clear from these findings that basic inquiries into a notion of performance try to take a holistic approach to school performance and bear in mind the continual development of adolescents (Schönig, 1999).

An important question for research is, whether or not, the expectations of a consistent educational concept of Catholic schools is realised on the basis of an educational community. Arguing from an empirical standpoint, Rainer Ilgner

⁴ Translation: a thorn in the flesh of society, which believes it knows everything about itself and the world now or will know everything in the near future.

⁵ Schweitzer talks of “Religion als Schlüsselproblem.”

⁶ Translation: schools of faith.

⁷ Translation: questions of faith play a role in school.

⁸ Translation: introduction to possibilities of practising faith today.

⁹ Translation: strives to create an educational community by connecting families to the school.

critically states the following: “Wer die Realität des katholischen Schulwesens in unserem Land kennt, ist sich freilich auch darüber im klaren, daß die Idee eines solchen individuellen Erziehungskonzeptes, in dem die einzelne Schule ihr Erziehungsprogramm definiert und ihre Identität beschreibt, vielerorts erst noch entdeckt werden muß”¹⁰ (Ilgner, 1999, p. 91; see also Ilgner, 1994).

Catholic School Identity: A Balancing Act Between Tradition of Faith and Plurality of Life Spheres

Not only state schools, but also Catholic schools are confronted with the problem of the loss of tradition, secularisation, plurality of the situations adolescents face, and changes in educational requirements, all problems that make everyday school life less manageable and less secure (Rauschenberger, 1999). School has become more difficult, and especially challenges communication amongst teaching staff and with parents about their tasks and goals. In fact, it is widely believed that the quality of education received at Catholic schools is automatically better than that received at state schools. This is primarily because of the dialogue created in the teaching staff due to continuing education of teachers, teams that are organised, and the continual work done on school programmes which is institutionalised (Wagner, 2001b; Wittenbruch, 1999)—communication about experiences is an essential characteristic of parochial schools. In opposition thereto is the opinion that the trend in society towards secularisation and individualisation does not stop because of teaching staff at parochial schools, rather, individual teaching styles leave a lasting impression on pupils, thereby driving forward the dissolution of basic communal standpoints through teaching and education. But since we do not have enough empirical research (Schweitzer, 1999), such observations are rather speculative. However, this does call attention to the fact that Catholic schools are confronted with a large task, a specifically Christian task of bringing out the special denominational aspect in a world that is changing drastically.

In the discussion about the specific concept of Catholic schools there are at least two aspects of reference that must be recognised. On the one hand, there is the Catholic faith with its individual traditions and ways of life. On the other hand, there are the special working conditions of individual schools in their concrete settings. It remains to be seen which basic Catholic beliefs are able to withstand the test of time and claim universal validity and which beliefs must be revamped to conform to current goings-on in the world (Nordhofen, 2001). It is obvious that the educational contents of Catholic schools can no longer be deduced from the dogma of the Church if the Church’s work in the field of education is supposed to have a meaning for the greater public. It can only be

¹⁰ Translation: Those who are familiar with the reality of the Catholic school system in our country certainly know that the idea of such an individual educational concept, in which individual schools define their educational programmes, has yet to be discovered in many places.

“anschlussfähig,” that is connectable, if the contents of faith and education are discussed (Anhelm, 2000).

This moved Rainer Ilgner in his commentary to the first volume of the *Handbuch Katholische Schule* (Ilger, 1994), to take up the idea of “progetto educativo,” the educational concept of the Catholic Church developed at the Second Council of the Vatican. “Progetto educativo” indicates that it is no longer about specifiable, individual characteristics of Catholic schools, “sondern um die regulativen Ideen für die immer neue Auseinandersetzung mit wechselnden geschichtlichen und gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen und für die unterschiedlichen Ausformungen von Schulpraxis”¹¹ (Knab, 1998, 164). Using the idea of a project, Ilgner speaks of “projet éducatif” to emphasise the openness and dynamism of this educational concept at the level of individual schools and to make room for the idea of school development (Ilgner, 1999). Part of this “projet éducatif” is dealing with the tension between the uniqueness of Christ’s life and crucifixion on the one hand and the mission of proclaiming the Christian faith to others on the other hand (Nordhofen, 2001). Therefore, a central question for the theoretical foundation and the practical design of Catholic schools is how, on the one hand, faith can be proclaimed and, on the other hand, the dignity of *all* members of the school community can be respected. In other words, the question is how to cultivate the tradition of Catholicism while practising solidarity with people of other faiths or atheists in school.

The council text of the Second Council of the Vatican, “Nostra aetate,” holds other faiths in high esteem and emphasises the unifying moment between them with the term “Communio,” or the forging of relations (Rahner & Vorgrimmler, ¹²1978). This makes it clear that it neither makes sense to ignore religious or confessional differences nor to level them out to the greatest common denominator. Only after the differences between confessions and religions are seen, is it possible to interrelate them and to stimulate a dialogue in order to learn from one another (Scheilke, 2002) by acting in accordance with the idea that similarities strengthen and differences must not be ignored.^b At any rate, confessional differences in schools challenge new modes of encountering others, whether in the form of confessional and cooperative religious instruction (Nordhofen, 2002; Frank, 2002) or in everyday school life.

These challenges are especially controversial, in so far as a considerable share of pupils attending Catholic schools are not Catholic. Moreover, children today frequently no longer have a “konfessionelle Heimat”¹² and grow up in multi-confessional families or even have volatile family relationships (Krautter, 2000). Indeed, the above-mentioned survey carried out by Dikow (Dikow, 2004) shows that the share of Catholic pupils at Catholic schools

¹¹ Translation: rather it is about regulatory ideas for evererupting discussions about changing historical and societal conditions and for the diverse forms of everyday school life.

¹² Translation: a religious home.

^b “Gemeinsamkeiten stärken – Unterschiede gerecht werden” is the title of the religious education project in primary schools supported by the “Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaften” (DFG). This project is currently being carried out by Schweitzer (Protestant religion) and Biesinger (Catholic religion), two instructors of religious education at the University of Tübingen

has decreased in previous years, constituting roughly 77% of all pupils in the 2002–2003 school year. According to his study, one-fifth of all pupils are Protestant. And while the number of Muslim pupils is low, this particular group of pupils is growing. It may be seen as a reaction to the everchanging denominational make-up of the pupils attending Catholic schools and to a diminishing practice of faith in the home that certain practices of religious life cannot be easily realised in schools. For this reason the number of worship services and religious holidays has decreased in schools. The latter is certainly coupled with the increased workload demanded of teachers and the decreased economic buying power of some homes. Remarkable is the fact, that 15% of all pupils, or 40,000 pupils, attending non-vocational Catholic schools come from single-parent households (all statistics: Dikow, 2004). Therefore, Catholic schools are no longer excluded from the task of having to cater to pupils' special needs.

The “project éducatif” as a development of the school must be seen in light of this background. School development at the level of the individual school means today the method by which teachers collaboratively work to systematically deal with the problems of institutionalised teaching, learning, working, and living (Schönig, 2000). In this process the task of school development in Catholic schools is contingent upon the faith in contrast to state schools. Teaching and school life should be arranged so as to capture the spirit of the religion. Though religious instruction plays a fundamental role in “was unbedingt angeht,”¹³ “religion” cannot be exhausted in a single school subject. Questions about the meaning of life must be discussed in every subject (Ladenthin, 2001) because “religiöse Fragen melden sich nicht ‘diszipliniert’ im Doppelsinn des Wortes ...”¹⁴ (Knab, 1995, 70). For this reason, the proportion of individual school subjects to integrated disciplines must be taken into consideration. For where learning outside of the cellular organisational structure of school takes place, learning opportunities will arise more easily, that allow, for personal (religious) experiences and active and practical exposure to world phenomena and that make interreligious learning possible. Yet even with organised learning, faith cannot be “manufactured” because it always stands in a dialectic between freedom of the individual and a merciful gift of God. Therefore, the question is, which social environment individual schools should provide for the cultivation of decisions based on faith.

Implications of New Forms of Quality Control and Development of Quality for Schools

PISA, an international school achievement test, is a component, of a developing state philosophy of quality assurance, through a new means of monitoring school performance. This turnabout has become characteristic of all industrialised

¹³ Translation: what must necessarily be addressed.

¹⁴ Translation: questions pertaining to religion do not arise in a disciplined manner, in a double meaning of the word.

nations that wish to be competitive in the global marketplace. It is therefore not surprising that the OECD, an organisation for the *economic* co-operation and development of nations, initiated the reform of school systems through an international system of monitoring. Until recently, a close-meshed net of bureaucratic state preliminary regulations marked quality assurance of schools in a particular school system. Statutory ordinances, decrees, administrative regulations, and detailed curricula were created to ensure that schools adhered to these guidelines. This system of regulation is also known as output-oriented education and no monitoring of the actual achievements of schools took place.

Initiated by rapid societal and cultural changes, individual schools developed their own personal concepts of school. This occurred in individual countries and the various states of the Federal Republic of Germany at different speeds and led to a plurality of educational settings and a multitude of school types. Apparently, differences in quality between schools have grown larger, so large in fact, that conventional means of individual state monitoring, which aimed at school uniformity, no longer adequately controls the situation. Henceforth, the state has been changing its means for monitoring schools. In lieu of preliminary procedural standardisation the state is gradually introducing later evaluations of school quality, a phenomenon known as output-oriented education. The conventional system of regulations is increasingly being withdrawn and schools are gaining more educational freedom to develop individual school concepts. This is happening, however, at the cost of greater accountability of schools for their attained achievements aided by a sophisticated evaluation system. This process has progressed at different speeds in the various German states. While the city-states as well as Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia had already begun implementing this system of evaluation in the mid-1990s, the southern states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria have only recently embarked upon this path (see also Schönig & Häußler, 2005).

Educational standards, which were established by the “Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder” (KMK) on 4 December 2003, are an integral part of this orchestra of reform (<http://www.kmk.org/schul/home/htm>). These are competencies that are directly related to individual school subjects and that pupils should acquire by the time they finish a certain class in school. Thus far the KMK has set educational standards for German and mathematics in the fourth year at primary schools; for German, mathematics, and the first foreign language for the ninth year at “Hauptschulen”; and for German, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, and the first foreign language for the “Mittleren Abschluss,” which is attained after the tenth year. As a general rule, centrally administered tests monitor to what extent pupils have achieved set standards. In contrast to achievements—which define a highly limited spectrum of knowledge, skills, and proficiencies—competencies aim at the application of knowledge in particular situations. They therefore refer to pragmatic aspects of formal skills and behaviours which are defined identically for all adolescents in a particular class.

A controversial discussion has arisen in Germany over the introduction of educational standards (see also Böttcher, 2003; Brügelmann, 2003; Klieme, 2003;

Schlömerkemper, 2004). While some people expect equal opportunities, better rates of school achievement, and a means to rationally monitor pupils' competencies, others see a widely standardised school system that "teaches for the test" and sells off education. As alternative schools, non-vocational Catholic schools are dependent on state educational funding and are therefore obliged to fulfil the educational standards and demonstrate their quality of work through self-evaluation and evaluation from others. Against this background people have begun asking if Catholic schools are in the process of finding themselves or if they are "auf dem besten Wege, sich selbst zu verlieren"¹⁵ (Wagner, 2001a, V). Critics call attention to the danger for parochial schools, that the adopted course of state reform may be more about an economically motivated outlook on education, (Fischer, 2000; see also Wittenbruch, 1999) than about an increase in educational quality as a whole. Moreover, some people fear that religiousness will be expelled from Catholic schools altogether. Arguments stemming from educational theory carry a special weight in the current discussion in the context of Catholic schools and these arguments shall be discussed forthwith.

Based on the idea that the economy today is a "Form menschlicher Gesamtp Praxis"¹⁶ (Rekus, 2004, p. 287), Jürgen Rekus looks into the connection between education and educational standards. Rekus states that educational standards, which are demonstrated in competencies, do not aim at the development of an autonomous identity of individuals, rather they aim at formal behaviours that can be tested objectively and "gegenstandsgleichgültig," or without paying attention to various subject matter (Rekus, 2004, p. 287). Accordingly, he states that competencies have an affirmative character as far as they refer to behaviours that can be recalled at any time and in any place. He further claims that competencies have no value in and of themselves, rather they have a value of benefit because they have no substantial content and attempt to prove that individuals can move in a network of flexible, anonymous, functional processes under competition conditions. In line with Rekus' thinking, Ludwig Pongratz emphasises that the "Zwangscharakter," or the feeling of being forced to do something, present in modern industrialised nations not only leads to people having to market themselves but also leads to a reification of individuals. Pongratz claims that young people are supposed to learn to be "erfolgreiche, flexible, mobile, gut ankommende Selbst-Verkäufer"¹⁷ (Pongratz, 2000, p. 179). Therefore they are raised to be lifelong "Lern-Nomaden," or nomads of learning, spurned on by the concern that, they have to continually put on a show for others. In so doing, Pongratz argues, one particular characteristic of education, namely its stability and the ability to connect itself with the outside world, is forfeited. He further argues that this deformation of education must necessarily be withdrawn from the consciousness of the public through a mythological veil: "Das reformpädagogische Pathos, mit dem sich die Ökonomisierungsimperative den Praktikern andienen,

¹⁵ Translation: on their way to losing themselves.

¹⁶ Translation: an outlet for all human experience.

¹⁷ Translation: successful, flexible, well-received sellers of themselves.

lässt den realen Zwangszusammenhang hinter einer Nebelwand liberaler Wunschvorstellungen verschwinden ...”¹⁸ (Pongratz, 2000, p. 180).

According to Aloysius Regenbrecht, the choice of vocabulary used in the new educational reforms demonstrates this very camouflage. Indeed, he calls the term educational standard itself a “sprachliche Missgeburt nach PISA,”¹⁹ a means of deception. He claims that this word was chosen because it must be played down that educational standards have nothing to do with education and everything to do with monitorable rates of pupils’ achievement (Regenbrecht, 2005). The question remains how to fill the term “Bildung,” which I have here, called education with content.

Rekus alludes to a traditional understanding of education and includes it in the sphere of personality, being able to confront life, and understanding the world (Rekus, 2004). In contrast to competencies, which are a mere mastery of skills, education refers to the ability to form one’s own opinions and attitudes critically and objectively. Viewed in this light, education presupposes that reason prevails and therefore aims at “in den unvorhersehbaren Situationen des Lebens vernünftig handeln und dieses Handeln verantworten zu können”²⁰ (Rekus, 2004, p. 293). Thus education comprises a probationary criterion that is rooted in the notion that individuals are self-determined. But in light of Christian understanding, self-determination is not akin to man’s being entirely in charge of his actions. In fact, education is a decisive criterion for morality. For this reason Volker Ladenthin focuses on the moral judgement of man (Ladenthin, 2003) by which he refers to man’s ability to make decisions that serve the common good. Accordingly, he claims that such decisions aim at the whole and not at gaining quick, short-term advantages (Ladenthin, 2003, p. 70). But morality is neither sufficiently regarded by PISA nor is it adequately reflected in the newly designed educational standards. The renowned psychologist Franz E. Weinert states self-critically that there is “im Bereich motivationaler, volitionaler, sozialer, ethischer und moralischer Kompetenzen immer noch einen großen Mangel an zuverlässigen, gültigen und leicht handhabbaren Messmethoden”²¹ (Weinert, 2001, p. 358).

Apart from morality, Ladenthin also singles out aesthetics as a second constitutive characteristic of education, or “Bildung.” By this he means being able to see disregarded phenomena in a new light and “etwas auf neue Art zu gestalten”²² (Ladenthin, 2003, p. 70). Education is therefore attributed with a moment of active creation, of creative and formative access to the world. It is not, however, concerned with the adaptation of individuals to pre-existing structures, but

¹⁸ Translation: the pathos of educational reforms with which practising teachers palm off the imperative of economisation allows the current forced connection to disappear behind a curtain of liberal desires.

¹⁹ Translation: freak use of language that has arisen following PISA.

²⁰ Translation: being able to act rationally in unpredictable situations and taking responsibility for one’s actions.

²¹ Translation: still a lack of reliable, valid, and easily managed methods of measurement in the field of motivational, volitional, social, ethical, and moral competencies.

²² Translation: being able to redesign something in a new manner.

rather to the configuration of meaningful life affairs. In other words, adolescents should not just learn to fulfil predetermined standards, rather they should learn to set their own rational, morally responsible standards. Thus education means the skill of being able to set one's own goals.

By following this educational theory discussion, the danger becomes apparent that educational standards undermine an enriched education. Therefore, Catholic schools are confronted with the dual task of educating pupils because of and despite educational standards and of defending specifically Christian aspects of individual school concepts. It is obvious that Catholic schools show the limitations of educational standards and reclaim the missing dimension of a comprehensive religious education for themselves. As far as quality of instruction is concerned, educational standards are useful indicators of quality, promote reflection about instruction, and define quality of education; they are, however, only one criterion among many. It is important for Catholic schools that a distinguishing "Proprium" can take effect in their curricula. However, this "Proprium" has yet to be attached to educational standards because it cannot be restricted to individual school subjects. The specifically Christian educational and social mission of Catholic schools is realised by the fact that the various learning spaces and learning opportunities dovetail and that the schools themselves become places to meet others and experience things with a specifically Christian outlook. Only by practising the faith—by praying, meditating, and working with youths and through worship services, devotions, spiritual guidance, and counselling—is the specific educational quality of Catholic schools disclosed; educational standards are but one facet of this (Rothgangel & Fischer, 2004).

Officials of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches have quickly warned of the impending reduction of the term "Bildung" and have especially warned of the reductions in religious instruction. In fact, German bishops published "Kirchliche Richtlinien zu Bildungsstandards für den katholischen Religionsunterricht in den Jahrgangsstufen 5–10/Sekundarstufe I (Mittlerer Abschluss)"²³ on 23 September 2004 (Sekretariat, 2004). In contrast to the rather formal state educational standards, this particular set of guidelines disclose content-based competencies that should be acquired through religious instruction. They aim at establishing religious attitudes as well as making religion and faith possible. The learning processes for religious education are thereby emphasised: "Auch religiöse Bildung erfordert die Selbsttätigkeit der Schülerinnen und Schüler. Unterricht ist deshalb nicht im Sinne einer Output orientierten Systemsteuerung, sondern als kommunikativen Handeln zu verstehen und zu gestalten"²⁴ (Sekretariat, 2004, p. 11). This message is not only a rebuff for a one-sided, cognitive, and product-oriented kind of learning, but for applied religion as well.

²³ Translation: denominational guidelines for educational standards of Catholic religion classes for years 5–10.

²⁴ Translation: religious education demands that pupils act on their own accord, too. Instruction is therefore not meant as an output-oriented system of monitoring, rather it is a communicative act that should be organised thus.

Moreover, religious instruction is assigned the role of a methodical leader. It is remarkable that some sponsors of Catholic schools have compiled manuals with which teachers can define the quality of their religion lessons in accordance with a Christian understanding of education (e.g., Gandlau, 2004). Even the “Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland” has looked critically at the new competence and goal-oriented learning required by educational standards and is lobbying for a different culture of teaching in which learning is personally meaningful to adolescents: “Ein solches ‘sinnvolles’ Lernen bedeutet: einhalten, nachdenken, sich sammeln, Zeit lassen zum Begreifen, zu sich selbst kommen—und so auch zu den Sachen”²⁵ (Rat,^b2003, p. 63).

Agenda for Future Research and Development

Given the diverse challenges facing Catholic schools today, it is pertinent to look at proven research findings. However, people who read the literature about Catholic schools, will be disappointed to see that a great vacuum exists in this respect. According to Rafael Frick, one indication of the utter lack of research in this field is the widespread ignorance of the theoretical foundation of Catholic schools not only amongst teachers but also in the field of education science: “In deutlichem Gegensatz zur imposanten Statistik des Systems Katholische Schule [...] steht der geringe Kenntnisstand der erziehungswissenschaftlichen Öffentlichkeit hinsichtlich der Theorie und Praxis katholischer Schulen: die aktuellen kirchlichen Standpunkte und Entwicklungen im Hinblick auf Pädagogik und Schule sind, soweit dies aus der Anzahl der Thematisierungen in wissenschaftlichen Publikationen ruckgeschlossen werden kann, in Deutschland kaum rezipiert ...”²⁶ (Frick, 2006, p. 3). In fact, there is but one research project in this field; it is solely concentrated on the effectiveness and problems of Catholic schools and has just commenced (see also Wittenbruch & Werres, 1992). The motivation that should come from Catholic schools for state schools (Dikow, 1988) would probably be stronger if only Catholic schools would let their propagated and unique educational weight be empirically proven. Based on the explanations above only a rough sketch of some goals for research and development can be given.

- One major field of research and development is Catholic schools’ understanding of achievement. It appears as though the noble claims of educational achievement and the levels of performance actually required of schools contradict each other. On the one hand, Catholic schools live off

²⁵ Translation: such meaningful learning means stopping, contemplating, concentrating, taking time to understand, coming to terms with oneself, and thereby also with the subject matter.

²⁶ Translation: the impressive statistics of the Catholic school system stand in stark contrast to the absolute ignorance of the education science public as far as theory and practice are concerned: the current standpoint of the Church and the developments with regard to education and school are—as far as can be determined from the number of discussions in scholarly publications—hardly taken up in Germany.

a culture of sticking up for, helping, encouraging, and supporting others. On the other hand, conventional teacher-centred instruction is often found in schools in which it is well known that the individual learning potential of pupils is not exhausted: “Wenn auch dem strengen, vielleicht überdimensionierten Leistungsbewusstsein durch eine engagierte Kultur des Helfens viel von seiner Bedrohlichkeit genommen wird, so ist doch nicht auszuschließen, dass gerade durch die gleichartige Struktur von Erwartungen und durch die gemeinsame Akzeptanz der Leistungsnorm von Elternhaus und Schule eine – möglicherweise nicht immer kontrollierte – soziale Verstärkung dieses Leistungsdenkens geschieht, die sinnvolle Grenzen wohl auch überschreitet”²⁷ (Vorsmann, 1999, p. 139). If the Christian idea of man refers to the dignity of the individual, his being made in God’s image and his uniqueness, then lessons must also allow for these ideas and be fostered by diverse teaching methods and individualised performance demands in order to encourage the development of the personal endowments of each and every pupil. This is not only a task of utmost importance for teachers as professionals, but it is also an important task for research. It must be demonstrated how a multidimensional individualised learning that is aimed at the individual in a Christian setting can succeed better than in conventional state schools. Therefore, accompanying pupils after they have completed school is essential in this context, for this kind of research can show what happens to alumni of Catholic schools occupationally and socially, as citizens, and as far as church activities are concerned.

- In the past few years, religious instruction has played a key role in the development of Catholic schools among others (see also Battke et al., 2002). It appears that teachers of religion, by virtue of the unique objective of their subject, use a wider variety of teaching methods than their colleagues who teach other subjects. One indication of this is Dikow’s finding that no other subject uses as many individually designed teaching materials as Catholic religion classes. This practice has been confirmed in at least 70% of all non-vocational Catholic schools (Dikow, 2004, pp. 35–36). The potential for reform contained in this type of teaching is merely suggested. It would therefore be fruitful to analyse how motivational teaching materials used in religion classes are taken up in staff discussions and transformed into concrete steps for school development. One final comment on this topic is necessary: there is a lack of case studies directly related to school development that go above and beyond mere sketches of individual schools.
- Finally, it is worth noting that we know little about the practical consequences of educational standards. Aside from school evaluations, it is necessary to implement an evaluation of educational standards. Such a demand,

²⁷ Translation: even if the threatening nature of a strict and potentially oversized performance consciousness is removed by a dedicated culture of helping others, it cannot be ignored that especially because of a similar acceptance of the performance norm by parents and schools—potentially not always controllable—an arguably irrational social reinforcement of this way of thinking about performance is encouraged.

however, infringes on the presently favoured system of empirical research in the field of education in Germany, which is concerned with the verification of the effects of education on pupils and not just with learning and achievement. This, of course, presupposes an educational theory of schools and increasingly requires the means of qualitative social research, hereby closing this circle of argumentation.

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CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN POLAND

Rev. Dr. Włodzimierz Wiczorek

The dynamism of Catholic education in Poland is related to 1989. It was then that the political transformation began, and in 1991 it brought about legislative changes with regard to education. Old Catholic schools have been reactivated and new schools have been established since that time, an important educational phenomenon in the country and an important pastoral phenomenon in the Church. Changes in the law have made it possible for the Church to develop an important mission, which is “to be free in establishing schools of any kind or degree and govern them”.¹ These schools, being authentic educational institutions, are obliged to function within the frameworks of the educational law, confirm with the standards of didactic, educational, and protective function. They are rooted in the Church and have a Catholic character and they aim at evangelisation. They are supposed to carry it out in the context of transformations difficult for education and crises of culture. This study seeks to describe how Catholic education functions in Poland, stressing that it has to carry out its specific goals in a confrontation with contemporary challenges. In order to accomplish the intended goal, some manifestations of the crisis of contemporary culture will be discussed; they are threats to an integral development of adolescents and children. Drawing on these threats, some attempts will be shown at responses to them, such attempts that present organisation and programmes. The final part will list sources of the issue under study and propose initiatives which could become objects of more intensive actions of Catholic education. One cannot address these issues without showing first the current situation of Catholic schools.

¹ DWCH 8 (Sobór Watykański II. Deklaracja o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim, w: Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje, dekryty, deklaracje [Vatican Council II. The Declaration on Christian Education. In Vatican Council II. Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations], Kraków, 1967, pp. 313–323).

Catholic Schools in Poland—Reactivation and New Dynamism

The first Catholic schools in Poland were established in the 13th century. They were parochial and religious centres of education. The classes in which boys dominated were theoretical and practical. Young people were taught the principles of reading, counting, and agriculture. The cathedral schools offered a higher level of education. Their syllabus included classes in arithmetic, grammar, rhetoric, music, or else astronomy.

The orders which specialised in schools were Piarists and Jesuits; in education, they laid stress on students' formation. Thus the syllabus included classes in the principles of conduct, ethics, or eloquence.

From 1772, when Poland lost independence, Catholic schools concentrated on the maintenance of culture and national awareness. When Poland regained independence in 1918, a new stage of Polish education began, and new educational challenges were posed. This resulted from a demand for a new generation of intelligence, ready to take responsibility for the formation of state structures. There was a need to unify the educational system which was supposed to make foundations of a common national awareness in Polish society divided by partitions.

The Church in Poland responded to these requirements by establishing the Catholic University of Lublin in 1918, one of the first educational institutions in the reborn Poland. In the very beginning its staff came from the milieu of Polish scientists working at the Spiritual Academy and University in Sankt Petersburg.² For decades KUL has remained the only Catholic university in the whole eastern block and up to now has been the only Catholic university in Poland. The development of Catholic education was completely interrupted by the outbreak of World War II.

The post-war years were characterised by regress. Catholic education was then resisted by the authorities enforced by the Soviet Union. This process came through the period of mass dissolution of Catholic schools in 1949 and 1962; only nine religious schools survived to increase their number up to 14. This situation stayed for over 20 years and it was only after 1989, when Poland had completely regained independence, that a hope arose for a rapid reconstruction of Catholic education. A comparison of statistical data pinpoints that in 1989 the number of Catholic schools equalled merely 3.6% of the state of Catholic education in 1937, when there 390 such schools.

Together with the increase of the political significance of Catholics and their participation in public life the influence of Catholic thought in Poland became more and more obvious. Despite the decrease in the number of practising Catholics after 1989 the demand for Catholic schools was constantly increasing. What is interesting is that children and adolescents attending such schools came also from milieus that were religiously neutral, or even ideologically negative.

² G. Karolewicz, *Geneza Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego* [The Genesis of the Catholic University of Lublin]. In G. Karolewicz, M. Zahajkiewicz, & Z. Zieliński (Eds.), *Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski. Wybrane zagadnienia z dziejów Uczelni* [The Catholic University of Lublin. Some Selected Issues from the History of the University] (pp. 47–50). Lublin: RW KUL, 1992.

Since 1991 the number of Catholic schools has been constantly increasing and today it equals 450, with 80,000 students. A majority of them function in big cities, although there are initiatives to establish them in the province. Everywhere an offer of Catholic schools enjoys great popularity with a view to their standard of teaching, a high coefficient of graduates who attend good schools or universities, an interesting syllabus, and standard of formation. Kraków may be an example of popularity; for one seat in a Catholic school there were more than four candidates.³

Catholic schools are conducted by religious and diocesan founding bodies. They are male and female religious orders, the Association of the Friends of Catholic Schools, the Association of Catholic Families, or dynamic parishes. From the point of view of the law, a school becomes Catholic when it is governed by respective church authorities, a church subject of the law, or a Catholic foundation. It must, however, according to the canon law, possess a licence issued by bishop of the actual place and be grounded on the principles of Christian doctrine.⁴

Statistics show that the largest number of Catholic schools is conducted by religious orders—35% of all Catholic educational centres in Poland. Salesians are in the lead among them; they run 61 various kinds of schools. Since 1994 all Catholic schools are united in the National Board of Catholic Schools (Pol. KRSK) established by the Polish Episcopate. The Board is chaired by a chairman appointed by the Conference of the Polish Episcopate (Pol. KEP). It is also assisted by a bishop appointed by KEP. Since 1998 KRSK is a member of the European Committee of Catholic Education with its seat in Brussels, and regularly takes part in the World Congresses of Catholic Education.⁵

Challenges of the Present Times

Democratic transformations that have taken place after 1989 have undoubtedly created better conditions for the development of education. Freedom of speech has been restored, new opportunities for private enterprise have been created also in the sector of education, and in social awareness a belief has set in that education is a value worthy to be invested in. The reforms that have been introduced have allowed to regulate rules connected with the financing of the public sector and Catholic education. The problems with which Catholic schools struggled were no longer of a political-legal character. Rather, they were and are challenges linked with the crisis of European culture.

³ Cf. *Szkoły katolickie. Leksykon Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* [Catholic Schools. A Directory of the Catholic Church (the state on 2nd August 2003)] Warsaw, 2003, p. 291; *Szkolnictwo katolickie w Polsce. Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijańskich Dziel Wychowania w Krakowie* [Catholic Education in Poland. The Society of Christian Works of Education in Kraków], Kraków, 2005.

⁴ Cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 803.

⁵ Cf. *Catholic Schools. The Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland*, p. 291.

The Crisis of Contemporary Culture

At the sources of the crisis of culture there was a warped understanding of the personal dimension of man and woman. On the one hand we had a materialistic worldview, and on the other the individual was subjected to a system. These attempts were designed to make the person deprived of his subjectivity, subordinate to the state and deprived of his transcendental relations.

Among the most essential manifestations of this anthropological reduction one can name alienation. It can be seen in the fact that human artefacts, like scientific discoveries, social institutions, political systems, or tools, have gained an independent being and often are used against man and to threaten his biological, psychological, and moral spheres. This problem took on the shape of such tendencies among socio-economic transformations which have caused considerable unemployment, unequal economic development of social groups, among which a large part of society is very poor and there are abuses in the sphere of workers' rights. To some extent this is a consequence of typical communistic system fighting against the right to private property with its by-product: loss of a difference between the common good and one's own good. This kind of attitude often takes on the form of sacrificing a large common good in order to make one's own interest.

The problem of impoverished social milieus requires of schools with Catholic social sensitivity to take up concrete actions so that they do not disregard in their educational work poorer milieus. The point is to offer grants, free tuition, or other forms to reach the impoverished milieus—usually rural. Together with material poverty there is a phenomenon of marginalisation and various kinds of pathologies, or delinquent behaviour. Taking into account family situations, dangers of the application of psychoactive substances, or other forms of addiction, must shape formative and protective taken by Catholic education.⁶

Another expression of anthropological misunderstanding in culture is a peculiar domination of "to have" over "to be." The contemporary point is to change the hierarchy of values so that the principal place is occupied by material goods rather than to personal, or spiritual values. This kind of change leads to man's reification in which he loses his subjectivity and gives in to the consumer mechanisms of lifestyle. In the context of social transformations in Poland the influence of materialistic culture of the West falls on the society that is going through a complex of deficit. It is expressed in its readiness to win material goods, positions, power, or values. This problem takes on various forms in education. An example of this may be the tendencies among children and adolescents to gain recognition by manifesting their own affluence and its related forms of rivalry. Another challenge is rivalry among schools for prestige in the category of effectiveness of tuition. The priorities of schools are set in such a way that commercial success be ensured, so that the talented youth from rich families may be

⁶ The Congregation for Catholic Formation. The document: Catholic school at the threshold of the third millennium no. 7. In I. Skubiś (Ed.), *The School as a Place to Form Patriotic Attitude. Catholic School at the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (p. 12). Częstochowa, 1998.

attracted. Private schools call it “success,” but no doubt if Catholic schools wish to preserve their identity they must lay emphases differently.

From the point of view of the faulty vision of man and woman human freedom in the profound sense of the word is endangered, as “freedom from” and “freedom to.” The problem here is linked with deformation, mutual isolation or limitation of the most human values, such as truth, goodness, love, or openness to the transcendental sacrum.⁷ The manifestations of wrong freedoms are apparent in relation to the problem of nature, where man is often perceived as a subject of truly creative powers. He is seen to be submissive to the laws that govern the world of nature, in which there dominates a willingness to satisfy one’s purely biological needs. As a result, there is a peculiar mixture of freedom and nature which takes on the form of man’s liberation by a return to nature in customs. This is reflected in the progressive liberalisation of human sexual behaviour.

Among the phenomena connected with this fact one may find liberalisation of manners and beliefs related to the morality of marital life. The number of divorces or incomplete families is increasing despite the traditional model of life rooted in Catholicism. In the situation in which parents do not take the burden of sexual formation the school is posed with another challenge. School syllabuses include problems connected with preparation for family life and preparation of parents for conversations on this type of question.

This problem is also manifested in youth pop culture in which “pop” authorities and controversial patterns are imposed on young people by tabloids. This undoubtedly affects their language, way of thinking, valuing, and the system of signs designed to be used in a generation communication. This arouses a pedagogical problem of considerable importance: the limits of students’ freedom under the influence of such patterns. The problem is connected with the question how to help them, without constraining their youthful spontaneity and authenticity of expression, to be freed from the destructive influence of such “freedom”. Evading this task, which is taking place in many state or private schools, in the name of tolerance, or under any other pretext, does not correspond with students’ interests and in fact is an escape from the duty proper for educational institutions.⁸

The warped understanding of the personal dimension of man and woman as a source of cultural crisis is connected with secularism and theoretical–practical atheism. The latter was for many years written in the political structures in Poland. As a result, communism took the struggle against the Church and its teaching as one of its priorities. This struggle in fact did not bring about the intended results,

⁷ Cf. J. Dobrzyńska, *Wiara i kultura. Materiały: III Ogólnopolskie Forum Młodzieży Szkół Katolickich* [Faith and Culture. Materials: 3rd Nation-wide Forum of the Youth of Catholic Schools], (no place of edition), 2003, p. 5.

⁸ Cf. D. Sławiński, *Jak w procesie edukacyjnym szkoły przekazywać dziedzictwo kultury chrześcijańskiej* [How to Teach about the Heritage of Christian Culture in the Educational Process of School]. In J. Dobrzyńska (Ed.), *Wiara fundamentem kultury* [Faith as a Foundation of Culture] (pp. 58–59). *Materiały Ogólnopolskiego Forum Szkół Katolickich* [Materials of the nationwide forum of Catholic schools] Jasna Góra, 13–15 November 2003, Warszawa, 2003.

for the dominating majority of the citizens were baptised Catholics, but it was not without any consequences. Although the number of declarations to reject God is not big, the manifestations of practical atheism increase; morality is rationally isolated from faith in God. This secularism can be noticed in such attitudes in which human beings pose themselves as points of reference of all ethical relations, do not accept any forms of authority, both religious and those with metaphysical grounds.

The consequences of moral autonomy are varied. They include not only a simple moral permissiveness, relativisation, or a belief that the individual's conscience is autonomous in establishing the categories of good and evil. In the area of formation there is a problem of an entirely axiologically neutral tuition which penetrates syllabuses together with the postmodern conception of science. If there is no formation for values, or development of skills to pass proper judgments of values, the process of formation will certainly be poor.⁹ This phenomenon has a strict link with the ousting of the existence of a personal God from human awareness. For Catholic schools in which ethical formation makes one of the principal traits the these phenomena constitute a challenge to make students' awareness more profound as to the need of religious practices. Only a personal experience of God's presence can make a complementary factor of coherent pedagogical work. This task is the more important, the bigger, that there is a disproportion between the number of declared believers and those who regularly observe religious practices.

In the post-war Poland the model of a religiously neutral schools was enforced, a fact that made the system of education an ideological battlefield against family formation and Christian values in school. In fact non-religious individuals, who gave up their individuality and subjectivity, were never accepted personal patterns, nevertheless this model has posed a certain problem for educational influence.¹⁰ Promoting antipedagogical actions in school, or else in the mass media, promotion of liberalism, which fell on the ground of the pedagogical system with a weakened ethical foundation, very often led to anarchical attitudes in school, or undermining the authority of teachers and school. This may generate claims and caprices, instead of the sense of responsibility for the common good.¹¹

The left influenced the shape of Polish education, a fact that later resembled a return to the model of ideological school of liberal orientation. This conception of school in which there are no normative grounds of a hierarchy of values must necessarily give up its formative function, as it has no tools for that. Reality provides many examples of a negative verification of such assumptions, an example of which is pathology among students. Many teachers find their formative work difficult. What makes matters worse, the mass media promote antipedagogical

⁹ Cf. DWCH 5.

¹⁰ D. Nakonieczna, *Wychowanie jako zadanie* [Formation as a Task], Warszawa, 1993, pp. 40–41.

¹¹ A. Dyer, *Szkoła i wychowanie wobec współczesnych zagrożeń* [School and Education Towards Contemporary Threats]. In A. Szowiński, & A. Dyer (Eds.), *Wychowanie moralne w szkole katolickiej* [Moral Formation in the Catholic School] (pp. 23–24 (23–27)). Szczecin, 2003.

patterns, there is a fashion for stress-free education, destruction of teachers' and school's authority. Consequently, egoistic attitudes are in fashion, claims, caprices, irresponsible, and asocial attitudes. Liberal pedagogic culture based on relativism and subjectivism is a very serious challenge for Catholic schools.

Another problem of social nature is connected with the integrative tendencies of Polish society. It is a question of patriotism, which should be a leading factor of the relations between the countries in the united Europe. For a dozen or so years after World War II, the problem of patriotism could not be addressed officially as a subject of social debate, nor there were any conditions for encouraging patriotism at school, or in the media. The reason for this was Poland's dependence, like in other countries of the Eastern Block, on the ideology of communism. This dependence was expressed not only in the external and internal policy. It was so advanced that to a certain extent it gave shape to teachers' attitudes and syllabuses in schools. The official history of Poland was adjusted to the current political interests, which combined national identity and sense of membership with socialist countries. In such circumstances there could be no discussion about any contents that referred to patriotism or formed patriotic attitudes among children. The dominating majority remained silent about their love of Homeland and its freedom. At the moment, there are no patriotic beliefs, behaviours, or attitudes both in the context of internal affairs, and in relation to other countries. The lack of stability is exemplified by the phenomena of cosmopolitanism, chauvinism, and distrust. All of them are due to lack of certainty as to one's own identity.¹²

The above cultural factors, which are inspired by a focus on the material world and a narrowed field of knowledge, from the point of view of Christianity constitute the sources of the crisis of culture, and what challenges, the educational systems. The main source, as it seems, is the paradigm of man who has lost his spiritual subjectivity and his capacity to metaphysically justify the morality of life.

Responding to the Challenges: The Work of Catholic Schools

Many of the cultural transformations just mentioned paradoxically raise demand for Catholic schools. They are recognised in society as those which have not given up their formative tasks and provide a better guarantee to save the young generation from the above threats. Nevertheless the crises, or the necessity to financially support schools, are major pedagogical challenges. The initiatives, postulates, or forms of actions given below are inspired by these factors.

1. Integrative Actions

Since 1994 Catholic schools in Poland have formed a union in the Board of Catholic Schools (Pol. RSK) established by the Conference of the Episcopate of

¹² Cf. S. Napierała, *Szkoła a patriotyzm* [The School versus Patriotism]. In [Moral Formation in the Catholic School], pp. 171–173.

Poland. This church, nationwide organisation unites all the schools run by religious orders, Catholic associations, physical or legal entities whose schools have been approved by a local bishop as Catholic schools. The Board has church and civil entity. Among its goals the most important is that the schools collaborate with regard to formation, education, and improving their syllabuses. Regular meetings of school representatives, consultations, and exchange of experiences work together to ensure Catholic identity and efficient organisation of the presence of Catholic schools in social life. KRSK provides legal counselling, in-service training courses for teachers, and formative conferences of a pastoral character. The Board is also a member of the European Committee for Catholic Education (CEEC) and regularly takes part in the World Congresses of Catholic Education.¹³

The sector of Catholic education initiates integrative actions manifested in the annual nationwide forum of Catholic schools organised by KRSK. Each meeting has a leading idea on which focus the discussions of all school representatives. Lectures, discussions, and workshops constitute a notable, conceptual aid to schools and their teaching staff. The topics addressed at the meetings draw on the formative programme, develop and interpret it, formulating practical suggestions for its application. The activity of RSK in this annual meetings is inspired by a twofold intention. The first is to be loyal as possible to the criteria of Catholic character in each school; the second is to respond to contemporary challenges. Similarly like KRSK, young people have met for several years at the Nation-wide Forum of the Youth of Catholic Schools. Therefore they have an opportunity to exchange experiences from the milieus of particular schools.

2. *Promotion of the Dignity of the Human Person*

In the principles of the Formative Programme published in 2000 and initiated by the Association of the Friend of Catholic Schools the promotion of human dignity is its foundation. The good of the human person was taken integrally as a principle combining pedagogical steps which cannot be reduced to fragmentary techniques.¹⁴ Such steps must be defined according to man's nature and his destination—the knowledge of truth, the experience implementation of good, and unity marked with love for another person. In the light of the Gospel these horizontal human aspirations are fulfilled in the communion between man and God. A concern about the integral development of man should therefore be built on the foundation of the truth about man as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.¹⁵ In the field of pedagogical (didactic, formative, and protective) responsibility for the development of the human person there must be promotion of the truth

¹³ *Szkoły katolickie* [Catholic Schools]. In *A Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland*, p. 291.

¹⁴ Cf. *Program wychowawczy nr 9–10* [Formative Programme no. 9–10]. In I. Skubiś (Ed.), *Program Wychowawczy Stowarzyszenia Przyjaciół Szkół Katolickich* [Formative Programme of the Association of the Friends of Catholic Schools] (p. 12). Częstochowa, 2000 [This document will be further quoted as PW].

¹⁵ The Congregation for Catholic Formation. Document: Catholic school at the threshold of the third millennium no. 10. In *School as the Place of Forming Patriotic Attitude*, p. 117.

about man. This promotion should take into account both his historical and transcendental dimension; formation of his conscience, the necessity to be committed on behalf of other people in the spirit of Christian love.

This anthropological attitude has its supplement in the personal dimension of human life. This dimension takes into consideration the man living in various relations: internal—the subjective relation, the relation to God and other people. The personalistic character of the Formative Programme understood in this manner is manifested, above all, in the concern about the internal development of two subject—the student and the teacher. The school's task is to make the students aware of their responsibility for the shape of their own personality and to make them active partakers in the process of formation. The student's commitment, according to the programme, appears when the school responds to his most profound need—the experience of good and love in the process of learning the truth. The formative milieu acting in this spirit inspires to work on knowing oneself, which gives the sense of dignity; thereby conditions are prepared to participate in internal life—non-authoritarian spiritualities.¹⁶

Among the tasks of educators there is always the truth about the dignity of the human person, whose good is taken in the categories of holiness as an ordering principle. What should characterise school relations is the individual contact based on trust and sincerity; they should be designed to make student ready to take responsibility for their formation and for the formation of others.¹⁷

The personalistic character of education puts the subject in the centre of the educational process. This, however, calls for the distinction of two areas. The first of them is this part of educational actions which from the point of view has a passive character. Students here are recipients of the contents provided by teachers and their knowledge—possibly largest—should be verified by objective criteria. At the same time a school syllabus must include some active forms of education in which students take part with their potentials; their intellectual or artistic commitment are elements adjusted to their individual abilities. For this reason there are various forms of activities: theatre, choir, school publications, games, competitions, exhibitions, book clubs, clubs of the Bible, the liturgy, the film, or philosophy lovers. If we want the creative work of the youth and children to be authentic, it must often be guided by teachers, so that the artistic ways of expression were directed at their integrally understood good (cognitive, moral, psychical, and social). Similar prudence is needed in the situation when talented students tend to individualism in their conduct. It is also then that formative steps should be taken, without suppressing individuality; such attitudes should be included in the service of the common good and the school community. The tension between creative spontaneity and the community, or its axiological dimension, is a way to shape a proper aesthetic sensitivity. The initiatives of

¹⁶ PW 25–37.

¹⁷ Cf. PW 81–87; W. Cichosz, *Czy szkoła katolicka może ulegać postmodernizmowi?* [Can the Catholic School Give in to Post-modernity]. In A. J. Sowiński, & A. Dymier (Eds.), *Program wychowania. Refleksje, problemy, dylematy* [Programme of Education. Reflections, Problems, Dilemmas] (pp. 99–101). Szczecin, 2000.

active commitment on the part of students are taken in Polish Catholic schools, but there is a lot to be done in this regard.¹⁸

The subjective character of the Formative Programme is also expressed in the contents addressed to teachers. They make it a point that pedagogy applied in the spirit of such humanism calls for a constant formation of the school staff. Its purpose would be to shape sensitivity to students' uniqueness and such traits of character as openness, an ability to establish contacts, forgive, live through difficulties, sense of humour, etc. The programme points at the missionary dimension of pedagogical work; the teacher here is a collaborator of God in the process of shaping his students' personalities.¹⁹ Such goals call for a permanent formation which is to be provided by such initiatives as those taken by the Association of the Friends of Catholic Schools in Częstochowa. They are as follows: centre for pedagogical and managerial training for teachers and senior management, workshop of formative abilities for parents and educators, retreats, sessions, training-formative camps for the milieus involved in Catholic formation.²⁰

The principle of the priority of persons over things with a simultaneous confirmation of human dignity is concretely reinterpreted by the emphasis laid on universal Catholic education. The economic difficulties are the reason why not all families can afford to finance their children's education in a non-public school. The efforts to make access to Catholic education are not centralised in Poland and seem to rely on the entrepreneurial activities of particular schools, or orders which run them. A good example here may be the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The tradition to ensure education for poor students has been long. The Catholic university since the beginning of its establishment has exempted full-time courses students from fees, although from the point of view of the law it is a private university. There is also a system of scholarships covered by the funds that the university provides. There are also complete or partial exemptions from accommodation or catering fees in the buildings that belong to KUL. Therefore a percentage of students from poor regions of the country, i.e., the rural areas, equals over 20%. This is a very good result in comparison to other prestigious universities. It is also specific of KUL to organise aid to the Catholic youth from the countries of the former Soviet Union. There is a separate hostel for those students and a very broad system of scholarships. Therefore there are 500 to 700 students from the poor countries at KUL.

The laws of 1 January 2001 brought about an increase in the state funding for Catholic education by the principles common to public schools which covers 60% of all the expenses of a school. Despite that, the subsidy does not balance all costs of maintenance of the schools. This is the main reason why 90% of Catholic education in Poland must charge fees. For various types of schools

¹⁸ Cf. S. Sławiński, 2003, pp. 55–61.

¹⁹ Cf. PW 54–130.

²⁰ Cf. Annex. The association of the friends of Catholic school in Częstochowa. In *Formative Programme*, pp. 141–142.

it was most often from 200 to 300 Pln monthly. At the same time the average income per person in a family with regular income was 650 Pln, for the working class 472 Pln, for farmers 411 Pln, and 716 Pln for entrepreneurs. Hence we can see how difficult it is for workers and peasants to pay for schools. Studies show families with their own enterprises pay the most for their children's education and those who come from richer regions of Poland, or have fewer children.²¹

The practice of Catholic schools in this regard is marked with an effort to reconcile their own financial needs with the difficult economic situation of the society. There are some ways to do it: lower fees, partial or complete fee exemptions. Another common practice is to establish scholarship funds supported by individual persons, institutions, or associations.²² Accordingly, the schools may function without any deficit, and at the same time support poorer families. Often some educators or teachers—usually religious persons—give up a part of their payment to lower the costs of the school maintenance, and consequently, students' fees. A certain drawback is an insufficient number of Catholic schools in comparison with the demand declared by parents. This is especially true for the non-urban areas, i.e., those that are statistically poorer. The situations call for more outlays on the part of the church structures, or external means which would allow not to burden parents with a too high fee. Undoubtedly, there must be a lot of organisational and financial efforts; such actions however, must be conducted to preserve the universal character of the Catholic school in Poland.

The practice of formation according to values has an ethical and religious character. In the first case this is linked with an effort to make man in his dignity and uniqueness the principal ethical norm in the system of education and organisation of school life.²³ In the publications that address the axiological foundation of Catholic education, the recurring theme is how to preserve the genetic relationship between the three values: truth, good, and love, or beauty, whose synthesis is man—the truth about his nature.²⁴

The anthropological foundations of Catholic formation are characterised by a focus on Christ. Therefore the truth about human dignity is supernaturally rooted, and God revealed in Christ is an authority behind the law revealed in the Bible and natural law discovered in conscience. The religious aspect formation in schools is very important for the knowledge of ethical reality owing to faith and reason. This is especially stressed by the Formative Programme in the

²¹ Cf. A. Maj, *Szkolnictwo katolickie w III RP (1989–2001)* [Catholic Education in the Third Polish Republic (1989–2001)], Warszawa, 2002, pp. 198–200.

²² Research shows that ca. 50 per cent of Catholic education obtains additional support from institutions, foundations, or orders. The remaining schools are maintained from the state subsidies and fees. Cf. J. Maj, 2002, pp. 197–200.

²³ Cf. S. Sławiński, 2003, p. 60.

²⁴ Cf. P. Mazurkiewicz, *Szanse i zagrożenia w wychowaniu do kultury chrześcijańskiej w rzeczywistości zjednoczonej Europy* [Chances and Threats in the Formation for Christian Culture in the Reality of United Europe]. In *Osobowy wymiar kultury* [The Personal Dimension of Culture] p. 52; W. Andrukowicz, *Sześć szczebli rozwoju wrażliwości naprawdę, dobro i piękno* [Six Stages of the Development of Sensitivity to Truth, Good, and Beauty]. In *Wychowanie moralne w szkole katolickiej* [Moral Formation in the Catholic School] pp. 243–251.

chapter “religious formation and inner life.” Among the tasks which it poses for schools is practice and formation for an individual and communal prayer. The importance of the Eucharist and confession is stressed; the school should introduce into their practice and theory. A good opportunity for it is events in the school calendar; they should be observed solemnly, e.g., the beginning and end of the school year, the feast of the school’s patron, or the holiday of National Education. The school should join the practices of the Church connected with the liturgical year, the practice of retreats, and occasional pilgrimages. The school chaplain plays a special role in organising such events. He is delegated by a bishop, or the religious authorities of the order that runs a school.²⁵

The cooperation between Catholic schools and a local Church is very important in the process of the formation of faith and morality. The Church has a mission in a school community; its duty is to sanctify and teach the method of combining scientific knowledge with the knowledge in faith. Catholic schools and their proper work contribute to the freedom of conscience. Parents have more opportunities to send their children to such schools which correspond with their view on formation.²⁶ On the other hand the presence of a Catholic school in a broader community is an additional characteristic of the educational programme—it means formation in a community and for a community. Formation becomes, as it were, a by-product of being a member of a larger, uniform community. This constitutes a big “social capital” which, according to some, decides about better results of Catholic schools in comparison with other schools.²⁷

One should also add that “the ecclesial character of the Catholic school is written in its essence as a formative institution. It is a true subject in the Church as a formative institution in which “faith, culture, and life are combined into a harmonious whole”.²⁸ Therefore it must be stressed once again that “the ecclesial dimension is not an additional tone, but a proper, characteristic, and specific trait which imbues and shapes every moment of educational activity, the principal element of its identity and the focal point of its mission.”²⁹ This close liaison is a strong guarantee for the preservation of the identity of the Catholic school. In practice, the presence of school in the Church means also pastoral work among young people. The consecrated persons have a special mandate for this. Their examples testify to disinterested service on behalf of the neighbour. Therefore it is especially desirable from the point of view of formation that the consecrated persons be present in the school.³⁰

²⁵ Cf. PW 168–193.

²⁶ PW 195–205.

²⁷ Cf. D. McKeown, *Szkola katolicka miejscem przygotowującym do życia razem* [The Catholic School as a Place of Preparation for Living Together]. In *Moral Formation*, pp. 37–38.

²⁸ The Congregation for Catholic Formation. Document: Catholic school at the threshold of the third millennium, no. 33.

²⁹ The Congregation for Catholic Formation. Document: Catholic school at the threshold of the third millennium, no. 11; The Congregation for Catholic Formation. Document: the religious dimension of formation in the Catholic school, no. 33.

³⁰ Cf. John Paul II, The Apostolic Adhortation: *Christifideles Laici*, Rome, 1998, no. 62.

Commitment on behalf of a broader community outside school should take on the form of a service for those most in need. What is important here is the category of the common good which is a moral directive, a defence of the dignity of the human person. The good of all people, especially those in need, such as the disabled, the poor, the forsaken, and the sick in the field of responsibility are a challenge, so that children and the youth could help them. The Formative Programme proposes that the children have charts of social activity, something that will encourage them to be committed on behalf of society.

The conception of formation towards the fullness of humankind, which is one of the priorities of the Catholic school, assigns the family with the main role in this process. For this reason, the school interprets its formative activity as auxiliary towards the family and tends to a closer cooperation with children's parents. The cooperation between the Catholic school and parents is based on the principle of loyalty and mutual respect. It is carried out in practice by organising meetings with the board of directors and teachers, the activity of the parental council, parents' participation in the formative actions organised by the school, such as retreats or days of retreat, parents participate in school events after classes. This cooperation on the one hand makes parents more aware of formative attitudes, and on the other may really influence the process of teaching and formation at school.³¹

Now, patriotism is a precious and needed value in Catholic education under the current socio-political circumstances in Poland. It is important to stress patriotism because we must help the young person to transcend the area of his own affairs, interests, or benefits towards the common good. This is especially true when patriotism draws not only on political or historical categories, but also on those non-temporal and transcendent.³²

In the practice of Catholic schools the stress is laid on these problems at classes.³³ It also inspires to organise meetings with the representatives of the authorities, or to enhance national traditions. To this purpose may serve holidays and important state anniversaries; their solemn observation should be permanently written in the calendar of the school.³⁴ In the context of Poland's preparations for joining the European Union the issue of patriotism was discussed by the 13th Nation-wide Forum of Catholic Schools organised by KRSK in 2002. The leading idea read: "School and Patriotism." The message of the symposium was worked out in the spirit of a debate between integrative tendencies in the European Union, which prefers unification at the cost

³¹ Cf. PW 38–53.

³² Cf. S. Napierała, *Szkola a patriotyzm* [The School versus Patriotism]. In *Moral Formation in the Catholic School*, pp. 171–173.

³³ K. Ryczan, *Patriotyzmu nauczanie* [Teaching Patriotism]. In *Moral Formation in the Catholic School*, pp. 175–188.

³⁴ Cf. PW 161–167.

of the traditional understanding of patriotism, and the vision dear to John Paul II's Europe as a homeland of homelands.³⁵

The above ways to respond the challenges for Catholic education in the case of some schools are efficiently carried out, whereas in other cases they are still to be implemented. It goes without saying that the National Council of Catholic Schools and the Formative Programme of the Association of the Friends of Catholic Schools should be merited for their actions. They set standards and inspire.

The Literature of Catholic Education in Poland

Several publications devoted to Catholic education in Poland deserve our special attention. The first of them is the often quoted Formative Programme of the Association of the Friends of Catholic Schools. In its structure and contents it is profoundly rooted in the indications of Vatican Council II. What constitutes its characteristic trait is that it takes into account many formative subjects, not only the teachers directly involved, but also educators, parents, and, above all, students themselves.

The programme has two dimensions. The first one is theological-axiological. It traces a direction of the principal orientation of formation, formulates principles, priorities, or leading ideas, pointing at the same time at values, i.e., means owing to which the intended goals should be accomplished. The second dimension has a praxeological character. It formulates basic tasks and modes of their implementation under concrete circumstances. In order to properly formulate a programme of any school the following questions must be answered at the start: what should the student's profile be like and how is it to vary between the beginning and the final classes? what should the profile of the graduates be like? what traits and competencies should they have as persons and workers? what ideas and values are to characterise the school's patron and how does it affect the syllabus? what should the teacher of a given school be like in order to put into practice its basic principles?³⁶

Another publication is "Catholic Education in the Third Polish Republic (1989–2001)" by A. Maj. It seeks to show the changing situation of Catholic education in the years of 1989–2001. The study focuses on the political-legal circumstances, taking into account the changing statistical data. In this context it analyses how Catholic education carries out its basic didactic, formative, and

³⁵ Cf. S. Ewertowski, 2002, *Jan Paweł II o integracji europejskiej* [John Paul II on European Integration] Olsztyn; A. Majewska, *Patriotyzm—skrzydła i korzenie* [Patriotism—Wings and Roots]. In <http://www.vulcan.edu.pl/eid/archiwum/2003/05/patriotyzm.html> (on 11 April 2006); P. Młynarz, *The 13th Nation-wide Forum of Catholic Schools*. In <http://www.wychowawca.pl/miesiecznik/01-121/14.htm> (on 11 April 2006).

³⁶ Cf. A. J. Sowiński, *Zasady konstruowania programu wychowawczego szkoły* [The Principles of the Construction of the Formative Programme in a School]. In *The Formative Programme, Reflections, Problems, Dilemmas* p. 85.

protective functions. It is a first learned publication of this kind on contemporary Catholic education in Poland.³⁷

In the list of cyclical publications one cannot ignore those which come out after the annual proceedings of the Nation-wide Forum of Catholic Schools. It is organised each year by the National Council of Catholic Schools. The topics addressed there express what the milieus are interested in and attempt to reflect on how to respond to the most essential challenges for the educational system. As an example, one may discuss the topics in particular years:

The 8th Nation-wide Forum of Catholic Schools (OFSK), 1997: The School as a Place of Forming a Patriotic Attitude

10th OFSK, 1999: The Formative Programme, Reflections, Problems, Dilemmas

13th OFSK, 2002: The School versus Patriotism

14th OFSK, 2003: Faith as the Foundation of Culture

15th OFSK, 2004: The Personal Dimension of Culture

16th OFSK, 2005: The Personal Dimension of Culture. The Personalistic Conception of School in the Light of the Teaching of John Paul II

All the materials have been published, as instanced by the following books: The school as a place of forming a patriotic attitude. In I. Skubiś (Ed.), *The Catholic School at the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (p. 131). Częstochowa, 1998.

The Programme of Formation. In J. Sowiński, & A. Dymier (Eds.), *Reflections, Problems, Dilemmas* (p. 150). Szczecin, 2000.

Moral formation at the Catholic school. In J. Sowiński, & A. Dymier (Eds.), Szczecin, 2003, p. 327.

These publications together with papers delivered at the conferences are profoundly rooted in the teaching of the Church. At the same time they are open to the experience of Catholic education from other countries; in technical literature we find authors involved in Catholic teaching from Ireland, France, or Holland.

Agenda for Further Research

Improving Catholic education in Poland and working out formative programmes for particular schools depend on empirical research conducted in respective milieus. Their purpose would be to diagnose the family, social, cultural, or religious situations that constitute the objective conditions in which children and the youth live and study. Such studies should deal with various categories of needs. The school must be aware to what extent it satisfies the basic needs of its students, such as the need of acceptance, attachment, respect, recognition, safety, development, and love. The changing situation of families in Poland

³⁷ A. Maj, *Catholic Education in the Third Polish Republic (1989–2001)* p. 300.

constantly generates new needs. An example here may be the movement of economic migration to other countries. In practice it means that many families remain temporarily in separation, which is then translated into the situation and needs of their children.

Then we need to be aware how the school corresponds to students' needs, what obstacles there are and how to overcome them, so that we could satisfy children's needs at school. Specific psychical and spiritual human needs have their individual sources, but in fact they may be satisfied in a society and for a society.³⁸ Much more empirical research is required.

One would have to include the scale of risk connected with addictions, or with other forms of threats. Among the factors that raise the risk one may list competition and falling off the weaker, organisation of the criminal underworld, the system that enforces competition, promotion of psychoactive substances, or audio-visual images of destructive lifestyles.³⁹ Such studies could become a part of a broader programme, including symposiums, teacher training, publications, preventive actions, promoting healthy and creative lifestyle. One cannot exclude, however, that there will be a need for integrated actions on the part of a network of Catholic schools to remove obstacles of this kind in the personal development. Even if this problem is marginal in Catholic education, it may initiate such actions in other schools, where such challenges undoubtedly remain.

Conclusions

The reactivation and new dynamism of the development of Catholic education in Poland have many factors which affect its development and cause problems. The milieu responsible for Catholic education is aware of several matters:

1. The awareness of the attractiveness and effectiveness of the formation in the spirit of the Gospel increases. Therefore there is a constant demand not only for their existence, and for new schools also in the poorest social milieus.
2. Under the pressure of secularised culture Catholic schools must confirm their high standard of teaching, and at the same time, preserve their Catholic identity. This means in practice on the one hand that they must justify their value in a competitive system, in which a parental choice of a school is based on what is best for their children. On the other hand this is linked with a profound awareness of functioning in the fellowship of the Church and the community of the believers.
3. There is awareness that the preservation of the cultural identity of Catholic school consists in writing a proper paradigm of the human person in

³⁸ Cf. A. J. Sowiński, *The Principles of the Construction of the Formative Programme in a School*. In *The Formative Programme, Reflections, Problems, Dilemmas* p. 80.

³⁹ P. Karpowicz, *Kultura współczesna i narkotyki* [Contemporary Culture and Drugs], *Biuletyn Informacyjny Narkomanii* [The Information Leaflet on Drug Addiction], no. 4/01 2001, p. 15.

pedagogical activity. This paradigm was most fully revealed in Christ. Only this vision is capable of providing energy for a long-term programme of the development of human personality. There are many premises which say that despite unfavourable cultural trends the educational system with such foundations will strengthen its position, and in the future it will dictate standards for public education.

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS AT WORK IN EDUCATION—WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BELGIUM

Dr. Raf Vanderstraeten

This chapter provides an overview of the role of religious congregations in Catholic education in the Low Countries, in particularly in Belgium. Its focus is on the social context in which the religious congregations did and do their work. In the first half of the 19th century, a very large number of active religious congregations of brothers and sisters were founded throughout Europe.¹ The foundation of these active religious congregations constituted a reaction to the perceived secularization of European society, after the Enlightenment period of the 18th century. Many of the religious congregations were (very) successful in the late 19th and early 20th century. They were able to attract many members and play an important role in the field of Catholic education—as well as in other social fields, notably Catholic health care. In the second half of the 20th century, most of the active congregations in Europe experienced a rapid decline. Large numbers of brothers and sisters left their congregations; the congregations were and are also hardly able to attract new members. It is now clear that this particular form of religious devotion, which for the most part took shape in the 19th century, will not be continued in Europe in the 21st century. The major contemporary challenge that faces the religious congregations is to hand over their works of charity to lay people—that is, to “real” lay people (as, from the point of view of canon law, sisters and brothers are also lay people because they are not ordained).

This chapter starts with a discussion of the characteristics of secularization in Europe. It is argued that secularization cannot simply be interpreted in terms of religious decline. Modern society provides for a different context. This context

¹ There are hundreds of active congregations of brothers and sisters all over the World, most of them having their historical roots in the 19th century. Among their predecessors, a few initiatives stand out. The *Filles de la Charité* (Daughters of Charity), founded in Paris in 1633 by Louise de Marillac and Vincent de Paul, provide the first example of an active congregation for women. For men, Jean-Baptiste de la Salle founded in 1681 the congregation of the *Frères des Écoles Chrésiennes* (Brothers of the Christian Schools) in an attempt to improve the state of education for the poor in northern France. This initiative served as a model for many similar ventures in the 19th century, too.

also provided and provides new challenges to religion. Our modern, secularized type of society puts religion under pressure, but it also provokes new forms of religion or religious devotion. In the second part of this chapter, the emergence and growth of active religious congregations is discussed against this background. Particular attention is paid to the role that these congregations played in establishing Catholic education (in which field most of the congregations were active). Education is not just the field, in which the congregations chose to be active (because it was considered to be an important one); it is also the field, which clearly shaped the format of the congregations and the life of their individual members. In this sense, the evolution of the active religious congregations of sisters and brothers is closely linked with that of Catholic education. In my view, work in the field of education first enabled the rapid growth of the congregations, but later also undermined their *raison d'être*. Throughout this chapter, the focus is on evolutions in the Low Countries, and in particular on those in Belgium. The appendix to this chapter provides a detailed overview of the available statistical data about the evolution of the activities of these congregations and their members in Belgium in the 19th and 20th century.

Secularisation

In his handbook *The Sociology of Religion*, Malcolm Hamilton writes that the contemporary scholarly debate over secularization “presents us with a decidedly odd situation. What is alleged to have been a fundamental change characterizing modern society is alleged by others not to have taken place at all. It is rather as if economic historians were in deep dispute as to whether the industrial revolution ever actually occurred” (2001, p. 186). In order to understand the social context in which religious congregations emerged and worked, it is first necessary to clarify some of the aspects of the complex transformation, which is called “secularisation.”

Religion in the Modern World

Etymologically, the term secularization derives from the medieval Latin word *saeculum*, with its dual connotation of secular age (temporal) and secular world (spatial). In canon law, the term secularization was first used in the late 16th century in a relatively narrow sense—connected with the differentiation between the cloistered regular clergy and the secular clergy living in the world. It referred to the process whereby a religious monk left the cloister to return to the world and its temptations, thus becoming a secular priest. From the middle of the 17th century, the term is also used to signify the lay expropriation and appropriation of monasteries, landholdings and the mortmain wealth of the church after the Protestant Reformation and the ensuing religious wars. Afterwards, the term acquired a much broader meaning. Secularization has come to designate any transfer, or relocation, of persons, things, functions, meanings, etc., from religious or ecclesiastical to civil or lay use. Since the 19th century, secularization often refers to the progressive decline of religious

beliefs, practices, and institutions in modern Western society with its Christian history (Conze et al., 1984; Marramao, 1992; Casanova, 1994, p. 11–39).

In the last decades of the 20th century, it has become clear that such a broad conception of secularization is not tenable. The so-called secularization thesis, adopted by the social sciences in the 19th century, incorporated the beliefs in progress and the critiques of religion of the Enlightenment. It assumed that the historical process of secularization entailed the progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices in the modern world; it saw history as the progressive evolution of humanity from superstition to reason, from belief to unbelief, from religion to science. This classic secularization thesis is now itself classified as myth, as ideology (Chaves, 1994; Tyrell, 1996; Gorski, 2000). But this does not mean that we ought to abandon altogether the term secularization. In itself, the term does not imply such far-reaching interpretations. It can still be used as a term that highlights historical changes in society and in religion. The social sciences need to substitute for the mythical account of secularization detailed analyses of historical processes of secularization, if and when they take place. My hypothesis is that the evolution of the Catholic religious congregations and their work in the field of education in the Low Countries needs to be understood against this background.

Analyses of religious changes in the Netherlands by Peter Raedts (for Catholics) and Peter van Rooden (for Protestants) can serve as a point of departure. Their analyses clearly indicate that the construction of a Catholic, Orthodox-Protestant population is a 19th-century phenomenon and more or less imposed by social transformations (Raedts, 1996; van Rooden, 1996). “Religious organisation . . . did not use to rely on free decision-making. Religion as social phenomenon was part of the public sphere [unquestioned and unquestionable]. . . . The Orthodox-Protestant population came into being as a result of ecclesiastical and political mobilizations in the second half of the 19th century” (van Rooden, 1996, p. 13–16). In medieval Europe, membership in the church was practically 100%. With some exceptions, such as among the Jews and some Muslims, who were permitted to live in their special enclaves, membership in the church was compulsory. But, therefore, this fact also tells very little about individual religiosity. Everybody was a Christian. Only in the course of the 19th century, as a consequence of the “great transformation” of society, the churches became perceived as organizations—which had to recruit members and of which each individual could freely decide to become a member. Although they did not change themselves, the churches became perceived and treated as modern member organizations (and no longer as part of the public sphere, as traditional communities of faith). The widespread diffusion of organizations in modern society imposed a different perspective upon the churches. Seen in this light, it cannot be said that pre-modern Europeans were more religious than modern ones. Only in the modern era, when unbelief became an option, religious involvement became an explicit choice. Only in such a context, for example, it makes sense to count the number of people that consider themselves Catholic or Protestant or Muslim (Vanderstraeten, 2006). This transformation also puts the churches to work; it calls for a more active, missionary attitude; it calls for an emphasis on the active recruitment and retention of members.

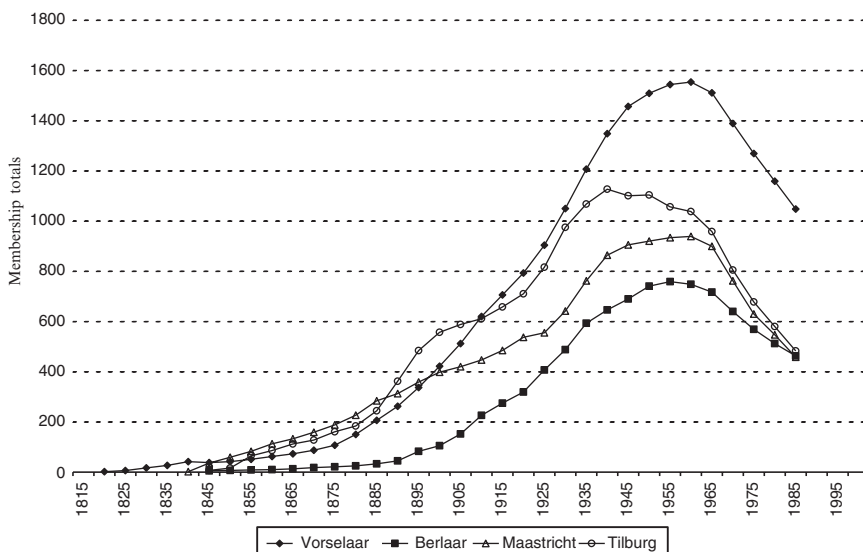
Studies in the history of ideas support this interpretation. For example, there have occurred important changes in the usage and meaning of the concept of civilization in Protestant milieus at the beginning of modernity (van Eijnatten, 2001). The classic point of reference of the definition of this concept was the distinction between faith and civilization, between Christianity and the world, between the inside and the outside. Around 1800, Protestant authors increasingly started to claim that the Book of Nature and the “enlightened” world needed to be confronted with the Book of Revelation. They propagated the education of humankind as remedy for the moral decay. From the middle of the 19th century onwards, more dynamic expressions of such views were put forward strongly. It was argued that society not only needed Christian teaching, but that it also had to be converted, purified, sanctified, rejuvenated, recreated, etc. A similar evolution seems to have taken place in Catholic milieus. Here too, one started to search for a *more active way* to communicate one’s faith. The many religious revivals or awakenings, which are typical of the 19th century, both in Protestant and Catholic regions, are expressions of this changing attitude towards society. The churches turned themselves to the entire population; in this regard, one nowadays also speaks of the emergence of 19th-century “popular Catholicism” (Sperber, 1984; Blaschke, 2000; Lönne, 2000; Sheenan, 2003; Verhage, 2003).

To view modern historical transformations from the perspective of secularization means, to a large extent, to view reality from the perspective of religion. The secular, as a concept, only makes sense in relation to its counterpart or antonym, the religious. The advantage of such a perspective derives from its ability to show the radical extent to which Western society has changed precisely in this respect. It remains therefore helpful to use this concept. But secularization cannot be identified with the progressive decline and the eventual disappearance or societal irrelevance of religion in the modern world. From a religious point of view, processes of secularization constitute a problem and a provocation—to which religion needed to react with both existing and new means.

Active Religious Congregations

The emergence and growth of active religious congregations is one of the prominent examples of the Catholic revival in the modern era. The period after the Counter Reformation already witnessed the establishment of some active religious congregations (such as the *Filles de la Charité* founded by Louise de Marillac and Vincentius a Paulo in 1633 and the *Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes* founded by Jean-Baptiste de la Salle in 1681),² but it is only in the 19th century that this religious form became truly important in the Catholic Church. Thanks to their work “in the world” (especially in the fields of education and health care), the

² In this regard, it is hard to underestimate the significance of the *Societas Jesu*, the Jesuit Order. Founded by Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuits constitute the prime example of the more active orientation of the modern Catholic Church. In the early 19th century, many (ex-)Jesuits played an important role as founders of the new active congregations of brothers and sisters. In the 19th and early 20th century, many of them also served as advisors to these congregations.



Graph 1. Membership figures of four active religious congregations

Graph 1 depicts the evolution of the number of members of four typical congregations: two Belgian congregations of sisters and two Dutch congregations of brothers. Each of these congregations had a large number of settlements in Belgium and the Netherlands (often consisting of 8–12 religious who worked for the local communities). Their motherhouses are situated in Berlaar and Vorselaar; Maastricht and Tilburg respectively. All four have been predominantly active in the field of education. They were founded between 1820 and 1844, in a period which is now known as “the time of the foundations.” After a relatively difficult start, the congregations flourished. The period of the late 19th and early 20th century has been aptly called “the time of the congregations” (Langlois, 1984). Numbers reached a peak around the middle of the 20th century, after which a rapid decline set in.

active congregations were able to represent and disseminate religious ideas and values in the secular sphere. Seen in this light, they have aptly been called the “sacred militia” of the Catholic church. In comparison with traditional forms of religious (monastic) devotion and dedication, they clearly embodied and embody a more active orientation towards the social world. In the Catholic Church, they are a prominent example of the religious reaction to the perceived secularization of society. Many congregations also explicitly devoted themselves to specific 19th-century’s Roman-Catholic points of interest, such as the Virgin Mary, the Immaculate Conception, the Sacred Heart, Saint Joseph, or other saints.

In the implementation of the ideals of the Catholic revival movement, the active congregations of male and female religious played a crucial role. Brothers and sisters have to a considerable degree represented and disseminated religious ideas and values. The appeal of life in religious congregations also reflects the ups and downs of the Catholic revival movement. Graph 1 gathers

together data about the numerical strength of four congregations, from their foundation onwards. The curves depict a succession of stages: a hesitant start, a swift expansion, a levelling out, and a rapid decline. The small differences between the curves indicate at the same time that the factors underlying this evolutionary pattern transcend the local level. Secularization processes were not bound by territorial boundaries; they also led to fairly similar religious reactions in many regions of the European continent (Geller, 1980; Kagchelland & Vanderstraeten, 2003). Detailed data about the evolution of the total number of brothers and sisters in Belgium are presented in the statistical appendix to this chapter; these census data, however, do not allow to distinguish between members of active and contemplative congregations and therefore can only partly highlight the characteristics of the evolution of the active religious congregations.

The 19th century's active congregations were not prone to underline their innovative and modern features. Their primary reference point was the great monastic tradition of the contemplative orders with their strictly regulated contemplative form of life. The active form of monastic life, as it acquired its distinctive and lasting shape around 1860 (as a consequence of intensified control by the Church hierarchy), consequently displayed an ambiguous relationship between the requirements of worldly and religious tasks. Although the official regulations and constitutions of the active congregations allocated an important role to the apostolate in the world, monastic life was structured by innumerable directives, precepts, customs, and rules which were often at odds with the demands made by the work of its members (some were simply time-consuming, others disturbed their sleep, or forced the working day into a rigid timetable). These regulations clearly dominated the religious forms of commitment of every (potential) member.

But what did these congregations actually do? In several small, relatively heterogeneous countries, the Catholic revival of the mid-19th century led to "organisational Catholicism." From approximately 1880 onwards, Catholic organizations have emerged in a wide variety of social domains: in education, health care, politics, youth work, recreational activities, the mass media, on the labour market, etc. In Austria, one counted no less than 219 Catholic organizations that were active throughout the entire country in the period 1932–1934 (Righart, 1986, p. 20). In Holland, there existed 161 different, nationally structured Catholic associations during the early 1960s (Duffhues et al., 1985, p. 54). The emergence of this organizational Catholicism reflects the 19th century's motto of the Catholic church: *Omnia instaurare in Christo*, i.e., ordering the entire world according to Catholic principles. The initiators could also refer to the papal encyclical *Humanum genus* (1884), which recommended the establishment of religiously committed associations. The "tight coupling" (Karl Weick) of the different Catholic organizations could help to ensure that every Catholic was a Catholic from the cradle to the grave, i.e., always and everywhere. The construction of the so-called Catholic pillars would not have been possible without the work that the religious congregations were able and willing to do (Vanderstraeten, 1999). The organization

of an extensive network of Catholic school organizations in Belgium and the Netherlands in the 19th and 20th century is one, (very) important example of their active involvement in the Catholic reaction to the perceived secularization of society.

Education

In the 19th century, the Catholic Church argued that popular education was one of its prerogatives, because of tradition and because of Christ's command to educate mankind. In what was perceived to be a secular environment, the Catholic movement opted for the creation of separate Catholic schools. The principle of the Dutch bishops in their 1868 charge about education was simple: "If affairs are so important as these, one has to play it safe" (Mandement, 1941 [1868], p. 23). The following analysis focuses on the establishment of this network of Catholic schools in Belgium and the Netherlands and the role which the religious congregations played herein.

Secularization and Its Discontents

In every European country, the church and the worldly authorities were involved in a number of disputes related to the control of popular education in the second part of the 18th century. Influenced by the idea of the perfectibility of man and society, the enlightened monarchs started to pay explicit attention to mass education. They contested the intimate relation of education and religion (such as the ecclesiastical supervision of schools, the omnipresence of priests and religious in schools, the moral and religious aims of education, etc.). The dissolution of the Jesuit Order in 1773 is in this regard of great significance. But the developments in the field of *mass education* were relatively slow. In Belgium, for example, the first Elementary School Act (1842) still included religion among the compulsory subjects. The clergy also were entitled to inspect the municipal schools. Halfway through the 19th century, however, the demand for ideologically neutral public education gained force. Liberal governments strengthened the power of the central level. In the Netherlands, a new Elementary School Act (1857) moulded the public school as an ideologically neutral type of school. The financial support of private Catholic schools was also curtailed. On the rebound, Catholics, in Belgium and the Netherlands alike, emphatically stated the constitutional freedom of education. The funding of private (Catholic or Protestant) schools became the main issue of the "school struggle" (Lory, 1979).

Until approximately 1870, one can hardly speak of a systematic attempt to construct a separate network of Catholic schools. However, the dissatisfaction with the public schools and with the governmental policy grew steadily. In this context, the Catholic elite deliberated upon the means to extend the "good works" and to safeguard the Catholic interests. After Pius IX's encyclical letter *Quanta Cura* with its *Syllabus errorum* (which condemned 80 different mistakes of modernity, among which: democracy, liberalism, and

socialism) the Catholic elite became much more combative. In their charge about education, the Dutch bishops summoned Catholic parents to enrol their children in Catholic schools. According to them, children were only allowed to visit public schools if “sad necessity” left no other choice (Mandement, 1941 [1868], p. 16).

As a consequence, several educational topics ended up on top of the political agenda: compulsory education, the broadening of school subjects, teacher education, the governmental role, the ideological colour of public education, etc. In the 1870s, liberal governments introduced new educational legislation, both in the Netherlands (1878) and Belgium (1879). Their options encountered fierce opposition. The Catholic elite seized upon the secularizing aspects of the legislation; they started to organize popular resistance. Their reaction turned the school struggle into a kind of civil war. The bishops provided the parochial priests with detailed instructions about how to organize the boycott of the public schools. Religious sanctions were used to force parents to send their children to Catholic schools, and to force teachers to resign from public schools and move over to the private ones. Funds to establish schools and to provide for their operational needs were raised through all kinds of channels (fairs, school pennies, offertories, etc.). In the next elections, this momentum had not vanished. Catholic points of view could be translated into legislation.

In the Netherlands, the new Christian cabinet passed in 1888 a law that introduced a subsidization of private elementary education (in the order of 30% of the salary expenditures). The following years, this subsidy was gradually raised, until in 1917 equal financial treatment of private and state schools was reached. The subsidization laid the foundation of the palmy days of private education. From the 1890s, school governors dared to take more risks. The number of Catholic schools expanded rapidly. A national network of Catholic schools, satisfying the diverse needs of the Catholic population, took shape (Vanderstraeten, 2002).

In Belgium, the parliamentary elections of 1884 had provided the Catholic party with a comfortable majority. Until 1914, the government remained dominated by Catholics. In 1884 and 1895, they passed legislation that re-established the impact of religion in elementary education, and that enabled the national government to fund private schools. In Belgium too, the principle of subsidized freedom is thus by now more than a century of age. Two decades later, the compulsory education law, which also laid down the wage structure for teaching positions, (temporally) ended the conflicts between Catholics and “liberals” around education. In the meantime, private education had had the occasion to establish itself nationwide. After World War II, however, the ideological conflicts blazed up once more, in response to the expansion of secondary education. A new “liberal” law, which provided for a state-funded expansion of public secondary schools and only “reasonable” grants for private schools, gave way to a new school war. With mass manifestations, boycotts of official services, etc., the Catholics took again a hard line. This new struggle was ended in 1958 and resulted in the so-called school pact, which provided generous financial support for private

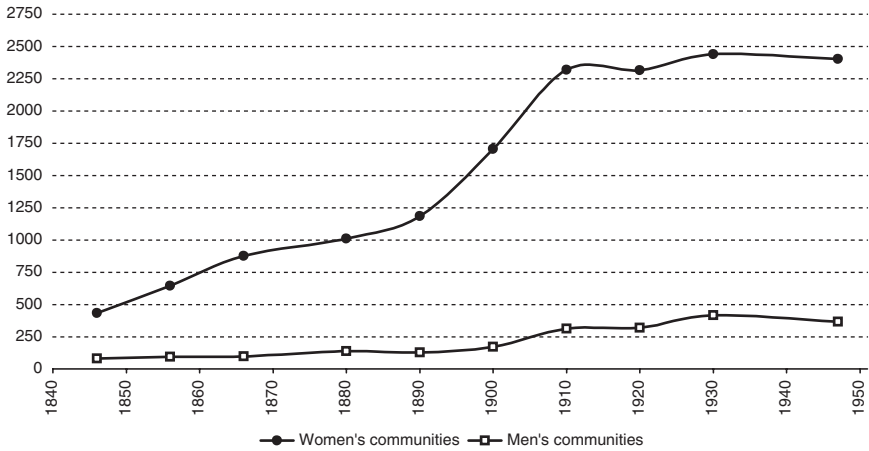
education, and thus institutionalized the existence of separate educational networks in Belgium (Dierickx, 1999).

The systematic expansion of the network of Catholic schools also called into being the need for detailed coordination and control. Lay Catholic teachers established unions in the 1890s, both in Belgium and the Netherlands. After the turn of the century, a Catholic inspectorate was formed at the diocesan and national level. From this inspectorate ensued in the Netherlands the Roman Catholic School Council (1910). Afterwards, collaboration of school governors took off. In 1919, the Roman Catholic Central Bureau of Education was founded, which had to advise school administrations in juridical and organizational affairs. In Belgium, there developed for each educational level national umbrellas, e.g., the Central Council of Catholic Elementary Education (1911) or the National Association of Catholic Technical Education (1919). They supported the elaboration and implementation of Catholic teaching methods and Catholic syllabi. The different umbrella organizations were brought under yet another umbrella in the 1950s (during the second school war), which guards the identity of the Catholic educational project, viz. the National Secretariat of Catholic Education.

The main outlines of the processes of pillar construction are remarkably similar in Belgium and the Netherlands. The ideological conflicts itself cannot explain this similarity. In north and south, there were different parties involved in the school struggle. The convergence of events and evolutionary processes supports, on the other hand, the hypothesis that the evolution of the educational system has determined the character of the school struggle. Anyone who wants to make a contribution to a particular social system has to stick to the rules and procedures of that system. One became dependent on the educational services which one wished to deliver.

Religious Virtuosos

In the construction of the Catholic pillar, the members of the active religious congregations played from the onset an important role. They gave, together with parish priests, colour and shape to the Catholic ideals. The active congregations of brothers and sisters wanted to engage themselves in charitable work. In contrast with the contemplative orders, active congregations opted for an apostolate “in the world.” Their members dedicated their lives to the good cause. Numerical details about the role they played in Catholic education are presented in Graph 2. Together with the data of Graph 1, these figures indicate that the establishment of the Catholic school network and the take-off of the congregations of brother-teachers and sister-teachers largely coincide. This parallelism is no coincidence. Within the Catholic pillar, there was a clear preference for male and female religious personnel. In a circular letter, addressed to their parish priests, the Belgian bishops proclaimed the following principle with regard to the 1842 Elementary Education Act: “make happen that the education of young persons is preferably entrusted to the virgins of the Lord, who are dedicated by status to the education



Graph 2. The evolution of religious communities engaged in educational activities in Belgium

Graph 2 displays the evolution of the number of religious communities which were active in the field of education in Belgium. Between 1846 and 1947, 7–8 out of ten female communities, and 6–7 out of ten male communities committed themselves to educational services. The difference between the number of communities for female and male religious is highly remarkable. But it should be kept in mind that men have the choice between a secular priesthood and a regular life in the convent; women who want to devote themselves to God and to their neighbours can only go to a convent. Also, male communities were on the average larger, which enabled them to take care of larger educational institutions. N.B.: This graph depicts the number of communities active in education, not of individual sisters or brothers (as Graph 1 does). For more data, see the statistical appendix to this chapter.

of the youth, and whose devotion is always so pure and so sublime” (Circulaire, 1847, p. 37). But what motivated this preference for the virgins of the Lord?

The increasing demand for religious personnel in the second half of the 19th century had, without any question, also worldly foundations. As long as the public financing of Catholic institutions was not secured, brothers and sisters were simply much cheaper than lay teachers (vow of poverty!). It is a misconception that they would work for free. But for a long time, they simply were the best bargain; school governors could often contract two religious for the price of one lay person. Moreover, most religious congregations conscientiously observed the contractual regulations with governing bodies (vow of obedience!). They were able to guarantee continuity, even in less fortunate circumstances. Secular priests often also preferred to have religious communities at work in their parish, because their members could take care of other parochial activities (e.g., sexton, leader of a choir).

The material advantages, which could justify the preference for congregations, were reinforced by religious arguments. Canon law makes, at first sight, a sharp distinction between laymen and priests, marked by the sacrament of ordination. Although brothers and sisters do not receive the holy orders, they are not in the full sense laymen. In a sense, their status can be defined as one of “improved laymen” (van Vugt, 1994). Because of the vows they make, they commit themselves entirely to God (vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience). Their way of life expresses their dedication to the church and to the Catholic faith. Using terminology introduced by Max Weber (1988, p. 259–260), one can call these improved laymen “religious virtuosos.” The preference for religious personnel is predominantly based upon this virtuosity. Brothers and sisters fulfilled, within the margins of the hierarchical apostolate of the church, an exemplary role. The active religious congregations became, as already mentioned, the sacred militia of the Catholic pillar (Art, 1977).³

Also, the religious life of these virtuosos displayed a special affinity with educational affairs. In Catholic circles, the target of education and the aim of the convent life coincided in a way. They were both described in terms of the pursuit of perfection, or *imitatio Christi*. Consequently, the members of religious congregations found themselves in comparison with real laymen in a privileged position. A morally superior person is better suited to educate children and to show them the way to a true life. This background explains, moreover, why brothers and sisters hardly obtained teaching qualifications for a long time. From their point of view, teacher education simply could not make a difference. Congregations also feared that further education would endanger an essential trait of the religious, viz. their humility. Life in religious congregations was not at all associated with worldly knowledge, but with devotion. The same was true for education. This convergence of religious and educational concerns was, however, not total. The religious motives of the active congregations were modified by their exposition to the logic of the educational world.

It should first be mentioned that the apostolate of the religious congregations changed their religious way of life. The congregations mentioned in Graph 1, for example, were initially engaged in a variety of charitable activities: literally from orphanages to elderly houses. But from approximately 1880 onwards, school education offered the best perspectives for growth. Their work in schools quickly pushed the other forms of charity into the background. Educational needs and educational possibilities dictated the foundation of new communities. From the moment onwards that the allocation of governmental grants became linked to teaching qualifications, the congregations were forced to improve the education of their members. In recruitment politics, the emphasis shifted from humility to

³ It can also be said that priests, brothers, and sisters are able to embody the Catholic ideals in a virtuoso way. Lay people have it more difficult in this regard. Nevertheless, more or less similar prescriptions were introduced for real laymen. Well known, for example, is the so-called celibacy clause or marriage bar, which obliged female teachers to resign as soon as they married or became pregnant. For married (male) employees, on the other hand, divorce often had far-reaching consequences for their careers within Catholic organizations.

intelligence. In this sense, the life lived by brothers and sisters behind high brick walls, in splendid isolation, was modelled by their worldly tasks. The identity of Catholic education became predominantly characterized in terms of specific *educational* competences.

The extensive list of conflicts between the religious and the lay teachers also exemplifies the delicate relation between educational and religious criteria. The presence of laymen was thought to endanger the identity of Catholic schools. “If one no longer sees the religious habit among school teachers... classes lose their prestige: the difference between the laymen and the Sisters fades away. One might even fail to distinguish between Catholic schools and official schools,” one remarked around 1900 in Belgium (Wynants, 1984, p. 282). In most cases, laymen were only reluctantly accepted in schools administered by religious congregations. They were necessary because legal provisions related the distribution of grants to the number of qualified teaching staff. The conflicts, often presented as a tension between personal devotion on the one hand and technical expertise on the other, in fact only faded in the second half of the 20th century when many religious communities had to be closed down for lack of active members. In the near future, the consequences of this shift for the character of Catholic education deserve close attention—both within the Catholic pillar and within the field of educational research (Grace, 2002).

Concluding Remarks and Agenda for Future Research

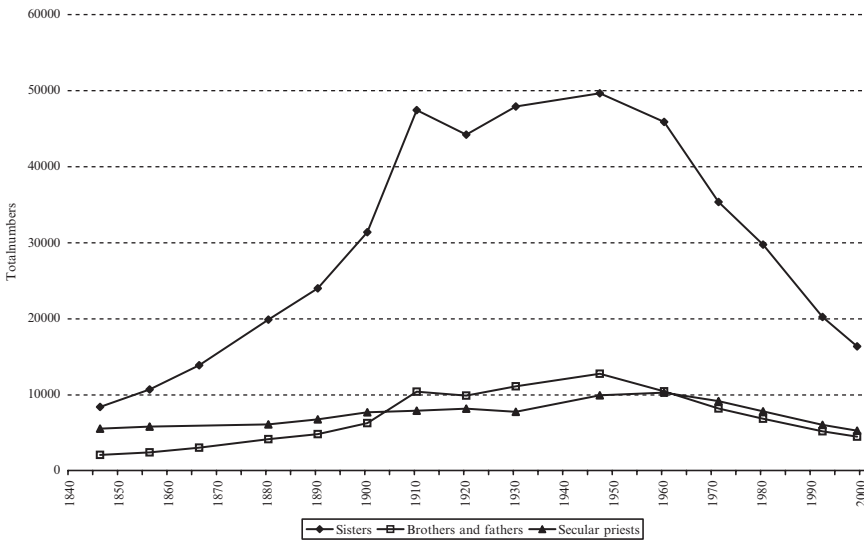
The decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, issued in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council, contained an urgent appeal to all religious orders and congregations to initiate within their own communities the *aggiornamento* (modernization) of the Catholic Church. This decree and its elaboration in the *Normae* of 1966, which contained instructions as to its practical implementation, paved the way for experiments with new organizational structures and regulations. In fact, in many institutions this appeal was used to sanction developments, which had already been taking place for many years: the erosion of traditional customs and devotions, the softening of rigid hierarchical relations, the growth of personal responsibility and freedom, and the individualization of daily life, work and prayer (see Bellah et al., 1985). A highly visible aspect of this process was the fact that the attire of the brothers and sisters changed drastically. The members of the religious congregations were no longer obliged to wear a habit; most of them started to wear “modern” clothes—just as other lay people. But in this context, the role of the congregations in education was repeatedly put into question within the Catholic Church itself, too.

As said, it was already apparent before the World War II that, despite the growth of their congregations, religious teachers were becoming a small minority within Catholic education in Belgium and the Netherlands. After the World War II, the recruitment of new members faltered, while Catholic education as a whole resumed its expansion. In the field of education, brothers and sisters

became a dwindling minority among the growing labour force of lay teachers. Their influence declined accordingly, although there was still ample demand for their services. But the degree of urgency behind this demand fell as the supply of well-trained, professional laymen increased. In the “businesslike” climate of the 1950s and 1960s, the exemplary religiosity of brothers and sisters carried less weight than before. Their reputation of solid expertise and personal charisma remained, but it had become clear that many lay teachers, too, could compete with them. In short, Catholic education *without* religious congregations had become conceivable. In the post-war welfare state, their traditional fields of activity (education, health care) were being taken over by Catholic laymen or by public organizations with sufficient funds and personnel to make charitable initiatives apparently redundant. In this context, the position of the congregations was increasingly criticized—not only by lay people, but also by the ecclesiastical authorities and eventually by their own members.

As a reaction, the congregations’ policies became increasingly dominated by the concept of “need.” They looked for new needs or priorities. As one of them, special education for mentally retarded or handicapped children received much attention in the second half of the 20th century. Some of the congregations also made considerable investments in education for the deaf and dumb and the blind—both in terms of material and human capital (e.g., the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, also known as the Brothers of Tilburg, who were active in the Netherlands and Belgium). But, most importantly, several active congregations tried to set out a new course by focussing on missionary work in the Third World. After many African and Asian nations gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s, the traditional strategy of religious conversion of the Church was abandoned in favour of educational and development projects. This kind of work offered the religious institutions an opportunity to devote once again their attention and their workforce to the poor and underprivileged.⁴ Moreover, it was hoped that the adventurous missions would lend new vigour to institutions which had lost much of their original pioneering spirit. Missions in the Third World were also expected to enhance the recruitment of new members: young men and women who did not care for the seemingly dull career of a school-teacher, but who might be excited by the prospect of working abroad among the *damnés de la terre*. For sure, the congregations have been partly successful in their missionary work, but it is also clear that their endeavours abroad did not bring about the hoped-for revival of vocations in Europe.

⁴ Many other alternatives, often of a quite experimental nature, were also tried: religious consultancy, modern forms of youth work, home help for the elderly, telephone helplines, pastoral care among factory workers, parish work, etc. But these charitable undertakings proved too volatile, too insubstantial to be practical alternatives for entire communities. For the most part, they remained individual “hobbies.” (In this sense, they constitute examples of the growing individualization of religious life in the 20th century.) Each congregation also had to deal with the reluctance of some of its members to have their lives drastically changed—which made decision-making policies in the congregations still more complicated. The description in this paragraph draws especially upon Ebaugh (1993) and van Vugt (1994).



Graph 3. The evolution of secular priests and member of religious congregations in Belgium

This picture, probably taken in the 1950s, shows a member of the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, also known as the Brothers of Tilburg, who teaches lip-reading to a Deaf-and-Dumb boy by means of a mirror. The picture was taken in the Royal Institute for the Education of the Deaf and the Dumb in Hasselt (Belgium).

date	number of sisters			pro 10000 female inhab.	number of communities			
	Belgian	Foreign	Total		Total	Education- oriented	Only education	% Educ.- oriented
1846	7528	840	8368	38.50	622	433	340	69.61%
1856	9133	1520	10653	47.18	828	645	449	77.99%
1866	12083	1751	13834	57.45	1129	871	685	77.15%
1880	16670	3177	19847	71.86	1454	1008	800	69.37%
1890	19902	4056	23958	78.85	1539	1183	708	76.87%
1900	26070	5285	31355	93.08	2182	1704	1157	78.09%
1910	31888	15531	47419	126.69	3111	2318	1666	74.61%
1920	33914	10266	44180	117.53	3037	2313	1685	76.16%
1930	38853	9038	47891	117.25	3302	2439	1816	73.86%
1947	42275	7349	49624	115.07	3358	2402	1846	71.53%
1960			45873	97.75	3565			
1971			35331	71.68				
1980			29721	58.99				
1993			19800	38.60				
1999			16325	31.27				

date	number of brothers and fathers			pro 10000 male inhab.	number of communities				
	Belgian	Foreigner	Total		Total	Education- oriented	Only education	% Educ.- oriented	Secular priests
1846	1472	579	2051	9.48	137	80	68	58.39%	5489
1856	1799	584	2383	10.49	145	93	46	64.14%	5773
1866	2298	693	2991	12.36	178	97	74	54.49%	
1880	3042	1078	4120	14.94	226	136	93	60.18%	6062
1890	3422	1353	4775	15.77	229	128	81	55.90%	6735
1900	4547	1690	6237	18.76	291	171	103	58.76%	7660
1910	5747	4629	10376	28.19	495	312	218	63.03%	7857
1920	6674	3184	9858	27.07	491	320	227	65.17%	8129
1930	8304	2778	11082	27.65	640	416	303	65.00%	7723
1947	10506	2219	12725	30.30	535	364	271	68.04%	9895
1960			10411	23.15	570				10235
1971			8145	17.25					9133
1980			6819	14.18					7785
1993			5166	10.55					6012
1999			4444	8.9					5237

If we focus on their work in education, it needs to be underlined that the congregations which turned to missionary work were forced to make sacrifices for their expansion abroad. In order to release members for the new missions, they had to abandon or close down some houses (annex schools), and/or to transfer schools to lay personnel and lay school boards. In the aforementioned “critical” context, many religious congregations increasingly experienced their work in education

as a burden. They perceived schools as conservative institutions—which were responsible for the decline of the religious congregations themselves. The circumstances which, in the beginning of the 19th century, had permitted religious congregations to start new and daunting enterprises had vanished. Education and most other traditional fields of activity were now firmly occupied by the welfare state and its mass of detailed rules and regulations. In such a setting, many religious congregations did no longer think of themselves as being able to make a difference that makes a difference. They no longer thought of education (or health care) as their *raison d'être*. Some congregations which played a prominent role in education during most of the 19th and the 20th century did deliberately and entirely withdraw from their work in education (such as the Belgian Annunciates). Thus the search for a new identity often went at the cost of their work in education. For sure, many of the active congregations did not cut through their ties with education. But almost all of them did no longer (fully) identify themselves with their work in education. After a period of approximately one century, the close interrelationship between religious congregations, on the one hand, and education, on the other, broke down fairly abruptly.

Inevitably, almost any future research about the role in Catholic education in Europe of the active congregations of brothers and sisters will be historical research. Currently, around 80% of all the members of the religious congregations in Belgium is 70 years of age or older. Only few of their members are still active in schools or educational organizations (as school leaders or teachers). In quite a number of cases, they furthermore fulfil roles in school boards. But there is a clear difference between the level of daily face-to-face interaction with children in classrooms and that of “bureaucratic” decision-making in the headquarters. In most parts of Belgium and the Netherlands, Catholic education no longer relies on the work of the religious congregations. In many cases, the congregations have quite abruptly handed over their works of charity to lay persons. They gave up work in settings in which their presence was questioned and in which they were constantly forced to legitimize themselves. In other cases, the transfer of responsibilities to lay persons has been better thought out. Efforts have been made to maintain some of the spirit of the work of the congregations, to make visible how education can be Catholic education. But that task is not (and has never been) easy—if only for the fact that the demands of the “public” have changed radically. Because an increasing number of parents, teachers, pupils, and members of school boards of Catholic schools now describes themselves as being more or less indifferent in religious matters, religious teachers will probably always find themselves in a difficult, if not impossible position. The basic question remains difficult to answer: how can professional roles in Catholic education be controlled and given a particular “colour,” how does one offer Catholic professional services in a social context in which this is all but self-evident?

Traditionally, religious congregations closed themselves off from their secular environment. They organized their affairs “in splendid isolation.” This characteristic was attractive to the ecclesiastical authorities and the Catholic

elite, which tried to keep the young within the fold and protect them against so-called libertine or socialist tendencies. During the 19th and part of the 20th century, the population in the Low Countries was divided into several mutually exclusive groups, Catholics being one of them (just as Protestants, liberals, or socialists). In such a pillarized context, this closure of the congregations was very much welcomed by the Church. At the same time, it elicited negative reactions among worldly authorities. The political upheaval over Catholic education were perhaps not so much directed against Catholic education as such as against the way religious congregations closed their work off from secular society (Lanfrey, 1995). In more recent years, this closure has continued to be a characteristic of congregations. For researchers (or other outsiders), it is at present still difficult to acquire access to relevant archival material of some congregations. Doors often remain closed, requests for interviews are repeatedly rejected. Here one can only hope for more openness. This will be necessary in order to assess in more detail the contribution which particular congregations made in the past and to stimulate a reflection on the way in which their religious inspiration can continue to make a difference in the future as new generations of lay teachers and lay school leaders take over almost all of their work in schools and educational organizations.

In this respect, one can also hope for closer collaboration between the congregations. The isolation in which congregations used to work continues to have a negative effect on their mutual relations. There are in Belgium hardly any systematic efforts to initiate lay people into the inspiration of the religious congregations. In this respect, the congregations continue to work on their own. Some (especially the bigger ones) have the means to recruit and train lay people for their school boards, but others do not. There seems to develop growing disparities between congregations. Especially among congregations of women, where competition for new members (as well as for pupils for their respective schools) has been strong in the past, tensions continue to exist. As the statistical data in the appendix indicate, congregations of men were never as numerous as those of women and thus also had to compete less for new members.

Many of the active religious congregations, which were established in the secularizing society of Europe in the 19th century, and which thrived well until the middle of the 20th century, will not survive for long any more. At present, many of them no longer recruit new members—either based on an explicit decision of the congregations themselves, or simply because hardly any youngsters currently do show interest for their particular form of religious devotion. In general, it is clear that the activities in education and health care, which enabled the congregations to flourish, currently are no longer very attractive to young people with a calling. This does not mean that convent life itself is likely to disappear soon. The traditional forms of *contemplative* religious life do again, or continue, to attract new members (albeit not in the same degree as in the 19th century). Among the *active* religious congregations, those that specialize in missionary activities, are able to recruit new members, too, both in Europe and in the missions themselves. Active

congregations, with a history of work in education (and health care), now also reorient their available labour force to missionary work—in part because they think to be able to ensure their further existence along this path, and in part because they think that they are most needed in the Third World. In Europe, their works in the field of education are, or soon need to be, handed over to lay people. This leads to financial costs, which are often difficult to bear by the largely retired population of the congregations. But apart from these financial efforts, the challenge for many congregations is to find ways in which they can hand over their Catholic works in the secular world in such a way that they can safeguard (some of) the religious inspiration of their work. Scientific research can be of help here. By clarifying how religious inspiration did play a role, the transmission of this inspiration to new generations might be enhanced. But history does not repeat itself. The different context needs to be taken into account. The identity of Catholic education will have to be reinvented—largely without brothers and sisters.

Statistical Appendix

Throughout Europe, censuses have been organized on a regular basis from the early 19th century onwards (as part of what was thought to constitute “modern” government). Belgium became independent in 1830 and organized its first census in 1846 under the direction of Adolphe Quetelet. From 1846 until 1947, a special section of the decennial censuses was devoted to religious statistics. It included a highly detailed survey of the activities of the religious congregations and their members at the municipal level—although there are significant differences between the decennial censuses in the kind of material that was gathered and the way that the data were presented.⁵ After 1947, the religious surveys were no longer organized by the Belgian government. To complete the dataset, I have made use of the (very partial) statistics that are published in the pontifical yearbooks. Because not every yearbook contains data of all the Belgian dioceses, the dataset could not always be prolonged with regular time intervals of ten years.

The reliability of the Belgian census data in general, and of those of the religious census data in particular, is sometimes questioned in the scientific literature. At the local level, several omissions and/or double-counts have been identified. For an overall sketch of the situation at the national level, however, these censuses constitute a reasonably reliable point of departure. As far as possible, I have corrected the “systematic” mistakes that were made by the census takers. Most significantly, census takers have often incorrectly counted *beguines* as religious sisters. Because *beguines* do not take the religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they cannot be included in this category; from the canonical point of view, they are

⁵ For the Netherlands, there is almost no reliable source which informs about the evolution of the number of religious communities. The available data are collected by van Hemert (1994).

“real” lay people. For the data of the censuses of 1880 and 1890, I have also corrected the mistakes to which André Tihon (1976) has drawn attention in his general overview of the evolution of women in religious congregations in Belgium (see also Vanderstraeten, 1995/1996). Graph 3 presents a global overview of the evolution of the number of religious professionals in Belgium.

As the two tables moreover show, there are important fluctuations in the number of sisters and brothers from foreign origins. To an important degree, this immigration was a consequence of the many conflicts between the church and the state in France—which escalated not only around 1800 but also and again in the first decade of the 20th century (the “Combes laws”). Especially in the Walloon provinces, large number of French brothers and sisters found shelter. In 1910, less than half of the total number of sisters in the provinces of Hainault, Liège, and Luxembourg was of Belgian nationality. After 1910, when the situation in France normalized, these refugees gradually returned home. But after this period, the Belgian congregations still continued to flourish for a while; they recruited more than one sister out of every 100 women and around three brothers or fathers out of every 1,000 men.

Above all, these figures clearly display the enormous increase of the number of women in monasteries in Belgium in the 19th and 20th century. The number of women clearly started to exceed that of men in the 19th century. The proportions do not change substantially when secular priests are also taken into account. In fact, the recruitment for secular priesthood was (and still is) much less influenced by these kinds of cyclical movements. The evolution of the number of religious sisters and brothers certainly strengthened the female character of modern Catholicism. Since the 19th century, the vast majority of the professional members of the Catholic church is of the “second sex” (Langlois, 1984). Not coincidentally, the 19th century is also the period in which the cult of the Virgin Mary was rediscovered and Marian piety reinforced.

After the World War II, in a period in which the welfare state was built up, the *raison d'être* of the active religious congregations seemed to be put into question. The congregations themselves started to direct their attention to new social “needs.” Many of them put less energy in regular forms of primary and secondary education, but directed their efforts to the education of marginalized groups, such as the blind or the deaf.

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INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION:
CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN THE 21st CENTURY

International Handbooks of Religion and Education

VOLUME 2

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The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each *Handbook* presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

International Handbook of Catholic Education:

Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century

Part Two

Edited by

Gerald Grace

*Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London,
Institute of Education, UK*

and

Joseph O'Keefe, SJ

Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA

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Dedication

These volumes are dedicated to the memory of the many thousands of religious sisters, priests, and teaching brothers who established the work of Catholic education across the world, faithful to the call of Jesus Christ– “Go and teach all nations”, and, in respect, to the work of their lay successors who carry on the mission amidst the many challenges of the contemporary world.

Gerald Grace
Joseph O’ Keefe, SJ.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our prime motivation in assembling and publishing this first ever *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, with special reference to Catholic schooling has been to provide a stimulus for more research and systematic enquiry into what is the largest faith-based system in the world.

Although there are over 200,000 Catholic schools internationally and over 1,000 Catholic universities and colleges, it is remarkable that research and scholarly analysis of this major educational system is still relatively undeveloped.

We have therefore asked contributors to these two volumes to conclude their analysis of the challenges for contemporary Catholic schooling, with a section entitled “Agenda for Further Research”. Some contributors are able to report the results of empirical studies of Catholic schools in their particular national contexts. Most of them however found in the process of writing their chapters that no significant body of empirical research existed in their societies. This is why the “Agenda for Future Research” sections of each chapter are so important in pointing the way ahead.

We hope that major Catholic schooling systems across the world will be prepared to commission more empirical research on Catholic education and that universities and colleges will be prepared to undertake such projects. However, a comprehensive, objective, and academically reliable account of the outcomes, effectiveness, and mission integrity of Catholic schools internationally will only emerge when research is undertaken not only by Catholic institutions but also by secular institutions of higher education and by secular research agencies. Moreover, it is our hope that this handbook will encourage social scientists across the world to focus their scholarship on Catholic education, a field that is rich with possibilities and very underdeveloped. We are confident that when such research is undertaken many contemporary misunderstandings of the purposes and mission of Catholic schools will be corrected and many provocative and polemical assertions about the consequences of Catholic schooling will be refuted.

These volumes are therefore offered not only to Catholics and Catholic educators, researchers, and policymakers but also to the wider world of international educational researchers and academics. We would welcome critical follow-up studies from such researchers on the analysis reported in these chapters.

Our primary focus has been upon Catholic elementary and secondary schools. A later publication is planned to focus on Catholic higher education institutions.

In the course of the five years in which these volumes have been in preparation we have relied upon the cooperation and assistance of many people whose roles in bringing this project to a successful completion need to be acknowledged.

Our greatest debt is to the 60 authors of the chapters and to their supporting institutions. Many of them are working under considerable pressure and we are grateful to them for finding the time to make their contribution to this international project. We thank Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome who has been a supporter of this project from the outset and we are also grateful for the contributions from Cardinal Telesphore Toppo (for India) and from Cardinal George Pell (for Australia).

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Gerald Grace and Joseph O'Keefe SJ

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Winston Akala is Head of Postgraduate Studies in Education, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya.

Mirentxu Anaya is an education researcher at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

Adriana Aristimuño is Professor and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Catholic University of Uruguay, Uruguay.

Joaquim Azevedo is Director of the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

Lyn Marie Birch is member of the teaching staff at the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland, New Zealand.

Brendan Carmody, SJ, long-standing Professor of Education at the University of Zambia, Lusaka.

Gerald Cattaro is Director of the Centre for Catholic Leadership at Fordham University, New York City.

Argaw Chernet is a teacher and deputy head teacher at St. Comboni Secondary School in Awassa, Ethiopia.

James Conroy is Professor of Religious and Philosophical Education and Dean of Education at the University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland.

Bruce Cooper is a Professor in the Division of Education Leadership at Fordham.

Brian Croke is Director of the Catholic Education Commission, Sydney, Australia.

Mary Darmanin is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Malta, Malta.

Hugues Derycke was formerly a staff member of the Catholic Bishops' Secretariat, Paris.

Annemie Dillen is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

Anna María Cambours de Donini is a member of the Ph.D. Committee at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, Buenos Aires.

Aidan Donaldson is assistant head of the Religious Education Department at St. Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School, Belfast.

Patricia Helene Earl, IHM, is Director of the Catholic School Leadership Program at Marymount University, USA.

Lydia Fernandes, AC, was formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education, Mangalore University, India.

António Fonseca teaches Education at the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

James Gallagher, SDB, is a member of the Diocese of Shrewsbury Education Service, UK.

Gerald Grace is Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London, Institute of Education, UK.

Angelina Gutierrez is Professor of Theology and Music at St. Scholastica's College, Philippines.

Virginie Habib is the Director of the Catechetical Center, Jerusalem.

Nathan Johnstone was formerly Director of the Catholic Institute of Education, South Africa.

Aad de Jong is Professor for Identity of Catholic Schools and Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology at Radboud Catholic University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Sally Kaissien teaches Catechism at Bethlehem University, Bethlehem.

Jamal Khader is the Chairperson of the Department of Religious Studies at Bethlehem University, Bethlehem.

Jeffrey Klaiber, SJ, teaches History at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Lima.

Martin Komolmas, FSG, is President of the Catholic Education Association of Thailand, Thailand.

Jiro Kozaki, SJ, was formerly President of the Japan Federation of Catholic Schools.

Maria del Mar Griera Llonch teaches Sociology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain.

Michael McGrath is Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service.

Sergio Martinic teaches Education at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.

Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo teaches Education at the Institute of Education, Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon.

Michael Miller is Secretary to the Congregation for Catholic Education, Vatican City.

Magdalena Mok is Professor of Education at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong.

Martin Mtumbuka is Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of the Catholic University of Malawi, Malawi.

James Mulligan is a Holy Cross Father who has worked in Catholic secondary education in Canada for three decades.

Maria Luisa De Natale is Pro-Rector of the University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy.

Ronald Nuzzi is Director of the ACE Leadership Program, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA.

Joseph O’Keefe is Professor and Dean of Education at Boston College, USA.

Susan Pascoe was formerly the Director of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia.

George Pell is Archbishop of Sydney, Australia.

Mark Philpot was Formerly Headteacher of a Catholic School in Wales. He is Currently President of the World Union of Catholic Teachers.

Mark Potterton is Director of the Catholic Institute of Education, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Kaetkaew Punnachet is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, University of London, Institute of Education, UK.

Aubrey Scheopner is a doctoral student at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College, USA.

Wolfgang Schönig is Professor of Education at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Bavaria.

Merylann Schuttloffel is Professor and Chair of the Department of Education at The Catholic University of America, Washington, USA.

Aldino Segala is Professor of Humanistic disciplines at UNISINOS, Brazil.

Paige Smith is a graduate student at the John Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family, USA.

Danilo Streck is Professor of Education at the Universidade do Vale do Rios dos Sinos (UNISINOS), Brazil.

Maria Supavai, SPC, is a former head teacher of a Catholic school in Bangkok.

Nicholas Tete, SJ, is Director of St. Xavier’s College, Jharkhand, India.

Telesphore Toppo is President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, India.

Carlos Torrendell teaches Educational Policy in the School of Psychology and Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.

David Tuohy, SJ, works as an independent consultant in education in Ireland.

Raf Vanderstraeten is Professor of Sociology at the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Kevin Wanden, FMS is member of the teaching staff at the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland, New Zealand.

Włodzimierz Wiczorek teaches Theology at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

SECTION FOUR

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN AFRICA

CATHOLIC CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS IN ZAMBIAN EDUCATION: A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

Brendan Carmody

Introduction

Today, Zambia has a variety of schools, among which are those that are government, grant-aided, and private. Government schools operate entirely as public schools. Grant-aided schools which began in 1925 receive a subsidy from government. Private schools are largely autonomous though they are subject to government regulations. As there are different types of school, so also there are different levels of school, namely, primary schools which cater for children in Grades 1–7, basic schools have Grades 1–9, and high schools carry Grades 10–12. In so far as one could make large-scale comparisons, one might say that the Zambian setting resembles Britain more than the USA in terms of relationship between church and state in the educational sphere. Church-related institutions are seen and even supported financially as partners in promoting the common good in Zambia somewhat as is also the case in Britain and elsewhere (McLaughlin et al., 2000, p. 54; Grace, 2002c, p. 427).

The Catholic Church manages 43 high schools, 35 of which are grant-aided, 8 are private, 32 grant-aided basic schools, 9 grant-aided special schools mainly for handicapped and two grant-aided teachers' colleges as well as two grant-aided Technical and Vocation institutes (Empowerment Through Education, 2004, p. 2). The Church also operates a number of institutes that do not lie within the categories noted, such as, 3 nursing schools, 40 homecraft centres, 26 community schools, and 87 pre-schools. One can thus estimate approximately what proportion of the overall enterprise this represents when in 2001 the country had 256 high schools, 5,677 basic schools, 3,380 primary 1 schools, 1,149 community schools, 31 special schools, 14 teachers' colleges,

and 151 technical institutes. In more recent times, the Catholic Church in Zambia has initiated the process of developing a Catholic university.¹

Fortunately, the Catholic Church in Zambia has since the 1950s unified its educational efforts through what it calls the Education Desk of the Catholic Secretariat² which is the Zambian Episcopal executive branch. This means that one can speak with some confidence of the Catholic Church's commitment as an institution to education in Zambia.

While the contribution of the Catholic Church today may quantitatively constitute about 15% of the total educational enterprise in Zambia, this probably does not reflect its qualitative contribution over a century, which is of key significance. This article will briefly situate the current partnership between the Catholic Church and the Zambian state in education historically, it will examine what has evolved in Catholic institutions as a result of such partnership and will identify issues which need review in order to remold a partnership that will more effectively serve the mission of the Catholic Church and better respond to the needs of the Zambian community.

Background

By the time of Zambian Independence in 1964, the Catholic Church, after 60 years of involvement with the British South Africa Company and the British colonial governments in the provision of schooling, had 644 or 30% of the country's primary schools and by 1967 it taught 21% of the secondary pupils within the grant-aided system.³ However, the new government centralized and tightened its control through the 1966 Education Act, which, among other things, directed the school calendar, syllabus, curriculum, assumed strong control over student admission, punishment, conditions of suspension, expulsion, as well as transfer of students, and appointment of staff (Mwanakatwe, 1968, pp. 36–37). Nonetheless, the Catholic Church, unlike most other churches, continued its long partnership by retaining not only its teacher training colleges and secondary schools but also those at the primary level.

As it became increasingly difficult to retain a satisfactory level of autonomy,⁴ in 1973, the Catholic Church finally chose to hand its primary schools over to government, thereby ending an important element of its partnership with various

¹ In 1992, the Zambia Episcopal Conference commissioned a feasibility report on the proposal to have a Catholic university. Task forces were set up and as of December 2005 there were plans to open for students in September 2006 at Kalalushi near Kitwe (Sr. Hilda Chilufya, Interview, 5 October 2006). See also, Feasibility Study Report on the Proposed Zambia Catholic University. Presented to the Zambia Episcopal Conference by the Catholic University Task Force, 2005.

² This was set up to coordinate Catholic educational activities in 1951. The first secretary general was Monsignor Killian Flynn OFMCap. See also, H. Hinfelaar, *History of the Church in Zambia* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2004) p. 195.

³ For details on the historical development of Catholic education in Zambia, see, B. Carmody, *Education in Zambia: Catholic Perspectives* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 1999) pp. 1–92.

⁴ The reasons for the handover are multiple but included the fact that, among other things, government frequently bypassed the Catholic agency on important matters, leaving it with responsibility but without voice on what was taking place.

governments in the provision of education over the years (Carmody, 1999, pp. 107–115). The two Catholic colleges, Charles Lwanga and Mongu, to a lesser degree, had an almost total Catholic population of both staff and students in the years following independence. Progressively this changed so that by 1980 only about 50% of the students at Lwanga were Catholic and many of the staff were non-Catholic. The situation at the secondary school level followed a somewhat similar pattern though for different reasons. What in the 1960s and before were almost entirely Catholic institutions in terms of staff and student populations became progressively less Catholic by the late 1970s.⁵ In one of the oldest Catholic schools, for instance, between 1969 and 1973, the number of Catholic students fell from 80% to 53% (Carmody, 1992, p. 128).

Moreover, during this period, government became increasingly concerned about the long-standing anomaly namely that different religious groups continued to view the schools almost as agents of their particular brand of Christianity. Thus efforts were made to create a non-denominational religious education syllabus for the schools.⁶ As this became a reality, it meant that both colleges and schools assumed, because of government, a more interdenominational ethos (Carmody, 2004b, p. 78).

Because of government priorities both of creating an educated labour force in the country and of unifying the country's population in a new nation state, the student and staff populations of Catholic institutions became increasingly non-Catholic whereby one bishop of the period noted that the Catholic educational institutions were intended primarily to respond to the educational needs of the nation. As Bishop Corboy (1984) put it:

Even though Lwanga (Catholic College) is an agency College, it is not directly under the control of the Catholic Church. It is a government institution operating by the rules of the Ministry of Education to provide teachers for the country and not for the Catholic Church.

The Church's response here as elsewhere seemed largely pragmatic rather than based on considered theological or educational considerations (Catholic Schools, 1997, p. 7). Whatever else, Catholic partnership with government came under further strain as the government claimed the upper hand.

New Models Emerge

By the early 1980s, as a consequence of partnership with government, a new situation had clearly arisen for the Catholic Church in Zambia. The days when it could speak in terms of what Arthur (1995) calls a holistic model whereby almost the entire institution's population was Catholic and had a distinctively Catholic habitus of the sacred (Grace, 2002a, p. 101) had passed. A dualistic

⁵ This resulted mainly from government policy on selection on the basis not of denomination but solely on merit. It was part of the national school policy of that period. See, Carmody, *Education in Zambia* p. 142.

⁶ This met with some resistance, see, Carmody, *Education in Zambia*, p. 125.

model had taken its place which meant that many non-Catholics now formed part of the setting and the specifically Catholic ethos and practice were no longer central. In other contexts, it has been spoken of in terms of the charter shifting from protecting the Catholic faithful from a hostile Protestant majority to the pursuit of justice (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 301; Grace, 2002a, p. 7). The new justice perspective involved:

[A] move from the traditional denunciations of Marxism and of communist regimes (as atheistic and oppressive) to a more extensive criticism of structures of oppression and exploitation (structures of sin) constituted in capitalism, in race relations (apartheid in South Africa) and in socio-political and economic relations in various parts of the world eg Latin America. (Grace, 2003, p. 37)

While various institutions reacted somewhat differently and at varying rates to the increasingly non-Catholic composition of the educational institutions in the early 1980s, the Catholic Church in general became more aware of the need to reformulate its educational agenda within the Zambian setting of a partnership that was becoming more one-sided. Factors within the Catholic Church itself had also affected what had come to pass. As a result of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics were encouraged to view other Christian churches and faiths more positively, noting that anything that is true and holy in other religions should not be rejected (Carmody, 1999, pp. 95–96). The Council had also strongly linked gospel proclamation with the promotion of justice and liberation of the oppressed, as already noted. Clearly, such sentiments had implications for how Catholic schools should develop (Carmody, 1999, p. 99).

Even though the new direction of education in Zambia might have resulted because of Vatican II with its emphasis on ecumenism, the main impetus came from government. It was not only government directed but indirectly market oriented. Government attempted to create an educated labour force in concord with its modernization approach to national development (Carmody, 2004a, pp. 25–28).

In the 1970s, the Zambian government adopted a philosophy of Scientific Socialism⁷ which initially received no major open comment from church administrators. However, when the retention of Religious Education in the school curriculum became doubtful, the Catholic Church and two other major Protestant Churches however felt that it was necessary to make a public statement (Komakoma, 2003, pp. 107–133; Gifford, 1998, p. 188; Dillon-Malone, 1989).⁸ As Lungu noted, the political climate was strained:

⁷ This emerged from President Kaunda's philosophy of humanism and progressively entailed more and more state control of health care, education, industry, even the press. See, K. Kaunda, *Humanism and a guide to its implementation* (Lusaka: Government Printers, n.d.).

⁸ This public statement outlined the basic tenets of scientific socialism in general and some of the ways in which it was interpreted in the Zambian setting. It cautioned that, while politicians were affirming that scientific socialism was compatible with religion or even Christianity, this was false. See, *Marxism, Humanism and Christianity: A Letter from the Leaders of the Christian Churches in Zambia to all their members about Scientific Socialism* (Zambia Episcopal Conference, Christian Council of Zambia and Zambia Evangelical Fellowship (Lusaka: n.d.).

The churches have occasionally been branded as agents of imperialism, some labour leaders were recently detained for allegedly 'dissident' activities, and the press has been at times on the verge of censorship. (Lungu, 1986, p. 410)

Nonetheless, the Catholic Church continued to operate its institutions that were in substantial accord with its objectives even when their autonomy became severely restricted (Carmody, 1990, pp. 247–263). It seemed almost as if what Berman and others had warned was coming to pass that church institutions had gradually been forced to subordinate their religious message to government directives (Berman, 1975, p. xi).

In response to the new situation, Lwanga in the mid-1970s and later Mongu Colleges adopted what was called Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) programmes for Catholics. This was intended to provide what had earlier been part of the Catholic syllabus. Being specifically Catholic it needed to be offered outside the regular religious education programme which by then had become interdenominational. This caused friction but survived. What had earlier marked places like Lwanga and to a lesser degree Mongu Colleges with their programmes of obligatory daily Mass, an almost entire Catholic population, and a specifically Catholic religious education programme became such that daily, even Sunday, Mass was optional for non-Catholics. The college population was then almost half non-Catholic and the religious educational programme was interdenominational. Similar developments occurred at the secondary schools. Many Catholic secondary schools adopted strategies similar to what had been used in the colleges fashioning a Catholic subgroup within the larger complex. Schools also began to create new Catholic clubs in Catholic institutions. The proprietors moreover insisted on having key administrative positions in the hands of Catholics and sought to have a satisfactory percentage of Catholic students.

Former Catholic institutions had become Christian, in the eyes of proprietors, but retained some of the Catholic ethos. This entailed not only forming Catholic enclaves within the institutions, but was complemented by both the creation of an awareness of ecumenism and increasingly of justice. It was nevertheless considered that in a Catholic setting it was appropriate to provide nurture for its Catholic population. The externally imposed restriction of the Catholic personality construction to the extra-curricular domain within the more general ecumenical classroom and academic programme was recognized (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001, p. 40).

The primary dilemma of the years that followed was how to remain open to pupils of many denominations which government sent on the basis of merit and yet remain Catholic (Carmody, 1992, p. 117). Developing satisfactory models to include both a sense of Catholic identity and openness to the faith of other mainly Christian churches proved somewhat elusive. Catholic institutions continued to have large sections of their populations which were non-Catholic. By 1994, Mongu Teachers' College had a Catholic population of 27% while that of

Lwanga was 61%.⁹ Thus, what evolved in the 1980s were Christian settings which included a Catholic segment. This model has been retained.

The tension between proclaiming to be Catholic and having such a large non-Catholic presence has also remained. Efforts at reserving places for definite numbers of Catholics in Catholic settings especially at the secondary and high school levels have been made but nothing was done explicitly at a national level largely because it would probably be rejected by government (Meade, personal communication, 2004). As elsewhere, it may also verge on being illegal (Grace, 2002a, p. 209). At the teachers' colleges particularly at Lwanga a definite percentage of places are however reserved for Catholics in reaction to a time when clearly the number of Catholics was too small. Overall, there is awareness of the need to retain a substantial proportion of both Catholic pupils and staff in order to provide a more meaningful sense of what it means to be Catholic. This may explain why by 2003, the overall number of Catholic students in Catholic high school and secondary institutions had increased from about 37% in 1995 to 56% (*Times of Zambia*, 22 July 1999).

Through the years, as we have noted, the Catholic Church has struggled in its partnership with government to maintain some form of Catholic identity. What follows will critically evaluate the nature of this identity and propose ways of creating a partnership that allows the Catholic Church to be more faithful to its mission in responding effectively to the needs of the Zambian community.

Catholic Education in Zambia Today

Zambia faced a new political order in 1991 with the demise of the one-party system of government at the defeat of Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's first President, and his party, UNIP. The new government advocated renewed partnership in the educational enterprise¹⁰ even to the point of offering to give primary and basic schools back to the Churches (*Times of Zambia*, 16 March 1997; Carmody, 1999, p. 132). This approach was motivated by government recognition that it needed whatever help it could receive since the educational system had reached such a poor state (Carmody, 2004a, pp. 56–58). It may also have been influenced by the perception that the churches had played an important role in the new government's coming to power by openly criticizing the former government on numerous occasions (Cheyeka, 1999, pp. 19–36).

The Catholic Church's response to any handing back of schools was cautious and has remained so even though it has taken over some primary schools and a number of basic schools as we have noted at the outset (Carmody, 2004a, p. 58).

⁹ This was primarily because of historical developments whereby the western part of Zambia (Mongu) was largely non-Catholic whereas this was less true in the southern part of the country where Lwanga was situated.

¹⁰ This was because government realized it needed all the help it could get and since the Catholic Church had a high reputation for efficiency in secondary school and hospital management, its increased participation was seen to be a good way to go. The Catholic Church was not the only church that received this offer. It was made rather generally to churches.

Revision of the 1966 Education Act

Even if the Catholic Church appeared unenthusiastic about a large-scale reinvestment at the primary and basic levels, it seized the opportunity to seek more satisfactory and clear conditions for grant-aided schools, mainly at the secondary level. In 1992, the Church thus expressed concern because there was no legal document detailing the relationship between the Ministry of Education and the Church in the area of grant-aided institutions. Rather, much was based on tradition and ad hoc arrangements which often caused tension between Ministry officials and administrators of grant-aided schools.

As a consequence, government agreed to review the 1966 Education Act, and by means of a Statutory Instrument in 1993, it granted greater autonomy to, among others, the grant-aided schools. It specifically provided for the maintenance of a religious ethos through the creation and legalization of boards of management, endorsing the system of appointing both the head and deputy of the same denomination as that of the proprietor. It also provided greater voice to the proprietor¹¹ in the appointment of staff and selection of students (Carmody, 2003b, pp. 20–21).

This more open climate provides the context for the Catholic Church's current involvement in Zambia's public education. What the Catholic education secretary general stated in 2001, namely, that the Church remains happy with the 1993 Statutory Instrument seems still to be substantially true. What causes difficulty sometimes is that officials are unaware of the Instrument's existence and act contrary to its provisions (Kabwe, 2003, p. 11; Henze, 2003, p. 12).

The latest Zambian bishops' statement of 2004 on Catholic education noted that education still retains an important place in the Catholic Church's agenda and that ongoing partnership seemed desirable:

Education, in a very special way, is a concern of the Church. . . . We look forward to our continued partnership with government in the provision of quality education. (Empowerment Through Education, 2004, p. 12)

Thus, the overall context for the Catholic Church's contribution to the educational development of Zambia now seems more conducive to creative cooperation with government than it ever perhaps has been since Independence.

Contemporary Challenges: Catholic Identity

Despite the movement towards greater autonomy especially manifested in the 1993 Statutory Instrument, the Catholic Church has poorly utilized it to create educational institutions that are in greater concord with its aims. This is not

¹¹ The proprietor is defined in Statutory Instrument No. 43, para. 3, 1(1993) as: "the person or body of persons in whom is vested the ownership, custody or control of the place at which the educational institution is conducted and of the buildings, equipment and other things provided for the pupils attending or accommodated at the educational institution."

because Catholic institutions are entirely happy that their institutions are sufficiently Catholic as is instanced in the following case:

Over the past six years I have been reflecting on how grant-aided institutions in Zambia can reclaim their Catholic identity. . . . I discovered that I could not distinguish between a Catholic institution and a public institution. (Kabwe, 2003, p. 11; Chisempere, 1993)

Repeatedly, at annual meetings of administrators and teachers from the Catholic schools, the issue of institutions' Catholic character is raised. Years of reflection at different levels especially since the 1980s have not made the Catholic character of the Church's institutions self-evident. Perhaps the notion of identity itself needs to be seen not as something stable, perhaps even static, but in terms of a continuous activity of construction and deconstruction. (Woodekker & Miedema, 2001, p. 37)

The process is complicated by the nature of the partnership between church and government. Catholic institutions are operating in light of directives both from the Catholic Church and the Ministry of Education. In the eyes of the Church, education needs to include a Christian vision to foster integral development of the whole person emphasizing such values as freedom, love, and justice (Empowerment Through Education, 2004, pp. 5–8). While acknowledging many such ideals, for a variety of reasons, government has promoted an educational system that is highly cognitive (Empowerment Through Education, 2004, p. 11; Carmody, 2004a, pp. xvi, xxi). As the policy document, *Focus on Learning* (1992, p. 27), when dealing with the curriculum, put it:

[I]ts concern is principally with cognitive knowledge and skills almost to the complete exclusion of other dimensions. Even within the cognitive domain it is directed more to the acquisition of the factual bits of knowledge than towards the easy mastery that arises from genuine understanding.

Clearly such diverging orientations between the Church and the Ministry of Education could be a source of friction.

Contemporary Challenges: Catholic Vision & Ethos

Apparently, the sense of Catholic identity linked to a specifically Catholic vision leading to a distinctively Catholic ethos resulting from interrelated rituals and ritual systems remains unsatisfactory as efforts are constantly being made to review it (McLaren, 1986, p. 5). A recent initiative to sustain the identity of Catholic institutions has been the proposal to form a Catholic teachers' association (Kelly, 1999). This idea is not entirely new for a Catholic teachers' association existed in the 1950s when there was perceived to be a threat of takeover of primary schools by government. The more recent movement in this direction has developed slowly as the teaching staff in practically all Catholic grant-aided schools includes significant numbers of non-Catholics. Given this significantly

different setting, it is not easy to envisage the appropriateness of such an association while there is the possibility of its being viewed as divisive by non-Catholics. What perhaps the initiative further reveals is that teachers need support and assistance in seeing themselves as Catholic. How this can be achieved without damaging unity and trust in Catholic interdenominational settings is unclear.

Support for the proposal to have a Catholic teachers' association may also manifest, among other things, many teachers' uncertainty not only about what it means to be a Catholic teacher but about what it means to be a Catholic. Earlier, when most of the administrators and teachers were religious priests, brothers, and sisters, the level of Catholic self-understanding could perhaps be more easily presumed. In 1969, religious personnel¹² constituted about 33% of the staff whereas today it is less than 3% (Choongo, 2005). As the numbers of such people decreased over the years and as the operation of Catholic institutions became more the task of laity, it has to be asked how well such people understand their Catholicity or what attention has been given to the "transmission of charism" (Grace, 2002c, p. 435). Frequently, various meetings emphasize the need for staff development. Undoubtedly one aspect of this in Zambia as perhaps elsewhere (Grace, 2002a, p. 224; Annette, 2005, p. 197) is the Catholic education of lay staff, many of whom may have had little opportunity to have any training beyond regular Sunday worship as well as whatever instruction surrounded reception of the sacraments. Yet, with such meager preparation, these men and women are being asked to develop Catholic institutions. Moreover, as one administrator put it in 2004:

Our pupils hope to find, especially in Catholic teachers not just good and professional Maths or History teachers, but persons with a genuine relationship with God. (Wilms, 2004)

Besides, there is rarely sufficient attention given to the distinctive roles of leadership and management in Catholic institutions, which has serious consequences (Grace, 2002b, 138ff.; Grace, 2002c, pp. 432–433; McKeown, 2002, p. 110). Appointment to managerial positions is often highly pragmatic to the detriment of long-term planning and vision, which should characterize leaders who, among other things, hold prime responsibility to guard and enhance the mission integrity of the school (Grace, 2002c, p. 433).

Catholic institutions in Zambia today have boards of management in accord with the 1993 Education instrument.¹³ These should perhaps facilitate the creation of a sense of Catholic identity as well as the transmission of charism.

¹² The religious personnel include diocesan priests, Christian Brothers, Marist Brothers, Marianist Brothers, Jesuits, Baptistine Sisters, Sisters of St. Francis, Franciscan Sisters of Assisi, Holy Rosary Sisters, Handmaid Sisters, Holy Cross Sisters, Religious Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, Dominican Sisters, Sacred Heart of Mary Sisters, Little Servants of Mary Immaculate, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. For further details, see, Carmody, *Education in Zambia*, p. 95.

¹³ These boards often but do not always have a Catholic majority. Efforts at having a Catholic majority are made but sometimes it is not possible.

They include various forms of representation and ideally help the overall direction of the educational institutions especially in so far as they include some community involvement. How effectively do these function in maintaining and safeguarding the Catholic identity of institutions?

In discussing the identity of Catholic schools, writers have stressed that the school is a community which focuses on the person of Christ (Daly, 2002, pp. 25–30). As Kelly put it:

Even though many of our pupils may be non-Catholics, and some may not be Christian, it still remains our purpose as Catholic schools to communicate to them, through all the teaching and non-teaching activities of the school, an understanding of the human person as God related and Christ related. (Kelly, 1999)

The need for such Christ-centredness has generally been reflected in vision statements while it is noted how Christ and his life should inspire all that takes place in the particular institution. Among other things, it means that staff and students are expected to behave in ways that do not outrightly contradict Christian values. This matter of contravening Catholic values frequently becomes evident when a staff member takes a second wife or when individual's moral conduct becomes questionable. In such circumstances, Catholic authorities normally request that the people concerned move to another non-Catholic setting. On the level of student behaviour, Catholic institutions retain a reputation for a strict, sometimes overstrict, code of conduct (Chilufya, 1996). How central nonetheless is the person of Christ especially since religious education lessons emphasize religious pluralism, form part of the academic timetable, and are as exam centred as other subjects?

Few Catholic schools in Zambia would moreover be unaware of the varying levels of community operative in their institutions where frequently many denominations are represented (Carmody, 1999, p. 143). How school authorities relate to such differences however may need more close attention. In some cases, especially where expatriates were mainly in charge, there could be a high degree of illusion where much homogeneity is assumed when there may be a powerful counter culture operative:

[W]hich includes an unending contest for the moral high ground, for the right to discern God's purpose, for the claim of 'true' conversion. (Simpson, 2003, p. 7)

Thus, while Catholic schools may foster a naive sense of belongingness, today this would rarely exclude some awareness of difference. Diversity is normally evident and institutions attempt to create some forms of unity that recognize rather than ignore difference (Woodekker & Miedema, 2001, p. 46). It is likely that because of the awareness of diversity that attempts at overall unity are less frequent than they might otherwise be. It may also be that, as already mentioned, so much attention is given to the needs of Catholics that others almost feel left to their own resources. What seems more obvious is that, despite the potential of such institutions, ecumenical development is often underemphasized. As a principal of Lwanga noted:

There is a Catholic atmosphere but there is need for greater ecumenism. . . . Here there is need not so much for vision. We have that but many non-Catholics do not feel part of it. (Chasha, 1995)

This is not to say that most institutions fail to provide ecumenical services or that non-Catholics feel greatly estranged. In a survey of 780 university students in 2005,¹⁴ it was found that 95% of students who had been in Catholic schools agreed that they felt at home there while this was true of 85% of those who were not in Catholic schools. Moreover, 88% of the Catholic school graduates as against 85% of others noted that their church membership had been respected while in school. However, the issue of unity amid diversity may need more than occasional communal services to do justice to an institution's Catholic identity and to grant genuine respect for non-Catholic needs in a spirit of openness and dialogue. Creation of a genuine interfaith community in such circumstances is evidently a complex matter (Noddings, 1996, pp. 245–267; Veverka, 1993, pp. 238–254).

In their attempts to be Catholic, practically all institutions provide regular Masses and usually mark the beginning and end of term with Mass for the overall population. In this regard, how free non-Catholics are to attend such functions varies somewhat but, from the survey of 780 university students already mentioned, 86% from Catholic schools as against 80% from others agreed that pupils from different denominations received fair treatment. Many institutions provide special out of class instruction for their Catholic students and this often includes catechumenate classes leading to Baptism and Confirmation in the Catholic Church (Carmody, 1999, p. 139). Other denominations are usually free to provide such services to their students even if the institution's administration may not be directly involved.

In most Zambian Catholic schools, the role of what is called a chaplain is important. Often, in past times, this person would have been a priest. In some instances, it was a way for many other staff to clear themselves of any major obligation for the religious and moral ethos of the institution. Oftentimes, even priests were very unclear about what the role entailed. As this role of chaplain passes on to the non-ordained, there will be need for specific preparation if the chaplain is to continue to be effective (Carmody, 1999, p. 146).

Catholic schools retain symbols of their Catholicity such as crucifixes on the walls, prayers at assemblies, prayer before classes, Catholic associations, as well as a chapel and regular Catholic services for the Catholic population. These include elements of what at least in the past were seen to constitute a distinctively Catholic ethos (Grace, 2002a, pp. 207, 218). One school head noted:

When one is entering our institution's premises from the front gate, one meets the grotto of Our Lady and there are crucifixes in almost all major rooms. (Head, St. Mary's, 2004)

¹⁴ This survey was conducted with first year students at the university of Zambia in January 2005. It was a random survey but since this is the principal university in the country it attracts students from all parts of the country and all the secondary schools. In that sense, it would be quite representative.

In this context, undoubtedly the hidden religiously coloured curriculum and the hegemony of day-to-day life help to create a Christian ethos (McCann, 2002, pp. 119–121; Elias, 1986, pp. 49–58). In this way, they attempt to be Christ-centred. What schools do specifically for their Roman Catholic populations is difficult to measure. It is recognized that they have been the birthplaces of vocations to religious and priestly lives and that they have formed men and women to live as dedicated and active Catholics in later life:

Catholic graduates from Catholic institutions have a high level of commitment to the Catholic Church as evidenced in such things as attendance at Sunday Mass and membership of Small Christian Communities. (Carmody, 1999, p. 149)

What perhaps also needs special consideration when speaking of Catholic identity is the degree of an institution's groundedness in local life and its capacity to create the kind of Christianity and Catholicity that are Zambian. Like other churches, because of a lack of freedom to produce curricula and programmes of its own, the Catholic church has done little to indigenize the education experience. Even in Religious Education itself, the emphasis on exploring in depth the dynamics of African conversion seems weak. Instead, the dominant emphasis appears to be on providing strong academic programmes in the interest of certification or modernization while often cosmetic efforts are made to inculturate liturgy and whatever art may exist.

Contemporary Challenges: Academic Excellence

Perhaps concern with Catholic identity receives peripheral consideration in the context of the challenge to be and to remain places of academic excellence (Carmody, 1992, p. 119). Even if the overall Catholic contribution to formal education in Zambia today appears to have been dwarfed by the proliferation of various models of school that have appeared over the past ten years, the Church's participation is highly prized by both the government and the people of Zambia (Minister of Education, 1997). A recent letter from the state President to the archbishop of Lusaka concluded:

Allow me to state that Government recognizes and appreciates the role the Church is playing in areas of health and education and is open to receive further proposals on how Government support to these institutions could be enhanced. (Republic of Zambia, 2002)

One reason for such esteem is that the Catholic schools can generally be trusted to deliver good academic results. As noted:

The Catholic schools gained and sustained a reputation for excellence, especially for good examination results. Many non-Catholics chose and continue to choose Catholic schools because of such reputations. (Carmody, 1999, p. 141)

This is not a recent phenomenon. It constitutes a central part of the Church's educational history in the country and more widely (Grace, 2002a, p. 153). Over the years the Catholic Secretariat has carefully documented academic results from its various schools. In Catholic schools the average passing rate has not only been high but also the number of upper divisions have remained higher than elsewhere with the result that a larger proportion of students from Catholic managed schools have gained entry to the University of Zambia. In 1975, for instance, 68% of all students at the University of Zambia had done part of all of their schooling in Catholic institutions even though the overall number of students in Catholic schools would never have been above 30%. Between 1982 and 1988 the percentage passing in Catholic schools ranged from 79% to 91% while the national average ranged from 61% to 66% (Carmody, 1999, pp. 127–128). This has continued so that in 2003 the average passing rate was 90% while the national average was 64%. Moreover, in 2004, as Catholic schools had approximately 15% of all students taking the Grade XII examination, 37% of the students at the University of Zambia had come from Catholic schools.

Efforts have been made to discover precisely why Catholic schools do so well academically. Government's post-Independence educational policy of equity through merit contributed to this situation in so far as the national headquarters in Lusaka designated a number of Catholic schools to receive the country's most academically able students (Carmody, 1999, p. 128). Other factors identified to be important included the Catholic schools' emphasis on discipline and organization, better teacher and student morale, more qualified staff, more adequate equipment, greater commitment of staff, and by the fact that they were single-sex schools (Carmody, 1999, p. 142). Many similar variables have been identified in other settings (Grace, 2002a, pp. 167, 177).

Catholic schools have thus contributed commendably, academically, to the education system, which has been a key objective of governments. It is not, however, clear that Catholic schools have provided the kind of holistic education they aim to impart and which government more recently also recognizes to be highly desirable (Empowerment Through Education, 2003, p. 5; Focus on Learning, 1992, p. 74; Carmody, 2004a, p. xvi). It is possible that they have been lured by the prospect of public recognition and achievement in the market curriculum rather than in the relatively invisible outcomes of the spiritual and moral curriculum (Grace, 2002a, p. 51).

Contemporary Challenges: Justice and Option for the Poor in Education

While academic performance over the years has merited Catholic institutions a high place in the educational landscape of the country, it may also be seen as over-identifying with the modernization orientation of the economy leading to, among other things, the creation of major divisions in society (*Sunday Post*, 31 October 2004). The latent tension between what has been identified elsewhere as market forces and Catholic values may be evident here (Grace, 1996, p. 70;

Grace, 2002a, pp. 180–204; Grace, 2002c, pp. 436–438). In the *Zambian* context, it has become progressively clearer that market forces have gained the upper hand in whatever battle there has been between them and ideals of equity and justice (Carmody, 2004a, p. 80).

Although option for the poor formed a large part of post-Vatican II thinking in the context of justice, how has this affected the *Zambian* Catholic educational institution? Whereas the option for the poor ideal clearly formed part of the earlier fabric of the Catholic mission when poor girls and boys were given schooling through all sorts bursary and work study schemes, it is less evident in recent decades.

As the *Zambian* social system began to favour those who have, the Church's position towards the "have-nots" has not been so obvious. When, for instance, the idea of payment of fees was reintroduced in the late 1980s, some sectors of the Catholic community protested. Though the protests may have been helpful in slowing down the process, they certainly did not halt it or even keep it within the context of how affordable it would be to the poorer sections of society. Occasionally, overt actions on behalf of the poor by Catholic institutions as for example, the move from boarding to day school facilities were highly resented by those who had become part of a growing elite and who benefited greatly from such a situation (Carmody, 2004a, p. 150). As a letter from the archbishop of Lusaka noted:

Some of the parents, influential as they are, totally refuse to understand the reasons (for becoming a day school). . . . In order to create a more comfortable learning situation for their children, the influential parents cannot understand the plight of those who could be admitted to Grade VIII, if the boarding was not phased out. (Mungandu, 1988)

This may have included aspects of what Grace elsewhere termed the internal war of position within the Church. (Grace, 2003, pp. 4–5, 12)

Catholic ideals of equity and option for the poor have nonetheless remained part of Catholic commitment but may have been heavily overshadowed by government's choice of a more capitalistic mode of economic development whereby the educational system is becoming more the preserve of those who are well-to-do. As grant-aided institutions, most Catholic institutions depend on government for funding and so it is difficult for them not to share the image now acquired by government which is that it favours those who have.

Government developed a system of bursaries for the less well-to-do. Catholic institutions have also attempted to cushion the poorest of the population through various bursary schemes of its own creation (Kanondo, 2002). In the survey of 780 first year university students in 2005, 55% agreed in general that pupils who could not pay were assisted by their schools while 88% of those in Catholic institutions so agreed. This concern for the less well off has also been a factor in the Church's movement away from boarding schools, as we have indicated, which were seen to favour those who have means (Draisma, 1987, p. 426). In 2004, for instance, 59% of Catholic secondary school population were day scholars. Even

though this still means that the number of boarders is high, the recent position is significantly different from what it had been where almost all Catholic secondary school students were boarders until the mid-1980s. Since it has been acknowledged that boarding schools favoured the richer sectors of society, today Catholic schools like Canisius high school near Monze deliberately aim to increase the proportion of day pupils even if its price may be high:

There was a view that by taking more and more day scholars, the reputation of our school is at risk. Yet another view was that we are committed to the poor even if this may mean that the quality of education suffers. The question that remains unanswered is: What are we going to do for the poor? (Jesuit Education Commission, 2004)

Such action provides concrete commitment to the poor as against yielding to market forces (Grace, 1996, p. 83; Grace, 2002a, pp. 180–204; Grace, 2002c, p. 441).

Moreover, the Catholic Church has largely resisted the option of opening private schools because such settings would most likely be providing almost exclusively for the 20% of the population or less that have means. The Church nonetheless opted to open a private school in 1999 when it took over a prestigious and somewhat elitist mine secondary school, Mpelembe, in Kitwe. This action was motivated by many considerations but it was certainly not welcomed universally by the Catholic community because of its elitist tone. Yet, it is not clear if and how Mpelembe has taken major steps to ensure that a substantial number of poorer pupils would be eligible for scholarships or, as Grace puts it, to what degree there is a concerted effort to inculcate an understanding for and a commitment to social justice (Grace, 2003, p. 20).

Concern for the handicapped has been translated into practice by the Church as has concern for those who are excluded from the system. This happened not only through the Catholic Church's decision to open more institutions for those with special needs but also by involvement in community schools, whose existence provides evidence of how the educational system has marginalized the poorest sectors of society (Carmody, 2004a, p. 65).

As noted earlier, the Church's commitment to the poorest has been evidenced in its educational contribution to Zambia. This was particularly true in its earlier years. As its grant-aided institutions became more closely part of the government system since the late 1980s, it became more difficult for the church to opt for the poorest of the poor since the education system has tended to favour the richer sectors of society. Here there is urgent need to review the partnership if commitment to Christ is to give shape to dreams for a more just society. Nonetheless, Catholic schools seem stronger than others in communicating commitment to the poor. Of 780 university students surveyed in 2005, 93% of those in Catholic as opposed to 81% in other settings noted that they were taught to help the poor. Efforts to inculcate a socio-political perspective is also evident from the 2005 survey just mentioned, 85% of the graduates from Catholic as against 57% from non-Catholic schools agreed that religious groups should criticize government.

Contemporary Challenges: A More Appropriate Curriculum

Within a few years of Independence in 1964, widespread misgiving about the nature of the school curriculum developed.¹⁵ Since then, various attempts have been made to diversify it and to make it more relevant to the country's needs. The Catholic Church has been conscious of this ongoing problem and has attempted to meet it. Even at the formal level where the curriculum was almost entirely controlled by the Ministry of Education since 1966, there were national initiatives among which was that of Canisius secondary school in the 1970s where exceptional efforts were made to combine academic excellence with practical work especially through the Production Unit:

During 1976, both staff and students agreed to extend the teaching periods to nine a day so that each class would have two hours of production per week without reducing the number of academic periods. (Carmody, 1992, pp. 120–121)

At the less formal level, many trades training, homecraft, and agricultural programmes have been developed (Carmody, 2004c, pp. 16–18). Yet, while Catholic initiatives have been commendable in the out-of-school sphere, they have not been integrated into the formal system so that Zambia still has large numbers of youth being educated who are not prepared for life outside the school which is mainly constituted by non-formal employment (Carmody, 2004a, p. 92; Colson & Scudder, 1980, p. 21; Kelly, 1991, pp. 151–152). Thus how the Church's option for the integral social development features is far from evident. Perhaps in many instances people see Catholic institutions as no more friendly than others to those whose resources are extremely limited in a context where approximately 80% of the population is considered to be below the poverty line (Carmody, 2004a, pp. 151–152; Carmody, 2003a, p. 303; *The Post*, 14 October 2005).

In today's setting where up to 15% of the overall population is estimated to be infected by HIV/AIDS, the Catholic schools' contribution to moral behaviour needs urgent attention. So far, Catholic schools have brought little that is distinctive to the overall educational approach to HIV/AIDS. Yet, clearly, any such contribution to effective education in sexual conduct would be extremely valuable. In this respect the strong long-standing Catholic emphasis on single-sex schools may need some review in so far as they may not provide an atmosphere for the development of mature boy–girl relationships (Carmody, 1998, 1999, pp. 54–55).

In a country and region where the promotion of democracy remains an ongoing but critically urgent task, we may need to ask how Catholic institutions in Zambia foster a democratic mode of procedure or a sense of belonging. They appear to vary on how they embody democratic principles. Of 164 staff surveyed in 1997, 62% felt that the administration of their respective institutions

¹⁵ Essentially, the hopes of upward mobility and widespread employment in industry were beginning to be dashed with increasing unemployment. There was also the quickly growing problem of inability to gain access at different levels of the school system. See, B. Carmody, *The Evolution of Education in Zambia* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2004) 29ff.

was democratic while 60% felt that staff criticism was well received (Carmody, 1999, pp. 155–156). When 780 university students were asked if they considered that they had been prepared for democratic life while in school, 67% from a variety of schools said that they had been while 82% from Catholic schools were in agreement.

It has been argued that as state control of the educational system declines, democracy has greater space to develop (Kamens, 1988, pp. 114–127). Where democracy is frequently under threat, it would seem that efforts to create and sustain democratic communities should be of highest importance in Zambian Catholic institutions today (Carmody, 2004a, pp. 158–162). Thus, although it appears that practice seems good, perhaps we need to continue to ask: how genuinely democratic are the educational institutions (Lombard, 2002, p. 92)? It is likely to be true here as elsewhere that a tradition of hierarchical leadership does not give way easily to new forms of shared consultative and collegial leadership (Grace, 2002b, p. 147)?

Catholic Schools in Zambia: A Research Agenda for the Future

Even though progress has been made on specifying the illusive issue of Catholic identity in Catholic institutions of learning, how clear is the overall vision of a holistic as against a job training approach (Empowerment in Education, 2004, p. 7)? To what degree is this perception shared among proprietors, staff, and parents in a country that has long been largely focused on the perception of the opportunity structure linked to market forces? Moreover, is such a sense of identity sufficiently firm to facilitate effective dialogue with the Ministry of Education?

In the ongoing transition from a preponderantly religious to lay staff in the institutions, how satisfactory has the transfer of charism (Grace, 2002a, pp. 129–130) and tradition been? Is there perhaps urgent need for a variety of staff development programmes? Are management boards effective in preserving the ethos of their respective settings?

It has been noted that Catholic educational institutions should form communities that are rooted in Christ. How can this be effected where increasing numbers of students and staff are non-Catholic and where the Religious Education programme is progressively more educational and less denominational? (Carmody, 2004b, pp. 79–81). In what way can Catholic belief in Christ be satisfactorily part of such a religiously and ethnically diverse Zambian school/college community?

In a context of more than a hundred years of Catholic education, one wonders how such a tradition has contributed to the contemporary society where access to schooling is becoming more elitist and which is marked by such things as severe unemployment (Carmody, 2004a, p. 92), a population where near 80% lives in poverty, 18% are infected with the HIV/AIDS virus, with fragile democracy, and indications of numerous serious crimes of corruption (Henriot, 2005).

Conclusion

Catholic education in Zambia still remains a high priority for the Catholic Church. Its history of partnership with the state has been fruitful. It provided schools when almost none existed and continued to cooperate with various governments in their efforts to provide schooling. After Independence, cooperation with government became greatly restricted through the 1966 Education Act as it left the Catholic Church still in a significant but subordinate position to government, where the church's mission and the possibility of creativity and initiative became less feasible. As the political climate changed in the 1990s resulting mainly in the Statutory Instrument of 1993, the Catholic Church has received a major opportunity to articulate its specifically Catholic vision and ethos entailing, among other things, better quality holistic education in face of unemployment, poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the ongoing fragility of democracy.

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A BEACON OF HOPE: CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA (AND LESOTHO)

Mark Potterton and Nathan Johnstone¹

Catholic schools form a small fraction of the total number of schools in South Africa, yet their influence has been both remarkable and enduring. Catholic schools in South Africa are distinctive because of the philosophy underpinning their approach to education. The dignity of the child is seen as central in the education process, and other significant values underpinning education in Catholic schools include:

- Respect for the diverse backgrounds and traditions represented in the school community
- Educational accountability for the content, teaching methods, finance, and quality of education
- School community participation in decision- and policy-making
- The redress of social and economic imbalances in education

This chapter briefly explores the beginnings of Catholic schooling in South Africa, it considers the changing educational landscape and challenges faced by Catholic schools. The South African research agenda and research opportunities created are also highlighted. A brief overview of the situation of Catholic schools in Lesotho is also provided, particularly because of the scale of provision and recent cooperation with the Catholic Institute of Education in South Africa.

¹ Mark Potterton was founder and Director of the Catholic Institute of Education's Centre for School Quality & Improvement and Nathan Johnstone was Director of the Catholic Institute of Education from 1999 to 2004.

From Beginnings to Democratic Transition

The history of the Christian Church in South Africa begins with the arrival of the Portuguese Catholics. A small chapel was built at Mossel Bay in 1501. However, when the Dutch settlers arrived in 1652, this temporary presence was long gone. Even though there were Catholics living at the Cape, the Dutch East India Company forbade the practice of Roman Catholicism (de Gruchy, 1979, p. 1).

The Catholic Church's involvement in formal education in South Africa started in 1849 when the Missionary Sisters of the Assumption opened a school for white settler children in the Eastern Cape. Schools multiplied throughout the country following the discovery of gold and diamonds and with the development of agriculture.² The Catholic school that opened in 1875 in the village of Pilgrim's Rest was one such example. This Ursuline school did not persist as the declining claims led many prospectors away from the town. From 1850 different religious congregations began to establish schools for Black, i.e., African, Coloured or Indian, children, particularly in the former Transvaal and Natal provinces.

By 1953 the Catholic Church was responsible for 688 state-aided schools and 130 unaided schools. These schools provided formal education for approximately 15% of the Black population within schools at the time. (McGurk, 1994, p. 2)

When the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953, the control of education was moved away from the provinces to the national Department of Native Affairs. The Act conferred wide powers on the Minister of Native Affairs, and brought Church schools under the indirect control of the state:

No person shall establish, conduct, or maintain any Bantu or native school other than a Government Bantu school, unless it is registered as prescribed. (Act No. 47 of 1953, cited in Rose & Tunmer, 1975, p. 259)

During the 1950s and 1960s many Catholic schools administered by the Church were forced to close because of financial pressures resulting from the Act. In 1986 the Private Schools Act allowed for partial subsidisation of Catholic schools together with other private schools then in operation.

The Bantu Education Act also brought teacher training under state control and only African teachers who qualified in state run teacher training institutions could be employed as teachers in state schools for African children. The Churches were forced to close the teacher training institutions they had established and maintained for African teachers.

² The first religious congregations arrived in South Africa to serve a settler church made up essentially of Catholic immigrants from Europe. Bishop James Ricards (from 1871 to 1893), in "to stop the ever-growing leakage from the faith" established education centres in some parts of the country. He invited the Jesuits to Grahamstown, the Marist Brothers; the Sisters of Nazareth to Port Elizabeth, and the Dominican Sisters to King William's Town. (Sieber, G. (1999) "Religious Life." In J. Brain, & P. Denis *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

In 1976, Catholic Church schools led the way in opening what were then private schools for white children, to all race groups. This action was the first step towards the desegregation of private schools and ultimately the entire education system in South Africa. However a quota was imposed, which meant that schools officially registered as private schools for white children could not enrol more than 10% black children. The first moves to defy the quota system in the late 1980s saw hard fought for subsidies to Catholic private schools being cut back drastically, precipitating financial crisis for many into the early 1990s (McGurk, 1994; Johnstone, 2002).

At the same time the declining number of teaching religious in religious orders involved in schools meant that increasing numbers of professional lay people had to be appointed to teach in Catholic schools putting further strain on already stretched financial resources. Towards the end of 1980s and into the 1990s the leadership of Catholic schools was increasingly handed over to lay people.

With the advent of democracy and the integration of education following the 1994 elections provision was made, in the South African Schools Act of 1996, for the existence of public schools on privately owned property.

A key provision of the Act guaranteed the recognition of the distinctive religious character of those schools where the property was owned by religious organisations. The required agreements between the owners of the property and the Member of the Executive Council responsible for education in each province, would recognise both the distinctive religious character and the manner in which it was to be maintained. In support of this provision, an instrument to appraise the distinctive Catholic character of our schools was developed by the Religious Education department of the Catholic Institute of Education. (Johnstone, 2002, p. 16)

New local bodies and structures to support and coordinate activities for Catholic schools were also established in the 1990s. Many of these arose out of the activities of the now disbanded Catholic Schools and Teachers Associations in various dioceses around the country. These were disbanded because of the patchy levels of support in some of the regions.

A Profile of Catholic Schools in South Africa Today

According to the most recent statistics held by the Catholic Institute of Education,³ there are 343 Catholic schools in South Africa today. 248 are public schools on private property and the remaining 98⁴ are independent in terms of the South African Schools Act. About 75% of the schools are rural or situated in townships and serve black communities. The rest are suburban and integrated or black. These schools serve 164,040 learners, of whom 90.7% are black and 34% are Catholic. 6,306 teachers, 69.5% of whom are black, and 38.6% of whom are

³ Catholic School Annual Statistics for 2004 supplied by the Catholic Institute of Education.

⁴ The independent schools are mostly owned by religious orders.

Catholic teach in the schools, which are spread across all nine provinces of the country. Teachers in Catholic schools do not necessarily have to be Catholic, and many schools are led by men and women who are not Catholic.

About one-third of all Catholic schools are in KwaZulu Natal, more than 90% of these being public schools on private property. The Eastern Cape follows with 19% of Catholic schools, then Gauteng with 14%, and of these more than 95% are independent. About 12% of schools are in the Western Cape, followed by the Free State with 7%, the Northern Cape and North West with 5% each, and Limpopo with 4% of the schools. Mpumalanga has just over 1% with only eight Catholic schools.

The fees charged by Catholic schools are an acceptable proxy for the socio-economic profile of the communities they serve. Of all Catholic schools 46% charge fees below R100 per year. A further 24% charge fees between R100 and R500 per year, with only 11% of the schools charging fees above R10,000 per year.

The physical infrastructure and facilities at the schools are as varied as the individual personalities that make up the school communities. These range from rundown, totally inadequate rural facilities with sometimes close to 100 learners in a classroom; through simple, well-maintained albeit simply equipped rural, township, and suburban schools and township schools; to very well maintained and well equipped architectural masterpieces all over the country.

Catholic schools have a reputation for being centres of excellence, with schools offering the final school leaving examination maintaining an average pass rate of just over 90% between 2001 and 2005 and a university entrance pass rate of 62% for the same period. Participation rates in Mathematics and Physical Science are 72.6% and 45.5% respectively, with a pass rate of 79% in Mathematics and 85.7% in Physical Science.⁵

The Changing World and Catholic Education

The increased connectedness between national economies known as globalisation, has resulted in increased competition between economies in a global marketplace. One of the most striking features of this phenomenon is the increasing economic inequality between and within nations.⁶ Rather than a more equitable distribution of economic well-being, the world is increasingly becoming a more unequal place with wealth becoming more concentrated among fewer people and growing numbers of poor people, mainly in developing and the least developed countries.⁷

⁵ Catholic Schools' Matric Examination Results for 2004 supplied by the Catholic Institute of Education.

⁶ In 1999 the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference published a pastoral statement *Economic Justice in South Africa*. This contribution highlighted the need to establish more just equitable and sustainable economic dispensation. The Bishops argued that if South Africans do not strive for economic justice, then they would experience a deepening of social problems like crime, lawlessness, poverty, and unemployment.

⁷ See discussion in Christie, 2004, pp. 15–18.

Information technology has been one of the more powerful drivers of globalisation and this is no better demonstrated than by the near instant spread of information and knowledge as a result of the Internet explosion. As with economic well-being, the Internet explosion has not provided equality of access and the world today can be divided into those privileged with access to technology and a growing digital underclass with limited or no access and therefore no prospect of being able to hold their own in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The third but by no means least significant global trend is the emergence of education as the fastest growing of all markets. In many countries of the world, industrialised and developing, schools are being turned into businesses in their own right and education consumerism is a growing phenomenon. Increasingly, teaching and learning is being reduced to a commercial transaction in a world in which education is ever increasingly privatised and expensive. This does not mean the demise of public education. There will always be a role for the state to provide education for those who will never be a profitable market and who will increasingly be excluded from the mainstream of economic activity.

The effects of these three key global trends can briefly be summarised as follows: Increasing use of education as a means in the service of “human resources”

- People seen as resources
- Must be employable, productive, profitable/yield returns
- Reject when no longer useful

Education presented as an essential tool for survival of each individual, each country in an age of worldwide competitiveness:

- Culture of “war”—every school/individual for themselves, not for living together
- Competition for pupils—to boost numbers and to get results
- Competition for teachers—richest drawing the most competent by means of premiums
- “Success” measured by visible academic results rather than by contribution made to society

As a result, education as we know it faces a serious crisis of values and mission, and in Catholic schools this means that education is seen either as a commodity traded in the market or as integral to the evangelising mission of the church. Catholic schools either see human capacity and richness as a resource to be used in the service of the economy or they are about the promotion of the human person and formation of whole people. They either provide access for those who can afford the fees charged or produce the desired results, or they provide schools for all children. In short they either promote competitive individualism or they commit themselves to working for the common good.

This crisis of values produces a critical tension which Catholic schools have to face and balance as they steer their way into the future—they are either driven

by the market or they are driven by mission! Patrick Dixon (1998), in his book *Futurewise – Six faces of global change*, argues that although many want a market economy, they still think that there should be justice, fairness, and equality of opportunity in a compassionate world where health and education are available to all. The aim of building a better kind of world should be to challenge values, to provoke justice, fairness, and a compassionate use of technology for the benefit of the whole of humanity.

The primacy of the common good as the principal aim of society, is one of two fundamental principles of the social order articulated by Jacques Maritain, the Catholic Neoscholastic intellectual, in the 1940s (Maritain 1943, 1946). Maritain developed the concepts of the person and the common good, contrasting these with the liberal beliefs about the individual and the public good. He used these concepts to offer the concept of “person-in-society” as opposed to the Enlightenment ideal which placed the individual above society, and the undue power vested in the state through totalitarian responses to the excesses of individualism.

While acknowledging physical needs as basic to humankind, Maritain argued that the person is also socially formed, fundamentally connected to humanity, and in common with all humanity has a spiritual life directed towards some good greater than just personal self-aggrandisement.

He considered love and wisdom to be the two virtues at the heart of the person. Love guiding humans in living together here on earth, sustaining them in times of adversity, and grounding their hope for the future in principal religious symbol of the life of Jesus. Through wisdom, people can discern what is of true value and worthy of a human life. This is symbolically represented in the concept of the Kingdom of God as the end to which all human effort is directed.

Maritain considered both love and wisdom to be intrinsically social virtues and believed community was an essential requirement for their formation and maintenance. In this sense, person and society are necessarily bound together.

Robert Steinberg (2001), in a paper titled *Wisdom and Education*, identifies wisdom as something different from what he calls practical intelligence. He argues for example, that some of the leaders of the apartheid movement may have been intelligent in an analytical sense. “They saw an economic problem for themselves, and solved it in a way they thought would benefit themselves and others they perceived as like them.” He goes further to suggest that many world leaders today are practically intelligent, plundering their countries for their own political and economic gain, while diminishing the life circumstances of the citizens of their countries. Here practical intelligence is selfishly directed only towards personal gain. Steinberg argues that wisdom is almost certainly something more than intelligence and that is what was missing from the works of the apartheid leaders, Nazi doctors and voracious world leaders.

Wisdom according to Steinberg’s definition is central to ensuring the primacy of the common good as the principal aim of society. He defines wisdom as “the application of tacit knowledge as mediated by values towards the goal of achieving a common good.” Whereas practical intelligence can be applied towards maximising any set of interests, individual or collective, wisdom must

always involve a balancing of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal or environmental interests in order to achieve a common good.

In Maritain's view, common goods are contrasted with public goods, which while broadly accessible, have benefits that principally accrue to individuals rather than to the common. His fundamental principle of the primacy of the common good as the principal aim of society views such good as flowing back over all persons by virtue of their membership in the common. Schooling in the 19th century was described as a common good. In modern rhetoric, schooling is seen as a public good, evidenced by the subtle change in language from the common schools of the 19th century, to the public schools of the 20th century. Schools as institutions serving the common good were to form in every citizen those basic intellectual, moral, social, and political dispositions necessary to sustain a free society. In today's world schools provide services that should be universally available and individuals acquire education in order to achieve greater individual economic rewards.

In Maritain's Catholic philosophy of education the formation of persons is the primary aim of education. He also argues that schooling must shape basic moral dispositions towards justice, courage, a love of beauty, and—foremost—a passion for truth. Maritain believed truth to be at the beginning of human action and that if humans abandoned the pursuit of truth as the unifying principle for society and accepted relativism, then everything would devolve into competing interests and ultimately to the dominance of the most powerful.

In addition to the work of Maritain, the research of Bryk et al. (1993) has been influential in South Africa. Bryk et al. bring together a number of strands of enquiry in Catholic Schools and the Common Good, a synthesis of research into the characteristics of effective Catholic high schools in the USA over ten years from 1981. Their comparative study of Catholic and Public high schools focused on the distinctive features of the Catholic schools that made it possible for them to simultaneously achieve relatively high levels of student learning, distribute this learning and achievement of learning outcomes more equitably with regard to race and class than in the public sector, and sustain high levels of teacher commitment and student engagement.

One of the key issues they considered was the argument put forward by James Coleman and others in 1966 based on human capital theory which suggests that an investment in education can promote economic development by increasing the "value" of people. This approach led to a focus on academic achievement as a measure of educational outputs. Coleman's work redefined a central educational issue: achieving equality in educational outcomes assumed priority over equal access to educational resources. This led to a shift in the focus of research into educational equity, away from the scrutiny of the equality of available educational resources towards a focus on the distribution of the outcomes of education and the factors believed to affect those outcomes.

They identified a body of empirical evidence that Catholic schools, produced higher cognitive achievements than their public counterparts. The social distribution of achievement was more equitable, indicating that the achievement

of students in Catholic schools was less dependent on family background and personal circumstances than in the public sector and, significantly, in private schools not associated with the Catholic Church. Bryk et al., identify Coleman's conclusion that contemporary Catholic schools better approximated the common school ideal, as the "common school effect."

Bryk et al. (1993), concluded that effective Catholic high schools function on the basis of four foundational characteristics, namely a core curriculum for all students regardless of their personal background or future educational plans; an academic structure embedded within a larger communal organisation formed round three core features.

First among these is an array of school activities and events that provide numerous opportunities for shared experiences among adults and students. These events also provide connections between current members of the school community, those who came before, and those who may come after.

The second, core feature is a set of distinctive structural components that enable the community to function. These include the extended scope of the role of the educator, collegiality among educators and relatively smaller school size.

Third, Bryk et al. (1993), identify a set of shared beliefs about what students should learn, about proper norms of instruction and about how people should relate to one another. These beliefs are all underpinned by a set of general moral commitments. The Catholic school sees itself as a community that respects the dignity of each person, where members are free to question within a commitment to genuine dialogue, and where an ethos of caring infuses social encounters.

The third, foundational characteristic is decentralised governance and the fourth, but by no means the least important, is an inspirational ideology. According to Bryk et al. (1993), Catholic schools are different from their organisational counterparts in the public sector because the ideas of Christian personalism and subsidiarity shape their daily lives. The extended role of educators is critical for advancing personalism. This extended role encourages staff to care about both the kind of people students become as well as the facts, skills, and knowledge they acquire. Personalism makes claims on human endeavours to act, beyond individual interest, towards a greater good.

The idea of subsidiarity rejects a purely bureaucratic conception of the school as an organisation. It claims that considerations about work efficiency and specialisation must be mediated by a concern for human dignity. This is most visibly demonstrated in the decentralisation of school governance which is based on the view that personal dignity and human respect are advanced when work is organised in small communities where dialogue and collegiality may flourish. It is believed that the full potential of the human beings is realised in the social solidarity that forms around these small group associations.

Bryk et al. (1993), envision Catholic schools as a realisation of the prophetic church that critically engages contemporary culture. They argue that Catholic education represents an invitation to students to reflect on a systematic body of thought and to immerse themselves in a communal life that seeks to live out its basic principles. The religious education provided by Catholic schools is broadly defined for life in society and not just in the sect. They conclude that the religious

understandings that shape the Catholic schools' education philosophy of person-in-community and their ethical stance of shaping the human conscience towards personal responsibility and social engagement, order daily life and its outcomes in such a way as to promote democratic life in a postmodern society. They conclude that Catholic schools represent a renewing force in a world where the link between quality education and economic advancement, both individual and societal, appears stronger than ever.

South Africa is recognised as one of the most economically unequal societies in the world. This is more due to the effects of the apartheid ideology but is exacerbated by the effects of globalisation. The Catholic school community, if it can be called such, in South Africa is a microcosm of South African and global society. The inequalities of resources, physical infrastructure, access to the Internet and opportunity are probably starker in South Africa than anywhere else in the world. However, the common belief in the dignity of the human person and the recognition of self, as the image of God, in others is much more powerful than the perceivable differences. It is this common inspirational ideology that continues to drive Catholic schooling in South Africa to make a meaningful contribution to the building of a South African nation and a common South African identity.

Challenges for Catholic Education in South Africa

The first and probably the most critical challenge facing schools is that of declining numbers and the increasing age of members of religious orders who provided the backbone of Catholic education in South Africa and across the world. This means that the schools are increasingly reliant on lay people, educators, and parents, to maintain the ethos and assets of Catholic schools.

One of the effects on schools is a decline in the social capital of religious congregations. Grace (2002) describes this as a network of support and trust relationships in the form of strong functional community provided by networks of religious communities and congregations. It also represents a decline in spiritual capital—the resources of faith and values derived from commitment to a religious tradition. The effect has been an increasing reliance on lay people, both educators and parents, to maintain the ethos and assets of Catholic schools.

This reality presents Catholic schools with the challenge of finding ways to ensure greater collaboration and mutual empowerment between religious and lay people involved in Catholic schooling. They will also have to ensure massive investment in formation programmes for people who have to take responsibility for Catholic schooling in the future.⁸

⁸ A number religious orders have established national forums and governance structures for their schools, these include the Holy Family Sisters, Christian Brothers, and Marist Brothers. The Marist Brothers, for example, bring principals and governors together regularly to share the vision and deal with common operational challenges. The Marist Brothers also organise a pilgrimage for school leaders periodically where they follow in the footsteps of St Champagnat. Both teachers and principals report that these pilgrimages contribute towards deepening the understanding of the Charism of the Marist Brothers.

The lack of corporate identity amongst schools and a sense of belonging to something bigger than individual schools is the next issue that has to be acknowledged and addressed. Schools identify themselves more by what makes them different from each other rather than what they have in common. They are either diocesan or religious order schools; public or independent; suburban, rural, or township; they are either black or integrated; rich schools or poor; members of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa or not members; they either write the Independent Examination Board examinations or the provincial senior certificate examinations. At the end of the day, there is a deep sense of isolation and neglect in many parts of the country and within and many of Catholic schools.⁹

Being Catholic should challenge schools to define themselves as a Catholic school system within the broader South African school system and also as a community of schools working towards the common good.

A further challenge facing schools is that of increasing financial pressure brought about by a combination of interlinked factors:

- Declining government subsidies for independent schools as a result of a necessary redistribution to poorer schools and communities. For many of schools this raises the question of sustainability if not short-term survival
- Declining donor funding both foreign and from local organisations or companies
- Rising educational costs and increasing fees
- Increasing inability of communities to pay¹⁰

Catholic schools are challenged to explore models for sustainability of all Catholic schools and this will of necessity require greater collaboration and sharing of all resources between schools. There is a need to consider the strategic movement of at least some Catholic independent schools into the public system. In this regard it needs to be remembered that the only reason many of these are independent is because of the Church's opposition to apartheid and the Bantu education system. There is also a need to harness collective energy to generate the financial resources needed to sustain all Catholic schools.

The threat of HIV/AIDS presents another key issue for Catholic schools. The high rate of infection of young people in South Africa, amongst the highest in the world, is also manifesting itself in increasing mortality of children and young people—many of them parents. Parent mortality weakens families and schools are going to have to cope with increasing numbers of children who have lost the material support and emotional help they may have received from their parents.

⁹ This comment is based on feedback gathered from representative delegates at the 2nd National Catholic Schools Congress held in 2004; this view is particularly strong in the more remote rural schools.

¹⁰ There is still high unemployment in the country, even though the South African economy is growing. Catholic schools in marginal communities find it difficult to collect all of the fees because of the adverse economic situation of parents and guardians.

Catholic schools are challenged as a community to increase the investment in combating the threat that HIV/AIDS poses to the fabric of the emerging South African society challenges. Catholic schools need to find and provide models for the coping with the effects HIV/AIDS for our education system and for community-based care and support of children of school-going age who live with and are affected by HIV/AIDS.

The final issue that is needs to be considered is that of incoherent, inadequate, and unsustainable service provision and support. There exists today, varying levels of local capacity to serve and support Catholic schools, ranging from well structured and organised to non-existent in many parts of the country. These local structures are not linked in any formal or even informal manner and there is very little collaboration and sharing of expertise and resources among them.

The 2nd National Catholic Schools Congress was held in September 2004. It saw consultative groups, representing educators, school leaders, school owners, and governors, highlighting a number of key issues affecting Catholic schools these included:

- A lack of understanding of what a Catholic school is or should be
- Diminishing numbers of religious staff to maintain the specific Catholic character of schools
- Acute shortage of adequately trained religious education coordinators and educators
- Shortage of Catholic leadership on schools
- A changing national curriculum
- Increasing demands for pastoral care
- Financial constraints

The Congress was held ten years after the demise of apartheid and 14 years after the first Catholic Schools Congress held in Durban in 1990. In a response to the keynote address, Nathan Johnstone of the CIE noted that: “Catholic schools in South Africa today have a sacred task to humanise—recognising the uniqueness of every person, in order to create a climate in which every pupil and teacher is able to become more fully human” (2004, p. 23).

A Congress Vision Statement was produced which recognised the strides made in education in a young democracy. The statement also highlighted pressures of poverty and the increasing disparity between rich and poor. The need to affirm schools and support schools as communities of care was highlighted (see 2004, p. 52).

Gathered at the 2nd National Catholic Schools’ Congress, representing all those involved in our schools who faithfully carry out the call to educate, we rejoice in the great advances that our young democracy has made. However, we acknowledge with pain that the communities in which we minister remain in need of healing. Ours is a society where poverty and social pressures bring despair, family life is changing, HIV/AIDS ravages our children and young adults, and disparity between rich and poor is increasing. Conscious that our schools also experience these realities, we are impelled to respond with urgency and compassion.

Jesus Christ has shown us the way to happiness and freedom from all that prevents us from being fully human. Catholic schools, as part of the Church's evangelising mission, bring the gift of this wisdom to our world. We are called to share what we have been given, pointing prophetically to the need for justice, solidarity, and the affirmation of the dignity of all, especially the "little ones." With boldness, we will continue to proclaim Jesus' way of love, compassion, solidarity, forgiveness, and service. We will search together for truth and meaning, for clarity of purpose and responsibility, trying to live and teach Gospel values with faithfulness.

The primacy of the poor should be a particular concern. We will affirm and support our schools as communities of care where each person's worth is nurtured. Created in God's image, all people have a claim on the common good.

Reliant on God's providence, we reverence God's presence in us and among us. We give thanks for the contribution already made by our schools to the common good, and we greet the possibilities of the future with joy and hope. (Johannesburg, South Africa, 23–25 September 2004)

The Congress once again highlighted the contentious nature of Catholic schools:

The contentious nature of Catholic schools is not merely an accidental feature, but rather one that is essential to their healthy functioning, painful and wearisome though this contention will be for people responsible for steering their way through it. Among the many qualities and skills required of Catholic school leaders must be included a willingness to entertain criticism and an adeptness in responding to it. Disagreement and debate prevent any temptation towards institutional idolatry and they render complacency impossible. (Sullivan 2000, p. 239)

A number of rather ambitious Congress Direction Statements were developed, which highlighted the contentious nature of schools. These focused around the following themes:

- Commitment to building the Kingdom of God
- Solidarity with the materially and spiritually poor through care programmes and sharing resources
- Commitment to share resources and to put them at the service of those in need
- Promotion of the Catholic ethos of care and the promotion of religious education
- Promotion of quality assurance and school improvement
- Formation of parents, teachers, school governing bodies, and school leadership
- Clarification of names, structures, and functions within the Catholic network
- Ensuring that schools get the appropriate financial support from government

Most of these themes are not new. In fact many of these were identified in 1993 at the inter-diocesan education conference at the University of the Witwatersrand¹¹ and 1995 at the Newcastle Conference.¹² Identifying the issues is easy, developing and implementing a strategy to address them is far more difficult.

Research in Catholic Education

A number of masters and doctoral studies with a focus on Catholic education have been published. The most significant study over the last 20 years was Pam Christie's (1990) examination of the experiences of the "open" Catholic schools in the turbulent decade after 1976. The study considers the extent to which open schools have challenged racial hegemony in South Africa. Christie recognised that within the constraints of apartheid the decision to open was brave, and that some schools worked very hard to create an inclusive vision. In her study Christie (1990, p. 135) concluded:

As a study of hegemony, this research indicates the pervasiveness of racial thinking and of assumptions of the legitimacy of the existing state forms. While pupils may indeed have been in favour of racial mixing and opposed apartheid, they were not necessarily challenged away from hegemonic assumptions or able to conceive of alternative racial and political arrangements. Indeed, what is striking is the contradictory consciousness which was evident in pupils accounts of race and social change.

It would be important now, 20 years later, to assess the situation in terms of desegregation in Catholic schools today.

A recently completed Masters dissertation provides a good example of the kind of research currently being conducted around the country in the various universities. Kusi-Mensah (2005) set out to identify and understand what contributes to parents' choice of Catholic schools. He surveyed 612 parents in five schools in the Western Cape and came to the conclusion that parents tended to base their choice of school on academic values which include high academic standards, good examination results, and the quality of teaching. Values such as communal and individual respect were also important.

The Catholic Institute of Education has also been engaged in small-scale research and evaluation. Its Centre for School Quality & Improvement and CIE Education Services has examined various topics.

In 2001 an extensive survey of the leadership training needs was conducted for the Association of Catholic Education in Africa and Madagascar

¹¹ Statement of the Inter-diocesan Education Conference of Religious and the CIE, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 25 January 1993.

¹² The Newcastle Conference Statement, 30 April 1995.

(Potterton & Cole, 2001). School leaders in Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland, and South Africa were surveyed as part of a strategy to develop closer regional cooperation.

The market-driven context and competition between schools and increasing numbers of lay leaders provided the backdrop to this research. The need for leadership training was highlighted with vision and planning being identified as the major need, followed by financial training and Catholic ethos development in schools. Another important aspect identified was the need to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis with care and compassion, as well as the need to reach out to the poor in the community.

However, funds for research and development have been scarce and this has meant that the research agenda has been limited, and mainly driven by specific project funding needs, such as measuring the impact of a numeracy and literacy intervention.

In 2004 CIE Education Services evaluated the Catholic Institute of Education's HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care Programme. This mid-term evaluation had three main aims, namely to:

- Expand information around the CIE's Prevention and Care programme
- Reflect on whether the programme is achieving its stated objectives
- Provide input for future planning of the programme

The evaluation revealed that the project was functioning well and that over 500 interventions had taken place since the start of the project. Participant schools were positive about the training and related well to the programme implementers.

A number of points for action in the future were also identified. Two of the major points being that schools need to be better prepared to deal with learners who are affected and infected with HIV and AIDS, and that schools needed better placed to offer pastoral care:

As more HIV positive South African children gain access to antiretroviral treatment we are seeing learners who are living longer, healthier lives. These learners have the right to attend school for as long as they are able. Schools will need to accommodate these children and be aware of the impact of HIV on their development. Learners who have been orphaned because of the impact AIDS also have particularly needs that will have to be met in the school. (Potterton et al., 2005, p. 34)

The Future Research Agenda

St Augustine College of South Africa was established in 1999 as a private university. St Augustine College is a centre of research and higher education which seeks to contribute ethical and leadership needs of the country.

The aim of research and education will be a Catholic humanism that involves the integral development of person, society and culture and humanity as whole. (St Augustine College of South Africa, 2006, p. 4)

A number of research reports have already been published, as well Masters and Doctoral degree small scale research projects.

St Augustine College has recognised the need for a specialised leadership course for Catholic educational schools to help prepare leaders to cultivate a culture that helps develop the leadership potential of its members including staff, parents, and students.¹³ This action supports the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1998) and recognises the need for authentic Christian leadership in Catholic schools in times of uncertainty and significant philosophical, religious, and technological change. The university has an opportunity to promote and support a research agenda developed in partnership with key stakeholders in leadership at all levels. The challenge also presents itself to assist Catholic and other organisations to analyse their leadership challenges using values-based and ethical frameworks in order to integrate values and culture into policy and decision-making. The opportunity also exists for the university to design and deliver short courses and renewal programmes on leadership and to act as a clearing house for the development and dissemination of Southern African examples of theory and best practice in leadership.

The research agenda for research in Catholic schools is immense. There are still vast patches of unexplored territory. Very little large scale research has been carried out and there is a need to look more closely at almost every aspect of the Catholic schools network. However, urgent areas in need of research include the following:

- The impact of secularisation on Catholic schools
- Maintaining the identity of Catholic schools when fewer and fewer of the teachers and leaders are Catholic
- Understanding the impact of HIV/AIDS on Catholic school communities in South Africa
- Maintaining the balance of power in schools where government funding and policies tend to overshadow Catholic values and policy
- Developing mechanisms to ensure that schools remain financially viable
- Ensuring, particularly in the wealthier schools, that Catholic schools have distinctive ethos that is genuinely different
- Establishing the needs for Catholic schools in a new democracy

Professional development partnerships need to be established between schools and local universities. These partnerships can involve shared teaching in

¹³ St Augustine College currently offers an extremely popular Master of Philosophy degree in Culture and Education specializing in Educational Leadership. Other Masters degrees are offered in applied ethics, philosophy, pastoral ministry, theology, and Canon law.

universities and the schools. For example, mutual deliberations on problems with student learning and their possible solutions could be an area of focus. St Augustine College is in a particularly strong position to develop a shared agenda and to create win-win partnerships for the good of Catholic schools.

A look at our Neighbouring Country Lesotho¹⁴

Lesotho is a small mountain kingdom entirely surrounded by South Africa. Because of its position as an enclave, its lack of a broad natural resource base and its history as an isolated protectorate, half the population lives below the poverty line, and income inequality is among the highest in the world.¹⁵ Other challenges are low quality of education, and health services, the widespread and growing incidence of HIV/AIDS, weak institutional development, lagging private sector development¹⁶ and the tendency for skilled Basotho to seek permanent employment in South Africa. For these reasons Lesotho is and is likely to remain economically captive to South Africa and is therefore in need of assistance from South Africa and other international partners.

The churches are the historical providers of education: their critical contribution is enshrined by statute in the kingdom, which is, by choice, dependent on their buildings, administrative structures, and teachers to sustain a school system. Thus, for the majority of the Basotho church school education is preferred but is not a matter of choice, as the public education system is under the statutory control of the church education secretariats. Running costs are therefore funded by the Lesotho Government, but on a scale that allows for the bare maintenance of services and nothing in the way of professional or physical development.

Recent policy decisions by the Government in favour of free primary education have circumscribed the powers of schools to levy fees; but this has not been accompanied by budgetary provisions agreed to by church and state. In addition Government provisioning has proved both inadequate and logistically ineffective. Education up to Standard 4 (age 9) in the country is now free, and schools are no longer permitted to collect fees from pupils in these standards. Government pays the salaries of teachers but does not maintain the buildings. Consequently schools are overcrowded and poorly maintained.

There is also a steady proliferation of independent primary schools which exist through the charging of fees. None are aligned to the mainline churches, but they provide only rudimentary teaching based on the availability of minimal supplies. People of some means are therefore drawn to them.

¹⁴ Much of the material in this section has been gathered in consultation with Mr. George Mohlapiso, Secretary for Commission for Christian Education of the Lesotho Catholic Bishops' Conference. This information was gathered together with the assistance of the late Michael Corke.

¹⁵ Gini index is 60.0 (2001), against South Africa 58.4 (1993), Brazil 58.4 (1993), USA 40.1 (1994), and Sweden 25.0 (1992). Source: World Bank

¹⁶ See Hassan, F. (2002). Lesotho: development in a challenging environment, World Bank and African Development Bank, Abidjan and Washington DC.

The Catholic Church has been actively involved in the education of the Basotho since the arrival in Lesotho, in 1862, of its first representatives.¹⁷ It has established and continues to provide schools of a Catholic nature offering education from early childhood; through primary, secondary, and tertiary, as well as special education in situations, inclusive of Pius XII University College.¹⁸ Through the graduates of its schools and institutions the Catholic Church has made an ongoing contribution to development and improvement of the quality of life of the Basotho.

The 588 schools of which the Catholic Church is the proprietor, are established with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop on property in or over which the Church has an interest or a right. The Church has an ongoing primary interest in the maintenance and promotion of the Catholic characters of these schools which operate within the legislative and policy framework for education, determined by the State.

In the pursuance of its educational mission, the Church recognises and gives expression to the right of every child to education, and demonstrates its intention to partner the State in meeting its obligation to ensure access to education for all children.

The Church endeavours to provide enlightened leadership in Catholic schools by placing competent school boards and committees in place to fulfil this role. The purpose of these is to create a supportive climate for teaching and learning to take place and for the promotion of healthy and mutually respectful relationships within the school and broader community. These school-based management teams serve the interests of the school and work in harmony with the mission of the Church. The Church endeavours to provide necessary training and formation for members of School Board's and management committees.

On 13 February 2004¹⁹ the Bishops committed themselves to the following vision: "A relevant education that plays an active role in the Christian formation of young people." Furthermore the bishops underlined their mission: "To provide quality holistic education that values human life and develops critical thinkers for the nation." The Bishops' commitment was to developing excellence in education and improving opportunities for all. They committed themselves to the following broad goals:

Quality

- Creating a climate of achievement
- Identifying good practice

¹⁷ The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were the first Catholic missionaries to arrive in Lesotho. But the Paris Evangelical Society was active in Lesotho before they arrived (See Couzens, 2003).

¹⁸ The origins of the National University of Lesotho date back to 8 April 1945, when a Catholic University College was founded at Roma by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of southern Africa. The establishment of this College was a result of a decision taken in 1938 by the Synod of Catholic Bishops in South Africa to provide African Catholic students with post-matriculation and religious guidance. The Catholic University College was founded in a valley 34km from Maseru in a temporary primary school building at Roma Mission. See <http://www.nul.ls/about/history.htm> for more details.

¹⁹ This workshop was convened in Maseru and included a group of lay principals and teachers.

- Sharing good practice
- Developing leadership and teaching staff
- Establishing means to monitor, evaluate, and support the work of the schools

Ownership

- Encouraging teachers to contribute to the system
- Taking responsibility for the maintenance and care of schools
- Promoting the religious formation of lay teachers

Partnership

- Forming strong and constructive partnerships with government
- Working with parents, committees, and community groups (Lesotho Catholic Bishops Conference Commission for Christian Education)

A look at the recent history indicates that Lesotho, like many countries in Africa, is experiencing a reversal of gains in the quality of life achieved in earlier years. The Human Development Index prepared by the United Nations Development Programme indicates that Lesotho has lost ground progressively since 1995. The index had been growing steadily from 461 in 1975 when it was first introduced to 573 in 1995 as follows: 461 in 1975, 510 in 1980, 534 in 1985, 571 in 1990, and 573 in 1995. It then declined to 520 in 2000 and 497 in 2003. Perhaps more significant is the fact that the country dropped from being ranked 123rd in 1975 to 149th in 2003,²⁰ suggesting that other countries are making better progress in improving the quality of life for their peoples.

The Human Development Report 2005 suggests that the share of Lesotho national income enjoyed by the poorest 10% of the population is 0.5% compared to 48.3% enjoyed by the 10% richest members of the population. The same report shows that 20% of the population representing the poorest members live on 1.5% while 20% of those who are the richest take up 66.5% of the national income.²¹

Lesotho is experiencing the progressive environmental degradation evidenced by massive gullies (or dongas) that are formed in mountainous areas through erosion, as well as the loss of vegetation particularly visible on the country's majestic mountains. Despite being a country that is reliant on subsistence agriculture, many of the young people do not stay on the land after completing their schooling but migrate into towns and to South Africa in search of jobs in offices and other commercial/civil service facilities.

The Lesotho Catholic Bishops Conference position statement of 26 May 2004 (8–19) clearly positions the Church as a partner for the common good.

²⁰ UNDP Human Development Report 2005. Human Development Index Trends Table 2, page 225.

²¹ UNDP Human Development Report 2005. Lesotho Country sheet.

The Catholic Church desires a continuing role in partnership with government in advancing education. The Church recognises the responsibility of the State on behalf of the community, to provide support and oversee educational activities for all its citizens. The Church is prepared to enter into discussion with Government regarding her appropriate responsibility for carrying out its educational ministry to the community. Moreover, the Church is also prepared to take her place in the service of the common good by advancing a role for herself in areas of development, particularly in areas of need. The achievement of this outcome will entail the provision of education of a high quality, transparent accountability and a consistent philosophy, all designed to enhance the Partnership for the Common Good.

Conclusion

During apartheid times Catholic schools were seen by many as “beacons of hope” in a country polarised by racially based legislation and practices. Many Catholic schools showed the rest of the country what a “normal” South Africa might look like. Today these schools face new challenges, particularly from growing secularisation and the increasing influence of the state. Rampant marketisation also threatens the identity of wealthier schools, and Catholic schools are once again being called to be countercultural, to be “beacons of hope,” witnesses to another reality.

The challenges facing Catholic schools, as well as other faith-based schools, need to be addressed systematically. There needs to be a focus on those issues that will ensure schools being present in the future to contribute to the common good. In short, there is a need to:

- Ensure that Catholic schools remain places in which community is fostered
- Ensure that Catholic schools remain committed to growing good people
- Put into place sound formation programmes to ensure that the spiritual and social capital that are so crucial to sustaining Catholic education is maintained and grown
- Ensure that Catholic schools continue to produce young people who are well informed and critical thinkers
- Develop models of good practice for Catholic schools and the public system in general
- Build structures to ensure mutual collaboration and empowerment between lay people and religious
- Harness the collective energies of the Catholic school community and its resources towards sustainability

To conclude, Catholic schools need to agree among themselves that Catholic schools exist with and for each other and the greater common good. Catholic schools need to realise that their individual future is bound to their collective future and

must begin to build the structures and Catholic education community we need to ensure our collective future and sustainability. Only then can we be assured that Catholic schools will continue to be beacons of hope and community for future generations of South Africans.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLING: RESPONSES OF MALAWIAN STUDENTS

Fr. Martin Mtumbuka

Introduction

This chapter has two main sections. The first section discusses responses of final year students to Catholic secondary schooling in Malawi. The discussion is based on the data collected during a study conducted by the writer in 1998.¹ The section has nine subsections: students' expectations; school life and climate; the curriculum; religious education; belief and faith values; influences on students' religious development; support for individual students; sense of community; agents of community spirit; and students' personal goals for the future. Although this study was done in Malawi its findings are in most cases very similar to those found by Carmody (1999) in Zambia. To that extent, therefore, the findings can be said to represent responses of students to Catholic schooling in southern Africa. In addition, some responses are compared and/or contrasted with those students in countries outside Africa such as Australia and the USA.

Much of the data itself is presented in nine main tables, one for each section. Each of the tables has columns showing student responses on a five-point scale. A sixth column for the mean is added to the right side. Items in the tables have been arranged in a descending order according to the mean, i.e., from items attracting large support to those attracting little support.² Although the tables in this study have been designed in such a way that, as much as possible they speak for themselves, comments have been given to highlight issues of significance or those that seem interesting. This generally includes those instances

¹ The study adopted a broad survey strategy. It involved a sample of six of Malawi's 14 Catholic secondary schools and 278 Form IV students, and 31 staff from these schools. Questionnaires and focus groups were used to collect data from students while semi-structured interviews were used to collect it from staff.

² Because of how certain questions were structured, a low mean for them represents the "positive" response that would be welcome to the schools. For example, a large-scale rejection of the proposition "I feel lonely in this school."

where respondents have seriously disagreed with each other, where there is a difference of 0.5 or more from the mean. In general, however, variations from the mean are very modest. Comments sometimes refer to perceptions which reflect the general view of the students; in other cases they draw contrasts among boys and girls, Catholics and non-Catholics, or between schools. Thus, in addition to the nine main tables there are also supplementary tables to show certain cross-tabulations of variables. Also presented after each table are relevant extracts from the students' responses to the three open questions they were asked.

Let us anticipate some large findings of the study. We shall see that one of the important findings in this study is that six in ten students said they intended to go to university after leaving school. Malawian universities accommodate only 0.3% of the relevant age cohort ³ and more crucially, in 1998 it was reported that only eight in 100 or less than one in ten secondary school graduates went to university.

Around 12,000 pupils sit the Ordinary (O') Level exams—taken in the fourth year of high school—each year. Roughly 8,400 pass, but the university takes only about 900 of them, according to Stanley Chamdimba, director of planning in the Malawi's Ministry of Education. And enrolment keeps going down each year due to a lack of funds. (Machipisa, L., 1998, p. 1)

Another leading finding is that almost all the students said religion was “very important” in their lives. Only one student out of the sample of 238 said religion was “not very important.” This high level of religiosity comes out very clearly in the data presented below. A third generally important finding was the students' great appreciation of the education they were receiving. Nine in ten said what they were taught was worth learning.

The second section of the chapter highlights one of the major challenges to Catholic schooling in Africa in general and Malawi in particular, namely the threat of globalisation to Malawian youths' religiosity.

Finally the chapter discusses the paucity of research in Catholic education in Malawi and how the newly established Catholic University of Malawi intends to fulfil this role.

A. Students Responses to Catholic Schooling

Expectations

In order to measure students' expectations regarding Catholic secondary schools they were asked to indicate the degree of importance they attached to certain educational aims of Catholic secondary schools. The results are presented in Table 1, showing the percentage of the students per answer.

Of all these aims going to university or getting a higher education attracts the strongest student support followed by preparation of careers and then religious development. It is interesting to note how these findings resemble and differ from those made in Australian and American Catholic schools. In Australia,

³ MOEST, 2000, Section 5.

Table 1. Expectations

QUESTIONS (Each question started with <i>Catholic secondary schools should...</i>)	NI%	LI%	SI%	VI%	MI%	MN
15. Prepare students for higher education (university, etc.)		3	3	26	68	4.6
13. Prepare students for their future careers	1	4	8	35	51	4.3
18. Provide an environment in which students' faith in God can develop	1	5	13	30	50	4.2
14. Provide an atmosphere of Christian community where people are concerned for one another	5	7	17	38	32	3.9
17. Give all students a chance of success in some aspect of school life	5	8	22	28	37	3.9
16. Prepare students to become good citizens	4	10	18	35	33	3.8
12. Help students to discover and fulfil themselves as persons	6	17	13	30	35	3.7
23. Develop students' commitment to better treatment of women in the Malawian society	17	17	22	18	26	3.2
21. Enhance students' moral development	14	19	26	23	18	3.1
22. Raise students' awareness of the importance of proper use of natural resources	14	22	21	26	17	3.1
19. Develop students' commitment to promoting human rights	16	21	25	23	17	3.0
20. Instil in students an appreciation of their culture (linguistic, musical, artistic, etc.)	15	30	24	17	14	2.8

Key: NI = No Importance; LI = Little Importance; SI = Some Importance; VI = Very Important; MI = Most Important; MN = Mean

also, Flynn found that the students' highest expectation of Catholic schools was that they should prepare them for university and careers.⁴ Religious goals, however, were considered rather less important than they are here. In America Bryk et al., found that bright students from affluent families joined Catholic high schools primarily for academic purposes, while less bright students from poorer families tended to join Catholic high schools whose emphasis was more

⁴ Flynn, M., 1993, p. 409.

Table 1A. Higher education aspirations

	NI%	LI%	SI%	VI%	MI%	MN
Boys	1	5	6	26	62	4.4
Girls		1	4	22	73	4.7

Key: NI = No Importance; LI = Little Importance; SI = Some Importance; VI = Very Important; MI = Most Important; MN = Mean

on religious development than academic.⁵ It is also worth noting how high goals relating to the common good (a core aspect of Catholic education), like caring for others and being a good citizen, rank in the above table. Crosstabulation (Table 1A) of gender and higher education aspirations shows that 95% of the girls said preparing students for university education was either “very” or “most” important against 88% of the boys. While going to university may be a realistic expectation for most students in Australia and America the Malawian situation is very different. Currently, girls make up only 28% of the 0.3% of the relevant age cohort that Malawian universities accommodate.⁶

Faith and moral development are essential elements of Catholic education. But the study found that while four in ten students said developing students’ faith was “most important”, and eight in ten saw it as either “most” or “very” important as an educational aim, only two in ten students said moral development was “most” important and four in ten felt it was either “most” or “very” important. For some reason(s) a significant number of the students did not see a close relationship between faith and morality. A possible explanation might be that for them faith necessarily includes morals and that they did not see the two as distinct from each other. There may be an amount of wishful thinking in this interpretation, however, and those dealing with moral issues among Malawian youths might be interested in this finding.

Another important finding was that in spite of the Malawian Government saying cultural development is a key educational aim, almost half the students saw it as of little or no importance, and only three in ten as “very” or “most” important. Similarly, in spite of a long campaign by government in regard to the importance of conserving natural resources, four in ten students said it was of little or no importance as an educational aim. Also rather “shocking” are students’ evaluations of the promotion of human rights. Almost as many students said it was of little or no importance as an aim of Catholic schools as said it was “very” or “most” important. Adding this to their relative valuations of faith and moral development one gets a possible picture of a significant number of students perceiving faith development as not greatly concerned with morals and very little to do with human rights.

Finally, in a society that is still so heavily dominated by men, it was interesting that more than four in ten students said improving the welfare of women was a

⁵ Bryk et al., 1993, p. 186.

⁶ MOEST, 2000, Section 5 of the Executive Summary and Section 3.2.3.

Table 1B. Treatment of women

	NI%	LI%	SI%	VI%	MI%	MN
Boys	25	19	24	16	16	2.8
Girls	10	15	20	20	35	3.5

Key: NI = No Importance; LI = Little Importance; SI = Some Importance; VI = Very Important; MI = Most Important; MN = Mean

“most” or “very” important educational aim. However (Table 1B), these break down into more than half of the girl respondents and only a third of the boys, and that, plus the fact that three in ten said this was of little or no importance as an aim of Catholic schools, suggest that gender awareness is very much in its early stages in Malawi.

School Life and Climate

It is said a student’s experience of the spirit of a school not only lasts longest in her memory, but also determines her perception of the entire learning process at the school. This study sought to determine the students’ assessment of their experience in Malawian Catholic secondary schools. They were asked 20 closed questions and three open ones. Table 2 summarises their responses to the closed questions, again in its order of the strength of their agreement with the proffered statement.

Important findings here include students’ marked appreciation of what they are taught (item 33) and of the support given to individual students by the staff (items 42 and 29). Another is that their sense of belonging or community is remarkably high (items 38, 37, 25, 34, 30, 32, and 40). The first is important especially in terms of motivating the students at their school work. When a mean of 4.6 is compared with the average attitudes of students in some other countries towards teaching and learning the importance of this finding is further underlined. The principle of support for individual students and the sense of belonging or community are equally key aims of Catholic education. That the sense of belonging and of community life is strongly affirmed in at least seven items speaks a lot about Malawian Catholic secondary schools.

Considering that the majority of students in Malawian Catholic secondary schools are non-Catholics it is important to note that six in ten students said most students understood and accepted the religious goals of the school and fewer than two in ten disagreed. But crosstabulation (Table 2A) adds a new angle to this finding. Nearly twice as many (24%) of the Catholic students as non-Catholic students (13%) disagreed. Presumably, the Catholics were referring here to their (majority) non-Catholic schoolmates. It remains, nevertheless, that most Catholic and non-Catholic students alike thought the majority of their schoolmates understood and accepted the religious goals of the school. We may refer to Carmody’s remark about Zambia. “The fact that so many Protestant students, some of whom originate from

Table 2. School life and climate

QUESTIONS	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
33. The things I am taught are worth learning	3	3	2	19	75	4.6
38. I feel proud to be a student of this school	6	2	1	14	76	4.5
37. Most other students are very friendly		2	6	41	51	4.4
42. If students have difficulty with school work, most teachers take time to help them	6	3	3	20	67	4.4
25. This school has a good name in the local community	6	2	8	25	60	4.3
34. Other students accept me as I am	8	3	17	30	43	4.0
31. This school places too much emphasis on external conformity to rules and regulations	12	7	9	23	49	3.9
28. Discipline presents no real problem in this school	11	9	10	29	41	3.8
29. Adequate counselling help is available to students	11	8	16	25	40	3.8
32. I am treated with respect by other people in this school	9	5	18	36	32	3.8
40. The Headmaster/mistress encourages a sense of community and belonging to the school	9	6	17	30	38	3.8
24. Students here know the standard of conduct expected of them	8	4	24	37	28	3.7
27. Most students understand and accept the religious goals of the school	9	8	21	29	32	3.7
35. There is a happy atmosphere in the school	13	11	12	26	39	3.7
26. I can approach the Headmaster/mistress for advice and help	17	8	13	20	42	3.6
36. Catholic teachers here set an example of what it means to be a practising Catholic	23	10	13	18	36	3.3
41. Most teachers never explain why they ask you to do things around here	36	19	14	15	16	2.6
39. There are ways to have school rules changed if most students disagree with them	56	8	13	8	17	2.2
30. This school is a place where I feel lonely	67	8	7	9	10	1.9

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

Table 2A. Religious goals of the schools

	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
Catholics	16	8	23	24	30	3.5
Non-Catholic Christians	5	8	20	33	34	3.9

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

Table 2B. Example set by Catholic teachers

	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
Catholics	15	11	8	22	44	3.7
Non-Catholic Christians	28	10	16	16	31	3.1

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

rather anti-Catholic denominations, leave Catholic institutions with a positive attitude towards Catholicism is surely significant” (Carmody, 1999, p. 140).

Catholic education, like any other form of education, is planned at various levels of the education system but it is the teachers who actually provide it to the students. It was an important finding therefore, that the mean for Catholic teachers setting an example of what it means to be a practising Catholic is a modest 3.3. Flynn’s study made similar findings. He found that although the students tended to be positive about their teachers’ professionalism, “the influence of teachers was found to be having a negative impact on students’ religious beliefs and values, as well as on their moral and social justice values” (Flynn, 1993, p. 406). He suggested that if the Catholic community in Australia wanted schools which strongly supported the religious development of young people, the manner in which teachers were recruited would have to be rethought.

Crosstabulation (Table 2B), however, reveals that seven in ten Catholics said Catholic teachers set an example of what it means to be a practising Catholic as compared to five in ten non-Catholics. Catholic students are significantly more positive about the example of Catholic teachers than non-Catholic students. And their evaluation may well be the fairer one since they are more likely to be aware and watchful in this area (more likely, even, to know which teachers are Catholic). But it is also possible that some were being “protective” of members of the same church as themselves.

Education in general, and Catholic education in particular, places great importance on helping students interiorise certain values. Among other things this implies placing more emphasis on why people do things than on what they actually do. It is important, therefore, to note that as many as seven in ten students said that the school they attended placed too much emphasis on external conformity to rules and regulations and only three in ten said there were ways of

changing school rules if most students disagreed with them. But six in ten said it was false that teachers did not explain why they asked them to do things. School administrators may have to review ways of formulating discipline policies and enforcing discipline.

Three open questions also related to students' evaluation of their school experience. In all schools a very big majority of students expressed great satisfaction with what they experienced and/or learned at school. What they appreciated about the Catholic secondary schools they attended included: equal treatment of students by teachers; freedom of worship for both Catholics and non-Catholics; friendly atmosphere; good examination results; good teaching; helping each other in times of need; improving their knowledge of the Bible; promoting students' spiritual growth; religious services; and the school's location and/or rules (for boys this seemed to mean protection from activities that would disturb them from their studies, e.g., discos, films etc., but for girls it mainly meant security from men!).

A student at School 3 said⁷: "this is a good school in the sense that it always has hardworking teachers . . ." And he added⁸: "The most pleasing thing is that when you come here you think of going to university or getting good points at the end of your secondary school course." Many students made similar remarks. One went as far as suggesting it was by divine will that he was selected to School 6. He said that⁹:

(The school) gives the best of all necessities of one's life particularly in the area of education and religion. I have realised myself through this school, and never shall I forget... (that) it was the plan of God to put me here so that all the plans He has for me should be fulfilled.

Paradoxically, at that time School 6 had the most dilapidated hostels and classrooms among all Catholic secondary schools in the country.

Closed and open responses alike show that the students placed academic goals above all others. It is a finding that Catholic authorities might not be pleased with. But Carmody (1999) found the same in Zambia—as Flynn (1993) did in Australia. "Seventy-five percent of the administrators surveyed in 1995 considered that for the majority of students, academic takes precedence over religious motives when choosing the school" (Carmody, 1999, p. 144).

Not that appreciation of the religious values and aims of these schools was lacking. One student said¹⁰:

Yes, I have come to appreciate and value my Catholic school because I have changed my way of life. When I was in the primary school I was not going to Church and not even respecting my parents. After coming here I have

⁷ Section A of Case 1, School 3.

⁸ Section C of Case 1, School 3.

⁹ Section A of Case 20, School 6.

¹⁰ Section A of Case 20, School 7.

learnt many things like praying and respecting others. But somehow I don't understand my fellow students.

At another school a student said¹¹: "The most pleasing thing is that since I came here I have never seen the Headmistress using abusive words—unlike the school where I was at first." At the same school another student said¹²:

I came to appreciate the Catholic school I am attending because at first I was at a government school then I moved here where I found life different from my previous school where we didn't have time to pray or do YCS meetings. But when I came here I found myself at the Church, at the YCS meetings with friends and we discussed the love of God and grew in my faith in God which at first I didn't know. Indeed Catholic schools are bringing young people to know about God. These are of great value to me. Only that I don't like the rule of cutting the hair short at secondary schools.

A student at another school said¹³:

(The school) has taught me how to behave in the community and spiritually. Now I know more about how to be in a community hence being tolerant. I know to uphold my temper and be friendly to others. I know how different people behave. It has inspired me to be a hard working Christian citizen.

Another student at this school had qualified praise¹⁴:

These schools offer better education for I have been to two of them. They develop students as better citizens and followers of God. However, the Catholic teachers who should set a good example are behaving loosely nowadays; most of them are failing to abide by the laws.

At one of the most famous boys' Catholic secondary school one student said¹⁵:

Firstly, I would like to say the school has really helped me to have faith in my Catholic religion and am sure I will not join another Church. Without this school I would have already left it and followed my parents' religion (Islam), but now I have no plans of doing that. I am aware that all denominations have the same faith.

Of course, responses were sometimes in conflict with each other. A female student complains about the rule of keeping hair short, saying it made girls look like boys. A colleague at another school disagrees¹⁶: "We are not allowed to keep chemically

¹¹ Section C of Case 9, School 2.

¹² Section A of Case 4, School 2.

¹³ Section A of Case 4, School 3.

¹⁴ Section A of Case 16, School 3. Here might be one of the reasons why most students did not see Catholic teachers as setting an example for them regarding what it meant to be a practising Catholic.

¹⁵ Section A of Case 33, School 1. The school this student attended might not be pleased with his claim that Islamic and Catholic faith are the same.

¹⁶ Section A of Case 1, School 5.

treated hair which is helpful to us so as not to busy ourselves with unimportant things. It is also helpful to those who cannot afford to beautify their hair.”

In sum, the study showed that academic development, religious activities, and teacher–pupil interaction in resolving discipline problems ranked highest in the students’ appreciation of their school experiences. Regardless of the physical condition of some Catholic schools, many students appreciated their stay at these schools provided there was what they considered to be quality of teaching/learning.

But the students also had some very critical remarks about their experience in the schools. As expected, most of these were directed at administrators and the schools’ boarding facilities, and especially food. In all the schools the students complained about poor diet. In 2 schools they were extremely critical of the head teachers, one lay head and one religious head. In the others they complained strongly against some members of the administration. In 4 schools, however, there were no strong criticisms of the school leadership.

The following comments are representative¹⁷:

At least there must be a change in the way they treat us students; like when a student has done something wrong they don’t bother to ask her why she did what she did. Instead, they make their own judgement, which cannot help us to grow in a good way. So they should try to understand us students because they were also once students.

Again¹⁸:

The way the students are treated; being suspended for minor offences e.g., noise making, or punishing students during class time, and poor diet. I don’t really understand why the Catholics whom I believe have lots of money should be failing to give us nice meals yet the Fathers and Sisters in their convents do have nice meals and cars for that matter. The rule of keeping short hair should be changed. We look like boys.

And¹⁹

There are no changes I would recommend at this school since I just came here last year and I have not been given any chance to do anything plus teachers don’t care to know ideas of some pupils on how to develop this school. I don’t even feel free when I am with teachers at times.

Regarding the school with the worst kept buildings²⁰:

The changes that have to be done to this school are books and buildings. Hostels have no windowpanes and we take bathing towels to cover the

¹⁷ Section C of Case 1, School 5.

¹⁸ Section B of Case 9, School 5. It should be noted that at that time School 5 had the best kept buildings among all grant-aided Catholic secondary schools in the country.

¹⁹ Section B of Case 33, School 3.

²⁰ Section B of Case 2, School 6.

windows. The diet is also bad. Imagine people have started making traps for catching mice for relish. I think these changes should commence as soon as possible.

At the same school one student said²¹:

If at all I will prosper in my life the best I will do is to make some changes in this school for though it is reputable, it is dilapidated titanically (sic) and should one ask which is the most ruined school in Malawi, School 6 comes first. I would therefore encourage my friends who are successful because of the same school that they should come in with some help.

Some of the most serious findings concerned some female students' claims that some teachers were seducing them. One student said²²: "Our diet is very poor. But I also hate some of the teachers who want to go out with young girls like us." At the same school another student said²³: "Male teachers should treat us as their daughters." Still at the same school one student said²⁴: "Teachers should treat each and everyone equally; male teachers should see us as their daughters."

In spite of such comments, the overall students' impression of Malawian Catholic secondary schools was very positive, and for some students this was directly related to the fact that they were Catholic. It is important to note that the students' overall positive perception of Catholic schools was also identified in Carmody's study in Zambia.

In the 1996 survey, over 90% of all past students noted that they enjoy meeting former teachers and administrators, generally indicating happy memories of their days in these institutions. (Carmody, 1999, p. 146)

The finding invites policymakers and school administrators to protect and promote the positive atmosphere in the schools. More important, because Catholic staff and students are a minority the finding highlights the importance of the role played by head teachers whom students said played an important role in promoting the sense of community. The finding also underlines the need to ensure that those appointed to head the schools receive sufficient orientation and support regarding protecting and promoting the Catholicity of the schools.

The Curriculum

Another aspect of Catholic secondary education on which students' views were sought was the curriculum—understood here as the subjects taught in the schools. They were asked six questions. Their responses are summarised in Table 3.

²¹ Section C of Case 20, School 6.

²² Section B of Case 2, School 5.

²³ Section B of Case 15, School 5.

²⁴ Section B of Case 36, School 5. Many would regard these claims as very serious not only because they undermine the professional and moral integrity of teachers but also in regards to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Malawi.

Table 3. Curriculum

QUESTIONS	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
44. The Religious Education programme is an important part of the curriculum	3	3	9	28	59	4.4
46. The subjects taught here prepare students adequately for future employment	4	3	9	25	59	4.3
43. The subjects offered develop the capacity for independent and critical thinking	5	7	8	29	51	4.2
45. The subjects taught in the school are relevant to real life and to students' needs	5	5	10	26	54	4.2
47. The subjects offered in this school are influenced too much by examinations	10	8	17	27	38	3.8
48. The school places sufficient emphasis on cultural activities (music, art, drama, etc.)	26	15	13	23	23	3.0

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

As in the previous section, it is important to note the very high degree of importance the students place on religious matters. Almost all say religious education (RE) is an important part of their studies.²⁵ Against the background of common complaints about the low quality of education and a very high unemployment rate in the country (estimated to be around 80%), it was a real surprise that that eight in ten students said the subjects taught at their schools prepared them adequately for future employment and that they were relevant to their real needs.²⁶ When this is coupled with the fact that only 8% of secondary school graduates go to university per year one might argue that one of the greatest challenges facing Catholic secondary schools in Malawi is raising unrealistic expectations among students. For some reason the schools give a lot of hope to the students. But high unemployment and very low transition rates from secondary to university education show the students' great optimism about the academic and economic benefits of their secondary education is unrealistic. Those responsible for educational policy may find this worth noting.²⁷

²⁵ It should be noted that in Australia Flynn (1993) found that the students viewed religious expectations to be far less important than careers, exams, and relationships (p. 409).

²⁶ The majority of teachers, however, said secondary education did not prepare the students for work in any significant way.

²⁷ It should be noted, however, that the success of Catholic schools is not only based on the number of their graduates who go to university or enter the world of work but also on vocations to priesthood and religious life. When the writer checked with the participating schools regarding vocations to religious life the average was about three vocations per school per year.

Some might argue, however, that in a country where the transition rate from primary to secondary school is only 13% it is understandable for secondary school students to think they have almost “made it” into the job market. Others might simply say the students are still young and really do not know how hard it is to get a job in Malawi. Whatever the basis for their great optimism about secondary education, it might be worthwhile to compare it with that of most of their counterparts in inner city schools in America and Europe.

Another important finding made here was that contrary to the views of some teachers, as mentioned earlier, eight in ten students said the subjects they studied developed their capacity for critical and independent thinking. What should also be noted is the similar distribution of the students’ responses to the question about cultural activities asked in this section as compared to how they answered a similar question as shown in Table 1.

It is important to note that students’ perceptions of the relevance of education to their needs identified by this study were very similar to those found by a survey commissioned by the Ministry of Education, *Needs Assessment Survey for Secondary Education in Malawi* (1995).

A little over 90% of the students agreed that secondary education provides general knowledge. The majority of the secondary students felt that secondary education prepares them for a career, to render good service to the community and helps them to discover vocational skills and interests. (Chimwenje, D.D. et al., 1995, p. 12)

But Chimwenje et al., (1995, p. 27) argue that “it is doubtful if such skills are in line with the current job market forces; the employers’ responses indicate that the secondary school products do not bring relevant skills to the job.” They further argue that

The fact that most school leavers fare well once employed is because the various organisations have offered them on-the-job training. The findings underscore the point that secondary education does not adequately prepare the youths for the world of work. (Chimwenje et al., 1995, p. 29)

It can be argued that this is an unfair criticism of the schools. It is unrealistic to expect them to prepare adequately each student for whatever job he or she will get after school. In fact, the same report²⁸ says, “When asked whether school leavers are trainable or not an average of 91.7% of the employing organisations agreed that they are trainable” (Chimwenje et al., 1995, p. 24). Furthermore, even if they were able to prepare the students for work, the benefits would be very questionable considering the extremely high level of unemployment in the country.

²⁸ Participants were chosen on the basis on stratified random sampling, they included: 22 secondary schools, 330 students, 110 teachers, 22 head teachers, 110 out of school youths, 110 parents, and 17 employing organisations. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students and staff while unstructured interviews were used for parents and employers.

Religious Education

The importance of RE is strongly emphasised by Pope John Paul II (1979).²⁹

The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students.

The students' perception of RE in Malawian Catholic secondary schools are summarised in Table 4.³⁰

One important finding was that almost all the students were very positive about RE—not only regarding its value as a subject but also its effects on their lives. Nine

Table 4. Religious education

QUESTIONS	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
59. RE classes help me to understand the meaning of life	1	2	6	28	62	4.5
56. RE classes have helped me to pray	5	4	5	20	66	4.4
57. RE classes have helped me understand other religious and non-religious points of view	4	5	7	27	57	4.4
55. RE classes help me to form my own conscience (sense of right and wrong)	5	3	9	21	62	4.3
50. I am enjoying RE classes this year	11	4	9	24	53	4.0
51. The study of other religions has helped me appreciate my own religion	8	5	13	25	49	4.0
53. RE classes are not taken seriously by students	17	18	15	24	26	3.2
54. RE classes are poorly prepared and taught	43	18	12	12	15	2.4
58. RE classes take up too much time which should be devoted to other subjects	68	17	10	2	3	1.5
52. RE classes are largely a waste of time	84	7	9	2	3	1.3

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

²⁹ Pope John Paul II, 16 October 1979, in Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 66.

³⁰ Note that the students were asked one question regarding RE in the previous section as shown in Table 3.

in ten students said RE had helped them to understand the meaning of life and almost a similar proportion said it had helped them to pray. In addition, eight in ten said it had helped them to form their conscience. Another important finding was that eight in ten students said they were enjoying RE and that it was “completely false” that RE classes were largely a waste of time. In addition, nine in ten said it was “false” that RE classes took up too much time that should be devoted to other subjects. There were no significant variations between boys and girls.

Although predominantly Christian, Malawi is a multi-faith society to some degree. It was, therefore, a significant finding that eight in ten students said the study of other religions had helped them to appreciate their own religion and also assisted them to understand other religious and non-religious points of view. But Malawian church authorities do not share this positive attitude towards the study of other religions in their schools. In January 2000 the government introduced a multi-faith junior certificate religious and moral education (RME) syllabus as a replacement of Bible Knowledge. Church leaders strongly opposed the Ministry’s decision to remove Bible Knowledge from the curriculum and asking their schools to teach Islam and traditional religions arguing, among other things, that these were the very religions they wanted people to convert from. The State President intervened by suspending the new syllabus and forming a National Consultative Committee to look into the problem and advise him on the way forward. The conclusion was that Bible Knowledge was reintroduced to be offered as an optional subject alongside RME that is also optional. But the church leaders are still not keen that their schools should offer RME. The writer was a member of the Committee.

The degree of the students’ liking for RE shown in Table 4 is on the whole endorsed by their responses to open questions. Responding to the question about what changes she would recommend about her school one said³¹:

I think it could have been better if the Priests, Sisters, and mostly the Youth Chaplain, often visited our school and taught us more about our Catholic faith. In this way more students would have known about their Catholic faith and become real Catholics. We students don’t know our Catholic faith.

Another said her school experience had improved and strengthened her faith as a Catholic. She added³²: “I have come to know real qualities of sisters and how good it is to be a sister. RE has improved my everyday life.”

In addition to the questions shown in Table 4 regarding RE, 14 questions that the students were asked were designed to test their RE knowledge. But considering that the questions were based on Catholic doctrine only the performance of Catholic students is considered. The average score was 50.3%. Flynn (1993) gave similar questions to Catholic students in Australia. Their average score was 11 out of 24, i.e., 45%. One student even asked him, “Who is this person Grace?” (Flynn, 1993, p. 430).

³¹ Section B of Case 43, School 4.

³² Section A of Case 43, School 5.

Values, Beliefs, and Faith

There were 25 questions relating to students' perceptions of values, beliefs, and faith. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.

The students' responses (Table 5) are in keeping with general pattern that has emerged so far—very high levels of religiosity and appreciation of moral values.

(a) *Morals* Seven in ten did not agree that “it was all right to take a small item from a large department store if everyone else did it.” And asked “if it was all right for a girl and a boy who were not married but loved each other having sex,” nine in ten girls said it was “certainly false” while six in ten boys said the same. It should be noted that *The 2000 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS)*, (2000), found that the median age of boys at first sex was 17 years while it was 18 for girls. It said its findings “suggest that age at first sex is unchanged or slightly rising for girls but falling for boys” (National Statistical Office, 2000, p. 4).

There was an unexpected finding regarding polygamy. In a country where polygamy is so common it was a rather strange finding that eight in ten students said that polygamy was against the dignity of women. But eight in ten female students and seven in ten boys said those who said polygamy should be abolished were wrong. When this apparent contradiction of standpoints was informally presented to an experienced lady teacher for comments she said there was a strong perception among young ladies in Malawi that they greatly outnumbered men. Thus, some were taking the view that the few men that were available should be shared. The 1998 census found that at national level there were 96 males per 100 females.³³ This does not justify polygamy.

Another important finding was that nine in ten of the students said they tried to be friendly and helpful to others who were rejected and lonely and a similar proportion said people should be respected whatever their tribe or religion. As discussed later in the chapter, the students' responses to the open questions showed similar findings in regard to the sense of community in Malawian Catholic secondary schools.

Taking into account the extent of the problem of abortion in many countries, it was an important finding that nine in ten students said it was wrong. This proportion applied equally to girls as well as boys. Finally, while seven in ten said it was “false” that trying out drugs was all right as long as you did not go too far, two in ten said it was all right as long as did not go too far. It is not clear whether or not the students who said it was alright trying out drug abuse as long as one did not go too far had an informed opinion about drugs and were really aware of its consequences.

(b) *Beliefs and Faith* As indicated, one of the most important findings of this study was that almost all the students said they believed in God and that it

³³ For details see, National Statistical Office, 2000, p. 1.

Table 5. Values, beliefs, and faith

QUESTIONS	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
61. I believe in God		1	2	4	93	4.9
72. I believe that God always forgives me	1		1	7	91	4.9
69. It is important for me to spend some time in prayer each day	2			9	88	4.8
70. My faith helps me be a better person	1		4	20	74	4.7
66. People should be respected whatever their tribe or religion	3	3	5	14	75	4.6
76. The Church is very important to me	2	2	5	19	72	4.6
67. Abortion is wrong	10	1	2	4	84	4.5
62. Polygamy is against the dignity of women	5	2	16	15	63	4.3
63. I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely	1	2	9	38	50	4.3
65. People today should respect the environment	5	4	12	26	53	4.2
80. Those who say polygamy should be abolished are wrong	8	6	11	13	62	4.2
73. I try to follow the religion way of life without questioning it	15	12	15	27	32	3.5
74. The Catholic Church needs women priests	30	5	31	15	18	2.9
75. Catholic priests should be allowed to marry	38	5	15	11	31	2.9
71. I have rejected aspects of the teaching of the Church in which I once believed	52	9	13	16	10	2.2
68. Trying out drugs is all right, as long as you do not go too far	57	10	12	11	11	2.1
60. It is all right to take a small item from a large department store, like PTC or Kandodo, if everyone else does it	67	8	11	6	8	1.8
64. It is all right for a girl and a boy sex who are not married but love each other to have	75	9	8	4	5	1.5
78. I think that Church services are boring	78	12	6	3	1	1.4
79. I think that saying prayers does no good	83	8	4	2	3	1.4
77. Jesus does not mean anything to me	97	2		1		1.1

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

was “false” that Jesus did not mean anything to them. Furthermore, almost all of them said it was “important” to spend some time in prayer each day and that it was “false” that saying prayers did no good. As for the influence of faith on their way of life the same proportion said their faith helped them to be better persons. Six in ten students said it was “false” that they had rejected aspects of the teaching of the Church in which they once believed. In fact, the majority said they tried to follow the religious way of life without questioning it. Contrary to the views of most of the youth in some countries, nine in ten students said the Church was important to them. Furthermore, almost a similar proportion said it was false that Church services were boring. Nine in ten said they normally attended church services (excluding school prayer services) either every Sunday or a few Sundays a month. And on a more spiritual level, almost all the students said they believed God always forgave them.

Regarding the sacrament of reconciliation, however, the pattern was very different. 34.1% of Catholic students said they received it about once in three months, 38.6% said they received only “a few times a year,” while 19.3% said they “rarely or never” received it. Because there are no other findings to compare these with it is not certain whether their reception of the sacrament of penance is going down or not. Nevertheless, it seems illuminative to compare these with Flynn’s findings.

While 37% of students received the Sacrament of reconciliation at least once a month in 1972, by 1982 this had fallen to 7% and in 1998 had declined to 3%. Also, 45% of students in 1972 rarely or never sought forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. By 1998, this number had increased to 87% (Flynn & Mok, 2002, p. 248).

Flynn and Mok (2002) suggest that secularisation accounts for the decline in the students’ reception of the sacrament. This, however, would not be the most credible explanation regarding Malawian students who on the one hand indicate a very high level of church attendance while on the other hand the majority receive the sacrament only a few times a year. It is not clear what religion means to most of them at the level of personal relationship with God and its implications. Carmody (1999) partly refers to this when he says, “the challenge for Catholic schools remains the need to develop the total person or, in other words, to promote conversion at the various levels of the personality” (Carmody, 1999, p. xxii). Pope John Paul II (1995) expressed the same concern. “In Africa today formation in the faith too often stops at the elementary stage, and the sects easily profit from this ignorance.”³⁴ It should be noted:

It is widely recognised amongst Catholic people today that, since Vatican II, there has been a marked decline worldwide in the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. . . . Indeed, even the need for reconciliation at all is often not readily acknowledged today. (Flynn & Mok, 2002, p. 247)

³⁴ For details see Pope John Paul II, 1995, para. 76.

Table 6. Influences on students' religious development

QUESTIONS	NI%	LI%	SI%	VI%	MI%	MN
81. The example and lives of your parents	3	6	7	28	56	4.3
86. School liturgies (Masses, prayer sessions, etc.)	6	4	15	30	45	4.0
85. The Religious Education provided by your school	5	8	16	31	41	3.9
82. The influence of your parish	10	11	26	30	23	3.4
83. The influence of your friends and peers	6	13	36	30	16	3.4
84. The example and lives of your teachers	13	18	29	25	16	3.1

Key: NI = No Importance; LI = Little Importance; SI = Some Importance; VI = Very Important; MI = Most Important; MN = Mean

Some might argue that taking attendance at Mass and receiving the sacrament of reconciliation as external manifestations of one's spiritual life is a narrow and mechanical view of spirituality. They may argue that what is "much more important is the quality of the interior life that schools foster in their students, the voices of conscience they nurture or fail to nurture" (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 341).

I think lots of schools in the past could be considered to have a strong Catholic ethos because of statues, reciting prayers and learning the Catechism but I don't know if that made it necessarily Catholic. We're about promoting the basics in terms of Christian values, love of God and love of neighbour. Jesus never made it difficult. It's only theologians who make it difficult.³⁵

The issue of what might account for the students' high levels of religiosity is discussed later in the chapter. The participants showed no strong views on having a married clergy or women priests.

Influences on Religious Development

Students were asked how six factors contributed to their religious development. Table 6 summarises their responses.

It is important to note that besides collectively considering teachers to be of least importance on their religious development (Table 6) their responses to open questions presented the same picture. Although they were pleased with the quality of education they were receiving they were critical of the teachers regarding justice and morals. They said staff did not listen to them about discipline issues and boarding facilities. They also complained about the head teachers being too strict or treating them unjustly. And as indicated, some female students complained that some male teachers were seducing them. It is important to note how similar these findings are to those made by Flynn. His Australian students ranked the six factors as follows: parents, friends and peers, RE, school liturgies, parish, and teachers (Flynn, 1993, p. 293). The study also showed that teachers' influence on

³⁵ Head teacher, Sacred Heart of Mary School, in Grace, G., 2002, p. 218.

students had steadily gone down for two decades: 28% in 1972, 20% in 1982, and 14% in 1990. Senior students no longer saw teachers as sponsors of their religious growth. Flynn (1993) says although students tended to be positive about their teachers' professionalism, the teachers had a negative impact on students' religious, moral, and social justice values (Flynn, 1993, pp. 403–406). It is not clear whether or not by “negative influence on students” he means teachers had a weak influence on the students' religious, moral, and social justice values or that they actually made the students worse in these areas. Probably he meant the latter. Nevertheless, considering the importance of the role of teachers in Catholic education, it was an important finding that three in ten students said teachers had little or no importance regarding their religious growth. Policymakers may find this worth noting.

There were at least two important inter-school variations in regard to the influence of teachers on students' religious development. While the mean for all schools was 3.1, Schools 2 and 5 scored 2.6 and 3.8 respectively. It should be noted that School 2's students registered the highest students' appreciation of teachers' support for individual students—including counselling. While correlation is not causation, head teachers might be interested in this finding.

Considering that Malawian Catholic secondary schools are boarding it is probably understandable that parishes come only third in terms of influencing the students' religious development. Nevertheless, Parish Priests might be interested to take note of this remark.³⁶

In Catholic schools which have no priests nearby prayers are rarely conducted, which weakens the faith of some students. Here prayers are not conducted in the chapel as often as they used to when the Religious were here.

Support for Individual Students

Most students showed a very high degree of satisfaction with the support the teachers gave them. Seven in ten students said (Table 2) it was “completely true” that if students had difficulties with school work, most teachers took time to help them. The students of School 2 were particularly positive about this. One said³⁷:

The thing which pleases me most here at school is the way teachers teach. If you go to a teacher and say I didn't understand what you said, they are always ready to help you which some teachers in other schools don't. . . .

Another wrote³⁸: “Teachers here always find time to help anyone who has got a problem.” In all the schools a big majority of students praised the schools for making provisions for the religious/spiritual development of students of other denominations or faiths.

Some, however, did not feel their religious freedoms were respected enough. This was particularly so with students from a Pentecostal/fundamentalist background.

³⁶ Section C of Case 5, School 6.

³⁷ Section C of Case 4, School 2.

³⁸ Section C of Case 12, School 2.

There is need to give full respect to various denominations. I was very much disappointed over the speech by His Lordship Bishop X forbidding Born Agains at this school. I did not expect such a speech from such an honourable man. And my only appeal is: may His Lordship Bishop X withdraw his speech.³⁹

But at the same school one said⁴⁰:

In our school we were used that every work which was to be done, there should be a Form One (first year) student to do it. Fortunately a Catholic headmaster came and changed things which were happening. Now there is improvement. The number of Born Agains in the past was so huge that they started disturbing others but now it has ceased.

At another school one said⁴¹: “There is that freedom—they don’t deny non-Catholics the freedom to remain with their faith; they help us in many ways. But the bad results are the Born Agains.”

School administrators are faced with a real challenge in trying to balance the common good with support for individual students—especially in regard to religious matters. There is need for clearer guidelines from Catholic authorities in this area. At the moment their view seems to be that New Religious Movements such as “Born-Again” should be kept out of their schools. But the Ministry of Education does not consider religious affiliations when selecting students.

Sense of Community

As indicated, communal existence is central to Catholic education. This study sought to identify the degree of sense of community in Malawian Catholic secondary schools and its agents as perceived by students.

(a) *Among Students* In all the schools students said there was a very strong sense of community that was particularly demonstrated during moments of pain and sorrow. For example, they comforted each other when one when one was bereaved and looked after fellow students who were sick. Remarks such as the following were very common.

I have appreciated a lot of things at this school, the love, peace and joy it offers; the unity which is strongly emphasised and keeps out all the thoughts of loneliness and neglect; living together as one regardless of where we come from.⁴²

Table 7 underlines the high degree of sense of community among students.

(b) *Between Students and Teachers* Although there was great satisfaction with the sense of community among staff on the one hand and among students

³⁹ Section B of Case 26, School 6.

⁴⁰ Section B of Case 25, School 6.

⁴¹ Section C of Case 43, School 5.

⁴² Section A of Case 8, School 2.

Table 7. Sense of community among students

QUESTIONS	CF%	PF%	U%	PT%	CT%	MN
66. People should be respected whatever their tribe or religion	3	3	5	14	75	4.6
38. I feel proud to be a student of this school	6	2	1	14	76	4.5
37. Most other students are very friendly		2	6	41	51	4.4
63. I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely	1	2	9	38	50	4.3
34. Other students accept me as I am	8	3	17	30	43	4.0
32. I am treated with respect by other people in this school	9	5	18	36	32	3.8
35. There is a happy atmosphere in the school	13	11	12	26	39	3.7
30. This school is a place where I feel lonely	67	8	7	9	10	1.9

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

on the other hand, it was not the same between the two groups and between head teachers and teachers. Except for School 2, in all the other schools (5) the students felt the staff did not listen to their complaints—especially regarding boarding facilities. None showed any awareness of the possibility of a relationship between the head teachers' commitment to discipline and the schools' quality of academic education. One said⁴³: “the Sisters here are the most feared people because of their tongue. The moment one sees a Sister in the corridor she tends to change her way.” At another school one expressed his inability to suggest any changes saying: “at present I cannot do it due to the atmosphere, the Head of the institution can suspend me immediately since he is big headed and does not appreciate any request. He says his word is final.” Except at schools 1 and 2, many said the head teachers, although encouraging a sense of community, were too strict or treated them unjustly. But one said⁴⁵: “school rules are there to keep the students safe and in doors to protect them from any harm e.g. the HIV/AIDS killer.”

Agents of Community Spirit

Students' responses to closed questions showed three key agents of community spirit in Malawian Catholic secondary schools: the social value that people must be respected regardless of their social or religious background,⁴⁶ individual students, and head teachers. Table 8 below shows the extent to which they did so.

In regard to the prominent role of head teachers in promoting community spirit it should be noted that Flynn made a similar finding in Australia. Principals were said to play the most important role in promoting a sense of community in schools (Flynn, 1993, p. 408).

⁴³ Section B of Case 28, Participating school.

⁴⁴ Section B of Case 12, School 3.

⁴⁵ Section A of Case 20, School 2.

⁴⁶ Some teachers said the widespread acceptability of this value in Catholic schools was due to influence of the Catholic tradition.

Table 8. Agents of community spirit

QUESTIONS	CF %	PF %	U %	PT %	CT %	MN
66. People should be respected whatever their tribe or religion	3	3	5	14	75	4.6
63. I try to be friendly and helpful to others who are rejected or lonely	1	2	9	38	50	4.3
40. The Headmaster/mistress encourages a sense of community and belonging to the school	9	6	17	30	38	3.8

Key: CF = Certainly False; PF = Probably False; U = Uncertain; PT = Probably True; CT = Certainly True; MN = Mean

The study however, identified one special factor of community building at School 2, namely school uniform. Some students said it concealed their socio-economic differences and made them look more like one community. One said⁴⁷: “I appreciate that one can forget how one was at home i.e. about poverty. Everybody is allowed to wear school uniform only.” At the same school one suggested that one area where School 2 needed improvement was that the administration should be stricter about school uniform.⁴⁸

Personal Goals for the Future

The students were asked eight questions about their future plans. In addition to identifying the students’ future plans the questions were also meant to reveal which values shaped most their view of life. Table 9 summarises their responses.

The pattern of responses (Table 9) is very much in keeping with the overall pattern that has emerged so far, namely a very high degree of religiosity among the students. In addition, the order in which the responses have emerged seems outstanding: God first (items 109 and 111), others second (item 105), and self last (the remaining items). But in a country as poor as Malawi it was somehow surprising that most students did not attach great importance to making a lot of money as a life goal. One might suggest materialism has not yet reached high levels among Malawian youths—at least those who took part in this study. How globalisation might change this is discussed later in the chapter.

Although it was mentioned earlier on that comments on variations would be made only in cases where there was a difference of 0.5 or more, it seems neces-

⁴⁷ Section A of Case 11, School 2.

⁴⁸ Section B of Case 2, School 2. Considering that school uniform is no longer mandatory in the primary sector the writer informally asked three teachers what they thought about the same policy applying to the secondary sector. All of them said school uniform should be mandatory in secondary schools. They said that was one way of reducing the pressure of materialism on poorer students, especially girls, and that poorer female students would feel very isolated if students were allowed to wear plain clothes in secondary schools.

Table 9. Personal goals of the future

QUESTIONS	NI%	LI%	SI%	VI%	MI%	MN
109. To find God in my life and grow in faith in Him		1	2	13	84	4.8
111. To live up to the example and teaching of Christ	1	2	6	23	68	4.6
105. To serve other people		3	10	34	53	4.4
108. To be important and successful in life	1	7	9	24	59	4.3
107. To accept myself as the person I am	6	8	8	25	53	4.1
110. To make lifelong friendships with other people	2	3	19	32	43	4.1
106. To be happily married and have a happy family life	5	8	15	24	48	4.0
104. To make a lot of money	13	25	26	17	18	3.0

Key: NI = No Importance; LI = Little Importance; SI = Some Importance; VI = Very Important; MI = Most Important; MN = Mean

sary to comment on variations between Catholics and non-Catholics regarding items 104 and 108. As indicated, they are sensitive issues within the Malawian context. The Catholic Church is said to have done not as well as the Presbyterian Church in terms of encouraging her faithful to be socially, politically, and economically ambitious. Catholic missionaries saw the main aim of their schools as providing religious instruction and thus used secular instruction only to “sugar the pill.” As a result, it is argued that Catholic education did not prepare Malawian Catholics for national leadership or their own socio-economic development. As noted by Linden (1974, p. 160) by the time Catholic schools started producing properly qualified graduates the social, political, and economic patterns of the Malawian society had been already drawn and “nothing the very diligent Catholic missionaries could do, could possibly reverse the process began in Blantyre and Livingstonia in the late nineteenth century” by their Presbyterian colleagues.

In this study non-Catholics scored slightly higher than Catholics in regard to the desire to make a lot of money and being important and successful in life. In regard to item 104 the mean for non-Catholics was 3.1 while that of Catholics was 2.9. As for item 108 the mean for non-Catholics was 4.4 while that of Catholics was 4.2. Although the differences are very small, it is not clear whether or not they are related to the issue noted by Linden (1974). School 2 which in many cases scored highest in terms of responses that school administrators might like to hear, had the lowest mean, 2.7, in regard to item 104 and 4.1 (second from the last) regarding item 108.

B. The Threat of Globalisation to Students' Religiosity and Sense of Community

One of the most important findings of this study was the students' very high level of religiosity. We might note again their mean responses to the following items (Table 10), bearing in mind that five is the absolute maximum and one the absolute minimum on this scale.

The students themselves said the schools played an important role in promoting their religious development, but this role is of course difficult to quantify. The Zambian study showed that college students who had attended Catholic schools were more likely to convert to Catholicism than those who had attended non-Catholic schools (Carmody, 1999, p. 139). More significantly,

it would appear that Catholic graduates from Catholic institutions have a high level of commitment to the Catholic Church as evidenced in such things as attendance at Sunday Mass and membership of Small Christian Communities (Carmody, 1999, p. 149).

Although correlation does not necessarily mean causation it seems the Zambian schools—whose situation is very similar to the Malawian—do play an important role in students' religious development.

The major influence may be parents, whom the students said played the greatest role in their religious development. Of Catholic students 82% said their mothers were practising Catholics. 75% said the same about their fathers. This, however, does not mean that the contribution of Catholic schools is small. What is true of American Catholic schools may apply to Malawi.

In fact, Catholic schools have an impact independent of parental background even in a comparison between those who attended Catholic schools and those who did not, but would have if Catholic schools had been available. The evidence on how the Catholic schools have accomplished this religious impact is consonant with the findings about the schools' academic impact—the real effect is less in the classroom than in the social network the schools create. (Greeley, 1997, p. 2)

Table 10. Values, beliefs, and faith

QUESTIONS	MN
61. I believe in God	4.9
72. I believe that God always forgives me	4.9
69. It is important for me to spend some time in prayer each day	4.8
70. My faith helps me be a better person	4.7
78. I think that Church services are boring	1.4
79. I think that saying prayers does no good	1.4
77. Jesus does not mean anything to me	1.1

Key: MN = Mean

A third influence is the African/Malawian culture. Describing the religiosity of the Igbos in Nigeria at the beginning of last century, which would have been typical of all sub-Saharan tribes at that time, Leonard (1968, p. 409) wrote:

They are, in the strict and natural sense of the word, a truly and deeply religious people, of whom it can be said, as it has been said of the Hindus, that ‘they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously, and sin religiously’. In a few words, the religion of these natives, as I have endeavoured to point out, is their existence, and their existence is their religion.

Writing more recently Mbiti (2002, p. 3) a notable African authority on African traditional religions, said:

African religiosity has a lot to say about God. In an ongoing research since 1960, I have not found a single African people without a word or a name for God. The words (names) differ because of different languages. But many attributes about God are similar, and explain or speak about the same God.

Pope John Paul II (1995, para. 42) acknowledges this:

Africans have a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, of the existence of God the Creator and of a spiritual world. The reality of sin in its individual and social forms is very much present in the consciousness of these peoples, as is also the need for rites of purification and expiation.

It can be argued that if the African/Malawian culture contributes in a major way to the students’ religiosity, policymakers, and school administrators may find it necessary to ensure that Catholic schools engage more effectively, within their limits, with Malawian traditional values and customs. Carmody (1999, p. xx) expresses the need for the same in Zambia.

It is not clear that much has been done, however, to promote on-going dialogue with traditional religion. Although as adolescents, there would normally be much search for meaning and integration, it is far from evident that sufficient is being done either in the classroom or out of it to enable young Zambian boys and girls to indigenise their faith or to enable them to find the Christian message relevant to their needs.

In discussing the strong sense of community found in all the schools one expatriate interviewee said⁴⁹: “I don’t know Africa without religion or sense of community”. It is true that religion and community spirit are both integral parts of African cultures and social systems. In 1963, Christian educationists from various parts of the world met in Salisbury (Harare) to set out the goals of Christian education in Africa.⁵⁰ The values that the conference felt should be respected and preserved

⁴⁹ Teacher, Interviews, School 2.

⁵⁰ For details see, All Africa Churches Conference, 1963.

included: “the keen sense of belonging which may balance extreme individualism; the concern for kin and the aged; (and) the irrepressible gaiety of Africans which has survived generations of adversity” (All Africa Churches Conference, 1963, p. 37). Mbiti (1969, p. 109) argues that an African has little scope for self-determination outside his or her family and community.

Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: ‘I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.’ This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.

Highlighting and treasuring this sense of community Pope John Paul II (1995, para. 43) said:

African cultures have an acute sense of solidarity and community life. In Africa it is unthinkable to celebrate a feast without the participation of the whole village. Indeed, community life in African societies expresses the extended family. It is my ardent hope and prayer that Africa will always preserve this priceless cultural heritage and never succumb to the temptation to individualism, which is so alien to its best traditions.

The 1963 conference also noted certain customs that should be transformed by Christian education: “the selective attitude which limits neighbourliness to one’s kin or clan; (and) restrictions on the exercise of one’s initiative which is fostered by an authoritative attitude of parents and instructors of the young” (All Africa Churches Conference, 1963, p. 38).

Even after allowing for changes that have taken place since the Salisbury Conference, it could be argued these African values and customs are still part of African cultures, and the tasks both of preservation and transformation remain the same.

Thus, while there is some justification for taking community spirit almost for granted while still prizing it in African Catholic schools, one needs to be aware of the real possibility that the sense of community may not spread across all sectors of the school or ethnic groups. The tendency to limit the concept of neighbour to one’s clan and tribe is still very strong in Africa and is one cause of some of the most horrific civil unrests in some African countries. It was, therefore, an important finding that nine in ten students said people must be respected regardless of their social or religious background.

For many participants there was a notably stronger sense of community in Catholic than in State schools, most easily attributed to their being Catholic. Another observation of Greeley (1997, p. 7) regarding America should in principle apply also in Malawi.

The slow and painful process of research on the Catholic phenomenon has demonstrated that Catholicism has two enormously rich and fruitful assets that are uniquely available to it—stronger community ties (and orientations towards community) and more imaginative metaphorical resources, particularly as they are expressed in communal liturgy.

He notes, the need for further research to “explore the communal and liturgical imaginations which currently function, however imperfectly, in the Church and in the schools and which apparently generate substantial social capital” (Greeley, 1997, p. 8). And that, too, would apply to Malawi.

It now needs to be considered that the values of religion and community are greatly threatened by globalisation. Dimmock and Walker (2000, 30(3), p. 304) describe this as “the tendency for similar policies and practices to spread across political, cultural and geographical boundaries” and Henriot (2001, p. 3) as “the phenomenon of increasing integration of nation states through economic exchanges, political configurations, technological advances and cultural influences.” Several cultural commentators and church authorities have warned of the serious challenges posed by this phenomenon.

African culture, its rich sense of family and community are under challenge in a global culture at times overly dominated by individualism. Respect for the human rights of every individual person can be achieved most effectively in a culture which also fosters a sense of responsibility and of sharing. (Martin, 2001, p. 2)

The Catholic Bishops of Asia warn of the dangers in their continent⁵¹:

Throughout Asia, religious believers of all faiths are confronted with strikingly similar crises posed by globalisation and economic situations, by counter-values such as individualism and materialism, by the erosion of traditional values of family and community, by a consumerism in which a person’s worth is assessed by what one owns, by development projects which endanger the environment and marginalized indigenous populations, and by the media pressure of an alien “pop” mono-culture.

The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (2001, p. 29) issued a more general alert.

Globalisation must not be a new version of colonialism. It must respect the diversity of cultures which, within the universal harmony of peoples, are life’s interpretive keys. In particular, it must not deprive the poor of what remains most precious to them, including their religious beliefs and practices, since genuine religious convictions are the clearest manifestation of human freedom.

Kiman (1998, p. 1), a Kenyan sociologist with the University of Nairobi, argues that the negative effects of globalisation are already present in sub-Saharan societies.

The effects of capitalism are already being felt in our families. Individualism in society is increasing. Even families in rural areas like to operate in isolation, and those who offer any help are keen to help their immediate families only. The (conjugal) family is becoming more independent. The

⁵¹ General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, 1998, para. 39.

loss of community networks and the development of individualism have resulted in (increased occurrences of) suicide, loneliness, drug abuse and mental illness. The communal system is breaking down. The extended family had certain functions to perform, for instance, to reconcile couples at loggerheads with each other, but this is no longer the case. It is no one (else's) business to know what's happening in one's marriage today.

Obviously, responding to these challenges cannot be solely done by Catholic schools. Indeed, they have to ensure they are not part of the problem rather than of the solution. The entire African/Malawian Church will have to find ways of dealing with them, particularly through helping its members deepen their understanding of both their culture and faith. Pope John Paul II (1995, para. 48) brought the two firmly together in a striking challenge:

During my visit to Malawi I made the same point: *I put before you today a challenge*—a challenge to reject a way of living which does not correspond to the best of your traditions, and your Christian faith. Many people in Africa look beyond Africa for the so-called 'freedom of the modern way of life'. Today I urge you *to look inside yourselves. Look to the riches of your own traditions, look to the faith* which we are celebrating in this assembly. Here you will find genuine freedom—here you will find Christ who will lead you to the truth.

But Catholic schools have an important role as well in responding to these challenges, as has been remarked in reference to other countries. An English professor observes in a major study:

Catholic schools are crucial in the contemporary struggle for the formation of young people and for the shaping of their consciousness. Such schools strive to renew a culture of spirituality, virtue and service to the common good in an increasingly materialist and individualistic global market. (Grace, 2002, p. 239)

An English Bishop, Konstant (1993) with special links to Catholic schools in England had earlier observed⁵²:

The distinctive Catholic approach, which emphasises the priority of the spiritual and seeks to ground all educational disciplines in a coherent and integrated approach to personal growth within the life of a Catholic community, cuts sharply across the grain of dominant values in our culture such as individualism, secularism and materialism.

One way of achieving this, as Carmody (1999, p. xx) suggests, is helping students to indigenise their faith. Another way is that Catholic schools should show greater commitment to those activities that deepen students' faith. An English professor again:

⁵² For details see, Konstant, D., 1993, *Briefing*, 22 July 1993, 23(14), p. 7.

The nurture of spirituality in a Catholic school is supported by the centrality of religious education and by collective worship, the regular celebration of the sacraments, the prayer life of the school and, crucially, by generating 'spaces for reflection' against the environmental press of constant busyness (Grace, 2002, p. 206).

Grace (2002) says what has helped head teachers in Catholic schools in England to cope with challenges posed by the global market is the heads' own spiritual capital largely drawn from their school and college experiences, family backgrounds, personal religious practice, and opportunities for professional development regarding the schools. In Malawi there is a felt need for professional and spiritual development programmes for staff and head teachers and their pastoral care, especially in view of the decreasing numbers of religious in Malawian Catholic secondary schools.

With a specific focus upon the ways in which spirituality can relate to educational policy and practice, such programmes can be a valuable counter-cultural agenda to that provided by secular courses of headteacher 'training'. Such charism transmission now seems essential for the future of Catholic education. (Grace, 2002, p. 238)

In Malawi, they would not have the burden of counteracting secular INSET, but would have other challenges.

Another part of the response is for Catholic schools to develop closer links with each other and establish a common approach in dealing with competitive market forces. Grace's study suggests that it is possible to achieve this.

At least half of the Catholic headteachers involved in this research were searching for forms of association and collaboration which would meet reasonable demands for efficiency and accountability on the one hand, while not involving the 'win or die' imperatives of unregulated market competition in schooling. (Grace, 2002, p. 204)

Of course dealing with competition motivated by greed should not be only at inter-school level but within schools themselves by helping students to develop a genuine appreciation of and commitment to the common good. One important way of working at this is using a wider battery of classroom teaching methods that promotes teamwork and cooperation as much as it does individually measured achievement. Indeed, that way itself be an aspect of "indigenising" education.

Some advocate a different approach to globalisation, a blend of fatalism, and pragmatism.⁵³

Colonisation and westernisation have brought a permanent and irreversible change in Africa.... As long as we continue talking of Africanisation and 'going back to our roots' yet we remain quiet on the reality of modern society, we will sound foolish, out-dated and out of touch with reality. ...

⁵³ Mugambi, M. S., 1998, p. iii, in Lassiter, J. E., 1999, p. 11.

What African writers and scholars should do is deal with the issues that are afflicting our society such as violence, corruption and rising costs of basic needs, rather than waste time on the issue of 'Africanness'.... [T]he effects of Westernisation are here to stay and the faster we adapt to living with them the better for us and the generations to come.

This fails to acknowledge that one cannot deal effectively with individual cases of greed and corruption without tackling the predominant culture in which they occur. However, the author is perhaps right to warn against an overdose of nostalgia. So, for example, Catholic schools should provide a quality education that provides a holistic response to students' needs. Catholic Bishops of England and Wales (1996, p. 3) have reminded us that individual excellence is also spiritually portent:

The search for excellence is seen as an integral part of the spiritual quest. Christians are called to seek perfection in all aspects of their lives. In Catholic education, pupils and students are therefore, given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

This would give the students enough grounding for developing the necessary values, understanding, and skills that are necessary in an increasingly competitive world including those they will need to defend their spiritual well-being. In doing so, the schools would be fulfilling the parable of talents (Matt. 25: 14–30) whose lesson is "that human potentiality should be developed to the highest possible degree" (Grace, 2002, p. 178).

C. Research Recommendations

Catholic secondary schools in Malawi form an important aspect of the Church's educational mission as confirmed by the study referred to in this chapter. In view of this and the massive human and financial resources the Church spent in establishing them, it is extremely surprising that very little research has been carried out on their processes, effectiveness, and outcomes. There is now a great need for this research so that researchers, policymakers, teachers, and parents can understand them better, monitor their performance, and promote those factors that make them effective. The newly established Catholic University of Malawi intends to carry out extensive research on Catholic schooling in Malawi. The research will focus on two issues which seem to be of great value to Catholic secondary education in Malawi.

Long-term Effects of Malawian Catholic Secondary Schools

Malawian Catholic secondary schools would benefit greatly from a research study that sought to establish the long-term effects of the schools. Traditionally, such effects have been perceived in terms of external signs such as Mass attendance, frequency of receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, membership of charitable organisations, and vocations to priesthood and religious life. In this vein Carmody (1999, p. 149) noted:

From the 1996 research, it would appear that Catholic graduates from Catholic institutions have a high level of commitment to the Catholic Church as evidenced in such things as attendance at Sunday Mass and membership of Small Christian Communities.

Grace (2002, p. 51) argues:

In contemporary contexts such traditional indicators of the success of the spiritual mission are relatively less visible than they were in the past and Catholic schools have to look for new signs of their spiritual, moral and social achievements.

While acknowledging that Carmody (1999) and Grace (2002) are writing from two different social contexts—the Zambian and British respectively—Malawian Catholic secondary schools would benefit from a study that sought to establish how much past students of the schools are committed to social justice, communal living, respect for the individual, appreciation of Malawian traditional values, participating in small Christian communities, playing an active role in the wider society unmotivated by greed, church attendance, and other church activities.

Teachers

It is teachers who actually provide Catholic education. Malawian Catholic secondary schools would benefit greatly from research that sought to answer questions such as: What do lay teachers perceive as their primary role in Catholic schools? To what extent do they share the mission of Catholic secondary schools? How does their commitment compare with that of the religious? How are lay head teachers prepared for their leadership role in Catholic secondary schools?

Summary

This chapter has discussed students' responses to Catholic secondary education in Malawi. The students have very high degree of religiosity and appreciation of what they learn and issues relating to the common good, e.g., sense of belonging, caring for others, and good citizenship. The general pattern of the degree of importance they attached to life goals is as follows: God, others, and self. Finally, although the students greatly appreciate the teachers' professional roles they consider them to have the least influence on their religious development. Secondly, the chapter has highlighted one of the major challenges to Catholic schooling in Africa in general and Malawi in particular, namely the threat of globalisation to Malawian youths' religiosity. The last section of the chapter has discussed the paucity of research in Catholic education in Malawi and how the newly established Catholic University of Malawi intends to fulfil this role.

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THE CHALLENGE OF CURRICULUM IN KENYA'S PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE RESPONSE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Winston Jumba Akala

Introduction

Stakeholder politics in education determine the general direction and quality of any system of education. As stated by Apple (2001) stakeholder politics pose a great challenge to the various stakeholders, in mooting ways of being accommodated to participate in policy construction. This chapter highlights the ways the Catholic Church as one of the most prominent stakeholders dealt with selected challenges associated with its involvement as a stakeholder in education policy-making in Kenya. Everywhere in the world, the Catholic Church recognizes and contributes immensely to education as an important area of human development and because it enhances and develops informed evangelization process (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977). Thus the Catholic Church sees education as a process of holistic formation of individuals—enriching them in all spheres of life including intellectual, technical, and social skills through the school, apart from spiritual sustenance.¹ Beutow's (1988, p. 7) view, "genuine education involves information, formation, and transformation" concurs with the general principles of Catholic education as a process of formation. Thus through the monologues and dialogues that characterize the education process, the individual is developed to his/her fullest potential.

In 1929, Pope Pius XI cogently described the place of education in the Catholic Church stating that, the Catholic doctrines ranked education as one of the highest commitments of the modern church anywhere in the world. He clarified further that in the process of evangelization, conversion is enhanced by

¹ Beutow (1988) explains further that to preserve their integrity, all individuals involved in the education enterprise, should necessarily make sense of their responsibilities in terms of the rest of their world view on life: humanist with a humanistic understanding, communist with the communist perception, and Catholic with the Catholic understanding.

education since it provides the knowledge and justification required by the new converts. Pope Pius also described education for material survival as facilitative to spiritual growth.

In Kenya, the Catholic Church participates in education by building schools, participating in curriculum planning and implementation, involvement in higher education, and civic education for the wider community. In the process of pursuing these goals the Catholic Church has faced numerous challenges. The degenerating morals caused by growing secularization of education through introduction of new subjects, prevalence and spread of HIV/AIDS, reluctance of the government to enforce certain laws, and the anti-religious sentiments exhibited by other stakeholders—notably teachers' unions—are among the greatest challenges experienced by the Catholic Church in Kenya today.²

Whereas clear action has been taken to respond to these challenges, some continue to bedevil the initiative of the church, particularly in education. This chapter therefore examines the involvement of the Catholic Church in the curriculum development activities in Kenya, and the educational goals it seeks to achieve. It analyses the role the church plays as a stakeholder, and the challenges experienced, reactions, and research initiatives that have put in place to deal with the associated challenges.

A Brief History of the Catholic Church in Kenya

Records from the Kenya Episcopal conference indicate that the Catholic Church made its first appearance in Kenya in 1498, with the arrival of the Portuguese Catholic explorer—Vasco da Gama on the seashore of Malindi. Apparently, Vasco da Gama's voyage opened up the Eastern Africa region to catholic activity ranging from the establishment of missions, evangelization, and community service. In 1599 St. Francis Xavier, visited the East African coast and established a Catholic community of 600 Kenyans at Mombasa under the Augustinian priests.

However, the most intense expansion of the Catholic Church in Kenya was witnessed after 1860 when the Holy Ghost Fathers arrived and established a mission at Rabai along the Kenya Coast. Between 1888 and 1892 the Holy Ghost

² The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) founded in 1957 has since taken radical stances on many educational issues articulated by the government of Kenya or other major stakeholders, notably the Catholic Church. The role of the Catholic Church has in the recent past seen by KNUT as uncompromising and infallible. The KNUT feels that the almost infallible contributions of the Catholic church subvert the freedom of the union not only to be involved in productive dialogue and participatory decision-making but also, an affront to the major professional function of the teachers in contributing views to enhance the relevance of the primary and secondary school curriculum. The removal of the secular subject—Social Education and Ethics (SEE)—from the school curriculum, spearheaded by the Catholic Church heightened instances of clash between the Catholic Church and the KNUT. According to the KNUT (2006, p. 19) Education policy document, “actual curriculum development should include a wider spectrum of stakeholders such as teachers, employers, government ministries, universities, and religious bodies.” Hence the KNUT felt that its position that the SEE curriculum adequately addressed social and moral needs of all youth irrespective of the religious beliefs and orientations was given lukewarm attention.

Fathers expanded their missionary activities to the interior covering the lower Tana River areas including Bura and Mombasa. The Holy Ghost fathers were followed by the Catholic mission of St. Austin's and Holy family were established in Nairobi in 1899; Consolata Fathers opened a mission in Kikuyu land and Tuthu in 1902; Mill Hill Fathers established a mission in Luo land at Kisumu in 1903; Four Catholic Jurisdictions were established namely the Vicariates of Nyeri, Kisumu, Zanzibar (Nairobi), and the Prefecture of Meru in 1926.

In 1927, the first Kenyan priest was ordained as Fr. Maurice Otunga. He became the Archbishop of Nairobi and later, in 1973 Cardinal Maurice Otunga. He then led the Kenya's Episcopal Conference for a long time. In 1953 Nairobi, Nyeri, Kisumu, and Meru dioceses were established. Today Kenya has 26 dioceses, one Apostolic Vicariate and one Personal Prefecture of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei.

Available data indicates that the Catholic Church is the most prominent religion in Kenya. A survey of the figures conducted by David M. Cheney (2005) reveals that the activities of the Catholic Church are distributed throughout Kenya with the Archdiocese of Nairobi, the most populous (4.02 million), having 1.23 million (30.6%) believers. A more interesting trend is demonstrated in the highly populated Archdiocese of Nyeri, with a population of 790,327 people having 476,870 (60.3%) as Catholics. In all other parts of Kenya except the Coast province, which is dominated by Muslims, the prominence of the Catholic Church is felt. Even so, comparing with religions other than Islam, the Catholic Church has the largest number of believers in the Coast Province.

The Catholic Church and the Challenge of Education in Kenya

At the beginning of the formal evangelization process the Catholic Missionaries had encountered the obstacle of communication. The African communities they worked with understood neither the missionary language nor the supportive literature, including the Bible, which they used for Christian education and evangelization. Inadequate communication or its absence resulted in disaffection, apathy or even outright hostility from some Kenyan communities, notably the Nandi, Masai, and Kikuyu, among others. As indicated by Sifuna & Otiende (1992), these became the first communities to start independent African schools in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

As a result the need to establish basic literacy programmes became an integral part of the evangelization process. It should be noted that this justification of Catholic education in Kenya did not imply that it was a secondary mission to enhance evangelization. The existing Catholic literacy has always regarded education as part of the evangelization process (Eshiwani, 1993). The new converts needed to read and understand the biblical scriptures. They also needed to keep church records and develop evangelization materials in local languages. This need became even greater as the congregations grew and expanded into the immediate hinterlands, now comprising Kenya Uganda, and Tanzania.

It became clear that schools needed to be established to undertake the demanding task of educating people to understand the worth of Christianity. In view of that, the Catholic Church took the lead in starting schools and colleges, developing curricula that included Christian religious studies, basic literacy, and certain academic and industrial and vocational subjects and courses.³ Baur (1990, p. 201) summarized this view:

An old Gikuyu man once stated it bluntly saying that the school was just a “trap to convert to Christianity.” However, it corresponded also to a deep missionary conviction, first clearly formulated by Francis Libermann the founder of the Holy Ghost Missions, that the school was necessary to build a Christian civilization.

Whereas the basic literacy and religious studies were intended to strengthen the converts’ faith and enhance the evangelization activities, the academic and industrial/vocational subjects were expected to develop shrewd administrators for the fast growing church. The subject would also provide skills that enhanced provision of basic needs for believers, apart from raising funds to run church programmes. It was foreseen that with the rapidly growing church in Kenya, the parent churches in Europe would not raise sufficient funds to shoulder the necessary evangelization and commensurate education programmes, without initiating education-related money generating programmes. This challenge was responsible for the diversification of education to address more than evangelization in Kenya, by using education as a form of investment in order to develop the church. Sifuna (1990, p. 43) was concise on this view:

In terms of curricula, the core work was reading, writing, and religious instruction, supplemented by arithmetic, Geography and History for more advanced pupils. Above all was industrial education, which reflected the education of the working class in Europe.

In modern Kenya, the Catholic Church has been involved in developing the primary and secondary school curriculum in five major ways:

1. Continued establishment of educational institutions ranging from pre-school, primary, secondary, middle-level colleges, all the way to universities:
 - (a) To pursue evangelization by furthering pastoral programmes and instruction in Catholic schools
 - (b) Reaching out to, and educating the masses through church services and mass media (e.g., Waumini radio and television)

³ The local communities in Kenya had received Catholic education with mixed views, ranging from outright rejection, cautious acceptance to voluntary acceptance for those who saw its value. Many communities, including the Kikuyu, Masai, and Kalenjin initially perceived Catholic education as a tool used to convert Africans to Christianity. They did not trust the civilizing character of Catholic education. The net effect was that it took long to convert and educate people in these communities. Consequently few of the oldest Catholic education institutions in Kenya are found in regions that resisted Catholic influence. It should however be noted that The Catholic Church has made substantial inroads into these areas after Kenya attained independence (1963–2005).

- (c) Civic education activities run by the Catholic Church through its schools
2. Working with the Kenya government and other religious organizations as one of the major stakeholders in the development of the primary, secondary, and, middle-level college curriculum.
 3. Establishing and developing collaboration and exchange programmes locally and internationally
 4. Development of money generating projects to raise funds to sponsor education for the religious men and women on the one hand and the deserving but poor members of the church on the other
 5. Through church-sponsored research programmes to develop the knowledge base for both the Catholic and non-Catholic community in Kenya

The Catholic Education Secretariat located in Nairobi coordinates all these activities to ensure that tenets of the Catholic education and faith are pursued effectively through the existing education system. In addition to many primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions owned by the Catholic Church, the following Catholic universities and university colleges are among the most prominent in Kenya and the entire Eastern Africa region: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa; Strathmore University; Blessed Bakanja College, AMECEA College of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa; Hekima College, Jesuit School of Theology; Marist International College; Tangaza College, Theological Centre for Religious (TCR); and the Mary Knoll Institute of African Studies (MIAS).

The 8-4-4 System of Education

The origin of curriculum diversification in Kenya can be traced back to 1974 when Indire and Kinyanjui suggested the inclusion of practical subjects in the curriculum. This was an interesting turn of events considering that the Ominde commission had recommended a largely academic curriculum, which excluded the pre-independence industrial subjects such as Agriculture and Wood Work. For a long time these subjects had been regarded by Africans as colonial tools of oppression. They had been emphasized by the government, the Catholic Church, and other religious organizations during the colonial era. In supporting the integration of academic and practical subjects in the school curriculum the Catholic Church had envisaged the following:

In virtue of its mission, then, the school must be concerned with constant and careful attention to cultivating in students the intellectual, creative and aesthetic faculties of the human person; to develop in them the ability to make correct use of their judgement, will, and affectivity; to promote in them a sense of values; to encourage just attitudes and prudent behaviour; to introduce them to the cultural patrimony handed down from previous generations; to prepare them for professional life; and to encourage the friendly interchange among students of diverse cultures and backgrounds

that will lead to mutual understanding. For all of these reasons, the school enters into the mission of the church. (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, p. 8)

Accordingly, the Gachathi Report (1976) and Maleche (1976) had re-emphasized the need for curriculum diversification by advocating the inclusion of practical subjects such as Agriculture, Home Science, and Wood Work in the curriculum. Following the Gachathi commission recommendations, a diversified primary school curriculum was designed to take nine years and its implementation started in 1979. Two years later, the Mackay education report (1981) evolved the 8-4-4 structure, which replaced the 7-4-2-3 structure.

The implementation of the 8-4-4 system started in January 1985. This system has the following four salient features:

- (a) The 8-4-4 structure which involves eight years in primary school, four years in secondary school and a minimum of four years' basic university education. This is a sharp shift from the former 7-4-2-3 structure.
- (b) It is highly inclined towards technical and vocational education.
- (c) It is supposed to give little emphasis to examinations.
- (d) It has a diversified curriculum, which offers a wide range of subjects.

The Catholic Church supported the recommendations of the Ominde (1964), Gachathi (1976), and Mackay (1981) because they succinctly recognized the role of the Church and promoted vocational aspect—also emphasized by the Kenya Episcopal conference.

According to Bogonko (1992), the 1973 presidential decree of free primary education raised primary school enrolment from 1.8 million in 1973 to 2.8 million in 1974. By 1983 just before the inception of the 8-4-4 system, this figure had doubled. In 1999, the enrolment levels in primary schools had risen to 5.9 million and 7.4 million in 2004, an increase of 25% following the Free Primary education declaration made by the president in 2003 (Republic of Kenya, 2005). More than half of these pupils terminate their education at primary school level, raising the challenge of education both for the government and other stakeholders, including the Catholic Church.

The Primary School Curriculum

The revised primary school syllabus for the 8-4-4 system appears in two volumes and it includes such subjects as Agriculture, English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Mother tongue, and Science as well as Christian Religious Education, Music, and Physical Education. Table 1 shows all the subjects covered under the defunct 7-4-2-3 and the current 8-4-4 systems.

The current primary school curriculum identifies various skills that should be acquired by primary school leavers by the end of their primary cycle. Required mathematical skills include operations, measurements, data collection, and interpretation as well as drawing tables, graphs, and deriving scales.

Table 1. Subjects covered both under 7-4-2-3 and 8-4-4 curricula

7-4-2-3 System	8-4-4 System
Kiswahili, English, Mathematics Science, History and Civics, Geography, Religious Education, Physical Education	Kiswahili, Business Education*, English, History and Government, Mathematics, Geography, Sci ence Social Education and Ethics*, Agriculture*, Religious Education Music*, Physical Education, Home Science*, Art Education*, Art and Craft*

*New subjects introduced with the inception of the 8-4-4 system of education. They include Social Education and Ethics, which has been the centre of controversy between the Catholic Church and the Kenya Government.

Languages are expected to enrich pupils with communication skills such as listening, speaking correctly and fluently, reading, and writing. The science syllabus is supposed to inculcate skills of observation, exploration, and participation by use of senses, hands, and legs to detect patterns, differences, similarities, and relationships between phenomena. The Business Education syllabus provides such skills as keeping simple personal records, starting small businesses, selecting a market, buying, selling, and the ability to calculate profit and losses. The Agriculture syllabus ensures that the graduates of standard eight possess marketing skills, tools and equipment handling skills, land mapping skills, disease and pest control skills as well as ability to keep accurate farm records.

Under the Art and Craft syllabus the skills inculcated include picture-making, pattern-making, paper craft, sculpturing (modelling), weaving, puppetry, making ornaments, construction of forms, graphic design, furniture-making (wood work), pottery (ceramics), fabric decoration, mounting (framing), basketry, metal work, and basic building and construction skills.

GHC-RE—a combined course, also called Social Studies encompasses three subjects—History and Government, Geography, and Social Education. Together with Religious Studies, it aims at developing such values as loyalty, self-reliance, patriotism, tolerance, cooperation, diligence, honesty, justice, fairness, love, respect, peace, and responsibility. They also inculcate skills of decision-making, and inquiry as well as critical thinking. On the other hand Home Science provides skills that enable learners to keep themselves clean and healthy, do laundry, care for the home, possess knowledge of food and nutrition as well as childcare. Ensuring that CRE is not appended to other subjects remains a major challenge to the Catholic Church and other religious organizations in Kenya.

Therefore these subjects and their scope imply that the 8-4-4 school curriculum is quite comprehensive. Furthermore, the curricula attributes emphasized maintain great semblance to the type of curriculum introduced at early Catholic Mission schools, in which holistic formation of individuals was conspicuous. It should however be noted the Catholic Church was not always in agreement with the Kenya government policies on the nature of curriculum pursued in schools. The Church had vigorously resisted the move by the government to control Catholic-sponsored schools in the early 1920s.

After Kenya gained independence in 1963, the church had vehemently opposed secularization of Catholic-sponsored schools although it shared the need to develop a cadre of African professionals to take over key position in the new government. The lull period of the 1970s and 1980s saw both the Catholic Church and the Kenya government consolidate their positions on existing school curricula. In the 1990s, following the overhaul of the system of education in Kenya, it became apparent that the government was again in conflict with the Catholic Church following the effect of the new subject—*Social Education and Ethics*—at the primary and secondary school levels.

Catholic Church Response to the Social Education and Ethics (SEE) Challenge

At the start of the 8-4-4 primary and secondary education innovation in 1985, the Catholic Church was fully supportive of the new curricula. However, in the first five years, it became clear that aspects of the new curriculum at both primary and secondary school levels had a negative effect on the major tenets Catholic education. The most remembered was the effect of—*Social Education and Ethics*—the new subject introduced in 1985 with the consent of the Catholic Church as a key stakeholder in the curriculum research and development process implemented by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE)—a Kenya government agency.

The *Social Education and Ethics* syllabus was introduced in the school curriculum following massive indiscipline in schools,⁴ including those sponsored by the Catholic Church. The strikes experienced in schools occasioned colossal losses in terms of property and human life. It was agreed upon by the government of Kenya and religious organizations—including the Catholic Church—that *Social Education and Ethics* be introduced as a subject in the new curriculum to help in imparting the required virtues of respect, honesty, obedience, and morality among youth.

Social education and ethics as a subject became clustered in one group with Christian religious education (CRE), Hindu religious Education (HRE), and Islamic religious education at the primary and secondary school levels. At the secondary school level, the students were free to choose one subject of their choice from this cluster. It became increasingly clear that most students preferred SEE because it was secular and less restrictive in discussing social issues.

⁴ According to the task force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools (2001) report, the causes of high school violence in Kenya include out-of-school and in-school factors. Out-of-school factors include use of drugs, laxity on the part of parents to nurture their children morally, influence of horror movies displayed in the mass media, pornographic literature, and peer pressure, among others. In-school factors include government policies on student discipline, school rules, poorly coordinated teacher education programmes and policies, and the general learning school environment. Most schools use expulsion, suspension, manual labour, and corporal punishment among others to stop or forestall unrest. This approach is painful and dehumanising. For instance, expulsion or dismissal does not give the student and the teacher a chance to interact again and reform. Furthermore these forms of punishment occasion psychological pain and anguish to those who remain in the school. Those expelled or dismissed are initially members of the school organization. The organization loses the benefit of their company. This creates fear, tension, and suspicion inappropriate for the natural blossoming of social relationships between the teachers and students and among the students themselves.

Furthermore, sentiments began to emerge among teachers and students that religious instruction for the purpose of spiritual nourishment would more appropriately be obtained from celebrated church sermons, Bible-reading sessions in church, and Sunday schools as well as catechetical instruction, and other liturgical services. Issues to do with general ethics, values, and virtues for social and moral living would then be adequately handled in schools from a secular and society-customized perspective.

This trend, apparently in tune with the views held by some key stakeholders in education began to strengthen in schools in 1997. Among the key stakeholders preferring the secular way of education was the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), which in 1999 declared that the Catholic Church, among others no longer needed to impose their control on schools and the curriculum that they pursued. Instead the schools needed to be left a lone as centres of educational transmission and creativity. It was perceived that the conservative nature of church organizations slowed the innovative characteristic of school. As a result schools were now being viewed as centres of reproduction rather than creation of ideas.

In response, Bishop Peter Kihara, addressing the Diocesan World catholic Education Day noted: “There have been some moves within the country’s ministry of education to remove church sponsorship of schools within the current education system, through some commissions which have already been carried out” (2006, p. 1). Bishop Kihara also reiterated that the 1964 Ominde Commission Report,⁵ the 1968 Education Act,⁶ and the 1988 Kamunge Commission Report⁷ concurred on the significant role of the church as a sponsor but also as a key decision-maker in the education sector.

Accordingly, in 1999, the Catholic Church began demanding the withdrawal of SEE from the primary and secondary school curriculum citing the following reasons:

- The tenets of morality and virtues of respect, obedience, and chastity pursued by SEE already existed and were handled more effectively in the CRE curriculum, and supplemented well by the teaching of the church. This

⁵ The 1964 Education Commission of Kenya, whose findings are popularly known as the Ominde Education Report recommended the following about church involvement in education: Religious education and understanding, including moral growth, should continue to play this vital role in curriculum; Churches should continue to participate in the religious teaching in their former schools; and religious education be handled as a subject along sound educational lines.

⁶ Education Act (Cap 211: Part III Section 7 a, b, 1968)—still in force today—was established to control and regulate all education activities in Kenya. It made clear the Kenya government’s intention to take full control of education policymaking and implementation. Among other things, the Act stated the following about the role of the church in education: Churches would act as sponsors in their old schools and colleges; the sponsors would be involved in the appointment of staff, in preparation of the syllabus and teaching materials required in conjunction with the ministry of education. As indicated elsewhere by Nafukhoet al. (2005), World Bank and Kenya government policies have inhibited the active involvement of other stakeholders—including the Catholic Church—from active involvement in decision-making about staffing. As a result the Catholic Church has been playing the major role of staffing Catholic-sponsored schools privately.

⁷ The 1988 Kamunge Education Commission Report was categorical that church organizations would continue to be major partners in funding education and determining the syllabi studied in schools, particularly that of religious studies.

implied redundancy in the school curriculum resulting from the duplication of certain aspects of curriculum.

- By nature of its secular orientation, instruction in SEE had created among youth and teachers negative sentiments towards religious instruction.
- The inclusion in the SEE syllabus of instruction on the use of contraceptives to prevent premature pregnancies and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases as a positive phenomenon for public health contravened the principles of Catholic education and beliefs. The Catholic Church has been on the forefront in promoting abstinence until marriage, faithfulness to one partner, and natural contraception as the best ways to deal with issues of sex education. Furthermore, the Kenya church felt that the SEE curriculum introduced sex education too early in the lives of teenagers leading to their destruction rather than education.

Under immense pressure from the Catholic Church, backed up by other Christian, Muslim, and Hindu organizations, the government officially withdrew the SEE syllabus from schools in the year 2005, paving the way for the enhancement of Religious Education. Apparently, this was a major success for the Catholic Church in dealing with the challenge of secularization of education in Kenya.

The Primary and Secondary School HIV/AIDS Curriculum Project

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS and its ravaging effects on schools in Kenya is another major challenge that is aching the Catholic Church. As a key stakeholder the Catholic Church, which sponsors the largest number of public and private schools (when compared to other religious organizations), the church is seriously affected by incidences of student and teacher infection. Since most infection occurs through unprotected sex, the Catholic Church has been concerned about the moral standards set by teachers and parents for the youth in schools. Regarding the rapid HIV/AIDS infection rate in the country, the Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC-Secretariat, 2006, p. 6) states:

A rate of infection above 1% is by definition, an epidemic. Nearly all the countries of the Sub-Saharan region have a rate well above 15%. The average infection rate among adults aged between 15-49 in sub-Saharan Africa is 7.2%. In 2005, about 2.4 million Africans died of AIDS related illnesses; in Kenya, there were about 150,000 such deaths in 2003.

Existing research evidence in Kenya shows that in nomadic pastoralist communities, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS—whether infected or not—are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in terms of access to education services (Akala, 2006). In order to ensure that high quality of education is maintained and improved, the Kenya Episcopal Conference has established permanent commissions and task forces to address the challenges facing education in Kenya. Many Bishops have served on the commissions and task forces to oversee the

implementation of programmes that improve primary, secondary, college, and vocational education activities in Kenya.

The Kenya Catholic Secretariat (KEC) the nerve centre of the Catholic administration of the Kenya Episcopal Conference implements the decisions of the Bishops, coordinates with the Kenya government, religious organizations, and other voluntary organizations addressing education issues. Regarding HIV and AIDS the Commission on Health and Family Life and the Kenya Catholic Church's HIV and AIDS Task-force (established in 1957 and 2003 respectively by KEC) have played an instrumental role in responding to the HIV/AIDS scourge in Kenyan schools. Their strategy has been three-pronged: First, addressing teachers and education institutions as a strategy to sensitize teachers not only on how to create awareness about the danger posed by HIV/AIDS among students but also themselves.

The second strategy—addressing the parents and children who are infected or affected emphasizes acceptance and care for the sick in order to eradicate stigma against the infected and/or affected students and teachers. Akala (2006) indicates that children—infected or not—face the difficult task of bearing with discrimination everywhere in school and in the society. If adopted they end up in homes where there is no resident adult.

Spiritual accomplishment in church plays a fundamental role in raising the spirit of the affected and infected. This psychological function of the church educates and enhances the life chances of the infected and affected people.

The third strategy addressing the church congregation itself targets parents and the community to understand the threat posed by HIV/AIDS. It also emphasizes moral teaching about faithfulness to one partner in marriage and discourages pre-marital sexual involvement. These activities have been implemented by the diocesan health coordinators in close collaboration with Diocesan Health Boards and in the various government health agencies as guided by the ministry of health.

The Catholic Church has been the only consolation for local inhabitants in some of the remotest parts of Kenya where the government and other organizations have no representation. For instance, in districts like Transmara, the Catholic Hospital of St. Joseph Kilgoris (Ngong Diocese) is the only facility within the radius of 100 km. "An estimated 40 percent of all Catholic programmes in Kenya operate in this kind of isolated settings and/or are providing a particular service which no one else around is providing" (KEC—Kenya Catholic Secretariat, 2006, p. 11).

Whereas the government of Kenya operates a total of 11,000 health facilities, the closest provider, the Catholic Church runs 463 facilities distributed in most needy parts of the country. Most of the Catholic-owned health facilities are located beside Catholic-sponsored schools as a way of ensuring the healthy services are accessed by these schools. All other religious organizations put together have barely half of the facilities provided by the Catholic Church. Thus:

The Catholic Educational Sector in Kenya is fully engaged in the struggle against HIV. The church provides 45 percent of all formal education in Kenya. The Church reaches out to the most marginal areas like the Diocese

of Lodwar, Maralal, Kitale, and Ngong where the government of Kenya only maintains a minimal presence in the educational field. (KEC-CS, 2006, p. 19)

Already, efforts have been made by the Kenya Institute of Education (2002), the Kenya government's main Curriculum Research and Development Centre, to develop a new curriculum on HIV/AIDS. The curriculum is currently in operation. However, the Catholic Church has opposed its emphasis on the use of contraceptives to prevent infection. The official position of Kenya's Catholic Church regarding education for prevention of HIV/AIDS may be summarized in the words of the Catholic Bishops of Africa & Madagascar (2006, p. 11):

[S]ome governments have been advocating the liberal use...of protective condoms and clean needles only. We have to go to the sources of morality, do a bit of heart searching, consider our attitudes towards human relationships and how sexuality fits into that.

Nevertheless, the silence and/or acceptance of contraceptives by other religious organizations have posed a major challenge to the effort of the Catholic Church to advocate for abstinence and change of behaviour to accept natural contraception.

Currently, the Catholic Education Sector in Kenya, as a key stakeholder in the process of developing and implementing curricula is advocating for the establishment of a national curriculum in two areas.

First, abstinence and behaviour change for youth (ABY) programme. This programme is intended to be implemented at grades 7 and 8 of the primary school and all four grades 1 and 4 at secondary school level. In these grades are enrolled students who have attained the age of puberty and are therefore sexually mature and active (Ruwa, 2005). Yet emotionally and cognitively immature and incapable of predicting the right actions about their own health and social welfare.

The suggested content of Education/Awareness campaign on HIV Prevention includes: promoting greatest awareness; abstinence before marriage; long-term change in behaviour (targeting 15–19 age young women and men but to target other with time; Encouraging the church officials to take advantage of the colossal infrastructure at the parishes to reach as many people as possible evangelizing while appending message about HIV/AIDS; care strategies for people living with HIV/AIDS; and care for people affected by HIV/AIDS. Suggested school and community-based curriculum implementation strategies include:

- Pupils/teachers
- Recommending infected pupils for help
- Awareness campaigns involving teachers and pupils
- Close collaboration between religious groups involved in the provision of health, educational, and a religious service has prioritized AIDS issues
- Collaboration between government and catholic institutions to educate teachers, pupils, and community about behaviour change
- Seventeen Dioceses already have educational policy on AIDS and educational programmes to implement the policy are already underway—using

- mass media including the recently established Radio Waumini, catholic media including Pauline's Publications and "New People," among others
- Offering Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) and encouraging all people to attend
 - OVC programmes, e.g., Fr. Agostino's Nyumbani Programmes in Nairobi⁸
 - Youth-groups offering help in the neighbourhood, including cleaning, caring for the sick, and delivering food
 - Funding funerals
 - Recommending affected for help
 - Self-help programmes for the affected—started with affected Catholic Women Associations (KEC-KEC) and opened up to the general public including schools

The second area for which the Catholic Church advocates a new curriculum is Peace Education Programme—prompted by the prevalence of grisly strikes by students, particularly at primary and secondary/high school levels. The report of the task force on school violence in Kenya revealed that the use of drugs, laxity on the part of parents to nurture their children morally, influence of horror movies displayed in the mass media, pornographic literature displaying explicit sex scenes, peer pressure, school rules and irregular leadership styles, and government policies on discipline, among others have been frequently cited (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Other factors responsible for violence in schools include powerlessness on the part of students, unclear limits and rules, lack of acceptable outlets for feelings, and attacks on personal dignity of students and teachers (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). The Catholic Church was fully represented on the task force on violence in schools in Kenya. The sluggish nature of government action on the recommendations is responsible for the response by the Catholic Church—advocating for the Peace Education Programme as a national curriculum.

Research and Future Trends

It would be a great oversight if this chapter did not deal with the response of research to challenges experienced by the Church in pursuing Catholic education in Kenya. Generally, limited research has been conducted in Kenya on the role of the Catholic Church as a major stakeholder in education. Available research

⁸ Fr. Agostino founded the *Nyumbani Home* for orphaned and vulnerable children in Karen, Nairobi in the mid-1990s demonstrating the role of the Catholic Church in dealing with the effects of HIV/AIDS. All the children in *Nyumbani Home* are living with HIV/AIDS. In the recent past, *Nyumbani Home* has responded to the needs of many other HIV/AIDS child victims by reaching out to the community to fund their education and provide welfare in terms of food and health services. *Nyumbani Home* is also moved a successful court suit in 2003 against public schools in Nairobi that discriminated against the HIV/AIDS-infected children. The High court sitting in Nairobi ordered the schools to admit and provide equal opportunity to children irrespective of their state of health.

Table 2. Textbook–pupil ratio by subject and standard, 2003 (From Statistics Section, MoE/MoE Statistical Booklet, 2005)

Standard/Grade	English	Mathematics	Science	Kiswahili	GHC-RE
Standard 1	1:2	1:3	1:3	1:4	1:164
Standard 2	1:4	1:5	1:4	1:8	1:234
Standard 3	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:6	1:273
Standard 4	1:3	1:3	1:3	1:5	1:95
Standard 5	1:2	1:2	1:2	1:2	1:51
Standard 6	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:5	1:53
Standard 7	1:3	1:3	1:3	1:4	1:41
Standard 8	1:2	1:2	1:2	1:3	1:29
Total	1:2	1:3	1:3	1:4	1:71
Lower Primary	1:3	1:4	1:3	1:5	1:207
Upper Primary	1:3	1:3	1:3	1:3	1:49

data show that most recent research studies predominantly targeted Catholic identity, administration of Catholic schools, the teaching of CRE and Pastoral Programme Instruction (PPI), and the effect of associated disciplines.

A survey recently conducted by Ministry of Education (MoE) (2005), on the status of education in Kenya reveals disturbing trends that clearly obscure the role played by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders. Statistics obtained from the survey indicate that the textbook/pupil ratios for religious studies are very high. Table 2 shows that the textbook/pupil ratio for English, Mathematics, Science, and Kiswahili are reasonably low. On the contrary, statistics for Geography, History and government and CRE (GHC-RE) are extremely high.

Although the survey data did not decipher the cause of this irregular disparity, it is obvious that effective learning in religious studies cannot be achieved. The educational foundation provided to learners in these circumstances is weak and largely responsible for poor performance in CRE and moral depravity at primary and secondary schools in Kenya. Accordingly, this situation raises questions as to whether the key non-government stakeholders such as the Catholic Church are indeed catering for religious education materials. The reluctance of the government in providing textbooks for religious studies is also implied in these statistics, which are skewed in favour of secular fields.

Opondo (2004) conducted an evaluation study on the Catholic education policies in Catholic-sponsored public schools in the Archdiocese of Kisumu, Kenya. Using Alkin's decision-oriented evaluation approach, Opondo examined the strategies used to implement Catholic education policies in selected schools, working with a representative sample of 246 participants. The findings of the study indicate that the people entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the principles of Catholic education policies understood their responsibilities to a limited extent. Opondo also identified interdenominational conflicts as a major

hindrance to the implementation of the Catholic education policies of holistic formation and life skills provision.⁹

Radoli (2005) conducted a study on the effectiveness of Principals in promoting Catholic identity in Catholic-sponsored public secondary school in Busia District—Kenya. The findings, which appeared to concur with Opondo (2004), revealed that major challenges were experienced where the majority of teachers and students were non-Catholic. Radoli states:

It can be summed up that the principals were fulfilling their role to some extent in promoting Catholic identity. . . . Others had a challenge of leading Catholic Sponsored schools with a vast majority of the staff and students who were non-Catholic. (Radoli, 2005, p. 147)

It seems that the government policy that ensures that all schools are accessible to all qualifying students, irrespective of their faiths has led to the influx of teachers and students from other faiths into Catholic schools. Thus the challenge of retaining Catholic identity in these schools is real, especially where other faiths form a majority.

In future, greater initiative needs to be made in studying the different ways the Catholic Church has contributed to education in Kenya. Precedence needs to be given to an evaluation study on the contribution of the Catholic Church to the process of curriculum development and implementation in Kenya. While the Catholic Church involvement has generally been high, little is documented, particularly in government records about its contribution. For instance, in the current Ministry of Education statistical booklet covering the years 1999–2004, data on education development are provided. The role of the government is represented throughout the booklet. Yet no mention is made about the role of the Catholic Church and other stakeholders in education.

There is also need to conduct research on how to strengthen the linkages between the Kenya government and the Catholic Church to go beyond the role of the church as a monitor of the government in the education sector. For instance apart from the curriculum for CRE where the Catholic Church has played a cardinal role, it was relegated to a minor role in the construction of other subjects' curricula. This became clearer when the Catholic Church sought to play a greater role in the curriculum for sex education and HIV/AIDS in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Regarding the study on effectiveness of Principals in promoting Catholic identity, Radoli (2005) recommended that further investigation be carried out to establish how the Catholic Church could assist non-Catholic

⁹ In Kenya, the Catholic Church has been on the forefront in advocating the use of three two methods of natural contraception as a strategy to control the spread of HIV/AIDS. These include abstinence and faithfulness to one partner. However, many protestant which along with the Catholic Church are major stakeholders in the development of policy on the school curriculum have accepted the use of contraceptives including condoms and coils t control birth and HIV/AIDS. This position has created a serious conflict between the churches—a phenomenon which created a lot of disagreements in the process of developing the HIV/AIDS school curriculum. Consequently, the churches have separately developed their own curricula for their followers.

Principals in Catholic-sponsored schools to enhance Catholic identity without necessarily interfering with their own faiths.

Conclusions

Stakeholder politics, among other things in education determine the general direction and quality of any system of education. Policy decisions emerge from debate and action deliberately undertaken by the various stakeholders. It is apparent from this chapter that the Catholic Church is one of the most prominent stakeholders in education in Kenya. In spite of the immense challenges bedevilling its initiatives, the Catholic Church in Kenya has consistently featured as a third force in the curriculum development process ensuring that the curricula adequately addressed the necessary holistic formation of the youths attending primary and secondary schools.

Given the deep level of entrenchment of religious institutions as stakeholders in education in Kenya, it will take a long time to separate the church, particularly the Catholic Church, from the State's function as the provider of public education. On the one hand, the Catholic Church offers the badly needed financial and moral support to the system. On the other hand it remains the political force that checks the secular excesses of the government in the provision of education in Kenya.

Finally, there is evidence that some research data exists in Kenya on the issues affecting the Catholic Church. However, limited attention has been focused on adopting into action the recommendations of these research studies. As observed in a study by Akala (2004) the greatest problem is lack of deliberate policy both within the government and other stakeholders—including the Catholic Church—on how to utilize research data for policy formulation and implementation. Yet policies are made everyday to deal with existing challenges. It should be almost certain that unless the strategies enhancing practical research-based is mooted forthwith, the challenges currently experienced by the Catholic Church will persist for a long time.

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Argaw Fantu Chernet

1. Introduction

The famous saying of Lao Tzu, the 6th-century Chinese philosopher, read “give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” The exclusive mission of the Catholic Church for being wholly taken to implement the last words of Jesus “go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mk 16: 15)¹ marks the link with this saying. Literally, the notion to go and teach all nations for life corresponds with the words of Lao Tzu. It also makes clear the role played by the Church for the provision of education in general and Christian education in particular to the whole humanity all over the world. The Church’s duty and right for the education of people is uniquely highlighted in the *Code of Canon Law* and is insisted upon the integration of Christian education into the whole pattern of human life:

The duty and right of educating belongs in a unique way to the Church which has been divinely entrusted with the mission to assist men and women so that they can arrive at the fullness of the Christian life. (Code of Canon Law, Can. 794/1)²

This signifies Catholic schools not only to be places of learning to simply acquire intellectual knowledge but also marks them to be places for a community morally engaged for a meaningful life enriched with Godly wisdom.

This raises the question whether the above consensus on the mission of the Church is appropriately accomplished, despite being challenged by some of the contemporary realities. After a long delay, the recently circulated education policy of the Ethiopian Catholic Church, stresses the mission of the Church for the education of children and young people:

¹ Biblical references are taken from *The Spiritual Formation Bible*. For details see the reference.

² See the proper reference for details.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church affirms that children and young people have the right to be formed and acquire moral values, a right conscience and to embrace them by a personal commitment, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently, it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position in public administration or who are in charge of education to ensure that youth are never deprived of this sacred right. (Ethiopian Catholic Church, 2006, p. 3)

The Church's vision on the contemporary period, seen in wider development perspective, puts education as a prerequisite agenda. The Catholic Church, through out the centuries, has been the protagonist in linking the teaching of Jesus with the changing socio- economic, moral, and spiritual condition of nations in this contemporary period. Living in this fast changing contemporary globalized period; in which the social, cultural, economic, and political combinations (Robinson, 2003) are taken as processes of knowledge production, it is important to explore the various educational initiatives taken and challenges faced by the Catholic Church and its school system in Ethiopia. This chapter attempts to reflect on the profile of Catholic schools and intends to explore the condition of Catholic education in Ethiopia with respect to recruitment, training, and retention of teachers and head teachers.

This brief and preliminary study is based on interview responses gathered from the Metropolitan Archbishop, who has wide educational insight of the Catholic schooling in Ethiopia; persons enriched with long years of teaching experience in Catholic schools who had held school leadership positions. Of course, the author's long years of personal experience as a teacher and deputy head teacher in one of the high profile Catholic secondary schools is believed to contribute to this analytical and empirical study.

The purpose of this chapter is to inform the reader about the link that exists between the education initiatives of the universal Church in general and the Ethiopian Catholic Church in particular, and to make contribution as reference for further research on Catholic schooling in Ethiopia. It is also believed this attempt will serve as a stepping stone to initiate a further and in-depth research in Catholic school systems in Ethiopia and possibly create a link with educational practices of the local Catholic Churches in various parts of the world.

The chapter is subdivided into sections. Section 2 provides an overview on the historical perspectives and structure of Catholic schooling in Ethiopia. The profile of Catholic schools in comparison with secular schools is presented in section 3. Section 4 overviews the contribution of school leaders and teachers in the successfulness of Catholic schools and the possible challenges of the future. Challenges of recruitment, formation, and retention of school leaders and teachers are discussed in the section in the light of future prospects. The whole analysis is summarized and concluded in section 5 with the hope that this would shed light on the initiative, position, and further educational insight of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia.

2. Historical Perspectives and Structure of Catholic Schooling in Ethiopia

Education together with health service forms the oldest socio-pastoral programme of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia dating back to the middle of the 19th century. Evidence suggested that the Catholic Church has been actively involved in pioneering modern education in Ethiopia. It was the Lazarist Missionaries, in 1845, under the leadership of Bishop Justin de Jacobis (Antonios, 2001), Vicar Apostolic of Northern Ethiopia, who began modern education in Adigrat in the locality of Golea and Alitena. Modern education means education derived from the western education system. The primary objective of the Church, at that time was to educate seminary students (Davitt, 1975; Alazar, 1995) who intended to become priests and for the children of the growing Christian community; later on the service was left open to access for the children of the wider community. The universal theological understanding of human beings as creatures created in the image of God for a divine purpose required that the Church endeavour to access education to all peoples in all parts of the world. It is this serious purpose that made the mission of the Church so distinctive and its educational objective aim at the promotion of the human person through human and Christian education, as the Church document explicitly stated:

Since a true education must strive for the integral formation of the human person, a formation which looks toward the person's final end, and at the same time toward the common good of societies, children and young people are to be so reared that they can develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual talents, that they acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and a correct use of freedom, and that they be educated for active participation in social life. (The Code of Canon Law, Can. 795)³

Secular education, in contrast, aims at imparting only secular and scientific knowledge in a secularized human context. The new education policy of Ethiopia, for example, provides evidence in this regard that the provision of education for all is to attain respect for human rights, democratic culture, and discipline as well as cultivate psychological traits (cognitive, creative, productive, and appreciative potential) of citizens by appropriately relating education to environment and social needs (TGE, 1994). In the context of Catholic schools the Church enjoys the privilege of achieving the promotion of the whole person that is beyond the mere humanistic perception of education and stretches to the extent of harmonious development of the physical, moral, and intellectual talents.

It is an indisputable fact that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church had started traditional education that was based on spiritual training and paved the ground in the production of the clergy (Kinfu, 1992), the traditional elite (Markakis, 1974; Teshome, 1979) and also civil servants, judges, governors, scribes, treasurers, and administrators who were employed in the public sector. The prior

³ See the proper reference for details.

objective being to produce literate people, in a rudimentary sense, fit for Church and public services; the traditional education did not encompass subjects like mathematics, science lessons, and foreign language. It was the Catholic Church that introduced those subjects first in the schools established in northern parts of the country, later on spread to the east in Harar and then to the south as the number of school establishments increase. In the later period the government following the initiative taken by the Catholic Church, gradually shifted from traditional education into modern education for which the first state supported modern school was established in 1908 (Markakis, 1974; Bahru, 1991; Kinfe, 1992; Tekeste, 1996; Mekuanent, 2000) in Addis Abeba and it was named Menilik II School after Emperor Menilik II. Further more, Emperor Haile Selassie I who ruled Ethiopia from 1930 to 1974 had been educated at a Catholic boarding school in Harar. It would seem that this particular contact and exposure to the mentality of European missionaries and the kind of modern training received through the newly introduced subjects caused Emperor Haile Selassie I to look forward and to strengthen the introduction of modernity through prioritizing education in the nation building agenda of the imperial rule. Jandy (1948, p. 115) convincingly showed the Emperor's heart was in education:

That education shares the second highest item in the national budget and the Emperor had no keener interest in any functional unit of his government than in the ministry of education which is a unit more intelligently staffed, efficient and forward looking than that of any other ministry. Furthermore, in the 1950s, the same Emperor had invited Jesuit Missionaries to systematize, modernize and upgrade the first national university college to a university level which currently is known as Addis Abeba University.

The argument could be that apart from the direct initiation and contribution to introduce and expand modern education, the indirect contribution of the Catholic Church was seen for infusing a sense of modernity in the minds of those who already passed through Catholic schools at that time. This and other factors can be argued for renewing the broken relationship of the universal Catholic Church with Ethiopia which was linked with the early 17th-century Catholic-Orthodox conflict (Kiros & Mazengia, 1972); by the time of which the Spanish Jesuits started schools in the area of Gondar (Gorgora) (*ibid.*). In this regard the credit as to who initiated and contributed for introducing and spreading modern education in Ethiopia, other than the later attempts made by the subsequent ruling regimes, unambiguously is due to the Ethiopian Catholic Church. Furthermore, in the 1950s, the same Emperor had invited Jesuit Missionaries to systematize, modernize and upgrade the first national university college to a university level which currently is known as Addis Abeba University.

In the course of time, that historical initiative is stretched and linked with the contemporary period as the Ethiopian Catholic Church, according to recent figures available from the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat became able to run the second largest number of schools next to the government. Currently, the total number of schools is more than 250; of which most of them are located in rural

areas. These schools encompass a wider range of levels from kindergarten to college level. Since the majority of the Ethiopian population is rural, the establishment of these schools, in most cases in inaccessible rural areas, does witness the commitment taken by the Church for promoting integrated human development.

Catholic schools which are coordinated under an Education Department of the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS), at a national and diocesan level, can be grouped into four categories: (1) those run by religious congregations, (2) those under direct sponsorship of the parish or diocese, (3) those owned by the diocese but run by a religious congregation, and (4) those registered under the so-called Project Agreement (for a specific period that is renewable every four or five years time in accordance with quality performance). These schools exclusively run by the financial support of the Church obtained from generous benefactors from abroad who strongly believe in the education of people and a minimal amount of school fees paid by parents of children attending in those schools. In other words, Church run schools in Ethiopia receive no subsidy from the government as opposed to what happens in other neighbouring countries like Kenya and Djibouti.

3. The Profile of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools, being part of the mandate of the Holy Church to proclaim the mystery of salvation to humanity, do play a significant role in promoting the human person through the effort put on spreading education. It implies the fulfilment of the goal of promoting the human person; with the awareness that all human values find fulfilment and unity in Christ.

The intention of the government is to expand schools to enable access to all school-age children in the country. Control of school expansion is seen in favour of access to all. Extended attempts to provide access to all may negatively influence the profile of many secular schools. Most often, Catholic schools are located in rural areas. On the whole it was expatriate missionaries who initiated the establishment of schools; of course with the consent of local authorities and people, they introduced modern education. It can also be argued that they had the finance to run schools with modern and imported facilities. This combined intention and financial capacity can be argued to be the means to expand schools in controlled way and aim at quality education rather than at quantity in terms of access. Targeting on the provision of quality education would mean aiming at individual pupil's academic success that includes both the physical and spiritual well-being of people as John Paul II once suggested:

Christian wisdom, which the Church teaches by divine authority, continuously inspires the faithful of Christ zealously to endeavour to relate human affairs and activities with religious values in a single living synthesis. Under the direction of these values all things are mutually connected for the glory of God and the integral development of the human person, a development that includes both corporal and spiritual well-being. (John Paul II, 1979 p. 3)

On the other hand the government is not in a position of obliging Catholic schools to expand for the sake of expansion. In that sense the quality of Catholic schools has been well preserved. In this respect Catholic Schools have gained public respect as a result of the quality of education they provide to young people.

The point of quality can also be argued to be linked with the making of the teaching profession more of a vocation than a simple job performed on the basis of set rules and regulations. Teachers trained for the teaching profession and who develop a real desire to be teachers apparently find a favourable environment in Catholic schools to perform the profession as a vocation. The Catholic system affirms the concept of the teaching profession as a vocation. Firstly, head teachers in Catholic schools, in most cases, are individuals who have professed the vocation of being called for lifetime commitment to the service of the poor. Being committed for lifetime vocation means taking each and every responsibility for the good of others rather than looking for one's self-interest and financial gain. The life experiences of committed school leaders, who try to live in accordance to the vows they made and with whom teachers work, understandably, has the symbolic power to draw the attention of those teachers who less significantly take teaching as a profession to reflect on and take their duties seriously. Secondly, Catholic schools leadership, in most cases, follows the principle of charismatic leadership. This emanates from the concept that teaching profession is more of self-commitment and sacrifice for the good of young people rather than being controlled by strict rules and regulations. It however does not necessarily mean that Catholic schools lack operational rules and regulations.

In general, Catholic schools are more viable in their system than that of the secular equivalent. However, this may not mean the secular schools do not have the viability. Lack of sincere commitment and dedication in the secular schools is more visible compared with Catholic schools. The main reason for such disparity is because of the value, mission, and vision of the Church that holds to achieve reasonable targets always integrated with human dignity. As Grace has pointed out a number of factors have enabled Catholic schools to attain a high profile in educational achievements. These are:

[T]he academic leadership of headteachers, the quality and vocational commitment of teachers, the influence of strong community and parental support (social capital), Catholicity as a form of cultural capital, demanding and focused academic programmes, the influence of structured environment, student engagement with the aims of the schools and an 'inspirational ideology' and clear sense of an educational mission. (Grace, 2003, p. 177)

Catholic schools then are schools that operate as personalized communities of learning rather than anonymous institutions where some students enjoy the support of few teachers while others feel ignored. The creation of schools that do have "few rules, realistic and open to change and development; clear and efficient lines of communication within the school" (Macrae & Quintrell, 2001, pp. 151–152) arguably make Catholic schools in Ethiopia distinct from the secular equivalent schools. The secularized assumption that "after all, schooling

is about student achievement” (Joyce & Showers, 2002, p. 3) does not express the holistic purposes of Catholic schooling.

Schools which pursue these holistic purposes include St. Joseph School, Nazareth School, St. Mary’s School, Nativity School all in Addis Abeba; Noterdam School in Dire Dawa, St. Daniel Comboni School in Awassa, and Don Bosco School in Dilla, Ziway, and Mekele. These schools currently educate the children and young people of many parents who hold high state offices in Ethiopia.

Comparatively, the Catholic Church in Ethiopia can be said to be running the best performing schools all over the country. The concern for creating a learning-centred community makes Catholic schools in Ethiopia responsible and accountable for the success of each child through assisting and providing the necessary support, in personal studies. Reflecting on the desires of staff, parents, and the wider community, Catholic schools are characterized by high standards of moral and academic performance. The moral aspects compel teachers to take seriously the moral imperative as stated by West-Burnham:

The moral imperative is very closely related to the professional imperative in that professionalism implies a commitment to the needs of a client and an obligation to meet those needs by deploying knowledge and skills to best effect. (West-Burnham, 1992, p. 6)

Looking into the issue of “success” for Catholic schools, other relevant aspects are necessary to highlight. In spite of the limited attraction for highly qualified teachers, the all inclusive philosophy and policy of Catholic schools seem more desirable as some of the respondents argued. An all-inclusive philosophy and policy of Catholic schools bring pupils who come from various backgrounds, social status of families, and class nature of society together. All school-age children whether from rich or poor family background, enjoy equal educational opportunities once they qualify for the admission requirements in Catholic schools. This opportunity helps to narrow the gap of differences in family background and broaden the spectrum of mutual understanding of pupils for the common goal of attaining educational success. The author’s life experience would provide substantial evidence of this. Coming up from an economically low income family did not prevent the desire to move up the rungs of the academic ladder. Children from the well off and poor families are believed to develop reciprocal knowledge of each other; and also to understand and realize the life condition of each other.

This implies that in Catholic schools the life situation of the real society is revealed through the sharing with and learning experience of children coming from various social background and economic status. Mutual learning creates a conducive learning environment for Catholic schools. The low school fees charged compared with high academic performance explains the increasing parental choice and demand for admitting children in Catholic schools. The mission and vision of the Catholic Church for its schools stands contrary to the highly secularized and self-centred individualistic contemporary culture and is vibrant testimony of the effort made to link values of humanity and faith with real-life encounter. In secular schools, for lack of ethical instruction a different ethos exists.

This is a significantly distinguishing feature of Catholic schools in Ethiopia from the secular equivalent schools. The Catholic Church has a tradition of running schools where young people are formed in integrated humanistic manners. Besides the academic teaching the young people do gain character formation through the instruction on Ethical Education which is aimed at developing norms and standards (Bennaars, 1993).

Unfortunately, for lack of a common syllabus for Ethical Education for all Catholic schools all over the country, Catholic schools at various localities have received frequent criticism from local authorities, and at times resistance not to teach; for assumed reasons of confusing Ethical Education lesson with the teaching of Catholic doctrine. However, though it is not validated with adequate research findings, plausible speculation would be possible that one of the many good reasons why parents choose Catholic schools, other than academic excellence, is for the pastoral care given to pupils and the teaching of Ethical Education. For example, on one occasion in a meeting held with parents of children in Catholic secondary school, all parents unanimously showed their support and they asked for the continuity of teaching Ethical Education in the school. Their argument was that moral education is the basis for children of this age. To this end they explicitly quoted the verse “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1: 7).⁴ The point of teaching moral education in Catholic schools however is believed by parents to provide more than what is expected from the general education objectives of the state.

The quality of pupils in Catholic schools in Ethiopia is measured not only in academic achievement but also by their integral development as human beings. If this is so evident by the greater support of parents of pupils, one may raise the question, why in some parts of the country, Catholic schools are compelled not to teach Ethical Education. To come to the point of analyzing this question further research need be initiated. Briefly, however, it may seem to lack of conception to what is going on both within the frontiers of the country and other wise with fast changes and dehumanizing concepts of individualistic attitudes which are feared for completely changing the mutual sharing with and caring for culture of people. In other words lack of realizing the real educational contribution of the Catholic Church for the over all humanistic development would end up in speculated mis-judgements which is feared to hamper the overall efforts of the Church.

In conclusion, the vision and educational objective of Catholic schools where young people are treated with respect and have the opportunity to learn the skills essentially needed for a successful life has kept them be highly demanded and demonstrated high profile. Moreover, the spiritual, moral, and professional integration of the whole school community is nurtured everyday. The effect is visible more than what is said so far. It is very true thus that most parents prefer to bring their children into Catholic schools not only for mere academic success but also for the moral and spiritual formation.

⁴ See 1 above.

4. Research in Catholic Education

It would be sad that very little is said or done or researched about the effectiveness of Catholic schools; in spite of the fact that many of these schools are of high education profile by the regional and national standards. Development and expansion of Catholic schools is not thoroughly studied so far. Dimensions of influence, percentage of population taught in Catholic schools, and levels of achievement of young Catholics are some of the areas that are researched very little, if not insignificantly done. Level of contribution in leadership position and contribution to national development and challenges being faced by Catholic school are also similar areas insignificantly assessed.

People need be getting interested in studying Catholic education as well as its history in this country. In this case, of course, interest would drive individuals to engage in research work. This seemingly can be accepted to stretch the latitude of research in Catholic education. Of course, interest alone would not suffice; so long as financial capacity comes into the foreground for not having well-established and developed research culture. Besides the culture of underdeveloped research in Catholic schooling, looking into several interests to actualize what is thought of can provide oral evidence. We learn from the past to face, improve, and develop the future. Any student of the past will be important resource to guide future perspectives.

The recent initiative to open a Catholic university, for which legal procedures are already underway, would mean of two dimensional visions in expanding educational services. On the one hand it would seem the desire of the government to draw the attention of the Church who already is engaged in providing quality education of higher profile; by way of which competition for quality education among other educational institutions in the country would be realized. On the other hand, the keen interest of the Church to actualize the presence of highly educated individuals endowed not only with academic knowledge but also with wisdom of sense of integrated human development would be a matching mission of evangelization for a holistic human and national development. Amid the growing expansion of the private sector in educational services, the presence of Catholic university in Ethiopia would seem to raise the growing demand for Catholic education as well as demand for well-trained manpower in fulfilling development targets. Research in Catholic education is also believed to be strengthened when the various faculties would engage in research endeavours. By and large, developing the culture of research would equally mean identifying problem areas, pointing directions for solutions and enhancing quality performance in the area researched.

5. The Contemporary Challenges of Recruitment, Formation, and Retention of School Leaders and Teachers

Teaching is always assumed to be a challenge. The magnitude however varies with time, place, and condition. In early days, to attract children and to encourage parents to send them to school, education in most Catholic schools was

freely offered. Three points have contributed to this task come true. Firstly, adequate financial aid was obtained from foreign benefactors and equally the purchasing power of local currency was adequate enough. Secondly, locally recruited teachers with minimal training but full of enthusiasm to teach were of great support for the educational mission of the Church attains its goals. Thirdly, the teaching of Moral Education was highly encouraging Catholic schools to officially include the subject in the weekly school timetable. This enabled teachers, with virtual love for the teaching profession, to look at what missionaries do and fulfil their duties accordingly. The same was true to pupils' being eager to learn.

As time went on, the problem come to be many, diverse, complex, and unpredictable that one feels disarmed in the face of so many challenges ahead. The challenges do equally have global dimensions. The new education and training policy of Ethiopia aims at education to strengthen problem-solving capacity (TGE, 1994) at an individual and society level. It undoubtedly is essential to develop problem-solving capacity of society through education and training. The challenge however is to reduce education to its purely technical and practical aspects for which a Christian approach of the "why" question on education is totally removed. In such a situation to consider education to only "how" question is putting great pressure and challenge on Catholic schools not to apply a Christian-pedagogical approach.

The Church, mainly in the western world, is facing a tremendous challenge as the number of vocation for religious life is getting diminished. This has significant implications on the traditional approach of recruiting school leaders from among them. The option to remedy this challenge could be recruiting from the labour market. As a matter of fact, getting well-trained school leaders in the market is a challenge of its own kind. True leadership mostly requires passion and conviction. Roger Gill (2006) has noticed five themes that seem to capture the real essence of leadership: sense of vision and mission, having a culture of positive values, developing strategies and implementing them, empowering people to operate in accordance with set values, and influencing, motivating, and inspiring them to do what is needed. All these seem true to Catholic schools. Like wise, one can read about the science of leadership in textbooks; and teaching about leadership styles might be easy. Above all, to find a competent lay Catholic school leader with adequate knowledge about the educational vision and mission of the Church seem to be far from reach. This may compel one to speculate, in the contemporary period; Catholic schools lack well-integrated and balanced school leaders who are ready to take up the mission as a vocation.

The same is true with recruiting teachers. A number of reasons can be forwarded to this argument. Firstly, the fact that many people in Ethiopia rarely choose teaching career as a profession; instead as optional job. In such circumstances, it is too difficult to assume positive outcomes. Secondly, young graduates often do not opt to go and serve in rural areas due to lack of personal comfort and insignificant opportunity available in Catholic schools for being transferred to

other Catholic schools. This is contrary to what is happening in secular schools for there are wider opportunities for being transferred elsewhere. Thirdly, the new recruits who do not have adequate information about the working position of Catholic schools; simply assume Catholic schools, for reasons of being non-government institution, as organizations⁵ for better salaries. Actually, Catholic schools, from the point of the vision and mission of the Church, are not in a position of remunerating outstanding salaries. If it happens, it depends on the extent of individual school's income of each diocese.

For all the effort put into education in the last century, it has not succeeded in producing enough educated and willing Catholics to help it fulfil its own educational and pastoral programmes. In other words, there are not enough educated Catholics available for own institutions. There is also lack of uniformly approved salary scale that applies to all Catholic schools in Ethiopia. Leave alone at national level, disparity of salary scale is also observed at the level of individual diocese. Putting things together, the point of recruiting school leaders and teachers is a serious matter for Catholic schools.

Looking at the issue of formation, a critical part of the job of an educational leader is to make sure that every teacher, in Catholic schools, feels special. Being aware of such things is an important aspect of building staff morale. Examining and leading how every teacher feels to what is important to every pupil in the teaching-learning process is a critical component of enhancing the morale of every teacher which is part of teacher formation. Today, in almost all primary and secondary schools the majority of the staff is made up of non-Catholic teachers. In some schools Catholics form a very small minority. The point is not to make things polemic rather to point out the seriousness of the challenge that Catholic schools are currently facing for formation. In addition to that, an increasing number of school leaders are not followers of the Catholic faith. In some parts Diocesan Catholic School Coordinators are not Catholics. The point is not a matter of competence or proselytism. It rather is how to form for acquainting Catholic education principles. To fulfil its vision and mission, the Church needs not only to establish schools but also to prepare qualified teachers preferably Catholics, if not at least Christians.

Globalization is shaping the minds of young people through mass media and electronic communications for which Ethiopia is not an exception. Exposure to new events and information dissemination is faster than ever before. Amid this challenge those teachers in Catholic schools need consider themselves as change agents through proper formation. Few of these mechanisms could be; on the job training, participating in refresher workshops and seminars. This is believed to enhance the professional competence of those committed teachers as well enable them retain in the profession. The challenge however is they rarely are provided such opportunities for reasons of financial constraints. It is not easy to regularly afford for training for the Ethiopian Catholic Church who excessively depend on financial aid

⁵ For reasons of better salary, non-government institutions in Ethiopia are generally assumed to be better salary payers than that of government institutions.

from abroad amid signs of fatigue among the traditional partners and benefactors who do not see much progress after many decades of helping Africa (The Church we want to be 2002) for which Ethiopia is not exception. Opportunities of training would enable Catholic school leaders retain teachers amid increasing competition for better salary and greater mobility of teachers. This is believed to support the over all initiatives of Catholic schools for human development and also develop sense of collegiality. Amid recruiting and formation challenges, creating conducive environment for teacher retention is not always easy.

There could be a couple of suggested points to partly overcome these challenges. In the first glance, the Church needs to look for ways to tackle those challenges by way of attempting to employ better qualified or else to encourage those already employed but with low level of qualification. To do so obviously need to look for financial means that could raise teachers' salary. One possible option to get enough income could be raising school fees however parents complain or expect some school improvement initiatives. Of course it depends on the availability of competent school leader who consider challenges seriously and opt for solutions. Increasing school fees may obviously confuse Catholic schools with schools established to maximize profit. This misconception emanates from lack of adequate information on how Catholic schools operate. More clearly, lack of evidenced research either by educators from within the Church and lack of acquaintance to the operational mandate of Catholic schools by some of the newly appointed local government civil servants aggravates the challenge of confusion.

Living in a competitive world for which Ethiopia is part of the system, creating a favourable condition (with regard to training, formation, and retention of teachers) is a must to speak of quality education and keep pace of the changing and challenging situations of competition. The quality of teachers' training on offer need much attention with the amount of income received to face the souring economic situation. Unless some mechanisms are designed this situation is feared not to turn teachers simply looking for economic options rather than considering teaching as a profession. This in turn would challenge the level of quality education provided through Catholic schools in particular and that of the country's education system in general. Unfortunately, empirical evidence suggests that Catholic schools can not charge more school fees to maintain teachers' salary. If they may do the educational mission of the Church may deviate from its origin by denying access for the poor and marginalized people. The opportunity may turn in favour of the well-off families. In this case what would be important is looking for other means of retaining teachers through creating favourable school environment for teaching and learning.

Conclusion

The Catholic Church though has long history in Ethiopia, represents a minority group; in spite of which it plays a significant role in education, being the second largest provider next to the government. It is not only the numerical position

that the Catholic Church enjoys with regard to education. Above all the clear vision and mission accomplished in providing quality education has rendered her to attain a remarkable reputation from the society of all walks of life. Nonetheless, its school system faces many challenges.

In conclusion, there are significant points of consideration for the Church leaders as to how to tackle challenges; focus on school leader and teachers' recruitment, formation, and retention. These points are believed to enable to look at closely on matters of keeping up on delivering quality education, coping up with the growing competition of attracting school leaders and teachers by private schools, and ensuring Catholic schools to preserve Catholic schools' identities.

Finally, the following suggestions are made to help further reflection and future consideration. (1) A competent teacher is expected to contribute for the up keep of the standard of Catholic schools as high as possible in line with the moral and ethical values of the Church. Challenges, seen in a wider spectrum, are argued to keep high standards of Catholic schools. Seen in a wider perspective it is not only the remuneration that could keep teachers professionally stable and satisfied with the job engaged in, but also it would be the inner conviction or even sense of professionalism that would keep one be conscious of ones duties and responsibilities. To this end creating a proper working environment is of significant contribution to retain teachers. (2) The point of training for professionalism is believed to contribute a lot in creating stability. Added to proper teaching environment the quality level of teachers' professional training can be assumed to attribute to qualitative recruitment, convinced retention, and to fair remuneration. In the face of these facts establishing its own Teacher Training College where courses on teacher professionalism and vocational nature of teaching could be offered would be of essential element. (3) The growing competitive living condition and lack of standard in the salary scale of Catholic schools is compelling teachers to opt for better salary. It would be high time for Church leaders to seriously take this issue into consideration if Catholic schools are expected to retain competent and ideal teachers. (4) Strengthening the establishment of a Catholic University is believed to play a pivotal role to enhance research initiatives and prepare future professionals and leaders who will take up Christian responsibility seriously. Its actualization thus is of a timely concern.

The future of the country and development of modern Christianity largely depends on the kind of value oriented quality education the Catholic Church provides to the children of Christian families in particular and children of citizens in general. Hence, all educational initiatives of the Catholic Church through bearing the multiple natures of challenges and looking for solutions depends on what education is regarded for.

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SECTION FIVE

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN INDIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH'S CONCERN FOR THE MARGINALIZED: A VIEW FROM INDIA

Cardinal P. Telesphore Toppo

Introduction

The Church has always recognized the importance of education in her mission. John Paul II, in *Redemptor Hominis*, spoke of the human person as “the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself.”¹ Hence the work of educating the human person is an irreplaceable aspect of the Church’s mission and the investment of human and material resources in the field of education becomes a prophetic choice for the Church.

Vatican II says, “Education is, in a very special way, the concern of the Church.”² This concern is directed not only towards the members of the Church, but also to all people. The document affirms that the Church “will offer its assistance to all people for the promotion of a well-balanced perfection of the human personality, for the good of society in this world and for the development of a world more worthy of man.”³ Catholic pedagogical tradition forcefully reaffirms the centrality of the human person in the educational process. Catholic schools and university colleges must be careful “to safeguard the priority of the person in their educational programme.”⁴

Gravissimum Educationis gives a beautiful description of what an education institution ought to be, when it says:

Among the various organs of education the school is of outstanding importance. In nurturing the intellectual faculties which is its special mission, it develops a capacity for sound judgment and introduces the pupils to the

¹ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Encyclical (1980), n. 14.

² Vatican II, *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 3.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education (2002). *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools*.

cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations. It fosters a sense of values and prepares them for professional life. By providing for friendly contacts between pupils of different characters and backgrounds it encourages mutual understanding.⁵

The document further states:

The Catholic school, by opening itself to the progress of the modern world, prepares its pupils to contribute effectively to the welfare of the world of men and to work for the extension of the Kingdom of God so that ... they become the saving leaven in the community.⁶

The Church looks at education as fundamental in the Church and society. When integral education is imparted through a clear education project of which Christ is the foundation, its ecclesial and cultural identity, its mission of education as a work of love and its service to society get deepened and enlarged. The Church also considers educational institutions as an effective way of carrying on her mission of evangelization, especially in areas where no other pastoral work is possible. They are means to the social and cultural development of different communities and an invaluable service to the spiritual and material development of less fortunate people.

At the outset, therefore, I would like to give a brief historical view of the Church's contribution to education in India as a prelude to the theme Catholic education and the Church's concern for the marginalized.

Church and Education in India: Before Independence

Christian missionaries were pioneers in education. In fact, the first formal Christian educational enterprise anywhere outside Europe was the Santa Fe School in Goa, founded in 1540 by the Franciscans. In 1542 it was taken over by St. Francis Xavier and in 1548 it was raised to the status of a college and renamed St. Paul's College. Soon more missionary schools appeared in other parts of India: at Bassein (Vasai) in 1546, in Cochin in 1549, at Punnaicayil in Tamil Nadu in 1567, and in Madurai in 1595. In 1713 a school was started in Pondicherry and in 1731 a School of High Tamil was started at Ellacurichi in Tamil Nadu. It may also be mentioned that a Sanskrit school was opened by the Catholic Church in 1846 at Mannanam, Kerala.

However, it was only during the British rule that education began to spread in a somewhat organized manner in India. After Macaulay's *Minutes* of 1835, which decided in favour of English education as against the oriental system, Christian educational work took a new turn. It led to a great intellectual revolution in India. The English language opened up a world of new knowledge and new ideas to the newly educated classes. The western ideas of liberty, equality,

⁵ Ibid, n.4.

⁶ Ibid, n. 8.

and fraternity began to attract the educated youth. The study of English literature and western political thought with its emphasis on the dignity of the individual gave a new sense of direction and purpose for the intelligentsia.

From 1835 till the end of the century, a considerable number of Christian educational institutions were founded all over India, many of which were affiliated to the first universities started in the country in 1857. Several of these institutions—St. Xavier's College, Kolkata (1835), Madras Christian College (1839), St Joseph's College at Tiruchirapally (1844), St John's College at Agra (1858)—are highly reputed to this day. In fact, till the beginning of the 20th century, Christian institutions played a dominant role in the education of young Indians.

Church and Education in India: After Independence

At the time of Independence (1947), the educational system in India was not only quantitatively inadequate, but also characterized by great regional, gender, and caste imbalances. Only 14% of the population were literate and only one out of three children were enrolled in primary schools.⁷ It was only after Independence, that the importance of taking education to the masses began to be appreciated.

After Independence, there has been a massive involvement of the Church in education. Though constituting only 1.86% of the population,⁸ the Catholic Church in India today runs over 20,370 educational institutions, namely, 4,428 nursery schools, 9,064 lower and upper primary schools, 4,837 secondary and higher secondary schools, 513 teachers' training schools, 359 colleges, 900 technical schools, and 263 professional institutions.⁹

Catholic educational institutions have always been rated high for the quality of education they impart. They are esteemed not only for their high academic standards, but also for the sound moral and spiritual values they inculcate and the open outlook they foster. Of these institutions, 59% are in rural areas serving the poor, especially the Dalits, Adivasis, and other marginalized sections of society.¹⁰

Our service of education extends to over 10 million students of all religions without any discrimination—23% Catholics, 5.3% Christians of other denominations, 52.9% Hindus, 8.4% Muslims, and 10.4% belong to other categories. In gender terms, girls constitute 54% of the students.¹¹

In socio-economic terms, 42.5% of the students come from the poor income group, 32.5% from the lower income group, 18.3% from the middle income group, and 6.7% from the higher income group. The poor here are those who live below the

⁷ Government of India, Ministry of I & B, *India 1995*, p. 79.

⁸ The Catholic Directory of India, 2005–2006, CBCI, New Delhi, p. 110.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Survey, CBCI Commission for Education and Culture, October 2005, p. 60.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Poverty Line.¹² Of the students in our institutions, 25% come from the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes community. According to the Planning Commission, a family with five members whose annual income is less than Rs. 24,000 is below the poverty line. About 30% of the Indian population live below the poverty line, that is, the marginalized.¹³

Church's Involvement in Technical and Vocational Education

To the Church goes the credit for introducing technical and vocational training in the country. Before the 19th century there were no schools for training people in any technical or industrial skills. One learned a trade merely by apprenticing oneself to someone who was already skilled in a particular trade. Aware of the limitations of purely academic education, the missionaries constantly looked for opportunities to vocationalize education so as to equip students with the skills necessary for gainful employment. Hence they started schools exclusively for imparting technical training. The first of such technical schools in the country was opened at Alapuzha (Kerala) in 1842, followed by others in Kottayam, Thrissur, and many other parts of the country.

Christian Contribution to the Education of Women in India

In the sphere of female education, "Christian missionaries everywhere were the first to break the shackles in which the women were bound, and set them free to know and understand the world."¹⁴ A century ago, the position of Indian woman was pathetic indeed. She was considered an economic liability rather than a welcome boon. The Hindu *Sastras* prevented the education of women and it was regarded "unbecoming of the modesty of sex, and fit only for public dancers."¹⁵

The missionaries were the first to promote girls' education in India. The first ever girls' school in India was opened by the missionaries in 1819 at Kottayam. A year later, another girls' school was established in Alapuzha. These initiatives gathered great momentum in the years to follow and girls' schools came into being in different parts of Kerala. It is interesting to know that the first ever girls' school by the government was started in 1850, 31 years after the missionaries had established one.

When the missionaries reached north-east India, education of women was practically unknown there, especially in the plains of Assam. The Adivasi

¹² According to the planning Commission of India, a family with five members whose annual income is less than Rs. 24,000 is below the poverty line. Above 30% of the Indian population live below the poverty line, that is, the marginalized.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ H. Gray (1968). *The Progress of Women*. In L. S. S. O' Malley (Ed.), *Modern India and the West: A study of the Interaction of their Civilizations* (p. 456), reprint. London: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ Minutes of Sir Thomas Muro, Governor of Madras, 25 June 1822, *Parliamentary Papers*, IX (1831–1832), Part I, Appendix 1, 501.

women were totally illiterate. Even among the Assamese women, education was totally neglected. The first attempts towards the education of women in north-east India were made at the turn of the 20th century.

Resistance to girls' education in the north-east was by no means less than it was in other parts of the country. Dr. Philomath Passah of the North-Eastern Hill University mentions how appeals to Naga parents to send their girls to school would in the early days invariably meet with the reply, "You cannot teach our females; they are trained to bear burdens, to bring wood and water, and to make the salt by which we make our subsistence."¹⁶ Today, female literacy level in the north-eastern states compares favourably with that in the rest of India.

The beginning of education of women was a major breakthrough in the transformation of society in India. The missionary service to the education of Indian women has long been acknowledged by prominent social workers and Hindu leaders. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras, a staunch freedom-fighter and former deputy chairman of the Madras Legislative Council observed:

I honestly believe that the missionaries have done more for women's education in this country than the government itself. The women of this country have been placed under a deep debt of gratitude to the several missionary agencies for their valuable contribution to the educational uplift of Indian women. Of course at present, India can boast of several other religious bodies such as the Brahma Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Arya Samaj, doing work in the field of women's education, but in the past the Christian missionaries were the only agencies in that field. Even at this day, in every province, we find missionary women teachers working hard in a spirit of love and faith, in out-of-the-way villages, where the Hindu and Muslim women dare not penetrate.¹⁷

The importance attached by the Church to women's education has been one of the major elements that has led to the enlightenment of Indian women of all religions, castes, and regions in modern times. In India, Catholic religious women and women missionaries from other churches, had easier access to local women. They pioneered the education of women and helped raise their status. The Church has continued to maintain this laudable initiative as can be seen from the fact that 54% of the students in the educational institutions of the Church are girls.

The Church in Higher Education

Collegiate education based on the western pattern was introduced by the Christian missionaries at the Serampore College, West Bengal, in 1818, even before Macaulay's *Minute* of 1835 decided in favour of British education and

¹⁶ Cf. Philomath Passah (1996). The contribution of Christianity to socio-economic development of north east India. In J. Puthenpurakal (Ed.), *Impact of Christianity on North East India* (p. 446). Shillong: Vendrame Institute.

¹⁷ Quoted in H. Gray, *The Progress of Women*, op. cit. p. 446.

the Hardinge Resolution of 1844 prescribed English as a necessary qualification for service under the government.

The Catholic venture into higher education began in 1835 with the founding of St. Xavier's College in Calcutta.¹⁸ At the close of the 19th century, India had only 26 Christian colleges. At the time of Independence in 1947, the number of Christian colleges was 62 out of a total of 450. Among these was St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, and I am a graduate of this college. It is important to know that most of the priests and religious of the Central Tribal belt of India are graduates of this college. The number of Catholic colleges today is 359 out of a total of 16,885 (*UGC Annual report 2003–2004*).

Catholic colleges form an integral part of the Indian system of higher education. They are highly esteemed for their academic excellence, co-curricular activities and the all-round formation they give. The spirit of service has always been a part of the ethos of the Catholic college. In fact, in recent times, we notice in these colleges a new awakening to the demands of social justice and human rights. Admission policies are modified to bring in more of the underprivileged into the college and programmes of social awareness are organized to create in the students greater concern for the poor and exploited.

Christian Contribution to the Education of the Indigenous People of India

An area where the Church has made notable contribution is in the education of the indigenous people—the Adivasis and tribals—of India. Here we wish to highlight what the Church has achieved in the field of education in two regions where the indigenous people are found in sizeable numbers—the Chotanagpur area and the north-east India.

Education in the Chotanagpur Region

When Fr. Constant Lievens and his companions started work in the Chotanagpur area in the second half of the 19th century, they were convinced that every form of development begins with and is based on education. Following their example, both Msgr. Louis Van Hoeck and Oscar Severin, who were great missionary educationists and the first two bishops of Ranchi, insisted on a basic principle that in any new area a school must be built first, and only after that a church could be built.¹⁸ As it is reported in *To Chotanagpur With Love and Service* (p. 107), Mgr. Severin used to say: “We can afford to lose our residences and churches for earlier too we lived and worshiped under the trees; but we cannot allow them (govt.) to take away our schools; never.” Due to this policy, a fine network of Christian schools came up all over the mission of Chotanagpur. Opening of schools especially in interior villages was instrumental for the progress and rapid social change among the Adivasis.

¹⁸ Cf. Dr. S. K. Mitra (2000). Contribution of Christianity to Bengal. *Indian Christian Directory* (p. 112). Kottayam: Rashtradeepika.

Christian education brought about a change, a transformation in Adivasi societies. The outlook of the Adivasis widened and their behaviour patterns also changed. Through education they acquired a strong sense of their Adivasi identity and selfhood. In their new identity, the Adivasis crossed the social boundary of their own collective Adivasi community, remaining part of it while becoming, at the same time, a part of the larger community of Christians, both tribal and non-tribal, in India and the world at large. This identity has helped them to get adjusted to modern life with its rapid social, economic, and political changes.

Some of the missionaries turned out to be great linguists, grammarians, and compilers of dictionaries in Adivasi mother tongues. In this missionary tradition, J. B. Hoffmann and A. V. Emelen, two Jesuit scholars, co-authored the *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*, a work of great value. These works are splendid instruments for the preservation and growth of Adivasi languages and culture.

Education in North-East India

The earliest systematic attempts at formal education in the north-eastern region began with the establishment of various Christian Churches there, from the beginning of the 19th century. Here we find missionaries engaging themselves in the translation of the Bible and writing primers, grammar books, and dictionaries with equal zeal.

It is an undeniable fact that the missionaries have successfully spread liberal and progressive education among the numerous tribes of the north-east.¹⁹ In this regard, Dr. Philomath Passah of the North-Eastern Hill University points out that the Catholic Church, “although late comers to the region, they have achieved great success in recent years because they put emphasis on education at all stages of the growing child.”²⁰

In higher education too, it was the Church that took the initiative among the tribals of the north-east. Institutions like St Edmund’s College, St. Anthony’s College were among the first centres of higher education among the tribals. These institutions have contributed in great measure to the formation of the intelligentsia of the region and paved the way for the establishment of universities in the region.

The Theme of the CBCI General Body Meeting, Bangalore, February 2006

The theme of the CBCI General Body Meeting was: *Catholic Education and the Church’s Concern for the Marginalized. Who are the marginalized?* The marginalized include both the economically and socially marginalized. In our Indian context it would include the poor, Dalits/tribals, rural women, slum dwellers, child labourers, unorganized workers, etc.

¹⁹ Dr. Archana Barua (1996). Contribution of Christianity to language and literature In J. Puthenpurakal (Ed.), *Impact of Christianity in North East India* (p. 370). Shillong: Vendrame Institute.

²⁰ Philomath Passah, op. cit., p. 443.

The Standing Committee of the CBCI constituted a Preparatory Committee consisting of the three Commissions of Education and Culture, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Backward Community (SC/ST and BC), and Justice, Peace, and Development to make the clergy, religious, and laity become aware of the theme of the General Body Meeting. The Committee held a national consultation in Delhi in December 2004. Including the chairmen and secretaries of the Commissions of Education and Culture, SC/ST and BC and Justice, Peace, and Development, regional secretaries and representatives of the Xavier Board, All India Association of Catholic Schools (AINACS), All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF), Catholic Council of India, and All India Catholic Union (AICU), 35 delegates participated in the meeting. The Consultation drew up a well-studied questionnaire on the theme. It contains 45 questions neatly grouped under the following ten sections:

(1) Clarity of Vision, (2) Commitment to the Marginalized, (3) Universalization of Education, (4) Quality Education, (5) Vocationalization of Education, (6) Institutions of Higher Learning, (7) Communitization of Education, (8) Networking, (9) Public Advocacy, and (10) Implementation Systems.

To facilitate speedy communication and gather the views from different sections of the Church in India, it was also decided to hold consultative meetings on the theme in all the Twelve Regional Bishops' Councils. We are glad to say that to-date, the Committee has held consultative meetings in nine out of 12 regions. Consultative meetings have also been held with the representatives of the National Conference of Religious of India (CRI), Xavier Board, and AINACS.

In addition, the Commission for Education and Culture conducted a national survey of Catholic educational institutions in India. The survey covered about 70% of Catholic institutions spread over the length and breadth of India. It contacted 149 dioceses, 72 generalates, and 528 provinces and regions of religious congregations engaged in the educational apostolate. It is gratifying to note that 86.9% of those contacted responded to the survey. The survey covers only institutions run by Dioceses and Religious Congregations. It does not cover educational institutions run by the Laity either as individuals or as a Trust.

Thus great care has been taken to prepare the theme well in advance of the general body meeting. Much time and personnel have been involved in making the theme known to as many people as possible. Consultation has also been held at different levels.

The Findings of the Consultative Meetings and the National Survey have been collated and published in the form of a handout for further study, reflection, and pastoral planning.

The Challenges of Reaching out to the Marginalized

You may ask why the theme *Catholic Education and the Church's Concern for the Marginalized* was chosen when 75% of the students already belong to the poor and the lower income groups? Is it because the benefits of good education imparted in our institutions have reached only the top layer among the marginalized and not the majority among them? These and other related issues were

thoroughly discussed at different levels during the consultative meetings. Several suggestions were made to meet the challenge of reaching out to the marginalized. The important ones among them are:

- The Church's vision of education for the marginalized should be transmitted to all units of the dioceses and congregations through seminars, workshops, Catholic weeklies, etc., within a period of six months after the CBCI General Body Meeting. This vision will provide scope and freedom for the diverse religious charisms in the Church.
- Depending on the local situation a certain percentage of admission in every institution should be reserved for the marginalized.
- To retain the students up to class X (age 16), the following measures need to be taken:
 - Provide freeships, scholarships, loans, mid-day meals, books, and uniforms
 - Arrange bridge courses, remedial classes, mentoring, and counseling
 - Evolve relevant curriculum and creative and participative pedagogy in relation to the culture of the children
- In all our vernacular schools, we should ensure proficiency of the English language as a means of communication.
- In view of the marginalized children struggling with maths and science, we need to have an innovative pedagogy to ensure the understanding of concepts.
- Institutions may assign some of the staff members to mentor and accompany the marginalized students in their holistic formation.
- Introduction of multi-skill training at the secondary level.
- Establishment of community colleges to enhance employability.
- Availing of the opportunities provided by the National Institute of Open schooling (NIOS).
- Establishment of non-formal educational centres.
- Tapping local talents for the training of skills to students.
- Building a corpus fund to provide subsidy for the marginalized.
- Training Catholics, especially the marginalized, to appear for Public Service Entrance Examinations.
- Need for Catholic educational agencies both at the diocesan and religious congregations' levels, to work together for mutual empowerment and effective implementation of the vision at the local, regional, and national level.
- Networking with government agencies and other NGOs, for example, through the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*.
- Establishing fruitful contracts with lay Catholics and other well wishers to support our work.
- Promoting and developing the Alumni/ae Associations to make them partners in realizing the vision.
- We must genuinely use our minority rights to safeguard and promote the education of Catholic and Christian students and the welfare of our employees.

- As a concrete sign of our commitment to the marginalized, we need to seriously implement programmes for non-formal, vocational, and alternative education.
- *Commercialization of education isolates the institutions' vision from the Catholic vision of education and is a counter witness to the mission of Jesus Christ.*

Conclusion

The Church's contribution in the field of education has had a direct impact on the social and cultural aspects of Indian society. The Church used education to open the horizons of knowledge to all, whereas up to the 19th century in India it was a guarded preserve of a few elite. By providing education to all and sundry irrespective of caste, colour, and creed, the church did much for the democratization of education and creating an awareness of the evils of caste discrimination and other social evils in the Indian society. In so doing, it successfully undid the monopoly in education enjoyed for ages by a few privileged castes. Because of education, it became possible for the Dalits and the other weaker sections of the society to compete with the higher castes on more equal terms, including political participation.²¹ Many Christian educational institutions were greatly instrumental in rediscovering and researching many aspects of Indian culture and propagating these findings within India and abroad, which should be considered one of the most valuable contributions of Catholic educational institutions to Indian culture and heritage.

The words of the Tamil sage and poet, Thiruvalluvar, are apt on this occasion: "Learning is the true imperishable riches; all other things are not riches" (*Thirukkural*, no. 400).

But the distribution of these riches has been a cause of concern through the ages, including the present one. In an age of globalization, the public policy, at least seen in practice today, appears to be in favour of the *haves* and not the *have-nots* (the marginalized). It is here that our intervention is needed to make the benefits of good Catholic education reach the marginalized. *One needs great trust in God who will not forsake those who work for the poor and the neglected, His special children.*

Education is the key to progress. Education is for life. Education is a mission and not an occupation. It is a mission entrusted to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ when He said: "Go and teach all nations." All of us, the clergy, religious and laity, are involved in carrying out this mission. Whatever some fundamentalists and fanatics may say, accusing us of converting the poor, Dalits and tribals and marginalized by allurements, fraud, and force, we continue to help the poor and empower them with the light of knowledge by educating them and thus liberating them from the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy. Our schools are

²¹ Andre Beteille (1965). *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village* (p. 5). Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

open to all, especially for the poor and the marginalized, irrespective of caste or creed. This task, entrusted to us by Lord Jesus Himself, has to be continued more intensely, consistently and unitedly. This is indeed our common vocation and mission.

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CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO FAITH FORMATION IN INDIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLING

Sr. Lydia Fernandes, AC

The Indian Catholic Church—Historical Background

India is a mosaic of different cultures, religions, castes, and classes with unimaginable pluralism and diversity at every level, making it the most complex nation in the world. This scenario brings with it a great many conflicts, problems as well as challenges in all aspects of life and activity. India being the cradle of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism the entry of any other religion has its challenges and conflicts. As per the Census of India, 2002, the total population of India is 1,002.1 millions with Hindus, 672.6 millions (82.4%); Muslims, 95.2 millions (11.7%); Christians, 18.9 millions (2.3%) with Catholics just 14.91 millions (1.51%); Sikhs, 16.3 (2.0%); Buddhists, 6.3 millions (0.8%); Jains, 3.4 millions (0.4%); and others, 3.5 millions (0.4%). The percentage of Christians in the South is larger than in the North except a few pockets in the north-east regions, where the Church seems to be thriving and in other places merely surviving. There are locations where Catholics are descendants of the upper classes of the Indian society and others, where the converts have been mainly Dalits (the oppressed persons and groups) and Adivasis (the original indigenous people of India). Consequently, any attempt at the analytical study of Christianity in India reflects the challenges posed by historical developments and mission patterns, and any efforts at faith education needs to have its basis on the context of its multicultural–multi-religious reality.

The communion of Latin, Syro-Malabar, and Syro-Malankara rites that make up the Indian Catholic Church, with its issues and conflicts, gives her also a character different from that of any other Church of ancient times. Tradition ascribes the introduction of Christianity to India to Apostle Thomas, one of the original 12, giving India the Syro-Malabar Church originally, the St. Thomas Christians and the Syro-Malankara Church, one of the breakaway groups of the former, accepted back into the Catholic fold as a separate church by Pope Pius XI.

The Church in India has been engaged in education in a very extensive way and for long years as an expression of her social commitment and also as part of Church expansion work. The contribution of the Church through its many educational institutions from elementary to tertiary education as well as professional educational programmes is significant. The role of these institutions in faith formation becomes significant when we consider it in the light of the guidelines for reflection and renewal provided by the Congregation for Catholic Education in the publication, “The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1988)”:

The Catholic School finds its true justification in the mission of the Church ... through it the local Church evangelizes, educates and contributes to the formation of a healthy and morally sound life-style among its members ... of its nature it guides men and women to human and Christian perfection, and at the same time helps them to grow mature in their faith (para, 34)

It is through its large number of Clerical Congregations, Brothers, and Religious Sisters¹ the Catholic Church is engaged in the mission of education as major agents of literacy and higher education. Christian institutions have also been safeguarded under Article 30(1) of the Indian Constitution as Minority Institutions with the freedom to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Table 1 is an indication of the empowerment the Christian institutions have experienced in this regard as well as provides a glimpse into the status of Catholic educational institutions in India.

Table 1. Statistical data on Catholic educational institutions in India (2005) (From *The Catholic Directory of India, 2005–2006*, A Claretian Publication)

Sl. No.	Education level	No. of institutions
1.	Kindergarten and Nursery Schools	4,428
2.	Lower Primary Schools	5,872
3.	Upper Primary Schools	3,198
4.	High Schools	3,372
5.	Higher Secondary Schools	1,465
6.	Colleges (Arts, Science, Commerce)	359
7.	Training Schools/Colleges	513
8.	Technical Schools	900
9.	Professional Institutions	263
	Total	20,370*

* Total number of students over 10 million

¹ While a large number of religious are involved in the mission of education, the Society of Jesus, Salesians of Don Bosco, Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, Gabriel Brothers, Irish Christian Brothers among men religious and Loretto Sisters, Apostolic Carmel, Jesus and Mary, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary among women religious congregations have been noted for their contribution at the national level.

Table 2. Statistical data of clergy and religious in India (2003) (From <http://www.cbcsite.com/Churchinindia.htm>)

	Dio. Priests	Rel. Priests	Rel. Brothers	Rel. Sisters	Total
Religious Congregations	–	55	16	230	300
Priests and Religious	14,000	13,500	4,300	90,000	121,800

Christian institutions in India have always been recognized for their quality and commitment and have been sought by people irrespective of caste and religion. The Catholic institutions, mainly in urban areas, have at times even erred in depriving the backward and poor catholic children an entry into them by following the policy of academic merit and at times even influence. However, through serious reflection and realization on the need to give priority to Christians with an option for the poor, the policy of admitting all the Catholics has been adhered to at present.² Institutions established and administered by the Catholic Church as Table 2 indicates, in particular, the ones run by religious congregations with their main objectives as faith education, have been trying to carry out this responsibility very meticulously.

However, the outlook of secularization and its consequent impact on education had influenced the thinking of Catholic schools even on faith formation. Several schools went to the extent of doing away with faith formation in schools or the display of Christian symbols, leaving the schools with no Christian essence other than the name of the school. In recent times there has been an awakening on the commitment to faith education on account of the challenges the Church has been facing in her mission of education, not only the ones created through historical reasons but also the ones due to the impact of globalization, on the Indian situation. The next section highlights some of those challenges that demand a response through the strengthening of faith education, in its perspective, content, and approaches in Indian Catholic schools.

The Catholic Church and the Challenges for Faith Education

The Challenge of Growing Communalism and Religious Fundamentalism

India is a multi-religious society and religion forms a part and parcel of the Indian psyche. In the life of the majority of Indians, religion is a great motivating force and is intimately linked with the formation of character and the inculcation

² The more reputed educational institutions run by the Catholic Church have existed for over a century and are provided with educational grants by the respective state governments, hence, the fees charged are nominal. The new institutions and new courses started at recent times are self-financing but as a part of option for the poor every diocese and institution has a mechanism of financing the poor Catholics students. The theme of the General Body Meeting of the CBCI, 2006 was "Catholic Education and Church's Concern for the Marginalized," one important resolution (7), in its Final Statement is, "... We will voluntarily exercise a reservation policy by which a quota in all our schools is kept for the marginalized. Those disadvantaged, socially, physically, or intellectually, will be specially assisted so that they can be integrated into the educational system. We make this preferential option, even if in this process academic results suffer ..."

of ethical values. However, when the Portuguese missionaries brought Christianity to India in the 16th century, it entered the country with the aggressive colonial conquest mentality and methods. While the contribution of the colonial powers had its positive elements, the missionary activity was not people oriented but institution oriented leading to the creation of the Christian community's image as "outsiders." It has also left behind many historical wounds that have festered and vitiated the Indian environment after independence affecting the relationship of the Christian community with the Hindu majority.

Articles 25 and 28, a part of fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution, make it very clear that India is a secular but not an anti-religious or irreligious or unreligious State. In other words, it means that the State is not wedded to any particular religion and cannot favour or give preferential treatment to any group of citizens on the basis of their religion. It endeavours to secure equality of rights and opportunity to people including the right to profess the faith of one's own choice. For almost 50 years after independence, India had a relative peaceful existence of people of all faiths (*sarv dharm sambhav*) with the Constitution that pledged to honour the plurality of cultures and secularism.

However, in the mid-1990s, with the coming to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party with its *Hindutva* (Hindu fundamentalism) ideology, the fundamentalist elements seeped into main stream politics. The motto, "one nation, one culture," was used by the communal outfits to redefine India solely in terms of monocultural, Hindu *rashtra* (nation). This not only caused communal disharmony and violence against Christians, but also militant activities for Hindu revivalism came to a height. In spite of the BJP being ousted from power in the recent general elections (2004) this hate campaign continues through the sustained anti-minority activities of Hindu fundamentalist groups known as the *Sangh Parivar*, who spread hate literature, mobilize people along religious lines to create religious rivalry, brainwashing the unemployed educated youth exploiting local conflicts and differences to cause unrest and communal disharmony.³

The efforts of the Church at faith formation in India need to be viewed from this multi-religious as well as the current anti-Christian context of the country. The Christian message has to be interpreted to counter this dangerous abuse of Indian historical positive outlook on religion. Faith education has to rest in the strong belief the Catholic youth and children have to repose in Jesus as different, unique, and exceptional, as the only one who has given us the decisive proof of His divinity. The very life of Jesus Christ, His teaching, His miracles, His crucifixion, the ascension, His sending the Holy Spirit, and His return at the end

³ The youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the *Bajrang Dal* (a unit of *Sangh Parivar*), has founded already about 4,000 blocks in 500 districts of the country to impart training in martial arts to the Hindu youth under the pretext of providing an answer to the cultural invasion by other religions and the *Vidya Bharathi Trust* of the *Rashtriya Swayam Sangh* another unit of the *Sangh Parivar* has tampered with textbooks in the name of educational reforms in BJP-ruled states of India to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in young generation (*Frontline*, 20 November 1998).

of time authenticated because of His Resurrection has to find expression in the process of faith formation. Our Catholic children have not only to believe in this reality but also live their entire life on the bedrock of this conviction. In addition, in our multi-religious society, the lay and religious educators have the obligation to use education to the faith as a means of carrying out the educational and pastoral service in order that a synthesis of faith and culture is attained.

The Challenge of Poverty Amid Plenty, Injustice, and Oppression in the Indian Society

India today rides high with its economic achievements becoming the tenth most industrialized country in the world within three decades after independence. The country that was deindustrialized and underdeveloped during the colonial period has succeeded in heavy investment-based infrastructure by the public sector and the profit-making consumer industries investment by the private sector. Development has been further enhanced after globalization whereby the GNP has grown and foreign investment has been flowing into the country bringing the percentage of middle class population from 10% in 1947 to 25–30% in the 1990s. Yet, on the other hand, poverty has grown during the years and is getting intensified after liberalization. Modernization introduced in an unequal society divided on the basis of caste and gender together with western heavy technology-based capital-intensive model of development has accentuated inequalities.⁵

However, even after 50 years of independence from colonial rule India cannot boast of a nation that is truly liberated. We find ourselves in a country that can be named one country but two worlds. It is a country where two realities exist simultaneously, a country where a small minority can boast of the best a modern world can offer, a land of plenty and a virtual paradise on earth. Alongside we witness people consigned to a living hell, in which starvation deaths occur in a large number of places, where drinking water is not available to many villages. It is the situation of the biblical wounded man on the road, robbed, exploited, and the plundered calling for social justice and not for welfare. Any attempt at becoming a Church of the poor should reflect her concern and pastoral care for them as human persons replete with social, moral, and spiritual resources in order that their human nature created in the image of God is restored and respected. The focus of faith formation needs to imbibe Christ-like qualities of concern for the materially poor (Matt. 11: 2–5) and thus to be the good news to the people.

⁴ As analysed by Fernandes Walter, in his article, India's Socio Economic Situation, pg. 199-227, in 'Puthanangadi, P. (Ed.) (2001). *Yesu Krist Jayanti 2000, Towards a New Society—National Assembly*', India's is a mixed economy and he notes that the UN Human Development Report puts India No. 128 among 174 countries and the Reserve Bank of India data show that while the size of the middle class grew during the last four decades, the gap between the rich and the poor grew.

⁵ Kurien C. T. (1996) in his book, "Global Capitalism and the Indian Economy," elaborates on the close link between the caste and class of those who got the benefits of those who paid the price of national development by pointing out that most middle class and upper class persons belong to the dominant castes and that most Dalits and tribals remained poor, hence modernization in an unequal society of India could further intensify inequalities.

*The Challenge of the Dalit (Oppressed) and Adivasi (Tribal)
Reality of the Church*

India is a country ridden with the contradiction of high caste and low caste persons. Dalits (Scheduled Caste as termed by the Indian Constitution) form 16.7% and Adivasis (original inhabitants, termed as Scheduled Tribes) constitute 8% of the Indian population. In spite of the Constitutional safeguards to the Dalits of reservation both at the educational and job arenas, the social stigma as “untouchables” has not diminished from the mind and attitudes of people. Their religious ostracism by the higher caste Hindus, economic impoverishment, political powerlessness has led to dehumanization. In order to gain what was denied to them in the oppressive structure of caste and to regain their humanity and be respected and treated with dignity, Dalits in great numbers embraced Christianity in the past centuries. The Church did work towards the emancipation of the Dalits by providing education and other opportunities for self-expression. However, the process has been slow and at the same time fraught with numerous problems.⁶

Dalits who converted to Christianity with a hope of liberation from bondedness and for gaining social mobility now feel to some extent let down by the Church which has failed to struggle for their social liberation and what is worse, discrimination has continued within the Church and institutions. The caste system practised within the Church varies from region to region both in degree and severity, yet reveals a negative identity of the Church. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI), at its General Body Meetings (1972, 1992, 1994) has repeatedly taken up the cause of the Dalits as a priority area for definite and practical action plans. The Conference in 1992 even emphatically stated that what the Dalits expect and need is not mere relief and welfare measures through economic and development projects, but empowerment and respect.

On the other hand, Adivasis, divided into two categories, namely, inhabitants of the frontier tribes in the north-eastern states and the non-frontier tribal population distributed mainly in central, northern and western India have their own tribal cultures and religions different from Hinduism. The Chiefs of these powerful tribes were strongly averse to any domination or control imposed upon them by foreigners. However, around the middle of the 19th century, they came under the influence of the British administration and most of them embraced Christianity of different denominations in big numbers.⁷ Adivasis in central India, like Chotanagpur in Jharkhand embraced Christianity village by village in order to stand together and resist the oppressive forces of feudal type rulers of the time.

⁶ The disease of casteism has its roots in the very blood and traditions of Indian people and the Church has taken a long time to treat this disease. Since casteism has existed even in the Church among the clergy and the faithful, the Church set up a Commission to tackle this problem in 1978. Azariah M. (1985) describes this evil in his book, *The Un-Christian Side of the Indian Church: The Plight of the Untouchable Converts*.

⁷ Even though village after village became Christian among the Adivasis and the Scheduled Tribes, the “Christian Dalits,” namely, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, in India are only 19 million, i.e., 9.5% of the 16% Dalit population in India (Source: India web site on Census of India, 2001). The Adivasi Church alone is young but it has been able to produce one Cardinal, four Archbishops and 18 Bishops so far indicating an important contribution of the Adivasi Church in India.

Christianity became the more attractive option to Hinduism with its caste system and Islam with its fundamentalist rituals or even of the tribal religions. By embracing Christianity they acquired a strong sense of their Adivasi identity and selfhood and found themselves a new community that helped them adjust to modern life with its numerous challenges. There is an upward mobility among Adivasis with the facilities provided by the government, as the Scheduled Tribes and opportunities from the Church. Many have got into higher education and jobs and there are several who have become priests and nuns. With the Hindutva forces trying to lure them into the Hindu fold by making them believe that they belong to the Hindu religion and that they are mere vanavasis (forest dwellers) through false propaganda with the dangerous slogan, “one nation, one language and one culture,” the confrontation between the Church and the Hindutva forces has grown sharper in recent years.

The final outcome of this nation represented by two sharply divergent realities pulling themselves further and further apart is causing an alarming situation of the existing deep fragmentation of Indian society calling the Church to respond to this serious challenge. The challenge to the Catholic Church in India is to rid itself of these oppressive structures and create a Church that lives the radical Fatherhood of God and brotherhood among its members. Unless faith education guides the believers to change their heart and attitude to common brotherhood this will only remain a dream.

The Challenges of Globalization and Secularization

Globalization as a phenomenon per se is not a new phenomenon but it has acquired new meaning and connotations due to the rapid strides in science and technology and its consequent impact on Indian Christian life. Indian Christians on the whole are literate, mainly due to the facilities and opportunities provided by Catholic education. Most of them constitute the lower middle class living in semi-urban areas, hence, they prefer jobs in sectors like service and white-collar jobs, government, banking, nursing, and teaching with very few entering business and other entrepreneurship. In rural areas Christians are either small landowners growing crops or fruits or work on land of people with larger holdings. With the advantage of English education in Catholic schools, the advent of globalization has drawn more and more young men and women in cities like, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Madras into the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry in Call Centres or Medical Transcription Outlets. The salary is lucrative for young people with educational qualification, in the Indian situation, e.g., about \$300 per month. The job timings that suit the USA require them to work on the night shift bringing with it irregular eating and sleeping habits, lack of commitment in relationships, imbibing a culture that has negative social impact and stress-related problems.⁸

⁸ *Indian Currents*, 26 September 2004 the article, “Alarm Bells are Ringing,” highlights the impact the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) have on the young Indian: irregular eating and sleeping habits, lack of commitment in relationships, imbibing a culture which has negative social impact, stress-related problems and so on. The article concludes saying, “. . . this is an alarm for the whole country.”

The situation of earning more money has its consequent tendencies for more consumerism. The media creating the “need” for the consumption of the whole variety of goods that flood the markets and propagating that if someone “has to be” one “has to have,” our young Catholic youth have absolutely no problem in spending the whole night at the BPO to earn for the goods, gadgets, and other things which their better-off counterparts possess. The impact on Christian families is also a related issue where the same tremendous urge and push towards consumerism strikes at the very root of what family life should be and is all about. The family that was considered sacred and the children as their wealth, to be brought up as God fearing and other centred, today these very families focus more on possessing rather than giving, inward oriented than service oriented, eventually resulting in weak family ties.⁹ Christian educators are called to confront this challenge of faith education of youth in terms of faith-reflection, faith-animation, and faith-formation to meet the demands of countering the current adverse influences of the modern world. Youth animators need to be aware of the importance of entering into the world of youth—their characteristic traits, psychological make-up, and the impact of the liberalized society on them and vice versa while evolving a specific catechetical pedagogy.

The Challenge of the Three Rites in the Catholic Church

The coexistence of the three Rites is primarily seen as a problem rather than a situation depicting mutual collaboration and enrichment. As in every other problem, invariably personal reasons play a bigger role than situational differences, the causes of conflicts among the Churches in India have less to do with doctrinal orthodoxy than with antagonism between persons and groups. While history tells us that the initial contacts between the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala and the Portuguese were cordial, it did not last long. On the one hand the mindset that the Roman Catholicism practised by the Portuguese was deemed the perfect form of Christianity and on the other hand that practised by St. Thomas Christians was judged to be imperfect, resulted in latinizing and westernizing the Eastern Church in India. Yet, at the same time, it was the Latin Church that became instrumental in drawing the St. Thomas Church into the Roman Catholic establishment.¹⁰ However, the present-day Indian Catholic community is heir to what took place in the colonial period giving rise to many and varied

⁹ Archana Masih, quotes in the interview to Rediff.com on 23 October 2003, the study by Juluri who came to the conclusion that the Channel (V) the foreign Music Channel for Indian youth has nurtured a misconception about youth culture by making consumeristic values appealing to young people at the same time not offensive to parents by couching it with the Indian value system about relationships, family, and identity. Optimal Media Solutions (OMS) study titled, “The Mysterious and Unpredictable Indian Youth—Unique in His Media Consumption Habits” highlights the consumeristic lifestyle among Indian youth of today due to media influence (cf. www.exchange4media.com).

¹⁰ The official web site of the Syro-Malabar Church: www.indianchristianity.org details the historical background on the origin of the Church in India in AD 52 from St. Thomas the Apostle that “Insistent tradition ascribes the introduction of Christianity to India to the Apostle Thomas, one of the original Twelve.” *History of Christianity*, Vol. 1: By Kenneth Scott Latourette, p. 80 and the role of the Latin Church uniting the separated sects as the Syro-Malankara Rite.

Table 3. Dioceses of the three Rites Churches in India (2003) (From <http://www.cbcsite.com/Churchinindia.htm>)

	Catholic dioceses in India		
	Provinces	Dioceses	Population
Latin	18	113	11,712,209
Syro-Malabar	04	24	3,477,628
Syro-Malankara	01	04	359,381
Total	23	141	1,554,921

concerns that occupy the attention of the Rites Churches. The three Churches function under the single banner of the CBCI while at the same time they also have separate conferences of bishops, namely, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (Latin), and the Synods of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Bishops separately (see Table 3).

While each Church has the right to form their own Episcopal bodies according to their own ecclesiastical legislation, the role of the CBCI is to facilitate coordinated study and discussion of questions affecting the Church, and adoption of a common policy and effective action in all matters concerning the common, national, and supra-ritual concerns of the Indian Catholic Church. The issues related to Christian faith in Kerala are bound to create conflict in the minds of learners as each Church pursues its own textbooks for faith education. The gravity of this situation will have to be studied and the impact of this state of affairs certainly deserves a serious consideration. It is more essential that the three Rites Churches respond in communion as true believers in Jesus Christ involving themselves with authentic human problems, speaking with one voice on issues that confront the faithful, than just collaborate in a federative or non-federative structure, in a country where the Christians of all denominations are just about 3%.

The Challenge to Counter the Patriarchal and Institutional Image of the Church

The clerical domination in the Church is not a thing of the past alone but a reality that stares in the face, marginalizing the laity's active participation. Women are painfully aware of the need to struggle for justice, equality, freedom, and human dignity in the Church of Christ.¹¹ Church in India does not mean

¹¹ Both the laity and the Religious Women of India have been highlighting this theme through different Forums: the theme of the 45th National Assembly of the Conference of Religious in India in February 2006 was, "Gender Empowered Church." Mrs. Virginia Saldanha, the Executive Secretary of the Office of Laity, Family and Women of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference emphasized on gender equality in bringing harmony and balance in practising the discipleship of Christ, her Article, "Christian Discipleship: Women's Perspective" and the presentation titled, "Breaking the Silence" of Dr. Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, a writer and activist, to the Bishops of India at their biennial General Body Meeting, are but a few illustrations.

only the leadership of the hierarchy. The Church has to look for an alternative method to change its image of institutional power and become a missionary Church. While the contribution of the Church, mainly in education, health, and service is significant and laudable, the Church in India has presented itself more of an institutional identity than a religious and cultural identity. This has to some extent alienated the Catholic Church on the Indian soil thus failing in her mission of manifesting the real values of the Gospel, in fact, the radicality of the Gospel. The patriarchal image of the Church has to be changed into a person-oriented community of love and sharing. How much the institutional image of the Church tends to blur the prophetic image of the servant church in India is to be viewed with great concern.

An Indian Christian has to be trained for prophetic discipleship, and formed in faith that is truly an experience of the saving God and the saving Jesus, the Son of God. The Church can survive in the modern world only through her prophetic role, deeply immersed in the world God loves and be a sacramental presence that will transform and create communion among people. The witnessing power of the Church has to be fostered by living the true spirit of the Gospel and by translating one's faith by being a community of loving and sharing, and not so much through its doctrinal formulations, thus, building up the Kingdom of God in the pluralistic and multicultural reality of India. In the context of this reality the Church in India cannot function with the institutional mentality, as any faith formation activity has to resonate with Indian religiosity and its spiritual outlook towards life.

The Challenge of Culture, Faith and Inter-religious Dialogue

The Statement of the Sarva Dharma Sammelan (National Inter-faith Assembly) organized by the CBCI Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, on the occasion of the Yesu Krist Jayanthi 2000, reflects on the growing ambivalence in the contemporary Indian situation:

On the one hand we hold on to the unity and integrity of this great nation, on the other hand divisive forces are also at work. On the one hand we uphold the value of religious tolerance and on the other hand fundamentalist trends are rampant in almost all the religious communities" (p.159).

The intertwining culture and religion reality of the Indian Church is yet another specific and related feature that poses a challenge and problem for faith formation. While one finds the intimate relationship between culture and religion everywhere across the globe, it is a different reality in India. Religion in India is intrinsically bound with its life since the reality for India is the ultimate spiritual reality where every reality is seen and lived in the light of God. The contemporary pluralistic context of India also brings with it fresh challenges and difficulties to rediscover the specific nature and mission of catholic schools. It demands of the schools to promote an integration of the two poles, namely, faith and culture on

the one hand and the faith and inter-faith dialogue with people of other faiths on the other, and to ascertain that while the schools are involved in the critical transmission of culture and the openness to other faiths, their Christian faith remains as the fundamental source of inspiration. The schools in India hold the key to resolving this conflict between the ecclesial, inter-religious, and societal perspectives and the inseparable goal of fostering the integration of Christian faith and dialogue with other faiths as well as societal culture.

In addition, an interesting phenomenon among Indians has been the impact of science and technology and their consequent outlook on religion. The impact of science and technology is minimal on the believing masses in particular, rural India but it is very much evident on the thinking elite. They have taken to secularism considering religion as a thing associated with socio-economic and cultural backwardness. Yet, at the same time the Indian mind with its spiritual heritage does not oppose religion but they have pushed religion to one's private life.¹²

Educational institutions not only have to develop approaches and strategies of direct faith formation but they also need to avail of opportunities to remodel their objectives and put in efforts to introduce the kind of faith formation in an informal way through non-formal techniques of education. They may include, performing the daily prayer in the school on the inter-religious prayer pattern, frequent dialogue meetings, joint celebrations of major festivals of the main religions of India, inter-religious live-together programmes during annual camps, and in particular providing a prayer room for personal and group prayer.

The Response to Challenges of Faith Education

The Catechetical Movement in India

The mode of faith formation and catechetical efforts in India reflect the phenomenon seen the world over and historians attribute the systematical catechetical efforts in India to St. Francis Xavier and to the Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century. They were in terms of preparing catechisms for the converts mainly by translating the works of European writers into English and other local languages. The Magisterial Approach was the only way to teach catechism effectively up to the 20th century elsewhere in the world and was found suitable for India as well, whereby catechetical instruction was primarily concerned only with the child's knowledge of religious truth.

¹² The Indian secularism theoretically means the rejection of the paradigm of a Theocratic State, hence, no religion is recognized as state religion; the proclamation of religion is a private or group concern and the individual or group is free to practise faith without any interference from the religious or state authority, and the assertion of the unity of the people of India and the inalienable equality of all the citizens irrespective of religion and caste (Rasheeduddin Khan, "Secularism and Social Transformation in India—III," in *Mainstream*, 6 May 1992). It is not "anti-God" or negation of faith but accommodating the faith of various religious communities.

During the decade that followed, when the emphasis of secular education was shifting from the content to the psychological basis to pedagogy, the catechetical approach too evolved in this direction of the psychological principles. As the Pedagogical Approach gained momentum, centres for the formation of catechism teachers in the pedagogical approach were set up in certain areas of India, mainly in Bombay and Tamilnadu. The Kerigmatic Approach occupied centre stage in the Indian catechetical milieu from the 1930s to the 1960s. It also gained popularity since several Indian bishops and priests were participants in the International Catechetical Study Week in Rome (1960).¹³

As one of the concerns of Vatican II, the catechetical orientation went by the name, the Anthropological Approach as the Conciliar emphasis on the human person. With the stress on the anthropological dimension of catechesis termed as the “Human Approach” the catechetical renewal in India was spurred on by this post-conciliar awareness on the anthropological approach. Each diocese was directed to appoint a diocesan director of Catechetics in order to build the structures for collaboration and the channels for communication.

The CBCI formed in 1944 as the permanent association of the Catholic Bishops of India with its main objective of facilitating the adoption of a common policy concerning the interests of the Church in India took up the challenge of faith education. After Vatican II, the CBCI considered the catechetical and liturgical ministries as the central activities of the Church for renewal in India. With this in view the Commission for Catechetics and Liturgy was instituted in 1966 and action was also initiated to start a National Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NCLC) at Bangalore to organize and animate liturgical and catechetical renewal in India, with Fr. D. S. Amalorpavadass as its Founder-Director (1966–1982). In 1971 the Centre’s area of service and research was broadened and it became known as the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC) in order to promote and coordinate the renewal of Christian life in the Church according to the principles outlined by Vatican Council II. In the post-Vatican era, the NBCLC was able to lead the Church in India in the field of Catechetics with the anthropological emphasis.

The National Catechetical Directory of India (NDCI, 1990), the magisterial document of the CBCI, was the response to the General Catechetical Directory (GDC, 1972), the magisterial document with principles of pastoral theology. The

¹³ The emphasis of secular education was shifting from the content to the psychological basis to pedagogy, the catechetical approach too evolved in the direction of the psychological principles as the Pedagogical Approach. In India this shift took place with the initiative of Fr. Thomas Duffy, the Founder Director of the Catechetical Centre at Tindivanam (1921) of the Archdiocese of Pondicherry in Tamilnadu. The thrust of the Kerigmatic Approach is the publication of “Good News and the Proclamation of Faith” by Josef Jungman (1936) in Germany. The emphasis of this approach was kerigma—the core of the Christian Message and the catechetical content was updated in the light of contemporary biblical and theological research, whereby the Bible was to be viewed in its relationship to God’s saving plan. This approach occupied center stage in the Indian catechetical milieu from the 1930s to the 1960s.

faith formation textbooks titled, *The God-With-Us* series (1967–1973) prepared by the NBCLC for Indian schools had the inspiration from the NDCI and the indigenous outlook keeping in mind the actual experience of catechesis as the product of many interacting factors, like the experience and background of the Catechist, his/her witness value and the world of the catechized—his/her age, religious and human experiences, socio-economic and cultural background, psychological make-up of the learner as well as prolonged and serious research and lengthy consultation with experts in the fields of theology, scripture, liturgy, Catechetics, sociology, indology, child and youth psychology. The pedagogy was process oriented with the “Human Approach in Catechesis” as emanating from life experience to life of faith situated in the context of the Ministry of the Church and was authored by persons trained at various international Catechetical Institutes and at the NBCLC as well as engaged in the religious education of the different age groups of children.

The publication of this series both for school and college students marked a new stage in the history of Catechetics in India. The revision of the God-With-Us series was an important responsibility of the Church as an expression of the catechetical movement, a continuous process. Simultaneous efforts were on at the Regional Catechetical Centres set up after the NBCLC. One of the pioneers was the Tamilnadu Catechetical Centre in Tindivanam, in 1961 that came up with “Avar Valarga” Tamil series of Catechism Textbooks for School Catechesis. The first catechism textbook was published in 1972 using the anthropological approach and the entire series for all the classes was ready by 1980 and in subsequent years they have undergone several revisions based on feedback received from the actual classroom teachers for faith education. Even at the recent national fora and meetings of Directors of Regional Catechetical Centres, the Tamilnadu series have been used as the model for the rest of the country.

The Bishop of Mangalore, Most Rev. Dr. A. P. D’Souza, Archbishop Emeritus of Bangalore, Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Pinto and Bishop Jerald Lobo, Bishop of Shimoga and Chairman of the Catechetical Commission of the Karnataka Catholic Bishops Conference (KCBI), were among those who provided an insight into the nature of faith formation approach in Karnataka. Mangalore had a well-knit programme of faith formation organized by the diocese for all the schools as well as for Sunday schools with annual examination and awards function and other dioceses followed this pattern. A major problem as in the rest of India has been to get suitable and well-trained lay faith educators since the religious sisters and clerics who had taken this responsibility in the past are not able to cater to all the Catholic children. In spite of the training given to lay teachers at Catechetical Centres, the problem has persisted as a serious need to be attended to. As one of the major concerns of the recent Pastoral Plan for the Dioceses of Karnataka (2000), its Commission for Liturgy and Catechetics has taken up the responsibility of preparing new textbooks for faith formation for the entire state. Among other Centres, the Karnataka Regional Catechetical Centre has already started the translation of these textbooks for the Schools in Karnataka.

The Pastoral Centre in Ernakulam, started after Vatican II, had prepared the series of textbooks titled, “Towards the Father,” “Following the Son” and “In the Fullness of the Holy Spirit” for the Schools. All the Catholic schools as well the Sunday schools of the Churches used this set of textbooks in Kerala. However, the last decade of the 20th century changed this scenario in Liturgy, Catechetics as well as the training of priests. The Pontifical Seminary at Alwaye, Kerala, common for the three Rites for training the seminarians for priesthood got divided into two sections on the same campus, separating the training for the Priests of the Latin and Oriental rites. On the faith formation front the Changanacherry Archdiocese of the Syro-Malabar Church has started preparing separate set of books for faith formation. An interview with Msgr. Jose Navez Puthenparambil, Vicar General of the Diocese of Vijayapuram, Kottayam, Kerala, who was formerly the Diocesan Director of Catechetics and the Secretary of the Kerala Bishops Conference, provided certain insights into the challenges of the Church in Kerala. He pointed out:

The differences in approach has in-built richness of resources, both material and human capacity. However, differences caused by the history of the Church seem to be taking an upper hand due to the failure of complementing the differences. The content of faith formation textbooks differ mainly pertaining to the history of the Church and liturgical practices.

Educational institutions are the main place of faith education and one of the biggest challenges comes in the wake of children of a particular rite studying in schools managed by the other rite. However, Msgr. Puthenparambil clarified:

The children of the Syro Malabar Church are provided faith formation only at Sunday School and not in the schools. The two hour duration every week is utilized to not only to give general faith formation but also to appreciate the differences in the practices in the three Churches under the Holy See.

He pointed out that this would help them to integrate themselves better with Catholics of different rites.

Research Basis for Future Concerns of Faith Education in India

Research has not been an integral part of the process of faith education programme in different parts of India. However, in recent years, among the efforts of diocesan centres for Catechetics towards future orientations in faith formation, the contribution of the Salesians of Don Bosco too has been significant. Publications of books, journals, and material on faith education as well as training programmes in varied aspects, e.g., techniques, media education, research and development and the like, related to strengthening of faith education has provided significant pointers to meeting the challenges of faith education in India. In view of the centenary celebrations of Salesian presence in India (1906–2006), their Mumbai province took up an exploratory research to find out what Catholic youth in India think and know about their religion and how they feel they live it out in practice.

The investigation involved 5,000 youth between the ages of 12 and 25 years from all over India and the questionnaire included the aspects on the self-perception of youth as Catholics and members of the Church; their beliefs, viz., general religious concepts as well as the specifically Catholic beliefs; their practice of religion on the vertical plane with regard to God, Jesus, Mary, prayer, liturgy, and sacraments; and their practice of religion on the horizontal plane, with regard to others as well as some aspects of their value system.

The findings of the study by Fr. Cyril De Souza and team, “The Response of Catholic Youth to Religion” has highlighted that the youth in India are extremely traditional, in terms of their beliefs and religious practices in that they “know” their Catholic doctrine. However, it was noted that this belief does not translate itself in the depth of their personal faith as they have not personally and critically “appropriated” their Catholic religion and what they believe also does not impinge upon their everyday decision-making. The findings which have been published by the Salesian Fathers of Don Bosco, in the book titled, *Lord, I Believe, Increase My Faith*, provide the Catholic Church in India ample indicators towards facing the challenge of converting its “believing and belonging youth” into “faith-full youth.”

An educational-pastoral research on inculturation in the Tamil/Indian cultural context, by Fr. Francis Vincent Antony, SDB (1999), observed that Avar Valarga, the religious instruction series of Tamilnadu showed that it was well oriented towards the objectives of integration between faith and inculturation in order to be responsible members of the Indian Church and society. The nurturance of this identity did not seem to have taken place as gauged through the survey on the attitude of students. Referring to the nature of faith formation the researcher advocates religious instruction that leads the learner to a mature attitude of faith. A mature faith needs to be inculturizing in reference to the plurality of cultures, dialogic in reference to plurality of religions, and liberative in reference to oppressive socio-economic situation of India.

Conclusion

A new era of faith formation in India needs to emerge whereby religion is not a cramming of beliefs and truth to one’s memory. A new science of faith formation has to be seen whereby religion becomes the embodiment of an experience and spirit-filled expression. In his article in *Catechetics India* (February, 2005), “Less Religion, More experience,” Dr. Peter Lourdes SDB, describes “religion” as having two levels: the level of “religious experience” and the level of “religious expression.” Religious experience to be real, it should lead the learner to direct encounter with God, developing in him/her a sense of awe, of sacredness and imperceptibly the divine becomes central to one’s existence. Promoting this religious experience can have far-reaching implications to one’s religious expression in a multicultural–religious, pluralistic society like India. It necessitates the change in the style of Church personnel, of religious and lay catechists from

the institutional to personal approach. A study conducted under the guidance of the same author discovered that 33% young secondary school boys and girls had an intense awareness of some presence. It indicates that religious experience is not as far out of the reach of people as one may think.

Formation of communities of faith among the students who are rooted in one's indigenous traditions and yet open to other faith traditions is a specific need. Their faith is strengthened in such a way that they affirm their identity as Christic experience and face their life situations with a Christian outlook. The Christian communities of Asia still need an Asian face in order that the misgiving that Christianity is a foreign religion, owing allegiance to a foreign power is erased from the hearts and minds of our Indian brethren. It is also necessary to witness to the relevance of Christian God experience for India, a country of great religiosity and a country where more than half the population suffers deprivation, that God loves all and that all are His children. As expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, "The Church's first purpose then is to be the sacrament of the inner union of the human person with God, and because people's communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the human race" (No. 24).

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN INDIA: CHALLENGE, RESPONSE, AND RESEARCH

Fr. Nicholas Tete, SJ

Introduction

The history of Catholic education in India is as old as the arrival of Christian missionaries. With the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in Goa in 1542, and starting of St. Paul College in Goa in 1548 the foundation of Catholic education was laid; yet a systematic and official pronouncement of goal and mission was awaited till a few years ago. It was a common understanding that in the past, the aim of the Catholic education was to educate society, to evangelize people and instill in them the Gospel values. In the recent past, the aim was to assist national integration and development, by promoting cultures and values. In contemporary times, there is a danger that Catholic schooling may become “commercialized.”

A national consultation on Catholic education which was held at Bangalore in April–May 1999; again in January 2002 at New Delhi and recently in February 2006 at Bangalore by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI) Commission for Education and Culture, offered broad guidelines for Catholic education in India.

We, 160 Bishops of India, gathered at St. Peter’s Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore, for the 27th general Assembly of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI), from 8th to 15th February 2006, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, spent three days of our meeting in prayer, reflection and discussion on the theme: ‘Catholic Education and the Church’s Concern for the Marginalized.’¹

The CBCI took a stand that the Catholic education would ensure *the holistic and integral development of all our students*² and focus especially on empowering

¹ De Souza, Donald H. R. (ed) *Catholic India: CBCI General Body Meeting, Feb.8–15, 2006, Bangalore*. CBCI, New Delhi, p. 105.

² CBCI, The Draft policy, p. 3.

the underprivileged sections of society. By educating the underprivileged sections of society, the CBCI emphasizes *Dalit*³ and *Scheduled* communities to improve their living conditions as well as to build a stronger nation and a world with social equality. "Education is the key to progress ... Education is a mission and not merely an occupation," said Cardinal Telesphore Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi, in his Presidential Address to the 27th CBCI General Body Meeting in Bangalore, India. "Our schools are open to all, especially to the poor and the marginalized, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. Imparting Catholic Education is indeed our common vocation and mission."⁴ His Excellency Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, Apostolic Nuncio to India, urged the bishops to offer "its [Church's] educational service to the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith."⁵ Further he pointed: "The purpose of Catholic education is the development of man from within, freeing him from that conditioning which would prevent him from becoming a fully integrated human being."⁶ This paper is an attempt to highlight the policy decision made by the CBCI which indeed is a very bold decision and the broad guidelines for Catholic education in India. This poses lots of challenges for the future courses of action that we are going to take.

Indian Situation

The Indian situation is so complex that it makes the literacy mission of the government as well as the task of the other minority institutions very difficult. My attempt is to highlight some of these complex situations. Unlike most other countries in the world, primary education in India is not compulsory, and child labour is not illegal. The Indian Constitution gives provision that "the state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."⁷ About child labour the Indian Constitution says, "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment."⁸ In practice these constitutional provisions are widely ignored. According to recent survey made by the Government of India, about 350 million people in India are illiterate and are denied access to education. Of the world's illiterates, 50% are in India. According to the 2001 census, literacy rates in India are 65.38%, with 75.85% male literacy and 54.16% female literacy.⁹ Of children between 6 and 14, 50% are not in schools. Indian law prohibits the employment of children

³ *Dalit* means oppressed class who belonged to Scheduled Castes.

⁴ *Catholic india*, p. 26

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁷ Constitution of India, Article 45.

⁸ *Ibid.* Article 24.

⁹ Census of India, 2001.

in factories, but not in cottage industries, family households, restaurants, or in agriculture. "They stay at home to care for cattle, tend younger children, collect firewood, work in the fields . . . in cottage industries, tea stalls, or restaurants or as household workers in middle-class homes."¹⁰ Child labour in India numbers from 13.6 million to 44 million or more.

The strong hierarchical caste system is also one of the reasons for this situation. The people of lower castes are expected to serve the people belonging to the upper castes. The children of the poor and low castes are supposed to work rather than attend schools. The education of the poor, it is believed, would lead to the problem of unemployment. The white-collar jobs are meant for the middle class rather than the poor people. These are sets of myths and beliefs that are predominant in India.

Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major national concerns of the Government of India since independence but results are not very encouraging.

The state bureaucracy unintentionally reinforces the hierarchical caste system and related notions in the implementation of the education policy in India. As a result there is much apathy and indifference among government officials, non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, trade unionists as well as from parents of children. The Indian Government has launched various programmes for the eradication of illiteracy since independence such as Community Development Programme (1952), The Kothari Commission (1964–1966), Central Advisory Board of Education, National Policy on Education (1986), National Literacy Mission (1988) but the results have not been very effective. Of its total budget, India spends 20% on defence and 12% on education.

In India religious organizations are the ones who have played a big role in the diffusion of mass education. The Catholic Church has been central to the provision of educational opportunities in India.

Catholic Church Education Policy in Recent Times

The CBCI has directed that a uniform policy be formulated and promulgated and that these policies be translated into action in the dioceses of India and in the roles of management, principals, teachers, students, parish priest and community, parents and public. This policy is summarized below.

Clarity of Vision

The Church in India knows the importance of education in her mission.

Education is, in a very special way, the concern of the Church, not only because the Church must be recognized as a human society capable of imparting education, but especially it has the duty of proclaiming the way of salvation to all men, of revealing the life of Christ to those who believe,

¹⁰ Weiner Myron, *The Child and the state in India*, p. 3.

and of assisting them with unremitting care so that they may be able to attain the fullness of that life.¹¹

The ministry of education is a continuation of Jesus' mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God (Lk 4: 18–19). In the age of globalization and information technology the gap between rich and poor has widened. Catholic educational institutions should promote personal, spiritual, and social development of students and especially empowerment of the marginalized. Thus the mission of Catholic education is:

to form people in basic human values; to develop and enhance their spiritual potential; to pay special attention to the formation of the Catholic students; to build a new India, where learning and empowerment for all are progressively realized; to remove the gross inequalities; to help people to live with dignity; to enable everyone to enjoy the fundamental constitutional guarantees of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity and to train to be socially conscious ...¹²

Personal and Spiritual Development of Catholic Students

Catholic education is committed to nurture a personal encounter with God. In a climate of mutual trust, it must help to develop and cultivate the talents of the students. In the education of students, the parent's role is primary; thereafter the Church and lastly the school is an agent for their faith formation. As a Catholic school, there is a special responsibility for the growth of Christian students, especially the socio-economically and intellectually deprived.

Education and Care for Catholics and Commitment to the Marginalized

All Catholic students are to be admitted to our schools. The Church stands committed to integrate all children of God into one great human family, without any distinction of class, caste, colour, creed, or culture. However, we exercise certain preferences for children of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes and take the responsibility to ensure that they receive an education of quality to occupy their due place in society. Henceforth, Catholic education institutions will take responsibility for the education of the poor and marginalized,¹³ as an essential part of building an inclusive and just society, while our institutions will continue to admit different members of society. Besides, other academic facilities and financial support are to be made available for Catholic students for vocational, technical, or professional courses.

¹¹ Gravissimum Educationis (On the Importance of Education), Vatican II.

¹² CBCI, Draft of National Catholic Education Policy, 2006.

¹³ "marginalised" term is used for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, economically weaker sections of society, the migrants and displaced, the girl child, slow learners.

Quality Education

“Quality” in a Catholic sense, does not mean only academic excellence, it also means the total formation of the student—the physical, spiritual, emotional, moral, and social development. This type of quality education has been the hallmark of Catholic education institutions. It is unfortunate that at present in our educational institutions mostly the urban middle class and upper class students get admission and the marginalized are left out. Making quality education available to the marginalized will be our future mission.

Social Sensitization in Educational Institutions for Future Societal Transformation

Catholic education seeks to promote the spirit and practice of cooperation, collaboration, team work, in the building of a new India and a new ethos through socialization and awareness programmes. The aim is to develop a strong sense of equity, equality, and justice so that in future students may be able to contribute to the national regeneration of the country. The impact of globalization has both positive and negative effects. The negative aspects of globalization which brings disparities, injustices, and marginalization must be fought courageously. Catholic education must teach the students “the art of right living; to discover the deeper meaning of life; to learn to interact positively with others; to love creation; to learn to think freely and critically; find fulfillment in work; to plan their future.”¹⁴ Our contact with alumni associations will help in bringing about transformation.

Values-based Institution

Education is essentially a transformative process, this takes place only in a suitable institutional climate where there is mutual trust. Collaboration, cooperation, openness, and transparency should characterize a Catholic institution.

Management Policies, Ethics, and Norms

There should be partnership between the Bishop and Religious Congregations to provide quality education. Proper recruitment of staff is needed; standard salaries to the teachers must be paid; fee structure must be moderate and reasonable; scholarships to the economically needy students must be provided; institution facilities must be shared with the community; gender sensitivity, equity, and equality should be ensured; education must be given for society, human values, and spiritual maturity; finally a code of conduct, on-going self-development programme and an evaluation instrument should regulate the institutions.

The draft of the National Catholic Education Policy (NCEP) is definitely a clear guideline, which greatly needed; it is *a paradigm shift* in order to make Catholic education in India more effective and focused. Against this NCEP

¹⁴ CBCI, National Catholic Education Policy (draft), 2006.

background as well as keeping in mind the Indian situation I would like to dwell on some of the challenges Catholic education is facing today in India.

Contemporary Challenges for Catholic Education

Politicization of Education and Poor Infrastructure in India

The fate of education in India largely rests on the ruling parties. Priorities and policies are constantly changing according to the ideologies of the government in power. A large number of Catholic educational institutions are government aided and dependent on government policy. There is a shortage of teachers in schools. Those who are actively teaching are also busy in activities other than academic work like election duties, census taking, taking tuitions. Many teachers are irregularly paid or poorly paid. As a result the academic disciplines and standards have fallen. The infrastructure is in poor condition, other facilities, such as the condition of libraries, laboratories, desks and benches, drinking water, toilet facilities add to the list of woes of Indian schools.

Commercialization of Education

It has been observed that education is being commercialized in India. Catholic education is no exception to it. There are many English medium schools mushrooming everywhere. Education has become a big business. Coaching centres, spoken English centres, computer training centres have become “teaching shops.” Charging of capitation fees is increasing in professional institutions. Although the government is trying to regulate all the excess fees under different heads, yet it is a matter of concern for all us. Big industrial houses and Non Resident Indians (NRI) also have become involved in these commercial developments. Non-Christian commercial enterprises are now using the most popular Christian saints’ names for their school. In other words, the market is appropriating the symbols of Christian education.

Cut-throat Competition

The situation in India has become so competitive for admission to the best schools that there is little chance for the common people and average students. Admission to premier institutions is very difficult. Even for our Catholic students getting admission in Catholic institutions is a demanding experience.

Defective Education System

The present education system in India is, some critics have claimed, irrelevant, unjust, elitist, bureaucratic, and privatized. The curriculum, teaching-learning methodology, examination system, evaluation system is defective. It favours, they claim, rote-memory. Education in India has been “result-oriented” and not “life-orientated.”

Response of the Catholic Church to These Challenges

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* states that *the Church has always recognized that education is an essential dimension of her mission* (no. 96). Catholic education must be motivated by a sense of mission. With the changing times we need to redefine and reformulate our mission and vision, which the CBCI has undertaken by formulating an education policy so that we can reorient ourselves for future mission and the eradication of illiteracy in India. At present the impact of globalization, gross commercialization, injustices, inequalities, violence, religious communalism, consumerism, and dehumanizing corruption are taking firm root. The present science and technology developments have made the poor and the unskilled masses even more marginalized. There is one dominant culture, profit culture, which results in the degeneration of human values, selfish individualism, materialism and hedonism, violent conflicts and terrorism.

Catholic education must produce “men and women for others” or we may end up producing learned, egoistic and self-centred educated oppressors among the poor and marginalized. Education of the marginalized is meant to bring about a social transformation, an education that empowers them and leads them to upward mobility.

Responding to the Consequences of Globalization

On the one hand, globalization has compressed the world to a “global village” through the means of transportation and communication technologies and on the other hand, through the process of privatization and “liberalization,” it is creating economic exploitation and political subordination of the poor countries, leading to greater misery and poverty. It is generating unending greed for profit and power, exploitation of natural resources, and polluting the environment. These developments are affecting the education system to great extent. The Catholic Church is attempting to resist these developments.

Religious fundamentalism is being promoted by Hindu fundamentalists. They have one agenda—to make India a Hindu state. They propose to rewrite history books, which glorify the Hindu history and denigrate the minority Christian contribution to Indian civilization. In an effort to promote Brahmanism in the curriculum they have introduced conversational Sanskrit, astrology, religious rituals, and Vedic mathematics. Young minds are being poisoned by the fundamentalists and as a result young people are totally confused. People belonging to underprivileged social groups the Dalits (oppressed class), the Scheduled Tribes (weaker sections) and the Backward Classes (socially marginalized group) are being “Hinduised.” To counter these trends the Catholic educational institutions are promoting national integration, the respecting of religio-cultural diversity, and the coexistence of different religions and cultures.

Concerns of the Marginalized (The Dalits, The Scheduled Tribes, The Scheduled Castes and Women)

Social and economic equalities and opportunities are denied to the Dalits in various ways. They are considered inferior human beings. They cannot drink water from the well where higher castes draw water. The Dalits, having been discriminated against for centuries are used and abused, degraded, and exploited. The Catholic Church teaches that they must be recognized as human beings. They must be incorporated in civic, legal, and religious life. They need an education, formal and informal for their growth. They need to be formed to take their rightful place in social, cultural, and political life.

The Dalit women are subjected to inhuman treatments and treated as commodities. Caste discriminations are unfortunately still present within the Church and in the schools. This is an issue which must be addressed.

The Tribal lands have been forcefully taken in the name of “modern” developments. Their indigenous religions, cultures, and languages are not given proper respect and representation. They are uprooted from their land and traditional ways of living.

The Tribals are socially and culturally exploited. Non-acceptance of their language, religious customs, and cultures makes them feel alienated and segregated. Catholic education is trying to help the Tribals to counter the impact of globalization and to reaffirm their own tribal identity. To counteract exploitation of Tribals, cooperatives and self-help groups are being organized. Education should help them to be part of a great nation. Their knowledge of herbal medicine and indigenous art must be preserved and recognized in the schools.

Women in general belong to an oppressed group. Female foeticide and infanticide is alarming in India. Domestic violence, sexual exploitation at work places, female illiteracy are very common. Rural women are at the mercy of their men counterpart. They suffer as a result from inferiority complexes. Catholic education will attempt to empower women to break through structural injustice. They should be looked upon as partners and collaborators. Co-education could be a means of providing equal opportunities and the use of inclusive attitudes and language must be instilled.

Catholic education in the rural and tribal areas has been serving the poor to a large extent, while our urban elite schools are serving the rich. The new Catholic education policy will help to set new priorities based upon Jesus’ humanizing and liberating mission. This was for all, nevertheless, his care and concern for the poor and the outcast: the sick, lepers, tax collectors, Samaritans, the outcasts of society was obvious. In our Indian context, the Catholic education option will be to the Dalits, Tribals, women, and economically poor children. Without this basic commitment our education ministry cannot be called Catholic education. As Vatican II exhorts Catholic Schools should become “increasingly effective, especially in caring for the poor, for those who are without the help and affection of family, and those who do not have the Faith” (Gravissimum Educationis 9).

Bishop Charles, SJ of Hazaribagh Diocese, who is also the President of Education and Culture (CBCI) responded to the following questions; during a research interview:

Q: “Do you think that Catholic education in India lacked a unified policy until recently?” Some of the dioceses and religious groups have drawn up their own education policy based on their founder’s charism. The present policy is a reaffirmation of earlier policies and deliberations.

Q: What in your view, are the distinct characteristics of Catholic education? “We try to instill gospel values, co-operation, equality, equity, brotherhood, social transformation, empowerment of the marginalized and dignity of women. The all-round formation of the human person is emphasized.”

Q: Which are the main target groups the Church has served in the past and is serving in the present? “We started well to educate the poor and the marginalized. But gradually we drifted away from the poor to the rich. Our priorities should be for the marginalized. The Church in India extends its education mission to the people living in remote coastal areas, street children, slum dwellers, the Dalits and Tribals, physically and mentally challenged people, plantation workers, unorganized labourers, hill tribes, and people who are economically backward. We have study centres like National Open Schools, Community Colleges and Vocational Training.”

Environment

There is unrestricted exploitation and destruction of environment in India. There are enormous chemical wastes from industries, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The earth, water, and air are terribly polluted. The environment is badly affected and the earth has become a dangerous place to live in. Education for ecological promotion and preservation is to bring about a change in attitudes and mindsets towards the earth and environment. Catholic educators realize that we must save the earth.

The Catholic education mission will be to motivate our students with a prophetic fire for establishing the justice and peace of God’s reign in society. The challenge of Catholic education has to be first prophetic, and to make our institutions prophetic as well as signs and witnesses to the kingdom in our world today.

Catholic education will also focus on combating the fast dehumanizing culture of individualism, materialistic consumerism, capitalism, cut-throat competition, politics of communalism, corruption, gender discrimination, casteism, and all types of violence. It will work less for the privileged few and more for the marginalized masses. Jesus never excluded anyone from his love and service. Catholic endeavour will be to the service of all humanity and all creation. Our campuses will promote inter-religious dialogue and harmony and appreciate religious and cultural pluralism. Today’s education system emphasizes the development of mind through academic study. What Catholic education will

offer is a holistic education both formal and non-formal so that it reforms prejudiced minds and heals wounded hearts. Our students must think critically and become self-learners.

Catholic education will inculcate national pride and a sense of duty in the young minds. Our students should be motivated to care for the poor, needy, socially and economically weak people and learn to respect and recognize the uniqueness of all religion. We can enable our students to grow in democratic orientations, approaching all our social problems rationally. Admission policies for Catholic schools in the future must be fair and just and providing equal opportunity for all.

Fr. Erentius, SJ, a Principal of St. John's High School Ranchi, says "A Christian, to be a good Christian must be educated. The better they are educated, the better our converts will be." St. John's is the first Catholic school of the Ranchi Mission. It was started in 1887. He elaborates further, "our target group remains the same—namely, the Christians and Tribals, along with them the Dalits and the marginalized. This year we have admitted 164 students belonging to this group and the fee we charge is just Rs.7.50 per student per month." Dr. Sr. Grace, who is a principal of Hindi medium school says our priorities have been to educate the poor and the marginalized. "This year out of 267 students admitted, 137 belong to the marginalized section of the society. They are weak in studies, but we offer remedial classed for them." This is not the same everywhere in India. There is a need to develop a common plan of action at national, regional, and local levels. Radical statements for the marginalized are not enough. It must come from convictions and a change of heart and a change of mindset. In the Universal Church level the themes that have been developed constantly by various Popes and the Church's teachings on nature of Catholic education, the value of Catholic schools, the importance of Catholic teachers and educators are very clear. In India some uniform education policy and practice is now required.

Research in Catholic Education: Current Achievement and Future Needs

The CBCI especially the Commission for Education and Culture, has taken the initiative to make an All India Survey of Catholic Educational Institutions in India between 2003–2005. The survey covers only institutions run by dioceses and religious congregations. It does not cover educational institutions run by laity or individuals or trusts. The Commission for Education and Culture is closely working with Catholic Religious of India (CRI) and the Catholic Council of India (CCI) and other religious groups like Don Bosco Education Society (DBES) and Jesuit Educational Association (JEA), Xavier Board of Higher Education, is making a sustained effort to study scientifically the above concerned issues raised in the field of Catholic education in India.

Tables 1 and 2 indicate some of the results.

Table 1. Catholic educational institutions in India (From CBCI, Catholic Directory of India 2006)

Particulars	No. of institution	%	Boys	%	Girls	%
Rural	15,820	56	1,496,450	51.6	1,552,469	44.8
Urban*	11,214	40.6	1,405,613	48.4	1,909,297	55.2

* a population above 100,000 people.

Table 2. Growth in Catholic education institutions (From Rashtradeepika, *Indian Christian Directory*, 2000, pp. 22–23)

Area	Presence	Area	Presence
Colleges	590	Higher Secondary Schools	1,062
High Schools	3,339	Upper Primary Schools	3,123
Lower Primary Schools	6,055	Nursery Schools	4,170
Training Schools	840	Technical Schools	1,028
Professional Institutions	187	Orphanages	1,909
Hostels	2,922	Hospitals	2,749
Publications	355		

Conclusion

Catholic education needs a complete paradigm shift taking seriously the idea of education as mission. We have to work against the long-established belief system that people in India are not meant to be equal. The Catholic identity of the school has to be maintained by admitting Catholic children, as well as other children. Values education will be taught to all students and a congenial Christian atmosphere and radical commitment to the poor will be ensured. There must be both a political will as well as a religious will to carry out this mission. Education for the marginalized is meant to bring about social transformation, liberation, and empowerment. The growth of commercialization of education has to be checked. The Catholic system should build policy for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Lastly, we must avoid all rhetoric, it is time to translate all our policies into action. A new Vatican II-inspired Catholic Educational mission is in the process of developing in India.

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SCHOOLING AND CATECHESIS IN THE HOLY LAND*: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Fr. Jamal Khader, Sr. Virginie Habib, and Sally Kaissien

In this chapter, an analytical critical description will be made for our social context, in order to understand better the various factors that influence the Catholic education schooling system in our society and the challenges that emerge from such a pluralistic situation.

Social and Religious Context of the Holy Land

Catholic Churches in the Middle East and especially in the Holy Land live in a society characterized by its religious pluralism; different churches and different religions coexist in the same land.

Catholic Churches in the Middle East in general and in the Holy Land in particular live in a society of religious pluralism: different churches and different religions. In our Christian East, many religious and racial conflicts originated in the past that created numerous divisions and churches divided in terms of race, religion, and language. Unfortunately, these divisions still exist.

Moreover, the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have originated in the East. Each religion in the area has a great history and distinguished worshipping places, related to its origin and its development throughout ages. Today, the followers of these religions live mainly in harmony. However, sometimes many conflicts arise. In the past, this area has been through great conflicts in the name of the religions as a result of the regional and world politics.

The location of this area is very sensitive. Geographically and historically speaking it is considered the link between three continents. Also, a sea and land passage for traders, invaders, and pilgrims.

* Holy Land is understood here to be Israel/Palestine.

In terms of religion, it is considered the mother of three monotheistic religions. In terms of culture, it is considered a linkage between civilizations that helped its inhabitants throughout history to adopt an especial ecumenical dimension and a wide culture.

Religious Pluralism and Its Challenges

Our society is characterized by great diversity and pluralism on different levels, including the level of religious pluralism. Religious sentiment is profoundly rooted in our oriental society, and it plays an important, one might even say essential, role in social relations. Religious pluralism leads to certain attitudes and behaviours; some are negative and some are positive. The positive attitudes derive from authentic religious and social values which characterize our society, such as, respect for the other, whether being the guest, the neighbour, or the stranger. Phenomena associated with these positive attitudes are: hospitality, generosity, protection, and compassion. The negative attitudes are conditioned by diverse conscious or unconscious factors. These factors should be analysed in order to defuse their destructive mechanisms and reactions. These factors, which have left their negative marks on the psyche, are: historical factors such as wars and unrest; psychological factors such as prejudices, labelling, projections, generalizations, fanaticism, and denominational intolerance; social factors such as inherited ideas which transmit images of the religious “other”; educational factors such as negative ideas concerning the religious “other”; and finally, religious factors such as differences in religious belief and practice. These factors lead to negative attitudes and hostility which contradict relational principles and common sense, making relationship with the religious “other” fraught with tension and torment. Therefore, our churches are invited to reflect realistically and creatively, on religious pluralism and its repercussions from the vantage point on their evangelical faith identity. They must attempt to formulate principles for a coexistence which is “more positive and fruitfully interactive.”

(1) Christian Relationships with Muslims

Our churches exist in a Christian-Muslim Arab society. Some may equate Islam and Arabism. However, the Arab Christian presence eliminates this misunderstanding showing that our country is dedicated for its entire people. All the people are in charge of building their country together side by side, whether Muslims or Christians. Christian Arabs in the East are part of the identity of Muslims, as well as Muslims are part of the identity of Christians.

As Christians, we carry with Muslims our tradition, either its time of glory and civilization or its time of internal and external conflicts and wars. Moreover, we lived together in periods of external oppression and occupation that some are still experiencing in most of our countries.

Nowadays, because of the geographical and political location of the Arab world, because of its natural resource richness and the multicultural feature and religious pluralism, Arabs whether Muslims or Christians together face pressure from inside and outside in terms of politics, economics, and ethics. In terms of politics, some of our countries are still under foreign occupation. In terms of ethics, the phenomenon

of globalization despite its positive side, it is working against our society's religious and traditional values. As well as this "external invader," we have to remember also the wave of internal fanaticism in our countries which threatens, in the name of religion, our society, and the whole world in a blind wave of terrorism.

(2) Christian Relationship with Jews

Christians of the Holy Land live also with Jews. The local church began a dialogue with the Jews based on the directives that resulted from the document—*Nostra Aetate*—and according to the teaching of the Church. This dialogue is centred on the living reality in the Holy Land, as the believers face it, whether Christians, Moslems, or Jews, where God as the progression of history, in his mysterious plan wanted all the believers to live side by side.

The fate of human beings in this land today represents our main topic of dialogue with Jews, within the context of political conflict in the Middle East. The conflict is political in its nature, but it concerns human beings, who suffer most and whose dignity is violated constantly, as a human being and as a believer, Christian, Moslem, and Jew.

The goal of dialogue is to create a society where peace and security prevail for all, and where each recognizes the other and respects him/her. Our true and authentic faith in God requires a dialogue in favour of the suffering men and women, in this part of the world.

Changes in Society and Their Repercussions

Our society is passing through manifold changes reflected in many aspects of life and in different social sectors.

We are witnessing rapid and profound changes in our society resulting from various factors. Among these factors, communications and media and their influence on today's generation, modern modes of transport, transmission of culture, changes in the economic structure and work conditions, sharp and decisive political transformations and conflicts, modernity, multiple parties and ideologies, and progress of both theoretical and applied sciences. Among these changes, are for example, the gradual shifting from village culture to city culture, the mixing and interaction of various social groups and different Churches, the gradual transformation of the hierarchy of values in ordinary life, the tendency towards popular participation in decision-making, the changes in the fibre of traditional social relations within the family.

All these changes have profound repercussions on the traditional structure of our society and have caused confusion, imbalance, and loss of equilibrium on all levels. They have caused tensions and a development crisis which swings between search for its identity and authenticity in the shadow of many difficulties, both internal and external. The influence of these changes manifests itself in the various institutions and social sectors.

(1) Challenges for the Family

The Church is aware of the situation of families, characterized by its cultural values and virtues; in general, the families are still traditional and united, a point of reference for its members. The family in the Middle East is still attached

to traditional religious and moral values. But families face new challenges and difficulties; some are economic in nature, other are moral, caused by new technologies and mass media in a globalized world; other difficulties come from ignorance; families face new challenges for which they are not prepared. All these new challenges and difficulties affect the family and threaten its traditional role.

(2) The Emigration of the Youth

The problem of emigration is well known in our countries, affecting mainly young people. They emigrate searching for better education, or job opportunities, more freedom or just a better life. They have lost hope in finding a better future in their own land, and the political situation does not allow them to develop their own lives.

The emigration of young people is a big loss for the Catholic Church and our country in general; they should be the main element in building the country and developing it. The loss of young people weakens the whole society.

Challenges for Catholic Schools

Our Catholic schools have a venerable history. The Custody of the Holy Land (the Franciscans) were the first in this field, their schools going back to the 16th century. When our Catholic schools were formed, the school was among the first institution which received specific and privileged attention. Most often, the school was built at the same time as the church alongside it. These schools were parochial; they were belonging to the parishes and the diocese directed them. Nevertheless, the various men and women religious congregations arrived rapidly and they opened their own schools.

Description of Catholic Schools

Table 1 gives an idea of the distribution of students and teachers. When we know the small number of Christians in Palestine, we will realize the importance of these schools as a source of excellent education in Palestine. These schools are “Christian” schools. They are opened for everyone, and their mission of providing quality education is the church’s priority in Palestine.

From the previous table, one can notice the following facts:

1. Schools 1–12 are Catholic schools.
2. There are different reasons for the different percentages of Christians and Moslems at these schools:
 - Some schools are parochial schools, where Christians have priority to get involved, such as the schools of the Latin Patriarchate.
 - In some areas, Christians are a small minority, for instance in Gaza and Jericho.
 - Some schools are more “private” schools than “Christian” schools.
 - Some schools are for children with special needs (nos. 18 and 19).

Table 1. Schools of the Holy Land

	School Category	No.	Teachers	Associated staff	Christians	5%	Moslems	5%	Total
1	Latin Patriarchate	112	226	55	1,965	52	1,818	48	3,781
2	Greek Catholics	33	77	31	906	75	302	25	1,208
3	Custody of the Holy Land	5	193	45	2,054	64.5	1,082	34.5	3,136
4	Franciscan Sisters	1	21	4	12	2	649	98	661
5	Salesian Brothers	3	18	18	72	31.5	157	68.5	229
6	DeLa Salle Brothers	2	116	53	947	51	911	49	1,858
7	Rosary Sisters	3	153	69	338	14.5	1,992	85.5	2,330
8	Sisters of St Joseph	1	49	13	309	42	432	58	741
9	Schmidt Sisters	1	39	10	88	18	406	82	494
10	Pilar Sisters	1	19	3	65	33.5	128	66.5	193
11	Nigerzia Sisters	1	1	1	2	6	33	94	35
12	Ivrea Kindergarten	1	6	3	50	23	165	77	215
13	Greek Orthodox	6	136	31	776	46	947	54	1,748
14	Coptic Church	2	28	8	62	52	57	48	119
15	Anglican Church	2	103	28	499	32	1,050	68	1,549
16	Lutheran Church	6	165	75	1,299	54	1,102	46	2,401
17	Quakers	2	91	27	373	33.5	741	66.5	1,114
18	Helen Keller	1	14	17	1	1.5	52	98.5	53
19	SOS Village	1	25	9	3	1	363	99	366
	Total	54	1,480	501	9,821	44.5	12,385	55.5	22,206

Role of Catholic Schools in the Holy Land

Catholic schools, with all their diversity, play a fundamental role in the life of our diocese and in the life of our society:

In our society, they effectively contributed to educational progress, being at some point, the only schools in our countries.

In the life of our churches, they contributed to the preservation of Christian faith identity and its development, and they likewise made an essential contribution in the area of catechesis.

These schools accompanied the progress of society; they constantly developed themselves to respond to the new needs. Today, they continue to fulfil their mission amidst ever-changing circumstances in our society and churches, these circumstances which often are not simple. These schools make manifold sacrifices in terms of material burdens and human resources. In order to protect their existence and mission, they are struggling to improve their performance in all its dimensions, preserving their originality and the singularity of what they have to offer. Our churches, are now called to take a serious, critical and objective stand so as to advance this dimension of the educational mission of the Church.

Challenges for Catholic Schools

The Catholic schools have faced many challenges on various levels, facing much criticism and being exposed to complaints. This needs to be analysed in a constructive and sincere spirit, striving to preserve the identity and characteristic mission of Catholic schools in our societies and churches.

(1) Evolution of the School

Our Catholic schools face many challenges, some of them deriving from the evolution of the school itself, where educational, pedagogical, and material requirements have grown rapidly; it is not easy to respond to them. Other requirements derive from the evolution of the society, where educational references have developed (media, Internet, and increased openness in the sphere of public life) that compete with the school in its educational task, rendering its role more difficult.

(2) Educational Project

Some claim that our schools often lack a clearly outlined educational project which takes into consideration the different dimensions of its identity and mission. Such a project should present a global, full, and organic work programme to be implemented in all areas of school performance.

(3) Confusion of Priorities

Catholic schools developed as a contribution to the national effort in the area of instruction and education, and also as a place where believers might deepen their faith and cultivate their religious life.

Many note that this religious commitment has weakened in our schools and is no longer the priority it was when the schools were originally established.

This has been replaced by criteria and priorities which distance the Catholic objectives.

The Catholic school is an important location even if it cannot assume the entirety of pastoral activity in all its dimensions. The school is one area of the varied pastoral areas, no more and no less. It can, thus, take its place within general pastoral activity if it is integrated in a global pastoral plan including the different dimensions of pastoral life in our churches. This pastoral activity, first and foremost, is represented in the dominant spiritual and Christian atmosphere in the school. In this general atmosphere, catechesis plays its role. This means that Catholic schools must give it special attention, ensuring specialized persons in the area of catechesis, and ensuring the necessary tools and practical organization for it (time, place). Catechesis is strengthened by spiritual activities linked to it such as, Eucharist, rite of penance, spiritual retreats, and apostolic movements. These spiritual activities complement catechesis and can be revised in order to suit modern pedagogical orientations. This can all be achieved to the extent that the school remains open to the parish in particular and to the church in general.

The parish and the school each have their own identity and mission. However, this identity and mission are interconnected and complementary, requiring mutual openness and collaboration between them. On this basis, the school should help its students integrate into the parish, by deepening their belonging to it and taking their place in it. As we live in a situation of ecclesial diversity, it is necessary that the school takes into consideration the needs of its students who belong to different churches, as well as taking into account the religious pluralism which exists in our schools. The school must develop a religious model which helps each believer discover their faith's identity. Consequently, this identity is open and in dialogue with others, despite the diversity of religions and church or denominational belonging.

(4) Social Context

The school does not live in isolation from society. Rather, the school is an institution within society and for the sake of society. The school must assist its students in understanding society, both from a religious and civic perspective, and deepening their sense of belonging to it, understanding its needs, integrating in it, and playing their role in its development, especially in the villages and rural areas. As the society in which we live is characterized by religious pluralism and ecclesial diversity, so it is necessary that this dimension of our schools' reality be integrated into our educational and pastoral planning. In this way, the school can be an exercise in interacting with the other from a different religion, developing a positive model of fraternity and coexistence among different religions.

The school has to take this reality into account; however, it must do so in such a way that, on the one hand, it does not lose its Christian identity and originality. On the other hand, it should understand this reality in order to incorporate it organically into its identity, mission, and educational vision.

This requires the development of a clear vision for this dimension of the life of our schools, far from improvisation, fear or hesitation, and in collaboration with the interested ecclesiastical and religious institutions.

(5) Exorbitant Expenditure

The great financial burden carried by the Catholic schools has forced those responsible for the schools to put financial concerns ahead of things which are more important. This has repercussions on some of the pupils (children from poor families are deprived of the benefit of our schools because of exorbitant fees, making these schools institutions which serve a limited elite of our society and our churches). It should be added that the conditions of acceptance to the Catholic schools sometimes depend on good reputations or academic excellence which leads to the exclusion of intellectually limited pupils, this too being a type of poverty which should not be ignored by our schools which are supposedly based on Christian and Gospel values.

Responses to the Challenges

The transformations of all kinds on the social, religious, ecclesial, cultural, and political level have forced the Church to take many initiatives, in order to respond to the various challenges that are emerging from these changes in every aspect of our life.

A Diocesan Synod: 1995–2000

This was opened in a solemn celebration on the day of Pentecost in 1995, where the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land were all present.

The synod had three phases. The first, was a faith process and renewal. The aim is to renew our faith in Jesus Christ and the church; also, to clarify our position and our mission towards all our brothers and all the religions with which we abide. After having redefined our faith and identity, we approach the second phase, in the light of this renewal, to discuss our problems and needs. In the third phase, a general comprehensive pastoral plan was established that covered all the fields of our spiritual and social life, all our religious and civil duties and all our obligations towards ourselves and towards the others.

In this pastoral plan the Catholic school (role, goals, identity, and task) has occupied a whole chapter. Educational principles were formulated in the light of our needs in our society and the direction of the Second Vatican Council about education and Catholic schools.

A Catechetical Convention 2005

The churches in the Holy Land decided to organize a Catechetical Conference. A committee was asked to develop the idea of the conference and to plan for it.

The committee began its work in holding workshops in all Christian schools to assess the needs in schools and in catechism. The workshops focused on

the main components of catechism: the goals of catechism, the content, the catechists, the role of parents, the needs of the students themselves, and the role of schools. More than 30 workshops were held in different schools; administration, teachers, catechists, parents, and students took part in them (between 20 and 30 participants in each workshop), under the supervision of a moderator who presented later a full report of the results of the workshop. All the reports were collected by the preparatory committee, and they were gathered and classified. This final report was presented to the conference on catechism. The conference was held on 13 May 2006 in which 250 participants took part in the discussions. The participants were heads of churches, representatives of the administration of schools, directors, teachers and catechists, parents and students.

The report was discussed and several observations were made. The initial report was amended and became a basic document on catechism in Christian schools. It took the title, *Catechesis in Christian Schools: A Comprehensive Vision and Practical Orientation*. This became a guideline tool for all the churches and schools and for all those who work in catechism.

In order to follow up the work done, the conference decided to form a joint committee for catechism of all the churches to develop catechism in Christian schools according to the instructions of this document.

The document suggested several concrete steps, such as:

- The class of catechism: the class of catechism is the criteria of how much a school gives importance to catechism, and this requires:
- The importance of the class of catechism: this class should be given priority it deserves; it should not be omitted for any reason.
- Number of classes: the number should be appropriate with the age of the student.
- The classroom: it is preferable to hold classes of catechism in a separate room. It is advised to have a chapel in each school for weekly masses and other religious activities.
- The timing: classes of catechism should be treated equally with other school classes in its timing; it should not be the last class of the day. On the other hand, exams should not be held in Christian festivities, to allow the students to take part in these feasts.
- Support to Christian students: they should receive spiritual support wherever they may be, in public or private schools.
- Activities: these activities are important to give life to catechism in schools; these activities include:
 - Academic activities: celebrations, prayers, meetings, lectures by specialists.
 - Non-academic activities: to take advantage of special religious feasts, and to develop the spirituality of liturgical seasons, contests, weekly masses, confessions, open days, exhibitions, visits to the holy places, morning prayers.
 - Social activities: visiting sick people and different social institutions.

- Supportive activities: choirs, youth groups for different ages, summer camps, participating in youth conferences.
- The Catechist: the main suggestions regarding the catechists were the following:
 - Selection: the Catechist should have special qualities that should be taken into consideration by schools when they hire them (there is a special chapter about Catechists in the document). A catechist should be academically qualified, as any other educator, and he/she should be a spiritual leader and an active church member. The schools should collaborate with the centres specialized in qualifying catechists.
 - The support of catechists: it is important to support catechists in their roles, financially and morally. It may be appropriate to examine future catechists by churches to approve him/her.
 - Tools: catechism needs different tools to assist catechists in their work; some of these tools are:
 - Material tools: computers, recorders, VCR, television, boards.
 - Educational tools: pictures, educational material, archives for educational materials (videos, slides, cassettes) and to train catechists to use them.
 - Religious library: providing books and distributing them to different schools, so students can read them and use them in their work and reports.
 - Budget: it is important to provide schools with annual budgets to support catechism, in order to be able to buy educational material for activities, books.
 - Collaboration among schools: several activities can be made in collaboration among different schools, for example, spiritual retreats, contest. It is advised to invite schools in remote areas to make them feel part of the church in bigger areas.
 - Organizing catechism in the schools: this includes several dimensions, such as:
 - (a) Team work: creating a team spirit in catechism in each school to develop catechism in its different aspects. The team may include catechists, parents, and students. This team may meet regularly to assess the needs and take the appropriate initiatives. Some suggest the presence of a spiritual director in schools.
 - (b) Coordinator: a coordinator can be assigned to take important decisions concerning catechism in school; his/her main work is to assist catechists in their work, to overcome difficulties and to coordinate work among catechists in each school. He/she should coordinate activities among Christian schools.

National Ecumenical Catechism

A commission of educators and theologians from the different churches in the Holy Land was formed. This commission had the task of putting the curriculum of catechism for all Christians, taking into consideration the differences between churches and the different aspects of each church. This curriculum is

used in all Christian schools, where students belonging to different churches and religions coexist. This same curriculum is taught in public schools and for the last five years.

The Department of Religious Studies/Bethlehem University

This department aims at preparing catechists for the different schools. The main objectives of this programme are:

The Department of Religious Studies concentrates on the study of Christianity from a Catholic and ecumenical point of view. The programme aims at promoting an appreciation of the religious culture of the Holy Land in an ecumenical and interfaith atmosphere.

The content of the programme includes:

Theological courses: They consist of courses in Christian doctrine, moral theology, Holy Bible, Liturgy, and the study of other religions such as Judaism and Islam. These courses take into consideration the local reality and its social and philosophical contexts.

Pedagogical courses: In addition to the major in Religious Studies, the department provides an opportunity for all students to join the programme towards a minor in catechesis and the Bible. This minor serves those who plan to teach catechism at schools. To earn this minor, students are required to successfully complete courses in: the psychological foundation of teaching, introduction in catechism, Catechism and Old Testament, Catechism and New Testament, Catechism and the Local Church, Catechism at different stages of life, and the pedagogical methods of teaching.

Catechetical Center of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

This centre monitors these centres for catechists and continues their work through pedagogical courses to update catechists in the latest developments in catechesis, trains catechists to latest techniques in teaching, organizing spiritual retreats, and organizing religious and catechetical activities to students in different schools.

Agenda for Future Research

As a conclusion to this analytical critical description, we may become more aware of all the factors that affect the Catholic education schooling system. We have seen that these factors are many such as, religious pluralism, globalization, political transformations and conflicts, modernity, and occupation. Hence, we would come to be more conscious of the challenges that are facing the Catholic schools with their education. Catholic schools have been trying to take all of these factors into consideration and integrating them into their curriculum. Specially, stressing on the relationship with the religious “other” within this pluralism, since most of the schools’ students are in particular, Moslem students to understand what is it like to accept the “other” and live in harmony with him or

her? How would we be able to achieve that? These two questions are very crucial if someone desires to survive in such pluralism. Research is needed to investigate to what extent Christian and Moslem students in our schools actually grow in understanding each other. Research is also needed to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the *Catechesis in Christian Schools* initiative.

Catholic Churches in general and Catholic schools in particular, are taking these factors seriously and into consideration. We may appreciate their attempts of addressing these factors, in the Catechetical Convention they initiated and took part of it.

We all hope that our schools' system can accomplish their goals and help in building a better Holy Land for holy people who deserve to live in dignity, justice, and peace without suffering.

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SECTION SIX

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE PHILIPPINES: BEACONS OF HOPE IN ASIA

Angelina L. V. Gutiérrez

Corruption and Poverty in a Catholic Culture

The Philippines is known as the only predominantly Roman Catholic country in Southeast Asia. Of a population of 86,241,697 in 2004, 83% identified themselves as Catholics (UNESCO, 2004).¹ Based on the 2003 Annual Statistical Report to Rome, there were 2,719,781 Catholics in Manila out of its estimated population of 2,993,000 (Legaspi, 2003).² Since 1595, when the ecclesiastical provinces of the Roman Catholic Church were established in the country, the hierarchy's presence has been institutionalized.

The Philippine Catholic Church is a major social and political force. It provides moral and spiritual guidance by developing the social conscience and the social consciousness of the Filipino people. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) inspired two people power revolutions, which forced two presidents, namely Marcos in 1986 and Estrada in 2001, to step down from their positions. Because of the great influence of the Catholic Church on the people, political candidates seek public "anointment" from well-known bishops and church figures. The church, hence, has a voice in the nation's governance, despite the constitutional separation of the church and the state.

The CBCP has commissions on bioethics, health care, indigenous people, migrants, youth, social communication, mass media, social action, justice and peace, education, etc. Bishops head these commissions, with lay people acting as staff members or implementers. Through these commissions, the CBCP articulates its position on various national issues such as the pending legislation on population control, reproductive health and reproductive rights, the abolition of capital punishment, the visiting forces agreement between the Philippines and the USA, the mining act and others. It issues pastoral letters on topics such as

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2003).

² See Bishop Legaspi's report to Rome on "Catechesis and Catholic Education in the Philippines: The Reality in Context and Response" (2003).

guidelines to follow in electing political candidates, the foreign debt problem and corruption in the Philippine economy, the kidnappings of church personnel, the toxic contamination of former US military bases, the terrorism in Mindanao and many other critical national problems. Priests are required to read these pastoral letters nationwide during the Sunday homily.

The CBCP has legal representation in Congress, enabling it to submit petitions and recommendations to government agencies. Some of its projects have received government funding such as a 50-million peso grant to the Catholic organization, Couples for Christ, for the promotion of natural family planning nationwide. The church and all its activities are not taxed because the Philippine Constitution recognizes it as a charitable institution.³

The Catholic schools represent a major ministry of the Philippine Roman Catholic Church. According to the Catholic Educators Association of the Philippines (CEAP), which is the educational network of the Catholic Church, the total number of Catholic schools in the country in 2003 was grouped into: 596 pre-elementary schools, 592 elementary schools, 1,070 high schools, 240 colleges, and 101 graduate schools.⁴ These schools are mostly exclusive boys' and girls' institutes, established by religious congregations such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Augustinians, Jesuits, Daughters of Charity, Assumption Sisters, Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, Salesians, Religious of the Virgin Mary, Christian Brothers, and many more. All the 21 Catholic universities in the Philippines are coeducational.

Filipinos have a deep regard for education. Parents instill in their children the belief that education is the fundamental means that will help them advance economically and socially. Middle-class parents make tremendous sacrifices in order to provide education for their children. This is why the Philippines has the highest literacy rate of 97.9% among the youth from ages 15–24 in Southeast Asia. The overall school enrollment rate is 94% in primary level, 69% in secondary level and 29% in tertiary level (UNESCO, 2004).⁵ The medium of instruction is English and Tagalog, making the Filipinos bilingual. Due to the remarkable development of its educational system, the Philippines has earned a reputation as an educational leader and an English-language learning center by its neighboring countries.

Since there is full government funding for public primary and secondary schools, education in these levels is free to the public. However, privately owned Catholic and Protestant schools do not receive government aid and have to meet high costs in order to survive. Thus, the tuition fees of these private schools are costly. Only families who can afford are able to attend Catholic schools. In 2004–2005, only 926,122 students were enrolled in private Catholic primary schools while 12,089,365 attended public elementary schools. In the secondary

³ Article XIV, Section 4 (3) and (4), Philippine Constitution (1987).

⁴ Catholic Educators of the Philippines report (2003).

⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics on Education (2004). Adult literacy rate (15+) is 90.8%. The country has a strong population growth, aged 5–14 years grew by 15%. This puts pressure on the education system to increase student numbers at all levels.

level, 5,043,776 were enrolled in public high schools, and 1,268,255 students were enrolled in private Catholic high schools (Basic Education Statistics, 2005).⁶ From a survey made by the CEAP in 2002, only 9% of Catholic students are enrolled in Catholic schools.⁷ This has brought out the concern of how the Catholic Church and the schools can reach out to the other 91% Catholic students. In a country where poverty is a leading problem, the same question arises whether Catholic schools cater only to the elite and privileged class of Philippine society. How do Catholic schools address the church's preferential option for the poor?

While the graduates of Catholic education have furnished the cultural, intellectual, economic, and political leadership of the nation, the problem of graft and corruption in the Philippine government remains one of its entrenched structural problems. One wonders how a very Catholic nation can tolerate money laundering, bribery, dishonesty, shady business dealings, and many other forms of moral aberration. The country loses 40% of its government annual budget to graft and corruption, which draws away resources from urgent development needs and social services (CBCP, 2003).⁸ This situation is of great concern to Catholic education. Do Catholic schools make a difference in transforming Philippine society? What is the moral stand of the graduates of Catholic schools who are running the country?

Challenges for Catholic Education

Unlike academic achievement, which can be easily assessed, the moral results of Catholic education cannot be easily quantified. Just like other nations, the Philippines is undergoing a crisis in values as a result of the rapid structural and cultural changes brought about by the globalization of economy and technology. Prospects of development are accompanied by the growing secularization, materialism, and consumerism, which have often led to family breakdown and moral relativism.

The dichotomy between faith and traditional culture is evident in all walks of life in the Philippines. Today's Filipino teenagers are losing their virginity and taking drugs, just like any other western teenagers. A study conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute (2000)⁹ showed that 23% of 16.5 million Filipinos aged between 15 and 24 have engaged in premarital sex. In the same age group, 1.8 million Filipinos are drug users, shabu, or methamphetamine hydrochloride being the most popular drug of abuse.

The global market economy and telecommunications have not spared the young people either. The widespread craze of communicating via mobile phone

⁶ Department of Education, fact sheet on Basic Education Statistics (2004–2005).

⁷ CEAP survey (2003).

⁸ CBCP "Pastoral letter on Graft and Corruption" (2003). The Philippines is 11th most corrupt country among 102 countries identified as harboring corrupt public officials (Transparency International, 2003).

⁹ University of the Philippines Population Institute (2000).

has led to text gambling as well as cell phone sex even among the youth. Outside the urban and suburban school campuses, the noisy fast food chains are packed with students. Filipino youth today eat more junk food and get obese more quickly. Round the clock Internet cafes next to the schools are crowded with students playing violent computer games and surfing pornographic web sites even during school hours. Shopaholic parents and kids waste time and money at the malls satisfying their consumerist appetites.

The social problems in the country have become worse, as the gap between the rich and poor widens. About 45.9% of the population is considered “near poor,” living on less than \$2 per day (World Bank report, 2001).¹⁰ This poverty rate is predicted to increase with the ongoing worldwide fuel crisis and the devaluation of the Philippine peso currency. Child labor remains a problem with 4 million children aged 10–17 working as vendors, farmers, fishermen, and factory workers (UNICEF, 2002).¹¹ These children are forced to work because their parents could not find jobs. The Philippines has one of the largest populations of street children in Asia. A nongovernment movement called End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT, 1996)¹² counted 1.5 million street children in 65 cities in the Philippines. These children roam around as pickpockets or beggars, or are sexually exploited or driven to prostitution. They are also users of the illegal substance known as rugby. About 60,000 to 100,000 Filipino children work as prostitutes, making the Philippines a favorite destination of pedophiles from the USA, Australia, and Europe (UNICEF, 1997).¹³

The continuous economic and unemployment problems in the country have encouraged massive migration of Filipino women and men into the international labor market. This contemporary phenomenon has displaced families and children, affecting traditional family values. Young people are left to the care of grandparents or relatives while their parents work abroad in order to pay for their education and daily needs. Migration has also led to brain drain in the country. Schools in the USA are heavily recruiting teachers in Catholic schools in the Manila region, threatening schools in the Philippines with potential staffing shortages. In early 2000, about 40 teachers in a Catholic school in Makati City, south of Manila, applied for posts in Texas, USA. A teacher from that group said she applied because she needed money to send her children to college. She earned about \$6,800 a year in the Philippines, but could earn about \$35,000 annually if she gets a teaching job in the USA (Donovan from the National Catholic Reporter, June 21, 2002).¹⁴ This scenario is replicated in the medical field where Filipino physicians leave the country for nursing jobs in the USA and Europe. There are also many instances when Filipino teachers work as domestic

¹⁰ World Bank report (2001).

¹¹ UNICEF report (2002).

¹² End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism study (1996).

¹³ UNICEF (1997).

¹⁴ Donovan, Manila schoolteachers leaving for jobs in U.S. *The National Catholic Reporter* (June 21, 2002).

helpers abroad, where they take the roles of nannies and tutors as well as bringers of the Catholic faith to the secularized families of the First World nations.

Like in other developing countries that are exploited by multinational companies in the name of global progress, Catholic schools are concerned at the growing environmental problems all over the Philippines. The Philippines is known as the “Pearl of the Orient” for all its natural beauty and wealth of natural resources. However, human greed has plundered its God-given natural gifts. Illegal logging has caused landslides and floods that have killed thousands of Filipinos. Out of the original 30 million hectares, only 1 million hectares of primary forest is left (CBCP, 1988).¹⁵ Exotic local species have become endangered or gone extinct. Dynamite fishing has damaged pristine coral reefs and mangrove forests. Mining tailings and industrial chemicals have destroyed marine species. Bronchial illness has become very common due to air pollution. The task of environmental stewardship is an urgent challenge to Catholic education.

The nation’s overall political instability and economic decline and the violent armed-conflict terrorism in southern Philippines, often highlighted by the skeptic media, have become commonplace news among the Filipino people. Despite this apparent bleak picture, the Filipino people remain hopeful. The Catholic Church continues to remind them of their inherent cultural and religious values that can help heal the many problems caused by injustice and exploitation and the deficient cultural values and mindset inferred from the temptation to extort and to bribe, from the exploitation of women and children, from the killings of militants, labor leaders, and journalists without the benefit of just trial, from torture and maltreatment of every kind, from graft and corruption and subtle dictatorship, from destruction of the ecosystem and deterioration of peace and order (CBCP, 2006).¹⁶

Strategic Responses of the Catholic Schooling System

How do the Philippine Catholic schools make themselves relevant in the midst of these social realities that are constantly competing with its evangelizing mission? The efforts of the primary and secondary Catholic schools in addressing these challenges may be categorized into: (1) content of religious education; (2) pedagogy of a socially transformative Catholic education; (3) pastoral care of the agents and receivers of Catholic education; (4) praxis-oriented outreach as “preferential option for the poor.”

Content of Religious Education

Commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines to advance its teaching ministry, the Catholic schools promote the development of the whole person (SCCE 34, 1977)¹⁷ through a Catholic orientation that is in harmony with

¹⁵ CBCP “What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land” (1988).

¹⁶ CBCP Documents from 1990–2004.

¹⁷ The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education “The Catholic School” #34 (1977).

the development goals articulated in the Philippine Constitution. The content of the religious education in the Catholic schools' primary level, secondary level, and higher education consistently responds to the signs of the times that are reflected in the current social, political, and moral issues in the country. An essential element, therefore, of Catholic education in the Philippines is character formation and citizenship building.

The teaching of religion/theology is the distinguishing mark of the Catholic schools in the country. This is in consonance with Pope John Paul's words: "The special character of the Catholic schools is precisely the quality of religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils" (*Catechesi Tradendae* 69, 1979).¹⁸ The revised National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines concretized this through its guidelines: "the quality of religious instruction depends (as in all education) on: (1) the professional competence of the teachers, in this case, motivated spiritually from within by personal religious faith commitment; (2) the school's actual religion program and course materials; (3) the collaboration of the whole school faculty and administration with the religion program and its integration into the total school curriculum and student activities" (NCDP 479, 1985).¹⁹

Religion as a core subject that is taught from primary to secondary schools is locally known as Christian Living. Its content is mainly based on the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (CFC, 1997) and its vernacular translation in the national Tagalog language "Katekismo para sa mga Pilipinong Katoliko" (KPK, 2000).²⁰ These are the National Catechism in English and Filipino. They highlight the integration of the intellectual (doctrinal), behavioral (moral), and affective (sacramental-worship) dimensions toward a progressive faith education geared to the maturity level of the students. The content is firmly grounded in Scripture and Church teachings, which are related to the concrete, inculturated experience of the students within their specific socio-cultural-religious contexts (cf. NCDP 483, 1985).²¹ The Christian Living curriculum, hence, integrates the following five dimensions in order to provide a holistic Catholic-Christian education to the Filipino students: (a) instructional (doctrine/teachings); (b) relational (moral); (c) ministerial (service); (d) contemplative (liturgical celebrations); and (e) the particular spirituality of the religious congregation that runs the school.

In developing content that is focused on communicating the light of faith and Christian virtues, Catholic schools become communities that transmit values for living. This is done through the formation of conscience centered on Christ as the Model on whom one's life is shaped (SCCE 47, 1977).²² Students are taught to integrate culture with faith through instruction and formation. Lessons from the Christian Living classes are enriched by days of recollection/retreat as

¹⁸ Pope John Paul II, "Catechesi Tradendae" #69 (1979).

¹⁹ "National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines" #479 (1985).

²⁰ "Katekismo para sa mga Pilipinong Katoliko" is the vernacular translation in the national Tagalog language of the Catechism for Filipino Catholics (2000).

²¹ See NCDP #483 (1985).

²² See SCCE #47 (1977).

well as outreach activities toward the marginalized members of society. This is what makes Catholic schools in the Philippines different from secular or public schools.

Pedagogy of a Socially Transformative Catholic Education

The visions of quality Catholic education in the spirit of service and communion are expressed in the mission statements of the various schools. In exploring the web sites of the leading Catholic schools in Metro Manila and other big cities in the country, common themes and specific spiritualities of the religious congregations that run the schools are revealed. Exclusive female institutes run by Benedictine Sisters and Assumption Sisters focus on education for social transformation. Assumption institutes seek to create empowered learning communities by nurturing a culture of excellence for service in order to bring about justice, peace, integrity of creation, and social equality. The Benedictine institutes strive to realize the tenets of “ora et labora” (prayer and work) in the form of academic excellence as service to liberate the Filipino people from all forms of oppression and injustice. A strong social orientation is evident in all their academic programs as they strive to build the liberal arts skills of inquiry, critical and creative thinking, interdisciplinarity, gender sensitivity, and care for all creation from primary, secondary, and up to college levels.

Exclusive male institutes carry similar mission and goals. The Ateneo High School run by the Jesuits provides a profile of its high school graduate: Christ-centered in the Ignation tradition, academically competent, possessing a well-formed conscience with the courage to defend what is right and to right what is wrong and compassion to the poor and disadvantaged that leads to service and work for justice and peace. In keeping with St. John Baptist De La Salle’s charism, La Sallian institutes that are run by the Christian Brothers, aim to produce graduates who can make a difference in the lives of those who are powerless, marginalized, and deprived of dignity. This is accomplished through a curriculum that instills in the learners a concern for justice and peace, and a commitment to active solidarity with the poor.

The Catholic schools in the Philippines try to provide a service that is both civic and apostolic. They work closely with the CBCP by implementing their pastoral exhortations through campus awareness and school activities. For example, the pastoral statements of the CBCP are proclaimed and posted on school campuses. Students, teachers, administrators, and staff are encouraged to take part in people power rallies and peace rallies when the Church calls for participation and solidarity for the cause of justice and defense of human rights.

The pedagogy of a socially transformative education, therefore, includes the following types of liberation: (a) personal liberation from ignorance to acquire mature self-giving; (b) spiritual liberation from sin to learn communion with God; (c) sociopolitical liberation from unjust and dehumanizing structures to achieve human dignity and solidarity; (d) cosmic liberation from the destruction of creation to attain harmony with all creation.

This socially transformative pedagogy is expressed in the various projects of Catholic schools such as: (a) campaigns to actively participate in the concern for the environment through proper recycling and composting of waste that may be used as organic fertilizer; (b) promotion of simple and healthy lifestyle as alternative to consumerism by banning junk food, soda, and faddish clothing within the school campus; (c) campaigns to use local organic products; and (d) institutional peace camps, peace march, and peace rallies. In these efforts to meet the needs of the Philippine society even in the socioeconomic and political sphere, Catholic schools fulfill their task of synthesizing culture and faith.

Pastoral Care of the Agents and Receivers of Catholic Education

Curricular content and models of pedagogy by themselves cannot accomplish the educative mission of Catholic schools. Pastoral care of the students, teachers, administrators, and staff is one of the most significant obligations of Catholic education. In the Philippines, Catholic schools have long-established formation programs for the entire academic community. Regular sacramental celebrations and spiritual exercises through days of recollection and retreat are all part of the school calendar facilitated by the Campus Ministry Offices in the various school campuses. The liturgical programs include the sacraments of Confirmation and Reconciliation, Bible sharing, blessing of Marriage vows, and local devotional celebrations such as Christmas Dawn Mass novenas, Lenten practices, and Marian feast days.

The purpose of the Campus Ministry Offices (CMO) is to form the academic community toward a lived faith by providing opportunities to worship and to translate this existential faith into works of justice and service to the marginalized members of society. In its desire to be salt and light in the school campuses while being socially relevant, the CMO coordinates with pastoral nationwide organizations such as Youth for Christ, Life in the Spirit, Bible Study Groups, and other charismatic groups. Hence the CMO complements the students' Christian Living learnings through contemplative activities as well as through civic action concretized in their lay social apostolate.

For example, the La Salle Greenhills (Manila) has a Center for Spiritual Development where fifth graders spend a day of recollection on the theme "Being Signs of God's Presence in Today's World." Through prayer, reflection, and writing, these students are invited to put into words and actions their preferential option for the poor and to be peacemakers in their day-to-day life. Similar days of recollection are provided to all students from middle school to high school levels. The Adult Ministry Program for teachers and staff provides structured spiritual activities and opportunities for volunteerism as response to pressing current issues. For example, volunteers may involve themselves in the following activities: (a) environmental stewardship through coastal cleanup and through ecological solid waste management,

and campus cleanup; (b) youth education through the special education program for former street children and the help-a public-school project; and (c) volunteer work at dental and medical missions as outreach assistants. These volunteer opportunities provide different learning situations to the teachers and staff to help enrich their faith experience as they share themselves in the service of the less fortunate members of the communities.

Since the teachers and staff are entrusted with the care of the young people, an essential goal of their formation program is the continuous renewal to become witnesses of the Gospel. This is meant to deepen the understanding of their catalytic role as teachers in the transformation and renewal of society. They are also accompanied by the religious sisters, brothers, and priests who run the schools to grow in their vocation as teachers according to the charism of particular religious congregations. Hence, the Benedictine, or the Jesuit, or the La Sallian, or the Dominican spirituality is inculcated to the students, teachers, administrators, and staff as part of their holistic formation within the academic framework of the school.

Praxis-oriented Outreach as “Preferential Option for the Poor”

The emphasis on education for social transformation has made Catholic schools in the Philippines act as agencies of conscientization and advocacy. Social Action Centers (SAC) in the campuses implement exposure programs and immersion activities as part of awareness-raising activities to help students and teachers become sensitive to the signs of the times. Through the SAC, the material and human resources of the academic community are mobilized and channeled to the less fortunate sectors of society. This helps nurture among the students the sense of solidarity, of sensitivity to the sufferings of others, and of social responsibility in behalf of the disadvantaged.

There are usually three components to the “preferential option for the poor” projects: (a) structured learning experiences, which are required outreach activities for students as built in their Christian Living subject or required community service from the teachers to qualify them for promotion; (b) volunteer projects, which are opportunities for direct involvement and service to the poor; and (c) issue advocacy which includes programs and activities on social concerns such as environmental, socioeconomic, and political issues.

This prophetic dimension of the Catholic schools is expressed in various praxis-oriented projects such as: (a) free secondary night school for less-fortunate working young women; (b) special education program for former street children; (c) free basic education for school dropouts; (d) the “building homes, building hope” assistance to marginalized families; (e) free training on peace education and conflict mediation to urban women and out-of-school youth; (f) school curriculum implementation of the “Pondo ng Pinoy,” (literally translated as Funds for the Filipinos), which asks Catholics in Manila parishes to donate 25 centavos (or a nickel) per day to the poor, a program authored by Cardinal Rosales of the

Manila archdiocese that is based on the “theology of the crumbs,”²³ and many other projects in behalf of the marginalized sector of Philippine society.

This description of the strategic responses of the Catholic schools to the challenges posed by the contemporary world provides a glimpse of the particular identity of Catholic primary and secondary education in the Philippines. The evangelizing mission of Catholic schools is evident in their civic and apostolic service. They collaborate with the Church in building up the secular society through the formation of a Christian-Catholic mentality in the students, teachers, staff, and academic communities.

While there are debates as to whether the Catholic schools are solely identified with the wealthy social classes and perpetuate the status quo because of their exorbitant tuition costs, there are evidences, as well, of their accomplishments to serve the poorest of the poor in their communities. This examination of the goals and purposes of the leading Catholic schools in Metro Manila has illustrated their efforts to answer the needs of contemporary society through an integral formation of the whole person through Gospel values and the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Contradictions always exist, however, this exploration of the school mission statements gives indicators of their purposes and agenda against which their “mission integrity” can be assessed (Grace, 2003).²⁴

Contemporary Research

Since Catholicism is deeply embedded in the Filipino culture, there is strong linkage in the philosophy of education of both government and Catholic schools. The philosophy of Catholic schools harmonizes with the following philosophy of education provided for in the 1987 Philippine Constitution in promoting civil progress and human development:

Education for the Filipinos shall be rooted in their culture and traditions, which are anchored on positive values and beliefs of the people. It shall develop an enlightened and nationalistic citizenry, imbued with democratic ideals, unselfish in their commitment to serve the national community, and proud of being Filipinos, yet receptive of international developments. It shall further develop God-loving, creative, disciplined, productive and self-reliant citizens leading meaningful lives.

²³ Pondo ng Pinoy (literally, Funds for the Filipinos) was authored in 2004 by Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Manila. The Pondo ng Pinoy is rooted in the “Theology of the Crumbs” based on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man from St. Luke’s Gospel. The project encourages Catholics in 13 Manila dioceses to give 25 centavos (or a nickel) donation daily for the foundation, whose aim is to support projects of nongovernment organizations and provide the people an alternative to entrusting their welfare to politicians. From 2004–2006, the Pondo ng Pinoy Foundation has collected almost P80 million pesos (about US \$1.6 million) from donations. The program has fed and educated underprivileged children, provided jobs to impoverished communities and taught values to many. Cardinal Rosales said Pondo ng Pinoy hopes to bring about not only the development of the Filipino people, especially the poor, but also a miraculous transformation of the country.

²⁴ Grace (2003, p. 47).

With this kind of philosophical interconnection between government and Catholic schools, educational research of both sectors since the mid-1970s has attempted to address significant academic issues such as evaluating quality education, narrowing the gap between urban and rural schools, developing relevant materials, improving teacher competence, and adopting innovative approaches. In the early 1980s and early 1990s, a longitudinal survey was conducted to determine the effects of school, household, and community factors on school outcomes and participation. The results provided direction for developing intervention programs to improve the quality of outcomes of elementary education (Sutaria, 1995).²⁵

A research grant (2006–2008) given by a government agency, the Philippine Center for Population and Development,²⁶ to a theological seminary, the University of San Carlos, aims to develop teaching modules for primary, secondary, and collegiate levels on the topics of population and development, human sexuality, and related topics in the context of Catholic spirituality. These modules will be pilot-tested and will eventually be integrated in the curricula of Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) member schools. This government funding for the development of Catholic school materials is perhaps precipitated by the recent reaction of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to the government's trial integration of sex education to the general curriculum of public schools. The Filipino bishops objected to the introduction of sex education in the public schools because according to them, it instructs the youth in the use of artificial contraceptives and condoms, which is against the Church's teaching on human sexuality. They said that this would encourage teenagers to try premarital sex rather than remain abstinent. The bishops emphasized that sex education is the parents' responsibility, not the government's. The Secretary of Education ordered a stop to the distribution of the sex-education modules, meaning, the government has now ceased the program until it meets with the bishops' representatives of the CBCP (Smith, 2006).²⁷ Three studies spearheaded by CEAP in 2000–2001 served as directional compasses in meeting the problems and issues of Catholic education and the catechetical ministry in the country. These studies are: (a) the nationwide Youth Study conducted by the Global Filipino Foundation and the Society of Jesus; (b) the empirical survey on the shape of religious education in the Catholic schools, conducted by the University of Santo Tomas Social Research Center; and (c) the national survey on the catechetical situation in the pastoral setting.²⁸

The findings of the Youth Survey 2001 (CEAP) presented a profile of the Filipino youth aged 7–21. According to the results of the research, some of

²⁵ Sutaria, M. 1995. The educational research environment in the Philippines. In G. Nilesen (Ed.), *Educational Research Environments in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Searrag.

²⁶ Philippine Center for Population and Development, research project on "Development of POPDEV-Related Modules for CEAP Institutions" (2004–2006).

²⁷ Smith, J. "Philippines Scraps Sex Education in Schools After Catholic Opposition" *The National Catholic Reporter* (June 21, 2006).

²⁸ CEAP surveys conducted from 2000–2001.

the personal concerns of the young people are: (a) to be better people characterized by discipline, patience, industriousness, friendliness, and absence of vices; (b) to alter their appearance in order to be more attractive; (c) fear of falling into drugs and getting pregnant or someone pregnant; (d) worry about environmental pollution. Only 18% among the youth is involved in church activities. The majority lacks interest in national concerns, although a quarter of the youth are ashamed of corruption in the government. For them, school is their surrogate home. They like school not only for its academic purpose but also for the socialization it provides. With regards to sexual behavior, premarital sex is not acceptable to 58% while one out of four is already sexually experienced. As to their values—family, education, love, friendship, and money, in that order, are important. Their dream is to get rich and go into professional careers. Their mothers exert control over basic things such as food and curfew. They generally experiment with alcoholic drinks before smoking cigarette. There may be one for every ten males who will prefer priesthood. There is low awareness of cultural values and national affairs.

Conclusions from this study are the following: (a) teenagers are individualist in relating to God and their social conscience has not been formed to lead them into concrete action; (b) they look at the Church as a building and are distant, unaffected and unaware of the Church's teachings on issues which particularly concern them such as homosexuality, premarital sex, marriage and divorce, gambling, sex and violence in media, abortion and contraception, and social justice; (c) they continue to value the family and are highly interpersonal but catechesis fails to capitalize on these and instead remains doctrinal and confined to the classroom setting; (d) this situation calls for a paradigm shift by exploring strategies to reach the youth in and outside the classroom settings such as through campus ministries, community-based catechesis and family apostolates; (e) strategies should be used so that the youth can experience the Church as a community, not an institution, through a catechesis that calls for social response and is participative, not merely cognitive. Although the survey is comprehensive, it does not provide enough data on the religious preferences and belief system of the Filipino youth at the beginning of the millennium. This Youth Study 2001 certainly provides important data as to what concrete interventions the Catholic schools can do toward integral formation of today's young people.

The empirical research (CEAP, 2001) on the shape of religious education in the country presented the following findings: (a) the goals of education are ranked accordingly—foster a stronger belief in God, cultivate strong relationship with Christ, nurture commitment to Christian morality, with promotion of social justice and active involvement in the parish ranking last; (b) 82% of religious education programs have formalized vision-mission statements, which shows an improvement from the 76.81% figure of the 1979 survey; (c) 89% have established religious education (RE) offices providing compulsory classes in religion for two hours of class per week in the elementary and secondary levels and three hours per week in the college level; (d) 88% use the Catechism for Filipino Catholics with its approach of inculturation, integration, and community

formation; (e) 49.2% of the teachers of religious education have baccalaureate degrees in theology/religious education while the remaining 50.8% have other fields of specialization. On the influence of religious education on the students, the survey demonstrated how many students found religious education to be effective: 98% among elementary students, 97% among high school students, and 95% among college students. They considered the Catholic school environment as influential in their religious formation.

The Youth Study 2001 and the Shape of Religious Education in Catholic Schools 2001 presented an overview of the realities that confront Catholic schools in the Philippines. The findings of these researches provide significant information in bridging the gaps in the curriculum and the agents-recipients of religious education in contemporary Catholic schools.

The Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCE) continues its research projects to support the prophetic work of Catholic education in the country. Its ongoing studies during 2001–2006 are the following: (a) the revision of the National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines entitled “Maturing in Christian Faith” in order to make it more updated, inculturated and user-friendly; (b) the preparation and development of the Basic Content of Christian Formation, which was formerly called the Elements of Minimum Learning Competencies. These are guidelines regarding the indispensable content of the Religious Education curriculum, syllabus, and program for any given level of classes in the school setting, or formation program in the pastoral setting. Its purpose is to assist authors of Religious Education textbooks in preparation of content, school administrators, and diocesan censors in evaluating textbooks, and parish priests and leaders in preparing Christian Formation programs; (c) the Accreditation Instrument for Religious Education in Catholic schools and colleges; (d) the strengthening of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) curriculum toward stronger emphasis on social transformation; (e) advocacy work and studies that hope to influence the proposed legislation to make Religion a mandatory subject in all public schools and the adoption of a voucher system in the basic education level of Catholic schools.²⁹

As Catholic schools in the Philippines continue their close collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church and the government in becoming Christian leaven for Asia, there is still much work to do. The ECCE and the CEAP have significant research agendas to address particular concerns they have laid out for the coming years in terms of improving the quality of Catholic education, increasing human and material resources, better collaboration with pastoral, civic and educational institutes, and renewing the Catholic schools’ mission to the communities they serve. While the praxis of education toward social justice continues to be the dominant color of Catholic schooling in the Philippines, more empirical research can be done to harmonize Catholic education with the CBCP 1990s–2006

²⁹ Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCE), “8 Key Concerns” (2005). The voucher system proposed by ECCE seeks government funding for students from low-income families who are interested in attending Catholic primary or secondary schools.

pastoral statements on the topics of building a culture of peace, on terrorism and relations with the Moslems in Mindanao, population and development, politics and graft and corruption, exploitation of women and children, environmental and sustainable development, economy and foreign debt problem, human rights, and on strengthening the Filipino families.

Agenda for Future Research

In a nation that has become politically, economically, and morally entangled, the responsibility of the Catholic schools in the spiritual and moral formation of the young Filipinos has become even more demanding. An important agenda for future research is the question of how the charisms of particular religious congregations who run Catholic schools influence the moral practices of the students. Is there any evidence that the graduates of Catholic schools who are in positions of leadership in the government or other institutes are less prone to graft and corruption? For example, did former President Corazon Aquino, a product of St. Scholastica's College, manifest the Benedictine values of social justice and service during her term? Or do the policies of the current President Gloria Arroyo, a product of Assumption College, demonstrate the Assumption Sisters' commitment to build an equitable and peaceful Philippine society? Are the products of Catholic schooling guided by a social conscience that is sensitive to the poor in their midst? Or do they perpetuate the status quo that separates the elite and the powerful from the poor and the powerless? Are Catholic school graduates, administrators, faculty members, and personnel contributing to the social transformation of the Philippine society toward justice and peace? Can we bridge the inconsistencies and the gaps between the content and the practical application of faith in Catholic schooling? Careful analyses are needed in order to craft relevant materials and pedagogy that can decolonize the global culture of violence and greed toward the praxis of moral and social responsibilities. Ultimately, future studies should illuminate how Catholic schooling can form good citizens who can build the Filipino nation by strengthening the positive Asian cultural values that are in harmony with the Catholic Christian faith. This should recontextualize the contemporary mission of Catholic schools in order to address the critical problems of poverty and corruption in the country and help advance social justice and the common good.

This limited presentation has traced the joys and difficulties, the contributions and inadequacies, the hopes and dreams of the Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Philippines for the last two decades. As the Catholic schools continue their journey of courageous renewal and conversion toward "a new springtime for Christian life" (Tertio Millenio Adveniente #42, 1996),³⁰ their commitment to their mission remains an inspiration to the Filipino people. While there are still many questions that need to be answered and contradictions that need to be resolved, Catholic schools remain beacons of hope to the Philippines and Asia.

³⁰ Pope John Paul II (1996). "Tertio Millenio Adveniente" #42.

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ETHICS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FORMATION OF STUDENTS: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THAILAND

Bro. Martin Komolmas, FSG

Introduction: The Challenges in Thailand

The Catholic Education Council of Thailand stated the vision of Catholic Education Management under such headings as “Learning Persons, Loving and Caring Community, Reaching for Human Excellence According to Christian Principles” (1995). To achieve the above-mentioned vision, various teaching and learning processes have to be provided simultaneously and consistently. It covers three forms of education: formal education, nonformal education, and informal education, involving all levels: preschool, primary and secondary, and higher education.

The social environment is dynamic and has changed dramatically in many attributes such as society itself, culture, economy, science and technology, politics, population, and so on. For example, due to the technological advancement today mobile phones have become so cheap that they have become a toy for the primary and middle school level students. These mobile devices facilitate all kinds of abusive acts, for instance pornographic photo-taking and circulating images among their friends. Cultural change has taken place in the form of consumerism in urban societies, especially major metropolitan cities, e.g., Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, etc., and other cities as well. From economic standpoint Thailand has enjoyed a steady economic growth since it recovered from the Asian financial crisis in 1997–1998. Thailand is doing well in managing its economic development especially its investment in the Mega Projects.

However, the impact of secularization and western consumer culture is a global phenomenon, which is not a unique concern for the Thai culture. The impact of secularization and western consumer culture is deep rooted in almost every culture especially in the developing economies. Hence, the Thai youth are not free from western immoral and sexually permissive behaviors. The Catholic

school youth are a part of greater Thai society hence, they are not immune from this influence. Moreover, the technological development has expedited the process of cultural colonization. Technology has created one single global village and its pace of penetration is very fast in the heart of any modern society. Hence, we do not want to blame our children due to these influences. We believe Thai children have strong cultural ties; this is evidenced by one of the fast food chains (i.e., McDonald's) which is facing an eroding sales and market share in Thailand, despite their heavy advertising which targets mainly the younger consumers. These attributes have effects and influence both directly and indirectly on how to administer and manage education. Teaching and learning process has to be adapted, adjusted, and improved to come up with the changes so that the graduates of Catholic schools gain knowledge and live happily in the society.

Ethics and morals are very vital in the formation of students in Catholic schools. That is the strategic direction in providing teaching and learning process according to the Catholic educational philosophy. Social responsibility as well is vital. Catholic education takes social justice and social responsibility seriously. The Episcopal Conference of Thailand through its commission for social justice and peace has urged Catholic institutions to propagate the social values of the children in the country. That is why all the Catholic schools are concerned to create justice for all. For example, many Catholic schools in Thailand have adopted social justice as a part of their extracurricular activities. As a part of the program, students visit and work as volunteers in slum areas. This is to create consciousness among them with love for justice and social values. Rural developments have been initiated by senior students to participate in social works. Also, during the Christmas fair they raise funds to help slum areas by establishing facilities for pure drinking water.

Hence, various activities in many schools have to form and support the above-mentioned characteristics within students with activities in teaching and learning process included in the curriculum: supplementary activities and extracurricular activities.

Moral, Ethical, Religious, and Social Challenges

The Education Ministry's measures for fighting immoral behavior among children have been criticized for failing to tackle the problems head-on. The ministry's steps include classifying bad behavior into eight groups and forming special "problem-solving" panels.

Experts working on issues relating to youth said problems must be tackled "at the roots" with the participation of young people, and with the introduction of clear policies to bolster the family institution and promote social order. An adviser to ministry urged schools to provide more opportunities to study morals.

The views were expressed by about 300 representatives of social groups, state agencies, academics, students, and school executives during a recent ministry workshop (toward the end of 2005) to promote morality among youth.

The chairman of the committee for promoting morality for the benefit of the country said he disagreed with the classification of eight forms of bad behavior and the setting up of more panels. The eight forms of bad behavior are addiction to liquor and cigarettes, skipping classes at school, premature sex, gambling, addiction to computer games, spending money lavishly, and resorting to violence. The former secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Board said the measures did not get to the root causes. These root causes are mainly, lack of proper sex education, abusive use of media like Internet, television, etc. are the sources of all these social vices.

He suggested the ministry look at the problems systematically and tackle them comprehensively by allowing the participation of representatives of young people with the cooperation of relevant nongovernmental organizations. He also urged politicians, be they MPs or the prime minister, to act as role models for youth.

The director of Chulalongkorn University's Educational Policy Research Centre, urged the government to introduce clear policies to "decrease immoral areas and increase virtuous areas" for youth and boost the strength of the family institution. Moral woes concerning youth stemmed from a lack of social controls and order amid a plethora of offensive materials accessible to children.¹

Catholic Education in Thailand

The 16th century was an important era for Siam (Thailand). At this period contacts with European powers were made through trade. Ayutthaya being the capital well known for its hospitality attracted Europeans and Asians alike. The first missionaries to come to Thailand were Portuguese: the Dominicans in 1554, the Franciscans in 1583, and the Jesuits in 1606. Then came the French. The first missionaries of the Foreign Mission of Paris came in 1660. Five years later, they had "a theology school, a school for boys sent by the King, and a small school for Christians." This school was called "General College" Later on parish schools were opened in provinces along with churches, e.g., at Phuket, in the South, 1671; at Lopburi, in 1673; at Bangkok, in 1674; at Phitsanulok, in 1675; at Chonburi, in 1707.

After the kingdom of Siam was reestablished in Bangkok in 1767, the French missionaries resumed their educational work in the new capital. From the record of the mission, we find new schools opened in 1796 at Sancta Cruz; in 1772 at Calvary Church; in 1785 at the Assumption parish; in 1834 at St. Francis Xavier parish, SamSen (Pallegoix, 1855, p. 307).

¹ Anecdotal evidence suggests that, the influence of Internet is almost impossible to control. Internet cafés are open on 24 hours a day and 7 days a week basis which impedes the social life of these students by keeping them away from parents. Moreover, many of these parents have no knowledge of these modern technologies; hence, they also have no idea of the purpose why their kids are busy with these machines.

Formation and Catholic Schools in Thailand

Prior to 1969

Before the Vatican Council II, each teaching Congregation² managed its own schools according to its philosophy of education and policies. Church directives especially in the form of Papal Encyclicals had always been faithfully adhered to which served as unifying force for Catholic schools. After the Vatican Council II, all teaching Congregations came together to discern the spirit and the search for common objective in the light of Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education. Before 1965 the Catholic schools were loosely organized as a movement until they became well established in 1969 as Catholic Education Council placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishops' Conference of Thailand.

Deliberations on the Moral and Social Formation in Catholic Schools Between 1969 and 1979

At the National Convention of Catholic Schools held in 1969, the Catholic Education Council formulated a general policy for Catholic schools and it has been adhered to ever since.

1. Aim and nature of the Catholic school in Thailand
The aim of the Catholic school is the full development of the human person according to Christian principles.
2. The social responsibility of the Catholic school in Thailand
 - 2.1. The Catholic school "aims to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the gospel spirit of freedom and charity." (cf. GE no. 8)
 - 2.2. The School must also provide its students with ample opportunities to take upon themselves personal and social responsibilities according to their age and maturity.
 - 2.3. The School administration
 - (a) will pay special attention to contemporary needs; (cf. GE no. 9).
 - (b) will be equipped with educational skills which reflect modern day findings (cf. GE no. 8).
 - (c) will give an increasing share in the formulation of policies and the administration of the schools to the teaching staff.
 - (d) will show special concern for the needs of the poor³ or of those who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith (cf. GE no. 9).
 - (e) will perform their services as partners of the parents (cf. GE no. 5).

² The Brothers of St. Gabriel, De La Salle Brothers, St. Paul de Chartres Sisters, The Ursulines, The Salesians, Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Lovers of the Cross, Sisters of the Holy Infants Jesus, etc.

³ Schools serve the poor by providing scholarships or other forms of financial aid given to the needy students; especially in the parochial schools. Sometimes, up to 80% of the students are given free education.

(f) will give serious consideration to all the directives and orientations emanating from the Ministry of Education.

3. The responsibility of the Catholic school to the Catholic Church and to other religions in Thailand

The Catholic Education Council recommends

- 3.1. That the Catholic school be a centre for dialogue with other religions
- 3.2. That the Catholic school forms youths according to the positive content of their faith
- 3.3. That the Catholic school foster an attitude of mutual respect and understanding among youths of different religions
- 3.4. That the Catholic school promote the cultural heritage of the country as a means of expressing religious values
- 3.5. That the Catholic school consider the formation of Catholic youth a primary duty

At the National Convention of Catholic schools held in 1979, the Catholic Education Council reexamined the common aim of the Catholic school in Thailand. It has unanimously adopted the following elaboration on the aim of the Catholic School formulated in 1969:

The Catholic School is committed to the development of the whole man, according to Christian Principles. For this reason, the Thai Catholic School is in service of both Catholic and non-Catholic student. It helps each to develop the ability to think for himself and to develop his own judgment. Each student is expected to seriously explore his religious tradition; the Catholic to deepen his commitment to Jesus and the Church; the non-Christian to explore his own religious heritage, and both to be spiritually enriched by each other. And each will be assisted to integrate his faith with the demands of social justice; initiatives for social justice should increasingly be taken together especially among alumni. The guiding principle for both Catholic and non-Catholic is the realization that the faithfulness of their involvement depends on the vitality of their faith.⁵

The above statements are, in a way, indications of the kind of moral and social formation and training of character children receive in Catholic schools, bearing in mind that Thailand is a Buddhist country and that 90% of students attending Catholic schools are Buddhists. Therefore every Catholic school in an ecumenical spirit, is supposed to strive for these common aims and policies while respecting particular characteristics of each school.

Furthermore every year Catholic school administrators come together during the annual conference to exchange their viewpoints concerning moral and social

⁴ The majority of the students in the Catholic schools in Thailand are predominantly Buddhists, followed by Christians, and others religions.

⁵ By Rev. Daven Day, S J 1979.

formation of their students. As a result, school administrators themselves had to undertake certain pedagogical trainings especially “Reflective Pedagogy,” Ignatius Pedagogy⁶ designed for effective teachers in Catholic schools. Besides this, School administrators have to undergo some other training from time to time as needs arise.

During the course of further formation, the administrators also learn how to implement changes with regard to religious and moral formation of their students; for example, how to teach catechism to catholic students and at the same time how to teach morals to non-catholic students. Accordingly, an academic committee was formed to rewrite a new curriculum on catechism based on the life of Christ to fit in with the country’s culture; the committee also prepared moral lessons for other students. In all cases, all studies are based on the Vatican II’s teaching especially the decrees on Christian Education, the Church in the Modern World, and Religious Freedom. For us this is “the full development of the human person according to Christian principles.”

The National Convention of Catholic schools of 1979 has significant bearing on Catholic schools in that it reexamined the aim of the Catholic school, formulated in 1969, in the light of “The Catholic School,” a document issued by the Sacred Congregation for Christian Education, in 1977.

Besides, the 1979 National Convention also discussed at length the position paper on “Mission and Education” proposed by the Asian Bishops’ Conference. Its final deliberations have been accepted as Guiding Principles for Catholic schools in Thailand which confirm some of the deliberations of 1969 and 1979.

The National Convention of Catholic Schools of 1982 emphasized “the education in value for the societies of the year 2000” This study was done in the General Assembly of the International Office of Catholic Education held in Bangkok. The four values to be inculcated in pupils by all Catholic schools are:

1. Respect for others
2. Responsible solidarity
3. Creativity
4. Interiority

Respect for others as others is a value to be stressed in Thai education that excels in traditional hospitality. The present evolution of society makes such an education an urgent priority: development of pluralism in societies, the necessity of democratic participation and of protecting minorities, the acceleration of democratization in education, etc. These tendencies call for great tolerance between the citizens of a society.

In the classroom or the school setting, “Respect for others as others” implies initiating pupils into social life in the broader sense:

⁶ A pedagogy of St. Ignatius of Loyola which was a course designed by the Jesuits in Australia for effective teachers in Catholic schools.

- Respect for each pupil and the acceptance of differences
- Learning the art of dialogue and team-work
- Respect for the pledged word and or just authority
- A knowledge of each person's rights and duties
- Relations founded on justice and the promotion of the common good
- Respect for the environment

Responsible solidarity could arouse the suspicion of sociologists. They are wary of hollow words about universal brotherhood. What is essential is a social analysis enabling us to set our own country in the global context of international relations; similarly, a reflection on the running of the school establishment is urgently required: selection, elitism, corruption, indifference, and social ineffectualness have to be examined.

In particular, solidarity is taught through progressive actions and initiatives.⁷ In the Asian context, it means “responsibility and collaboration.”

Creativity is a value to be inculcated in the Catholic schools. It means “active methods,” the pedagogy of exploration and discovery, education in divergent and convergent thinking, teamwork and pedagogy of encouragement and support.⁸ Creativity should not serve as a refuge for individualism and self-interest.

Interiority is another good value for Catholic schools. In the Asian context, it means teaching children to pray together. In Thailand, we have a common morning prayer for all pupils, whether they are Catholics or not. It is composed for all religions. So also, there is a common afternoon prayer at the end of the school day. Furthermore, children, especially secondary school pupils should be guided toward the interior life; toward the values of silence, personal meditation, and prayer. Actually, the practice of Buddhist meditation is also encouraged in Catholic schools.

Education in values has been given to school administrators and teachers in the form of seminars many times. All Catholic schools have been encouraged to have their own value system such as honesty, responsibility, generosity, self-discipline, etc. along with the nation's values: Country, Religion, and the King.

To conclude, the deliberations of 1969, 1979, and 1982⁹ presented above are recommendations proposed to all Catholic schools to put to practice in their educative evangelization while respecting individual school's initiative and creative thinking. Whether or not all schools have done it to their utmost is the question

⁷ For example, at the schools nowadays courses are not evaluated not only on the basis of examinations but also students are divided into teams and assigned team projects to foster collaboration and sense of responsibility to the group.

⁸ Same explanation, please refer to endnote 7, and also to Rev. Ekwa bis Isal, SJ in bibliography No. 3.

⁹ The above-mentioned dates are the major milestones of Catholic thinking as a result of deliberations of Vatican II. Hence, despite further developments made in the later years but those developments were in line with the major deliberations of Catholic Education Management under such headings as “Learning Persons, Loving and Caring Community, Reaching for Human Excellence According to Christian Principles.”

of every school's faithfulness to their consciences. In general, we can rest certain that all Catholic schools have tried their best to give Christian education to children entrusted to them as witness to their faith in God.¹⁰

Research on Catholic Schooling: Existing Studies and Future Needs

Thailand's Office of Catholic Education Council is established on the campus of Assumption University (AU) Ramkhamhaeng 24, Bangkok 10240. It has been there since 1975 and the Catholic Education Council makes use of AU's Institutional Research Center for its studies on various topics of interest, one such research center is ABAC Poll.

Existing Studies

A survey by ABAC poll during the St. Valentine's Day in 2005. This survey is a product of ABAC Poll Research Center at Assumption University of Thailand, supported by the Department of Disease Control at the Ministry of Public Health. The survey presents patterns of sexual value and risk behavior of Sexually Transmitted Diseases on Valentine's Day among Thai Youths, aged 14–25, in Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

ABAC Poll staff members administered the survey to eligible young people at their households during 24 January–9 February 2005. Participation was voluntary. Questionnaires were self-administered. The stratified multistage sampling was applied for selecting participants. There were 1,513 respondents in the survey.

The findings showed that 39.50% of total respondents attached importance to Valentine's Day. After estimating, it was found that 97,372 out of 818,166 or 11.90% of young people in Bangkok intended to have sex on the day. Somewhat alarmingly for traditional Thai morals, the survey showed that 23.80% of respondents who had previous experience in having sex tended to have more than one sexual partner. Moreover, 22.70% of the people made the decision to have sex with someone after knowing them for less than a day and 6.7% reported that they had engaged in group sex. According to the risky sexual behavior of catching sexually transmitted diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS), there was a public health concern because the currently sexually active youths sometimes using condoms and those who had never used condoms were 39.50% and 19.60% respectively.

The survey results also found that 40.90% of total respondents agreed with the vending machine of condoms available in their schools or universities; however, 36.50% disagreed and 22.60% did not have any comments. We may say that knowledge without awareness of the risk did not determine whether or not Thai Youths in Bangkok engaged in having safe sex.

¹⁰ They ask for annual convention of Catholic schools administrators. But these deliberations are not better than the main principles. These deliberations are built on the previous three deliberations and these need to be adopted from time to time.

In conclusion, the survey shows that many youths in Bangkok would have sex on Valentine's day and other unsafe sexual activities (e.g., failing to use condoms, having group sex, having more than one sexual partner). Therefore, the Ministry of Public Health and other related agencies to this situation should have a strong and very active health campaign against their risky behavior of sexually transmitted diseases.

Current Study

A study was designed to understand how far the activities organized by Catholic schools under the umbrella of Catholic Education Council of Thailand help students to develop their ethical, moral, and social responsibilities.

The result from this study will let the concerned personnel know the value and the kind of activities which Catholic schools under the umbrella of Catholic Education had organized for their students. This result may be used as benchmark of improvement and adjustment of Catholic Education system in Thailand.

A survey has been carried out with 70 Catholic schools in Thailand to understand how they preach the ethical, moral, and social responsibilities to the students. The respondents of the study comprised of diocesan schools, schools run by Teaching Congregations, and the schools run by Lay Catholics.

Research Findings

For this pilot study, out of 306 Catholic schools in total number, there were 70 Catholic schools as the samples, which provided as 38 schools administered by dioceses, 25 schools administered by religious groups, and 7 schools administered by lay people. Findings from the survey by Assumption University Center for Institutional Research (AUCIR) between June and July 2005 of all Catholic schools in the country show how the morals and social teaching are conducted in the schools. The findings are as follows:

(1) *Moral Formation* The survey on activities in teaching and learning process included in the curriculum concerning ethics and moral formation provided to students resulted as:

The most important activity in teaching and learning process included in the curriculum concerning ethics and morals formation provided to students was adding learning integration on ethics and morals in every subject of learning groups by 44 schools (62.9%).

The second was teaching Catechism to Catholic students and daily homeroom activity in the morning for knowledge of ethics and morals, each equally by 19 schools (27.1%). The third was classroom for teaching religion, ethics, and morals by 17 schools (24.3%).

The other activities were formulating teaching plans to support ethics and morals by 13 schools (18.6%), providing the quality of life and ethics development's hour by eight schools (11.4%), and providing an ethics course as an elective course by three schools (4.3%).

The survey on supplementary activities added to the curriculum for formatting ethics and morals resulted as:

All Catholic schools as the samples (100%) supplemented activities for important religious days to the curriculum for ethics and morals formation in students. The next supplementary activities were ethics camp¹¹ for better state of mentality by 41 schools (58.6%), activities promoting ethics and on ethics and morals lectured by priests or religious by 15 schools (21.4%), promoting students activity clubs according to different religions by eight schools (11.4%), and religious practicing on important religious days by three schools (4.3%).

The survey on extra activities added to the curriculum for ethics and morals formation in students resulted as:

It was found that the most extra activity added to the curriculum for ethics and morals formation in students were social activities useful for community by 16 schools (22.9), certificates granted to well-behaved students by six schools (8.6%), and promoting students to take part in ethical concerned activities held by external organizations and activities of practicing meditation, each equally by 19 schools (5.7%).

(2) *Social Formation* The survey on activities concerning teaching and learning process included in the curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students resulted as:

It was found that the most activity concerning teaching and learning process included in the curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students was adding learning integration on ethics and morals in every subject of learning groups by 42 schools (60.0%). The next ones were developing analytical skills in social study such as news analyzing by eight schools (11.4%), daily homeroom activities in the morning by six schools (8.6%), adding knowledge concerning local community (local wisdom) in concerned courses by four schools (5.7%), and specifying social responsibility as one of the required admirable characteristics of well-behaved students in curriculum by two schools (2.9%)

The survey on supplementary activities added to the curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students resulted as:

The most supplementary activity added to curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students was Boy-Scouts and Girl-Guides activities by 21 schools (30.0%). The second was activities supporting important events such as Earth Day, World Environment

¹¹ The activities in ethics camp includes, visit to rural areas or slum areas with an objective to help the deprived community of the Thai society. A wide range of activities are performed within these three to four days ethics camps.

Day, and so on by 12 schools (17.1%). The third was activities supporting social awareness and responsibility by ten schools (14.3%). The fourth was counseling activities aimed to make students aware of their goal and duties by nine schools (12.9%).

The next activities were educational trips aimed to make students understand social environment and special guest speakers for specific knowledge such as sex education, drug abuse, and so on, each equally by five schools (7.1%), and military training course for students by four schools (5.7%).

The survey on extra activities added to the curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students resulted as:

The most extra activity added to the curriculum concerning social awareness and responsibility formation provided to students was activities supporting charity and donation for society by 55 schools (78.6%). The next activities were activities supporting democracy¹² by 27 schools (38.6%), activities supporting school and community's cleanliness by 20 schools (28.6%), activities supporting antidrugs by 19 schools (5.7%), activities supporting social responsibility and self-responsibility by 17 schools (24.3%), activities supporting environmental preservation by 14 schools (20.0%), activities supporting energy saving by nine schools (12.9%), activities supporting maintenance of local cultures by seven schools (10.0%), activities supporting consumerism¹³ by three schools (4.3%).

Agenda for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, numerous future researches can be initiated. One such study may be directed to understand, what are most effective and efficient pedagogy to create socially and morally responsible youths. Also, research needs to be directed to understand, what else is to be incorporated into the existing curriculum that will foster a better social and moral awareness among these youths.

Conclusion

The leadership of the various Catholic schools in Thailand considers the teaching of ethics and the instilling of concepts of moral and social responsibility as matters of great importance. At a time when traditional values are declining and many youngsters tend to be afflicted by social ills such as drug addiction, delinquency, violence, and crime the schools are stepping up efforts to disseminate the virtues of love, devotion, harmony, and the rules of conduct as taught by the Catholic

¹² These educational activities are designed to create social awareness regarding their duties and responsibilities as a member of a civil society.

¹³ To make these youths realize the downside of consumerism or consumer culture.

Church. His Eminence Michael Cardinal Michai Kitbunchu, chairman of the Catholic Education Council has confirmed that such duties and responsibilities are considered as sacred and mandated and the schools under the guidance of the Bishops' Conference of Thailand shall continue in these endeavors for strengthening and fortifying human values and the society at large.

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CHALLENGES FOR THE SCHOOLS OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT PAUL OF CHARTRES IN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY ACCOUNT

Kaetkaew Punnachet and Sister Maria Atchara Supavai, SPC

This chapter aims to provide a background account of the contemporary challenges and responses of the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres who are working in Thailand. Over the last 100 years, the congregation has striven to achieve its mission by providing an all-round education using a Christ-centred approach. However, with many contemporary challenges, especially from the secularisation of society, other problems have arisen, which will cause the sisters to face considerable difficulties. This chapter will be categorised into four sections: the first section focuses on the original mission of the congregation and their mission in Thailand. The second section aims to provide a picture of the contemporary challenges that the Sisters might face in the position of leaders of the school. The third section provides the response to those challenges and the final section recommends further research that needs to be done in SPC schools.

Origin of the Mission

Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres

The Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres (SPC) is an International Apostolic and Missionary Roman Catholic congregation, united by the same ideal: the ideal of Marie Anne de Tilly and Father Louise Chauvet¹ and their companions, who founded the congregation in 1696.² Their life is organised around three poles: prayer, fraternal life, and service of the poor. Since the founding of the

¹ He was a parish priest of Levesville-la-Chenard, a little village in the region of Bauce, around 60 miles south-east of Paris.

² The original mission was to instruct the daughters of the farm labourers, to teach the poor and uneducated girls of the village, to visit the poor and the sick in their hamlets, and to serve in hospices in small communities of two or three sisters.

congregation, the Sisters have been committed to the education of children, the care of the sick and the handicapped, and catechising.

The Congregation still responds to the needs of faraway missions. The fundamental mission of the congregation has been derived from St. Paul's mission, which is Christ-centred, and due to the St. Paul spirit, the congregation has expanded all over the world. For example, the schools of the White Lily in Japan, the schools of Saint Paul in the Philippines and in Hong Kong, the schools of Saint Joseph in Thailand and the schools of France in Africa prepare the youth for the future. In the hospitals of Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Martinique, and elsewhere, the Sisters endeavour, with the help of the most modern equipment, to alleviate the sufferings of their patients.

The Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres have been working in Thailand for more than 100 years. At present, there are 33 schools in 20 provinces under their responsibility around Thailand. There are 3,313 teachers and 67,953 students in these schools (Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres, 2003). The congregation is also working in two archdiocesan hospitals, an orphanage for children infected with AIDS, a day care centre and a home for the aged as well as a special school for tribal minorities. In 1999, the Thai sisters opened a house in Laos, in order to raise the human and spiritual level of this very poor country. After several attempts from 1997, the authorisation was finally granted on 9 September 1999 to open a co-educational school for physically handicapped young people in Vientiane.

For more than 100 years, the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres in Thailand have provided good cooperation between the Thai government and the Catholic Church and also provided education in schools according to the ideals of the congregation. The Thai Ministry of Education also provides formal acknowledgement of the quality of teaching in these schools of the congregation. Moreover, many of the schools of the congregation have also received awards from the Ministry of Education (Phewkling, 1995, p. 6).

Contemporary Challenges for the Schools

This section will explore the contemporary challenges for the schools, especially in terms of social and political factors and the voice of the Catholic Church. There are five major challenges: (1) secularization; (2) the change process, which focuses more on wider cultural change and the behaviour changes of young people; (3) Charism, especially regarding financial problems; (4) the problem of preparation for school leadership³; and (5) political and social forces.

³ Grace clarifies the distinction between educational leadership and school leadership: educational leadership "is a term often used to describe leadership in a wide range of settings, e.g., national and local education policy formation, community and adult education, higher education, etc.," while school leadership "generally refers to leadership in a specific institutional settings, i.e., an educational institution for children or young people. However, these distinctions are not strictly observed because difficulties arise when it is necessary to refer to educational leadership (relating to curriculum and pedagogy) in school settings" (Grace, 1996, p. 4).

1. Secularisation

It is legitimate to argue that like many countries⁴ around in the world, Thailand has become dominated by secularisation, although to a different degree. In Western Europe, the concept of secularisation seems to be stronger and many people believe in the death of religion. Norris and Inglehart (2004) argued:

The death of religion was the conventional wisdom in the social sciences during most of the twentieth century; indeed it has been regarded as *the* master model of sociological inquiry, where secularization was ranked with bureaucratization, rationalization, and urbanization as the key historical revolutions transforming medieval agrarian societies into modern industrial nations. (p. 3)

These authors continue to provide evidence for the trend of secularisation by using the argument of Wright Mills (1959), which said:

Once the world was filled with the sacred – in thought, practice, and institutional form. After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, in the private realm. (p. 3)

According to some writings in sociology and philosophy, secularisation is one of the sources from which other problems stem. Many people have blamed this problem on science and technology. Some have claimed this secularisation has been caused by the missionaries who brought the western educational system into colonised countries, influencing their education and production (Tournas,⁵ 1996, pp. 27–28). Some attribute the problems to economic growth, which has encouraged a culture of measurement in terms of productivities.

Secularisation is a definite challenge for Catholic schools, as it is referred to in this context as:

the denial of the validity of the sacred and of the associated culture and its replacement by logical, rational, empirical and scientific intellectual culture in which the notion of the transcendent has no place. (Grace, 2002, p. 11)

Catholic schools originated in, and must remain rooted in, sacred culture. Without constant reference to the sacred, Catholic schools will lose their purpose.⁶

⁴ Carmody (2000) explored the concept of Catholic schools and secularisation and found tension between the Catholic educational mission and the secular schooling system. He argued that Catholic schools seemed to be overshadowed by secular educational systems (Carmody, B. (2000). Zambia's Catholic schools and secularisation. *History of Education* 29(4), 357–371).

⁵ Stephen A. Tournas (1996). From Sacred initiation to bureaucratic apostasy: junior secondary school-leavers and the secularisation of education in southern Africa. *Comparative Education* 32(1), 27–43.

⁶ The Vatican document entitled “The Catholic School” (1970) mentioned that, “the Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ” (para. 55).

McLaughlin (2000) conducted an extensive literature review on the subject of Catholic schools and concluded that the purpose of Catholic schools is to:

Proclaim the kingdom through an authentic educational enterprise, by developing within it an ethos and structures that aim to reflect the values that Jesus lived. In practical terms this means aspiring towards right relationships critiqued by justice, charity, peace and liberty. (p. 110)

It could also be argued that secularisation of consciousness could stem from the western educational theoretical framework itself, and from the technique of research and enquiry, through which academic scholars have neglected the religious perspective. This could have directly contributed to research results, which often affect the decisions of policymakers, leaders, and the authorities. From this point, the curriculum, pedagogy, leadership theory, organisational theory, and training programmes could be dominated by secularisation.

It could also be legitimately argued that when the authorities or the leaders of Catholic schools have studied and followed the guidelines of the secular “training” courses that are normally provided by universities and colleges, they tend to adopt secular management techniques, which have been carefully set up from secular research techniques. To give one example from Thailand, the Thai government has set the law that any person who is going to be in the position of principalship, in either a public or a private school, must hold at least a master’s degree, preferably in Educational Management and Administration.⁷ Using leadership theory as an example, it could be argued that most leadership theories that have been taught in Educational Management course are derived from business and corporate culture. None of the leadership theories that the principals have to study in such courses use a Christ-centred approach based on the philosophy of service (Punnachet, 2006).

The overwhelming influence of secular theories on education provided by universities and colleges could misguide the principals, drawing them away from their original mission of providing education to the poor and representing Christ, who is poor and loves the poor. Also, the concept of secular school effectiveness, which aims to use test scores as a major measurement of school success, could really misguide Catholic principals, especially in the high “uncertainty avoidance”⁸ culture of Thailand (Hofstede, 1991).

⁷ According to the western literature, leadership and administration seem to have major differences from management. For example, leadership seems to provide the drive and direction for achieving the objective by putting stress on the keywords, such as values, vision, and mission. Management deals with the use of resources, and is associated with planning, organising, and budgeting. Administration seems to be associated with operational matters at lower levels.

In Thailand, the term “administration” could be perceived as a synonym for “management.” Beare et al. (1989) try to clarify the confusion surrounding the use of the term. They suggest that the terms “administration” and “management” could be best understood when located in the cultural context. The Thai educational system leans towards the US system, which prefers the term “Educational Administrator.”

⁸ Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 113). The principals therefore normally follow strict guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education. Hallinger and Kantamala (2000,

2. Wider Cultural and Behavioural Changes

Today on all continents, the young are living in difficult situations, influenced by materialism, cultural changes, family divisions, violence in all its forms, the lack of moral and spiritual standards. In your educational missions, together with the lay people who collaborate in your institutions, it is important that you offer a scientific, human, moral and religious training of high quality, thereby giving young people the chance to build up and structure their personality and to overcome the problems they encounter, enabling them to envisage a more peaceful future.

(John Paul II, Address to the Sisters of Saint-Paul de Chartres, 2001)

Secularisation not only affects the way in which the principal leads the school, but also has an impact on wider cultural and behavioural changes among young people. It is worth outlining Thailand's cultural background before going on to explore the changes that affect young people's culture and behaviour.

(a) Background of Thai Culture The kingdom of Thailand is situated in the Indo-Chinese peninsula of South-east Asia. Thailand is usually referred to as "Land of the Free," because it has never been colonised by any other country. Visitors are welcome as equals, and as a result, "racial and religious prejudice is virtually unknown" (Tonkin & Kongsiri, 1996, p. 11). The population of Thailand was just over 64 million in 2003, of whom 95% were Buddhist, 4% Muslim, and 0.5% Catholic.

Tonkin and Kongsiri (1996, p. 13) note that the Buddhist religion could be considered to be of special importance in Thailand. Buddhism has an important bearing upon the structure and meaning of Thai life. Not only is it the national religion of Thailand, but it is also a major force in the life of the Thai people. Therefore, the influence of Buddhism upon the Thai culture is pervasive. The lifestyles of Buddhists affect the culture in the sense that Buddhists tend to be flexible, tolerant, patient, and forgiving, because they accept their karma (the accumulation of sin and good deeds) and believe that they cannot change it (Rattanapongpaisan, 2001).

Thailand can be categorised as a feminine culture⁹ according to Hofstede (2001), as its score is 34, which is considered to be low in the masculinity index.

p. 192) note that the result of high power distance, which is evident in the Thai educational system, is an expectation that a higher authority will make decisions: the ministry for administrators and for principals, principals for teachers and parents, and teachers for students. This could be called a *Fiat* culture.

⁹ Another of Hofstede's cultural dimensions concerns masculinity and femininity. He suggested that men's goals were significantly different from women's goals and could therefore be expressed on a continuum between masculine and feminine poles. The masculine culture is a culture where male values, such as toughness, assertiveness, and ambition, dominate. People in this culture tend to value the opportunity for high earnings, getting the recognition they deserve when doing a good job, having the opportunity for advancement to higher-level jobs and having challenging work to do, from which they derive a sense of accomplishment. In feminine cultures, people are likely to value a good working relationship with their supervisors; they are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with their quality of life. This kind of culture emphasises non-materialistic aspects of success.

Patience and tolerance are important to the Thai people, as Tonkin and Kongsiri (1996, p. 29) argued: “Buddhism is the Middle Path, the avoidance of extremes and violence, the attainment of harmony, inner and external.” Thais normally have the ability to control their feelings. Moreover, criticism is regarded as verbal abuse (Tonkin & Kingsiri, 1996, p. 29). Although Komin (1991) found that Thais can be easily provoked to strong emotional reactions if their dignity is offended (p. 161), in the normal situation, “smooth interpersonal relationship orientation” was found to be an important Thai cultural value. The “smooth” interpersonal relationship orientation includes nine factors: Thais tend to be (1) caring and considerate, (2) kind and helpful, (3) responsive to situations and opportunities, (4) self-controlled, (5) tolerant and restrained, (6) polite and humble, (7) calm and cautious (*jai yen*), (8) contented, and (9) focused on social relations.

(b) Changes in Cultural Values and Behaviour Komolmas and Salam (in this volume) have explained at some length how modern technology affects the behaviour of young people. Indeed, materialism and technological development have made Thai teenagers less and less patient and tolerant. For example, when they need some information, they can easily obtain it from the Internet with only one click. The rapid responsiveness of email on both computers and mobile phones makes it difficult for them to understand the real meaning of “patience,” which is embedded in Thai cultural values. This loss of the sense of patience is at the root of many other behaviour problems that conflict with Thai cultural values, such as loss of self-control, loss of positive social relationships, etc.

Globalisation and the effect of the mass media have had an impact on students’ morals and ethics as a result of Internet use and consumer culture, as Komolmas and Salam have explained. This may be at the root of problems of aggressiveness and the loss of a sense of respect towards others. This could be because young people have learnt from the media that what adults can do, they also have a right to do. This could be one problem that challenges the methods of teaching in Catholic schools, in the sense of how to embed morality and teach young people to judge what is right and wrong.

Political and economic changes are also influential: the economic recession in Thailand has brought increasing unemployment. The economic system brings three major problems and challenges for Catholic schools in terms of affecting parents, students, and schools themselves.

For students, in order to gain qualifications and guarantee their employment, they seriously need to achieve high academic scores in order to attain places at university. They thus seem to focus entirely on test scores, with not much interest in morality and spirituality.

Schools now seem to be run using market metaphors, with students being perceived as “customers,” although Pring (1996) warns against this view. With a competitive market for education, schools have to attract “customers,” and one way to do so is to ensure that the percentage of students who gain places in public universities is as high as possible. Thus, schools seem to focus more on

secular academic achievements based on test measurements. Given the strength of external forces, it is difficult to deny that this trend threatens to overshadow the teaching of morality and Christian spirituality as a major focus.

(c) Service to the Poor It should be noted here that Catholic schools in Thailand are private schools. Their principals are responsible for finding the money to support the schools. This represents a further dilemma facing the Catholic school system today in terms of the original mission of service to the poor. However, the next section on responses to the challenges will explore in more detail the charism of the congregation.

It could be perceived that financial problems are less serious than the problem of “admission and exclusion.” Catholic private schools, especially religious-run private schools, seem to be the first choice for parents from all faiths, across all parts of the world, irrespective of language, race, or religion. Evidence that could be presented to support the popularity of Thai Catholic schools includes the fact that His Majesty King Rama IX and later Her Majesty Queen Sirikit both studied at Catholic-run private schools. Moreover, the present Prime Minister and many Ministers and their children also received their education from Catholic schools. It should be noted here that the school in which H.M. Queen Sirikit studied is one of the SPC run schools. With too many applications to these schools, the problem of admission and exclusion seems to be severe in Thailand, although this has not yet been researched.

With insufficient places to accept all students who apply to Catholic schools, the problem that Grace (1996) found regarding the special mission of Catholic schools to serve the poor seems to be also a severe dilemma for Thai Catholic educational leaders. Moreover, it is assumed that Thai educational leaders have to face the problem that Grace referred to as “playing the market” (p. 85), which involves “selecting the most able pupils from educationally supportive homes in order to maximise the output of measurable success on league tables of performance.”

To Grace (1996), the exclusion problems provide a sharp dilemma, since admission allows students to benefit from the academic, spiritual, and moral culture, while exclusion officially excludes students from participation in the faith community. Grace explained that exclusion challenges school leaders because a Catholic leader should be guided by Gospel values. He pointed out:

The act of exclusion has powerful symbolic and cultural meanings within Catholic schooling. To the extent that such schools explicitly represented themselves in most of the cases as a loving and caring community permeated by Gospel values, the act of pupil exclusion, as an act of apparent rejection, was discordant with this value culture. (p. 78)

In conclusion, this section provides a broad picture of the challenges that Catholic religious principals must face. We would like to use Grace’s statement to conclude this section. Grace (1996, p. 84) raised a major question, which focused on Catholic values and market values. He clearly argued that:

the critical question for Catholic school leaders in new circumstances is “can a balance be found between Catholic values and market values, or will market forces begin to compromise the integrity of the special mission of Catholic schooling? Can Gospel values survive in the face of a more direct relationship with the market place?”

In conclusion, the challenges that the SPC has to face could be summarised by using this quotation from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Thailand:

The world in the age of globalization is struggling for power and possession. Economic factors, trade, inventions, scientific and technological development are the decisive forces which promote, lead and accelerate the movement of structural and operational mechanisms of trade and of economic, ideological and political systems at all levels. Globalization generates these forces as the world mainstream to bring about rapid and critical change beyond frontiers. No other forces can resist this change. The driving force of power and possession of a small group of people is further strengthened by economic and political power as well as by the more advanced technologies they enjoy, enabling them to manipulate and exploit this global relationship of humanity for their own benefits. It takes advantage of transnational development in all sectors to intervene and dominate ideologies, economic and political systems, resources and technologies of the peoples who are less capable to use these forces. The penetration of this one global culture is threatening the diversity of civilizations and cultures, and widening the gap between it and the various groups of different ethnic peoples, cultures, belief systems, backgrounds and ideologies. Consequently, each group has to struggle for its existence and future. (Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Thailand CBCT)

Responses to the Challenges

... of all the works of charity, there are none more pleasing to God nor more worthy of merit than to instruct the ignorant and to assist the afflicted. ... (Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres, n.d.)

The response to the challenges faced by the congregation will be discussed from three perspectives:

- For the Glory of God
- The good of the church
- The service of others

The congregation has no territorial preference and responds with fidelity to the call to serve, with a special love for the most neglected, anywhere in the world. Their major services include education, nursing, and all kinds of pastoral work.

Since the foundation of the congregation, it has been committed to the education of children, the care of the sick and the handicapped, and catechesis.

The Sisters started working at St. Louis' Hospital in 1898. Assumption Convent School, their first school, was founded in 1905. For a century, the Sisters in Thailand have remained faithful to their charism, especially on the service to the poor and the marginalised.

Service to the Disabled

The latest challenge of this province is the challenge to educate the disabled in Laos PDR. The Vocational School for the Disabled was established in 1999. However, it was the vision from Mother Anne Marie (Superior General of the order from 1989–2001) and her assistants to raise the human and spiritual level of this very poor country. The distance from Vientiane and Nong-kai (border of Thailand) is only 30 km. Nonetheless, the level of living is much lower. After several attempts from 1997, the permission was granted to Mother Myriam Kitcharoen (present Superior General) on 9 September 1999 (9/09/1999) to open a vocational school for the disabled.

At the beginning, there were 110 students from nine provinces of Laos PDR. To be admitted, the applicant is expected to have finished at least their second year high school education. Those who have not obtained their certificates are helped to prepare for it.

Listening to the “Voice” of the Deaf and Dumb

A very recent challenge occurred in October 2006. It was when a Sister heard the voice (need) from the deaf and dumb. Earlier, in the beginning of this year, they visited the school, and she saw in their eyes the eagerness to be accepted in this school. The decision was made to reach out to them. She had to study their language in order to communicate with them and search for a translator for the teacher to help them while the teacher teaches. Finally, they were accepted in the school to take the computer course.

The mission's focus is on the provision of scholarship, humanity, and evangelical counsels:

- Providing all funds to fulfil the project from the construction, continuing education of teachers, and performing all school-related affairs, its mission is therefore to benefit free and favourable activity.
- Performing the humanity-based mission through vocational formation as well as other supplementary vocations for daily life, teaching on morals, and joint management with the Board by means of the Evangelical Counsels—either rational clarification or behaviour, such as pardon, paying attention to neighbours, fairness, honesty, simplicity, and humbleness.

So far, only two SPC Sisters have been permitted by the Lao Government to reside in Lao PDR for this mission. Recently, a key government officer individually expressed his opinion to us: “whoever was nurtured by you would receive all good things to his life as you treat all your cripple students as if they were your

natural children.” The Sister replied: Exactly, because they are “Jesus Christ” in our sight The Sisters therefore:

- Make a search for the “lost lambs of God” and visit Catholic families with non-baptised children encouraging catechism and baptism at the church, as well as persuading them to join youth activities organised by the church and providing their further studies.
- Try to help those that need care, i.e, Catholic and non-Catholic orphans. These orphans are particularly helped through employment and vocational education. Ones who need extraordinary treatments will be taken to special treatment physicians until they get well and are ready for the vocational courses provided.
- Provide commuting vehicles for elderly Catholics and their families to attend the Sunday Masses.

Resisting Sexual Exploitation

The other challenge that needs to be considered is the problem of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of girls in northern Thailand. It is a big problem which needs to be eliminated. It is considered to be one of the worst forms of child labour. It is reported that as many as 300,000 women and girls are engaged in trafficking. What is much worse than this is that the parents of some girls are willing to trade their daughters to be involved in this crime. They are misled, only by the promise to be given money by the middle agents. To counter this, the congregation has to pay compensation to get their daughters and to educate them in our school. This is provided absolutely free of charge.

The congregation set up a project to prevent “buying and selling girls into prostitution.” The congregation has opened the Princess Ubonratana School for girls in Chiang Mai, 700 km north of Bangkok. Through education, the school tries to help its students, many of whom are from hill-tribe villages and might not have proper citizenship papers, to avoid being exploited. The school offers vocational training and incorporates values education along with teaching the girls to read and write.

The Provincial Superior said, “many agents (working in the sex trade) go to Chiang Mai to look for girls who are virgins.” The police sometimes bring girls they have rescued to the nuns. “Many girls are only 11 years old. Some cannot read or write,” The sister said, adding that it is important to work with local officials and NGOs.

However, the Religious Superior pointed out that the term “trafficking” is not exclusive to the sex trade but refers to “all forms of illegal trafficking.” She said this includes exploitation of people brought into or sent out of the country for cheap labour and the “trading” of orphans and street children by begging syndicates, among other examples.

Consequently, the congregation set up the school in order to teach street kids to respect the dignity and rights of women and girls, and teach everyone how to protect themselves and not be deceived. It should be noted that this school is not

only totally free of charge but must also “buy” the students from their parents in order for them to be educated. Normally, the school “buys” girls so their parents cannot “sell” their children to be prostitutes.

Apart from that, the congregation has undertaken to help the HIV children whose parents died of AIDS, by raising them up in our clinic.

Additionally, there is an urgent need to help the hill-tribe women and girls who might be involved as victims from north-west Thailand especially in Mae Sod, which is the district between the border of Myanmar and Thailand. To avoid the widespread sex tourism and to help eliminate trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, we need to help these ethnic hill tribes by establishing schools for them in the remote areas. Some schools have been founded in the north-west and northern part of Thailand. These schools are:

- St. Joseph Mae Ramard School
- Patrawit School in Mae Sod
- St. Joseph Mae Jam in Chiangmai

Agenda for Future Research

As Komolas and Salam encourage further research to be done in this field, it seems to us that research in education in Thailand is very limited. There is even less focus on Catholic education, very little of which focuses on the work of the SPC congregation. Although there have been some studies on the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres in Thailand, most of them are in the form of doctoral and master’s dissertations, which primarily adopt a positivist method based on questionnaire surveys. This could be because for most master’s dissertations it is recommended in Thai universities, that students adopt the questionnaire approach. This is perhaps because the Thai educational system has been influenced by the North American educational system. Gartell and Gartell (1996) noted that the positivist paradigm, which uses questionnaires as a research technique, is still widely used in North America, and this has been reproduced in Thailand.

However, from the perspective of international researchers, positivism in educational research has been declining in importance over the last 30 years because of its major weaknesses, its failure to understand the complexity of human nature and the quality of social phenomena (Neuman, 2003, p. 71). There are many criticisms of positivism. The positivist fails to recognise the unique ability to interpret the meaning of experiences. A fundamental difference that underpins the approach used by the interpretive researcher is the use of qualitative research methods. Future research on Catholic schools in Thailand needs to adopt this approach also.

Although this chapter has presented the response of a congregation providing education to the poor and the marginalized, further research needs to be conducted on service to the poor in urban schools. What changes are needed in this mission?

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SECTION SEVEN

**CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG AND JAPAN**

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN HONG KONG

Magdalena Mo Ching Mok

History of Catholic Education in Hong Kong

The Prefecture Apostolic Period, 1841–1874

Catholic education has a long history of over 160 years in Hong Kong. The establishment of Catholic education in Hong Kong dates back to 1841, the same year at which the British started occupation of Hong Kong under the Convention of Chuen Pi. On 22 April 1841 the Catholic Church announced Hong Kong as a Prefecture Apostolic, with Father Theodore Joset as the first Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong.¹ The first governor of Hong Kong, Sir Henry Pottinger, inaugurated in August 1841, was a visionary leader committed to building up Hong Kong's future. Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842 under the Treaty of Nanking and became a Crown Colony. In the same year, the Governor approved the establishment of a Roman Catholic Seminary in Pottinger Street for the cultivation of Chinese missionaries and translators.

The first school for Chinese boys, Chinese School for Boys, was started in Wellington Street by the Prefecture Apostolic on 1 February 1843.² This was (and still is) an important event not only for Catholic education in Hong Kong, but was also significant for Hong Kong education in general, given that at that time, Hong Kong was still a small fishing village with a total population of about 70,000 and had only three schools for the local children. The Catholic religion then was not popular amongst the local people, with only about 600 Chinese Catholics among a total of around 3,000 Catholics comprising mostly Portuguese and the Filipinos. The first school for children of expatriates (Free school for Portuguese)³ was established in 1845 by the Church to meet the needs of visitors from Europe, particularly those from Ireland, and the Portuguese from Macau.

¹ Source: <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/administrators/cathadmin.htm>, viewed 15 April 2006.

² Source: <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/chronology/>, viewed 15 April 2006.

³ Source: <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/chronology/>, viewed 15 April 2006.

Like most developing countries and regions in other parts of the world, the education of girls is vital to ensuring equity and better quality of life of children. The Prefecture Apostolic era between 1841 and 1874 witnessed significant contributions to the education of girls in Hong Kong. In 1854, Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, an international congregation founded in France, established the French Convent School (renamed St. Paul's Convent School in 1955) for the education of girls from the age of 11–18.⁴ This great work was grounded on the congregation's various charitable services in Hong Kong since 1847, including a hospital, home for the blind, home for the aged, and other services. The school extended to include primary education for girls in 1864. The French Convent School is one of the first Catholic school in Hong Kong history and one of the oldest grant-in-aid schools in Hong Kong.

In 1860 the Canossian Daughter of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious order founded by Marchioness Magdalene (St. Magdalene of Canossa), set up the Italian Convent School (renamed Sacred Heart School, and then Sacred Heart Canossian College in 1960) for the education of girls in Hong Kong soon after arrival from Italy. At its initial establishment, the school had 40 girls being taught Chinese, English, and Portuguese. The first headmistress of the school was Sister Emily Aloysia Bowring, daughter of the fourth Governor of Hong Kong, Sir John Bowring.⁵ The Canossian Daughters of Charity have since established eight secondary schools, ten primary schools, and one kindergarten in Hong Kong.

Parallel to the education of girls, the Church has also had significant contributions to local education in the education of boys and in vocational education for those less academically oriented. In 1860, a small Portuguese school for boys was established in Wellington Street for the training of Portuguese young men in English to take up positions in offices and business firms. In 1864, this small school merged with the Chinese School for Boys of Central Council of Catholic Laity to become the St. Saviour's College (now St. Joseph's College). St. Saviour's College was a very prestigious school at the time. Lessons in St. Saviour's College were taught in four different languages and the curriculum included English, geography, algebra, geometry, music, and art. Graduates were almost guaranteed for employment. Under the appeal of Bishop Raimondi, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers) took over St. Saviour's College and renamed it St. Joseph's College on 7 November 1875. Brother Hidulphe-Marie sent by the Institute became the first Director of St. Joseph's College. St. Joseph's College is a whole day aided all-boys school and it has sustained the prestige held by its predecessor. The College has grown from its initial enrolment of 75⁶ to a total enrolment of about 1,200 in 29 classes (secondary 1 to secondary 7) in 2006.⁷

⁴ Source: http://ihouse.hkedcity.net/~sp1400/schoolprofile/index_history.htm, viewed 27 April 2006.

⁵ Source: <http://www.shcc.edu.hk/>, viewed 27 April 2006.

⁶ Source: Advisory Inspectorate Division, Education Department, February 2001, http://www.emb.org.hk/qai/QAI%20website/C-Qai%20Website/exesum/2000_01/Sec/StJoseph_x.htm, viewed 27 April 2006.

⁷ Source: http://sjc.edu.hk/school_pro.php, viewed 27 April 2006.

West Point Reformatory and Orphanage (renamed St. Louis School) was set up by the Fathers of the Catholic Mission in 1863 in West Point for less academically inclined young men. The school pioneered technical and pre-vocational education in Hong Kong. The initial enrolment comprised only 20 boys and had since grown to an enrolment of around 1,200 in 2006. Initially, the curriculum consisted mainly of trade and technical subjects including shoemaking, carpentry, tailoring, and printing for character training and pre-vocational education of male orphans and destitute juveniles. The Christian Brothers took over school sponsorship since 1875. Sponsorship was taken over first by the Maryknoll Fathers in 1921 and then by the Salesian Fathers in 1927. In 1948, St. Louis School became a Government subsidised Catholic school with a full English grammar school curriculum.⁸

Chinese was the medium of instruction for most Church schools in Hong Kong in the Prefecture Apostolic era, given that most enrolment were Chinese, although some attempts were made to use English as the medium of instruction. In 1862, the Hong Kong Government set up its first formal Anglo-Chinese secondary school, The Government Central College to generate a group of elite boys in China to be competent both in English and Chinese in order to support the everyday running of the Government. The College was named Central Schools for Boys, then renamed Victoria College, and again renamed Queen's College. Its counterpart was Central School for Girls, later renamed as Belilios Public School, which was set up in 1890 for the education of elite local female workers competent in both Chinese and English. In 1866 English was listed as a compulsory curriculum subject for all schools. At the end of the 19th century, many Catholic schools in Hong Kong also used English as the medium of instruction.

The Vicariate Apostolic Period, 1874–1946

On 17 November 1874, Pope Pius IX raised the Hong Kong Prefecture to Vicariate Apostolic and enlarged to include Wai Yeung and Hoi Fung Districts (in addition to San On District) of China, bringing to Hong Kong the Vicariate Apostolic era which lasted until 1946. The first Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong was Mgr Timoleon Raimondi. There were about 8,000 Catholics in Hong Kong which was about 3% of its population of 300,000 at that time. Most Catholics were of non-Chinese origin.

In 1873 the Hong Kong government was keen to include voluntary schools—mainly Catholic and Christian schools run by missionaries—in a grant system which began in 1847 for the Chinese vernacular schools. Many Catholic schools refused to join the grant system as Religious Education was not included in the scheme. The issue was not resolved with all Catholic schools joining the system until 1879 when the system was amended with the help of Governor Sir John Pope Hennessy, himself a Roman Catholic.

⁸ Source: <http://www.stlouis.edu.hk/oursls/Profile/schoolprofile.asp>, viewed 28 April 2005.

In 1861 Qing Dynasty China was ruled in name by a 6-year-old emperor and in reality by his aunt Empress Dowager Cixi for the next 48 years, during which China was defeated by Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895 over control of Korea and forced to adopt an open door foreign trade policy by western powers, particularly Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the USA. The result had led to general unrest throughout China including the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901), and the rebellion led by Dr. Sun Yatsen who overruled Qing Dynasty and established the Chinese Republic in 1912. The long-term unrest in China was associated with famine and plague. About 100,000 casualties of a bubonic plague were reported in Canton in spring of 1894. In May 1894, the plague attacked Hong Kong, leading to about 100 deaths per day at its height and killing a total of 2,552 in the same year. The turmoil was not only detrimental to trade and had led to an exodus of 100,000 Chinese fled from the colony, it had also made Catholic missionary and educative work in Hong Kong almost impossible at the end of the 19th century.

Despite the hardship, the Catholic Church continued its efforts to contribute to local education. Examples include the establishment of Victoria School as a private school in 1883–1896, St. Joseph's College at mid-levels in 1875, Holy Infant School in Kowloon in 1890, and the establishment of Hunghom School in 1891.⁹ Hong Kong's population boomed after World War I, from 530,000 in 1916 to 1.6 million by 1941. Many missionaries from America, Ireland, and Canada arrived in Hong Kong to set up new schools in the 1920s in order to meet local education demand. Notably, Maryknoll Fathers arrived and established their Procure in 1920. Maryknoll Sisters arrived in 1921 and set up Maryknoll Convent School on 11 February 1925, teaching 12 students with a curriculum on basic subjects, the Holy Spirit School for girls on 10 January 1927 for eight classes of students, and a kindergarten in 1925. Holy Spirit was reopened as Maryknoll School in 1948 after World War II; renamed Maryknoll Sisters' School in October 1957 when the school moved to its present location in Happy Valley; renamed Marymount Secondary School and Marymount Primary School in 1983; sponsorship transferred to Columban Sisters in 1979 and to the Christian Life Community in 1997.¹⁰

The Salesian Fathers pioneered trade and technical education in Hong Kong (Waters, 1988). Over the years, the Salesian Fathers had set up five secondary schools and seven primary schools for boys, in addition to an impressive profile of youth development work in Hong Kong, including the Salesian Youth Movement, House Studies, Youth Outreach, Youth Centres, and other. This great work started when the Salesian Fathers arrived on 1 October 1927. Soon after their arrival, St. Louis Industrial School (formerly, West Point Reformatory and Orphanage) was transferred to the care of the Salesian Fathers. In March 1935, the Salesian Fathers was invited to take charge of the Aberdeen Trade School

⁹ Source: <http://www.stlouis.edu.hk/oursls/Profile/schoolprofile.asp>, viewed 28 April 2005.

¹⁰ Source: http://www.mcs.edu.hk/mcs_homepage/schinfo/aboutus/about2.htm, and <http://www.mss.edu.hk/history.htm>, viewed 29 April 2006.

(renamed Aberdeen Technical School in 1952), which was established with donations from such social elite as Sir Shouson Chow, Mr. Fung Ping Shan, Sir Robert Kotewall, Sir Tang Siu Kin, and Sir HoTung for destitute children.

The Jesuit Fathers (Society of Jesus) had an equally impressive contribution to local education. In 3 December 1926, the Jesuit Fathers arrived from Ireland. The following year, Jesuit father Rev. Fr. John Neary, started to teach Religious Knowledge in Wah Yan College. Wah Yan College was a Catholic school for boys founded by a fervent Catholic Mr. Peter Tsui Yan Sau to integrate Catholic and Chinese tradition in the education of boys with English as the medium of instruction. There were only four students when the school was first established in December 1919 but by 1921, the school had grown to 300 students. It became a grant-in-aid school on 1 October 1922, and enrolment reached 800 in 1928, the highest of any school in the colony at that time. On 22 December 1932, the College was transferred to the care of the Society of Jesus and Fr. R. W. Gallagher, S. J. was the first Rector. Wah Yan College had a strong tradition of benevolence. As early as 1938, secondary 5 students offered Free Night Schools for poor children and this good act continued until the Pacific War broke out when the school was burned down and two teaching staff interned. After the war, Wah Yan College resumed on 8 September 1945 and a Chinese stream (Wah Yan Middle School) was added later the same year.¹¹ The Jesuit Fathers also founded in 1929 Ricci Hall, the only Catholic hostel in the secular University of Hong Kong.

The Vicariate Apostolic Period (1874–1946) was a fruitful time for Catholic education in Hong Kong despite society austerity. In addition to the contributions by Maryknoll Fathers, Maryknoll Sisters, Salesian Fathers, Jesuit Fathers, the Canadian Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels arrived Hong Kong on 3 December 1926 to establish St Clare's School the following year, and the Canadian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived in 4 August 1928 and set up Tak Sun School that year. St Clare's, Tuk Sun, Maryknoll Convents, St Louis, and Wah Yan College continued their success until today.

Two events were of particular note for the Vicariate Apostolic Period. The first was the formation of local congregation for educational work, and the second was the establishment of local Catholic weekly newspaper, the *Kung Kau Po*. In 1922 Precious Blood Sisters started as an independent congregation from the Canossians (juridically established as such on 19 July 1929).¹² Tack Ching Girls' Secondary School was established in 1923, and after World War II, a second school Tack Ching Girls' Secondary School II (renamed Precious Blood Secondary School in 1952). In 2006, Precious Blood Sisters has 3 secondary schools, 9 primary schools, and 2 kindergartens in Hong Kong.

The Kung Kau Po, a Catholic weekly printed in Chinese language, was instigated by Fr. A. Granelli and published since 4 August 1928 as a platform for the dissemination of teachings of the Church and Catholic news from a Christian

¹¹ Source: <http://www.wahyan.edu.hk/>, viewed 1 May 2006.

¹² Source: <http://archives.catholic.org.hk/chronology/>, viewed 15 April 2006.

perspective. The English parallel, *Sunday Examiner*, founded by F. N. Maestrini was published since 1 March 1946.

Diocese Establishment Period, 1946–1969

The Church established episcopal hierarchy in China on 11 April 1946 and Hong Kong Vicariate was raised to a diocese. Bishop Valtorta was installed as the first bishop of the diocese on 31 October 1948. The period between 1946 and 1969 was the time when the Hong Kong Diocese developed a strong foundation for subsequent years and forged the identity of Catholic education in Hong Kong. The beginning of this period overlapped with the civil war (1945–1949) of China characterised by major conflicts between Kuomintang Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek and the revolutionary Red Army led by Mao Zedong. It was a period of upheaval and bloodshed. There was an exodus of refugees including Catholics, religious Sisters, and clergymen who fled to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong population rapidly expanded from 0.5 million in 1945 to 2.5 million in 1955. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Religious freedom was denied in communist China. Religious missionaries were expelled from mainland China and many of them continued their mission in Hong Kong. Many schools were set up within this era, including:

- 1947 St. Rose of Lima School of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
- 1949 St. Martin's College of Marist Brothers
- 1951 Sai Kung Sung Tsun Catholic Secondary School re-established as junior secondary school; it is the first secondary school run by the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Schools Council
- 1952 St. Francis Xavier's College of Marist Brothers
- 1958 Raimondi College, St. Joseph's College and Shung Tak Catholic English College as the early secondary schools run by the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Schools Council
- 1959 St. Albert's Priory was used as school premise for the newly established Dominican Primary School in 1959 (renamed as Rosaryhill School in 1961)
- 1962 the secondary section of Dominican Primary School was set up
- 1969 Pope Paul VI College of PIME (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions) Sisters, Missionaries of Immaculate Mary

Two events during the *Diocese Establishment Period* (1946–1969) were of particular note. First, the Diocesan Catechetical Centre was in operation in 1963 for the coordination in spreading the Good News and educating young people with Christian principles and values. Second, Caritas-Hong Kong was founded by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong as a unit in the Catholic Centre in July 1953. The Caritas St. Francis' Secondary School (renamed as Caritas Wu Cheng-chung secondary school) was established in 1969 as a pioneer in pre-vocational education and apprentice training for youth aged 12–19. These two events together

with those already mentioned forged strong links between Catholic education and Chinese culture in Hong Kong.

The *Diocese Establishment Period* (1946–1969) witnessed rapid growth in the number of Catholic schools in Hong Kong to meet the dramatic increase in demand for access to education. In 1954, Mgr Lawrence Bianchi had the vision to establish at least one school for each Parish. This vision was fulfilled with joint effort from religious congregations, Caritas-Hong Kong, and the Catholic Education Office, pushing Hong Kong Catholic education to its first peak. Over 50 secondary schools, primary schools, and kindergartens in all regions of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories were opened during this era. In 1950, there were less than 50 Catholic schools in Hong Kong but at the departure of Bishop Bianchi from Hong Kong in 1969, there were over 250 Catholic schools in Hong Kong, educating some 210,000 students.

Reform and Localisation, 1969–1989

The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education (*Declaración Gravísimum educationis sobre la Educación Cristiana*) proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on 28 October 1965 inspired reform and localisation in Catholic education in Hong Kong. In keeping with the teaching of the Church, Hong Kong Catholic education took on a reform and changed from an emphasis on the provision of access to the promotion of quality education, and to imbue in students the spirit of Christ. The local education context was facilitative of such a reform. In the early 1970s Hong Kong already had a large and educated population, and a strong proportion of Catholics were of Chinese origin. Localisation was inevitable. With the appointment of Mgr Francis Hsu as the third bishop on 26 October 1969, the direction of the diocese was handed over to local clergy.

Hong Kong launched free education at primary level in 1971 and free education for all on-age children was extended to secondary 3 in 1978. Diversification of the ways of access to formal education was necessary. In keeping with the Church's teaching (*The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, 1965*) and in response to meeting changing needs of the local community, Hong Kong Catholic education expanded its areas of service and diversified to include evening colleges, technical, and vocational schools, centres for educating adults, institutes for pre-school education, and schools for children with special needs in addition to running primary and secondary grammar schools. In 1974 the evening section of Shung Tak Catholic English College, and Cheung Sha Wan Catholic English Evening Secondary School, both Diocesan schools using English as the medium of instruction, were established to provide quality education in the evening for youth who were engaged in employment during daytime.

In order to meet new challenges and demands during the *Reform and Localisation* period (1969–1989), Caritas-Hong Kong had significantly expanded and modified its education services to include pre-vocational and vocational education, special education schools. Notably, four special education schools and nine vocational training schools were established during the *Reform and Localisation*

period (1969–1989). By 2006, Caritas-Hong Kong has two kindergartens, six special education schools, 11 vocational secondary schools, one field studies centre, two apprentice training centres, and ten evening schools and adult education centres. The Caritas special education established in this period were:

- 1973 Caritas Magdalene School to provide support to students who had hearing impairment and who enrolled in mainstream schools
- 1979 Caritas Resurrection School for children with mild mental disability
- 1981 Caritas Lok Kan School for children with severe mental disability
- 1982 Caritas Lok Yan School for children with severe mental disability; the school was later renamed Caritas Jockey Club Lok Yan School

The Caritas vocational schools established in this period were:

- 1969 Caritas Chong Yuet Ming Secondary School
- 1971 Caritas St. Joseph Pre-Vocational School (renamed Caritas St. Joseph Secondary School in 2001)
- 1973 Caritas St. Paul Pre-Vocational School (renamed Caritas St. Paul Secondary School in 1995)
- 1977 Caritas Tuen Mun Marden Foundation Secondary School
- 1979 Caritas Chai Wan Marden Foundation Secondary School
- 1979 Caritas Shatin Marden Foundation Secondary School
- 1981 Caritas Lok Mo Integrated Training Centre for vocational training of youth with mild mental disability
- 1988 Caritas Fanling Chan Chun Ha Secondary School
- 1988 Caritas Yue Long Chan Chun Ha Secondary School

Caritas-Hong Kong largely relies on donation (e.g., from Jockey Club, and Marden Foundation), fund-raising activities, and fees from those using their services, although there is government funding for some of the services. Diversified funding support model used by the Caritas-Hong Kong precluded total reliance on the Government remittance and ensured flexibility.

Hong Kong education expanded rapidly in the 1970s in response to pressure from the burgeoning population for access to education provision. Catholic education in Hong Kong also peaked in expansion. To enhance coordination and management, the Religious Schools Council and Diocesan Schools Council were established.

“March into the Bright Decade,” 1989–1999

On 19 December 1984, the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong (China, 1996) was signed between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the UK governments after two years of negotiation between the two governments. Under this agreement, the Chinese Government would resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997 and Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC. Paragraph 3(12) of

the Joint Declaration provides that the basic policies of in the Joint Declaration and the elaboration of them in Annex I will be stipulated, in a Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR, by the National People's Congress of the PRC, and they will remain unchanged for 50 years (China, 1996).

Regardless of promises from the PRC's "paramount leader" Deng Xiaoping for Hong Kong to retain her economic system and lifestyle within the PRC under a special policy called the "One Country, Two Systems" for the next 50 years after the handover, many Hong Kong people had not recovered from the fear generated by the way China dealt with the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. Hong Kong in the late 1980s and early 1990s had the largest wave of emigration in its history, particularly from the middle and upper sectors of the society, affecting virtually every facet of the territory's social and economic functioning. Education services were also hit badly by the brain drain.

In view of the acute erosion in social confidence, Cardinal John-Baptist Cheng-chung Wu issued his Pastoral Exhortation "March into the Bright Decade: on the Pastoral Commitment of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong" on 14 May (Pentecost) 1989 and suggested a multifaceted strategy in response to political changes in Hong Kong. Through "March into the Bright Decade," Cardinal Wu reaffirmed education, pastoral care, and social service as the three pillars of the activities of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong.

The Contemporary Context of Catholic Education in Hong Kong

On 22 February 2006: Bishop Joseph Ze-Kiun Zen was named a member of the Sacred College of Cardinals by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and on 24 March 2006 Cardinal Zen was formally elevated to the Cardinalate.

Main Ideologies of Catholic Education in Hong Kong

Catholic schools are very important ways for spreading the Good News of God. They are crucial to the formation of young people. As the discussion in previous sections indicates, Hong Kong Catholic schools have contributed an invaluable service over the years to Hong Kong education. In the Diocese Synod held from 2000 to 2001, the Group on "Education and Culture" shared the vision that Catholic education in Hong Kong should endeavour, "under the premise of promoting the Christian philosophy of life and the invaluable elements in Chinese culture, to help students to develop into persons who hold human values close to their heart, who are sound in body and mind, rich in courage, and have an ability to innovate" (Catholic Education Office, 2006).

Management and Organisation of Catholic Education in Hong Kong

The Catholic Education Office (CEO) is headed by the Episcopal Delegate for Education who represents the bishop in matters related to education and assists

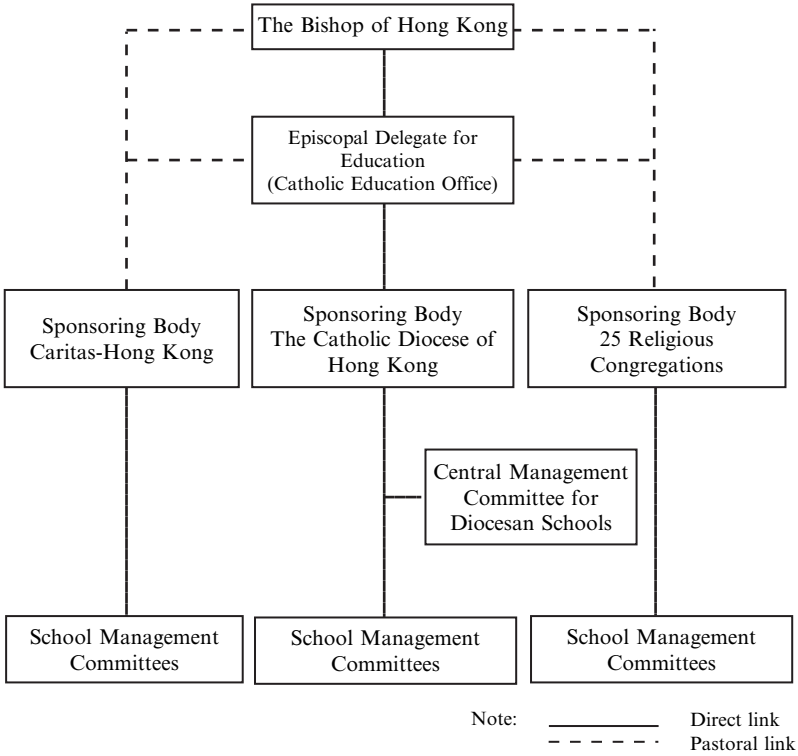


Figure 1. Organisational structure for the promotion of Catholic schools in Hong Kong (From Catholic Education Office. www.ceo.org.hk, viewed 15 May 2006)

him in formulating and reviewing educational policies of the diocese (Catholic Education Office, 2006).

The organisational structure of sponsoring bodies of Catholic schools in Hong Kong is presented in Figure 1. The Bishop of Hong Kong is the highest authority. He is represented by Episcopal Delegate for Education. The sponsoring bodies of the 311 Catholic schools in Hong Kong are the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Caritas-Hong Kong, and 25 Religious Congregations (see Figure 1).

Policymaking and monitoring of Catholic schools in Hong Kong are undertaken by the Hong Kong Catholic Board of Education, with operation support from the Catholic Education Development Committee. Schools are managed by two school Councils: (a) the Diocesan Schools Council, accountable to Episcopal Delegate for Education, and (b) Religious Schools Council. Coordination and administration work on Catholic education are undertaken by Catholic Education Office under the directorship of Episcopal Delegate for Education. The organisational structure for the promotion of Catholic education in Hong Kong is presented in Figure 2.

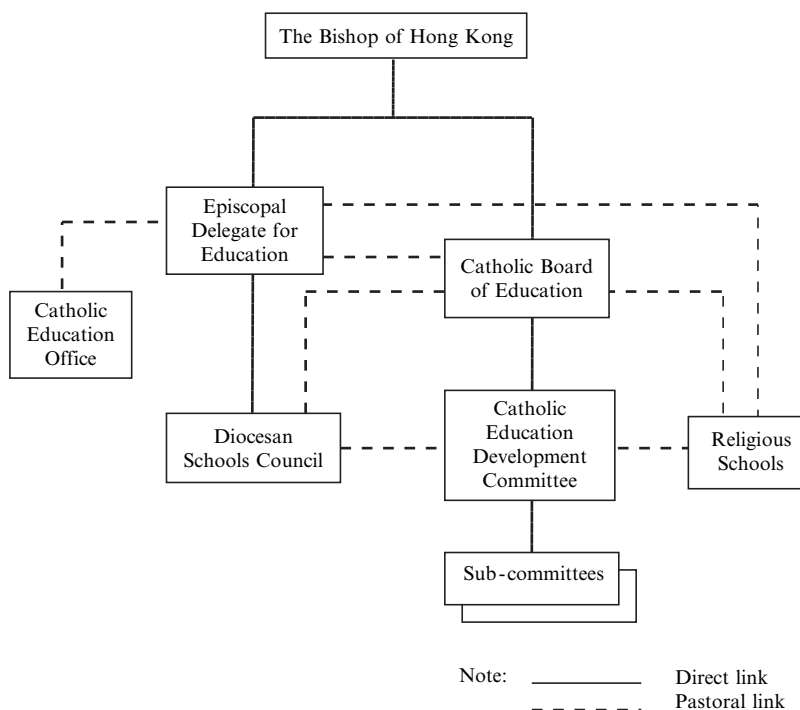


Figure 2. Organisational structure of sponsoring bodies of Catholic schools in Hong Kong (From Catholic Education Office. www.ceo.org.hk, viewed 15 May 2006)

Number of Catholic Schools in Hong Kong in 2005

Church statistics indicate that there are about 300 priests and 600 religious sisters belonging to 45 religious congregations. There are about 240,000 Catholics in Hong Kong (excluding around 1.3 million Filipinos who are Catholics). Each year about 4,000 Catholics are being baptised. Most of the Catholics in Hong Kong are of Chinese origin.

According to statistics in December 2005, there were 311 Catholic schools in Hong Kong, educating 249,620 students amongst them 18,113 (7%) were Catholics. In these schools, there were 11,594 teachers; amongst them 3,100 (27%) were Catholics.

By types of schools in 2005, there were 36 Kindergartens, 128 primary schools, 90 secondary schools (including both schools where Chinese was the medium of instruction, and schools where English was the medium of instruction), 3 vocational schools, 41 adult education centres, 2 evening schools, 8 special education schools, and 2 post-secondary institutes.

The profile of Catholic schools is presented in Table 1. It can be seen from Table 1 that Catholic primary and secondary schools accounted for 17% of all schools in Hong Kong. About one in five primary or secondary students in Hong Kong enrolled in a Catholic school in 2005. Indeed, the Catholic Church is the

Table 1. Profile of Catholic schools in Hong Kong in 2005

School type ¹	Number (percentage ²) of Catholic schools	Number of schools in Hong Kong	Number (percentage ³) of students in Catholic schools	Number of students in Hong Kong schools ⁴
Kindergarten	36 (5%)	731	10,104 (8%)	130,200
Primary School	130 (17%)	761	94,904 (21%)	446,600
Secondary Schools (English and Chinese)	90 (17%)	519	91,070 (19%)	476,400
College of Careers	2 (n.a.)	n.a.	798 (n.a.)	n.a.
Adult Education (Day)	41 (2%)	1,089	50,619 (22%)	227,800
Adult Education (Evening)		943		
Evening Secondary Schools	2 (4%)	51	75 (n.a.)	n.a.
Special Education Schools	8 (12%)	66	705 (8%)	8,500
Post Secondary Institutes	2 (8%)	26	1,345 (1%)	140,600
Total	311 (7%)	–	249,620 (17%)	1,498,700

Notes:

¹ There are 311 Catholic schools in Hong Kong. Excluding the 2 evening secondary schools, the remaining 309 Catholic schools, 115 were Diocesan schools, 63 were Caritas-Hong Kong, 125 were Religious schools, and 6 were of other types. These 309 Catholic schools had 18,123 Catholic students.

² Percentages of Catholic Schools = ratio of number of Catholic schools in Hong Kong to number of schools in Hong Kong in the same school type.

³ Percentages of Catholic Schools = ratio of number of students in Catholic schools in Hong Kong to number of students in Hong Kong schools in the same school type

⁴ Number of students in Hong Kong schools was rounded to the nearest hundred.

Table 2. Profile of teaching staff in Catholic schools

Teaching staff	Number
Priest	43
Religious Sisters	88
Religious Brothers	21
Male Teacher	3,500
Female Teacher	7,824
Male Pastoral Assistant	28
Female Pastoral Assistant	90
Total	11,594

Note: There were 3,100 (27%) Catholics in the teaching staff.

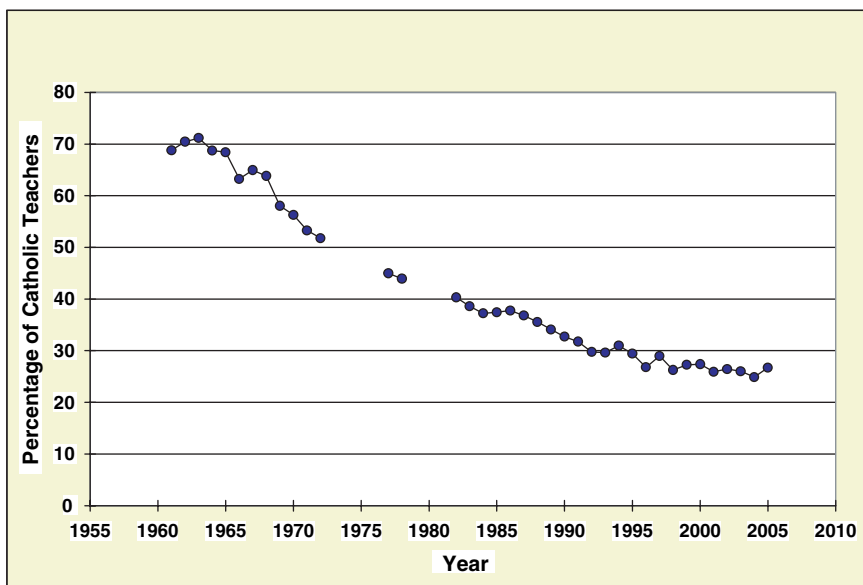


Figure 3. Percentage of Catholic teachers in Catholic schools in Hong Kong

largest school sponsoring body in Hong Kong primary and secondary education. The profile of teaching staff in Catholic schools in Hong Kong as of Year 2005 is presented in Table 2.

Challenges Facing Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong

Hong Kong Catholic education is facing many challenges after the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 2007. The first of these challenges concerns the change in political status from a British colony to a SAR of China after 2007. In the 1980s and 1990s, political uncertainty had led to massive emigration, particularly professionals and people with upper and upper-middle socio-economic status. It had resulted in difficulties in appointing good middle managers and leaders in the school sector. In the Diocese Synod held from 2000 to 2001, the Group on “Education and Culture” recommended emphasis on quality teacher education for the next generation of teachers for Catholic schools.

The second major challenge concerns secularisation. In the past, a high percentage of school leaders were of religious order. With the drop in vocations in recent years, more and more principals were of lay people, making it very difficult to ensure the distinctive Catholic character of the school. The data speak for themselves. In 1961, 69% of teachers in Catholic schools were Catholics. In 2005, the figure dropped to 27%. The trend in decreasing percentage of Catholics in the teaching staff is presented in Figure 3. The “Education and Culture” group in the Diocese Synod held from 2000 to 2001 recommended that “Catholic schools

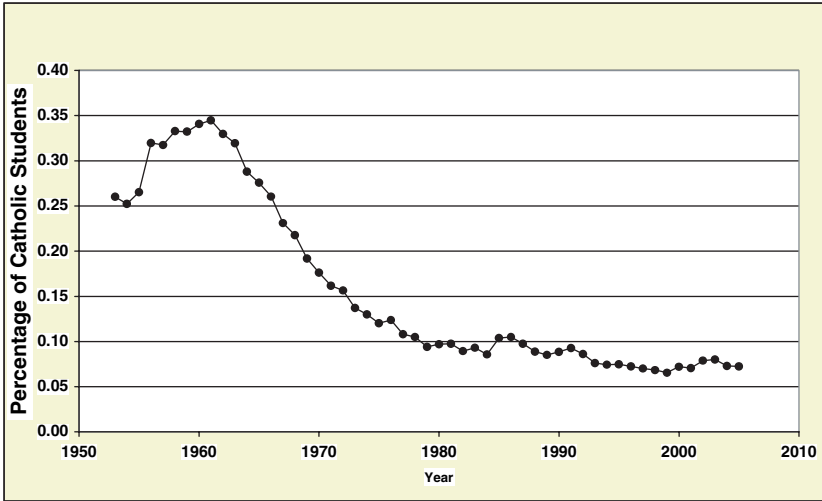


Figure 4. Percentage of Catholic students in Catholic schools in Hong Kong

(including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) should provide principals and Catholic staff with more religious formation, clearly require all staff to identify themselves with and carry out the Catholic educational mission and respect the Church's position" (Sect. 3.6, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, 2001). There is also a strong tendency for decrease in the percentage of Catholic students in Catholic schools. In 1953, 26% of students were Catholics. This percentage increased to 35% in 1961, followed by a steady decrease. In 2005, only 7% of students in Catholic schools were Catholics. The trend is presented in Figure 4.

The third major challenge for Catholic schools in Hong Kong is the severed relationship between the Church and the government on education matters (Chan, 2004). Two major conflicts were of note. On 29 January 1999, the Court of Final Appeal ruled that all Chinese citizens born of Hong Kong permanent citizens had the right of abode in Hong Kong SAR irrespective of their birthplace. Nevertheless, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in Beijing reinterpreted the Basic Law of Hong Kong and overturned the ruling by the Court of Final Appeal. As a result of the new ruling, 4,700 children faced deportation to China. In relation to this, these children were deprived of the right to public education while waiting for the local court's ruling on their appeals. The Catholic Church, in particular Bishop Zen, on humanitarian grounds strongly criticised the Hong Kong government's appeal to Beijing to overturn the Court of Final Appeal on the right of abode ruling. Bishop Zen openly defied the government's decision on barring children from enrolling at local schools. He exhorted all Catholic schools to admit these children, again on humanitarian grounds.

The conflict between the Catholic Church and the government lasted for several years since 2000, when the Hong Kong government issued a consultation

paper on school-based management. Bishop Zen (then Coadjutor Bishop) (2001) sent defiant messages to the government and urged all Catholic schools in the diocese to go against the proposal ("Education (Amendment) Bill 2002;" eventually passed in 2004) in the consultation paper because it was envisaged that the establishment of Incorporated Management Committee to manage all government subsidised schools (including the majority of Catholic schools) would undermine the role of school sponsoring bodies, thus threatening the Church in actualising her vision and mission in schools. The proposal, or later called the "Education (Amendment) Bill 2002," was eventually passed by Legislative Council in July 2004. The Bill essentially transferred responsibility and power of supervising schools from the school sponsoring bodies to Incorporated Management Committees in each individual school. The religious influence of the Church as the largest school sponsoring body in Hong Kong is likely to be diluted by the Bill.

The fourth major challenge facing Catholic education in Hong Kong concerns the declining birth rate and the government's lack of effective measures to meet the enormous drop in student population. The decline in student number has already led to the closure of schools and teacher redundancy. The effect has been very obvious for primary schools in the past few years. It is going to badly hit secondary schools. As the Professional Teachers Union warned in its News to members on 29 May 2006,

The tide of low birth rate has reached its climax and begins to strike... secondary education, aggravating class reduction and school closure... The most critical year of severe class reduction in secondary schools will start in 2009 when there is a drastic drop of intake from about 80,000 secondary 1 students to 44,000–48,000 students, and particularly there is little hope of rebounding. (Professional Teachers Union News, May 2006)

Catholic schools will be no exception to the crisis. Nevertheless, the sense of crisis among teachers is weak. Teachers may be exhausted from the numerous reform initiatives since 1997. Reforms include the use of information technology in teaching, mandatory use of Chinese as the medium of instruction for all except the designated 114 schools, the introduction of Direct Subsidy Scheme, curriculum reform, assessment reform, school-based management, new system of student allocation to secondary places, structure change of 3-year junior secondary, 3-year senior secondary, and 4-year university (3-3-4 from the current 5-2 system), etc., all in about ten years. These reforms are numerous in number but largely uncoordinated and without sufficient support mechanism. Teacher morale is low and many leave the profession.

Strategies to Manage Challenges

The Catholic Education Office has taken a number of measures to manage the many challenges faced by Hong Kong education. First, there is strong emphasis on strengthening middle management through strategic searching among lay people and providing professional development after recruitment. Second, there

is serious discussion on reforming the Religious Education curriculum so that while reaffirming the mission of Catholic education and sustaining its Catholic quality, Religious Education is to have more relevance to meeting the total educational needs of young people today in Catholic schools. Third, the Catholic Education Office has set up an online resource centre and collaborated with other organisations in supporting teachers in preparing for curriculum reform and the 3-3-4 structural reform. Fourth, since 2002, pastoral assistants have been recruited in all Catholic schools in order to assist teachers in student formation and the development of Catholic ethos in schools.

Agenda for Future Research on Catholic Schooling

The historical review of Catholic schooling in Hong Kong identified three research areas of highest priority, namely, culture of Catholic schools, leadership in Catholic schools, and teachers in Catholic schools. Within each of these major areas, a reasonably broad research agenda is appropriate, as these areas are intricately linked with each other and none of them can be studied alone as a single dimension.

Culture of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools have a long tradition in Hong Kong, starting from the time in history when Hong Kong had almost no provision of formal schooling. Catholic schools have fulfilled the old mission of providing access to education for Hong Kong children. Then Catholic schools have also fulfilled the mission of providing quality schooling that is defined by high academic standards and strong moral formation. In fact, they have been so successful that for a long time, Catholic schools are synonymous with quality education. Nevertheless, Hong Kong Catholic schools do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, schools exist within the wider context of the local culture and are being shaped by forces external to the schools. Such forces may include globalisation, new technology, and the change in sovereignty which implicated a major change in political ideology and vision of education, the dangerously low birth rate which directly impact upon school survival, the passing of “Education (Amendment) Bill 2002” which substantially change the governance of Catholic schools, and societal trend of secularisation. Under such pressures, the question of how Hong Kong Catholic schools can maintain their Catholic identity while sustaining the favourable attraction for students, teachers, and parents is the most urgent area for systematic research.

Flynn (1993) defined the culture of a Catholic school as “the core beliefs, values, traditions, symbols and patterns of behaviour which provide meaning to the school community and which help to shape the lives of students, teachers and parents” (p. 8). There has been almost no systematic study on the culture of Hong Kong Catholic schools. Research questions may include: What is the culture of Catholic schools in Hong Kong? What are the salient features in the culture of Hong Kong

Catholic schools in Hong Kong that have contributed to the schools' success? What is the Catholic quality of Hong Kong Catholic schools? What are the effects of the culture of Catholic schools on school effectiveness? Research addressing these questions will produce a portrait of the culture of Catholic schools in Hong Kong. It will also report on the implications for the dimensions of school culture crucial to student development. A main outcome of the research is the generation of empirical evidence that will inform policymaking and practice.

Leadership in Catholic Schools

The principal of a school provides leadership in the school's vision and mission. In a Catholic school, the teaching of Christ underpins educational and administrative decision-making and the principal contributes to leadership in fulfilling the evangelisation and mission of the Church. In Hong Kong, the role of school principals as religious leaders has been made rather difficult in recent years due to a number of reasons. First, the role of school principals, Catholic or not Catholic, has become increasingly complex partly because of the local education reform, and partly because of changes in ecology of schools brought about by the closure of many primary schools in the last five years as a result of low birth rate.

Second, the composition of student body has changed dramatically since the introduction of free and compulsory education in foundation years. This is accompanied by such other societal changes as parents having higher education levels, and their changing expectation of schools. The challenge facing Hong Kong education today is no longer the provision of school places but of quality education. Third and most important, there has been a dramatic increase in lay principalship in Hong Kong Catholic schools. Not questioning the capacity of lay principals in effective articulation of spiritual mission of Catholic schools, the recruitment and formation of principals with spiritual qualities in order to safeguard the Catholic identity of schools is a research priority in Hong Kong. Given the shortage of religious principals in Catholic schools, ways to prepare all principals for their pastoral role is especially needed.

The passing of "Education (Amendment) Bill 2002" in 2004 will give Hong Kong Catholic schools new models of governance, with the potential danger of a weakening of spirituality in Catholic schools. Ways for reconciliation between the Church and Hong Kong SAR government over the conflict of school governance while upholding Catholicism of Catholic schools is important research. Without satisfactory answers to the research would imply major difficulties in effective leadership faced by principals of Catholic schools in Hong Kong.

Teachers and Catholic Schools

Teachers hold the key to the future of this world as they play key roles in shaping the values and beliefs of our next generation through their day-to-

day interactions with youngsters. Good teaching is a transformative process that develops students spiritually, morally, intellectually, psychologically, and physically. Good teachers act as role models and inculcate their students with strong sense of morality, engender them with the zest for learning, inspire them with confidence in problem solving, instill in them the passion for creativity, foster an environment for rigorous academic exploration and experimentation, and develop students into honest and competent citizens who can contribute to the economic and social development of our society. Teachers working in Catholic schools have the additional responsibility to be leaders and mentors in the spiritual development of students.

As discussed in other sections of this chapter, the percentage of Catholic teachers in Hong Kong has a steady decrease since 1961 from 69% to 27% in 2005. If the decrease in Catholic teachers continues at this rate, then very soon Hong Kong Catholic schools might be facing the same difficulties faced by Chicago governments schools described in Bryk et al., (1993), "At the base is an absence of moral authority. As long as moral inspiration remains largely absent from public education, the social resources required for broad-based change will remain uncatalysed. The current need is a matter not only of restructuring, but of renewal." In face of this potential risk, the Catholic Education Office in Hong Kong has undertaken serious measures to protect the religious development of students. The Diocese Synod held from 2000 to 2001 also highlighted the urgent need for quality teacher education. In addition to these good efforts, research into teachers teaching in Catholic schools is necessary. Catholic schools are communities for Christian values to be expressed. To what extent is the Catholic education mission being affected by the religious composition of teaching staff is a question needing research. In relation, the recruitment and formation of teachers for Catholic schools is an important research question for Hong Kong. Research questions may include: How to strengthen the sense of Catholic mission among teachers? What are effective religious formation mechanisms in Catholic schools? What are teachers' expectations of Catholic schools? How to develop non-Catholic teaching staff in the promotion of the school's mission? Why do teachers enter Catholic schools? These are some of the research questions facing educators and policymakers in Hong Kong.

This chapter has discussed some of the challenges facing Hong Kong Catholic education and proposed a series of research for the future. In the proposal, research into school culture, leadership, and teachers of Catholic schools are high on the agenda. The research could even go beyond the list into other important areas including the establishment of a Catholic university in Hong Kong, curriculum of Religious Education, parent choice of schools, merging of schools in geographical districts of low demand, streamlining of school types, and privatisation of Catholic schools. Each of these areas deserves careful research and deliberation.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN JAPAN: CONTEXT AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Fr. Jiro Kozaki, SJ

Background

For several decades in the 16th century, seminaries and colleges flourished in Japan. Francis Xavier's dream to start a university was on the way to realization. There are still extant textbooks and curricula printed with presses brought from Europe. The missionaries did not use the language of their homeland but Latin and Japanese. This "Christian Era" came to a tragic end at the turn of the 17th century. Martyrs numbered in the thousands; the Church went underground, and Japan began two and a half centuries of exclusion from the rest of the world. Immediately upon the restoration of the Emperor in the 19th century, proscription of Christianity ended and Christian communities surfaced; they had maintained their faith for over two centuries despite having had no priests to serve them.

The Paris Foreign Mission immediately sent priests to Japan, and they called religious women from France who opened orphanages. Within a few years several women religious congregations opened schools for girls in several cities throughout the country.¹ Within a few decades male religious opened schools too, but met a more competitive environment in that the state schools focused on the education of boys. During this period Protestant missionaries were even more active. They too began with women's education but by the turn of the 19th century had already launched several institutions of tertiary status. Catholic higher

¹ The Sisters of St. Maur were the first women religious to heed the call of the Paris Foreign Missioners to come to Japan. They arrived in Yokohama in 1872, and started to work for orphans and the underprivileged. In 1877, immediately after the persecution of Christianity was lifted, the Sisters of the Infant Jesus settled in Kobe and began schools and hospitals in western Honshu and Kyushu. The Daughters of St. Paul arrived to Hakodate in Hokkaido in 1878 and began to establish schools in Eastern Japan. The heroism of these women religious cannot be easily exaggerated; they faced an enormous prejudice that had been built up against Christianity for two and a half centuries. Discovery of the hidden Christians in 1865 caused a reactionary government to scatter some 4,000 Christians from Nagasaki to 42 places of confinement throughout Japan, where a fifth of them died.

education only began after the Holy See urged the founding of a university in Tokyo in the beginning of the 20th century. But strong surveillance by a nationalistic government suppressed growth.

Most of the Catholic schools in Japan began their life after 1945, upon the cessation of World War II. The occupation government liberally facilitated the foundation of Christian schools and missionaries came from numerous countries. Christianity enjoyed a boom. Conversions were numerous and there was a surge in vocations to the clerical and religious life. At present the administration of Catholic schools is in the hands of 14 male congregations, 41 women's congregations, 3 dioceses, and 8 lay groups (this last category is recent; religious orders which no longer have personnel for staffing schools have ceded administration to lay people).

The success² of Catholic schools is such that at least in major cities they are highly esteemed. This is evident in the fact that applicants usually far exceed available places, and admission is decided by examinations. Furthermore, applicants choose tuition-fee Catholic schools over fee-free public primary and middle schools, and low tuition public high schools. Lately, due to an accelerating decline in school-age children, provincial schools face a more competitive situation. One of their recourses is to abandon single-sex for coeducation. Some traditional girl's schools and boy's schools have turned to coeducation with the purpose of maintaining their student population. The Appendix shows how, in general, Catholic schools are being affected by population decrements.

Challenges Confronting Schools

Catholic Identity

With only a few exceptions, most schools serve students who (95% or more) are not Christians. Increasingly, this is becoming true of the teaching staffs. Heretofore, religious instruction was given by sisters, brothers, and priests; they have taken full advantage of the law for private schools, which allows religious instruction, and even encourages private schools to maintain their foundational identity. But the religious bodies which founded the schools have suffered a dearth of vocations and the religious who built the schools have largely reached retirement age. To replace these religious many schools are training their lay staff to teach ethics and give religious instruction. Unfortunately, due to a decline in

² Success is a moot word to describe the benefits of education. Perhaps a distinction can be made. Market success would be the ability of a school to attract students; Catholic schools in Japan range from the enormously successful to the struggling. Social success would be a record of preparing students to advance to the next level of education, or ensuring employment that fulfills students' ambitions; Catholic schools are graded variously by this measure. Evangelical success would be the extent to which schools impart Gospel values and inculcate a discipline that fosters prayer, tolerance, self-acceptance, and charity. Such success is not easily measured but it often serves as a basis for engaging other aspects of success.

conversions,³ hiring of Christian lay persons is increasingly difficult. Less than 1% of the population is Catholic; just statistically, competent Christians are hard come by. When employment examinations are held, it is easy to find that the more competent applicants will tend to be non-Christians. Hence a school which is competing academically with other public and private schools is presented with a dilemma: hire applicants mainly because they are Christians or hire applicants because they have outstanding qualifications. Families who entrust their children to the schools expect a high level of instruction. Schools which are found wanting soon suffer a decline in applicants. But with an insufficient number of Christian staff, the school can gradually lose its identity. School age youth are often more influenced by the role models that they find in their teachers than by explicit instruction.

Economic Administration

Each private school in Japan is administered by a board of trustees. Their main source of income is tuition fees. At the tertiary level, national government subsidy runs from 5% to 25% depending upon such factors as faculty to student ratio, salary scales, research outlays, tuition fees, expense to income ratios; at the secondary level, subsidy varies according to the prefecture and is generally higher, sometimes reaching 50% of total income. As would be expected from their religious inspiration, most Catholic schools endeavor to ask low fees.⁴ None want to be termed schools for the privileged only. On the other hand, expenses such as faculty salaries and facility improvement cannot be neglected. The danger for many schools is that they spend their income for current needs and leave nothing for the future. Few schools are able to build endowment funds or depreciation funds. This is also due to the fact that there is little custom in Japan of giving gifts to schools. Those schools which neglected to apportion for the future and are now suffering a decrease in applicants have a heavy task—to maintain standards with less income and avoid insolvency.

Secularization

No one argues against the role of schools in ensuring the human and academic growth of their students. But often schools are evaluated by the number of their graduates who enter prestigious universities or famous companies.

³ The decline in conversions is variously attributed to material affluence and the revived nationalistic pride that this has fostered. Conversions were numerous after World War II when poverty and loss of purpose forced people to look for something new, but present success fosters contentment with Japan's culture and the good life of this world, while holding minimal expectation for a future next world.

⁴ Fees for private schools vary widely due to the disparity in subsidies among the various prefectures; such subsidies can constitute 20% to over 50% of a school's total annual income. Kindergarten fees run about \$1,000–2,000 a year. Fees for elementary school run about \$2,500–5,500. Secondary education annual fees run from \$3,000 to \$6,000. Subsidies for tertiary education are dispersed by the national government and hence more uniform but less generous, and contribute only about 10% of the institution's total income; range from \$10,000 to \$25,000 a year though fees for medical schools would be considerably higher.

Schools can easily find themselves under pressure to produce such results, and an overcompetitive regime can work against the school's resolve to create a Christian inspired community in which each student is fully accepted regardless of achievement. Parents usually do not overtly demand more intensive instruction, but if graduates do not succeed academically the school can suffer a decline in applicants in ensuing years.

Catholic schools traditionally assert that the primary responsibility for education of the child belongs to the parents. This implies that the school should respect the religious belief of the family. The implication here is that the school should avoid proselytizing but endeavor to impart gospel values, particularly Christian humanism⁵ as an alternative to a "this world only" ambition. For this purpose most schools frequently gather parents to explain their efforts to impart moral values and religious sentiment. Success in this area is often seen in the number of parents who attend bible study sponsored by the school. And where Catholic schools cannot boast high academic results, it is precisely their reputation for total human development that draws students.

It was noted earlier that Catholic education in Japan in modern times was pioneered by religious women. They came to a country where secondary education for girls was very limited, and succeeded in developing a system of education specific to the needs of women. Symbolic of their achievements is that the present Empress of Japan was educated in Catholic schools from kindergarten through university. One can also adduce the same of numerous educators, authors, and international personalities. And yet, quite recent laws which guarantee equality of women in the work place now give girls the opportunity to find employment on leaving school. This new equality of opportunity for women is inclining some to ask whether single-sex education is not out of date. If women are to work together with men in the work place, is it not reasonable that they be educated together and be prepared for the future? The following section endeavors to argue that single-sex education is still most appropriate. Catholic schools in Japan gained their reputation initially in women's education; this heritage is not to be cast aside lightly.

The Challenge to Catholic Single-sex schools

Despite the popularity in some places of unisex theories which demand equal treatment for men and women not only in life-earning employment but also in each level of education, this chapter argues that women are unique, and that their endowments cannot be reduced to those culturally bred characteristics that

⁵ Christian humanism is an effort to translate globally expressions which Catholic schools use to describe their educational aims. They speak of religious sensitivity, respect for others regardless of their origins, reverence for their own bodies and those of others, modesty of deportment, courtesy that defers to elders and the handicapped, willingness to volunteer for social projects, a self-project that looks to serve rather than be served, to be people for others.

distinguish women from men. Thus it is the possibility of bearing children that can define women. They find within themselves a potency that shapes their whole life. As they accept their role as potential bearers of life they learn a respect for life that men can only acquire by considerable effort.

Developmental changes teach women from childhood to respect the rhythm of their physiology. They may be similar to boys in many other ways, but the ability to conceive and bear life is their prerogative. It is their irreducible nature. Concomitantly, self-awareness and an acceptance of what is beyond their control engenders a general disposition to await the future, to patiently accept physical changes, to seek insight into the mystery of life, and to grasp a whole view of nature. Their distinctive physiology gives them a distinctive psychology, and a distinctive worldview.⁶ Science is also bringing to light brain-use and hormonal production peculiar to men and women. This is not to deny that men and women share equally most traits of human beings, but to affirm what nature has made quite different.⁷

Education ideally aims to develop the whole human being; this includes what is common to men and women, and what is distinctive of each. Separate schools for girls take on both projects; not neglecting the abilities common to boys and girls, they seek to bring to flower all the talents of women. This is to assert that women need to be prepared to live as equal but unique participants with men in society. By being fully women they can contribute to society what only women can offer, a role vitally complementing the role of men.

Coeducation can strive to achieve these same objectives, but unfortunately, Japanese society has not arrived at being a society open to equal participation by men and women. This inequality is apparent in coeducational schools where traditions and customs keep alive gender bias and fail to give adequate attention to the needs of girls. Consider three aspects of separate schools for girls, which can overcome such impediments: school environment, availability of role models, and talent enhancement.

School Environment

The environment of girls' Catholic schools provides teachers and students an atmosphere unembarrassingly open to all that is feminine. They are able to concentrate all resources toward the development of girls. Coeducational institutions in Japan were largely preceded by all-male schools whose aims were naturally to educate boys. When girls were allowed to enter these schools the original structures and goals were largely maintained. This still obtains at the present day. Girls are, as it were, educated in boys' schools. Teachers teach a curriculum devised for boys with a method of instruction devised for boys. Girls have to adapt to the male-dominant system. Girls are evaluated by the measuring

⁶ Leonard Sax. *Why Gender Matters*. Random House. Janne Haaland Matlary, Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo. See *L' Osservatore Romano*, January 12, 2005.

⁷ Steven Rhoads. *Taking Sex Differences Seriously*.

rods originally adopted for boys. Learning content chosen by men and value judgments formulated by men give an environment in which girls are willy-nilly forced to be second class citizens.

Coeducation tends to expect less of girls. They are often deemed less logical than boys as though the intuitive ability of girls has to be inferior to a characteristically male thinking process. This means that in the classroom girls yield place to boys in the give-and-take of instruction. Girls keep silent and follow the lead of boys; they are kept dependent upon boys when they should be building self-reliance. In extracurricular activities girls cheer in the stands while boys kick the ball.

By contrast, in the case of girls' schools, in and outside of the classroom all activity is the domain of girls. They must speak up. They must plan and organize. They must take leadership and responsibility. There is no gender bias whereby girls are treated as the "weaker sex." If tables and chairs have to be moved, the girls do it. Furthermore, girls are treated as first class citizens. Being the only students, all instruction and activity is directed toward girls. Their interests are given space to develop and affirmed as important. They grow as girls should, while being given full play to develop talents that are common to boys and girls. This is an environment that is liberating for girls. They are free to assert their own identity.

Role Models

Nonverbal education has enormous potentiality. Children absorb numerous values less by what they are taught verbally than by what they catch from models. In a girls' school, women role models abound. Most coeducational schools in Japan have male administrators and a majority of male teachers, whereas girls' schools would have a mostly female staff. This disparity becomes more pronounced as one goes up the educational escalator from elementary school to university. It is especially important in a male-dominated Japanese society that girls have immediate contact with female role models. It is in such contact that they can find a vision of themselves as agents building a society in which men and women participate as equals.

Talent Enhancement

Due to the environment mentioned above, girls in an all-girl Catholic school are not oppressed by comparisons with boys. Their perceptiveness, their interests, their moral development, and emotional reactions are respected. They are evaluated by different standards than boys. Teachers can guide them with a touch appropriate for girls. Goals can be set so that girls feel pride in their identity. They can experience their sexuality as enriching, distinctive, and fulfilling. Odi-ous comparisons with men can be easily dismissed. Self-pride becomes a basis for ambitioning a career. This is not to judge girls' schools solely by counting their prominent alumnae. It is more pertinent to note how self-possessed the graduates are, how no matter what the social role they play, they hold their own personal values and make their own judgments. As wives and mothers

they voice their opinions and take initiative to build a better society. They keep developing the identity they found in school. It is such women of strong character who are needed if Japan is to change into a society where men and women are truly equal, equal in the opportunity to make their own distinctive contribution to society. The cultural enrichment which girls' schools provide is a strong contender against the unisex, media-dominated cultural impoverishment so common today.

Agenda for Single-Sex Education

Needless to say, gathering girls in separate Catholic schools does not automatically accomplish the mission of women's education. An all-girl environment surely renders the task easier and gives more opportunity for leadership growth. But to those people who are asking whether all-girl schools are not out of date, a more aggressive educational program must be presented. Here are a few suggestions.

An Equal Society

First we must ascertain clearly what we mean by women's education, and why it must necessarily differ from men's education. This demands we set aside prevailing prejudices and declare what we mean by equality between men and women while distinguishing their separate roles. Obviously the equality that nature demands is not unisex clothing and hair fashion. It is equality of opportunity, the opportunity to develop the nature that God has given them. It is freedom from the imperatives of male dominance.

The Mission of Girls' Catholic Schools

Then we must develop curricula that incorporate gender-balance as an objective of primary importance. Pedagogical methods that actualize women's talents must be constantly improved and enunciated forcefully to gain understanding of society. Leonard Sax in his book *Why Gender Matters* elucidates the physical and psychological differences that are found as boys and girls develop. For example, girls have a more acute sense of hearing and respond better to a woman's voice which might put boys to sleep. Girls process images differently, and are more aware of color and texture whereas boys concentrate on special relationships, speed, and direction. Girls use visual landmarks to navigate while boys use more abstract concepts such as north and south. Girls are more reflective and ready to speak and write about their feelings; this puts boys at a decided disadvantage. Boys are more inclined to take risk and resort to violence. Among boys friendships revolve around games and activities; among girls friendship is fostered by conversation and intimate sharing of feelings. Toward teachers, girls are inclined to seek help and carefully follow instructions while boys try to go on their own. Boys find stress and competition an incitement; girls find them distracting. Sax also insists that boys and girls develop at different paces. Differences in cerebral capacity are larger during childhood than those among

adults who have reached maturity. The conclusion then is that boys and girls require different teaching methods.

Even in so-called advanced countries, equality of men and women has a short history; its ethic is undeveloped, and the study of femininity is immature. Despite angry demands for equality, the respective defining characteristics of men and women are left vaguely stated. A society where both sexes participate on an equal basis is talked about but the corresponding contributions to be expected from men and women are not clarified. So we are liable to repeat the mistakes of the past: women will be stuck somehow into a social structure built by men, compelled to perform the same tasks as men, and judged successful to the extent they conform to the thought patterns and ideals of men.

Significance Today

Thoughtful people are painfully aware that in recent years women are losing their bond to nature and replacing it with self-willed steps to control nature. Respect for life is in danger of being lost; sensitivity to the marvels of nature and acceptance of its demands become clouded. The media display the possibility of virtual children and designer babies. Education that elucidates the danger of such cold calculations and the inhumanity they portend is more necessary than ever. Women can be turned into units of production in a competitive society. Joy and gratitude for the gift of new life can be torn from them. The god of efficiency is so worshipped that the bearing of children is coming to be judged a handicap rather than a privilege. What is lost is the natural inclination of women to depend on nature, that something that is beyond their control. Here at stake are such things as acceptance of the rhythm of life, a willingness to await what nature is preparing, all the emotions and delicacy that come with reverence for life. Efficiency, competition, immediate satisfaction, ruthless positivism, social ladder-climbing are the gloomy alternatives being offered.

Education too is gradually being evaluated on such terms. Politicians are spinning new programs for schools to implement in order that education become "more efficient, more competitive." The results are beginning to appear: an increase in school dropouts, major crimes committed by adolescents, murder within families, suicide among minors, and loss of psychological balance among teenagers. Respect for life is declining at an alarming rate.⁸ Such a descent will hardly be reversed by a simple addition to the curriculum. A value such as respect for life cannot be force-fed. The significance of life has to be caught in an ambience where its value is lived.

Of course, boys too must be led to respect life by immersion in integrated value education, but different role models, different gradations of instruction, and different content are required. Separate-sex education is called for. With girls, awareness of life's preciousness begins with respect for one's body and its changes,

⁸ (Justice Ministry General Research Institute, White Paper on Crime and Delinquency. Government Printing Office, 2005).

especially the transformations that prepare the possibility of motherhood. Such sensitivity cannot be “taught”; it has to be educated in stages with assistance appropriate to each degree of maturity. Girls’ Catholic schools have the resources, the expertise, and the environment for providing such education. Imparting a respect for life is their mission. Japan sorely needs such education in order to recover those values which have refined our widely admired culture.

Education That Values Life

In summary, girls’ Catholic schools give their students respect and gratitude for their own bodies. Their education does not separate academic and moral training with emphasis on the former; rather girls are taken for what they are and encouraged to accept themselves. By not demanding immediate results at each juncture, they impart openness to life and its rhythms and cheerful expectations for the future. Girls are not regimented mechanically nor marshaled to univocal goals and cast aside if they fail to achieve such norms. Rather, by sharing together the same kind of life, they enjoy a warm and understanding intimacy that carries them over the hurdles of development.

Many will agree that this is only what women’s education should be, but that doubt that today’s Japan will allow it to be implemented. The media report increasing child misdemeanors, and reformists call for “education of the heart” and “schools with breathing space.” Bookstores are stocked with titles decrying a decline in basic education and demanding that schools produce young people who are “immediately useful to industry.” People in power constantly proclaiming new shibboleths succeed only in confusing the purposes of education.

Girls’ schools have not escaped harm from our overcompetitive society, but they have often been saved by their *raison d’être*, a wholesome education that orients its efforts toward respect for life. Their mission is to enunciate clearly to society an appreciation for the gift of life, and the imperative to respect life if we are to build a peaceful world.

Living One’s Values

Some of these observations overlap and cannot be adequately distinguished. But given what has been said above, girls who have grasped their true female identity are potential leaders for a better world in which men and women participate on an equal footing, each contributing its own charisma and achieving gender-balance. Fortunately, such girls are graduating from our Catholic schools and making their own contributions to society. Often they take on work that was traditionally reserved for men, and are making their mark to the astonishment of an older mind-set. Given the opportunity, they measure up to the performance of men, and often set the pace in positions of leadership. It is most important precisely at this instance when times are changing that women hold on to what nature has given them and not lose their sensitivity by adapting unconsciously to standards and practices which originate with men. On the contrary, by achieving equality in the workplace, women have a new opportunity to demonstrate their more inclusive powers of observation and their deeper emotional involvement.

They can bring to bear their unique sense of value integration. Being closer to life than men, they hold life in higher esteem, and can confront society with the duty to hold life in greater respect. This is their power to change society. Just as women have been able to assume roles reserved for men, now they can develop their female potentialities and become yet more competent to cooperate with men, achieving in this way a genuine social balance. Perhaps this will be a new paradigm, a society where men and women fully interact and complete the roles of each other. Women can set forth their unique viewpoint over such moot questions as economic goals, scientific progress, safety from aggression, environmental well-being, and standards for competency evaluation. If women speak out on such issues, humanistic economic goals, revised standards of safety and a fresh value system will give new life to society.

This section has endeavored to argue that single-sex Catholic schools for girls are most appropriate venues for the flowering of women's prerogatives and their overall talents. If the staffs of girls' schools are aware of their privileged situation and explore its potential fully, they will do justice to their duty of building a better society through the education of women. By fulfilling their mission, Japan's inequality between men and women will be addressed, a new paradigm where women's insights obtain will appear, mutual interaction between men and women will give depth to society, women's role as life bearers will alert society to the inviolability of life, and alignment with women in underdeveloped countries will bring about equal societies all over the world. Single-sex education of girls promises us a better future.

Adaptation in Jesuit Secondary Schools: Forming Lay-leaders

The most felicitous development in the Jesuit Secondary Education Apostolate is that for several years now non-Jesuits have begun to play a more active role in the promotion of the Catholic and Jesuit character of education in the schools. Two of the four Jesuit six-year schools now have lay principals who are fervent Catholics. The Jesuit Secondary Education Committee (JSEC) which plans and administers seminars⁹ for the schools is composed of laymen from each school and a single Jesuit. Meanwhile, the number of Jesuits working in the schools continues to decrease, and the staff tends to include fewer Catholics. Given this situation, whether or not the Catholic character of the schools can continue to be dynamically realized in the life of the schools depends upon the efforts of leaders.

Aside from the particular efforts made in each school, the JSEC schedules three-day seminars in alternate years:

⁹ A common staff drawn from the four Jesuit High Schools mainly uses personnel of the same schools to conduct the seminars. The committee is composed of a Catholic layman from each school and is chaired by a Jesuit.

1. A seminar for new staff members focuses on the pamphlet, "Characteristics of Jesuit Education," and the figure of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.
2. The seminar for middle management staff is an adapted retreat based on the "Principle and Foundation" and the "First Week" of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.
3. The seminar for ethics-religious education treats curriculum and syllabi. Materials for these seminars include a fresh Japanese translation of the "Characteristics of Jesuit Education" with a new title, "In Order to Serve," and a DVD version of the "Shared Vision" videotapes with Japanese subtitles.

In December, 2005, a second all-province Forum was held for 26 participants. The last ten years since the last Forum were reviewed, and after praying and sharing together, participants formulated the following proposals with a view to prepare for the next ten years:

1. The future of the four school corporations (juridical persons that are responsible for the schools in the external forum) was reconsidered.
Previously it had been decided to maintain a majority of Jesuits on each board of trustees with the intention of guaranteeing the Catholic character of the schools. But now, facing the reality of fewer Jesuits being assigned to the schools, it was deemed necessary to explore the appropriate structure for these corporations. One measure being taken is to have some Jesuits sit on the board of more than one school. Another measure taken is to have Jesuits of other apostolates sit on the boards. Also, as with some religious orders which have founded schools in Japan, it is possible to set up a single school corporation to administer several schools. In Japan, the legal entity which administers schools is always distinguished from the religious corporation that founds schools and assigns religious to work in the schools. The schools are basically the property of the Japanese people; should they become no longer financially viable their assets are either expropriated by the government or deeded to another school corporation. They are not ultimately the property of the original founders of the school.
2. Provision has been made that the trustees, auditors, and councilors of each school corporation as well as school administrators and potential JSEC members among the teaching staff can learn more about Catholic education, and get some experience of the Spiritual Exercises. This program will be set up and administered by JSEC with the approval of the top echelon of the four schools.
3. In order that non-Christian personnel may play a greater role as leaders in promoting Catholic education, seminars in spirituality based on the Bible and the Spiritual Exercises will be offered within each school as well as in the joint seminars. The reason here is obvious: the majority of the personnel of each school are not Christians. This majority will have to help carry the burden of preserving the Catholic and Jesuit character of each school.
4. While stressing the important individual formation of each Jesuit who will be assigned to the schools, it is stressed that their main duty will be to work as

animators of Catholic education. Aside from their formation in philosophy, theology, and English, they will need a special training to fulfill this duty. This proposal intends to clarify for the benefit of Jesuits yet in formation the essential meaning of the Jesuit role in our secondary school apostolate.

5. Jesuits working in schools should preferably live in community with Jesuits serving in other apostolates. The reason for this proposal was that communities made up of Jesuits from various apostolates can provide valuable spiritual stimulus for one another. There is also need to eliminate the financial burden of maintaining large residences for only a few men.
6. International exchange programs are deemed a valuable part of our educational input. Presently, the schools exchange students annually with the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, and India.
7. The principals, chairmen of the board of trustees, and religious superiors meet twice a year, dealing with the training and distribution of Jesuit personnel and other matters vital to the continuity of the Jesuit character of the schools.
8. A special lay teacher training fund was inaugurated ten years ago, and has reached over a million dollars; it is being used in moderation by the schools to send teachers to the summer theology seminars at Sophia University. This fund has increased annually due to contributions from each school's Jesuit community, though their allocation will not likely be maintained due to the decrement in fully salaried Jesuits. The treasurer of the Jesuit Province invests the fund and allots generous annual dividends.

Agenda for Future Research on Catholic Schools in Japan

Bishop Misobe Osamu¹⁰ has recently proposed topics of concern for Catholic schools:

1. The decrease of vowed religious serving in Catholic schools necessitates a shift in their role. They need become more aware that they are preeminently a religious presence, people of prayer and deep spirituality, people who can communicate the Gospel with a conviction rooted in personal experience. So they need to revise their priorities, putting this role ahead of administration and classroom teaching.
2. Evangelization is the primary task to be addressed in schools. Religious should take a central role in creating an atmosphere that does speak gospel values. This will require a high degree of dedicated pastoral planning and constant evaluation.
3. The witness of the common life lead by religious communities can be a powerful influence upon youth. As Japanese society becomes more international, this witness of religious of varied age and nationality living immediate to the school is increasingly valuable.

¹⁰ Bishop Misobe Osamu. "The Trend of Catholic Education", *Research in Catholic Women's Education*, 11, March 31, 2004).

4. For students ever anxious to discern their future, the role of religious in assisting such discernment as spiritual companions calls for emphasis on formation of such experts.

To this agenda of Bishop Misobe might be added the need to find acceptable methods of training non-Christian teachers to fully participate in upholding the foundational principles of the schools.

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SECTION EIGHT

**CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA
AND NEW ZEALAND**

CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Susan Pascoe

Introduction

This chapter on Catholic education in Australia will begin with an overview; proceed to describe some of the contemporary challenge issues; explore more fully issues of Catholic identity, student enrolment, access for the poor and leadership; and finish with a discussion of recent research. It is written to complement the chapter by Brian Croke on Catholic education in Australia.

The continent of Australia has a population of 20.3 million spread over a huge, largely arid, land mass. The bulk of the population cling to the coastline where cosmopolitan cities, industrial towns, and holiday locations are to be found.

Founded as a penal colony by the British in 1788, Australia is yet to formally sever ties with mother England. From its initial uneasy coexistence with the Indigenous population, Australia has become multicultural, with 23% of residents born in another country and second and third generation migrants often retaining an affiliation with their parents' or grandparents' birthplace. Some 52% of marriages are between people from different birthplace countries.¹

Catholics constitute the largest religious group in Australia with 26.6% nominating their religion as Catholic in the 2001 census (ABS, 2005). This compares to 20.7% nominating themselves as Anglican, 25.6% nominating another religion, 15.5% nominating no religious affiliation and the remainder not adequately stated. These figures are in marked contrast to a century earlier when the majority religion was Anglicanism (39.7%) and Catholics were a comparably smaller group of 22.7%.

There are 28 Catholic dioceses in Australia which vary in size and geographic spread. There are three Eastern Rite Eparchies, one military ordinate and one personal prelature. The Maronite community² operate three schools in Sydney

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005), *AusStats Online* www.abs.gov.au.

² The heritage of this Eastern Rite community reaches back to St. Maron in the early 5th century. The first Maronite patriarch, St. John Maron, was appointed in the late 7th century. Today they are one of the main religious groups in Lebanon.

and one in Melbourne. The largest diocese, the Archdiocese of Melbourne, has a Catholic population exceeding one million and constitutes 20.5% of the Catholic population in Australia, while the smallest diocese, the diocese of Broome, with some 11,000 Catholics (or 0.21%) is spread over a greater geographic area. There is evidence of the larger dioceses supporting the smaller dioceses with expertise and in kind assistance.³

School education in Australia is a mix of government and non-government schools, with government schools fully funded for their operational and capital costs and Catholic and Independent schools partially funded from the public purse. Just over two-thirds of the student population attend Government schools (67.5%) and 20.1% attend Catholic schools. The Independent schools (12.4%) are a loose affiliation of other religious and philosophical groups, notably Anglican, other Christian schools, Jewish and Islamic faith-based schools and philosophically based schools such as Montessori and Steiner.

Constitutionally Australia's education system replicates its federal model of government. School education falls to the states due to its omission in the founding constitution, with education jealously guarded by the six colonies when they became states in 1901. Government schools are overseen by state bureaucracies. Governance of the Catholic education system occurs within the parameters of Canon Law and government regulation. In most states a government authority decides whether an institution is a school or not and reviews the school at regular intervals to inform decisions regarding ongoing registration.

Individual dioceses oversee the operation of their own schools. However policy and funding matters are handled by state Catholic Education Commissions endowed with civil and canonical authority. State Catholic Education Commissions comprise diocesan, education, and community representatives and are the jurisdictions which are collectively responsible for the receipt, distribution, and accountability of some \$6.9 billion funding annually. Each state Commission is represented on the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), which is a commission of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. The NCEC is a federated body which advocates on behalf of all members of the Catholic education community, including non-systemically funded Catholic schools,⁴ which are largely Religious Institute owned schools.

Context

Challenging issues faced by Catholic education in Australia occur within the context of the broader Church and the local political environment. Undoubtedly the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Pope Benedict XVI had as profound an

³ For example, the Archdiocese of Melbourne provides data collection and analysis services to the smaller dioceses.

⁴ There is one non-systemically funded Catholic school in Victoria—Xavier College—which is a Jesuit school spread over three campuses. Other states have greater numbers of non-systemically funded schools, for example, there are 42 in New South Wales.

impact in Australia as other parts of the globe. The very public death of John Paul II in his apartment in Vatican City was a powerful witness to his lifelong commitments to the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of human life.

At the same time Terri Schiavo's husband and parents fought in the Florida courts over whether to have her life support removed. Ethical issues dominated the media momentarily. The contrast was dramatic. And the global Church received some relief from its customary depiction as a curiosity of a bygone era or an inept handler of sexual abuse cases.

Similarly the Catholic Church in Australia received high exposure over the hanging in Singapore of a young Vietnamese Australian, van Nguyen, who was caught with drugs. Senior church figures advocated on his behalf, parishes held prayer vigils and when prayer and lobbying failed to save his life he was buried from Melbourne's Cathedral. The media followed all aspects of the case and the Church as advocate, pastoral leader and healer was to the fore.

In Australia, the Church is moving on to the front foot in its relationship with the media. The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference will issue a pastoral letter in February 2006 on how to deal with the media and how to be responsible consumers of the media. The Bishops' Conference recognises that the Church needs to make better use of all forms of mass communication in an era of declining mass attendance.

Like many western countries, the Catholic Church in Australia is faced with an ageing clergy and diminishing numbers of priests and religious. Table 1 shows that in five major Australian provinces between 1970 and 2002 the number of priests fell from 3,481 to 2,820 (down 19.0%). The decline in the number of religious was even more marked—from 16,228 to 8,687 (down 46.5%).

Attendance at Sunday Eucharist is also in decline with figures from the 2001 *National Church Life Survey* indicating that the average attendance of 764,800

Table 1. Number of priests and religious in five Australian provinces, 1970–2004. (From <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/spcau4.html>)

Province	Data	Year				
		1970	1980	1990	2000	2004
Adelaide	No. of priests	265	276	265	236	218
	No. of religious	1,061	983	840	695	583
Brisbane	No. of priests	546	549	515	425	425
	No. of religious	2,702	2,761	1,941	1,440	1,342
Melbourne	No. of priests	1,037	1,001	944	850	763
	No. of religious	4,194	4,003	2,899	2,485	2,338
Perth	No. of priests	282	277	300	319	346
	No. of religious	1,573	1,594	1,151	1,050	846
Sydney	No. of priests	1,351	1,267	1,152	1,110	1,118
	No. of religious	6,698	5,627	5,015	3,466	3,487
Total no. of priests		3,481	3,370	3,176	2,940	2,870
Total no. of religious		16,228	14,968	11,846	9,136	8,596

Table 2. Number of religious principals and teachers in Victorian Catholic Schools, 1950–2004. (From Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Data Sets)

Year	No.	%
1950	1,333	83.5
1963	2,054	65.2
1978*	1,147	17.2
1990	437	3.9
2004	74	0.5

* The 1978 data refer to full-time staff only.

(representing just under 16% of Australia's Catholic population) was down 13% from 1996.

The laicisation of Catholic education has been evident over many years, as can be seen from the Victoria data below (Table 2).

Key positions of leadership nationally and at the state level in Catholic health, education, and welfare are now occupied by lay people. Reporting relationships with civil and canonical authorities are complex and there is a focus on good governance arrangements. Further, funding is accompanied by strict compliance, performance, and accountability requirements.

In the political domain Australia is experiencing tensions between the federal government and the states. This is exacerbated by the fact that all state governments are centre-left Labor governments and the Australian Government is a centre-right Coalition Government. Ministers are increasingly interventionist with proposals for the federal government to take control from the states of the nation's ports, overhaul industrial relations and introduce compulsory national cohort assessments of students.

The current Australian Government has been in power since 1996 and has some clear policy directions in education such as parental choice, diversity of education providers, alignment of education and training with the nation's infrastructure needs and re-emphasis on values education. It is intent on implementing its economic, industrial, and social reforms. The business community is critical of the Australian and State governments for what it believes is inadequate provision for infrastructure projects, poor planning for skills development, and a weak trade balance. Between the federal and state governments there is overlap of functions in areas such as school education and health, which gives rise to tensions and political expediency from time to time.

While the federal government concerns itself with nation-building areas such as the economy, foreign affairs, defence, and higher education, the work of state governments is more focused on delivering services such as school education, health, welfare, transport, and policing. Most of the centre-left state governments have adopted community building as an explicit portfolio area, with Victoria establishing a Department for Victorian Communities and South Australia creating a Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The differing policy emphases and dispositions ensure that Catholic

Education Directors need to be policy savvy and politically dexterous. Their advocacy and lobbying efforts are handled on behalf of the bishops nationally by the Chair of the NCEC and at the state level by Directors of Catholic Education Commissions.

A new feature on the Australian political landscape in the October 2004 federal election was the emergence of a party with religious affiliations, the Family First Party.⁵ This new political phenomenon took political parties and commentators by surprise. As the election campaign unfolded the Family First Party moved from the status of political curiosity to power broker. Many post-election analyses viewed their emergence as evidence of deep-seated concerns about directions in Australian society and unease about specific issues such as drug use amongst teenagers.

Challenge Issues: Overview

As occurs in many developed nations, the Church in Australia finds itself at odds with rising secularisation, individualism, and consumerism. The blight of sexual abuse cases is yet to be fully accommodated within legal and canonical authorities. Tensions arise from time to time between those championing competing theological perspectives. And active parish involvement is declining.

In this context it is not surprising that Catholic identity is a priority for many Catholic systems and congregations. In fact the issues identified collaboratively as priorities for consideration by the NCEC for the period 2005–2008 are:

- Catholic identity
- Religious education
- Leadership in Catholic school education
- Governance
- Enrolment policies
- Curriculum matters
- Resourcing of Catholic schools
- Tertiary sector
- Employment issues
- Relationship with constituencies

Individual state Catholic Education Commissions and dioceses have varying emphases depending on their circumstances. For example, the Archdiocese of Melbourne has a current priority of updating its enrolment policy and many state Commissions have as a priority access to Catholic schools. These two matters will be explored more fully in the next section.

Certain challenges, such as leadership in Catholic school education, contain within them core issues such as the role of women and leadership of faith and educational communities. These will be taken up in the next section.

⁵ The Family First Party aims to support legislation beneficial to the health, welfare, and unity of families. It is not a church party but does base its values on Christian ethics.

Challenge Issue: Catholic Identity and System Response

Catholic education in Australia can be described as a system of schools with common values and principles, agreed distribution of funding within the system on the basis of need, geographic coverage across the continent, socio-economic coverage across income groups, and cultural coverage across most ethnic groups.

It would be difficult to describe a typical student in an Australian Catholic school. She could be a recently arrived Sudanese refugee; her first language will not be English in one in six cases; her family grouping could be single, traditional, extended, or otherwise; her religion will be Catholic in about 80% of cases; she could come from an impoverished, middle class or wealthy background; she could be in a rural, remote, or urban setting; and she could be highly able or disabled. She will have been shaped by the entertainment industry and digital technologies as well as by her peers, parents, school, and Church.

The reality for many Australian Catholic families is that school is their dominant experience of Church. Mass attendance figures of 16% emphasise this point. The other reality that is dealt with below is that nationally some 53% of Catholic children are in Catholic schools. The experience of Church for those not in Catholic schools is fertile ground for research.

In the period 1998–2001, the Queensland bishops oversaw a research project and consultation process on the defining features of Catholic schools for the 21st century. The conclusions from this process were that the Catholic school of the future will have a strong Catholic identity and give witness to Christian values; will be open and accessible to all who seek its values; will offer an holistic curriculum; will be a community of care and right relationships; and will be staffed by competent qualified people who give witness to Gospel values. Since that time individual dioceses in Queensland have used the defining features for ongoing staff formation.

Similarly, the consultation in early 2005 on issues associated with the enrolment of children in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne spelled out some of the challenges in achieving Catholic schools' core aim of educating in faith. It is noteworthy that conceptions of Catholic school identity uncovered included the view that a "critical mass" of Catholic students and staff were required to maintain the Catholic identity of the school.⁶ This view was strongest amongst parents. (This view is at odds with Catholic education in many parts of the world where the proportion of Catholic students can be comparatively low.) During the review, Catholic student identity was confirmed literally as possession of a baptism certificate with the canonical nuances covered by provisions for pastoral decisions at the local level. The issue of the identity of staff in Catholic schools will be discussed in the section on leaders.

⁶ The suggested size of the "critical mass" of Catholic students ranged from 50% to 100%, with the majority of suggestions in the range 85–95%. A number of respondents also expressed the view that a strong presence of Catholic teachers was important for maintaining the Catholic identity of the school.

In describing the nature and purpose of Catholic schools to potential students and parents, emphases are likely to be on the education of the whole person, on faith and religious education and on pastoral care and learning outcomes. In liaising with government, emphases are likely to be on core purpose, support of democratic principles and institutions, parent choice, legislative compliance, good governance, sound educational practice, commitments to accountability, and fulfilment of elements of formal agreements.

In advocating for an appropriate legislative environment or adequate resources for schools the public nature of Catholic schools is likely to be emphasised. In his submission to the Victorian Government's review of its education legislation the Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart, argued that the 1870s foundation principles of education as "free, compulsory and secular" were outmoded and exclusive in an era when all families paid either fees or levies and when some 33% of students in the state were in faith-based schools. Instead he argued:

Public education could be defined as education that is conducted by providers whose schools and teachers are registered by the appropriate government authority, whose curriculum and pedagogy support democratic principles and civic virtues, and whose outcomes are reported to parents, the government, relevant jurisdictions and the public under an agreed quality assurance outcomes framework. This definition would include the provision of various types of government-dependent, privately managed schools, including denominational schools. Religious education should not disqualify a school from being a provider of public education. (Hart, 2005)

In seeking to clarify and maintain Catholic identity in changing times, Catholic education systems are looking at ways to measure the Catholicity of their schools. A number of dioceses and Catholic Education Commissions in Australia are evaluating their school review procedures to ensure they encompass measures which robustly assess the degree to which schools live up to their vision and mission. The model illustrated in Figure 1 is typical.

Schools would be expected to have evaluative data on the content and attainment of their Vision and/or Mission Statements; the quality of leadership in faith; the quality of Religious Education programmes; the opportunities for prayer life and liturgy in the school; the qualifications and levels of accreditation of staff; the religious knowledge, values and attitudes of students; the percentage of Catholic students; the percentage of Catholic staff; the visibility of Catholic symbols and icons; and the promotion of Catholic education within the community.

In addition, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) has commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research to develop a measure of the value added by Catholic schools.⁷ This is in response to requests

⁷ This is defined as the value added by Catholic education or a measure of the extent to which Catholic schools are able to produce learning outcomes that are central to the identity and role of Catholic schools.



Figure 1. Catholic school vision embedded in five key spheres of schooling within the context of the strategy plan for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2005)

from principals that reductionist measures of school performance are avoided and the value added by being in a Catholic setting be measured. The measure will be based on an Archdiocesan Strategy Plan 2006–2010, which aligns the goals of schools and the Catholic Education Office (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 2005). Recent improvements in assessment methodologies in Australia make this now possible (Pascoe, 2005).

Arguably our attention on explicating, shaping, and animating the identity of Catholic schools will remain while the world changes around us. The creative tension between transmitting authentic Church teaching and maintaining traditions which give meaning to peoples' lives on the one hand, and reading and responding to the signs of the times on the other, will remain with us. Catholic education planners and educators need ongoing opportunities for faith renewal, and professional growth to remain adept at navigating this terrain. The Church has entrusted a sacred duty to them.

Challenge Issue: Enrolment and System Response

Enrolment policies in Australian Catholic dioceses typically aim to ensure a place for every Catholic child seeking a Catholic education. While the policies focus on inclusion and the parent–school partnership, they generally address two further issues—the view that there needs to be a critical mass of Catholic students to maintain the Catholic identity of the school and the belief that Catholic

schools should be demonstrably Catholic to account to Government for public expenditure on the operation of Catholic schools. Both concerns are untested. We don't know if there is a critical mass of students required to maintain the identity of a Catholic school and we don't know what percentage of non-Catholic enrolments would trigger questions from governments as to whether Catholic authorities were not using public monies according to implicit expectations. Most systems planners would rather keep their houses in order and err on the conservative analysis with policies and data collection practices, which ensure high levels of Catholic enrolments.

The NCEC hosted a meeting of Diocesan Directors in 2004 with enrolment and fees policies on the agenda. Both issues touch on questions of access to Catholic education which will be discussed below. Most dioceses give priority to Catholic students, then those from Eastern Rites,⁸ and then others. Exemptions in Equal Opportunity legislation enable these priorities to be maintained. Most parishes have little difficulty accommodating primary school students. It is at the point of entry to secondary schools, when families exercise wider choice that enrolment pressures typically occur. Established priorities can be put under strain in dual religion families; in areas with fluctuating enrolments where non-Catholics may be granted access in one period but not another; and in areas of enrolment pressure. There is potential for litigation⁹ when system authorities do not enunciate clear principles and guidelines and when individual schools do not implement them consistently and transparently. The aggregate national figure for non-Catholic student enrolments in Catholic schools is 22%, with variation amongst the states from 20% to 35%.¹⁰

One of the difficulties in discussing the issue of enrolments is that the primary policy disposition can be one of apparent exclusion, while the nature of Catholic education is one of inclusion. There are tensions between fostering parent choice yet maintaining the viability of all schools in the system; of being inclusive yet having transparent protocols for areas of enrolment pressure; and of enabling subsidiarity while ensuring that planned provision remains. The challenge is to keep them in equipoise.

Challenge Issue: Access to Catholic Schools and System Response

Providing comprehensive access for Australian Catholic families to Catholic schools requires planning for their construction across the continent, designing a range of school types and ensuring that capacity to pay is not a barrier

⁸ The Catholic Church is a communion of 23 autonomous Churches: the Latin Catholic Church and 22 Eastern Catholic Churches. The non-Catholic Eastern Churches number 36. Many of these churches are present in Australia (CEOM, 2005).

⁹ For example, litigation may be commenced by a person who asserts that the failure to enrol a student amounts to unlawful discrimination. The outcome will depend on the particular circumstances of the situation.

¹⁰ Source: National Catholic Schools Database (ABS Census Data Collection, 2001).

to access. Australia is fortunate that most parishes have a parochial school and that families can access Catholic education in even the remotest settings. In the desert country of Western Australia, Catholic schools in the largely Indigenous communities of Balgo, Mullin, and Billaluna are the only schools. In the green fields areas around the large cities new schools are planned for the decades ahead.

While most parish primary schools are co-educational, there are a range of secondary school types—single sex and co-educational; years 7–10; years 11–12; years 7–12; and other combinations. While most schools implement the state curriculum, there are some variations, with a small minority teaching the International Baccalaureate and like credentials. Schools typically have an area of curriculum strength, be it in areas such as the Creative Arts, Vocational Education and Training (VET), or Sciences. Arguably the Catholic community is able to access a diversity of Catholic school types and programmes in a generally convenient location.

The Catholic Church in Australia remains committed to a preferential option for the poor within health, education, and all of its services. It is the issue of access for the poor that has challenged Catholic education over the last decade. A study on access to Catholic schooling commissioned by the NCEC, in partnership with the Australian Catholic University (Johnston & Chesteron, 1998) highlighted issues for some families and groups in Australia. These arise from a number of factors involving local availability of Catholic schools and places within them, perceptions of Catholic schools, the cost of schooling, and the extent to which Catholic schools are seen to cater for particular needs and cultural characteristics.

Anecdotal evidence that poorer Catholic families were not presenting for enrolment prompted the CECV to commission research on the affordability of Catholic schools (Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, 2004). The researchers at the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training at Monash University analysed the social composition of enrolments in Catholic (and other) schools; interrogated data on those families receiving a means-tested government education allowance (the Education Maintenance Allowance); interviewed principals and parents; and examined systemic funding models and school fee arrangements.

The researchers found that Catholic schooling had become less affordable for Catholic families and there had been a consequent decline in enrolments from 23.6% in 1991 to 22.2% in 2002. Catholic children from lower income families are less likely to attend Catholic primary or secondary schools. Similarly the proportion of students in Catholic schools receiving the Education Maintenance Allowance declined in the period under study. The researchers found that fees had increased faster than average weekly earnings and that fees and affordability are important considerations in parental choice of school. It is important to note that Catholic schools in the state of Victoria at that time received the lowest level of funding of any group of schools in Australia. This situation was rectified in 2005.

Improved government funding on its own does not remove financial barriers to participation. All schools in the research sample had a range of fee-relief strategies including fee plans (such as family fees and staged payments), fee concessions (from a modest to a full reduction), and scholarships and bursaries. These school responses were consistent with research evidence from a study on *The Poor and Catholic Schools* (Johnston & Chesteron, 1994), commissioned by the Conference of Leaders in New South Wales. This research outlined a range of strategies and practices including fees exemption, reduction or collection flexibility, clothing pools with free or cheap uniforms, school expenses assistance or exemption, family counselling and visits, curriculum support, and free lunches. The factors hindering capacity for schools to respond included lack of resources, lack of time, curriculum pressures, and the hidden nature of poverty exacerbated particularly by parents' sense of pride and the stigma associated with accepting alternative arrangements regarding school expenses. On the other hand, supportive policies, good and sensitive relations, communication with the parish and the community and dedication of the staff were considered to be enabling factors.

Some states are reviewing their fees policies to ensure that Catholic schools are open to those with limited financial resources. Perhaps the most radical strategy has been developed in Western Australia. In 2005 the Catholic Education Commission implemented a scheme where families who hold a Commonwealth Health Care Card (i.e., unemployed or on some but not all pensions) are charged an annual tuition fee of \$800 per secondary student and \$120 per primary student. Other charges may apply and sibling discounts also apply when families have more than one child enrolled at the school. The first year of implementation has been very successful with 16% of families accessing the discounts. The designers are confident it will grow as the scheme becomes better known. The benefits of this approach are that it is based on objective criteria and affords the family dignity in the application process.

Curiously the research on affordability (Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, 2004) also found that there had been a decline in the proportion of wealthy families attending Catholic schools during the research period. The evidence is that those high socio-economic families who do not access a Catholic education typically attend an independent school where the fees are generally higher. Arguably the attraction of these schools is their elite social networks, the quality of their facilities and programmes and their success at gaining access for their students to sought-after universities and higher education courses. Historically Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders in Australia have provided schools for all Catholics irrespective of socio-economic status. It is expected that the more elite schools will have access programmes for less advantaged families—scholarships, bursaries, and fee remissions. The challenge for Catholic education planners is to ensure that there are sufficient schools to cater for the aspirations of all Catholic families while maintaining their primary focus on access for the poor.

Currently some 53% of Catholic families in Australia have their children in Catholic schools and this enrolment share has been relatively constant over time

(Table 3). However, there remains a challenge for the Catholic education system for their schools to be schools of first choice for Catholic families. Indeed, this is one of the specific objectives of the Catholic Education Office in the Archdiocese of Melbourne where 58% of Catholic families have their children in Catholic schools.

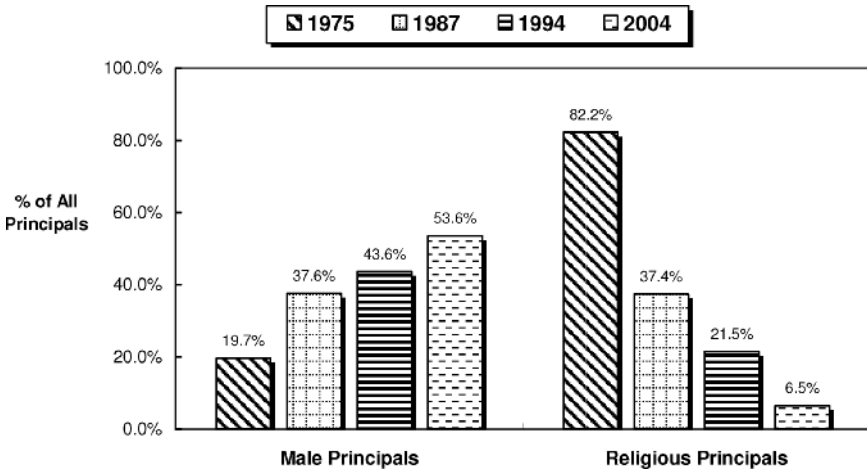
Challenge Issue: Leadership and System Response

The leadership of Catholic schools and education systems has been changing with a declining number of religious in senior roles, a lopsided gender representation and an ageing cohort. In 2004 in Victoria 53.6% of principals were male despite comprising 27% of all teachers. The situation differed in primary and secondary schools with 50.4% of primary principals male (coming from only 20% of full time teachers) and 66.3% of secondary principals male (coming from 45% of full-time teachers). At the same time the cohort of leaders is ageing with the average age moving from 46.4 in 1994 to 49.5 in 2004.

In 1975, 82.2% of Victorian principals were members of religious orders. By 2004 the figure had shrunk to 6.5%. Graph 1 illustrates the decline in religious

Table 3. Percentage of children who are Catholic who attend Catholic Schools. (From Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Data Sets)

	1996			2001		
	Melbourne	Vic	Aus	Melbourne	Vic	Aus
% attending Primary	62.3	61.4	52.9	58.9	58.4	51.7
% attending Secondary	56.4	54.8	52.5	55.8	54.8	52.0



Graph 1. Principals in Victorian Catholic schools: percentages of males and religious, 1975–2004. (From Catholic Education Commission of Victoria)

numbers, as well as the increased frequency of male principals (from 19.7% in 1975 to 53.6% in 2004).

Data are kept on those applying for principalship, which show that 57% of primary principal applicants and 75% of secondary applicants were male, indicating that their “success rate” is lower than that of females (Table 4). The key issue is the apparent reluctance of females to apply for principalship. To probe why this might be the case, the Catholic Education Commissions in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania commissioned the Australian Catholic University to investigate the barriers and attractions to principalship. The *Leadership Succession Project* (Australian Catholic University, 2004) found four main factors which discouraged senior leaders from applying for principalship in Catholic schools:

- The negative impact of principalship on personal and family life
- The complexities and pressures of the role
- Concerns about selection and appointment procedures
- Schools in locations which created disadvantages for family members of the principal applicant.

Each of these Commissions and others around Australia are implementing strategies to improve the pool of candidates for principalship, to identify pathways to principalship for women and to extend the induction, mentoring and professional support offered to principals. For example, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission’s *Leadership Succession Project* is looking at alternate models of principalship (such as co-principalship and team leadership) and the mentoring and support of leaders. Strategies such as enrichment leave¹¹ (which affords principals up to ten weeks spiritual and professional renewal after ten years of service); dedicated seminars and professional development activities; and opportunities for retreats are rated effective in the ongoing support of principals in their roles.

The role of principal as leader of a faith community has been the subject of ongoing dialogue and formation. It received particular attention with the recent publication of a study commissioned by the Australian Catholic Primary

Table 4. Females among religious principals (percentages): Victorian Catholic schools, 1975, 1987, 1994, 2004. (From Catholic Education Commission of Victoria)

Year	M	F	All religious principals	% of female among religious principals
1975	55	324	379	85.5
1987	38	147	185	79.5
1994	29	76	105	72.4
2004	13	18	31	58.1

¹¹ Most Australian dioceses have enrichment leave programs for principals.

Principals' Association (ACPPA, 2005). Although criticised for superficiality, the study did document the current perceptions of Catholic principals about their roles. The research restricted itself to an exploration of the perspectives of ACPPA members in the current role of principal of a Catholic primary school. It explored what activities are identified in their role descriptions and what activities are expected or assumed but not written down. Principals identified the positive and negative aspects of these parish activities.

The research found that parish activities contribute to the complexity of principalship in Catholic primary schools; that there are difficulties when there are unclear expectations of the principal's role in the parish; and that there is a unique rural experience of principals in small isolated Catholic schools. The ACPPA used the findings to call for dialogue amongst Church leaders to ensure clarity and consistency in roles and expectations for primary principals.

While the perspective of the ACPPA research could cast the issue of leadership of a faith community as a professional and industrial¹² matter, it is a question which has long occupied the episcopacy, clergy, religious, Catholic system planners, and principals themselves. In Australian Catholic schools, the principal is supported in this role by a Religious Education Coordinator (REC). Increasing emphasis is placed on the standards expected of Catholic education leaders and the appropriate accreditation for the role. Most Commissions offer sponsored study leave for credentialled courses to ensure that principals and RECs are qualified for the role.¹³

The CECV commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research to develop standards for leaders in Catholic Schools (see Attachment 1). An extensive consultative process was used in the development of these standards during 2004 and 2005. The next step is to use them as the basis of discussion on accreditation for leadership and to integrate them into the principal selection process. This work is proceeding alongside wider initiatives in Australian education to identify subject specific standards and those relating to neophyte, experienced, and exemplary teachers.

Research in Catholic Education: Current Achievements and Future Needs

The arguments for evidence-based (or data-driven) approaches to improving educational outcomes are championed by professional groups such as the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE). While individual schools and Catholic education systems make connections to these international initiatives, work is also done at a national level to ensure that the Catholic

¹² The workload of principals, and the expectation from some Parish Priests that they contribute to Parish life, is a potential industrial issue.

¹³ For example, in 2006 the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria gave sponsored study leave to 26 Religious Education Coordinators undertaking further studies in RE and theology. In 2005, 734 had completed or were completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare).

Attachment 1. (Catholic education commission of Victoria (2005), *leadership in Catholic schools: Development framework and standards of Practice*, CECV, Melbourne)

	Leadership actions in the five key areas				
	Area 1 The faith community	Area 2 A Vision for the whole school	Area 3 Teaching and learning	Area 4 People and resources	Area 5 Community
Guiding conceptions of leadership					
The litmus test of all leadership is whether it mobilises people's commitment to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things. It is individual commitment, but above all it is collective mobilisation (Fullan, 2001: 9) The following features should be apparent in all of the actions of school leaders:					
1 HAVING A CLEAR MORAL PURPOSE	1.1 The Catholic identity of the school School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain, and enhance the Catholic identity of the school.	2.1 A vision for teaching and learning School leaders actively and collaboratively develop and communicate a whole-school vision that is centred on the guidance and improvement of teaching and learning	3.1 A focus on student learning outcomes School leaders actively and collaboratively advocate and ensure a teaching and learning focus on student learning outcomes.	4.1 Professional learning and development School leaders are learners who actively and collaboratively encourage and support the professional learning of their colleagues	5.1 Communication with families School leaders actively and collaboratively encourage and facilitate effective communication with families.

(continued)

Attachment 1. (continued)

Leadership actions in the five key areas					
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Guiding conceptions of leadership	The faith community	A Vision for the whole school	Teaching and learning	People and resources	Community
2 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	1.2 Education in life and faith	2.2 A learning culture	3.2 Curriculum and assessment	4.2 Staff appraisal and performance review	5.2 Partnerships
	School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain, and enhance an education in faith, and opportunities for faith development.	School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and build a culture that supports the school's vision for teaching and learning.	School leaders actively and collaboratively develop curriculum and assessment policies and programmes. They mobilise others to implement these policies.	School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, support, and participate in staff appraisal and performance review programmes that aim to ensure accountability and improve teaching quality.	School leaders forge partnerships with individuals and groups who can have a positive impact on students' growth and learning.

<p>3 UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING CHANGE</p>	<p>1.3 Celebration of life and faith</p>	<p>2.3 Policy and programme development</p>	<p>3.3 A safe and effective environment for teaching and learning</p>	<p>4.3 Resources</p>	<p>5.3 Service to the wider community</p>
	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively promote, maintain, and enhance processes for reflection, prayer, and liturgical celebration.</p>	<p>School leaders plan, strategically and collaboratively, to develop policies and programmes that support the school's vision for teaching and learning.</p>	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively cultivate and promote a safe and effective environment for teaching and learning.</p>	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively select and organise resources to promote student learning.</p>	<p>School leaders emulate the model of Jesus Christ in providing service to the wider community.</p>
<p>4 CREATING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>1.4 Action and social justice</p>	<p>2.4 Teacher professionalism</p>	<p>3.4 Quality teaching</p>	<p>4.4 Pastoral care</p>	
	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively uphold a commitment to social justice and action in the school and wider community.</p>	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively build a culture that promotes teacher actions and relationships that are appropriate to the vision and mission of the Catholic school.</p>	<p>School leaders are expert teachers. They actively and collaboratively assist their colleagues to improve teaching practice.</p>	<p>School leaders actively and collaboratively promote and implement the school's pastoral care policies, and programmes.</p>	
<p>5 ENSURING COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT OF STRUCTURES</p>					

education system is underpinned by a robust database which is regularly analysed. A pioneer of these approaches in Australia, Marcellin Flynn, undertook longitudinal research from 1972 to 1998 on the expectations and attitudes of key groups in Catholic schools. In another chapter of this publication my colleague Brian Croke writes about the Australian Catholic Education Systems (ACES) database—a database of the NCEC—which is housed at the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission. However, most of the research occurs within state commissions.

This section on research will describe the research efforts of the CECV over the decade 1996–2005. The Commission's research framework is provided in Attachment 2. A chronological overview will reveal the use of theoretical, empirical, and applied research for a range of purposes from leading opinion, to advocating on behalf of the sector, to improving educational outcomes. The Commission took the view that high calibre research would best be generated through a combination of in-house and externally commissioned projects. A Knowledge Management unit was established, appropriately skilled staff appointed and data sets reviewed.

A chronological account of research initiatives at the CECV reveals a growing commitment to sourcing international best practice and to using evidence-based approaches to improve educational outcomes. In 1996 researchers from Melbourne University, Peter Hill and Carmel Crevola, were commissioned to undertake a literature search on effective literacy teaching, which underpinned the development of a system-wide approach to literacy improvement. The effectiveness of this initiative, the *Children's Literacy Success Strategy (CLaSS)*, was measured by throwing a longitudinal research umbrella over the project (Ainley & Fleming, 2000, 2003; Ainley et al., 2002). The researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research were able through multivariate analysis to determine those factors which enabled literacy improvement and those which did not. This knowledge is continually fed back to practitioners to inform their practice through professional development activities and publications.

In 1999 researchers from the Australian Catholic University, Doug Clarke and colleagues, were commissioned to source best practice internationally in the area of numeracy and develop a numeracy strategy for the Commission. The strategy, *Success in Numeracy Education (SINE)*, is now the subject of an evaluation to determine its effectiveness in improving numeracy outcomes.

While these two projects were developed in partnership and focused on learning in the classroom, a quite different research initiative was conceived to tackle growing concern about the gender representation of the principalship and the shrinking number of candidates. *Leadership Succession for Catholic Schools in Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania* (reported earlier) was a successful collaboration across state Commissions in partnership with the Flagship for Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University. Like the projects described earlier, these commissioned research initiatives were conducted in partnership with various research agencies. The advantages of this approach for the Commission are that the best expertise can be sourced for an issue and costs

Attachment 2

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Research Framework

THEORETICAL RESEARCH

Aims

- Deepen understanding of nature and purpose of Catholic education
- Test new conceptions of schooling and Catholic education

Examples

- *The School as the Core Social Centre (OECD Project)*
- *Conceptions of Public and Private in Education (CECV)*
- *Assessing the Catholicity of Catholic Schools (CECV)*

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Aims

- Interrogate evidence to identify key issues in Catholic schools
- Analyse findings to test anecdotal views
- Apply analyses to policy issues for advocacy and promotion

Examples

- *The Affordability of Catholic Schools (CEET, Monash University)*
- *Welfare Needs in Catholic Schools (AYRC, Melbourne University)*
- *The Contribution of Catholic Schools to the Victorian Economy and Community (CSES, Victoria University)*

APPLIED RESEARCH

Aims

- Encourage practitioners to use data to drive improvement
- Promote innovative and reflective practice by enabling local action research initiatives

Examples

- *Provision of Services, Catholic Education Office, Melbourne (Australian Catholic University)*
- *Children's Literacy Success Strategy (CECV)*
- *Review of School Review Procedures (CEOM)*
- *Innovations Grants Program (CEOM)*

contained. Also, alliances and networks are built with universities and research agencies which have follow on benefits.

An expansion of research activity began in 2003 with renewed resolve to improve the funding of Victorian Catholic schools. The view was taken from the outset that a multi-faceted strategy involving raising community awareness, lobbying government and influencing opinion leaders would be needed. This strategy would be underpinned by theoretical and empirical research. Agencies with known reputations would be used to ensure the credibility of claims made in lobbying efforts with government. Once again the Commission worked in a form of partnership with research agencies, though from a greater distance.

Each research report was released to an invitational seminar at which respected academics and opinion leaders were asked to respond to and debate the findings. Summaries of the proceedings were published and widely disseminated to the broad educational community, policy makers, and the media. The first issue tackled was *Conceptions of Public and Private in Education* (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2003) to challenge prevailing conceptions of public education as solely provided by government owned and operated institutions. Strategically this was important as the dominant narrative in the community was of poorly funded government schools and elite well-resourced private schools. This put Catholic schools in the same category as independent schools, obfuscated their unique identity and diminished the face validity of their claims for improved resourcing. An intellectual challenge was required and the commissioned papers and ensuing debate enabled this to occur.

In addition to the conceptual debate, empirical research was needed to validate, or otherwise, the anecdotal claims from principals and parish priests that poorer families were dropping out of Catholic schools, and also that schools were straining under growing welfare needs. The report, *The Affordability of Catholic Schools in Victoria* (Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, 2004) confirmed what the principals had observed. A complementary report, *The Welfare Needs of Victorian Catholic Schools* (Australian Youth Research Centre, 2004), also verified claims of growing welfare needs in Catholic schools and limited resources to manage them. These reports were presented at CECV seminars and widely disseminated. It is noteworthy that the Queensland bishops' research project (1998–2001) found similar needs, hence the defining feature of “community of care” for its Catholic schools. Both research projects empirically validates claims of need in Catholic schools.

Arguably these reports might have sufficed, but the Commission was determined that it would not promote a negative campaign, which could have long-term deleterious effects on perceptions of the quality of Catholic education. Also, the Executive Director was struck by an observation of the State Treasurer during one of their meetings that he did not know what difference Catholic schools made to the quality of life in Victoria. This was the prompt to go on the front foot and provide evidence of the contribution that Catholic schools make to the state. The resultant report by economists from Victoria University, *The Contribution of Catholic Schools to the Victorian Economy and*

Community (Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, 2004), produced evidence that “Victorian Catholic schools generated a net saving to the Australian community in 1999–2000 of about \$440 million per annum,” that they contribute to social harmony, and that they are cost-effective, achieving higher than average outcomes on a lower resource base. The report states that “higher than average outcomes are evident in AIM testing of factors such as literacy and numeracy at the primary level, in student retention rates to VCE, in VCE results and in post-school transition experience” and “recurrent expenditure per pupil in Victorian Catholic primary schools in 2002 was much lower than in other schools, being 21% lower than in the average government primary school, and 31% lower than non-government primary schools. Secondary schools are better resourced, but recurrent expenditure levels in Catholic systemic secondary schools was 6% and 33% lower than in government and other non-government secondary schools respectively in 2002.” This was groundbreaking research, which generated intellectual as well as policy interest.

The momentum generated by the public release of research reports, the growing debate within the community and amongst opinion leaders, and ongoing lobbying was sufficient to achieve the funding improvement in the May 2005 budget. Given that Victorian Catholic schools had received the lowest funding in Australia for more than a decade, this was a historic turnaround.

Current research is focusing strongly on improving educational outcomes. Analysis of end-of-school results revealed poorer than expected results in some subject areas, despite above average results generally. Research on achievement in mathematics, *Report to CEOM on Elite Achievement in VCE Mathematics Subjects* (University of Melbourne, 2005) and in science, *A Study of Factors Affecting Performance of Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Schools in VCE Science* (Australian Council of Educational Research, 2005) was undertaken by external researchers and results provided to principals at their briefings and at seminars.

Catholic educators and system planners in Australia have been influenced by the research of US academics such as Coleman and Hoffer (1987) and their conception of social capital and Bryk et al. (1993) and their efforts to identify the factors influencing student performance. Across the Atlantic, the work of Grace (2002) on Catholic identity has been influential and of McLaughlin (1996) on the nature and identity of Catholic schools. The current growth in Catholic higher education institutions in Australia may produce stronger research schools. The private university, Notre Dame Australia, has expanded from Fremantle in Western Australia to Sydney and Melbourne on the eastern seaboard in 2006 and the liberal arts college Campion College has opened at the same time. This means there will be three Catholic higher education providers in Sydney facilitating opportunities for collaboration in and consolidation of research efforts.

Future research will move to evaluative areas. The debates on Catholic identity suggest the need for clarifying those elements we believe are central to the maintenance of a Catholic identity and then ensuring their presence through auditing, review, or evaluation. One dimension of this work will be measuring

the value added by a Catholic education. As previously noted, ground-breaking developments in measurement methodologies will enable this to happen (Pascoe, 2005).

Conclusion

Most Catholic schools have adapted to changing political and socio-economic environments in Australia's relatively brief history. They have been an important part of the Church's evangelising mission. Dominant issues have moved from dealing with secularisation, to financing "mission schools," to catering for the influx of post-war migration to maintaining universal access for Catholic families. This paper has painted the Australian context, identified current issues in Catholic education, and described research activity. From an Australian perspective we are fortunate in the mix of federal and state funding which has enabled comprehensive provision of Catholic education in Catholic primary and secondary schools across the country. We view Catholic schools as community providers of a public service with visible commitment to democratic institutions and civic virtues. There is every reason to be optimistic about the future of Catholic education in Australia given the proactive approach by Catholic sector authorities to reading the signs of the times and contributing to the Australian community and to the robustness of the Catholic tradition.

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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN A CHANGING POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Brian Croke

Introduction

Casimir College in the inner Sydney suburb of Marrickville encapsulates the story of Catholic schooling in modern Australia. In the 1930s, the Brothers of the Christian Schools (known in Australia as the De La Salle Brothers) and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, the first locally created congregation (1857), were invited by the parish priest, Fr Casimir Maguire, to establish separate schools for boys and girls. The original schools amalgamated in the early 1980s to form one large co-educational school by which time the Religious had almost disappeared from them and the Irish Australians, which the schools originally served had long since been displaced by immigrants of Italian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, and other national backgrounds. The last De La Salle brother retired from the school in 1995. Originally the schools were funded entirely by the fees of the relatively poor Marrickville parents and the meagre resources of the congregations. The labour of the brothers and nuns who staffed them was free. The advent of government funding from the early 1970s, combined with the reorganisation of secondary schooling across the Archdiocese of Sydney, gave rise to the present college. It is well equipped, staffed by lay teachers and is predominantly funded by the Australian and state governments. It forms part of the community of schools whose management and development is supported by the Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office (Luttrell, 2000, p. 147).

In February 2004, Casimir College provided the setting for a major political event involving the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, and the Cardinal Archbishop of Sydney, George Pell. The occasion was generated by the need for the Prime Minister to publicise an increase in Australian government funding for Catholic schools such as Casimir. The symbolism of the occasion was not lost on political commentators who interpreted it as the Prime Minister courting what was once called the “Catholic vote” ahead of a forthcoming national election due by the end of 2004. The perception of a close alliance between the Government

and Church leaders was reinforced several months later, at a crucial moment during the national election campaign, when the Archbishops of Sydney and Melbourne, both Catholic and Anglican, issued a joint statement condemning the education policy of the Opposition Australian Labor Party as inimical to the interests of non-government schools. In a testy electoral cauldron accusations of political bias were freely sparked, along with cries of cynical manipulation of religion by politicians and of politicians by church leaders. Religion appeared to be getting the upper hand in supposedly secular Australia (Maddox, 2005), but in hindsight it seemed that episcopal clout might be misinterpreted (Mellish & Tingle, 2005, p. 61).

The Marrickville event is emblematic, however, of wider developments in contemporary Australian political and religious life and the relationship between them. Catholic schools and the bishops responsible for them are inevitably caught up in this swirl. They depend on the Australian government for the majority of their funding,¹ while the government increasingly seeks to use its funding to leverage preferred outcomes and policy directions from schools. The government wants Catholic schools to prosper because they provide choice for parents, all parents not just Catholics. The Church requires the freedom and autonomy to manage and develop the schools as part of its mission. In this mix of competing goals and obligations, Catholic schools find themselves under increasing strain.

It is recognised that, compared to other nations, Catholic schools in Australia have achieved a uniquely advantageous combination of government funding and relative autonomy. However, this unique advantage is now under pressure, both internal and external. The former certitudes about a Catholic school's purpose, role, and character have dissolved, as they have in other western nations. Some challenging questions are increasingly being asked, haltingly answered and scarcely researched as yet: Are Catholic schools succeeding or failing? How can we tell? Why are they being increasingly ignored by Catholics but embraced by non-Catholics? Why should they continue to be funded by governments? Should more community and social demands be placed on them in return for further government funding? What is their future?

The present challenges for Catholic schools in Australia involve finding new ways to consolidate their integrity and authenticity in a climate of reduced religious commitment from Catholic parents and the potential encroachments of government regulation. In the current transition from a lengthy preoccupation with seeking financial security from governments, with their Catholicity assumed, to a focus on quality and Catholicity, there are specific challenges around identity,

¹ Australian Catholic schools are essentially funded by three sources: Australian government grants (53% of annual recurrent income), State government grants (varies from state to state but 19% on average) and tuition fees charged to parents (28%). The Australian government also provides capital grants for building of new Catholic schools and refurbishing of other schools but these are competitive and priority is given to relative socio-economic need. The main source of capital funding is loans, which are repaid by parental and church resources. Some states, for instance NSW, also provide a subsidy on the interest paid for school buildings.

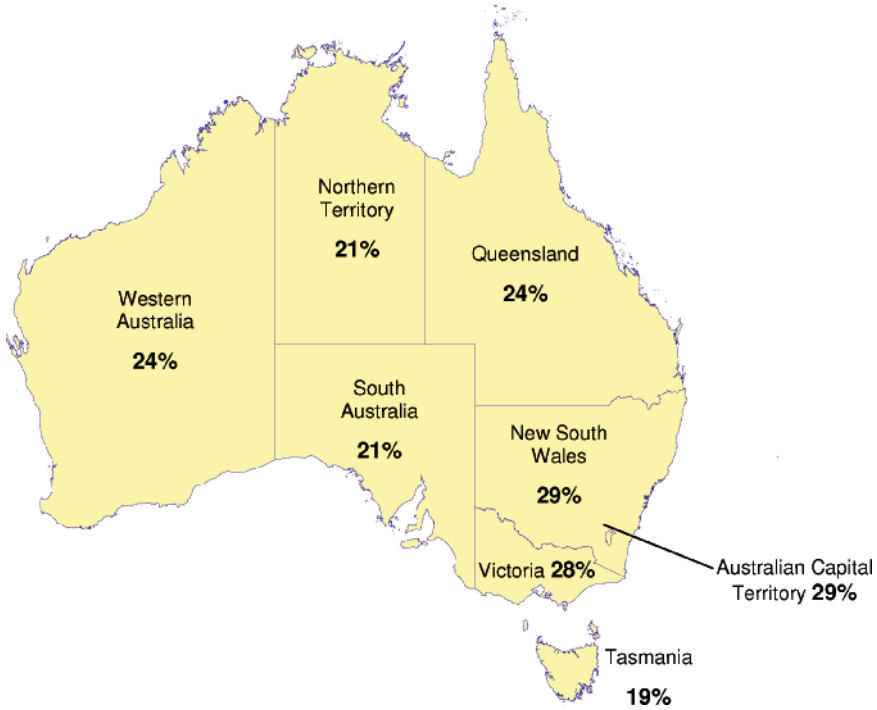
access, and leadership. These are addressed in Pascoe's complementary chapter (—Chapter 42). This chapter aims to identify and elucidate the broader contours of these current challenges, as well as to suggest how they might be resolved.

Politics, Religion, and School Choice

The Australian government first provided direct financial aid to non-government, predominantly Catholic, schools in 1964 in the form of small grants for science laboratories. This initiative was a convenient way of responding to the increasing demand for some sort of financial relief for Catholic schools, which had been growing and modernising rapidly since the end of World War II. The Catholic campaign for what was called "State Aid" had simmered along since funding was withdrawn from Catholic schools across each of the colonies in the 1880s, 20 years before the colonies federated to form the single Commonwealth of Australia. The 1870s and 1880s saw the introduction of universal and compulsory primary education. In the climate of the day the hope was held that secular educational institutions would lead to the withering of religious conflict and dissent as Catholic and other denominational schools disappeared. The Irish Catholic community of the Australian colonies, strongly led by their Irish bishops and clergy, resolved to defeat the secularists' dreams by importing nuns and brothers to staff the Catholic schools. The Irish Catholic enclave was further solidified by support for new political parties representing the specific interests of workers. The proportion of Catholics in each colony varied, depending on the rate of Irish immigration, and these variations persist to the present (Map 1). Everywhere religious division and bigotry prospered. By the 1920s, the new Labor parties which enjoyed majority Catholic support won government, at both state and national level. The symbiosis between religion and politics helped promote the demand for the introduction of government financial support for Catholic schools and kept alive a healthy suspicion of the Catholic quest, complicated further by the fierce split in the Australian Labor Party in the mid-1950s (Hogan, 1978).

By the 1960s the intensity of denominational difference was ebbing, helped along by the Church opening up to the world following the Second Vatican Council, and Catholic schools started to reap the benefits of the extensive social mobility they had deliberately promoted. Catholics could now be found in the higher echelons of professional and political life, so ways of supporting Catholic schools financially started to be explored. By then Catholics were even emerging at the senior levels of what had traditionally been a Liberal party suspicious of Catholics (Brett, 2003, p. 132). After a long struggle, both major political parties (the Liberal Party and the Labor Party) eventually endorsed policies supporting public funding for Catholic schools. The most substantial step forward came in 1973 with the formation of the Australian Schools Commission and the introduction of grants at a level which enabled teachers' salaries in Catholic schools to be paid.

Bipartisan political support for Catholic schools was won by a recognition of the justice of the case that Catholic schools were not in competition with



Map 1. Percentage of Catholics in Australian states. (From 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics)

government schools. They were making their contribution to the education of a large proportion of young Australians who happened to be Catholic and whose parents wanted them to have a Catholic education. Catholic schools were now being supported by all taxpayers precisely because they were Catholic. It was a justification based on the democratic rights and entitlements of a religiously motivated community. Moreover, being Catholic also guaranteed the Church's right to control who enrolled in Catholic schools, who taught in them and what they taught (Croke, 1996). Exemptions for Catholic schools in Anti-Discrimination Acts reinforced and protected this entitlement.² By 1981, when a legal challenge to the constitutionality of Australian government aid for church schools failed in the High Court, both government and the Church felt secure about the integrity

² The Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act* (1984) provides a defence for religious schools to discriminate on grounds of sex, marital status, and pregnancy "so long as such discrimination occurs in good faith in order to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherents of that religion" (section 38), while the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act* (1986) has similar provisions, as well as the defence of "inherent requirements of the job." All Australian states have similar State legislation. From time to time, it is argued by different community groups that these exemptions should be abolished although no Government has attempted to legislate accordingly.

and future of Catholic schools (Lawlor, 2002, p. 63). Religion and religiously educated citizens were seen as a force for good in society because they promoted tolerance and social development.

The religious, political, and social environment of Catholic schools has changed enormously in the last 25 years, especially in the last ten. In Australia, as in most western societies, religious thought and practice are often eyed with anxiety. Clerical abuse and financial scandals have been significant contributors to this situation. To be religious is to be not only irrational and illiberal, but also exclusive and intolerant. Religion is seen as the underlying ingredient of conflict and terrorism everywhere. Religious education only perpetuates social friction, so it is argued. Governments should not be funding it, or if they do they should be helping defuse or emasculate its essential core. Since church schools in Australia are predominantly government funded they should not have the right to be so self-interested and selective in their students and staff, and need to develop a stronger sense of social responsibility (Caro, 2006).

At the same time, almost paradoxically, God and religion are subjects of unprecedented public commentary and debate in Australia (Maddox, 2005; Lohrey, 2006). Politicians wear their faith on their sleeves like never before. Governments cultivate the support of religious groups and “faith-based” organisations, usually mainstream churches, are replacing government instrumentalities in the provision of various social services. In this context religion is surely seen as a force for human and social development. On the other hand, some commentators would argue that the churches have been captured by government and compromised (Maddox, 2005, pp. 247–259). This appears to be reinforced by the way politicians are seen to treat church leaders (e.g., Downer, 2003). They are keen to promote and bolster the views of church leaders on moral issues (abortion, euthanasia, sexuality, responsibility, respect) but not on other more social dimensions such as war and peace, social justice, taxation reform, or industrial relations. In those cases they are warned that such issues have nothing to do with religion and they have no right to comment. Instead, they should stick to the purely spiritual and moral (Maddox, 2005, pp. 232–247). Sooner or later this argument will be applied to what is taught in the religious schools for which those leaders are responsible.

This separation of the personal from the social and the common good is part of the wider phenomenon of the privatisation of religion across western societies. Religion has value on a personal level and is supported as the basis of moral improvement. Linked to this is another entrenched rhetorical distinction between spirituality and religion. “Spiritual” is good, the argument goes, because it improves the moral fibre of individuals and therefore society; “religion” is bad because it is institutional, interfering and out of touch (Maddox, 2005, pp. 161–162). Australian students are happy to be spiritual, even religiously committed students, but they too shy away from “religion” (Lohrey, 2006, pp. 4–5).

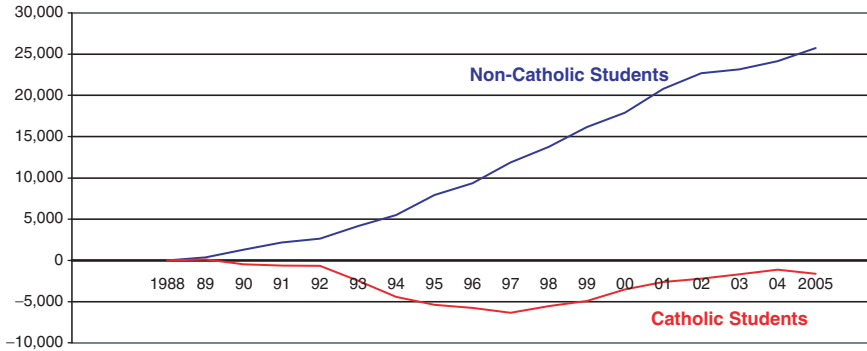
Religious ignorance is regarded, however, as a civic detriment. Prime Minister John Howard has advocated the teaching of Christianity as part of the Australian culture and tradition, while Australia’s head of state, Governor General Michael

Jeffrey, triggered off a polarised debate in 2003 when he publicly advocated the teaching of more religion in Australian schools. He argued that a decline in teaching of religion was responsible for a decline in values and moral behaviour, so we need to promote “the notion that society benefits if we live an ethically good life, including the recognition that with rights go obligations; to each other, to our communities and to our nation” (Jeffrey, 2003). His critics did not contest a greater emphasis on ethics but they challenged the need for its exclusively religious context. Governments now actively promote values and the teaching of values in schools, so that even if religion is not seen as positive then religious values certainly are (Maddox, 2005, p. 192), and Catholic schools represent a deliberate choice for religious values in education.

Facilitating choice is a key Australian Government policy designed to make more non-government schools more affordable to more people. The school’s religious or other affiliation is a subsidiary factor. While the choice is exercised by local ethnic and religious communities for their own schools, the assumption is that they can be chosen by anyone. Choice presupposes a market and competition. Australian government policy also aims wherever possible to deal directly with parents, bypassing school authorities at state level, thereby empowering parents themselves to make a choice (Maiden, 2005, p. 133). The recent introduction of the “Investing in Our Schools Program” (small grants for capital projects in schools) and its instant political success has been followed by the “Literacy Voucher” programme and proposals to extend the voucher model to students with disabilities.³ Catholic schools are succeeding in this climate because they are attractive to many parents. Moreover, they are increasingly skilled at marketing themselves, except not to Catholics it would appear.

Catholics fought hard for the right to choose a Catholic school, at least to enable that right to be affordable. Although affordability is rarely an issue now for Catholic parents, fewer Catholic families are choosing Catholic schools, even though their resources are better than ever. In NSW, for example, in 2005 there were 1,610 fewer Catholic students in Catholic schools than there had been in 1988 (CEC, NSW, 2005). The data shows that the drift from Catholic schools is occurring at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum. As in the USA (Baker & Riordan, 1998; Youniss & McLellan, 1999), high-income Catholics are increasingly attracted to more selective and high-fee schools, which are not Catholic. In the absence of any systematic survey, it is assumed that for such families school choice is driven more by perceived academic standards, discipline, and school facilities than religious factors. What little evidence we have shows that religion is not a strong factor in choosing a Catholic school. In a 1994 survey (Canavan, 1995) it ranked 9th in a list of reasons for choosing a Catholic school and in a 2001 survey it

³ The Australian government’s new *Reading Assistance Voucher Program* provides a voucher worth \$700 to parents of students who in year 3, 2006 failed to meet the national proficiency benchmark for literacy. Parents are then free to spend the voucher on engaging extra tutorial assistance for the student. The proposed voucher for disabled students would provide parents with a voucher towards the cost of educating their child with the parents then free to choose whether they enrol their child in a government or non-government school.



Graph 1. Annual change in Catholic and non-Catholic enrolments in NSW Catholic schools, 1988–2005. (From Catholic Education Commission, NSW. *Annual Statistical Returns*)

ranked second last, ahead of affordability. As for the lower socio-economic families, it is assumed that affordability is a key issue keeping them away from Catholic schools, even though Catholic school fees are considered relatively inexpensive. Earlier research (Johnston & Chesterton, 1994) suggests that reluctance to accept charity or be stigmatised as poor are also factors.

If Australian Catholic families are no longer preferring Catholic schools, then who is? In brief, the growth in Catholic schools is being entirely sustained by middle class families of other Christian denominations, and non-Christian faiths (Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu). In NSW (Graph 1), alongside the decline of Catholic students between 1988 and 2005 there was an increase in non-Catholic students of 25,738 (CEC, NSW, 2005).

The pattern is similar in other Australian states although there is no comparable national data. Again, why these families choose Catholic schools has not been investigated. It is usually presumed to be because of the perceived values and educational standards of the schools. Some argue that it is because Catholic schools provide the only accessible option for upwardly mobile non-Catholics fleeing government schools (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 218). The particularly rapid increase in non-Christian enrolments reflects not only the growing religious pluralism of Australia, particularly in its major urban areas, but also the fact that many of these parents are looking specifically for a religious and moral education for their children. To them the Catholic school, as their only affordable option, is far preferable to the overtly secular government school.

Regulation of Catholic Schooling

Public accountability, along with the regulation which drives it and turns it into documented reality, has become a major test for all Australian schools. Since Catholic schools are now so dependent on the Australian Government as their

major source of funds, they find that the ever increasing government demands for accountability can be a challenge. While greater national consistency and standardisation across Australia in curriculum, assessment, and other matters has often been advocated, only very recently has it gained momentum. Moreover, that momentum has come largely from the Australian Government's capacity to tie conditions of funding to its grants to schools, including all Catholic schools. For example, among other things, the Australian Minister for Education now prescribes a series of common annual tests for all students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9, that student reports to parents must be in the same format, must describe student achievement by a uniform scale (A to E) and must provide comparative ranking for each student in each course. Schools must now have a functional flagpole to fly the Australian flag and, in some states, sing the national anthem on official school occasions. New national structures for teacher quality, for testing and for curriculum standards have been established or are planned.

The latest regulations also include a requirement that when appointing staff in a Catholic school a principal will "take account of the relationship of the school with the bishop, the parish priests and the leadership of religious institutions" (DEST, 2005, p. 193). When a parliament starts to take responsibility for this level of prescription in the operation of Catholic schools, as a condition of funding, it provides an easy precedent for less acceptable requirements in future. Certainly, Catholic schools, and Catholic school authorities, are generally supportive of greater national consistency and standardisation in schooling. Of more concern to them is the potential impact of all the increased regulation and prescription on their integrity and autonomy as Catholic schools. In other words, are we approaching the point where aspects of government control and direction may begin to threaten the very nature of Catholic schools? At some point, they may be forced to take a public stand which could prejudice their continued receipt of Australian government funds.

The rationale for most of these requirements is twofold: schools need to be more transparently accountable to government and the community for public expenditure and for students' outcomes, and parents need to be able to compare and evaluate schools to inform their choice of school for their own children. It is a clear symbol of the trend towards the commodification of schooling in the modern market place. The assumption that by itself competition invariably drives price down and quality up is being applied to schools. This emphasis on competition among schools is not something that sits comfortably with Catholic schools and educators, just as it did not when it emerged a decade or so earlier in the UK (Grace, 1998, 2002, pp. 180–183, 189ff). On the other hand, Catholic schools also recognise that the Church strongly supports the parental right to choose a school and that there is a proper role for schools to play in promoting themselves as a way of building relationships that assist informed choice (Myers, 2003).

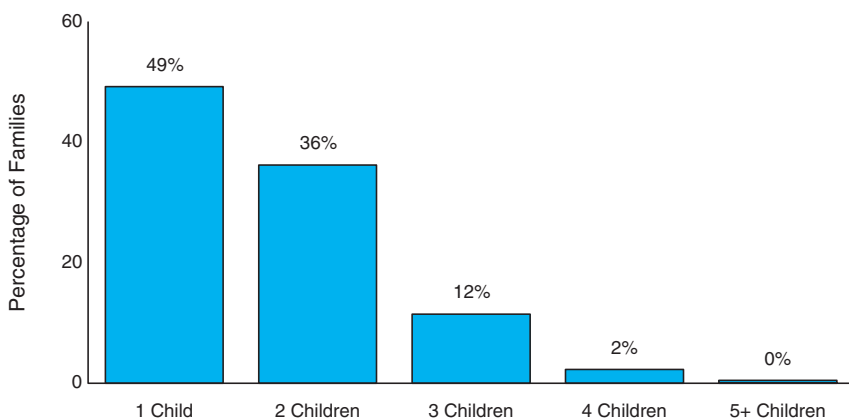
The increased use of data on student academic performance can form part of a wider campaign to ensure that a Catholic school is worth choosing without the school's essential goals and integrity being subsumed or forfeited. There is no doubt that on average Catholic schools do produce higher outcomes for students,

particularly students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Grace, 2002, pp. 153–179; Evans, 2004). There is some research to posit an established link between academic achievement and quality of school life, morale and strength of community. It appeared in the 1970s (Flynn, 1975) and was systematically addressed in the 1990s (Mok & Flynn, 1997). Confirmation can be found in comparable research from the USA (Jeynes, 2002) and England (Morris, 2005). Catholic schools are seen to be good at developing a strong and functioning community with supportive pastoral care and community development programmes.

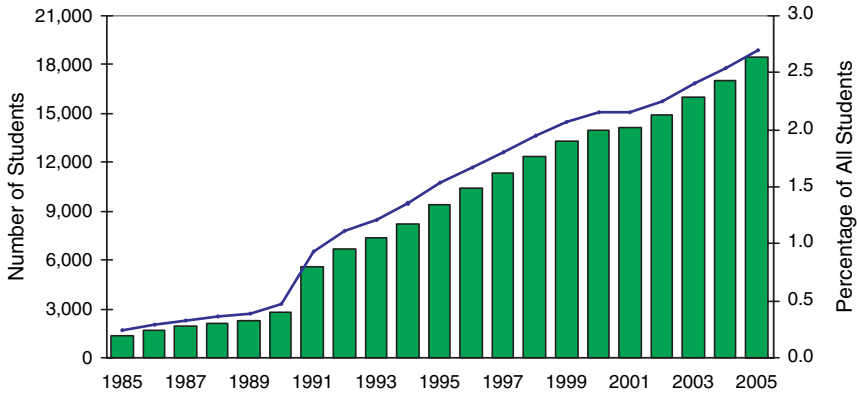
Australian Catholic schools will continue to change. They will continue to be funded by governments and are likely to become more and more regulated in response to changing political and social agendas. Preserving the autonomy and authenticity of Catholic schools in a demanding and competitive market for student achievement will be challenging enough. If current trends in industrial relations lead to intense salary competition among schools for the best teachers this could prove additionally stressful. Catholic school authorities will do well to ensure that the increased regulation of teachers and teaching does not marginalise or devalue the personal and religious requirements essential for teaching in a Catholic school, and that it does not intrude on enrolment policies. Preserving anti-discrimination protections will be essential.

The Changing Face of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools reflect the changing face of contemporary Australia. They include rich and poor, as well as families of all ethnic backgrounds. Above all they reflect the rapidly diminished size of Australian families. In fact, 85% of students in Catholic schools come from families which have no more than two school-age children (Graph 2).



Graph 2. Family size: Australian Catholic school families, 2001. (From 2001 Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics)

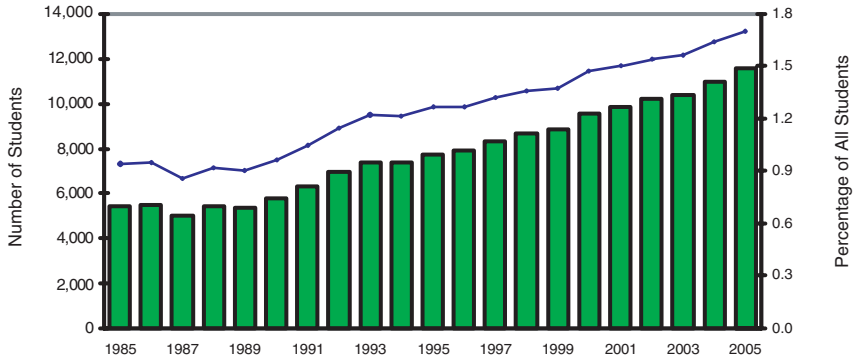


Graph 3. Students with a disability, Australian Catholic schools 2005. (From NCEC, Australian Catholic Education Statistics Database)

The largest cities of Sydney and Melbourne in particular continue to support each new influx of immigrants and refugees. Many of these find the Catholic school a welcoming home. Yet they provide their own challenges. In the Archdiocese of Sydney, for instance, every second child commencing school in Kindergarten is from a non-English speaking family and arrives at school with little or no English. Catholic schools have built great expertise and experience in teaching English as a second language since the 1960s and may count it among their many considerable achievements (Canavan, 2006, p. 17).

Catholic schools are often accused of not taking their share of students who are seen to be more challenging and harder to teach, particularly students with disabilities and Aboriginal, or Indigenous, Australian students. The enrolment data for Australian Catholic schools shows, however, that schools are enthusiastically striving to answer this accusation. In fact, arguably the most significant development in Catholic schools in the last 15 years or so has been the dramatic increase in the enrolment of students with disabilities (Graph 3). This has arisen from both the universal move towards integration of such students into regular schools wherever possible, as well as the specific legal obligation on schools since the Australian Government's *Disability Discrimination Act* of 1992, which makes it difficult for a school to refuse enrolment to a disabled child. The resources and the support services required by these students continue to place great pressure on Catholic schools but the commitment to do better remains.

The picture is similar for Indigenous students in Catholic schools where the number has more than doubled since Pope John Paul II's exhortation to Indigenous Australians at Alice Springs in 1986: "You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until

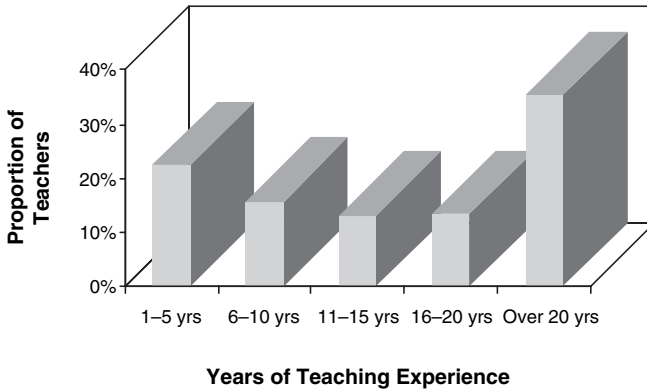


Graph 4. Indigenous students, Australian Catholic schools 2005. (from NCEC, Australian Catholic Education Statistics Database)

that contribution has been joyfully received by others.” Increased Australian government funding for Indigenous students in recent years has also played a role. There are now 11,554 Indigenous students in Australian Catholic schools. From 2004 to 2005 the number grew by 1.7%, which was higher than the overall enrolment growth from 2004 to 2005 of 1.1%. Graph 4 shows the growth over the last 20 years.

While the growth in students with disabilities and Indigenous students reflects the Catholic school being true to its mission, one countervailing trend is problematic. The declared preferential option of the Catholic school for the poorest is failing in Australia. The data shows that poorer families are staying away from Catholic schools more than ever before. Between 1996 and 2001 (NCEC, 2001) the proportion of students classified, using standard national categories, as “low income” halved (from 6% to 3% of all students) while the proportion classified as “high income” doubled (from 17% to 34% of all students).

Bishops are coming to realise that one of the few canonical responsibilities they have for Catholic schools is to ensure that the academic standards in them are as high as any other local school (*Code of Canon Law* 806.2). Accordingly, some have expressed concern over the challenge which has only emerged relatively recently of how to cater for the more academically talented students. The data is clear: more and more Catholics are seeking a more academically elite or specialist education for their children. In Australia that means choosing an academically selective or specialist government high school, a primary school with a special programme for gifted and talented students, or a well-established high-fee paying independent school. However well or ill-informed parents may be, there is a clear perception that Catholic secondary schools can be a limited or risky option for more able or ambitious students, or those with special talents in creative arts or sport. Moreover, there is some evidence for this perception. Research on students completing university (Kelley, 2004) shows



Graph 5. Years of experience of Teachers in NSW schools, 2005

that children from working class and lower middle class families who attended Catholic schools had a better chance of completing university than those who attended government schools. By contrast, children from professional families who attended Catholic schools were less likely to complete university than their social peers who attended government schools. Annual analysis of the subject choices of students from Catholic schools in the NSW Higher School Certificate, the high stakes and exam-based end of school credential which also determines university entrance, continues to show that fewer Catholic school students opt to study the higher-level courses especially in English and Mathematics (de Courcy, 2006). This phenomenon poses a dilemma for Catholic schools, especially in the Australian model where they have traditionally been focused on providing local choice, affordable to all, and with a comprehensive curriculum. As in the UK (Wheat, 2005, p. 17), it may be that Catholic schools will become the only comprehensive school option available to many.

Teacher quality is rightly considered the vital determinant of learning outcomes for all students. Much political and educational effort is currently being invested in improving teacher quality and identifying and rewarding the best teachers. Catholic schools are part of this enterprise. So far, they have prospered on the back of a generation or two of young qualified teachers, many former Religious or religiously formed to some extent, whose careers have developed with the system. A significant number of them are nearing retirement and will be progressively replaced by a young generation now in teacher training or their final years of schooling. The process has already begun (see Graph 5).

Sustaining the value and authenticity of Catholic schools will be heavily reliant on the quality and commitment of its teachers. Several dimensions are relevant here. First, it will be essential to preserve current legal protections, which ensure that a teacher's lifestyle and example are an important part of being an effective Catholic school teacher. Such provisions are threatened from time to time,

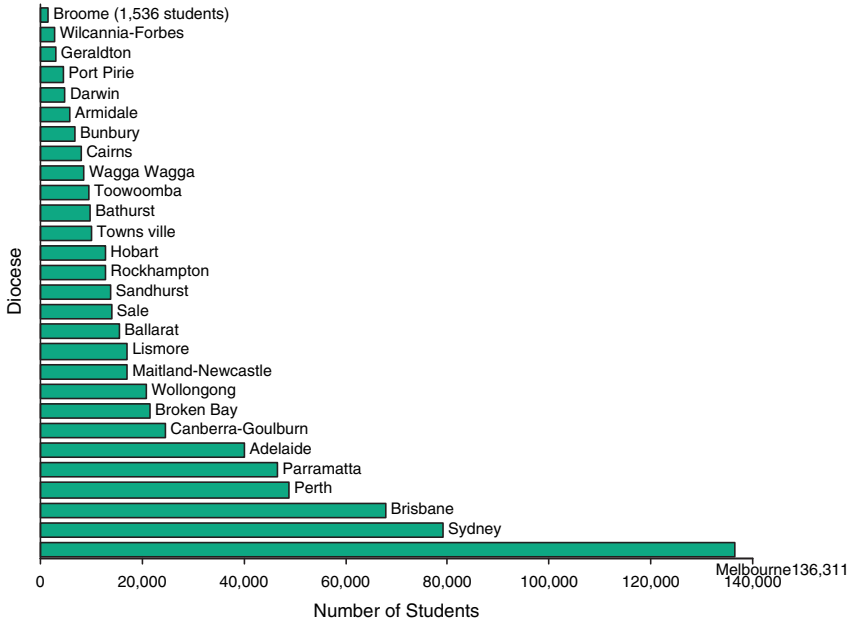
most recently by The Greens party in the NSW parliament (2005).⁴ Then it will be important that Religious Education is seen to be a relevant, challenging and legitimate area of teaching in a modern curriculum. Preserving the right of Catholic schools to recruit and promote teachers with appropriate knowledge, values and commitment is one thing, being able to exercise it fully is quite another. Already, there are widespread concerns about the capacity of many young teachers and student teachers to teach in a Catholic school, or at least to contribute meaningfully to the core religious goals of the school. Recent research surveys would seem to indicate that the Australian bishops are right to be concerned at the level of religious understanding and commitment of the next generation of Catholic school teachers. Australian research on senior school students suggests that their commitment to their faith is tenuous (Rochford, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Rymarz & Graham, 2005) while the very limited studies of potential Catholic school teachers who are actually Catholic at Edith Cowan University (Saker, 2005), and of those already teaching in Catholic schools (Rymarz, 2004; McLaughlin et al., 2005), have raised alarm bells in some quarters.

Looking ahead, there are plenty of challenges for Australian Catholic schools: maintaining a witness to the relevant role of a religious school in a modern democratic society, ensuring that Catholic schools are still worth choosing in a competitive education market, engaging with the requirements of governments and politicians, adequately meeting the needs of all students from those who are disabled to the most talented, balancing the catechetical and evangelical programmes to cater for the religiously diverse student population, finding more creative ways of giving preference to the poorest. Above all, ensuring quality of teachers, and eventually leaders, may well turn out to be the most difficult and threatening challenge to the future of Catholic schools in Australia. The personal and religious education of teachers that has been largely taken for granted to date may require a major investment of funds and personnel if the authenticity of the Catholic school is to be preserved.

Responding to the Challenges

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) holds two major plenary meetings each year, which incorporate meetings of its committee on education. The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) which is responsible to the bishops reports to each bishops meeting. In recent times increased attention has been paid by bishops to the NCEC's analysis of the changing situation for Australian Catholic schools. Everywhere the consciousness of bishops has been

⁴ NSW Legislative Council: *Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Equality in Education and Employment) Bill 2005* designed to "prohibit private educational authorities from discriminating in education and in employment." The Greens had previously introduced the *Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Removal of Exemptions) Bill 2003* to "prohibit discrimination on the ground of cohabiting with a person of the same sex; to prohibit private educational authorities from discriminating in education and in employment." Neither Bill acquired the support of the parliamentary majority.



Graph 6. Students in Catholic schools, by diocese, 2005. (From NCEC, Australian Catholic Education Statistics Database)

raised and several have begun to recognise and address some of the challenges within their own dioceses. The rationale for Catholic schools has been reformulated and restated (NCEC, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000). Together the bishops have expressed concern about the need to work more effectively across dioceses and have sought advice on how the better resourced (generally metropolitan) dioceses can contribute more support to the less well off (generally rural) dioceses. There are enormous disparities in size, scale, and sustainability across Australia’s 28 dioceses but each of them maintains its own independent and autonomous diocesan system of schools. Graph 6 shows the relative size of their school systems.

It has become increasingly clear in recent times that, despite the substantial government funding of all Australian Catholic schools, schools and students in some dioceses are more advantaged than in others. For the Australian Church, this is a fundamental issue especially when considered in the context of the wider challenge of addressing the declining affordability of Catholic schools. More difficult still is the challenge of sharing current resources more equitably across schools and dioceses.

Each state and territory constitutes a single system for the purposes of receiving and distributing the funds, which are made available for Catholic schools by the Australian and the local state/territory governments. Each system has its

own method for distributing those funds across all the schools within the system. It has become clear that some of these internal mechanisms are more equitable and defensible than others. While all acknowledge the greater needs of others they find it difficult to act on this in practice. Diocesan school operations are naturally locked into a traditional level of resources, which is hard to modify. For example, an attempt to reach a fairer model across the 11 dioceses in NSW in 2003–2005 proved extremely difficult to negotiate and implement.

Exacerbating proposals for redistribution of government monies from better off to less well off schools is the disparity in private income across schools. Some Catholic communities are simply wealthier than others and can better support the resources of schools. Generally, private income (tuition fees, charges) is kept out of allocation formulas, thereby leaving schools to multiply their relative advantage. With greater attention to financial transparency and awareness of the relative wealth of different school communities, debate around the sharing of resources for the common good is likely to intensify. Committing to the common good is easier said than done, as Catholic schools in other countries have previously discovered (Grace, 2000, 2003).

Resourcing Catholic schools has tended to be the preoccupation of bishops and administrators for the last three decades, and understandably so. There was a time when serious decisions had to be made about whether the Australian Church could afford to maintain both primary and secondary schools, or could ever afford to build new ones. Now, however, the biggest challenges are no less momentous but they are related to the quality and the very authenticity of the Catholic school. Put simply, the Australian Catholic school of the early 21st century has an annually increasing proportion of non-Catholic students, along with students from mainly middle class Catholic families whose adherence to their Faith is weak. They are all taught by teachers who are themselves at various stages along their faith journey, including those who have scarcely set out and those who have already abandoned the journey.

Authenticity and inclusiveness were the focus of an extensive project entitled the *Queensland Bishops' Catholic Education Research Project, 1998–2000* (CECQ, 2001), which identified the challenges of declining religious practice of students and teachers, as well as the test presented for Religious Education by significant numbers of non-Catholic students. Bishop Anthony Fisher, Chair of the Catholic Education Commission in the state of New South Wales, and Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, recently posed this same reality to Catholic secondary schools in NSW, namely that:

If an option for the poor is a crucial purpose of the Catholic school—and certainly that was the mind of most of the founder religious, priests and parishioners who built up our schools—then our under-representation amongst the poor is a real problem. Put baldly (and somewhat simplistically): poorer Catholic children are increasingly attending state schools; wealthier Catholic children are increasingly attending non-Catholic private schools; and middle income non-Catholic children are increasingly

attending Catholic schools. So while we are opening the equivalent of one Catholic secondary school worth of places every year, we are effectively closing one secondary school worth of *rich and poor* Catholic students and opening two secondary schools worth of *middle class non-Catholic* students each year. (Fisher, 2006)

The most urgent issue identified by the bishops across the 11 dioceses of NSW is the development of a strategy to deal with the reality that nearly one in four students in a Catholic school is non-Catholic and in some dioceses the figure is much higher. In 2005 and 2006 the bishops have dedicated time to discussing the religious and pastoral implications of the data, especially when combined with the knowledge that more and more Catholic students are themselves unchurched or virtually so. Facing the further reality of low church attendance, especially among the younger generations and their parents, diminished commitment to parish and church activities, and aging clergy, bishops have begun exploring ways of re-engaging students and their families with the church. One such response deserves special mention, namely the fact that Sydney will host the papal World Youth Day in 2008. The quest to secure the event for Sydney, and the planning that is now being devoted to it, have been predicated on utilising it as part of a long-term strategy of energising the younger generation by expanding their religious education and experience, and by enhancing their spiritual life and their sense of engagement with their church community. Catholic schools, especially secondary schools, will naturally play a key role in the programmes and activities for World Youth Day.

Consolidating the links between school and church at a time when many parishes and parish priests feel marginal to the mission and operation of the school is receiving some attention. As Bishop Michael Putney (Diocese of Townsville) has acknowledged (2005: 395), the Church has a fight on its hands that it cannot ignore: "With enormously diminished numbers of participants in the life of its parishes, drastically reduced numbers of religious and priests, and reduced resources to pay for all aspects of its pastoral work and mission, it is struggling to maintain the embrace of its schools that it is clearly required to maintain." He goes on to argue that "we must take up the challenge of reclaiming or reasserting the Catholic school's ecclesial identity, notwithstanding fewer numbers of Catholic students and teachers and yet fewer with a firm church link . . . (398): despite the difficulties involved, a strong Catholic ecclesial identity is what we should strive for at this point in our history in Australia." This will involve a considerable educational effort especially for parents and teachers. A recent example of what is possible is the programme developed by the Bishop of Armidale (Luc Matthys), which is designed to improve Sunday Mass attendance. It involves a four-week course for use in Catholic schools' Religious Education lessons and in Special Religious Education classes in government schools across the diocese. Homilies and sermons on the Sundays within the four weeks will reinforce what is being offered in the school-based programme.

Religious education and faith formation programmes in schools are being scrutinised afresh, including the possibility of common guidelines for Religious

Education for all Australian schools. As a result there is now more systematic support for religious education, better quality texts and in one large archdiocese (Sydney) tests of religious knowledge for all students in year 6 to complement other tests. It is acknowledged that there is a need to rethink religious education programmes drawing on the extensive research of recent decades (De Souza, 2005) in order to ensure that programmes are relevant and meaningful in the contemporary context. Religious Education in the senior years of school is being squeezed by the heightened demands of the examinable curriculum. In Western Australia, considerable reaction was provoked recently by a decision of diocesan authorities to require that in the final two years of schooling, students undertake mandatory study of religion, focused on the Catholic faith (Buckley-Carr, 2006). Some saw this as an unreasonable imposition and grounds for not choosing a Catholic school! Other states have long had some form of mandatory religious study as part of their senior school programme.

Catholic schools alone present enough challenges but, at the same time, bishops are also confronted by the fact that their responsibilities extend to the majority of Catholic students who attend government and other independent schools. Therein lies yet another set of pastoral and evangelical challenges, which many believe have been neglected or inadequately addressed for too long. The Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education* (1965) proclaimed that “parents are truly free to choose according to their conscience the schools they want for their children (6) . . . [so that] . . . the Church must be present with her own special affection and help for the great number who are being trained in schools that are not Catholic (7).” This message was reinforced in 2001 by John Paul II who exhorted the Bishops of Oceania that the education of those “who do not attend Catholic schools, calls for special care and systematic planning” (John Paul II, 2001, p. 22).

Research and Data Analysis

Given the extent, duration, and scope of its effort, it is surprising that Catholic education in Australia has been the subject of so little systematic research and critical analysis but new possibilities are emerging. Of particular relevance has been the increased capacity to utilise public sources of data to throw fresh light on various aspects of Catholic schooling. Two periodic national data collections are increasingly being used: (1) the national Census of Population and Housing conducted by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics* (ABS), and (2) *The National Church Life Survey* (NCLS). Both collections take place close together every five years, the next being in 2006. The ABS census gathers information not only on each individual’s income, housing, ethnicity, and a range of related issues. It also records religion (or none) and which type of school each Australian child attends (Government, Catholic, Independent). The capacity to correlate all this information provides useful opportunities for Catholic educators.

For some time, the ACBC has sponsored a project which develops profiles for parishes using the latest census data and which creates much other data for

pastoral purposes (Dixon, 2005). Catholic school authorities have used the census data to construct socio-economic profiles of schools since the mid-1980s. More recently, however, improved technology and database construction have opened up new possibilities such as the capacity to properly quantify for the whole of Australia the nexus between religion, income, and school choice. Moreover, these linkages can be monitored over time from census to census. Recent reports drawing heavily on ABS Census data have helped apprise the bishops of the changing social and religious reality of Australian Catholic schools and to the school choices of Australian Catholics (NCEC, 2001, 2006). Many have found the data stark and confronting but its significance is now fully appreciated.

The ecumenical *NCLS*, instituted in 1991, is a snapshot of the attitudes, beliefs, practices, and background characteristics of church attenders across more than 20 Christian denominations, including Catholics. For the 2006 survey around 850,000 attenders across 10,000 congregations took part. About half of them were Catholic. The particular value of this survey is the insight it provides into the views of the “core” Catholics, including attitudes to Catholic schools and data on the Mass attendance rates of school-age Catholics and Catholic school teachers.⁵ As with the analysis of the national census data, the Australian bishops have uncovered a range of pastoral and theological challenges in the attitudes and values of the committed minority of church attenders (Dixon, 2004). “We have not always been comforted by the findings,” according to the Secretary of the ACBC, Fr Brian Lucas, “but we know that we have been provided a reliable, authoritative map of a changing landscape over time.” As the value of the ABS and the *NCLS* data has come to be better appreciated and used, it has created further demands to exploit the data more fully and to maximise its use in conjunction with other collections. Foremost for Catholic schools is the annual Australian Government census of schools which collects basic school, student, and teacher data. At the same time, most state Catholic Education Commissions run their own supplementary collections including data related to the religious affiliation of students and teachers.

The paucity and the disconnectedness of available data on Catholic schools were exposed by the NCEC’s quest in 2000 to produce a report on recent and projected enrolment trends in Australian Catholic schools, and on choice of school by Australian Catholic families (NCEC, 2001). The need, for this purpose, to bring together into a single database the ABS data, the annual school census data, and the local state/territory Catholic schools data highlighted for the NCEC the potential for such a database. Accordingly, the NCEC subsequently authorised the development of a permanent database, called the Australian Catholic Education Statistics (ACES) database (Smith, 2006). It is a web-based tool and is accessible by registered and trained users in each diocese and state/territory commission. It has been designed as a cooperative research and analysis

⁵ The most recent report shows that Catholic school teachers who attend mass are younger and far more engaged than other parishioners in their local parish: B. Dixon and S. Bond, *Profile of Mass-attending teachers in Catholic schools* (December 2006: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference).

tool, which contains data on every Catholic school. Data is updated constantly and new reports are being prepared and planned. Over time the ACES database will be extended and its scope and interoperability enhanced. The detailed enrolment trends brought to light by the ACES database are now able to be analysed, monitored, and updated.

The advent of the national ACES database represents a major step forward in underpinning the capacity of research into Catholic schools. While the database can help describe in detail issues such as the changing school choice of Catholic parents, as well as the religious affiliation of Catholic school students and teachers, it cannot penetrate the underlying questions: Why do parents choose the schools they do? Why do Catholic parents increasingly prefer non-Catholic schools, while more and more non-Catholic parents choose Catholic schools? Are Catholic schools succeeding or failing, and why? It is here that research has so far been less systematic and where urgent tasks abound, as is also the case elsewhere (Grace, 2003a).

Still, it is in this domain that we can summon up the pioneering research of Marcellin Flynn and Patrick Fahy over a 30-year period, from the early 1970s to the turn of the 21st century. Fahy set his research in the broader context of determining the effectiveness of Catholic schools, especially their religious education programmes (Fahy, 1992). Flynn surveyed the attitudes of Catholic school students in their final year of schooling on four occasions: 1972, 1982, 1990, and 1998. His research focused on attitudes to school, life, and religion. These rich and acclaimed studies plot the impact of Catholic schools over almost three decades of profound change in church and society (Grace, 2002, pp. 96–99; McArthur, 2005). Much attention has been paid to the clearly evident decline in religious practice of students over a generation although a strong spiritual quest and belief in God remain evident in the data. Flynn's research also shows the decline in the authority and influence of both Church and family over time. On a more optimistic note, his research underscores the importance of a supportive and connected community in the transmission of faith, as well as a meaningful religious education curriculum. Herein lie particular challenges for bishops, principals, parents, and curriculum developers.

A modernised continuation of Flynn's research project would be useful while other related questions also require serious research, particularly the relative influence of parents, teachers, and peers on the development of students' attitudes to religion and religious practice. The recent study of Rymarz and Graham (2005), for example, could profitably be expanded to a larger sample, while the Catholic Education Commission in Victoria currently has two promising research projects in hand, one being conducted in conjunction with the Catholic University at Louvain on the Catholicity of Catholic schools, the other on seeking to measure the difference a Catholic school makes. There is always value in knowing what parents, teachers, and students think of Catholic schools and why. Recent research on the attitude of teachers (McLaughlin et al., 2005) and potential teachers (Saker, 2005) suggests more extensive and thorough investigations of teachers' understanding of Catholic schools would be enlightening. There is

still fundamental research to be done on the dynamics of school choice, that is, why and how parents choose a school. To date there are really only limited surveys (Canavan, 1995). Of particular value would be discovering in detail why more Catholic parents are sending their children to non-Catholic independent schools.

Finally, leadership succession has emerged as an important factor in ensuring the continued development of authentic Catholic schools, which explains recent attention to the question of why qualified people are not applying for Principals' positions in Catholic schools. This problem was first addressed in NSW (D'Arbon, 2001) and later elsewhere (Carlin et al., 2003) with the consistent finding that the liabilities and expectations, including religious expectations, of the position now appear too burdensome to too many (D'Arbon & Dorman, 2004). Subsequent research on primary school principals (Spry, 2005) discovered that there are widely differing expectations of the role of the primary school principal in parishes, and that in many parishes the principal has become the de facto parish priest, that is to say, where there is no longer a resident priest the principal has assumed by default responsibility for organising baptisms and funerals, Eucharistic celebrations, and anointings.

Catholic schools are increasingly the site for research by a wide range of organisations and individuals, so much so that in recent times several Catholic Education Offices (e.g., Brisbane, Sydney) have produced detailed guidelines for those who wish to use Catholic schools for their particular research project (Canavan, 2003). Unfortunately, not a lot of this research is related to the fundamental purposes, character, and operation of the Catholic school itself. While there is increased awareness of the importance of research, much basic work remains to be done. The NCEC has recently revamped its research policy and at least one diocese (Sydney) has published a list of topics requiring research as an incentive to new research students.⁶

Conclusion

Catholic schools in Australia are still growing, but the new demand for them is greater from non-Catholic than Catholic families. Australian families, including Catholic families, are generally more affluent than ever and they now have fewer children. Education is seen as a prized commodity and government policy settings encourage choice and competition among schools. The Catholic school is becoming just one among many choices for parents, including Catholic parents, and religious or faith development is well down the list of factors influencing choice. The strong and coherent links between community, school, parish, and

⁶ The latest such statement ("Research in Sydney Catholic Schools", Catholic Education Office Sydney, Bulletin 40c, 2003) includes sections on "Research Opportunities" (in Leadership, Religious Education, Literacy and Numeracy, Teaching and Learning, and other fields), "Completed Research," "Educational Programs/Emerging Issues," "Journal Articles" (by CEO staff), and "University Research" (research conducted by universities in Sydney Catholic schools).

family which characterised the Catholic school of previous generations are fast dissolving. Quite suddenly, a whole new set of challenges has emerged. At the same time, the Australian government is now intimately, at times controversially, involved in specifying what schools, including Catholic schools, can spend their money on and what they must do in return for their taxpayer subsidy. There is a risk that over time the local Catholic school could become just another government-funded school with optional faith education, and with civil law and regulation determining who can attend Catholic schools, who can teach in them, what they can and cannot teach, how they can spend their funds, and how they can relate to the local parish and diocese. The Australian Church is now grappling with this plethora of challenges and is looking to develop new ways of keeping Catholic schools Catholic, distinctive, and affordable.

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RELIGION AND CULTURE: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA

Cardinal George Pell

Catholics have always been one of the most significant and interesting minorities in Australian history. Whether the long established Irish-Australians are more interesting than the Maronites or the recently arrived Vietnamese is a moot point as is the unanswerable question of whether race or religion is more powerful.

Catholic history in Australia extends for little more than 200 years and for at least 100 years of that story Catholic schools did more to change Australian hearts and minds than even the extraordinary network of parishes. One challenge is to continue to believe in the capacity of our schools to change minds and hearts and so keep Catholics in Australia interesting—and for the right reasons.

Australian history would be very different without Caroline Chisholm and Mary MacKillop, without the network of Catholic dioceses and schools everywhere across the continent, without Cardinal Moran, Archbishop Mannix, and Archbishop Duhig. Without Catholics the First World War referendums on conscription would have been carried. As it turned out Les Murray, our greatest contemporary poet, claims that Mannix then saved

perhaps half
the fit men of a generation
from the shrapnelled sewer landscapes
of Flanders.

Most of us have heard the story of the Australian Labor Party member in New South Wales who genuflected in the aisle as he left his branch meeting. He had thought he was in Church as the same people were present. Without Catholics, there would have been no split in the Labor Party in 1954 and Menzies' time as Prime Minister would have been much shorter. There was also in those days no ready substitute for the working class Catholic unionists, who removed the Communist leadership in key Australian unions. Without them the struggle would have been longer, harder and probably violent. Would the Mabo judgments of the High Court on aboriginal land rights have been different or delayed without Catholic lawyers and judges and their understanding of natural law?

Without Catholics there would not have been a successful 90-year campaign for “state aid” as it was called inappropriately, i.e., for government funding for non-government schools, which Prime Ministers Menzies and then Whitlam successfully introduced and expanded. We might have been like the USA where the separation of Church and State is still interpreted to preclude such funding of Church schools. Without government money many Catholic schools would have been forced to close. My first cousin, a Josephite nun, like many others once had to teach a primary class of over 90 children, some of them with English only as an imperfect second language. This was unsustainable.

Originally the Catholics were poor, undereducated and Irish. Especially in the first half of the 19th century they were often wild, victims of centuries of systematic oppression in the “old country” and the terrible transportation system.

William Ullathorne, an English Benedictine was the first Vicar General in Australia arriving in 1833. Then young, formidable, and strait-laced, he wore no rose-tinted glasses as he surveyed the early Sydney community. “The eye of God looks down upon a people, such as, since the deluge has not been A community without the feelings of community, whose men are very wicked, whose women are very shameless and whose children are very irreverent.” He became a determined and effective opponent of transportation “the removal of such a plague from the earth concerns the whole human race” which ended in Eastern Australia in 1853 and 1867 in Western Australia.

The waves of immigrants and the wealth which followed the discovery of gold in 1851 broke these patterns of deprivation. But it was the arrival of hundreds of Irish teaching nuns and brothers after the removal of government funding for Church schools in the 1870s that accelerated the steady development and improvement of the Catholic community. This paralleled the improvements in Catholic life and practice in Ireland after Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

These achievements were immortalized in the folk poetry of John O’Brien, also known as Father Patrick Hartigan, for 27 years parish priest of Narrandera, whose collection of poems *Around the Boree Log* sold 100,000 copies. I have only rarely come across classes which were introduced to his poetry and that is a pity. The schools he described, including the religious schools I attended 50 years ago, were effective reinforcers, indeed transmitters of our tradition.

Long the quest and ever thieving pass the pedlars o’er the hill
 With the treasures in their bundles, but to leave us questing still.
 Mystic fires horizons redden, but each crimson flash in turn
 Only lights the empty places in the bracken and the fern;
 So in after years I’ve proved it, spite of pedant, crank and fool,
 Very much the way I found it in the old bush school.

This is not only the language of faith, but of self confidence; confidence in the Irish Australian identity and the personal and intellectual adequacy of Catholicism.

Everywhere in Australia the Catholics were (and are) a minority in both town and city, not concentrating in urban centres like Boston and New York as they did in the USA., but still visible through churches, schools, hospitals, and public activity. This continues today. We take it for granted but a visiting priest from New Zealand, where Catholics only comprise 14% of the population, was surprised at the media coverage Catholic activity received here.

Peter Lalor, the Irish leader of the Eureka Stockade rebellion at Ballarat in 1854 was Catholic and indeed had his arm amputated in the Ballarat East presbytery after the fighting. More happily Australian life largely avoided political violence after that brief episode and Catholics became increasingly visible in public life especially with the founding of the federal Labor Party in 1900. Australia had a Catholic Prime Minister, James Scullin in 1929, more than 30 years before the USA had a Catholic president. The tertiary scholarships for ex-servicemen of World War II also provided opportunities previously unavailable to young Catholics.

The steady Catholic progress towards respectability had begun. Today in every parliament there are Catholics on both sides of the house and probably in every ministry. The Australian Catholic schools promoted a social mobility among their students which was not bettered anywhere, even in the USA, and today we live with the consequences of this, which are overwhelmingly good, but not without a downside. Many Anglo-Celtic Catholics are no longer struggling to keep up with the Joneses, but through intermarriage and education are included among them.

One consequence of keeping up with the Joneses is that a quarter of young Australians are leaving their Christianity behind by the time they are 30. To what extent will Catholics follow this pattern? Another issue is whether those who remain, or hopefully return to the fold, will also be marked with the colours of the Australian majority religiously. That is, while fundamentally decent and Judaeo-Christian in most of their instincts, will they also be religiously indifferent and confused? As they and their children struggle with all the wonderful benefits of prosperity, e.g., education, health care, travel, material comforts, and struggle too with the down sides of our allegedly post-modern society including the consequences of marriage breakdown, the comparatively new threat of drugs, the old challenge of alcohol, soft porn in magazines and television and on the internet, will their underlying faith be a strong enough compass to guide their reactions? We live in interesting times, and as educators the question of how strongly the faith underpins the lives of generation after generation of our young people rests in our hands also. Like previous generations of teachers, we too have influence.

State and Church After World War II

During my life time there have been myriad alterations in Australian life, but two in particular are significant as contributing to important changes in the Catholic community: post-War immigration and the invention of the contraceptive pill.

Catholic life is stronger and more colourful because of the arrival successively of the Italians and Maltese, smaller numbers of the Dutch, Central Europeans such as the Poles, and Lebanese Maronites; then the Vietnamese who are still producing many vocations to the priesthood and religious life and finally the Filipinos, South Americans, and Pacific Islanders. As provincial school boys, we worried that many Italians, especially the men, only went to Mass at Christmas and Easter. They proved to be trend setters for many of the Anglo-Celtics, but today most of our ethnic communities have a Mass going rate above the steadily declining national average, now 16%.

The invention of the contraceptive pill was the catalyst for a social revolution everywhere in the Western world. There were high hopes that the abortion rate would fall because of its development and that children would be better cared for. None of this has happened, although the birth rate has collapsed dramatically with no country in the Western world producing sufficient children to avoid population decline. Russia is now losing people at the rate of 700,000 a year through abortion, contraception, and some emigration. The pill has liberated sexual activity from procreation, so that sexual activity has become a recreational right for adults, separated from marriage, family, children, and often from love itself. The incidence of divorce increased exponentially. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones wrote the hymns of the 1960s for this permissive revolution and not surprisingly, recreational sex, divorced from higher purposes has provoked the rise of powerful homosexual lobbies. Against these trends the recent upturn in the birthrate in Australia is welcome as a sign of confidence in the future.

Different factors were at work in the Church. The most powerful agent of change in the Catholic Church was the Second Vatican Council held in Rome between 1962–1965, which broke the Tridentine mould of Catholic life and was followed by radical developments, only some of which were intended. Before proceeding to list some of these it is useful to recall that most young Catholics have little or no idea what Catholic life was like before the Council and Vatican Two is for them as relevant as the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).

Pope Benedict, like his predecessor Pope John Paul, is important as an accurate guide to the true meaning of Vatican II, which has to be seen in continuity with previous Church history; certainly a development, but not a radical break which invalidated the previous 90 or indeed 400 years of Catholic history.

A number of Conciliar teachings impinged directly on Catholic schooling with the renewed emphasis on baptism, on the primordial role of the lay faithful being particularly appropriate for the changed makeup of Catholic teaching staffs.

This recognition of lay leadership and the doctrine of the collegiality of bishops led to the introduction of parish and school boards and eventually diocesan, state, and national education commissions. It was my privilege to be a foundation member of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria in 1973.

In those days there were very few non-Catholics in any Catholic schools and official contacts between Catholics and Protestants were discouraged. Despite the fact that my father was an Anglican, I had never been inside a non-Catholic church before the Council as this was forbidden, even for the weddings and funerals of relatives.

The most profound changes emanated from the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, the most problematic of all the Council documents at least in its implementation. This constitution quite properly called for dialogue with the surrounding culture rather than condemnation and urged us to emphasize what was common rather than to begin immediately with our differences. This is fundamental to the way we now see ourselves as an integral part of Australian society, the main reason why the majority accepts us as such and why all educated Australians now automatically and rightly presume that they have every right to comment publicly on distinctively Catholic teachings on, e.g., the impossibility of women's ordination, or contraception or the mandatory celibacy of priests. Most Australians are much slower to do this with, e.g., the Orthodox or the Jews and Moslems.

The two principal motifs of the Council were *aggiornamento*, bringing things up to date and *ressourcement*, a return to the genuine sources, i.e the New Testament and the Fathers. The tension between these two approaches still lies at the heart of the differences today between gospel Christians in every denomination (sometimes called conservative or traditional) on the one hand and the liberals or radicals on the other.

Many of my contemporaries in the seminary saw the Council documents as a starting point for further reforms. Most were not ordained and others left after ordination. Unfortunately very few remain as priests now, an enormous loss to the Church.

Movements for reform are difficult to contain and direct, often developing into a revolutionary itch requiring more and more changes.

Many of my contemporaries were naïve and optimistic like myself, expecting a new Pentecost with all this sensible modernization. Many others, older and wiser, who should have known better also seriously overestimated our capacity to influence and change events as we scrambled to escape from our Catholic ghetto, real or imagined. We forgot that nearly everywhere in the West, and certainly in Australia, serious Christians of any sort are in a minority.

Very soon vocations to the religious life dried up, now vanished almost completely in many non-contemplative orders, and many left religious life, often to return and offer excellent service as lay teachers.

The arrival of large amounts of recurrent finance into the Catholic schools after the Whitlam sponsored Karmel Report (1973) enabled many religious who continued as religious to leave the schools for other apostolic activities. Governments regretted the extra money this required, but were powerless to prevent it.

We soon had a situation where religious teachers were in a minority in nearly every school; a development which was covered adequately in an educational sense but crucially weakened the religious witness in the schools.

This has developed further now as most schools have no religious at all on the teaching staff and often a significant percentage of non-Catholic (in fact 20% nationally) or non-practising Catholics as teachers. While many lay teachers are serious Catholics and an increasing number possess theological qualifications, the balance has changed. Obvious consequences flow from this.

The lay faithful have stepped forward to replace the religious. Lay principals and the executive staff are responsible for the religious leadership of their schools, including the Catholic life of the schools. Many lay leaders are now more explicit about this than some of the religious principals of 10 or 20 years ago.

This transition, this turn of the wheel back to a situation where most teachers are lay, as they were generally in Catholic schools until the 1870s, has often been noted. What has provoked less comment has been the rise of the complex organizations that now administer schools and school systems. 50 years ago no diocesan or religious order education office would have employed more than 10 people.

These Catholic education bureaucracies are a new phenomenon in the Catholic Church and it is essential that we also reflect on how they can best contribute to the evangelizing mission of the Church as well as in a more general educational sense.

There is no doubt the schools and school systems are now administered more efficiently and governments have only a limited number of competent agencies to deal with on a host of matters, including the increasing requirements of financial accountability. Excellent work is done too on educational quality.

But the leadership role of diocesan bishops and religious order superiors in relation to their schools has been changed radically by the rise of these bureaucracies. Some bishops and religious superiors have just abdicated, opted out. There will be yet another stage in these developments as many religious orders increasingly handover policy control of their school systems to totally lay boards. Such incorporations raise important canonical issues, because it is vital that neither properties nor institutions move outside official Church control (variously defined) to become independent secular institutions.

These new bureaucracies are indispensable leaders and allies of bishops and superiors in any concerted efforts to reform and improve standards, to change the curriculum or improve Religious education outcomes. Their vital role has often been under-remarked and underestimated and there is little likelihood that their influence will reduce in the future.

Where Are We Now?

In the 2001 census Catholics constituted 26.7% of the Australian population, a percentage which has not varied much for 40 years. Catholics replaced Anglicans as the largest denomination in 1986 and our numbers increased by 202,000 between 1996 and 2001, reflecting the steady increase in Australia's population.

However this increase, a percentage decline in 2001 of just over one-third of 1% for Catholics, masked a significant exodus as Catholic migration should have pushed the percentage higher. Another significant change, also little noticed, was that the percentage of self-declared irreligious declined from 16.6% to 15.5% in 2001, the first such decline for 100 years. Most Australians are still Christian (68%) and there is no inevitable progression to majority secularism despite the political correctness and irreligion, which dominate most of the media.

All of us are aware of the steady decline in regular worship among Catholics from an estimated high point of 50% in 1950, to the present rate of 16%. I had concluded from these different sets of figures until quite recently that few Catholics were opting out explicitly even when they did little that was Catholic to justify the title. As there had been a big opt-out between 1971–1976, this conclusion was wobbly and a recent survey has further dented my carefully circumscribed optimism.

A research project completed by Redemptorist Father Michael Mason and his co-workers, *The Spirit of Generation Y* surveys the beliefs and practices of Australians aged from 13 to 29 years.¹ Not surprisingly there was a mixed bag of good, bad, and indifferent news. Three quarters believe in God variously defined, but only about half identify with a religion, considerably below the national average.

Parents remain the most powerful influence on their children, as this survey found little difference in belief and practice between continuing Gen Y Christians and their baby boom Christian parents, but there are two particularly important developments.

About 30% of Gen Y are moving away from their Christian origins. Some have reduced their attendance at worship or stopped attending altogether. Others no longer identify with a religious denomination or no longer believe in God.

By the time Gen Y reach the age of 29, 25% of those who used to belong to a church are already ex-members. The number for Catholics is 29%, higher than any other denomination.

Another historically significant finding is that young women are no more religious than young men. This has enormous consequences for the future. Generations of children across most ethnic groups in Australia had the faith passed on to them and nurtured by the devotion of their mothers. It remains to be seen how many Gen Y women revert to this role once they have children of their own.

Three other findings surprised me. Only 10% of young Catholics believe “only one religion is true,” against a national average of 11% and a rate of 34% for other Christians, excluding Anglicans. The question is capable of being understood in several ways, but the pressures on young Catholics beyond tolerance and ecumenism and towards muddle are evident here, channeled sometimes through the ill effects of courses in comparative religion.

Worse is to come. Of young Catholics 75% believe it is “OK to pick and choose beliefs” against a national average of 36%. While the national average is meaningless, because (for some strange reason) nine out of ten non-identifiers were not asked the question, this is still a particularly disturbing finding for Catholic educators indicating a malaise and confusion in the general approach to life rather than a few isolated points of heresy or unbelief.

This finding is paralleled by the fact that 56% of young Catholics believe “morals are relative,” almost exactly mirroring the national average of 57% and being much higher than other Christians (40%) and even the Anglicans (39%).

Too many young Catholics have been led by the pressures of contemporary propaganda, whatever might be said about the inadequacies of family life and

Catholic religious education, so that their religious confusion is worse than that of all other young Australian Christians. Why is this so?

They are also poorly equipped for any return to the fold when they have little instinct for or understanding that there are truths of faith and morals, which are to be sought after and judged according to rational criteria. More of them seem to believe that life offers a smorgasbord of options from which they choose items that best suit their passing fancies and their changing circumstances.

The Generation Y Survey was not able to detect any religious effect of attendance at Church schools, although a majority of those who believe in God and attend Church schools say the religious education is helpful. Neither was I surprised to learn that about a third of the more religiously committed students (fewer at Catholic schools, only 19%) reported being made fun of at school because of their religion, confirming anecdotes I have heard off and on for 20 years. This parallels a small number of religiously committed parents who choose to send their children to non-Catholic schools, claiming that their children's religious practice was more likely to survive intact there.

Like the Holy Father citing a comment about Mohammed in his recent Regensburg address, I too cite this example without endorsement!

The *Spirit of Generation Y* is a thoroughly professional survey, which makes no claims to infallibility. Neither do I know what margins of error the authors might estimate, but there are no professional reasons to reject its findings.

In some ways it does not square exactly with the official 2001 census and a better context will be provided by the results of the 2006 census. But there is some chance that we are experiencing an acceleration in the Christian slippage, with Catholics slipping faster, even though they have bigger numbers on the slope.

Catholic school enrolments do not necessarily contradict such a hypothesis. Across the nation we now educate 677,659 students, 20% of the nation's children, an increase of 201,229 since 1965. Most of the growth is at secondary level, with primary enrolments almost steady in New South Wales and declining each year since 2000 in Victoria.

Three factors however are important in reflecting the changing place of Catholics in the national profile.

Of Catholic school students 23% are not Catholics, with Tasmania (44%) and South Australia (36%) having the highest non-Catholic participation; a tribute to the perceived qualities of our schools, a result of the blessing of ecumenism and cementing our place as an accepted part of the Australian mainstream. In New South Wales all enrolment growth for the last 20 years has come from non-Catholic pupils. Without them enrolments would have declined by 1,600!

There are 47,115 young Catholics at non-Catholic private schools (5% of Catholics attending school) for a variety of reasons. Better academic standards and more powerful social networks are two possibilities. Once or twice in parishes I have found that all the teenage altar servers have been from such non-Catholic schools, but Anglican chaplains have explained that most Catholics in their schools are not excessively committed to the devotion of the 52 consecutive Sunday Masses.

Of Catholics 43% are educated in state schools. This includes 69% of Catholic students from families with lowest third of family income, only 21% of whom attend Catholic schools.

As a consequence Catholic schools are not educating most of our poor, especially at the primary level. Of Catholic students from families with lowest third of family income 72% attend Government infant/primary schools and only 19% attend Catholic schools.

At secondary level 63% of the “poorest” Catholics attend Government secondary schools and 22% attend Catholic secondary schools.

Predominantly our schools now cater for the huge Australian middle class, which they helped create.

This is a significant challenge, a major reason for holding down increases in school fees and explains the necessity for nurturing and expanding our network of CCD catechists² working in the State schools.

Conclusion

This year Professor James Franklin of the University of New South Wales produced a brilliant book entitled *Catholic Values and Australian Realities*.³

The introduction began with these words: “Australian Catholics have had a distinctive image: Irish tribal loyalties, Labor but anti-communist politics, childhoods full of guilt and incense. There is more to their distinctiveness than that. Their central contribution to Australian thinking is an objective view of ethics” (Franklin, 2006, p. 1).

Guilt will always be with us, even when it is unrecognized and emerging as hatred of self or society. Burning incense too continues at Catholic funerals and in our Cathedrals, but an objective view of ethics among most Gen Y Catholics has disappeared as completely as Irish tribal loyalties. Our situation is changing.

I have not set out to be bland and anodyne anymore than I have set out to ignore our achievements and our considerable strengths. I love the Catholic schools too much for that.

In five years I have visited more than 100 of our 163 schools in the Sydney archdiocese. Overwhelmingly these are happy places of learning, serving and basically satisfying their constituencies, generally in good facilities where the Federal government provides 50% of the capital money and the NSW government covers the interest on the money contributed by the local community and the system. There is no crisis of morale in the Catholic schools and testing results reflect the quality of these schools and the socio-economic makeup of the pupils, being regularly better than national averages.

We Catholics are likely to remain around one quarter of the population in an increasingly secular Australia. While ours is a God of surprises, we have only a limited capacity to transmit our tradition and preserve our identity. We should clarify our goals, try to learn from our mistakes.

Secularists strive to remove religion from the public domain and restrict it to private life, where individual religious choices reflect personal preferences unrelated to truth and general principles. They see religion as another area for consumer choice.

For us as Catholics our central concern is the presentation of the person of Jesus Christ, with his call to repent and believe. We espouse crucifixion Christianity, which leads to the resurrection and believe that everyone stands under the four last things of death and judgment, heaven and hell. Catholicism calls to faith and reason as well as love and hope. This is now profoundly countercultural.

The decisions to believe in Christ are mysterious and individual. But schools can impart religious knowledge, encourage patterns of clear thinking, constructive enquiry, and a thirst for answers. We need to inculcate a respect for reason and tradition as well as call to faith, hope, and love.

These are mighty tasks, but attempting them is a wonderful vocation. Especially in our challenging environment, catechesis and evangelization are not only a duty but an adventure and challenge, truly one great work of the Holy Spirit.

I conclude with a series of questions to help focus thinking and discussion.

1. Do Catholic schools retain today a capacity to strengthen the faith and improve the morals of their students, as they did in the past?
2. Are Catholic truths presented to your students sequentially and comprehensively over the 13 years of schooling? Do students know what are the four or five fundamental truths of our faith? What is the place of student text books in Religious Education?
3. What strategies would overturn the assumption that all morality is relative? How can the truths about life, marriage, family, and social justice be defended?
4. What strategies might be adopted to strengthen the Christian faith and perhaps make converts among the 23% of non-Catholic students in our schools?
5. What strategies would make Catholic schools more accessible to lower income families? Should our “elite” colleges offer more scholarships to the disadvantaged?
6. Is it a concern that few Catholic schools are listed among the best academic schools?
7. Is there sufficient diversity among Catholic schools?
8. Should more be done for the religious education of Catholics in state schools?
9. What must we do to prepare the next generation of leaders for truly Catholic schools?
10. How can we attract committed Catholic school graduates into the teaching profession?

Pope John Paul II should have the last word from his message at the start of the third Christian millennium. *Duc in altum!* These words ring out for us today, and

they invite us to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and to look to the future with confidence: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13: 8).

Amen to that.

Notes and References

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN NEW ZEALAND

Fr. Kevin Wanden, FMS and Lyn Birch

He aha te mea nui o tenei ao? Maku e kii atu
 He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!
 You may ask: What is the greatest thing in this world? I will answer
 It is people, it is people, it is people!
 Māori proverb

This chapter examines a number of contemporary challenges facing Catholic schools in New Zealand and the Church's response to these challenges. It will first locate Catholic schools within the context of the New Zealand education system and give a brief account of the two major historical influences on Catholic schools as these have a direct influence on some of the challenges. The chapter will then discuss two major challenges: The challenge of developing structures to ensure the viability of the schools and the challenge of then using these as a foundation for the evangelisation of contemporary New Zealand.

The New Zealand Education System

For a small country, New Zealand has a reasonably complex schooling system. The compulsory schooling sector is divided into full primary schools years 1–8, contributing primary schools years 1–6, intermediate schools years 7–8, and secondary schools years 7–13 or years 9–13 (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 194). School attendance is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16 years, although most children commence school as 5-year-olds.

In New Zealand all schools operate under the provisions of the Education Act (1989) and its subsequent amendments.¹ The National Curriculum Framework²

¹ Schools are required to implement the National Education Goals; National Education Guidelines and the National Administration Guidelines and to develop an Annual Charter. See <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>

² This was preceded by a series of reports: 1987, *Curriculum Review*; 1988, *Tomorrows Schools: The Reform of Educational Administration in New Zealand*; and 1988, *Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education: Report of the Taskforce to Review Education Administration (Picot Report)*.

was introduced in 1993 prescribing, seven Essential Learning Areas (ELA), which, together with Essential Skills, Attitudes, and Values,³ form the basis of every school's curriculum. Catholic schools consider Religious Education to be the eighth ELA.

Schools are categorised as Independent, State, or State Integrated. All Catholic schools are of the third category, namely State Integrated Schools under the provisions of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975).⁴

Catholic State Integrated Schools

On 1 March 2005, there were 32,932 primary students and 28,973 secondary students in Catholic schools, representing approximately 9% of the total student population. While the student population of Catholic schools is predominately of New Zealand European⁵ origin, schools are becoming increasingly multicultural. In 2005 there were 11 Catholic Early Childhood Centres, 190 Primary schools, and 49 Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand⁶ (Table 1):

Catholic schools are owned by a proprietor, usually the Bishop of the diocese. Dioceses are the proprietor of all 190 Catholic primary schools and 34 of the 49 secondary schools. Religious congregations are the proprietors of the remaining 15 secondary schools.

A Brief History of Catholic Education in New Zealand

The provision of education has been closely identified with the mission of the Catholic Church in New Zealand since the arrival of the first Catholic Bishop, Jean Baptiste Francois Pompallier in 1838.⁷ The first Catholic school in New Zealand was established in Auckland in 1841, one year after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.⁸ It was opened under the auspices of Fr. Jean Baptiste Petitjean SM and staffed by Mr. Patrick and Mrs. Catherine Hennessey. In 1850, Bishop Pompallier brought seven Sisters of Mercy from Carlow, Ireland who took over responsibility for the school.⁹ A number of schools were opened to meet

³ *The Essential Learning Areas: Language and Languages* (Te korero me nga reo); Mathematics (Pangarau); Science (Putaiiao); Technology (Hangarau); Social Sciences (Tikanga-a-iwi); The Arts (Nga toi); Health and Physical Well-being (Hauora). *The Essential Skills: Communication; Numeracy; Information; Problem-solving; Self-management and Competitive; Social and Cooperative; Physical; Work and Study. Values* include: Honesty; Reliability; Respect for others; Respect for law; Tolerance; Fairness; Caring or Compassion; Non-sexism; Non-racism. (*The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*)

⁴ In 2004 there were 325 integrated schools, 240 of which were Catholic schools (74%).

⁵ The Māori word is Pakeha.

⁶ For a map of the dioceses see <http://www.catholic.org.nz/bishops/bishops.php>

⁷ Jean Baptiste Francois Pompallier Vicar Apostolic Western Oceania 1836–1848, first bishop of Auckland 1848–1869.

⁸ The Treaty of Waitangi, signed 6 February 1840 formally agreed the terms on which New Zealand became a British colony.

⁹ Was sited near the present cathedral of St. Patrick and St. Joseph, Wyndham Street.

Table 1.

Diocese	Early childhood centres	Primary schools	Secondary schools			
			Co-educational	Boys	Girls	Total
Auckland	6	41	4	6	6	16
Hamilton	1	28	3	1	1	5
Palmerston North	1	29	2	3	3	8
Wellington	2	38	3	3	3	9
Christchurch	1	30	3	2	2	7
Dunedin	0	24	4	0	0	4
Total	11	190	19	15	15	49

the needs of Māori¹⁰ and the settler population.¹¹ Between 1841 and 1852 the provision of schools was a responsibility of the Colonial administration. With the establishment of Provincial Governments¹² (1853–1875) this was devolved to the Provinces, which generally made financial grants available to the churches for the provision of schools.

1877 Education Act

There have been two pivotal pieces of legislation that have largely determined the history of Catholic schools in New Zealand, the Education Act (1877), and the Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act (1975).

With the abolition of the Provincial Government system in 1875, education became the responsibility of central Government. State primary schools were to be free, compulsory, and secular (O'Neil, 1989). Catholic schools ceased to receive any financial assistance from the State after the passing of the Education Act (1877). Lay teachers who staffed many Catholic schools at the time could not be paid the equivalent of their State colleagues. The Catholic Church perceived the Education Act (1877) as an attack on the Church¹³ and responded by creating a parallel system of schools staffed by Religious congregations imported from Europe.¹⁴ This was a

¹⁰ Catechist schools existed briefly in Whangaroa and Kororaraka. St. Mary's college, Takapuna (1849); St. Joseph's Providence for Māori girls, Wellington (1851) and St. Joseph's Providence for Māori girls, Napier (1867–to the present).

¹¹ By 1850 there were five schools for Europeans in the Auckland area Auckland, Howick, Onehunga, Otahuhu, and Panmure.

¹² Establishment dates of provinces: Auckland (1853), Taranaki (1853), Hawke's Bay (1858), Wellington (1853), Nelson (1853), Marlborough (1859), Westland (1873), Canterbury (1853), Otago (1853), and Southland (1861). Provinces abolished in 1875.

¹³ See (Spencer, 2005) and Sweetman (2002, p. 24).

¹⁴ Marist Brothers of the Schools, FMS (1838), Society of Mary, SM (1838), Sisters of Mercy, RSM (1850), Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, RNDM (1865), Dominican Sisters, OP (1871), Christian Brothers CFC (1876), Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, RSJ (1880), and the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, RSJ (1883).

considerable challenge for the Catholic community, which comprised approximately 14% of the population¹⁵ and were predominantly Irish and poor.

Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act (1975)

A long, sporadic campaign followed the Education Act (1877) to secure government funding for Catholic schools.¹⁶ A petition was presented to Parliament in 1956 that had little immediate affect (O'Neil, 1989). While some financial assistance was finally obtained in the 1960s, the near financial collapse of the Catholic school system in the early 1970s resulted in the passing of the second pivotal piece of legislation the Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act (1975).

The 1975 act, integrated the Catholic school system into the State education system creating a partnership between the Church and the State, whereby the State assumed the day-to-day operational cost of running and maintaining Catholic schools. The Church became responsible for maintaining the "Special Character," which included the provision for the teaching of Religious Education within the curriculum, and the cost of capital development.

Under the terms of the 1975 act, Catholic schools have a legal obligation to provide an education with a distinctive Catholic Special Character. The Integration Agreement for each Catholic school states that:

The school is a Roman Catholic School in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese. (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 2004, p. 10)

Catholic schools could teach Religious Education as a subject in the curriculum. A position of Director of Religious Studies (DRS)¹⁷ was established under the Act. A certain percentage of the staff are "tagged" or reserved¹⁸ for teachers who can demonstrate an ability to willingness and ability to participate in Religious Education appropriate to the Special Character of the school. The act also made

¹⁵ Census figures: 1878 Total population 414,412, Catholics 58,881 (14.2%); 2001 Total population 3,468,813, Catholics 486,012 (14%) <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2001-regional-summary/default>

¹⁶ For a discussion of Catholic schools pre-Vatican II see: (Grace, 2002).

¹⁷ In primary schools with fewer than five teachers, the Board of Trustees may designate a position as a DRS. In primary schools with five or more teachers and in secondary schools, there must be a position designated as DRS.

¹⁸ There are a number of tagged positions in schools. It is a condition of employment that the Principal and DRS are willing and able to take part in Religious Education. A Deputy Principal tag requires that the teacher is capable of maintaining programmes and activities that reflect the Special Character. In primary schools, 60% of the total staffing entitlement must also be willing and able to take part in Religious Education. In secondary schools 40% of teaching positions, excluding the Principal and DRS must be tagged. PSCI Act (sections 66 and 68).

provision for Proprietors Appointees to have an active role in appointment procedures.¹⁹

Preference of enrolment in a Catholic school is given to those who can demonstrate a particular or general religious connection to the Special Character. The number of non-preference students is limited to 5% of the maximum roll.²⁰ Preference is determined by the proprietor, who usually requires a declaration signed by the parish priest.²¹

In addition to legislating for the integration of Catholic schools, the Act made provision for additional courses at teacher training institutions to meet the needs of those training to teach in Catholic schools.

Like all State schools, Integrated schools are governed by Boards of Trustees,²² comprised of elected parents representatives, the Principal, a staff representative, a student representative (in secondary schools), and up to four Proprietor Appointees.²³ Boards of Trustees are responsible to the proprietor for the maintenance of the Special Character and property, and to the Ministry of Education, Education Review Office (ERO), and parents for the governance of the school (Education Review Office, 2003).

One outcome of the 1975 act was that Catholic schools were required to define their Special Character. Until this time, the Special Character of a Catholic school was synonymous with the Religious congregation staffing the school. Now the Board, staff, students, parents, and Catholic community faced the challenge of defining and articulating what it means to be a Catholic school.

The initial aftermath of the 1975 Act was a rationalisation of schools. Many old buildings were demolished, and a number of primary schools amalgamated to form more viable co-educational entities. The decreasing number of Religious teaching in schools, small rolls especially in some of the senior examination classes, a shortage of specialist teachers and the increasing cost of teachers' salaries, forced a number of single-sex secondary schools in smaller urban centres to amalgamate forming larger viable co-educational secondary schools. For example, Verdon College, Invercargill was established in 1982 following the amalgamation of St. Catherine's College (1882 Dominican Sisters) and Marist College (1897 Marist Brothers).²⁴ Similar amalgamations took place in other North Island towns at Gisborne, Masterton, Palmerston North, Rotorua, and Wanganui and in South Island towns at Greymouth, Invercargill, Oamaru, and Timaru. With the exception of

¹⁹ The PSCI Act (section 63(2)) any Board committee that can appoint or recommend the appointment of teachers must have at least one Proprietor's Appointee on the committee.

²⁰ Can be varied with the consent of the Minister of Education up to 10% of the maximum roll. For current regulations see <http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/media/resources/pref-enrolment.pdf>

²¹ While there are a number of criteria that can determine preference, it is essentially Roman Catholic baptism.

²² Boards of Trustees were established under the Education Act (1989).

²³ State schools are similarly structured with the exception of Proprietors Appointees.

²⁴ In 1897 the Marist Brothers took charge of the parish school established in 1867. A secondary department was established in 1925. Verdon College is named after Michael Verdon, 2nd Bishop of Dunedin who invited the Dominican Sisters and the Marist Brothers to conduct schools at Invercargill.

Bishop Viard College, Porirua, Catholic Cathedral College, Christchurch; Kavanagh College, Dunedin, and Marcellin College, Auckland, there have been few amalgamations of secondary schools in the major urban areas. St. Bernard's, Brooklyn and Cardinal McKeefry, Wilton²⁵ were the first two Catholic primary schools to be integrated in 1979 and all remaining primary and secondary schools were finally integrated by March 1983 (Sweetman, 2002).

The period 1975–1994 saw the stabilisation of the Catholic school system as the integration structures were embedded. Since 1995, eight new primary and three new secondary schools have been opened.²⁶ Planning is proceeding for the provision of two new secondary schools in Auckland, and of new primary schools in Wanaka and Auckland. Currently Catholic schools are riding a wave of confidence with a 19.55% increase in students attending Catholic schools between 1992 and 2004.

Prior to integration there was no coherent Catholic school system in New Zealand. Most schools were part of networks developed by Religious congregations. The financial pressure resulting from the employment of lay teachers acted as a catalyst for the development of diocesan systems. The New Zealand Catholic Education Office was established in 1976 by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference to assist it and the proprietors of Catholic integrated schools in their task of providing and administering Catholic education. Each of the six dioceses has a Catholic Education Office, which is responsible for the Special Character, Religious Education advisory services, and physical infrastructure of the schools. Professional associations have evolved for Principals' and for Directors of Religious Studies at both primary and secondary levels.

Developments Since 1975

While the integration of the schools into the State system ensured the survival of Catholic schools, considerable effort was required to develop the structures that would ensure the continuing viability of the schools. The bishops, most recently Cardinal Thomas Williams,²⁷ have provided decisive leadership in tackling the challenges posed by integration.

As the number of religious who had staffed the schools diminished,²⁸ responsibility for the formation of Religious Education teachers, curriculum, advisory support, and continuing professional development for Religious

²⁵ Both located in Wellington.

²⁶ New primary schools: Bishop Edward Gaines school, Tokoroa 1995; St. Patrick's, Taupo 1997; St. Paul's, Richmond 1999; Mary MacKillop, Auckland 2000; St. Thomas More, Mt Maunganui 2001; St. Paul's, Auckland 2002; St. Claudine Thevenet, Wainuiomata 2005; Stella Maris, Auckland 2005. Secondary schools: Garin College, Nelson 2002; Aquinas College, Tauranga 2003; Cullinane College, Wanganui 2003, and Sancta Maria College, Auckland 2004.

²⁷ Thomas Stafford Williams, 6th Archbishop of Wellington 1979–2005. Cardinal 1983; Episcopal Vicar for Education, 1986; Order of New Zealand, 2000.

²⁸ In the Auckland diocese (included Hamilton diocese until 1980) there were 30 lay teachers in Catholic primary schools in 1960 (approx. 8% of teachers); in 1969 this had risen to 130 (37.9%); in 1979, 347 (58%); and in 2005, there are approximately 474 (99%) full-time equivalent teachers in Auckland.

Education, which had previously been devolved to the Religious congregations, was assumed by the diocesan authorities. This necessitated the establishment of Religious Education and property services.

A number of phases can be identified in the development of Catholic schools since the passing of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975): Contractual Obligations, Financial Management, Structural Support, and Evangelisation.²⁹

Contractual Obligations

One of the conditions of the 1975 Act, was that the physical facilities of Catholic schools would be brought up to the minimum standard of a comparable State school. This contractual obligation imposed a considerable financial strain on the proprietors. Initially it was envisaged that this upgrade would be completed by 1988 and cost \$100 million (Sweetman, 2002). In reality it took until 1999 to complete the necessary work and the costs considerably exceeded the initial estimates.³⁰ The total upgrading cost to the proprietors in the Auckland Diocese alone reached \$109 million. Three contributory factors to this delay can be identified as: an underestimation of the structural condition of many of the schools; coupled with changing building codes, particularly related to earthquake regulations that required additional strengthening of many buildings and the high inflation rate prevailing in the economy at this time.

Financial Management

The severe financial pressure required the proprietors to restore the schools to a sound financial footing. Proprietor cooperatives³¹ were formed in many dioceses to pool debts and Attendance Dues.³² In 1999 the National Catholic Education Trust Fund was established to meet the needs of the ten-year major maintenance, future capital works, and to ensure the long-term viability of Catholic schools.³³

²⁹ These phases were suggested in the interview with Cardinal Williams, 30 August 2005.

³⁰ In the Auckland Diocese between 1990–1999, the proprietors raised loans from the Housing Corporation \$41.75 million and received \$56 million in Suspensory Loans. In addition \$11.3 million was borrowed from diocesan and Religious Order funds. The total upgrading cost to the proprietors in the Auckland Diocese alone reached \$109 million.

³¹ The Archdiocese of Wellington cooperative was established in 1980 and the Auckland co-operative in 1984.

³² Under the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975), Attendance Dues can only be used to service capital debt. The amount is set with the approval of the Minister of Education. Attendance Dues in Auckland in 2005 are \$240 per annum (primary) and \$508 per annum (secondary). There are additional Voluntary Donations.

³³ The Ministry of Education is responsible for meeting the cost of major maintenance and capital upgrades. It meets this responsibility by paying the proprietors through Policy One money. It is calculated as 4% of the value of State school capital asset on a per capita basis and multiplied by the number of students in Catholic schools. The Catholic Education Trust Fund retains 20% of the Policy One money to build up a capital fund of \$60 million.

In 2000 the New Zealand Catholic Education Office restructured itself into a limited liability company and established a wholly owned limited liability finance company, NZCEO Finance Limited. As part of this restructuring, the National Attendance Dues Income and Capital Indebtedness Sharing Scheme was established in 2003.

The Major Challenges Confronting Catholic Schools in New Zealand

To paraphrase the Māori proverb the greatest resource in Catholic schools in New Zealand is its people. In preparation for this chapter, a survey focusing on the key challenges facing Catholic schools in New Zealand was sent to a random sample of Principals and DRSs in Catholic schools and to the advisors and managers of diocesan Catholic Education Offices.³⁴ In addition, a number of key personnel in Catholic education were also interviewed.³⁵

This survey showed that the most significant challenge facing Catholic schools in contemporary New Zealand society is to build on their evangelising potential. Four key elements that may contribute to the evangelising potential of the schools were identified from the survey: a clear articulation of the aims of the Catholic school, well formed teachers and leaders, relevant and engaging Religious Education programmes, and an alignment between the values of the Catholic school, family, and parish faith community.

The 1975 act secured the future of Catholic schools in New Zealand. It freed the proprietors from the urgent financial pressure and allowed them to concentrate on the aims of a Catholic education (Williams, 2004). Responsibility for ensuring the Catholicity of the schools operates at a number of levels.

At the national level, NZCEO has clearly articulated and actively promoted a vision for Catholic schools in New Zealand through the Declaration (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 1997) and the Beacon Plan (1998, updated 2004).³⁶ Another initiative has been the publication of *Light New Fires* to disseminate best practice. A biannual Catholic Schools' Day and a triennial Catholic Education Convention have been established to celebrate Catholic education. *Aoraki*, an online journal of best practice for Catholic school leadership was launched in 2004.³⁷ A process of Catholic Special Character Review and Development³⁸ was established as a national requirement for Catholic schools in 2004.

³⁴ Surveys were sent to a random sample of 32 primary and secondary Principals and DRSs. Sixteen responses were received (response rate 50%). Twenty-six Religious Education advisory or personnel in Catholic Education Offices were surveyed. Seventeen responses were received (response rate 65%).

³⁵ Interviews were conducted with: Cardinal Thomas Williams (30 August 2005); Br Pat Lynch FSC, Chief Executive Officer NZ Catholic Education Office (NZCEO) (1 July 2005); Mr Gary Finlay, Director National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS) (30 August 2005).

³⁶ Details of the Beacon Plan can be found at: <http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/pages/aboutus-strategicplan.html>

³⁷ *Aoraki* named after New Zealand's highest mountain. <http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/pages/resourcesubpages/aoraki.html>

³⁸ The reviews comprise three parts: the annual BOT self-review, the annual Proprietors Appointee's compliance report, and a three-yearly external review.

At the school level, Board of Trustees and Principals have a significant responsibility for ensuring the Catholicity of our schools because it is they who, to a large part, create the climate of the school, employ the staff, allocate resources and monitor the implementation of the curriculum. Consequently it is extremely important for Boards of Trustees and particularly Proprietors Appointees to be informed about the aims of Catholic education and to take an active part in enhancing the Special Character.

The Principal has an important leadership role in articulating for the teachers, students, parents, and community, the vision of the Catholic school in a way that invites their participation and contributes to their faith development:

It is important that Special Character take precedence over everything else happening in the school. Religious Education and opportunities to gather for Mass should be valued as much as reading, writing, maths and sports. (Primary DRS)

Make no mistake about the pivotal importance of your leadership in sustaining and developing your school as authentically Christian. Without your leadership, it simply will not happen. (Lynch, 2005, p. 6)

At the classroom level, the teacher also has an integral role in promoting and enhancing the Special Character of the Catholic school in partnership with the home. The Special Character of the Catholic school needs to be seen as the responsibility of the entire school community and not restricted to the DRS, Religious Education teachers, Principal, or the parish priest:

Maintaining a commitment to and understanding of the Catholic Character and the role of the Catholic School by ALL—Staff, parents and students. This may mean smaller but more authentically Catholic schools. (Primary Principal)

How long can we maintain the Special Character—increasing reliance on the Director of Special Character/DRS becoming the religious expert for the school? (Secondary DRS)

Each group has an important interdependent role to play in building up the community of the Catholic school.

In New Zealand, the Catholic school is an integral dimension of the mission of the Church and in many respects it is “the most widespread and effective ministry in the Church” (Williams, 2004, p. 83). It provides the Church with a privileged opportunity to actively engage in the dialogue between faith, culture, and life:

The Catholic school is a privileged place. Its task is to continue to be an instrument of evangelisation, helping young people to move from religious theory or practice by rote to a true life experience, where religious values have greater relevance. (Lynch, 2005, p. 6)

There is a developing awareness of the importance of the spiritual dimension of the person and an increasing groundswell for values-based education among

many parents. The current popularity of Catholic schools, many of which are oversubscribed and have waiting lists for non-preference students, provides an opportunity for evangelisation. In order to accomplish this, Catholic schools will need to clearly articulate their purpose and aims. They are called to be prophetic, to act as leaven in contemporary New Zealand society, which is becoming increasingly secular:³⁹

A Catholic school cannot simply be an annex to contemporary society. Its vision and the vision of its pupils cannot be limited by the ideology of the moment. Its vision is the vision of the Kingdom established by Jesus Christ. It is a vision that does not permit compromise. The Church is not an entrant in a popularity contest, anymore than was Christ himself. Christ commissioned his Church to preach the Gospel in season and out of season, welcome or unwelcome (Williams, 2004, pp. 85–86).

Maintaining the holistic and community aspects of Catholic Education and resisting the move to policies/ideologies that promote individualism and competition. The Catholic School must always be about the “common good.” (Primary Principal)

A key pillar of Catholic education is the centrality of Religious Education. The Catholic school is not a State school that has additional classes in Religious Education. Religious Education and Special Catholic Character are at the core of the curriculum in a Catholic school, providing an education-in-a-faith-environment and a beacon of hope for contemporary society. This is one of the essential characteristics that differentiates the Catholic school from other schools. The alternative path is to develop a dualistic model of the Catholic school that separates the religious and secular dimensions of education (Grace, 2002).

Next Generation of Catholic Teachers and Leaders

A major concern identified by Principals, DRSs, and advisors in the survey is attracting, forming, and retaining the next generation of Religious Education teachers and leaders.

Research indicates that quality teachers and leaders are essential for effective schools (OECD, 2005). With the aging of the teacher workforce, it will become increasingly important to be able to attract quality teachers to Catholic schools. In a survey conducted in 2000 of secondary Religious Education teachers in the Auckland and Hamilton dioceses, O’Donnell found that 51.5% were over 45 years old (O’Donnell, 2000b). While this compares favourably with the national trend of 58% of all teachers aged between 40 and 59 years (Ministry of Education, 2005), there will be an increasingly urgent need to attract and form Religious

³⁹ 2001 Census Religious Affiliation: Christian 60% (2,079,017); Non-Religious 30% (1,021,908). Total population 3,468,813.

Education teachers and DRSs particularly in secondary schools. Recognising the need of ongoing formation the secondary DRSs have established a national biannual conference.⁴⁰

Another challenge identified is the need to induct non-Catholics or nominal Catholics into the culture of the Catholic school. Most dioceses and schools have induction programmes for teachers new to Catholic schools and increasingly Boards are requiring leaders and teachers to undertake specific programmes on Special Character of Catholic schools.⁴¹ An increasing number of schools are developing an understanding of Special Character based around the charism of the founding Religious congregation, which is part of a growing awareness of the importance of the charism in developing and renewing the spiritual capital of Catholic schools (Grace, 2002).

Qualified Religious Education Teachers

One important factor for the success of Catholic schools identified in the survey is the need to have well qualified Religious Education teachers. While there are distinct issues concerning qualifications in Religious Education for primary teachers, junior secondary and senior secondary teachers and DRSs, it is important that all Religious Education teachers have a qualification in the subject that is appropriate to the level they teach:

A key [challenge] is having suitably qualified teachers involved in teaching the [Religious Education] programme with a sound theological background and suitable teaching skills to make the programme engaging for young people. (Religious Education advisor)

Historically Religious congregations met the cost of training Religious Education teachers, and a number were trained overseas.⁴² The importance of having well qualified Religious Education teachers was recognised as a priority by the proprietors due to the changing composition of school staffs as the number of Religious decreased (National Centre for Religious Studies, 1995). There have been two main responses to this challenge. One is the provision of qualifications either in partnership with tertiary providers or through Catholic tertiary providers. The second response has been to develop Religious Education programmes that have extensive theological background notes, links to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and detailed teaching episodes.

A National Certificate in Catechetical Studies was introduced as a foundational qualification for Religious Education teachers in primary and junior

⁴⁰ Some secondary schools have split the DRS position into Special Character and HOD Religious Education.

⁴¹ An online paper in Special Character is available through The University of Auckland Faculty of Education.

⁴² Training occurred at Catechetical Institutes, e.g., EAPI, Lumen Vitae, and a number of Catholic Universities in the USA.

secondary.⁴³ Courses in Religious Education are available as part of the teaching qualifications of a number of universities and Colleges of Education.⁴⁴ A process of Accreditation⁴⁵ was established in 1982 to encourage teachers to obtain an appropriate qualification and participate in continuing professional development in Religious Education (National Centre for Religious Studies, 1995). The Accreditation process is currently under review and is to be replaced by a process of Certification.

Research indicates the importance of subject matter knowledge in forming the teachers' conceptual understanding of the subject, pedagogical approaches, and classroom practice (Shulman, 1987). In a survey of primary Religious Education teachers, conducted in 2003 by National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS), 50% of teachers possessed some qualification including 6% with a degree or similar.⁴⁶ This is in part explained by the lack of Religious Education courses in teacher training institutions in New Zealand. Approximately 50% of teachers have no qualification in Religious Education, which may pose a challenge to the delivery of the Religious Education programme. The national monitoring project reports indicate that some teachers have difficulty teaching the more complex concepts of Catholic doctrine particularly to students with little background in the tradition (Kennedy, 2002). This also provides a challenge to the proprietors who are attempting to develop creative solutions to raise the level of qualification in Religious Education.

Teachers in senior secondary school are expected to have a degree or its equivalent in their subject specialisation.⁴⁷ Historically it has been difficult for Religious Education teachers to obtain appropriate qualifications in Religious Education or Theology. Until comparatively recently only Otago University offered Theology at degree level.⁴⁸ In 1992, the Catholic Institute of Theology in Auckland, in conjunction with the Australian Catholic University,⁴⁹ initiated a Graduate Diploma of Religious Education,⁵⁰ which was replaced by the Master of Religious

⁴³ The National Certificate in Catechetical Studies is offered in each diocese.

⁴⁴ Religious Education programmes at undergraduate, graduate, and post graduate level are available through the University of Auckland and undergraduate level at Otago University. The Wellington Catholic Education Centre offers NZQA accredited certificates and diplomas in Religious Education with a distance option.

⁴⁵ Accreditation recognises the qualifications, continuing professional development in Religious Education and regular teaching of the national programme. There are three levels. On attaining Level Two or Graduate Level, teachers are expected to have their Accreditation Certificate endorsed every five years.

⁴⁶ Qualifications and training of teachers of Religious Education in New Zealand Catholic primary schools as at December 2003. NCRS. Response rate 79% (150 of 189 schools, 1103 teachers).

⁴⁷ 75% of teachers in NZ secondary schools have a degree or higher qualification (2004 Teacher Census).

⁴⁸ The University Otago offered a degree in theology on campus from 1946 and eventually by distance learning with Catholic participation in the degree from 1972 to 1997. A Theology degree has been offered in Auckland since 1989. Originally through the Auckland Consortium of Theology Education (ACTE) initially in partnership with the Melbourne College of Divinity (until 1996) and from 1990 with The University of Auckland. In 2003 The School of Theology was established at the University of Auckland. An NZQA approved theology degree is available through Good Shepherd College.

⁴⁹ The Australian Catholic University also offers a Master of Educational Leadership through the Wellington Catholic Education Centre.

⁵⁰ The Graduate Diploma in Religious Education was phased out in 2000.

Education (MRE) in 1994. The MRE provides an appropriate qualification for senior secondary Religious Education teachers, DRSSs, and Principals. Since 1992, 60 candidates have attained the Graduate Diploma and 63 candidates have graduated with the MRE.⁵¹ The increasing number of experienced teachers in Catholic schools with graduate qualifications, reflects the increased access to these qualifications (O'Donnell, 2000b).

Two studies show that there are significant numbers of Religious Education teachers in Catholic secondary without a qualification in the subject. O'Donnell (2000b) in a survey of secondary Religious Education teachers in Auckland and Hamilton dioceses found that 67.5% of respondents had no formal qualification or training in Religious Education.⁵² While many of these teachers only teach three or fewer classes, a lack of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge may be impacting on student's perception of Religious Education. In a national survey of secondary Religious Education teachers conducted by NCRS in 2003, 51% of teachers possessed some qualification in Religious Education, with another 12% had a degree or similar. However, 37% of Religious Education teachers had no qualifications in this subject area.⁵³ While this indicates an improvement in the level of qualifications, a significant number of teachers still lack an appropriate qualification in the subject. This presents a challenge to the proprietors and to the delivery of Religious Education programme.

Another trend identified by O'Donnell is the lack of specialist Religious Education teachers with only 7% of teachers described as Religious Education specialists. This finding indicates an urgent need to attract, form, and retain specialist Religious Education teachers in Catholic secondary schools.

A further challenge facing Catholic schools identified in the survey is ongoing need for teachers to participate in continuing professional development particularly in pedagogy and spirituality⁵⁴:

Not always knowing when you are not qualified enough! i.e., blissful ignorance. (Catholic Education Office employee)

Religious Education Programmes

Following the Second Vatican Council, the New Zealand Bishops' Conference invested considerable resources in the development of Religious Education curricula for use in primary and secondary schools.⁵⁵

⁵¹ 17 Graduate Diploma candidates, upgraded to the MRE.

⁵² By way of contrast with teachers of English, 50% of all junior secondary teachers have at least one 100-level paper and 70% of all senior secondary teachers have at least one 200-level paper in the subject (New Zealand Schools 2004).

⁵³ Qualifications and training of teachers of Religious Education in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools as at December 2003. NCRS. Response rate 75% (36 of 48 schools, 234 teachers).

⁵⁴ The NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference recommends that each primary school Religious Education teacher undertake 12 hours of continuing professional development in the subject each year.

⁵⁵ Primary curricula: *Living Light*, 1969 and *We live Christ Jesus*, 1979 revised 1985. Secondary curricula: *Christian Living*, 1969 and *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, 1979. See Larkin (2004) for an examination of Religious Education curricular in New Zealand.

Partly in response to the levels of qualified Religious Education teachers, the primary and secondary programmes provide extensive background notes, cross-references to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and lesson plans.

One of the challenges facing Religious Education identified in the survey is that increasing numbers of students enrolling in Catholic schools have little formal connection to the faith community of the parish. To some extent the programmes assume a level of knowledge and experience of the Catholic tradition that is gained from regularly participating in the faith community. Teachers have to cater for this lack of exposure to the tradition. Religious Education must address the “two important contemporary searches: the quest for the sacred and the quest for community, believing and belonging” (Ward, 2004, p. 6). Evidence would suggest that Catholic schools are succeeding at building community but need to find more creative opportunities for students to engage with the sacred.

The Secondary Programme

Understanding Faith (National Centre for Religious Studies, 1991),⁵⁶ the secondary Religious Education curriculum was introduced in 1991 (Finlay, 1997).⁵⁷ It differed from the previous programme in that it adopted a Religious Education approach rather than a Catechetical approach⁵⁸ (Larkin, 2004). Teachers report high levels of satisfaction with teaching Religious Education⁵⁹ and found the Understanding Faith programme to be “interesting, worthwhile and challenging, allowing the expression of creativity in their teaching” (O’Donnell, 2000b, p. 4). The programme is currently being revised.

A significant challenge for Religious Education is to make the curriculum relevant and academically challenging particularly in the senior secondary school where students are exposed to an increasing secular society. Students need to leave Catholic schools with sound and adequate understandings of Catholic teaching and moral principles. This means teaching thinking skills and moral theology in senior classes. Students need to be equipped with the skills to think, evaluate, critique, and respect truth. One of the fundamental tasks of the Catholic school in New Zealand is:

to form young men and women who are prepared to put principle before expediency, who will live by unchanging Gospel-based standards, and who

⁵⁶ The secondary programme *Understanding Faith* (1991) and the primary programme *Religious Education Curriculum Statement* (1996) are the only Religious Education programmes approved by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference for use in Catholic schools. In letters to primary schools on 11 November 1998 and to secondary schools on 29 August 2000, the NZCBC specified minimum weekly time allocations for Religious Education. Primary: between 1 hour 40 minutes to 2 hours 30 minutes depending on year level. Secondary: three 40-minute periods.

⁵⁷ The programme, teacher’s guides, and student texts were introduced in schools between 1991 and 1994. The teacher guides and student texts are currently being updated. The programme is supported by a website <http://www.faithcentral.net.nz>

⁵⁸ The approach was referred to as Education-in-faith.

⁵⁹ 82% of respondents described their teaching of Religious education as positive.

will not seek excuses for moral u-turns that will enable them to live more at home in the de-Christianised society about them (Williams, 2004, p. 86).

Assessment in Religious Education

Changes in senior school assessment in New Zealand began to occur during the 1970s. Sixth Form Certificate (1974–2004), a nationally moderated, school-based system of internal assessment allowed for the assessment of Religious Education. For the first time in New Zealand secondary schools, it was possible for Religious Education to be assessed as part of a nationally recognised school qualification. This opportunity was enthusiastically adopted by a number of Catholic schools. The availability of assessment impacted on the teaching of Religious Education in Form 6 (year 12). As Religious Education was assessed in the same way as any other subject in the curriculum, it gained credibility as a formal subject in the eyes of many students, teachers, and parents.

The establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in 1990 resulted in the adoption of standards-based assessment in years 11–13, which incorporates internal and external assessment. Unit Standards and subsequently Achievement Standards⁶⁰ have been developed for all subjects including Religious Education. In 2002 the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) became the accepted qualification for schools. Currently, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority has not permitted the introduction of Achievement Standards in Religious Education although work is occurring which will enable their introduction. Schools wishing to assess Religious Education in years 11–13 must do so using Unit Standards. In 2005, 46 Catholic secondary schools were assessing against Religious Education Unit Standards⁶¹ (New Zealand Catholic Education Office, 2005).

The Primary Programme

In 1993 the government published The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993). The subsequent curricula developed for the ELA used an outcomes-based approach. This was adopted as the basis of the primary programme,⁶² Religious education curriculum statement for Catholic primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand (1996; Finlay & Kennedy, 1998). The programme

⁶⁰ Achievement Standard: a set of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. Specify three different standards of performance (credit, merit, and excellence) and may include national external assessment. Unit Standard: a set of learning outcomes and associated performance criteria. All unit standards are assigned a level and a credit value. See <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/>

⁶¹ Schools are assessing against 45 Unit Standards from 12 domains, a total of 45,771 entries.

⁶² Commissioned by the NZ Bishops' Conference in 1994. The primary programme was introduced to schools in 1997 in year 1 and 2; year 3 and 4 in 1998; year 5 and 6 in 1999 and year 7 and 8 in 2000. The Family Whanau book was added in 2001. It includes formal assessment of the cognitive and affective domains.

has been very positively received by teachers and students. Two reports produced a part of the national monitoring project will be discussed in the section on current research.

Faith Formation

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the faith formation of students in Catholic schools does not rest solely with the Religious Education curriculum. Opportunities need to be provided for students to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. This may require the intentional teaching of contemplation, meditation, reflection, and prayer and providing opportunities for students to participate in Christian service.⁶³ For many students pre-evangelisation may be necessary. This may not be appropriate in the classroom setting and will require the development of creative strategies, not least an understanding of contemporary adolescent spirituality, which centred on relationships and developing a sense of community (Gallagher, 1996).

Parish–School Relationships

It is the right of Catholic parents to access a Catholic education for their children. One of the ways that the parish assists parents in their responsibility for the faith formation of their children is through the provision of Catholic education and as such the schools should be an integral part of the parish rather than a separate entity. An important challenge that faces all Catholic schools is to establish the right relationship between the school and the parish. While primary schools are parish based, secondary schools are regional and have connections with multiple parishes. Until integration, parish priests were managers of parish primary schools. This connection diminished as the relationship with the schools shifted away from the parish to the diocesan Catholic Education Offices.

A contemporary paradox is emerging whereby parents desire a Catholic education for their children but are not active participants in the parish faith community (Grace, 2002). This may have important consequences for the school:

What some parents demand of the school can often be in opposition to what the school proclaims it is on about where the religious aspect of the school is tolerated because of what else the parents see as of value. (Religious Education advisor)

As Cardinal Williams noted:

Recognition of decline in religious practice serves to emphasise the need for ongoing partnership between parish and school. It goes without saying

⁶³ The Prayer and Liturgical Year Modules in the primary programme attempts to address this issue.

that any Catholic primary school is normally an integral part of the parish or group of parishes. What is not generally realised is that for many students and their parents the school is the parish.

In so many instances more families are in contact with the Church through the school than through parish organisations and Sunday Mass. If parishes are to reach out to their inactive parishioners, their most potent means must be the school. Catholic schools are essential to the vitality of the parishes, and their most precious resource. (Williams, 2004, p. 85)

There is an increasing realisation that the school, parish, and the home are partners in the faith formation of students in Catholic schools. Each has a unique but interrelated role:

Parents and grandparents all too often expect the school or parish education-in-faith programmes to do what neither can possibly do. Our teachers and catechists toil hard, they love and grieve over their pupils, they live and proclaim and witness their faith, but they can only supplement and extend and develop what is done in the home. They cannot replace it. (Williams, 2004, p. 84)

Catholic Schooling and Māori

The Catholic Church's commitment to Māori education began with the arrival of Bishop Pompallier and continues today. There are a number of small primary schools with 100% Māori students,⁶⁴ and three Māori secondary schools, St. Joseph's Māori Girl's College, Napier; Hato Paora College, Fielding and Hato Petera College, Auckland.⁶⁵ These Māori schools play an important role in New Zealand education as they are able to integrate a Kaupapa Māori educational philosophy.⁶⁶ The majority of Catholic Māori students attending Catholic schools do so in mainstream Catholic schools.⁶⁷

At the curriculum level, the primary and secondary Religious Education programmes have made a significant attempt at inculturation. The challenge exists however, for Catholic schools to continue developing and enhancing their bicultural understanding.

⁶⁴ For example: St. Joseph's, Matata; Te Kura O Hato Maria (St. Mary's), Pawaranga; Hato Hohepa te Kamura (St. Joseph the carpenter), Waitaruke.

⁶⁵ These schools provided boarding accommodation for students from rural areas. St. Joseph's was established in 1867; Hato Petera (St. Peter's) in 1928 and Hato Paora (St. Paul's) in 1947.

⁶⁶ The main elements include: Self-determination; cultural aspirations; culturally preferred pedagogy; mediation of socio-economic impediments; extended-family social structures and practices and a collective vision. See Smith, G. H. (1999), pp. 35–42.

⁶⁷ Many rural areas with a high concentration of Māori are too small to have a viable Catholic school. The percentage of students identifying as Māori at indicative schools in the Hamilton diocese (11 May 2005): Champion College, Gisborne 16%; John Paul College, Rotorua 17%; St. Joseph's school, Opotiki 57% and St. Partick's school, Taumarunui 52%.

The Historic Mission to the Poor of the Catholic School in New Zealand

Historically, Catholic schools in New Zealand, as in many other countries have provided education to lower socio-economic groups (Grace, 2003). One outcome of this has been the development of a social consciousness as part of student's experience in Catholic schools (Sullivan, 1996; Tolerton, 1994). Social justice education continues to be an important aspect of the current Religious Education programmes.

The Catholic school is called to offer "its educational service to 'the poor or those who are deprived of family help and affection or those who are far from the faith.'"⁶⁸ In New Zealand, Catholic schools are represented across the socio-economic spectrum,⁶⁹ although the number of Catholic schools is slightly under-represented in the lower deciles and over-represented in the middle deciles.⁷⁰ Approximately 30% of New Zealand schools are in the lowest deciles 1–3, compared with 22% of Catholic schools, 40% of all schools are in the mid-decile 4–7, while 50% of Catholic schools fall within this range (Education Review Office, 2003). In the Auckland diocese 31% of schools are in deciles 1–3, 36% deciles 4–7, and 33% deciles 8–10.⁷¹

Catholic schools educate a higher percentage of Pacific Island⁷² students particularly in Auckland and Wellington. These comprise approximately 15% of their rolls compared with the national average of 8% (Education Review Office, 2003). The NZCEO recognised the high percentage of Pasifika students in Catholic schools and launched the Raising the achievement of Pasifika students in Catholic schools initiative in March 2005.⁷³

The Church continues to make a commitment to provide education for those in lower socio-economic groups. As part of the financial restructuring of Catholic schools, the proprietors have stated that no Catholic student will be prevented attending a Catholic school because of their families financial circumstances (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 2004).

⁶⁸ *The Catholic school* (1977), par. 58.

⁶⁹ For funding purposes the Ministry of Education classifies schools into ten "deciles" based on the socio-economic characteristics of the local community. Approximately 10% of New Zealand's schools are classified under each of the deciles. The Ministry definition of deciles is:

A school's decile indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. A school's decile does not indicate the overall socio-economic mix of the school. Information collected in the census is used to calculate deciles.

⁷⁰ This refers to the number of schools rather than to the number of students in each decile.

⁷¹ In Auckland diocese Primary: decile 1–3: schools 32%/roll 32%; decile 4–7: schools 46%/roll 45%; decile 8–10: school 22%/roll 23%. Secondary: decile 1–3: schools 31%/roll 24%; decile 4–7: schools 25%/roll 26%; in decile 8–10: schools 44%/roll 52%.

⁷² Pacific Island (Pasifika) people represent 6.5% (231,801) of a total population of 3,586,731 at the 2001 census. The Pacific Islands primarily refers to countries such as: Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, and Fiji, but may also include: Tuvalu, Tahiti, and Kiribati.

⁷³ http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/media/resources/pasifika_ideas.pdf

These indicators suggest an ongoing commitment to the historical mission of providing education to lower socio-economic groups.⁷⁴

Research into Catholic Schools in New Zealand: Current Achievement and Future Needs

There has been very little research conducted on Catholic schools in New Zealand.⁷⁵ Most academic research has concentrated on various historical aspects concerning Catholic schools. These focus on the Education Act (1877) and the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975), and individual people, schools or Religious congregations, and their contribution to Catholic schools. Academic research has been undertaken in the areas of Religious Education and Special Character. The ERO has also reported on its reviews of Catholic schools.

Religious Education

There has been considerable debate internationally in the literature regarding the purpose of Religious Education (Crawford & Rossiter, 1985; Lovat, 2002). The principal argument revolves around the question of whether classroom Religious Education in Catholic schools is primarily catechetical or educational in nature (Malone & Ryan, 1994). Much of the writing on the aims of the Catholic school acknowledges the role of the Catholic school in transmitting faith (Groome, 1998; Macdonald, 1992; Moore, 1991; Moran, 1989; Rossiter, 1992; Ryan, 1997). One of the questions raised is whether transmitting faith is the exclusive role of classroom Religious Education or a task that encompasses the Catholic character of the whole school and the wider ecclesial community. While the teaching of any subject is a complex process, Religious Education has the added dimension of faith, which contributes an additional layer to the classroom dynamic.

In a survey of attitudes towards Catholicism among year 9 and year 12 students in Catholic secondary schools, Walker (2004)⁷⁶ found that, 39.8% of students reported attending Mass weekly, which is higher than similar studies overseas.⁷⁷ However, the comparatively large percentage who have at best a tenuous connection to the faith community poses a challenge to Catholic schools. Thirty-six percent of students attended Mass either “a few times a year” (22.1%) or

⁷⁴ The 2001 Census Unemployment: Total NZ 5.7%, Pasifika 11.2%; Income: Median weekly earnings Total NZ \$550, Pasifika \$468; Annual Income \$20,000 or less: Total NZ 53%, Pasifika 61%. Statistics New Zealand. (2002). *Pacific Progress: A Report on the Economic Status of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand*. ISBN: 0478269080.

⁷⁵ For a list of academic research see: www.theology.org.nz

⁷⁶ This study used a measure of attitudes derived from the research of L. J. Francis (1987) and M. Flynn and M. Mok (2002). The survey of 383 boys and girls in year 9 (13-years-olds) and year 12 (16-years-olds) was conducted in four single-sex Catholic secondary schools.

⁷⁷ Flynn and Mok, 2002 in Australia, found 23% year 12 students attend Mass weekly.

“rarely or never” (14.3%). These percentages were consistent across gender and age showing little decline by older students or any significant gender difference.⁷⁸ This raises a number of questions concerning the purpose and mission of the Catholic school, which could provide a basis for future research, particularly related to faith development. This will be critical as the Church seeks to develop ways to build on the evangelising potential of the schools.

Walker also found that while students had positive attitude towards Social Justice, they were at best neutral towards Religious Education. Many students reported that while they know more about their faith, classroom Religious Education did not appear to be influencing their faith development. This result is consistent with overseas research (de Souza, 1999). One inference from Walker’s research is that student attitudes towards Religious Education could be due in part to the lack of qualified and specialist Religious Education teachers adversely affecting the quality of teaching. These results indicate that while the students may know more about their faith, which is the stated aim of the Religious Education programme,⁷⁹ a more effective Faith Development Curriculum needs to be devised for secondary students.

Two monitoring reports have been commissioned by the NCERS into the primary programme (Kennedy, 2000, 2002).⁸⁰ Students reported positive attitudes towards Religious Education and enjoyed the learning activities. Students clearly identified teaching strategies they liked and disliked. Year 6 students commented on pedagogy, disliking lecture style teaching and being required to write too much. Ninety-five percent of year 6 students indicated that Religious Education made a difference in their lives. Students’ responses were also very positive about a number of elements of the Catholic character of the school, particularly concerning the community aspect of the school.

A perceived lack of parental support was identified as a concern in the monitoring reports. This has important implications for the alignment of values between the school and the home. Strategies need to be developed to enable parents to take an active role in the faith formation of their children. Research conducted in Australia suggests that parents have a significant influence on their children’s religious development (Flynn & Mok, 2002). While Catholic schools in New Zealand offer an education-in-a-faith-environment, this may have variable results without appropriate parental support.

Teachers surveyed in the monitoring reports believe that they are delivering the programme well and are nurturing their students’ faith development. Continuing

⁷⁸ Church attendance could be affected by ethnicity. Ethnicity was not collected in the survey.

⁷⁹ Secondary programme, *Understanding Faith* (1990) “Religious Education is a term used to denote furthering knowledge, understanding and appreciation of faith in a formal educational setting” (p.11). The primary programme, *Religious Education Curriculum Statement* (1996) Religious Education is the “knowledge of [Christ’s] teachings” (p. 6).

⁸⁰ The 2000 monitoring project report on year 3 (7-year-olds) and the 2002 reported on year 6 (10-year-olds). The research was conducted at the beginning of the next Year level; the students were 8 and 11 years old respectively. Fourteen schools were surveyed across all dioceses and deciles. Participants 2000: 112 students and 17 teachers. Participants 2002: 112 students and 12 teachers.

professional development was identified as an important factor in improving the delivery of Religious Education. Teachers also reported very favourably on the Special Character of the school particularly commenting on the relational dimension.

The Catholic School (1977) states that, Catholic schools “must be a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living,” “promoting a faith-relationship with Christ” and that “faith is principally assimilated through contact with people whose daily life bears witness to it.”⁸¹ The national monitoring reports indicate that students and teachers in Catholic primary schools are experiencing a sense of community, which is nurturing their faith development. This would suggest that Catholic primary schools are succeeding in their mission to form community and to transmit values for living. More research is needed to determine how effectively the schools are promoting faith development.

Special Character of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools in New Zealand are defined under the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975) as having a “Special Character.” In a study of two single-sex Catholic secondary schools O’Donnell (2000a), found that teachers perceived teaching as a vocation rather than a job. They perceived themselves as role models and interpersonal relationships to be an important dimension of Special Character. In terms of the Religious Education programme, the two schools adapted Understanding Faith “to suit local contexts and needs” (p. 280). O’Donnell identified two different approaches to Religious Education. One school had “a broad life-orientated approach” and the other an “academic subject approach” (p. 280). The differing approaches resulted from “differences in the religious backgrounds” of the student population (p. 280). The Special Character was strongly evident in all aspects of the schools and was closely related to the charism of the Religious congregation. However, the challenge remains to integrate and monitor the Special Character across the curriculum.

In a study of non-Catholic parents perception of Catholic schools, Poppelwell (2002), found that parents viewed Catholic schools as offering a religious, values-based, quality education. In addition, the wearing of uniforms, affordability of fees, a reputation for good teaching, the size of the school and being year 1–8, were all positive features for respondents. Filipo (2005) researched Samoan parents perceptions of three Catholic secondary schools in Auckland. Strong historic links with Catholic education were identified, as well as the need for schools to enter into genuine partnership with the community.

The experience of a Catholic education has a lasting influence. Research by (Hagenson, 1997), on eight women who commenced Catholic secondary school in 1973–1974, indicates that the Catholic school continues to exert a continuing influence on their lives.

⁸¹ *The Catholic school* (1977), para. 53.

ERO Performance of Catholic Schools in New Zealand

Between January 2002 and March 2003 the ERO⁸² conducted 71 reviews of Catholic schools and published its findings in a special report.⁸³ The report noted that the Special Character often permeated the whole culture of the school, characterised by “warm, friendly, family atmosphere” that was “caring and inclusive,” which formed the basis of pastoral care (p. 5). A number of strengths were also identified. Boards of Trustees showed an “active commitment to providing high quality education for their students” (p. 6); good working relationships were evident between the board, principal, and staff; Principals were identified as providing strong educational leadership in their schools; and “high quality teaching practices and programmes were common although there were also cases where these needed to be improved” (Education Review Office, 2003, p. 13). Generally, Catholic schools are performing well, although the ERO identified three main areas for improvement: safety issues; personnel management; and the achievement of Māori students.

Students leave Catholic secondary schools with higher than average levels of school leaving qualifications. In a comparison of year 13 students leaving Catholic secondary schools with all secondary schools in the same decile in 2001, 68% of Catholic schools had “noticeably higher percentages” of students leaving with qualifications, 26% with similar, and 6% with “noticeably lower percentages.” Likewise, 66% of Catholic schools had “noticeably lower percentages of” students leaving with “minimal or no formal qualifications,” 26% with “similar percentages,” and 9% “had noticeably higher percentages” (Education Review Office, 2003, pp. 3–4).

An Agenda for Future Research

The lack of research into Catholic schools has been surprising. It may partly be explained by the lack of tertiary Catholic education and research in New Zealand. Proposals are being explored by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office to develop a research capability that will conduct and promote research-based school improvement particularly concerning Religious Education.

Three areas for future research are emerging: firstly, the need to identify appropriate strategies for the successful teaching of Religious Education and faith development at all year levels; secondly, the need to research the integration of the Special Character across all curriculum areas and thirdly, identifying ways to build on the evangelising potential of the schools and their links with the faith community.

⁸² The Education Review Office (ERO) is a government department, established under the Education Act 1989, whose purpose is to evaluate and report publicly on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services.

⁸³ The ERO report reviewed 16 secondary and 55 primary schools, representing 30% of Catholic schools in New Zealand.

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APPENDIX 1

A PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS (WUCT)

Mark Philpot: President

By their witness and their behaviour teachers are of the first importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools.¹

...that which does not reproduce the characteristic features of a school cannot be a Catholic school.²

These two statements are drawn from “The Catholic School,” the post-conciliar document which set out the reasons for the existence of Catholic schools. Together, they point to the very heart of a Catholic school—one which is Catholic by its nature, ethos, and distinctive nature, and at the same time is a school, subject to the aims, needs, and purposes of any “centre of educational endeavour.” By extension, it is similar in nature and outcome to any other school, state and secular, and exists within the context of the overall educational system of a nation.

Further, the statements emphasise the fundamental importance of the role of the teacher, firstly in the creation of its religious character, and secondly in its professional character. Thus, the teacher is central to the educational task of the school, as are all other teachers in their own institution, but is central to its Catholic nature, in the mission laid upon the school by the Church.

This dual responsibility will therefore be seen to offer a sound justification for the existence of an organisation, which brings together teachers for pastoral, pedagogic, and spiritual development. In most countries where a Catholic school system exists, teachers have come together to form an association or a union for mutual benefit. In seeing themselves as part of a Universal Church, it is wholly understandable that such national organisations should look beyond themselves to an international organisation, which may offer fellowship and mutual support.

The World Union of Catholic Teachers (WUCT) has grown from such roots, and its history shows an origin based on truly idealistic hopes.

¹ The Catholic School Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome 1977 para. 78.

² *Ibid.*, para. 25.

1. History

In 1908, a Congress of teachers was called to Venice, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Pope Pius X, the former patriarch of that city. Some 3,000 teachers were present including teachers from Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In the course of the Congress a proposal was enthusiastically accepted to form a world organisation. A Constitution was drawn up, and in 1912, in the course of a further Congress in Vienna, the World Federation of Catholic Pedagogues was formed. In 1914 the outbreak of the World War I prevented any further contacts, and thereafter communications were difficult, until in 1932 another Congress was arranged, again in Vienna.

At this Congress, the president of the Austrian teachers was elected, and the vice president was from Washington University, exemplifying the international nature of this Federation. Council members came from France, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, and Hungary. A third Congress was held in Feldkirch (Switzerland), and the gathered representatives determined to hold the subsequent Congress in Budapest in 1938. Again world events conspired to prevent any further action, but they also demonstrated the need for the countries of Europe to lead the way in seeking a world in which conflict could be avoided by greater understanding and cooperation. The leaders of the Catholic teachers' organisations in a number of countries felt that through their common faith, and their brotherhood in the Church, they could indeed be leaders in such an ideal.

The Secretariat of the World Federation worked hard to re-establish the organisation after the war, and a fourth Congress was held in Luzern in 1949. The character of the Federation remained: "a supernational federation of catholic teachers' organisations in order to improve the discipline of pedagogics and of practical education in a really catholic sense."³

The Italian organisation, not present because of a pilgrimage to Lourdes, invited the Federation to Rome for Holy Week 1950. This particular timing was especially attractive and a source of great interest, taking place as it did in the Holy Year, 1950 and thus representatives came from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Malta, Austria, Spain, and Switzerland. Apologies were received from Belgium, Chile, Mexico, and the USA. As if to highlight the status and esteem of the occasion, one of the principal speakers was the Director General of UNESCO, Professor Victorino Veronese. As the conclusion to this Congress, a committee was formed to determine a new Constitution, including a new name for the Federation.

In October 1951, the Sixth Congress of the World Federation of Catholic Teachers became the first Congress of the WUCT. Additionally, representatives attended from Australia, Canada, French West Africa, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Natal, Portugal, Saarland, and Scotland. The spirit of cooperation and hope gave a truly international aspect to this new organisation.

³ Extract from the Aims—WFCT—The History of WUCT. Unpublished Theo Knippen 1981.

A Secretariat was formed and based in the building of Catholic Action, in Via della Conciliazione, Rome. The final Mass of this Congress was celebrated in the crypt of St. Peter's near the tomb of Pope Pius X, during whose pontificate the first meeting in Venice had taken place, 43 years earlier. The Holy See appointed an Ecclesiastical Assistant, and approved the constitution.

This is a significant moment, for the World Union has continued to be in relationship with the Holy See, benefiting from the presence of an ecclesiastical assistant appointed by the Holy See, and yet existing as an autonomous body.

The first Congress considered two themes "Christian Education in Primary Schools, and the Formation of their Teachers," and second, "Catholic Teachers with regard to post-war International Organisations and Institutions."

It may be fairly summarised that the WUCT sprang from an optimism and a desire for peace after a period of conflict and darkness; that the role of the catholic teacher is one of fundamental importance for the mission of the Church, and the benefit of young people; that it has truly international origins and perspectives; and that its first concern is for the professional and spiritual development of teachers.

2. The Current Position

(a) Association or Union?

The Church's mission in the world, to "Go and teach all nations" (Matt. 28) is simple and precise. Thus even individuals can see their role as being "to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the world." Human institutions thereafter are riven with misinterpretations, conflicts, and misunderstandings. On an international scale this is magnified, and personal differences can also be marked by cultural, historical, and traditional differences. WUCT is no exception, and a fundamental difficulty exists caused by the structural differences in education systems throughout the world.

It is not the scope of this chapter to carry out a full survey of educational systems, but suffice to use some examples:

England and Wales have a long-established system of state funded schooling. Following the Church's initial role as the provider of education, the State in the 19th and early 20th centuries began to accept that it had a responsibility for the funding and organisation of schools. In 1944, the Butler Education Act included Church schools within the state structure, and undertook to pay for education in Church-based schools, requiring a 15% contribution from the Church for buildings. Teachers were paid by the state, and equality of pay, as well as parity of esteem was established.

Teachers joined the secular Trades Unions and Professional Associations, for their legal protection and safeguards of employment.

In France and the USA, Church and State have been separate either by Revolution or from inception, and thus the education by the Church for those who wished to receive such education was a fundamental right of choice, but did not

lead to any contribution from the state. In such systems, the Catholic school is an independent, private institution. Such an extreme position is however, diluted in practice, so that in France, the state now pays for teachers, but the school remains independent. In the USA, the school and teachers remain independent.

Teachers in these countries unite as groups of teachers for their own rights within Trades Unions and Professional Associations, with respect to the Catholic sector only.

It is hardly surprising therefore, that a meeting of representatives of Catholic teacher organisations from across the world finds a natural division of those who represent “Associations,” of like-minded teachers who band together for pedagogic and spiritual support, and “Unions,” those organisations which exist to negotiate on behalf of the Catholic teachers for conditions of employment, salary, and legal process.

This fundamental difference has existed as a point of separation and division since the early days of the World Union. It appears as a constant thread through the notes and minutes of Council meetings, and as will be seen later, reflects the major concern for member organisations. Yet, it must be said, that goodwill exists to accommodate these differences, in order to unite in cooperation and understanding. Therein lies the value and strength of the WUCT.

(b) Communication

Any international organisation may be said to suffer concerns of communication on two levels—that of physical distance and systems, and that of cultural and linguistic difference. Both can be overcome by perseverance and commitment, but when looking at an organisation administered by volunteers, the demands are ever greater. The great commitment given by the Italian Association⁴ in the Secretariat for more than 40 years, and with the immediate and close contact with offices of the Pontifical Congregations meant that relationships were strong, and means of communication into the Vatican, and from Rome out to Bishops’ Conferences and national Education Officers was relatively fast and straightforward.

The second feature of communication, that of cultural and linguistic diversity, is naturally more difficult to overcome. At various times, the Council of the World Union has had to make a decision on the “official languages” to be used. English and French have been consistent, but from time to time Spanish, German, or Italian has been a third choice. In spite of the goodwill of members, such a decision has had repercussions in which a member country has withdrawn, or not attended a Congress for fear of not understanding the proceedings. A large, intergovernmental organisation, such as the European Community ensures that translators are available for every language. The reality that a language carries social, cultural, and emotional depth explains why member groups can feel easily slighted or insulted.

⁴ *Movimenti Maestri di Azione Cattolica* later the *Associazione Italiana dei Maestri Cattolici*.

The differences caused by language carry also cultural differences. Even within a single language group, such as English, constituent nations have differences, which are not always easily reconciled. The political stance of one nation may be significantly different from the political stance of another—the Union-based organisations are particularly prone to such factors (see later).

The point at issue of communication is that any international organisation is susceptible to the interpretations and the misunderstandings which can, and do, occur as language is translated. Underneath such linguistic concern is the simple cultural difference: one country naturally seeks an academic definition of a phrase, while another group responds that it is more important to deal with facts.

(c) The Development of the Constitution

Reference has been made to the fact that a Constitution was agreed in 1951, and in essence this lasted as the basis of the aims and objectives of the World Union until 1988.

It was in 1988, at the Congress in Rome, that the Belgian organisation COV, and the Dutch KOV, brought forward proposals to change the nature of the Union. The principle of the proposals was to emphasise the autonomy of the Union, and secondly to characterise the Union as an organisation, first and foremost, of Catholic teachers.

A proposal to add as Article Three, a statement of definition of one of the aims as “to defend and establish rights and relevant interests of the Catholic teacher” was rejected. It is clear from the personal accounts of the meeting that a danger of separation was near.

The President from 1988 was Harry Mellon MBE, KSG, born in Scotland, but a head teacher in England, and it was his task to attempt to bring some form of unity and sense of purpose back to the organisation. The Council’s first agreement was to undertake “an exhaustive and thorough-going review of the constitution and the general rules and regulations.”⁵

The Status of WUCT was then defined as “The World Union of Catholic teachers, abbreviated WUCT, having been established in Rome, is an autonomous organisation and has its seat in Rome, at the Holy See.” This statement endured until 2004.

Article Three stated that the aims of WUCT were:

1. *to study, assert and promote Catholic doctrine in connection with education and the school;*
2. *to exchange information concerning initiatives and experiences carried out in the field of religious, moral and professional training of teachers and of apostolic action in the teaching sphere;*
3. *to compile and exchange news regarding the economic and social status of teachers in the various countries and to study the possibilities of improving them;*

⁵ Introduction to Reports of the 1988 Congress, Harry Mellon. Unpublished.

4. *to further and to support the establishment of national organisations of Catholic teachers in countries where such organisations do not yet exist.*

Into these Aims the proposal from the Belgian and the Dutch organisations would have allied the World Union more closely to matters of Conditions of Employment, and salary.

Careful reading of the current aims (Appendix A) shows the influence of those member organisations which are concerned for the professional duties and conditions of service of their members, and yet allowing for full participation by those member organisations which do not have such roles in their objectives.

Simply, in an extreme situation, a Trade Union member organisation could call on its members to take strike action; WUCT could never be in such a position. A comparison may be made with national Trades Unions: they cooperate on an international stage, but as yet “International Trades Unions” do not exist.

Thus implicit in the Aims, are measures of information, dissemination, sharing, cooperation, education, and cooperation.

However, the strength of the World Union, responding to a request for mutual support, was shown on the occasion of a Congress and audience with the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II in 1980. The All Indian Federation of Catholic Teachers’ Guilds (AIFCTG) raised in Council the problem facing them that it was impossible for their lay teacher members to become the directors, or head teachers in Catholic schools. On 25 April at an audience with the Pope, the President, Theo Knippen said, in his address to the Holy Father; “At a time when the number of priests and religious, also in schools, is often rapidly decreasing, it is an absolute necessity that the lay teachers who replace them be competent and Christian teachers. But, being this, they are worthy of confidence, and qualified to occupy higher posts accordingly, also in Catholic schools.”⁶

(d) Canon Law and the New Statutes

On 6 February 2003, the Pontifical Council for the Laity wrote to its constituent members, the International Catholic Organisations (ICOs) to request that each organisation should resubmit its Constitution for approval according the new norms of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. The Pontifical Council had been declared as having “the competence and authority on all matters pertaining to the juridical status of the ICOs, and their associative life. This competence includes the authority for their erection or their recognition; approval of their Statutes; the *nulla osta* for the candidates to the presidency; the nomination and confirmation of their presidents, the nomination and confirmation of their ecclesiastical Assistants.”⁷

Canons 298–329 of the New Code of Canon Law (1983) has an extensive section dedicated to the norms regarding the associations of the faithful in

⁶ Newsletter WUCT, Nouvelles UMEC 1980–1982 President’s Address to Holy Father.

⁷ Archived letter to ICOs, 6 February 2003, signed Cardinal Stafford, Archbishop Rylko.

the Church. It recognises the right of the faithful to associate and at the same time offers criteria to ensure that it is done in harmony with the mission of the Church, and with the means each association considers appropriate.

Canon 215 recognises that “the Christian faithful are at liberty freely to found and to govern,” and this is in line with the Second Vatican Council’s reaffirmation of “the right of the faithful to associate in the Church, and underlining the importance and even the necessity of the ‘associative apostolate’ as an answer to the ‘need that is both human and Christian’ and as a ‘sign of the communion and unity of the church in Christ’” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 18).⁸

The Executive immediately prepared amendments to the Statutes, which were submitted to the Congress in Bangkok in August 2003. These were, in essence approved. But, just as the debate had been heated in 1979, so the debate became emotional and profound as the representatives considered the significance of an autonomous body, and one which is recognised by the Holy See. That some feeling was expressed that there could be difficulty in the acceptance by some teachers in individual countries of the need to be “in harmony with the mission of the Church” indicates the many widening perceptions of the role of the Church in Catholic education. For some, the concept of submitting a name for approval for the Presidency indicated a subjugation to the institutional Church, and a diminution of autonomy. That such views did not receive wide support is a sign of the recognition that Catholic teachers are fully and firmly part of the salvific mission of the Church, but that they were expressed is also a sign that the organisation needs to maintain and promote its links with the Holy See.

3. Educational Contexts

The sharing of information and good practice, for the improvement of the professional quality of Catholic teachers has been shown to be the *raison d’être* of the World Union. Therefore, the Congress, held every three or four years, is always an educational enterprise at heart, even if the General Assembly and business meeting forms part of it, and at times generates the most heated debate and international discussion.

The most cursory glance at WUCT documentation will reveal the major interest of the World Union—a concern for the role, image, and character of the catholic teacher in respect of the pupils in his care. Within the context of the world in which he or she works, the unchanging preoccupation is that of “what sort of person the catholic teacher should be.” A secondary characteristic of the Congress relates to a search for an understanding of educational systems across the world. Thirdly, themes indicate the search for a national answer to international change. All of these themes are demonstrably related to a search for an understanding of the role of the teacher within the Catholic Church.

⁸ The Catholic School, *op. cit.*, para. 81.

The themes deserve closer scrutiny in the form of the educational context in which the World Union and individual associations work. These themes also represent the deliberations of the Council, from 2004 to date.⁹

4. Themes of WUCT Congresses

1. *“What Sort of Person the Catholic Teacher Should Be”*

In 1976 in Vienna the discussion was “The Catholic Teacher and the challenges of the contemporary world,” followed by the “The Catholic teacher for Justice, Liberty and Peace,” and in 1985 “Witness to Faith.” and again in 1991 “A witness to the Gospel in Life and at school.”

Most recently, in 2006, the Council (by this time formed from the Presidents of Member Associations, and therefore more representative than the smaller elected group of Councillors), prepared a guideline document “The Image of the Catholic Teacher.” The statements agreed as the basis of a document, which is still under discussion in member associations, refer to the personal characteristics, the competences and the responsibilities of anyone who takes a role as a teacher in a Catholic school.

“It is not reasonable,” the discussion went, “for a Catholic teacher to be required to do more work, and have greater responsibility to his pupils, than other teachers in state schools, without extra pay.” In the context that the state pays the salaries of all teachers, whatever the school, this argument was widely accepted. “And yet” the debate continued, “a Catholic School is different from other schools by its distinctive nature, and it is the witness and behaviour of the teacher which imparts the distinctive character to the Catholic school.”

In considering those personal characteristics, the debate opened into the extent to which a Catholic teacher may only be called Catholic by adherence to the magisterium, the teachings of the Church. “Loyalty,” “faithfulness,” “following,” “adherence to,” and “respectful of” are the phrases which illuminate the discussion; and it is probably true to say that they have exercised the mind of academics and theologians for centuries. It was Paul VI who said “What the world needs now is witnesses.” The modern educational world demands example of its teachers, rather than dogmatic prescription—“Do as I say, not as I do” is no longer acceptable in a world where the media are quick to point out hypocrisy (especially in those who fulfil a public role). Does the individual’s private life impinge on his public duty? Which takes precedence in a situation in which western society’s mores appear to run counter to the teachings of the Church (eg, in the sanctity of marriage)?

Thus, in several countries it was reported that Diocesan authorities and Teachers’ Associations are wrestling with questions such as the following:

⁹ Minutes of Council of Presidents, Ghent, 2004, 2005, 2006.

- Is it acceptable to employ a young Catholic teacher who chooses to live in an unmarried relationship with his partner, or does he thereby remove himself from the possibility of employment in a Catholic school?
- Is it permissible for a divorced Catholic teacher to be employed, or indeed to continue in employment?
- What is the status of a homosexual teacher?

Contributions recorded from Council members would suggest that the reality is that Catholic schools may have major recruitment problems, to the point of closure in many parts of the world, if they were to insist on total adherence to the exact teaching of the Church.

The image of the Catholic teacher is at issue in many such situations and the result is that the policy of an individual member “union” may be at odds with the perceived teaching of the Church, since the role of that individual union is to protect its member in face of what it may consider to be unreasonable demands of the employer. The widening of the distance between the trade union as representative of teachers and the Church as employer can be seen to have its roots in the participation of Church schools in State education systems: “Catholic schools are thereby more or less closely associated with the national system and are assured of an economic and juridical status similar to State schools.”⁸

The acceptance that Catholic schools will be funded by the State, following “agreements, conventions and contracts,” leads to the relevant Unions, from the Catholic sector and the State sector, working in close relationship, and subsequently holding similar policies.

One may consider the example that a Union representing Catholic teachers will certainly seek to promote gender equality. For some of its members, this could be interpreted as the acceptance of women as priests. A Union which adopted this policy would be thinking directly contrary to the current Church teaching. It might be assumed that there could arise an opinion that the union itself would not legitimately be called a “Catholic Trade Union.” It may be imagined that this is itself a cause of lively debate!

The issue at the heart of the discussion is “The image of the Catholic Teacher”—the examples show how wide the interpretation may be, and therefore the overriding difficulty for the World Union to present a “single picture.” That there is some measure of agreement in the guidelines is in itself a success.

2. The Catholic Teacher in a Pluralist Society

The second major theme to traverse the list of Congress working titles, is that of the Catholic Teacher facing up to the challenges of a changing society around him. In Bangkok, in 2003, this was neatly described as “New Challenges—Same Goals.” The witness to Christ and the Gospel is unchanging—the same goals; but the transient society and ever present uncertainty create—new challenges. Globalisation, the “global village,” imply that the world is shrinking in economic and transport terms. Migration, interdependent employment, transnational enterprise, and the search for better standards of living bring about a movement of peoples, as it always has. However the greater numbers of migrants mean that

teachers are faced with larger groups of pupil in any one class who may have different faiths, language, and culture. Thus the World Union has set itself the task of considering what expectations are to be made of the Catholic Teacher in working within a pluralist society.

The annual Council meeting of 2004 concluded that “respect” was at the heart of the treatment of pupils of other religions, who came to work within a Catholic school. “Respect” assumed that the teacher should also receive it, as well as offer it. The questions which arise might include the following:

- Is it a Catholic school, if more than 95% of pupils are non-Christian?
- Is it possible for a Muslim teacher to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school?
- What is expected of a Catholic Teacher working in a school in another country and faith?

Examples offered raise further issues: a Jewish school which has a Catholic head teacher remains a Jewish school—therefore is it acceptable for the head teacher of a Catholic School to be of a different faith?

Pupils in Catholic schools in, for example, India or Lebanon, are known to be 100% Hindu or Muslim—is the fact that the head teacher is Catholic sufficient for the school to retain its Catholic nature?

3. Violence and Disruption in Schools

The working conditions of every teacher are to be with a number of young persons in order to impart the knowledge and experience required by the society he represents. Often the number of pupils ranges from single figures to huge numbers. The authority of the teacher has always emanated from within his own competence, and supported in most cases by the rules and regulations of the society in which he lives. When that society itself is fragmented, the young people may not accept willingly the authority of the teacher.

A society in which violent weapons are sometimes carried certainly places a teacher at risk of his own life. When young people do not see the value of the education being offered, their attitude to the authority figure in front of them leads to forms of poor behaviour, or violence, and certainly disruption. The ethos and nature of the Catholic School is enough to promote cooperation and consideration in many cases—but it does not preclude the fact that some schools are susceptible to the problems of the surrounding society—drugs, weapons, violence, disruption.

The annual Council of 2005 reflected on these issues, and in view of the overwhelming majority of pupils who seek to learn and cooperate with their teachers, recommended that in those exceptional instances of pupils being unable to work within the “normal” class should be removed from the class and given remedial teaching and guidance. Examples where groups of Catholic schools came together to assist each other were praised, since they were seen to maintain the principle, which is seen to guide every Catholic teacher in the execution of his role—“that every child is made in the image and likeness of God, and loved by Him.”

5. Conclusion

1. It has been noted that the WUCT works in cooperation with the Dicastries of the Holy See, and in particular the Council for the Laity, of which it is part, and the Congregation for Catholic Education, which represents its foremost purpose. A regular function of the Executive Officers is to meet, and discuss with, members of the Dicastries.

In 2007, the Congregation for Catholic Education has called a meeting of the International Catholic Organisations, which are concerned with education to consider the issues which reflect the Church and education today. Such a symposium is a recognition of the need to understand the movements which impinge on the work of Catholic educational institutions.

The WUCT will be present to participate in this important development.

2. The WUCT, 100 years after the first “international congress,” remains the only international organisation within the Catholic Church representing teachers, independently of the management of the schools. This unique role justifies its continued existence, and yet acknowledges the paradoxes and difficulties, which have been outlined earlier.
3. The secularisation of society in many countries, especially the “developed” nations, is placing a new pressure on Catholic schools to argue for their existence. A “post-Christian society” (as it has been called) questions whether the right of parents to choose an education based on their faith is still acceptable, and proposes that their right should be subjugated to the system operated by the majority. Naturally the WUCT argues that parents should retain that right, and that there is no case for the dissolution of the Catholic Schools.
4. The WUCT operates with a part-time secretary, and voluntary officers. As such it is limited in its power and its potential. As a member organisation, it can only rely on subscription income, and any donations from Trusts and Funds. Without evident “successes” which inspire new members, its growth will be restricted, and unless new members join, it will be unable to participate in situations which lead to “success.”
5. The “power” of the WUCT lies in its ability to influence, and offer guidance. It has no power to “direct” a response or an action. Its strength lies in the coming together of nations to consider, reflect, and recommend policies and actions, which individual member associations will then communicate to their members, and these will assimilate them into their daily work.

APPENDIX 1-A

The current Mission Statement and Aims (Article Two) states that:

Mission statement:

Recognising our unique role as teachers in the mission of the Church, the World Union of Catholic teachers is committed to the advancement of education in

Catholic and secular schools. It provides leadership, support and a range of professional services in partnership with its member organisations.

WUCT seeks to secure and to improve the position of school education and the people who depend on school education, worldwide. It also believes in the importance of the religious dimension in the programme of education in schools. Moreover, it holds that schools should promote an atmosphere of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

The World Union of Catholic Teachers seeks to promote Gospel values in education, in accordance with the teaching and tradition of the Church, through the following strategic objectives.

To promote and support Catholic teachers and member organisations in their spiritual and professional development and in their conditions of service:

- by promoting the realisation of the WUCT Teachers' Charter;
- by exchanging information about the social and economic position of Catholic teachers and the possibilities of improving their situation;
- by promoting the active involvement of teachers, parents and students in participation and decision-making at local and national level;
- by member organisations using their expertise to support the professional and collective bargaining activities of other member organisations, where appropriate;
- by supporting the initial and ongoing training of Catholic teachers to meet major current and future educational challenges.

To defend the rights and liberties, as well as the interests, of Catholic teachers within the context of the Church's social teaching and within the fundamental principles of social justice:

- *by exchanging information between member organisations about Catholic education;*
- *by supporting the formation of member organisation of Catholic teachers in countries where they do not exist;*
- *by exchanging experiences of member organisations about their activities in the field of Catholic education;*
- *by organising congresses, seminars and other forms of meeting on matters of concern and interest to Catholic educators;*
- *by working with other international Catholic organisations where there is common purpose.*

To promote the interests of Catholic teachers and member organisations to the Holy See and to the national conferences of bishops:

- *by developing links with the Holy See and bishops' conferences;*
- *by responding to the documents of the Holy See and bishops' conferences in relation to Catholic education;*

- *by acting as an intermediary between the member organisations and the Holy See and bishops' conferences;*
- *by informing member organisations of current ecclesiastical initiatives.*

To promote the interests of Catholic teachers and member organisations with other international organisations:

- *by working with international bodies in the field of education, teaching, and culture;*
- *by disseminating relevant information from these bodies to member organisations;*
- *by responding where appropriate to the initiatives of these bodies.*¹⁰

¹⁰ Constitution of WUCT. Approved General Assembly 2004.

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL STATISTICS FOR COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK

Statistics supplied by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome and taken from the Statistical Yearbook of the Church, 2004 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006, pp. 281–290).

Table A. By country

Country	Kindergartens		Primary/Elementary		Secondary	
	No.	Students	No.	Students	No.	Students
Argentina	1,505	175,449	1,785	700,484	1,604	430,781
Australia	278	39,946	1,298	365,908	432	300,152
Belgium	1,084	130,650	2,205	481,101	977	550,355
Brazil	2,148	551,027	2,889	1,203,038	1,327	284,764
Canada	391	23,660	1,437	495,188	290	235,887
Chile	449	35,109	657	229,216	416	146,727
Ethiopia	133	20,526	174	72,027	33	10,794
France	1,855	183,562	4,569	704,541	2,697	1,290,029
Germany	9,120	587,872	240	33,931	823	304,312
Great Britain	550	43,894	1,857	415,282	593	345,803
Hong Kong	38	10,352	131	99,862	134	151,365
India	7,827	1,123,001	10,211	3,207,571	5,037	3,070,540
Ireland	169	8,370	3,223	460,260	627	284,033
Israel	54	6,376	29	22,739	26	3,752
Italy	5,966	356,204	1,305	140,297	1,201	131,098
Japan	551	76,183	55	22,969	167	73,852
Kenya	2,857	222,847	3,934	1,469,321	1,000	335,464
Lesotho	24	3,285	518	173,636	79	47,402
Malawi	26	79,919	1,195	1,268,125	100	326,842
Malta	34	1,694	26	8,125	22	8,566
The Netherlands	–	–	2,053	517,629	153	242,977
New Zealand	7	323	189	34,653	49	27,262
Peru	406	28,728	573	188,175	556	203,503
Philippines	972	145,729	769	383,007	1,082	627,799
Poland	605	27,008	635	105,618	417	82,920
Portugal	512	37,248	185	35,579	84	34,666
South Africa	236	19,798	265	99,622	107	52,175
Spain	1,893	242,266	2,097	663,870	1,786	577,463
Thailand	172	60,281	171	194,377	149	127,414
USA	5,072	182,450	6,438	1,656,634	1,293	640,801
Uruguay	156	10,535	161	37,638	75	25,488
Zambia	95	6,298	59	26,202	47	19,209

Table B. By region (including countries not represented in the Handbook)

Region	Kindergartens		Primary/Elementary		Secondary	
	No.	Students	No.	Students	No.	Students
Africa	11,102	1,014,584	31,130	11,985,138	7,968	3,021,647
Asia	12,918	1,714,162	15,502	4,964,853	8,676	4,972,926
Europe	22,809	1,683,150	17,187	3,176,389	10,008	3,815,610
North America	5,466	206,279	7,878	2,152,248	1,586	877,176
Oceania	1,189	92,942	3,004	639,041	670	379,853
South America	6,749	948,229	10,036	3,443,362	6,925	2,087,703
World Total (including regions not represented above)	63,073	6,312,115	91,090	27,975,541	38,277	15,868,173

Note: There may be some discrepancies between these statistics (valid at 31-12-2004) and more recent statistics quoted in individual chapters.

APPENDIX 3

NUMBERS OF CATHOLICS AND PRIESTS IN THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN THE HANDBOOK (IN DESCENDING ORDER BY CATHOLIC POPULATION)

Country	Catholics	Priests
Brazil	143,900,000	16,598
USA	63,347,000	48,288
Philippines	63,025,000	7,521
Italy	55,877,000	54,920
France	46,823,000	25,353
Spain	37,152,000	27,281
Poland	37,002,000	27,458
Argentina	33,549,000	5,868
Peru	23,020,000	2,790
India	16,516,000	19,404
Canada	13,453,000	9,832
Chile	11,426,000	2,298
Portugal	9,404,000	4,237
Belgium	8,105,000	8,070
Kenya	7,654,000	1,865
The Netherlands	5,365,000	3,876
Australia	5,316,000	3,318
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	5,293,000	6,081
Ireland	4,666,000	5,642
South Africa	3,081,000	1,077
Zambia	3,012,000	575
Malawi	2,680,000	398
Uruguay	2,507,000	498
Lesotho	894,000	146
Japan	513,000	1,749
New Zealand	457,000	554
Ethiopia	443,000	439
China, Hong Kong SAR	371,000	325
Malta	364,000	931
Thailand	273,000	642
Israel	118,000	379

Source: B. Froehle, & M. Gautier (2003). *Global Catholicism: Portrait of a World Church* (pp. 151–153). New York: ORBIS Books.

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