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**Religious education and religious instruction in the
Irish post-primary school curriculum in the
aftermath of the introduction of an examinable,
non-denominational syllabus for religious education**

being a thesis in partial fulfilment of the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

in the University of Hull

by

Rev. Thomas J. Deenihan. M.Ed.

1 August 2001.

One last thing, my son, be warned that writing books involves endless hard work, and that much study wearies the body.

(Ecclesiastes 12:12)

To my parents and friends in Bantry who provided refuge and support to an oft wearied writer.

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ABSTRACT.

Summary of thesis submitted for EdD degree by Rev. Thomas Deenihan.

Religious education and religious instruction in the Irish post-primary school curriculum in the aftermath of the introduction of an examinable, non-denominational syllabus for religious education.

In September 2000 a new subject, religious education, was introduced to the Irish post-primary curriculum. This subject is examinable and non-denominational. The subject was introduced to sixty-seven schools in the first phase of its introduction. The Catechetics commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference subsequently issued 'Guidelines' for combining religious instruction with religious education in schools where religious instruction enjoys a legally enforceable allocation of classes on the timetable. Of the sixty-seven schools who introduced religious education in 2000, these number sixty-three.

This thesis examines current practice in the teaching of 'religion'. In doing so, it distinguishes between the content and aims of religious education and religious instruction. The new Department of Education and Science syllabus is examined as are the various Church documents on the nature of Catholic education, Catholic schools and a Church approved catechetics programme. Of crucial concern to this thesis are the agreements and legal safeguards afforded to religious instruction in the Irish post-primary curriculum.

This analysis leads the writer to the conclusion that the proposal to combine religious education with religious instruction was far from ideal. This assertion is verified by a survey of the sixty-three schools in the first phase of introduction that are also obliged to teach denominational religious instruction. This survey examined the critical areas of qualification, time allocation, status and, significantly, the steps taken to teach religious instruction in conjunction with religious education. Throughout, but particularly in chapter four, areas of difficulty in relation to the proposed merger of religious education and religious instruction are highlighted. These difficulties relate particularly to employment law and the awarding and recognition of qualification.

The literature reviewed and the information cited is correct as of 1st. June. 2001.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and definition.

Education could be said to be concerned about the giving of information, the imparting of knowledge and bringing to full potential. The purpose of education has been defined in a general way as 'the giving of moral, intellectual and social instruction'.¹ The following develops that link between moral and intellectual instruction:

Education, concerned as it is with the human person, helps each one of us: a) to recognise in ourselves an inherent potential, ordered towards freedom, to share in infinite existence and taste its joys; b) to realise in action this native potential and c) to cultivate the aspiration and skill, using all possible aids and sources, to play one's fullest role in life and thereby attain true happiness.²

This secular definition of education is important in relation to this thesis because it delineates education in terms of eternity and lasting joy, the concern of both religious instruction and Catholic schools. From a church viewpoint,

Education, fostering as it does the growth and development of a free individual human person, potentially or actually a member of Christ's mystical body, must always be amongst the chief pre-occupations of the Church.³

Both definitions of education are apposite in the context of this thesis, for not only do they describe education and religious education but they also encapsulate the broad aims of catechetics, the 'growth and development' of faith, a necessary 'pre-occupation of the Church'. The issue of definition, particularly the definitions of 'education', 'religious education' and 'catechetics' or 'religious instruction', is central to this thesis. More so now than at any time in the past, religious education is occupying a more central position in the area of curricular

¹ *Concise Oxford English dictionary*, (1991) (ed. R.E. Allen) BCA. Oxford University Press. p.373

² O'Connor, Cormac. (1972) *Education and People. Education in Ireland 3 -To unleash the potential*. (ed. M.W. Murphy) Cork:Mercier Press. p.19.

³ Graham, Aelred. (1960). *The Church on Earth. The teaching of the Catholic Church*. (ed. Smith) London: Burns & Oates. p.727

discussion. This discussion is a direct result of the introduction, by the Department of Education and Science, of a specific subject, religious education, to the post-primary examinable curriculum. However, in discussing the State syllabus and catechetics, a legal requirement in most schools as illustrated later, a difficulty of terminology arises. 'Religious education', 'religious instruction', 'Christian doctrine' and 'catechetics' are often used interchangeably. In fact, they are distinct disciplines. Patrick Devitt⁴, in his book *That you may believe* states

when I was in school I learned my *catechism*, I was taught *Christian Doctrine*. My first appointment as a priest made me responsible for *Religious Instruction and Formation*, but the school timetable said I taught *Religious Knowledge*. For a few years, I studied *Catechetics*, now I work in a department of *Religious Education* and educate potential *Religion Teachers*.⁵

Religious education is not catechetics and it is not religious instruction. Religious education, according to the State's syllabus, 'invites the students to reflect on their own experiences', and, in so doing, 'their commitment to a particular religious tradition, and / or to a continued search for meaning, will therefore be encouraged and supported'⁶. Correspondingly, the aims of religious education are

- ~to foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and of all times.
- ~to explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion.
- ~to appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.⁷

In that sense, what the Department of Education and Science syllabus for religious education describes is 'a philosophy of religion'. Devitt allows for this non-denominational interpretation, when he defines religious education in terms of the harmonious development of the whole individual, including its religious

⁴ Patrick M. Devitt is Head of Religious Education at Mater Dei Institute, Dublin and Statutory lecturer in Catechetics at University College, Dublin.

⁵ Devitt, Patrick M. (1992) *That you may believe, A brief history of religious education*. Dublin: Dominican Publications. p. 3.

⁶ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus. (Ordinary and Higher Level)* Dublin: Stationery Office. p.4.

⁷ Ibid., pp.4-5

dimension.⁸ Devitt defines ‘catechetics’ in terms of helping Christians to grow to a more mature faith, ‘religious instruction’ as helping pupils to be more aware of the content of their faith and, thereby, to be encouraged to put that awareness into practice, and ‘religious knowledge’ as being about wanting pupils to know Jesus as a real saviour and to grow in knowledge and understanding of his message.⁹ Devitt’s definition of religious instruction echoes an earlier definition of Lee, who holds that religious instruction ‘is that kind of intentional educational process by and through which desired religious learning outcomes are actually facilitated in some way.’¹⁰ In other words, religious instruction is not only denominational but involves celebrating liturgically or facilitating the practising of the knowledge imparted. Devitt’s view is echoed in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, which states ‘it is the special function of a Catholic school to.... enable young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given to them in baptism’¹¹. This view is also held by Prof. John Haldane¹² who believes

the primary function of Catholic schools, therefore, is to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted.... the task is a non-negotiable one. It is a duty’.¹³

Haldane’s ‘devotions’ echo Lee’s facilitation of ‘desired religious learning outcomes’ mentioned above. Both are clear that religious instruction is the duty of Catholic schools. Religious instruction involves learning about a specific faith, growing in that faith and celebrating that faith either in living or liturgically (facilitating). The Department of Education and Science also could be said to acknowledge a distinction between religious education and religious instruction.

⁸ Devitt, Patrick M. (1992) *op cit.*, p.14.

⁹ Ibid. p 14.

¹⁰ Lee, James Michael. (1982) ‘The Authentic Source of Religious Instruction’ in *Religious Education and Theology*. (ed. Thompson, N.H.) Alabama: Religious Education Press Inc. p114.

¹¹ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *General Directory for Catechesis*. Dublin: Veritas. p.262.

¹² Professor John Haldane is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Saint Andrews and Director of the Centre for Philosophy and Public Affairs.

¹³ Haldane, John. (1996) ‘Catholic Education and Catholic Identity’ in *The Contemporary Catholic School*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O’Keefe & O’Keefe) London: Falmer Press. p.133

The working definition of the Department in relation to religious education has already been cited. *Circular Letter 73/74*¹⁴ obliged the Vocational Education Committee to provide ‘... religious worship and instruction for pupils in accordance with the rites, practise and teaching of the religious denomination to which the pupil belongs.’¹⁵ Clearly, while the State envisages religious education being non-denominational, religious instruction, by its very nature, is denominational and involves celebrating that faith, an interpretation supported by use of the term ‘rites’. It becomes increasingly clear then that what has emerged on to the post-primary curriculum is religious education and not religious instruction. This distinction is crucial to the thesis.

Haldane subsequently distinguishes three roads or approaches to education in religion: the spiritual, the historical and the philosophical. The spiritual response is characterised by experience, emotion and reflection. The historical approach concentrates on Sacred Scripture and Church Tradition. The philosophical approach is typified by abstract and general argument.¹⁶ The state syllabus clearly identifies with the philosophical approach and modules of the syllabus will involve the historical approach. However, the spiritual response within that syllabus, in so far as it will be relevant, will be spiritual in the broad sense and may tend to be more spiritual than religious in that it appeals to general religious or spiritual experience as opposed to membership of, or the experience of one church.

Haldane’s tripartite analysis of religious education echo’s a similar analysis of Watson.¹⁷ Watson argues that there are three approaches to teaching religious

¹⁴ Department of Education. (1974) *Circular letter 73*. Dublin: Stationery Office. Circular Letters are the primary means through which the Department of Education, and latterly the Department of Education and Science, communicated with school authorities. Such letters were titled by number followed by the last two digits of the year. Hence, letter 73/74 is the seventy third letter of 1974.

¹⁵ Farry, Michael. (1998) *Vocational Teachers and the Law*. Dublin: Blackhall Publishing. p.34.

¹⁶ Haldane, John. (1999) ‘The Need of Spirituality in Catholic education’ in *Catholic Education: Inside-out / Outside-in*. (ed. Conroy.) Dublin: Veritas. pp.193-194

¹⁷ Brenda Watson is a former lecturer in the Departments of History and Religious Education at Didsbury College of Education.

education. While the three can co-exist in any one teacher, that is not to say that they can be integrated successfully.¹⁸ The first of these approaches is the confessional model, 'teaching religion - not about religion', in essence, religious instruction. The second is what Watson calls 'The Highest Common Factor model. This approach attempts to nurture values or virtues in students which are associated with religion but are acceptable to the broadest range of people. In many regards, this approach resembles 'secular humanism' or 'do-goodery'. Watson's third approach, she calls 'the Phenomenological model' for religious education. This is a multi-faith approach to religious education and seeks to promote knowledge of, and respect for, religion and the impact of religion on human behaviour.¹⁹ While the syllabus for religious instruction would be 'confessional', the State syllabus is, essentially, phenomenological.

The distinction between religious education and religious instruction, or 'confessional religious education' in the curriculum is crucial in that religious education is non-denominational and optional in terms of a Catholic schools curriculum, whereas catechetics, which could be said to define a Catholic school, is legally required in most schools, as is explained later. This distinction between religious education and catechetics is not a new development and is not as a result of the introduction of the state's syllabus even though that introduction has drawn attention to the subject and has helped to clarify questions of aim and definition.

There is a view which holds that there is no real difference between religious education and catechetics. For example, Fahy²⁰ holds that 'religious education is a

¹⁸ Watson, Brenda. (1993) *The Effective Teaching of Religious Education*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited. p 38.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp 38-44.

²⁰ Patrick Fahy MSc, MA., PhD. is an Australian Marist Brother and occupied the position of Senior Lecturer at the Australian Catholic University.

broad term encompassing education *within* any faith tradition’²¹ According to the Department of Education and Science this is not so and is precisely the opposite of what the new syllabus for religious education attempts to achieve. Fahy’s definition is interesting in that it presupposes that all religious education would take place *within* a particular denomination. Fahy goes on to talk of ‘Lutheran religious education’ or ‘Catholic religious education’. He asserts that ‘catechesis’ is the common name given to Catholic religious education.²² However, Rossiter and Crawford believe that, in everyday expression, catechesis should be applied to the adult-centred ministry of the Church and religious education for what goes on in schools.²³ Fahy subsequently defines school-based (Catholic) religious education as

...those deliberate activities which initiate young believers into the Catholic tradition of the Christian Church, and which involve an integration of cognitive understandings and growth in a living faith relationship with Jesus.²⁴

Therein lies the difficulty: a confusion in the distinction between the disciplines of religious education and catechetics. In common terminology or expression, both terms have been used interchangeably. However, this can no longer be the case. Moreover, in relation to the Irish post-primary curriculum it is important that a degree of precision be employed when discussing a state and non-denominational syllabus and a programme of faith instruction, development and celebration. Marthaler, a consultant to the American Catechetical Directory Committee, drew a distinction between the two in 1973. Marthaler held that religious education is primarily an academic enterprise while catechesis

included the kerygma, preparation for the sacraments, as well as the more advanced instruction to nourish and sustain a living faith

²¹ Fahy, Patrick S. (1992) *Faith in Catholic Classrooms*. New South Wales: St. Paul Publications. p19.

²² Ibid., p 19.

²³ Ibid., p 81.

²⁴ Ibid., p19.

in the community and its believers.²⁵

A similar distinction was drawn between religious education and catechetics by an American, Fr. William Paradis, in 1979 who wrote that catechetics would refer to all activities that would enrich the faith while religious education would simply signify the transmission of information.²⁶ Such a transmission of information is the sole concern of the state's syllabus and the only activity that will be, and can be, assessed in the state's examinations.

It has been asserted that there are two distinct aims to religious education: to teach people to practice a religious way of life and to teach people to understand religion.²⁷ The first of these aims has a singular object, the practice of one religion. In effect this first aim of religious education is catechetical. The second aim is plural, it involves an intellectual understanding of one's own religion and a consequent comparison with other religions. This second aim of religious education is the sole rationale behind the Department of Education and Science's syllabus for religious education.

In the new syllabus for religious education, religion is presented more as a philosophical concept rather than as a way of living. Cassidy reports that the Irish Bishops Conference and the then Conference of Major Religious Superiors in a joint submission on the green paper on education, *Education for a Changing World*, expressed caution *vis-a-vis* this scenario.²⁸ The point was made in that submission that

... religious education can never be reduced to 'knowledge' about religious belief without in some way compromising the very essence of religious belief which in all cases involves a commitment in the Christian religions to a personal relationship with a creative

²⁵ Arthur, James & Gaine, Simon. (1996) 'Catechesis' and 'religious education' in Catholic theory and practice. *Research in Religious Education*. (ed. Francis, Kay & Campbell) Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books. p 339.

²⁶ Ibid. p 339.

²⁷ Harris, Maria & Moran, Gabriel. (1998) *Reshaping Religious Education, Conversations on contemporary practice*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. p 30.

²⁸ Irish Bishops Conference /Conference of Major Religious Superiors (1993) *Education for a changing world, The Green Paper on Education. A joint submission from the Irish Bishops and the Conference of Major Religious Superiors*. Dublin: CORI p.5, sections 15-17

and loving God experienced in and through the faith community which is the Church.²⁹

In many ways, this submission expressing concern on the dangers of merely 'intellectualising' the 'religion class' reflected the views of Karl Rahner who believes that

faith is never awakened by someone having something communicated to him purely from outside, addressed solely to his naked understanding as such (as, for example, the statement that the chemical formula of water is H₂O). To lead to faith (or rather, to its further explicit stage) is always to assist understanding of what has already been experienced in the depth of human reality as grace (i.e. as in absolutely direct relation to God)³⁰

In other words, faith is neither developed or assisted by a mere intellectual discussion on the nature of religion, on the significance of religion or even by 'knowledge' of religion. These definitions make it difficult to comprehend how religious education and catechetics can be taught by the same teacher to the same pupils in the same classroom at the same time without compromising the distinct aims of both disciplines.

There are different definitions of what religious education should and must contain. However, as this thesis is concerned with a syllabus that is state devised and non-denominational, the term 'religious education' is used in this thesis in the sense of 'teaching people to understand religion'.³¹ This definition is devoid of catechetical input and, as already stated, represents only a part of the total definition of religious education of Harris and Moran from whom it is taken. It also falls short of the characteristics offered by Haldane above and falls short of what is required in catholic schools. In any discussion on a subject within the post-primary curriculum, the Department of Education and Science have the

²⁹ Cassidy, Eoin. (1995) Irish Educational Policy: The place of Religion in a Pluralist Society in *Partnership and the benefits of learning*. (ed. Hogan.) Maynooth: Educational Studies Association of Ireland. p.35.

³⁰ Rahner, Karl. (1975) *Encyclopaedia of Theology: The concise Sacramentum Mundi*. (ed. Rahner) New York: Seabury Press. p.497.

³¹ Harris, M. & Moran, G. (1998) *op cit.*, p. 30.

authority to establish the aims of the subject and the syllabus for it. In defining religious education in terms of ‘understanding religion’ and not in terms of catechetics, this thesis uses the Department of Education and Science’s definition of the subject. The aims of that syllabus are discussed later.

1.2 The scope of this thesis.

This introduction of religious education into the examinable curriculum has instigated much public discussion among concerned parties. ‘What is the function of religious education?’ ‘Is religious education about catechetics or is it more a philosophy of religion?’ ‘Will schools have qualified teachers to teach the subject?’ ‘Will teachers want to teach the new subject?’ ‘Will pupils want to take it?’ ‘Can time be found on the curriculum for it?’ and, crucially, ‘Can religious education and catechetics be combined?’.

It is this discussion and these questions that have been responsible for this thesis. In September 2000, sixty seven schools throughout Ireland introduced the syllabus with first year pupils. This thesis attempts to address the above questions by surveying the teacher of the new subject ‘religious education’ in those sixty seven schools. It is also of note that these schools did not ‘pilot’ the programme in that the programme is now final. These schools were merely the first ‘phase’ of schools to introduce the subject.³² Phase two will commence in September 2001 and all schools who wish may introduce the subject in 2002.

One of the crucial debates concerning the teaching of religious education over the years is the issue of focus. ‘Is religious education and the accompanying programmes “God based” or “Human focussed”?’ In effect, ‘are we teaching religion or what has been called “secular humanism”?’ This is a crucial question in the light of the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.

³² Writer in conversation with Dr. Caroline Renehan, Executive Secretary, Episcopal Commission for Catechetics and lecturer in Mater Dei, 16 November 2000.

Since the introduction of religious education in September 2000, the Irish bishops have issued guidelines for combining religious education with catechetics. Seven schools in the diocese of Cork and Ross were involved in introducing the programme. By October 2000, six weeks into teaching the syllabus, a community school in the diocese of Cork and Ross which had introduced the syllabus returned the catechetical material to Veritas³³ on the grounds that the material was ‘too Catholic’ and was incompatible with a non-denominational subject. What is of note was that this school was a community school and had obligations to teach ‘religious instruction’.³⁴ As a community school, the Catholic bishop of Cork and Ross has representatives on the Board of Management. Indeed, as illustrated later in this chapter, community schools have been defined by Justice Costello as *de-facto* Catholic schools because of their Deeds of Trust³⁵. The role of these representatives on the Board of Management in such a scenario is open to question. These obligations are dealt with later. It is clear then that there are some difficulties in relation to combining the two disciplines. The purpose of the thesis is to discover the extent of those difficulties and to establish if they can be overcome.

1.3 Religious education in the third millennium.

Another crucial question that needs addressing is ‘Are we teaching catechetics or a philosophy of religion?’ As indicated previously, there is a difference between catechetics and religious education especially when religious education is portrayed as being a ‘philosophy of religion’. Catechetics is about the growth of faith, religious education is concerned with the growth of knowledge. In the previous absence of a curriculum, or a clear understanding of the difference

³³ Veritas is the publishing wing of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

³⁴ This information was provided to the writer by the principal of the school concerned in an interview on 24 October 2000.

³⁵ Walshe, John. (1999) *A New Partnership in Education, From consultation to legislation in the nineties*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. p171

between the two, these distinct goals have become confused. For a school to be Catholic, both of these separate components should form part of the religious education curriculum. 'One of the basic criteria by which a Catholic school must be evaluated is the faith dimension of its staff.'³⁶ The new syllabus is not concerned with faith *per se* but rather knowledge about faith(s). Perhaps weighting needs to be given to the issue of staff as indicated in the quotation. Whereas staff may be suited and qualified to teach religious education, the same staff may not be competent to teach catechetics. Indeed, some staff may be unwilling and/ or unable to combine the two subjects. This may explain why a school returned catechetical material but it also raises questions about the wisdom of combining religious education and catechetics. These issues in relation to staffing are addressed in greater detail in chapter four.

In terms of the content of a religious education syllabus, there is a body of opinion that would see religious education as being about the transfer of knowledge of the faith. This group would decry and bemoan the abandoning of the old 'learning off' system of catechetics, with the accompanying catechism questions. This group is well typified by Michael Paul Gallagher when he writes

Some people bemoan that schools and parishes are not teaching the catechism any more, and that young people leave their education without clear notions about the meaning of Christian faith or Church worship.³⁷

The growth and decline of the catechism as a methodology for catechetics is dealt with in greater detail in chapter two. This move from the catechism is the most obvious change in modern catechetics in the aftermath of Vatican II and *The Catechetical Directory*. For almost four centuries, the catechism was the exclusive and universal instrument of catechetical instruction. Whereas there was a diversity of catechisms in use in the church, several dioceses, including the Dioceses of

³⁶ Fahy, Patrick S. (1992) *op cit.*, p82.

³⁷ Gallagher, Michael Paul. 1997(a) *Clashing Symbols, an introduction to Faith and Culture*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd. p.115.

Cork & Ross, produced their own. However, despite the variety of catechisms, all were of a common literary *genre*,

the main characteristics of which were: (1) its kerygmatic function, (2) systematic intent, (3) apologetic style, (4) didactic framework, and (5) linguistic rigidity.³⁸

The question and answer format was the predominant style of these catechisms and they can be traced to the Council of Trent and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. They dealt with areas of Creed, Cult, Church and Code. Phraseology in the different catechisms was often identical and updating them often meant little more than increasing the number of formulas to be memorised.³⁹ However, many do still hold that their demise as a teaching aid has left a void in the area of content in many catechetical programmes. To that end, there is a belief that much of the religious education syllabus in both primary and post-primary schools is more concerned with 'the work of the Lord' rather than with 'the Lord of the work'. Correspondingly, it could be suggested that religious education seems to be more concerned with instructing students how to live in right relationship with each other, Watson's 'Highest Common Factor' approach⁴⁰, than with preparing them for eternal life with God. A case could be made for asserting that within the religious education programme, the notion of sin was lost because of the emphasis on inter-human relations.⁴¹ Whereas loving each other as one's self is a basic tenet of Christianity, we are reminded also that we are to love God 'with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength'!⁴² Within that context, it should be remembered that

a Catholic philosophy of education cannot limit itself to the claim that there are objective social goods. It must build an extensive

³⁸ Donnellan, Michael. (1983) 'Bishops and Uniformity in Religious Education: Vatican I to Vatican II' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 233

³⁹ Ibid., p235.

⁴⁰ Watson, Brenda. (1993) *op cit.*, p 41.

⁴¹ Barker, Kenneth. (1981) *Religious Education, Catechesis and Freedom*. Alabama: Religious Education Press Inc. p33.

⁴² Mark 12:28-31

structure around the simple yet unlimited claim that we exist for the sake of God's glory.⁴³

There are grounds for asserting that the focus of 'religious education' in terms of it being 'religious instruction' has changed. The vacuum that evolved in the aftermath of the demise of the catechism seems to have been filled with the primacy of 'justice' and latterly, the ecological movement.⁴⁴ Justice has always been a concern of the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, a religious education syllabus which is based on justice moves quickly from the person of Jesus Christ and ends up as a hybrid of the Sermon on the Mount and The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights!

There is evidence that the issue of social justice or a 'new social awareness' was coming to the fore in American religious education as far back as 1940. In 1941, H. Shelton Smith authored a book, entitled *Faith and Nurture*. Smith attacked what he called 'liberal religious education' on several fronts. Religious education had begun to take the social sciences as normative for an understanding of the human being and his relations with others' but, crucially in this context, also because of

the over reliance on psychology and sociology had led to a fading consciousness of man's sinful predicament. The theocentric side of sin had been lost because of the emphasis on interhuman relations.⁴⁵

Given the current situation in Ireland, sixty years later, it is also of note that Smith argued that religious education could have a negative effect on catechetics.

Religious educators had concerned themselves with 'educational' activities over against 'Church' activities. The theories of education had such an influence that there was no interest in the church as a distinctive community of nurture. The interest was in the 'school', not in the 'church'. The institutional aspect of the church had been considered more as a hindrance than as an asset in religious education.⁴⁶

⁴³ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p.135.

⁴⁴ Harris, M. & Moran, G. (1998) *op cit.*, p3.

⁴⁵ Barker, Kenneth. (1981) *op cit.*, pp 32-33

⁴⁶ Ibid. p 33

In 1968, Pierre Babin wrote an article 'J'abandonne la catechese', an article which should be understood in the context of the student riots in the Sorbonne in Paris and the student protests against the Vietnamese War in the United States. The article condemned the over-reliance on human experience as a catechetical tool.⁴⁷ Babin used the article to refute the trend of using life experience as a means of achieving a desired end, adherence to the gospel message:-

Catechetical courses which explore ways of finding an excuse to bring in the name of God or to inject the gospel message at the opportune time, unexpected by the student but carefully planned by the teacher, Babin condemned as 'pseudo-courses in religious instruction'.⁴⁸

Similarly, like justice, ecology is a concern of the church. One can point to Genesis and a theology of stewardship⁴⁹. However, many liturgies that are focussed on ecology tend more towards pantheism than Christianity.

Perhaps, this change in the focus of religious education merely mirrors a change in the perception of religion in society as a whole. A case in point! When RTE television commenced broadcasting in 1961, it concluded broadcasting each day with a brief reflection. The concept has remained, though the content may have changed. A collection of these reflections was published in 2000.⁵⁰ Mary Kenny subsequently reviewed the publication. The spiritual collection 'dismayed' her, the faith portrayed being 'so colourless, so vapid, so banal in its language, so lacking in commitment'.⁵¹ Perhaps the emerging syllabus for religious education reflects that 'lack of commitment' being, as it is, for students of all and no religions. Kenny goes on to cite some categories of 'prayer': 'pollution, unemployment, World Literacy Day, women's equality, the death of Princess Diana, and above all, inclusiveness.' Ecology is mentioned too, 'God, I'm sad and

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp 80-82

⁴⁸ Ibid., p 82.

⁴⁹ Genesis 1:28-30

⁵⁰ RTE (2000) *Evening Prayer: Spiritual Thoughts to end the day*. Dublin: Town House publishing.

⁵¹ Kenny Mary (2000) 'A Prayer for the end of the day has become so banal' in *The Irish Catholic*, Vol 113. No. 28. 2 November 2000. p10

angry tonight. I saw two dead fish in our local river today... God, enlighten the minds of all polluters.’⁵²

For Kenny, the significance of these texts is not ‘in the puny fare of spirituality it offers’, but in how ‘Irish Christianity in general, and Irish Catholicism in particular, has been drained of the ardour and poetry of the spirit which once characterised them.’ Kenny deduces that the agenda is ‘humanistic or polytheistic’. Kenny would find comfort in Dominuco, who in relation to religious education, asserts that

it is worth recalling Christ’s striking assertion: ‘I rather have you hot or cold; the lukewarm I vomit out of my mouth!’ (Rev 3:16) Mediocrity has no place in a Christian calling.’⁵³

One could smile at the account and one could accuse Kenny of *reductio ad absurdum*,⁵⁴ however, one could also argue that a view is beginning to emerge in relation to religious education that all religions are equal. This view is often reflected by a society that believes in God - any god. It was in this context that *Dominus Iesus*⁵⁵ was published in 2000. *Dominus Iesus*, according to Rafferty⁵⁶ is ‘a challenge to a relativism which attempts to justify religious pluralism. To that extent it is to be welcomed, since not all religions are not equally valid.’⁵⁷ However, in fairness to Rafferty, he does state that ‘too often, *Dominus Iesus* seems to imply that Catholics are his (God’s) clear favourites.’

In attempting to appeal to students of all and no religions, non-denominational religious education runs the risk of becoming humanistic, polytheistic or ‘mediocre’. Instead of developing societies knowledge of religion and God, it seems to reflect a growing confusion in society as to ‘what God is’ and ‘the

⁵² Ibid. p 10.

⁵³ Duminuco. Vincent J. (1999) ‘Towards the Millennium-Catholic Education: Identity, Context, Pedagogy’ in *Catholic Education, Inside-out/ Outside-in*. Dublin: Veritas. p. 139.

⁵⁴ Reducing to the level of farce or absurdity

⁵⁵ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2000) *Dominus Iesus*. London: Catholic Truth Society.

⁵⁶ Oliver Rafferty, a Jesuit, is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth.

⁵⁷ Rafferty, Oliver P. (2000) ‘When is a Sister not a Sister?’ in *The Furrow*, Vol LI, No. 11. (November) Kildare: The Furrow Trust. pp 617-618.

validity of any and all religions'. Perhaps, in that context, society has ceased being 'religious' and become 'spiritual'. In England, Prince Charles has asserted that when he succeeds as monarch, he would prefer to be styled as 'defender of faiths' rather than 'Defender of the Faith'. This may be further evidence of a growing European belief that 'any faith will do'.⁵⁸ Correspondingly, there is a growing confusion relating to matters of church teaching, and specifically, the reasons for that teaching. An obvious issue is the matter of the Eucharist and the reception of the Eucharist by those not in communion with the Catholic Church. This matter was the subject of intense public debate in Ireland in 1998 when the President, Mary McAleese, a Catholic, received the Eucharist at a Church of Ireland Service. The issue was revisited in February 2001 following remarks by Desmond Connell, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin in an interview prior to his elevation to the College of Cardinals. The subsequent *furore* in the Irish media betrayed an ignorance of Church teaching on the nature of the Eucharist. Haldane suggests that if such matters (Church teaching) have 'been confused or lost sight of it may be because too much attention has been afforded comparative religious education and too little given to Catholic religious knowledge.'⁵⁹ The introduction of religious education as an examination subject may be reflecting that trend. However, without catechetical input, the confusion will remain. In a previous study by the writer, 'Church Teaching' was shown to be the most difficult subject to teach within a religious education curriculum.⁶⁰ When 'Love of God' was too difficult to teach or express, there may have been an unconscious compensation by an over-reliance on 'love of neighbour'!

There is a view which holds that young people's spirituality is fragmented anyway. Young people have

⁵⁸ This issue of 'defender of faiths' was mentioned in an article by a 'Universe correspondent' in *The Universe*, 19 November 2000. p 32.

⁵⁹ Haldane, J. (1999) *op cit.*, p200.

⁶⁰ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *An analysis of the teaching of religious education in the diocese of Cork and Ross- with specific reference to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.* (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Hull) p.74.

...adopted a pick-and-mix approach to the spiritual traditions. They are often quite open to religious ideas and actions, interested in these ideals and the people who have lived in accordance with them, but have a certain independent attitude toward them. They can take it or leave it, they don't mind learning about such subjects and are often quite interested. Here and there, where there is something which they feel has an affinity or an identity to offer, they accept it, but they seldom identify completely with a religious tradition.⁶¹

This is the constituency to which religious education as an examination subject is directed. It will offer an overview of the phenomenon of religion, it will compare and contrast religions and religious practices, but no religion will be promoted though students will be supported in their 'search for meaning'.⁶² The situation has a parallel in England:-

There is little doubt, for example, of the influence existentialist and phenomenological modern theology, from Kirkegaard onwards, on those current curriculum initiatives which speak of religious education largely as a matter of 'personal search'.⁶³

It is difficult to see how catechetics can be combined with a religious education syllabus which speaks in terms of 'a personal search'. From the viewpoint of the Catholic school, the ultimate aim of religious education must be God's glory and salvation; the manner of achieving it is not an end in itself. O'Connor, whose definition of education is already cited, goes further than Haldane in that he believes that all education, not just Catholic education, points towards a higher being and another existence:-

So, although concerned with learning and concepts and creative giving, education nevertheless is focused on something higher, and something more lasting than these, namely, existence itself in whose mystery is seen, 'as through a glass dimly,' the face of God.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Hull, John M. (1999) 'Spiritual Education, Religion and the Money Culture' in *Catholic Education, Inside-out/ Outside-in*. Dublin: Veritas. pp. 298-299.

⁶² Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p.4

⁶³ Carr, David. (1999) 'Catholic Faith and Religious Truth' in *Catholic Education, Inside-out/ Outside-in*. Dublin: Veritas. p171

⁶⁴ O'Connor, Cormac. (1972). *op cit.*, p.90.

O'Connor's statement points out powerfully the need for religious education to be provided for in any curriculum. This need and right to learn about higher truths and something 'more lasting' is stressed in *The General Directory for Catechesis*,

Students have the right to learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong. This right to know Christ, and the salvific message proclaimed by Him cannot be neglected.⁶⁵

Salvation is the ultimate aim of Catholic religious education and, as discussed later, for Haldane the aim of Catholic education itself.

Constitutionally, the State cannot endow any religion, so the new Department of Education and Science syllabus will not be and cannot be about faith formation. A more comprehensive examination of the new proposed syllabus will be made in chapter three. However, from a catechetical viewpoint, it seems that the churches will no longer be able to rely on the post-primary educational system for the dissemination of faith information. The introduction of religious education onto the syllabus may well force churches to initiate other ways of communicating belief and faith to their members. Increasingly, the context for such activity may move from the classroom to the greater community and the parish.

....There are those who call for the abandonment of the classroom as the focus of religious education, especially when RE is viewed in catechetical terms. Catechesis is the ministry of the whole church, the process by which the members of the church are led to a maturity of faith. The classroom has a function as only a part of that process, with the parish community and the home playing equally significant roles.⁶⁶

Looney seems to be advocating a return to the 'Sunday School' model of catechesis. However, it is uncertain if such a radical move in terms of Irish catechetical history would be either popular or successful. Although it must be acknowledged that Looney's view echoes, to some degree, that of the *General Catechetical Directory*:-

The Christian Community is the origin, locus and goal of catechesis. Proclamation of the Gospel always begins with

⁶⁵ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p.75.

⁶⁶ Looney, Ann. (1998) 'Teaching Religion to young people today' in *From Ideal to Action*. (Ed. Feheney) Dublin: Veritas. p76.

Christian community and invites man to conversion and the following of Christ.⁶⁷

Catechesis took place in the Church long before being provided in Catholic schools: the focus for such activity was the assembly where the local church gathered for the breaking of bread. The onus on the local church to be the venue and medium of catechesis has not diminished, though in some cases, the need for it was reduced by the efforts of Catholic schools. There is evidence to suggest that catechesis is, again, becoming a lay occupation in the American Church and is operated at local level.⁶⁸ Perhaps, in that context, there is a case to be made for reverting to the former practice in the Diocese of Cork and Ross under the late Bishop Cornelius Lucey, whereby Sunday homilies were of a catechetical nature, the topic of the homily for each Sunday being prescribed. Given the difficulties and misconceptions with Church teaching listed above, it is an approach that 'local' churches may consider. However, a reintroduction of such forms of catechesis into the life of the local church, without the support of schools seems unlikely to succeed. In a time of an undisputed decline in the numbers of young people attending the sacraments and, specifically, weekly Sunday Mass, any such effort would run the risk of merely preaching to the converted. It is possible that such a development might send the Irish Church rapidly along the road travelled by the Roman Catholic Church in the United States of America, in effect being a church that is occupied by those who are committed and the lapsed are let go.

Ultimately, the Catholic Church in Ireland has depended on the post-primary school as being the sole venue for catechetical activity within the local Church. This may have been unwise and this 'policy', in so far as it may have been a deliberate decision, seems to have ignored several significant Vatican documents on the nature and venue for catechetics in the life of the local Church. Currently,

⁶⁷ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p257.

⁶⁸ Harris, M. & Moran, G. (1998) *op cit.*, p3

with the emerging non-denominational philosophy of the religious education syllabus, the Catholic church is faced with an issue which has major implications regarding the faith of the next generation. Unfortunately, it is a matter to which the Irish Episcopal Conference, to date, has proclaimed no great caution.

1.4 Religious education and the ethos of Catholic schools.

A question of ethos also emerges here. Whereas one would find it hard to argue with a multi-denominational or non-denominational school abandoning Catholic catechetics, it is reprehensible, and repugnant to the spirit of their founders, for Catholic schools to do likewise. There is an obligation on Catholic schools to be places where the message of salvation can be taught:

It is however, the special function of the Catholic school to enable young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given them in baptism.⁶⁹

It was for this purpose that these schools were originally founded. A case in point is the history of Catholic education in Bantry. In 1860, a group of Mercy sisters arrived in Bantry. Soon after arriving, the sisters began a 'Sunday School' where religious instruction was given to the local children. In 1862, funding and a building was found which allowed the sisters to commence general education. However, it is significant that these sisters saw religious instruction as their most immediate concern. From those beginnings, a voluntary secondary school now operates.⁷⁰ There is no doubt that most other Catholic schools have a similar origin, and a founding ethos that saw religious instruction, or catechetics as being the primary concern.

In the current environment where schools *may* offer religious education on the curriculum, Catholic schools cannot absolve themselves of this duty to instruct

⁶⁹ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p.262

⁷⁰ Author in conversation with Sr. Vincent McCormick RSM, former Principal, convent secondary school, Bantry.

their students in the 'ways of faith' by merely teaching religious education. There is a real danger that if the proposed syllabus is embraced, catechetics may well give way to religious education in Catholic schools. This development may not be intentional, but may arise as the unwelcome product of an overloaded timetable and an examinable curriculum. In the light of this danger, it is worth remembering that

the primary function of Catholic schools, therefore, is to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted.....the task is a non-negotiable one. It is a duty.⁷¹

With a growing number of subjects on the syllabus, and the increasing possibility of even more, non-examinable catechetics classes in addition to classes in religious education may seem to be wasteful by some principals, teachers, parents and pupils. It is, nevertheless the *raison d'être* for Catholic education, not an optional extra. In that sense, the advent of religious education to the examinable syllabus may, paradoxically, pose the greatest challenge to 'Catholic education'.

Professor Haldane sees this as being the crucial issue in Catholic education,

The primary function of Catholic schools is to transmit Catholic truths and Catholic values. Everything else, no matter how important, is secondary to this.⁷²

It is by way of trying to reconcile the two distinct disciplines of catechetics and religious education that the Irish Episcopal Commission explored ways in which catechetical activity can accompany the teaching of religious education. To that end, the Conference appointed Dr. Caroline Ranehan who formulated a set of guidelines that accompany the NCCA syllabus in Catholic schools. It is stressed, and care has been taken to ensure, that these guidelines are not a new syllabus in themselves. These guidelines were presented to a meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference for approval during October 1998 and were published in April 2000.

⁷¹ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p.133.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p135

However, given that some schools have returned catechetical materials, there is evidence that these guidelines have not been universally welcomed. If a situation develops where, with the passage of time, these guidelines are not adhered to, what of religious education and religious instruction then? While religious education is another subject that a school may, or may not offer to its students, schools have various legal obligations to teach religious instruction. Noting the quotation of Haldane above, one cannot but arrive at the conclusion that the syllabus for Catholic schools, particularly in relation to religious education, cannot be the same as for other schools. After all

...could it be intelligibly argued, for example, that Catholic schools exist in order *not* to transmit the Catholic tradition of faith and life and to educate within it? And what sense can be made of a claim that Catholic schools on one hand, and the 'common' schools on the other, have - and should have - an identical educational responsibility and character?⁷³

1.5 The legal obligation on post-primary schools to teach religious instruction.

In brief, the post-primary educational needs of Ireland are served by four types of school: the secondary school; the vocational school; the community school and the community college. While the secondary school is the only form of post-primary education that is specifically denominational, it is ironic that provision for the teaching of religion is least secure in these institutions from a legal viewpoint.

1.5.1 The secondary school and religious instruction.

The oldest form of post-primary education in Ireland is the voluntary secondary school. In 1990, it was reported that this form of post-primary education accounted for four hundred and seventy six post-primary schools or sixty per cent of all post-primary schools⁷⁴. By 1995, these schools numbered four

⁷³ McLaughlin, Terence H. (1999) 'Distinctiveness and the Catholic School: Balanced Judgement and the Temptations of Commonality' in *Catholic Education, Inside-out/ Outside-in*. Dublin: Veritas. p67.

⁷⁴ Drudy, S. & Lynch, K. (1993) *Schools and Society in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan. p.6.

hundred and forty five, the vast majority of which were Roman Catholic, further, voluntary secondary schools represented about half of all post-primary schools⁷⁵. There is an obvious decline then in the number of secondary schools in the five year period 1990-1995. This decline is significant in that it mirrors a corresponding increase in enrolment in community schools and colleges. In practical terms, currently any new schools that are being opened are, generally, not secondary schools but rather community schools or community colleges. Indeed, religious orders and diocesan authorities seem to welcome such a development as it frees them from administrative responsibility and from appointing personnel in a time of declining numbers. This move from a denominational model of post-primary education is not an uniquely Irish phenomenon. Research indicates a similar trend in both the United Kingdom and the United States.⁷⁶ Briefly, in the United States, during the four year period 1990 to 1994, four hundred and thirty five Catholic schools closed.⁷⁷ In the United Kingdom during the five year period 1978 to 1983, three hundred and eighty nine Catholic schools were closed. This represented a decline of 181,997 pupils.⁷⁸ In terms of the Irish experience, the vast majority of secondary schools were Catholic in character and established by Religious. This

involvement by religious congregations in the provision of education in Ireland dates back to the eighteenth century. For most congregations, their entry into education was a response to extreme poverty among Catholic families at the time and to their exclusion from almost all social institutions⁷⁹.

⁷⁵ Feheney, Matthew. (1998) The Future of the Catholic School, An Irish Perspective. in *From Ideal to Action*. (ed. Feheney) Dublin: Veritas. p. 204.

⁷⁶ Healy, Kevin M. (2000) *Student perception and school choice: An investigation into changing enrolment trends and their likely consequences in both a vocational school and a secondary school in a west Cork town, 1997-2000*. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Hull. pp. 39-40.

⁷⁷ O'Keefe, Joseph. (1996) 'No Margin, No Mission' in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe) London: Falmer press. p182.

⁷⁸ Hypher, Paul. (1996) 'Catholic schools and other faiths' in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe) London: Falmer press. pp 221-222.

⁷⁹ McCormack, Theresa. (1998) The changing role of Trustees and Boards of Management. in *From Ideal to Action*. (ed. Feheney) Dublin: Veritas. p. 145.

The character of these schools is rapidly changing, because of a decline in the number of vocations but also because the necessity for them is mitigated, as a result of the provision made by the State in post-primary education. However, most of the voluntary secondary schools still have a presence of either priests, brothers or sisters on the staff, although that presence will continue to decline rapidly. On the Boards of Management and Trustee Boards of these schools, Religious continue to be represented:

Thus, religious congregations are in a position, through the trusteeship of their schools, to advance a Catholic vision of education and, at the same time, make a valuable and distinctive contribution to the type of experience which children will have in these schools⁸⁰

Because of an abundance of religious personnel in the past, these schools had no difficulty in obtaining teachers of religion. School authorities assumed that any Catholic teacher in a Catholic school could, and would, teach religion. Also, many of the Religious taught religion after official 'retirement' which allowed the school to use its teacher allocation in providing teachers of other 'examinable' subjects. This situation has now changed, Religious are almost non-existent on the staff of these schools and there is a shortage of qualified teachers of religion among the staff. This issue of qualification is a major concern in the light of religious education as an examination subject and will be addressed in greater detail later. What is of note is that the teaching of faith instruction or catechetics is least secure in Catholic secondary schools as it has no legal enforcement. There may also be a case for saying that as Religious withdraw from the schools, the maintenance of an adequate allocation of time for religious instruction may become more difficult, the schools becoming more 'secular'. As religious education/ instruction and other established subjects compete with newer subjects on the post-primary curriculum for time, the problem is intensified. This over-

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 150.

crowding of the time-table will also be dealt with later. However, while religious education may not enjoy a legal enforceability, from an ethos viewpoint, the *raison d'être* of Catholic schools is surely to make Jesus known. 'The primary function of Catholic schools is to transmit Catholic truths and Catholic values. Everything else, no matter how important, is secondary to this'.⁸¹ From the viewpoint of ethos and purpose, Catholic secondary schools must ensure that catechetics or religious instruction will not be, in any way, 'downgraded' as a result of the introduction of religious education.

1.5.2 The Community School and religious instruction.

Community schools are a newer form of post-primary education in Ireland. By 1995, there were sixty one community schools in existence in the Republic.⁸² As a concept, community schools date to 1972 when the first three were opened. Since then, many have evolved from mergers with vocational schools and voluntary secondary schools. This factor explains the gradual, though sustained, decline in the numbers of secondary schools and the corresponding increase in the numbers of community schools and colleges as already indicated. Other such schools were established by the then Department of Education in rapidly growing areas⁸³. While Community schools were not specifically denominational as they were not operated by religious orders, they were 'partly-denominational' as they allowed for the involvement of Religious as their trustees.⁸⁴ This view was substantiated by Mr. Justice Declan Costello in the High Court who, in a case taken by the Campaign for the Separation of Church and State in relation to the payment of teachers of religion and chaplains to community schools, stated that community schools were Catholic schools.⁸⁵ In effect, with the creation of

⁸¹ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p 135.

⁸² Fehene, Matthew. (1998) *op cit.*, p. 203.

⁸³ The Department of Education became the Department of Education and Science in 1997. see Walshe, John. (1999) *op cit.* p.6

⁸⁴ Drudy, S. & Lynch, K. (1993) *op cit.*, p.14.

⁸⁵ Walsh, John. (1999) *op cit.*, p.171.

community schools

what emerged was essentially a Catholic post-primary school where the church authorities had obtained what was legally a minority interest, but as the schools were to be almost exclusively used by Catholic children, the bishops could claim that they were Catholic schools and could demand and get reserved places, conditions safeguarding religion, and paid Catholic chaplains for at most a five percent contribution to the initial building cost.⁶⁶

Provision is made for the teaching of religion in community schools according to the Deeds of Trust and Articles of Management of each community school. These articles of management are agreed by the Irish bishops and the Department of Education and Science. The Archdiocese of Dublin has published the articles for private circulation. The articles, however, are the same for all community schools in the country:-

....the Board shall ensure that there is religious worship and religious instruction for all pupils in the school except for such pupils whose parents make a request in writing to the principal that those pupils should be withdrawn from religious worship or religious instruction or both religious worship and religious instruction. The religious worship attended by any pupil at the school and the religious instruction given to any pupil shall be in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of the religious denomination to which the student belongs. Religious instruction as aforesaid of the order of 2 hours shall be given to all pupils of the school in each week during which the school is in session.⁶⁷

What is significant is that the articles mention religious instruction and religious worship, both of which, by their definition, are denominational. The examinable subject 'religious education' is non-denominational. The articles also specify two hours religious instruction or religious worship per week. As mentioned earlier, in a survey by the author, this time allocation was only experienced by 13% of teachers of religion in the diocese of Cork and Ross⁶⁸. Clearly, from the most cursory examination of the articles of management of community schools and the

⁶⁶ O'Flaherty. (1992) *Management and Control in Irish Education: The post-primary experience*. Dublin: Drumcondra Teachers Centre. p.73.

⁶⁷ Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Diocesan office. p.23.

⁶⁸ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, pp 63-64.

syllabus for religious education, as published by the Department of Education and Science, the intention to combine both disciplines, which is being provided for by the Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference, seems to be ill-advised, mutually exclusive from an ideological viewpoint and chronologically impossible. The proposed combination of both subjects will be addressed later.

1.5.3 The Community college and religious instruction.

Community colleges were a Vocational Education Committee response to the community school. The only practical difference between the two is the issue of ownership, the community schools are owned by the Department of Education, and Science, the community colleges by the local VEC. On the Board of Management of each, the local church / diocese has three representatives. The origin of these colleges came largely from mergers between local voluntary secondary schools and vocational schools, though some vocational schools simply took the title without curricular or administrative change and there have been 'green-field' community colleges. In 1993, there were twenty two community colleges that emerged from mergers and agreements between secondary and vocational schools.⁸⁹ These community colleges, like the aforementioned community schools, operate under an agreement which safeguards the rights of the diocese.

The Articles of Management of Community Colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin state that:

the religious worship attended by any pupil of the College and the religious instruction given to any pupil shall be in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of the religious denomination to which the pupil belongs. Religious instruction as aforesaid of the order of two hours per week shall be given to all the pupils of the College (except those who are withdrawn from religious instruction in accordance with sub-clause (i) of this clause⁹⁰) in

⁸⁹ Drudy, S. & Lynch, K. (1993) *op cit.*, p.13.

⁹⁰ This sub-clause allows a student to be withdrawn only with written parental provision.

each week during which the College is in session.⁹¹

What is evident from the above extract is the striking similarity with the provisions of the Deeds of Trust and Articles of Management of community schools previously cited. This provision, in relation to community colleges, clearly envisages a 'denominational' form of religious instruction and specifies an allocation of time for such instruction. It is difficult to see how this 'denominational' form of religious instruction can co-exist with a non-denominational subject, religious education, given that there are two distinct syllabi, two distinct aims and all within the one class period.

The Articles of Management of Community Colleges also make provision for determining the orthodoxy of the content of any religious instruction:

if any question arises whether the religious worship conducted or the religious instruction given at the College is or is not in accordance with the rites, practice and teaching of a religious denomination, that question shall be determined by the competent religious authority.⁹²

In effect, this allows the local bishop, in the case of the Catholic Church, to decide the content and suitability of the religious instruction syllabus. This is in line with the role of the bishop as teacher within the local Church: 'In order that the full and living gospel might always be preserved in the church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority'.⁹³ With the Department of Education and Science syllabus for religious education, the Department itself set the syllabus, though in consultation with and with the approval of the Irish Episcopal Conference. However, it is important to note that at some future date, this syllabus could be radically altered without either consulting or obtaining the approval of the Episcopal Conference. In effect, by

⁹¹ Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community Colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin:Diocesan Office. p. 9.

⁹² Ibid. p. 10.

⁹³ Vatican II, (1965 a) *Dei Verbum, The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation in Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and post-Conciliar Documents, Vol.1.* (ed. Flannery) Collegeville, Liturgical Press. pp. 753-753.

consenting to the State devising the syllabus for religious education, the bishops have abdicated any right they may have had over the content and syllabus of such courses even within the Catholic secondary schools where they have control and responsibilities, particularly in relation to ethos and religious education..

A further advantage, from the religious education viewpoint, to community schools and colleges is that these institutions have the services of an ex-quota chaplain whose salary is paid by the Department of Education and Science. Vocational schools and voluntary secondary schools are deprived of this service unless, in the case of voluntary schools, the Board of Management or the Trustees pay for one. The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools are currently pursuing the issue of State salaried chaplains in secondary schools. A meeting has taken place with the Minister for Education and Science and work is currently (May 2000) in progress in devising a job description for the role.⁹⁴

1.5.4 The Vocational School and religious instruction.

The situation in vocational schools is also interesting, because while the *1930 Vocational Education Act* provides a legislative framework within which vocational schools operate, this act was silent as to the provision of religious instruction. Such provision was not made until *Circular Letter 73/74*.

Currently, in vocational educational schools, the Boards of Management are charged with 'ensuring that there is religious worship for pupils in the school save those whose parents request the principal in writing that they do not have such'.⁹⁵

This would indicate that in Vocational Educational Committee (V.E.C.) schools where the new subject of religious education is provided, some allowance would have to be made also for faith instruction. This is further indicated by Farry when

he states that

⁹⁴ Cassin, Jim (2000) *President's Address: A strong identity at the service of the education enterprise*. Dublin. AMCSS. p.18

This address was given to members attending the AGM of the AMCSS , 3 May 2000.

⁹⁵ Farry, Michael. (1998) *op cit.*, p.36

the Board is charged to ensure that there is religious worship and instruction for pupils in accordance with the rites, practise and teaching of the religious denomination to which the pupil belongs.⁹⁶

This would cause further demands to be placed on time-tables and resources. With the growth in religious education as a subject, it seems reasonable to assume that extra teachers would have to be recruited. However, since each school's teacher allocation is based on a pupil-teacher ratio, extra teachers for religious education/ religious instruction would, of necessity, mean fewer teachers for other subjects.

In relation to staffing a further problem arises here, in that the local bishop has a veto over teachers of religion in Vocational Education Committee schools. The reason for such a veto is presumably to guard against heresy or to maintain orthodoxy. However, teachers of religious education must also have a second teaching subject before appointment. This ensures that if a teacher is subsequently deemed to be 'unsuitable' for the teaching of religious education, that teacher will not lose his/her job within the school. The bishop's concern with the granting of 'permanent' status to teachers of religion is the protection offered to a permanent teacher under the 1930 Vocational Education Act.⁹⁷ Are we likely to see bishops objecting to permanent appointments in the light of TUI (Teachers Union of Ireland) opposition? Certainly, as the law stands at present, that objection is their prerogative, though such a scenario is unlikely. As the NCCA syllabus will not be catechetical instruction, will Vocational Schools be obliged to offer both religious education and catechetics? It seems likely that they would in order to fulfil the requirements of Circular letter 73 of 1974. This point is significant and seems to have been overlooked by the Department of Education and Science, the Irish Episcopal Conference and, as illustrated by the survey in chapter six, individual schools.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.34.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.36

In conclusion, while VEC schools, community colleges and community schools are multi-denominational, there are strong links between the various VEC's and the Catholic Church:

While the sixty one community and sixteen comprehensive schools (in the State) are intended to cater for all or no religious denomination, the adjective 'inter-denominational' would be inadequate, and possibly a misleading description of them. The majority of the community schools came into being as the result of an amalgamation of smaller voluntary secondary schools, sometimes including a local VEC school, and either the local bishop or religious congregation is a co-trustee of the school plant and property. Moreover, the local bishop, and religious congregations where they are involved, have a generous representation on the Boards of Management of both comprehensive and community schools. It is obvious, therefore, that though not expressly Catholic, these two types of schools have strong Catholic connections. The connection between the Catholic Church and the VEC second-level schools is also strong....⁹⁸

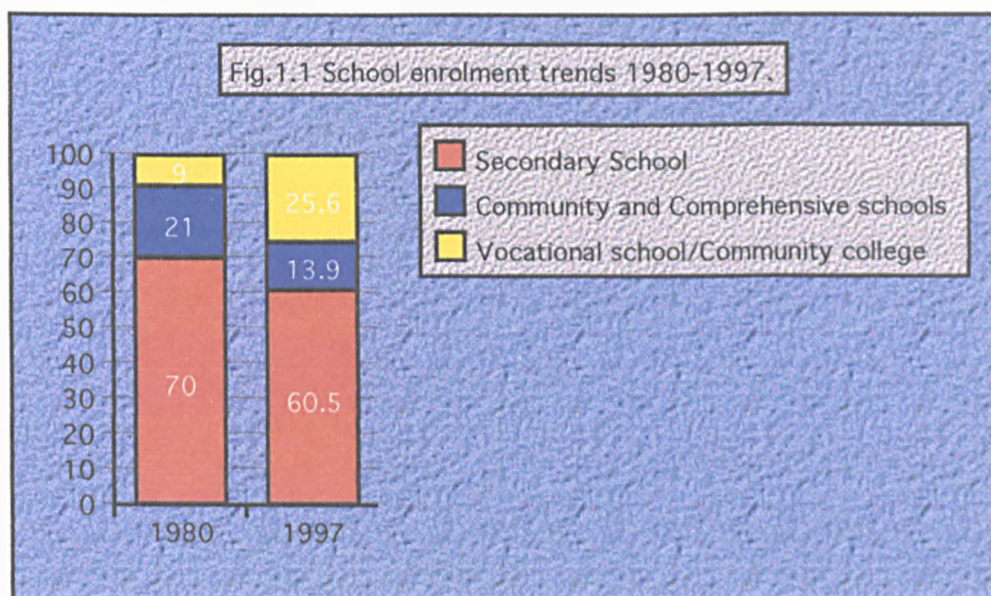
Crucially, these schools are legally bound to offer denominational religious instruction and to provide for religious worship. The State recognises this obligation in that it pays the salary of teachers of religious instruction in vocational schools as well as those in community schools and colleges.⁹⁹ Given this well established practice and its legal basis, it is difficult to comprehend the proposal from the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference that these two mutually exclusive subjects should be combined within the one class. Certainly, one can appreciate that the bishops may be trying to avoid making a distinction between religious education and religious instruction. Both disciplines can and often do co-exist. The difficulty is that the Department of Education and Science have now defined religious education in non-denominational terms. This will impinge on combining the two disciplines in the future.

⁹⁸ Feheney, Matthew. (1998) *op cit.*, p. 204

⁹⁹ Glendenning, Dymrna. (1999) *Education and the Law*. Dublin: Butterworths. p.36

1.5.5 A changing post-primary education landscape.

It is of note that there has been a considerable shift in enrolment patterns between vocational schools, community schools, community colleges and secondary schools. This shift is not without consequence. Healy outlines these changing enrolment percentages in detail.¹⁰⁰ The following figure represents the changing percentage of the total student body enrolled in each school type.



Community colleges and Vocational schools are the emerging popular choice in Irish post-primary education. In many regards, community colleges are the result of a broadening of the vocational school curriculum, both operated by the local VEC. Many of these community colleges have emerged as a result of amalgamations between existing secondary schools and vocational schools.¹⁰¹

Deeds of trust and Articles of Management govern the operation of all community schools and community colleges, in effect offering a legal safeguard to the religious party or diocese and the local VEC. As previously indicated, the best known of these provisions is the article which guarantees religious instruction and religious worship for all students. Provision is also made for membership of, and

¹⁰⁰ Healy, Kevin M. (2000) *op cit.*, pp28-29. These figures are reproduced from Coolahan's Irish Education: History and Structure (1981) and figures supplied to Healy from the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools in October 1999.

¹⁰¹ Drudy, S. & Lynch, K. (1993) *op cit.*, p 13.

representation on, Boards of Management.¹⁰² In an emerging educational landscape, where denominational or voluntary secondary schools are in decline as illustrated above (fig 1.1), the significance of these guarantees become crucial for church authorities and the teaching of catechetics in post-primary schools. As illustrated later, there is a real danger that the State syllabus for religious education may undermine these provisions.

While the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum is welcome in that it 'elevates' the status of religious education in the school's curriculum, it also raises concerns for the Catholic Church which has a significant interest in post-primary education in Ireland. Whereas religious education, an examinable subject, is optional in the post-primary schools curriculum, religious instruction in most school types is obligatory and has the backing of *Circular Letter 73/74* and legally enforceable Articles of Management. These requirements must not be forgotten and cannot be discarded with the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum. Unfortunately, neither the Irish Episcopal Conference, through its Catechetics Commission, nor the Post-Primary Diocesan Advisors for Religious Education, seem to take cognisance of these documents in their unqualified welcoming of the new examinable syllabus and in proposing that religious education and catechetics be combined. Admittedly, previous research by this writer has indicated that arrangements for the teaching of religious education in community schools and colleges as well as in vocational schools was for less than what was required under the *1930 Vocational Education Act* and by *The Articles of Management* in community schools and in community colleges.¹⁰³ There may have been a feeling that since catechetics or religious instruction was being afforded so little time and status within the school, any

¹⁰² This precise provisions of these documents in relation to the teaching of religious instruction can be found as follows: Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community Colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin, Diocesan Office. Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. pp9-10. Also, *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin, Diocesan office. pp 23-24.

¹⁰³ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, pp63-65.

other arrangement would be better. This is not so. In turning a blind eye to the legal protection afforded to religious instruction on the curriculum, the bishops may have, unwittingly, weakened the other guarantees that they have in relation to post-primary education, specifically in relation to membership of Boards of Management and interview boards for community schools and colleges. If any authority turns a blind eye to any law or regulation, then the effectiveness of all the other rules and regulations are also weakened. A similar view was expressed by Professor James Arthur¹⁰⁴ who believes that 'a Church College will most likely become more secular not through some decision of the governing body but through erosion.'¹⁰⁵ It is for that reason that the proposal to reduce the time allocated to religious instruction and to share that time with religious education, a subject that is philosophically and pedagogically opposed, is ill-advised.

1.6 Overview

In a survey of teachers of religion in the diocese of Cork and Ross in 1999, the majority of respondents indicated they would be in favour of religious education becoming an examination subject.¹⁰⁶ It was easy to comprehend why. The experience of teaching religious education as a non-examination subject was difficult.

Over the past few years, religious education, in some cases, lost its direction, text books differed on emphasis, the fact that there was no examination allowed teachers to follow their own curricula, often with mixed results. At a recent interview for the position of Catechist, the writer asked a candidate the following: 'If the principal gave you the senior certificate religion class next September and

¹⁰⁴ Professor James Arthur is Head of Centre for Educational Research, Canterbury Christ Church University College.

¹⁰⁵ Arthur, James. (2000) 'Changing patterns of Church College Identity and Mission' in *The Church Dimension in Higher Education. Proceedings of the national conference held at Canterbury, September 2000.* (ed. Arthur, J & Coombs, E.) The Council of Church and Associated Colleges in association with Canterbury Christ Church University College. p 34.

¹⁰⁶ Deenihan, Thomas (1999) *op cit.*, pp 85-86.

you were to give them, on a sheet of paper, the topics that you intended covering, what would we find on it?' The answer, which listed 'poverty', 'homelessness', 'drug abuse', 'unemployment' and 'sexual abuse' was unfortunately interrupted by the principal who posed this question. "If I were to give you social studies instead of religion, would there be a difference?" That scenario was not an isolated incident:

In many schools areas such as pastoral care, relationships and sexuality education (RSE), and substance abuse programmes have been incorporated into an already overcrowded curriculum by being lumped into the religious education class.¹⁰⁷ That was the problem. With the best of intentions, religion became secular humanism, worship of the 'work of the Lord', instead of the 'Lord of the work'.

As indicated previously, justice has a place on a religious education syllabus:

justice is a legitimate Christian concern - but it should not dominate religion class.... The primary purpose of religious education must be to the fore in the minds of Christian educators. This purpose coincides with that of the Catholic school: it is to enable young people to grow in awareness of and sensitivity to the transcendent action of God in their lives.¹⁰⁸

In an atmosphere where there was often no text recommended, no properly trained teacher and classes often borrowed for other 'examinable' subjects, it is not surprising that the teaching of religion became difficult.

It is for those reasons that the proposed syllabus was given a broad welcome by the teacher unions, the ASTI and the TUI, and also by the Diocesan advisors for religious education, the religion teachers associations and the voluntary schools national management bodies. It is expected that the promotion of religious education to an examination subject will encourage students to treat it as seriously as any other subject as it will have points going for third level entry. From the schools' view point, religious education as an examination subject should

¹⁰⁷ O'Toole, Orla (2000) 'Reflecting on the survey: A view from the classroom' in *Doctrine & Life*. Vol.50 No. 10 (December) Dublin:Dominican Publications. p.651

¹⁰⁸ Williams, Kevin. (1998) Religion, Culture and Schooling. *From Ideal to Action*. (ed. Feheney) Dublin: Veritas. p. 54.

encourage the appointment and allocation of qualified teachers of religion to all classes, a situation that does not universally pertain at present. Further, the clarification by the High Court on the role of chaplains and their payments, as mentioned in chapter three, will also be a source of comfort to those who try to impart religious knowledge.

However, regardless of the introduction of an examinable syllabus, there is no doubt that many of the difficulties that teachers of religion are experiencing will remain. They exist because of the nature of society and the manner in which society is developing. The introduction of religion as an examination subject, on equal footing with other subjects, provides an opportunity-and, probably, the last opportunity, for religion to be taught in a professional manner in our post primary schools. Williams would define this subject as ‘the study of religious beliefs, which is most appropriately described as the sociology of religion.’¹⁰⁹

However, in answering one question, another arises. What about handing on the faith, or what Williams describes as ‘...religion of a catechetical nature’?¹¹⁰ Will schools have a class of faith formation as well? The omens are not encouraging!

It is precisely this matter that is the subject of this thesis. Is religious education, a non-denominational subject, according to the Department of Education and Science, capable of being taught in conjunction with religious instruction or catechetics? and, if so, does such a proposal undermine the teaching of religious instruction in post-primary schools?

It is this writer’s contention that combining religious education with religious instruction would (i) be difficult to implement, (ii) its delivery impossible to staff and (iii) its effect contrary to the ultimate aims of both religious education and religious instruction.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.53

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p 53.

CHAPTER TWO - THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION / CATECHETICS.

2.1 Towards a separation of religious education and catechetics.

As already indicated in chapter one, the terms 'religious education' and 'catechetics' are often used interchangeably. There is a substantial difference between religious education and catechetics, which needs to be understood, even though the making of that distinction is a relatively new development. Marthaler, a consultant to the American Catechetical Directory Committee, drew a distinction between the two in 1973. Marthaler held that religious education is primarily an academic enterprise while catechesis

included the kerygma, preparation for the sacraments, as well as the more advanced instruction to nourish and sustain a living faith in the community and its believers.¹¹¹

The distinction between religious education, an academic undertaking, and catechesis has been consolidated and generally accepted since the 1970's. Another American, Fr. William Paradis in 1979 wrote that catechetics would refer to all activities that would enrich the faith while religious education would simply signify the transmission of information.¹¹² In 1990, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States defined catechesis without reference to religious education.

Catechesis nurtures the faith of individuals and communities by integrating four fundamental tasks, namely, proclaiming Christ's message, participating in efforts to develop community, leading people to worship and prayer, and motivating them to Christian living and service.¹¹³

This distinction between religious education and catechesis is crucial to this thesis not only because both disciplines have distinct and separate aims but also because

¹¹¹ Arthur, J & Gaine, S. (1996) *op cit.*, p 339

¹¹² Ibid. p 339

¹¹³ United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1990) *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials*. Reproduced in Warren, Michael. (1997) *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2*. Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. pp 334-350.

of the proposal of the Irish Bishops Catechetics Commission to combine catechetics with religious education. The proposed religious education syllabus could be said to be simply about the 'transmission of information'; however, a key concept in a Catholic school is catechetical activity. Haldane is decisive in this regard:

the primary function of Catholic schools, therefore is to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted.¹¹⁴

Subsequently, Haldane goes further and says that 'the primary function of Catholic schools is to transmit Catholic truths and Catholic values. Everything else, no matter how important, is secondary to this.'¹¹⁵ Haldane also states that this task, though it may be difficult is not negotiable but is a duty. Few 'Catholic' post-primary schools would measure up to this definition of a Catholic school.

Haldane's definitions mention 'doctrines', 'devotions', 'truths' and 'values'.

Whereas doctrines and truths can be taught in religious education, even if taught in a secular context, surely devotions and values belong to the area of catechetics or, at least, are transmitted through practice. These devotions and values form part of catechetics and, combined, are the very core ingredients in the ethos of a Catholic school. Clearly, both religious education and catechesis should co-exist in a Catholic school. However, in the context of a formal examination in religious education, there is a real danger that catechetical time would be taken over or overshadowed by religious education.

Another problem with the 'promotion' of religious education to the examinable syllabus lies in the big difference between religious knowledge and faith. According to Michael Warren catechetics is the cousin of celebration.¹¹⁶ The school catechist presumes the student has already embraced Jesus, already has

¹¹⁴ Haldane, J. (1996) *op cit.*, p 133.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 135.

¹¹⁶ Warren, Michael. (1986) *The Catechumen in the kitchen: reflections on Ministry and Catechesis in Ireland. Religious Education and the Future.* (ed Lane) Dublin: Columba. p.82.

faith. In the early Church, full Catechesis could only take place after the reception of Baptism and Eucharist. Today, due to a change in sacramental practice specifically in relation to the sacraments of initiation, catechesis is about informing, developing one's faith. Faith and practice are inseparable, there is a feeling that the proposed syllabus will attempt to teach religious education in a vacuum, without the influence of either faith or celebration.

It is true that the Catholic Church in particular has always relied heavily on the education system as an organ for catechetics. The National Schools were under the patronage of the local bishop and under the *Rules for National Schools*, were guaranteed a class of religion per day. However, it is worth noting that the INTO, The Irish National Teachers Organisation in its submission to the National Education Convention and in its document, published in 1991, *The place of Religious Education in the National School System*, made a distinction between religious education and religious instruction and thereby questioned as to whether nurturing a child in a particular faith as opposed to teaching about religion should be the business of schools.¹¹⁷ This point is significant because it indicates an opinion by one of the teacher unions that teaching religious instruction as opposed to religious education is not the business of teachers.

Similarly, the post-primary education system was operated to a large extent by Religious in voluntary secondary schools. In these schools religion or catechetics was given high priority. Even with the Vocational Education Committees, under the 1930 Education Act and the subsequent Model Agreement for Community Colleges, a guarantee was provided for the teaching of religion from which a pupil could only be excused with a note from his or her parents. Other churches were organising such ventures as 'Sunday School' and Bible classes.

The programme that was in place for post-primary religious education up to the present day was largely about catechetics and religious knowledge. The new

¹¹⁷ Cassidy, Eoin. (1995) *op cit.*, p 34.

Department of Education and Science syllabus removes the catechetics component and so the course, in some ways, resembles philosophy of religion. Religious education

examines religious questions, including Christian ones, not so much from the point of commitment, which is the perspective of catechesis but from that of intellectual enquiry.¹¹⁸

However, one wonders if children can be taught about 'religion' without being instructed (catechesis) into a particular religion. In this *scenario*, religion becomes not a way of living but rather a philosophical concept. Ironically, this is what the proposed syllabus may achieve:

It is hard to see how we can actually teach religion without initiating children into a particular religion, just as we cannot teach sport without actually teaching children to play a specific game, or teach music without teaching an individual musical instrument.¹¹⁹

That viewpoint is also expressed by Eoin Cassidy quoting from the joint submission of the Irish Bishops Conference and the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (now CORI) to the green paper on Education, *Education for a Changing World*.¹²⁰

Religious education can never be reduced to 'knowledge' about religious belief without in some way compromising the very essence of religious belief which in all cases involves a commitment in the Christian religions to a personal relationship with a creative and loving God experienced in and through the faith community which is the Church.¹²¹

That will, ultimately, be the 'acid-test' for the religious education syllabus, Can it be taught successfully to pupils of every and no religion? The preface to the syllabus makes mention of children of 'no religion', a further indication of no catechetical input. In this regard, the Department of Education and Science syllabus is religious education with a multi- (or non) denominational focus. The

¹¹⁸ Warren, Michael. (1986) *op cit.*, p. 83

¹¹⁹ Williams, Kevin. (1998) *op cit.*, p. 53.

¹²⁰ Irish Bishops Conference / Conference of Major Religious Superiors (1993) *op cit.*

¹²¹ Cassidy, Eoin. (1995) *op cit.*, p 35

proposed syllabus for religious education is not concerned with catechetics, yet catechetics is a primary function of the Catholic school and the Catholic community as a whole. It is in the light of this development that the Irish Episcopal Conference requested Dr. Caroline Renehan to devise catechetical guidelines for the teachers of religious education.

In brief, the introduction by the Department of Education and Science of a syllabus for religious education on the post-primary curriculum has obligated a separation of religious education, as it was popularly understood and practised, from catechetics within both the Irish educational system and within Church structures.

2.2 The Catechetical Movement.

The separation of religious education from catechetics can be traced to the catechetical movement. Historically, catechetical renewal and the differentiation between catechesis and religious education became a significant issue at catechetical congresses starting with the Vienna Congress in 1912. This meeting had been planned to consider scientific pedagogy and educational psychology and to assess the impact of these on catechesis.¹²² A second meeting was planned for Munich, which was postponed because of World War 1 and was finally held in 1928.

The Vienna and Munich meetings had the approval of their respective hierarchies as had the various catechetical meetings that were held at that time in Italy, Spain and France.

The next significant event in terms of catechetical history was an International Catechetical Congress in Rome during the Holy Year, 1950. This Congress was organised by the Congregation of the Council, now the Congregation for Clergy,

¹²² Marthaler, Bernard. (1997) (a) 'The Church Assembled: Catechetical Congresses and Conferences' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics, Volume 2* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 232.

which was responsible for catechetical activity within the Church.¹²³ Over twenty years later, in 1971, the Congregation for the Clergy arranged a second International Congress. It was this Congress that resulted in *The General Catechetical Directory*.

In the period between these two Roman congresses, various national congresses and meetings were held, without Roman approval. Significantly, a series of six international study weeks on catechetics were held between 1959 and 1968. These seminars were held in Nijmegen in 1959, Eichstatt in 1960, Bangkok in 1962, Katigondo in 1964, Manilla in 1967 and Medellin in 1968.¹²⁴ It was from these 'interdicted' congresses and meetings that the Catechetical Movement emerged.¹²⁵ The Catechetical Movement is of relevance to this thesis in that it was the Catechetical Movement that first made the distinction between religious education and catechetics. The catechetical movement went through a number of phases bringing new issues to the expanding notion of catechetics. These issues could be described in terms of

liturgical (the role of corporate worship in catechesis), kerygmatic (the proclamation of salvation-history), anthropological (concern with the cultural context of those being catechised) and political (motivation for social action).¹²⁶

According to Marthaler, in the aftermath of the Eichstatt meeting of 1960,

kerygmatic catechesis became the slogan of the day. It shifted the focus of catechetics from seemingly disconnected doctrines, commandments, and facts, to the person of Jesus Christ. Catechetics could no longer be satisfied with mere teachings, they were called to be witnesses. They were not to retail Church doctrine in the manner of sales clerks, but to share the faith that propels their lives.¹²⁷

¹²³ Ibid. p 233

¹²⁴ Arthur, J & Gaine, S. (1996) *op cit.*, p 337

¹²⁵ Marthaler, Bernard.(1997) (a) *op cit.*, p 233

¹²⁶ Arthur, J & Gaine, S. (1996) *op cit.*, p 337

¹²⁷ Marthaler, Bernard.(1997) (a) *op cit.*, p 235

This change in thrust for catechetics, as far back as 1960, signalled the separation of religious education from catechetics. Catechetics was about 'witnessing', not disseminating information like 'sales clerks'. It also sounded the first attack on the catechism as being the primary agent of catechetics since the Council of Trent. (1545-1563) This attack on the catechism was also being echoed in England at that time. Canon Francis Drinkwater of Birmingham edited a monthly periodical called *The Sower*. Drinkwater used this periodical to criticise the catechism which, he believed, was never intended for children, was filled with definitions and abstractions and exacerbated the divisions between Christians because it nurtured a race of Catholics

...who would not explain their faith even to their friends; whose idea of defending the church would be to throw brickbats at non-Catholic lecturers and hecklers, cheerfully regardless of the embarrassment so caused to other Catholics.¹²⁸

The role of the Catechism, with its decline and recent revival in Catholic catechesis is dealt with later in this chapter.

There is an opinion that the Catechetical Movement was devoid of American thought. Gerard Sloyan, who did much to promote the Movement in America

functioned primarily as a mediator between the Europeans and the hungry American audience. The distinctively American contribution began to appear with the turn to experimental catechetics in the late sixties, and is associated with names such as Gabriel Moran and Bernard Marthaler.¹²⁹

Experimental catechetics has been the distinct American contribution to modern catechetics. 'Experience is the theme which runs the educational literature of the United States like a haunting melody; some contend that it

¹²⁸ Drinkwater, F.H. (1951) *Educational Essays*. London: Burns & Oates. p 408 Cited in Marthaler (1983) 'The Modern Catechetical Movement in Roman Catholicism: Issues and Personalities' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 277.

¹²⁹ Barker, Kenneth. (1981) *op cit.*, pp 44-45

is simply another aspect of American pragmatism.¹³⁰ In this sense, the American contribution to catechetical development has reflected the influence of Dewey.

Essentially, the Catechetical Movement strove to establish more effective methods of catechesis and will be remembered for two features in current religious education.

First, it signalled a reaction against the spirit of the Counter-Reformation and the inadequacies of the traditional teaching of religion based primarily, if not solely on the catechism. Second, it showed a degree of openness to the insights and discoveries of educational psychology and represented an attempt to introduce learning theory in catechesis.¹³¹

Amongst these new discoveries, the earlier influence of John Dewey is significant. Dewey could be argued to have made 'discovery learning' popular.¹³² Dewey spoke of the 'reconstruction or reorganisation' of experience which adds to the meaning of experience'.¹³³ This 'reconstruction or reorganisation' of experience also 'enables human beings to find meaning in experience and direct the course of subsequent experience'.¹³⁴ The Catechetical Movement began to use experience as a catechetical tool. Dewey, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, believed that the family, church and apprenticeship no longer functioned as agents of education. The only remaining agent was the school which, by now, had become almost universally available.¹³⁵ From a Christian and legal viewpoint, this notion is flawed. The Rite of Baptism and the Irish Constitution itself recognise parents as being the primary educators of their children.

The primacy of 'experience' as a teaching tool, or Dewey's influence, has been

¹³⁰ Marthaler, Bernard. 1983. The Modern Catechetical Movement in Roman Catholicism: Issues and Personalities. *Source book for Modern Catechetics* (ed. M. Warren). Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 282.

¹³¹ Ibid p 277.

¹³² Arthur, James (1995) *The Ebbing Tide. Policy and Principles of Catholic Education*. Herefordshire, Gracewing, Fowler Wright Books. p 74.

¹³³ Fahy, Patrick S. (1992) *op cit.*, p 86.

¹³⁴ Harris, Maria & Moran, Gabriel. (1998) *op cit.* p 20

¹³⁵ Ibid. pp 16-17.

evident in the Department of Education and Science's syllabus for religious education:-

The syllabus for Junior Certificateinvites the students to reflect on their own experiences. The students' own experience of religion and their commitment to a particular religious tradition, and/or to a continuing search for meaning, will therefore be encouraged and supported.¹³⁶

However, by 1979 and the publication of *Catechesi Tradendae*, experience was being looked at more cautiously as a teaching instrument by the Catholic Church. Content was beginning to reassert itself over experience as a primary component of a catechetics programme.¹³⁷ That re-assertion would eventually lead to the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2.3 The emergence of the General Catechetical Directory.

This period of discussion on the nature and development of catechetics also coincided with the first mention of the *General Catechetical Directory* in the late 'fifties: 'the idea of a master manual was revived in 1959 and again in 1967, anticipating the General Catechetical Directory.'¹³⁸ This directory was intended as a support to National Bishops' Conferences in formulating their own guidelines and catechetical materials. While the Directory mostly quotes Vatican II and the teachings of Paul VI, the influence of the Catechetical Movement is easy to trace. The Second Vatican Council, in the decree on the pastoral office of bishops in the church, *Christus Dominus*, prescribed that a 'Directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people be drawn up'.¹³⁹ The *General Catechetical Directory*, as already mentioned, was published in 1971 and revised in 1997 under

¹³⁶ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p 4.

¹³⁷ John Paul II. (1979) *Catechesi Tradendae. Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II.* Boston: Pauline Books and Media., pp 19-20.

¹³⁸ Donnellan, M. (1983) *op cit.*, p 237.

¹³⁹ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p.11

the title *General Directory for Catechesis*.¹⁴⁰ A significant part of that directory dealt with the norms and criteria for presenting the gospel message. The Council, in the *General Catechetical Directory*, expounded some of the Church's expectations of a catechetical programme. The content of catechesis is to be found in the Word of God in scripture and in tradition.¹⁴¹ The source from which catechesis draws its message is the Word of God.

Since its publication in 1971, the *General Catechetical Directory* has 'orientated the particular churches in their renewal of catechesis and has acted as a point of reference for content and pedagogy, as well as for methodology.'¹⁴² This reflected the disenchantment with method and a desire for more content coming from the Catechetical Movement.¹⁴³ As the predominant method at that time was the catechism, which involved learning by rote, the directory was mistakenly interpreted as calling for the decline of the catechism as a form of pedagogy. This view is also supported by Ratzinger (below). However, this was not universally the case. In the Diocese of Cork and Ross, Bishop Corneilus Lucey published his own 'diocesan' catechism for primary schools in his diocese.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, in general terms, many new catechetical courses were introduced in the aftermath of the Directory where the emphasis was more on methodology than content.

In broad terms, pre-Vatican II religious education was objective. 'The Church was entrusted with the fullness of saving truth. It was expected that in Catholic schools this truth would be passed on faithfully, accurately and comprehensively'.¹⁴⁵ The various catechisms that were employed adequately fulfilled these requirements. In the aftermath of Vatican II, the focus changed.

¹⁴⁰ Congregation for the Clergy. 1998. *General Directory for Catechesis*. Dublin: Veritas. The reference refers to the English translation. The Latin (initial) version was published in 1997 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

¹⁴¹ Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *Ad norman decreti* (General Catechetical directory). *Vatican Council II. More postconciliar documents* (ed Flannery, Austin 1982) New York: Costello Publishing Company. p 554

¹⁴² Congregation for the Clergy (1998) *op cit.*, p 11.

¹⁴³ Marthaler B. (1983) *op cit.*, p277

¹⁴⁴ Lucey, Corneilus. (1973) *Catechism*. Cork: City Printing Works.

¹⁴⁵ Sullivan, John.(2000) *Catholic Schools in Contention*. Dublin: Veritas. p 230.

Perhaps it is unfair to link this change exclusively to Vatican II. Society was changing. Since the late 1960's, the Church has had to 'hold the line' on a range of issues and has acknowledged a decline in practice and in levels of conformity with moral teaching. During that time, religious education reflected a more secular educational practice: it took a subjective turn appearing to favour experience over truth.¹⁴⁶ It was in that environment that the *General Catechetical Directory* was published.

Another point of note is that the Directory broadened the scope of catechetics from the early school-going formative years to the whole span of life. This in itself was a change from a belief that saw catechetical formation end with the reception of the third sacrament of initiation, Confirmation. The realisation that catechetics was a lifelong process heralded the move of catechetics from the classroom back to the local church. Perhaps, in the past, Catholic parents have delegated their duty to bring up their children in the Catholic faith to Catholic schools excessively. Obviously, Catholic schools are there for a purpose, and that purpose or function is to provide 'forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted',¹⁴⁷ However this purpose is not the sole property of the school community.

However, from an historical viewpoint, it is worth noting that, initially, church or episcopal schools as they were established by the local bishop and attached to the Cathedral, were founded to prepare a clergy rather than educate Christian youth.

A Canon of the Council of Beziars in 1246 states that

parish priests are to see to it that they explain to the people on Sundays the articles of Faith in simple and clear fashion so that no one may claim a veil of ignorance. Children too from seven upwards, brought to Church by their parents on Sundays and feasts, shall be instructed in the Catholic faith, and parents shall teach them Mary's salutation, Our Father and Creed.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Haldane, J. (1996) *op cit.*, p 133.

¹⁴⁸ Sloyan, Gerard. (1983) 'Religious Education: From Early Christianity to Medieval Times' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 127.

Prior to this stage in the 'history of catechetics', Sloyan states that by the third century, 'catechesis' described what was transmitted to the catechuminate, or 'sessions subsequent to baptism'. Later, Origen and Tertullian mentioned infant baptism, a practice that could not involve prior catechesis and therefore concluded that instruction was at the parents' hands.¹⁴⁹

The obligation on the part of parents to be the agents of catechesis is found again in the more contemporary and currently used *Rite of Baptism for Children*. The blessing of the father in that rite expresses that duty or obligation clearly:

He and his wife will be the best teachers of their child in the ways of faith, may they also be the best of teachers bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do.¹⁵⁰

Church documents in relation to education have emphasised the primacy of parents in the role of catechesis. For example, 'it is recognised that the proper place for catechesis is the family helped by other Christian communities, especially the local parish.'¹⁵¹ However, it is becoming obvious that many of the parents who are bringing infants for baptism are not in a position to catechise. It is in this *scenario* that the community and, chiefly, the school has a pivotal role to play. In the early church, catechetical activity was the mission of the church as a unit. This is best illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles. The preaching of the disciples to the Gentiles was one of the first, and most successful, attempts at catechesis. In the accounts of the celebration of the Eucharist from Justin Martyr (d.165), 'on some occasions, the Eucharist was preceded by a reading from the prophets and memoirs of the apostles, as well as a homily by the president.'¹⁵² This 'homily' represents the dual existence of celebration (communion) with catechesis (homily). 'Such homilies, woven into the fabric of the liturgy were for

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p 112.

¹⁵⁰ International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) (1992) *The Rite of Baptism for Children*. Dublin: Veritas. p 85.

¹⁵¹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) *Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools' in Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Volume 1*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press. p 617.

¹⁵² Bokenkotter, Thomas. (1979) *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*. New York: Image Books. p 53.

centuries the sole mode of religion teaching for young and old alike.’¹⁵³ That model has remained to the present day, even if not all homilies could be said to be catechising!

A further difficulty that arose with catechetics being perceived to be an exclusively school-based activity was that it ended with formal schooling, and in reality, in some cases, with the reception of Confirmation, the third of the Sacraments of Initiation. The local community, the local church and the family absolved itself of having any responsibility in the area as catechesis was too often seen to be the sole preserve of the Catholic school! This is an overly restrictive view. After all, ‘The first and most central of the four features of catechesis that is significant for religious educators is its community centeredness.’¹⁵⁴ Catechesis is activity in a celebratory mode, catechesis fits into the category of worship and as mentioned above, historically belonged more to the church, where the community gathered to pray, than the classroom.¹⁵⁵ In this context, it is useful to note the distinction made by Rossiter and Crawford between catechesis, an adult activity and religious education which applies to schools.¹⁵⁶

2.4 The role of the catechism in Catholic catechesis.

A catechism has been defined as ‘a textbook divided into lessons, in which the text is set out in short questions and answers that can be easily memorised and reproduced’.¹⁵⁷ While the catechism is generally attributed to the Council of Trent and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, there is evidence to assert that the catechism is actually a Protestant and specifically a Calvin, innovation.¹⁵⁸ The catechism was a practical instrument for both teaching and learning. However,

¹⁵³ Sloyan, Gerard. (1983) *op cit.*, p 115.

¹⁵⁴ Warren, Michael. (1983) Catechesis: An Enriching Category for Religious Education. *Source book for Modern Catechetics* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 383.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.386.

¹⁵⁶ Fahy, Patrick S. (1992) *op cit.*, p 81.

¹⁵⁷ Lombaerts, Hermman. (1997) ‘Religious Education Today and the Catechism’ in in *Source book for Modern Catechetics, Volume 2* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 247.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p247 .

there is also evidence to suggest that this form of learning predated Calvin and Trent. Alcuin of York (d.804), the teacher of Charlemagne, is credited with being the first author of a catechism. Alcuin devised two hundred and eighty one questions in his *Disputatio puerorem per interrogationes et responsiones*. Large sections of the work emanate from Origen and Isadore of Seville. The Trinity is dealt with thus, 'Can the Soul have any likeness to the Trinity?' 'Yes, it can, just as God exists, lives and knows, so too does the soul exist, live and know, after its own fashion.'¹⁵⁹ This question and answer format bears striking resemblance to the catechisms in use until the early 1970's.

St. Pius V (d.1572) published the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* which contained a clear and concise summary of Catholic beliefs and practices which, with various adaptations, was used universally in schools and elsewhere as the primary means of catechesis.¹⁶⁰ Soon after (1566) St. Charles Borromeo wrote his *Catechismo Romano*, a catechism that was re-edited and reprinted many times and had many adaptations until the early twentieth century. This catechism had many functions: it was to be 'an expression of an authoritative argument in matters of doctrine; it was to be reference book of Catholic doctrine for parish priests and it was to be a 'criterion for catechetical renewal'.¹⁶¹

As a result of the *General Catechetical Directory* in 1971, the methodology of catechesis changed. One of the first changes was the abandonment of the catechism, or the learning of a series of questions and answers.

With the abandonment of the catechism, experience became a catechetical teaching tool, a development outlined earlier in this chapter which can be traced to the educational philosophy of John Dewey.¹⁶²

Catechesis should be at pains to make people aware of their more important experiences, both personal and social. It is also its task

¹⁵⁹ Sloyan, Gerard. (1983) *op cit.*, pp 124-125

¹⁶⁰ Bokenkotter, Thomas (1979) *op cit.*, p 253.

¹⁶¹ Lombaerts, Hermman. (1997) *op cit.*, p 248.

¹⁶² Marthaler B. (1983) *op cit.*, p 282

to throw the light of the gospel on the questions to which these give rise, thus stimulating in people themselves a right desire of transforming their way of life. In this way, experience enables people to respond actively to God's gift. Experience can help make the Christian message intelligible.¹⁶³

This advent of the validity of experience has led to difficulties too, especially in the area of a subjective morality and in the area of a fundamental option, largely, one can do what one wants provided the intention is good, there are no moral absolutes. This approach cannot represent Catholic moral theology, yet it manifests itself frequently both inside and outside the classroom.

The response to the new catechetical methodology was varied and a need emerged to separate catechesis from religious education - even though official Church documents still used the terms interchangeably.

In the aftermath of the catechism's decline in the early 'seventies, concern was being raised in some circles that content had all but disappeared from catechetical programmes. Reporting on a survey which revealed that fourteen percent of young Catholics do not see attendance at Sunday Mass as being important, Laighleis commented that this is a reflection on thirteen or fourteen years of religious education and 'indicates grave defects in the catechesis and liturgy to which this generation has been subjected'.¹⁶⁴

In another example, one Dublin priest wrote

I became acutely aware that the teaching of Religious Knowledge in our schools was not satisfactory. There were many reasons for this but I considered the main fault lay in the catechetical programmes the teachers were requested to present.¹⁶⁵

What is of note is that any catechetical programmes that were in use at that time were prepared by *Veritas*, the publishing wing of the Irish Episcopal Conference,

¹⁶³ Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *op cit.*, p 572.

¹⁶⁴ Laighleis, Peadar. (2000) 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' in *The Sundry Business Post*. Vol 13., No. 2 January 14th 2001. Dublin. p 19

¹⁶⁵ Gaughan, J. Anthony. (2000) *At the Coalface: Recollections of a City and Country Priest 1950-2000*. Dublin Columba. p 166.

who approved the materials! Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that any dissatisfaction with catechetical programmes on the basis of a shortcoming in the area of content was an exclusively Irish problem. Ratzinger¹⁶⁶ holds that in the seventies, when

the catechism ceased to be viewed as the basis for mediating the faith, catechesis lost its content, and humanly speaking it became not merely a much more difficult enterprise but pedagogically and didactically a very ineffective one.¹⁶⁷

In effect, Ratzinger seems to be implying that with a change of methodology, which the directory advocated, content was lost. It was such a realisation that would lead to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Origins of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* can be traced to an Extraordinary Synod called by Pope John Paul II in October 1985 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Vatican Council II. Out of this synod came the idea of producing a Catechism of the Universal Church comparable to the already mentioned *Catechismo Romano* of 1566. In July 1986, the Holy Father appointed a commission of twelve to draw up

a draft catechism for the Universal Church or a compendium of Catholic doctrine (in the areas of faith and morals) that could serve as a point of reference for the catechisms that had been composed or were being composed for individual regions. The (synod) Fathers had also said that doctrine was to be expounded 'biblically and liturgically'. It was to be sound doctrine suited to modern life.¹⁶⁸

The result, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, was approved by the Pope in June 1992 and was declared to be 'a sure norm for teaching the faith'.¹⁶⁹ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* was to be 'a sure and authentic reference text

¹⁶⁶ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a German, is Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

¹⁶⁷ Ratzinger, Joseph. (1997) (a) 'The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Optimism of the Redeemed' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics, Volume 2* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 259.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp 260-261

¹⁶⁹ John Paul II (1992) 'Apostolic Constitution: *Fidei Depositum*. On the publication of The Catechism of the Catholic Church' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics, Volume 2* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 275

for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechisms.¹⁷⁰

The Catechism is a lengthy tome divided into four parts, dealing with The Profession of Faith, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (The Sacraments), Life in Christ (Sin, Commandments, Virtues etc.) and Prayer.¹⁷¹ In this sense, the publication does not resemble a catechism in the traditional sense. For many, the size, depth and complexity of the Catechism has been a cause of surprise and puzzlement.

It does not fit into the popular understanding of a catechism: it has no questions and answers, and it defies memorisation. Like the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is a resource for pastoral ministers and teachers, not a textbook to be brought into the classroom.¹⁷²

Nevertheless, the *Catechism* did have similarities with earlier catechisms and, in that regard, did offer formulae and answers that could be memorised. It was envisaged that these formulae and answers would be utilised in devising local, be it diocesan or national, catechisms.

The catechetical character of the book appears most clearly in the brief statements found at the end of each thematic unit. The Catechism itself says that their aim is to suggest to local catechesis brief summary formulae that could be memorised.¹⁷³

It is clear then that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was intended to be a major official input into the catechetical life of the Church. It is equally evident that the *Catechism* envisaged dioceses writing their own catechisms for local use. That has not happened. In information given to the writer, only one diocese in Ireland out of a total of twenty six is in the process of writing its own

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p 276.

¹⁷¹ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church. (English Translation for Ireland)* (1994) Dublin: Veritas. pp v-xvi

¹⁷² Marthaler, Bernard. (1997) (b) 'The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the U.S. Context' in *Source book for Modern Catechetics, Volume 2* (ed. M. Warren) Minnesota: St. Mary's Press. p 280.

¹⁷³ Ratzinger, Joseph. (1997 b) *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism. Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. p 21.

catechism.¹⁷⁴

In general terms, the Catechism addressed the area of content which many believed to be lacking in the local catechetical programmes that were established in the aftermath of the *General Catechetical Directory*. It remains to be seen what impact the *Catechism* will have, given that it seems to have been ignored in the Irish catechetical landscape to date. The *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students* published in 1999 by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference makes no reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The proposal by the Irish bishops to combine catechetics with non-denominational religious education in which 'Christianity' is one option along with 'Communities of Faith and 'Major World Religions' of which students must choose two, will not address in any great detail the *lacunae* in content which the *Catechism* strove to rectify.

2.5 An approved catechetical programme.

Every religion seeks to disseminate its message and in every religion the recruitment of new members is a central part of its mission. From the time of the Apostles and later, the Church Fathers, the command of Christ, 'Go, make disciples of all nations' has been a central mission of the Christian faith.

The source of the message of catechesis is the word of God contained both in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. That word is meditated upon by the faithful and guided by the *magisterium*, the teaching authority of the Church. The word is celebrated in the liturgy, it shines forth in the life of the Church, particularly in the lives of the saints, it is deepened by theological research and is made manifest in moral values sown in human society.¹⁷⁵ Of note is the mention of being 'celebrated in the liturgy'; again this belongs more in the area of catechesis

¹⁷⁴ The aforementioned *Catechism* introduced in the diocese of Cork and Ross ceased to be used when the new primary catechetical programme *The Children of God Series* was introduced. This coincided with Bishop Lucey's retirement and Bishop Murphy's succession.

¹⁷⁵ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998) *op cit.*, p.103.

than religious education.

A Church approved catechetical programme then would have to contain elements of scripture but also church teaching, established through tradition, the twin mechanism of Divine Revelation quoted in the decree *Dei Verbum*¹⁷⁶ at the second Vatican Council. Whereas this would not eliminate 'socially conscious' topics, from a syllabus, it would insist on these topics being taught in a Christian context.

In terms of defining a Church-approved catechetics programme, the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in 1990, published *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials*. In this document, the conference set forth a number of principles.

The Christian message should be both 'authentic' and 'complete':

For expressions of faith and moral teachings to be authentic they must be in harmony with the doctrines and the tradition of the Catholic Church, which are safeguarded by the bishops who teach with a unique authority. For completeness, the message of salvation, made up of several parts that are closely interrelated, must, in due course, be presented in its entirety, with an eye to leading individuals and communities to maturity of faith. Completeness also implies that individual parts be presented in a balanced way according to the capacity of the learners and in the context of a particular doctrine.¹⁷⁷

What is of note is that the Christian message be 'presented in its entirety' and the programme should 'lead individuals and communities to maturity of faith'. The new religious education syllabus may achieve this in some circumstances but in general terms, the syllabus cannot hope to achieve the ideal. In that context, it is difficult to comprehend how the Irish Bishops Conference would sanction a catechetics programme 'on the back' of a non-denominational syllabus. The American Bishops Conference hold that all catechetical programmes should recognise that the mystery of faith is incarnate and dynamic. The National

¹⁷⁶ Vatican II, (1965)(a) *op cit.*

¹⁷⁷ United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1990) *op cit.*, p.339

Catechetical Directory¹⁷⁸ refers to

the Scriptures, the teaching, life and witness of the church, the church's liturgical life and life experiences of various kinds as 'signs of God's saving activity' in the world. These biblical, ecclesial, liturgical and natural signs should inform the content and spirit of all catechetical materials.¹⁷⁹

Again, by this criteria, the proposal to combine a catechetics programme with a non-denominational religious education syllabus, of which Christianity is one component, seems ill-advised.

The American bishops conclude that a catechetics course should reflect the progressive, step-by-step initiation of the believer into the Church community. Catechetical materials should highlight fundamental doctrines of the Christian tradition. The fruit or test of a catechetical programme is unity 'among all who hold and teach the Catholic faith which comes to us from the apostles'.¹⁸⁰

'Catechetical materials, taken as a whole, need to promote a healthy and vital Catholic identity in such a way that the believer hears the message clearly, lives it with conviction and shares it courageously with others'.¹⁸¹

These guidelines, though published in 1990 and emerging from an American context, are significant. They illustrate clearly what the purpose of a catechetical programme should be and what that programme should contain. As illustrated in chapter one, the Irish educational system is unique in that it stipulates denominational religious instruction for pupils within the educational system. The new syllabus for religious education has never claimed to be able to fulfil that obligation. The Catechetical Commission of the Irish bishops Conference has proposed that religious education be combined with catechetics and has issued

¹⁷⁸ As indicated previously, the *General Catechetical Directory* was intended to be a 'source book' for National Bishops Conferences in devising their own Catechetical Directories. The *National Catechetical Directory* was the response of the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops to the *General Catechetical Directory*.

¹⁷⁹ United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1990) *op cit.*, p.339

¹⁸⁰ Eucharistic Prayer One; The Roman Canon.

¹⁸¹ United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1990) *op cit.*, p.340

guidelines in this regard. The contribution of the American bishops is pertinent in that it illustrates the fundamental flaws in this proposal. In brief, a catechetical programme which is based on a non-denominational religious education syllabus can never fulfil the Catholic Church's expectations of a catechetics programme.

Over the past number of years, before the introduction of religious education as an examination subject, the Catholic Church in Ireland has invested time and resources, through the Catholic Communications Institute and its publishing wing, *Veritas*, in the formation of catechetical programmes for use in schools. However, as these programmes did not enjoy an examination of the work covered, and were to a large extent dependent on the teacher concerned, often with the support of only occasional meetings with Diocesan Religious Education Advisors, these worthwhile initiatives could not be said to have been overwhelmingly successful. It follows then that there was a general degree of dissatisfaction in Church circles about religious education / instruction as it was being taught, though appreciative of the difficulties involved. Very often the end result of five years of post-primary religious education was an awareness of others rather than an awareness of, and a relationship with, God, or, as one bishop put it, 'the work of the Lord rather than the Lord of the work'.¹⁸² The end should be an 'incarnation' of the Word, Jesus being made known and loved. Since the introduction of the new syllabus for religious education, *Veritas* has been involved in publishing catechetical guidelines. These guidelines have not been well received and were not regarded as being 'helpful' in the survey in chapter six. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that many committed teachers recognised the difficulty in relation to both content and motivation in teaching religious education. This may well account for the relatively high rate of teachers who desired an examinable syllabus.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Bishop Brendan Comiskey of Ferns in an address to seminarians in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. September 1985.

¹⁸³ Weafer J., & Hanley, A (1991) *Whither Religious Education? A survey of Post-Primary teachers in Ireland*. Dublin: Columba. pp 85-86 also Deenihan T. (1999) *op cit.*, p 85.

2.6 The faith context in which catechetics/ religious education is taught.

Repeatedly, at teacher conferences and seminars, one hears the comment that 'religion is the hardest subject to teach'. There are many reasons for such an observation. Joseph Coy in the 'Education and Living' supplement to The Irish Times (13 February 1996) claimed that

..there is a crisis in the teaching of Catholic religion in second-level schools: pupils do not want to study it and teachers do not want to teach it. He mentions problems such as teachers who teach religion in order to fill the gaps in the timetable, competition from other subjects, and the efforts of the points race.¹⁸⁴

All teaching of religion must take into account the massive changes that have occurred in Irish society over the last few years. The rapid decline in the authority of the Catholic Church, prompted by a series of scandals about the misbehaviour of a few, but also the growth of a more pluralistic society, helped by the questioning of traditional positions on major moral issues, the introduction of divorce in the 1995 referendum being the obvious example, the still high unemployment percentages in urban centres, the high rate of marriage breakdown, the growth in the number of one parent families, drink and drug addiction, all impinge on the teaching of religion. It could be said that all religion is about certainties and absolutes, right and wrong. In the life of a post-primary student in the nineties, there are no absolutes, no black and whites, just questions and greys. Perhaps we have removed the person of Jesus Christ from the heart of the religious education class, and if so, should we be surprised that the house with no foundation has fallen?

Mass attendance has dropped significantly as surveys have continually attested. A reputable MRBI (Marketing Research Bureau of Ireland) survey in association with The Irish Times newspaper was conducted on December 5th. and 6th. 1996 and subsequently published on December 16th. That survey indicated that only

¹⁸⁴ Walsh, Ann. 1997. The Future of Religion at Post-Primary level. *The Future of Religion in Irish Education.*(ed. Hogan & Williams) Dublin: Veritas. p 67.

forty one per cent of the eighteen to twenty four year old age-bracket say that they go to weekly Mass.¹⁸⁵ More alarming, was a report four years later which indicated that only 'fourteen per cent of young Catholics regard attendance at Sunday Mass as important'.¹⁸⁶ A caveat of sorts though comes from the Jesuit

Michael Paul Gallagher

...there are many ways of belonging to the Church. Just as Jesus stressed mercy and not sacrifices, attitudes rather than rituals, there are more ways of being Catholic than going to Mass on Sundays.¹⁸⁷

And yet, it seems unsatisfactory despite Gallagher's warning, to separate religious values from religious practices. A central notion to any religion is the practice of it, otherwise does it not become a mere intellectual concept or a case of values without principles or secular humanism? This is the critical issue in relation to the new syllabus. Without practice, how do you measure commitment to faith or religion? Surely, Mass is the central act of worship for Catholics and consequently, it is entirely reasonable, to measure commitment in terms of attendance at the 'core' act of worship.

Perhaps more worrying, though, is the cultural atheism that is prevalent in the 1990's. It has been commented that the 'sixties and 'seventies were dominated by the 'anti-religion' viewpoint, as Gallagher calls it 'ideological atheism'. Indeed, many of the Vatican Council II documents did refer to the difficulties posed by atheism in the realm of catechesis:-

Many of our contemporaries either do not at all perceive, or else explicitly reject, this intimate and vital bond of man to God. Atheism must therefore be regarded as one of the most serious problems of our time.¹⁸⁸

This view was echoed in the *General Catechetical Directory* which believed that

¹⁸⁵ Irish Times / MRBI Religious Attitudes. *The Irish Times*. December 16th. 1996. Dublin. p.1 & p.5.

¹⁸⁶ Laighleis, Peadar. (2000) *op cit.*, p 19.

¹⁸⁷ Gallagher, Michael Paul. (1990). *Struggles of Faith*. Dublin:Columba press. p.69.

¹⁸⁸ Vatican II (1965) (d) '*Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*' in *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Volume 1*. (ed. Flannery, A.) Collegeville: Liturgical Press. p 919.

many baptised people have become so indifferent to their faith that they profess religious indifference or, almost, atheism. Atheism, the Directory continued, was to be countered by 'presenting true teaching in a fitting manner'.¹⁸⁹ In many ways, the atheism of that era was hallmarked by anger and an anti-Catholic bias. That phase is ended. What we are now experiencing is cultural atheism. The anger is gone, all that is left is apathy:-

Outright atheism, in the sense of ideological atheism, is largely a thing of the past. An atheism born of indifference seems to be the much more prevalent mood among young people today.¹⁹⁰

The reaction of this 'cultural atheism' is summed up in the response recorded by Ann Walsh from her religion students ' "Who cares?" , "It doesn't matter" .'¹⁹¹ The key to successful religious education teaching in an age of religious inertia appears to be in getting the students interested in the first place.¹⁹² It is obvious then that the context of religious education has changed. The 'pro-religion' environment of the forties and fifties changed into the anti-religion atmosphere of the seventies and eighties and now we have the indifferent two thousands. The traditional cultural props to religious education have been dropped, society has changed,

..students are being bombarded with alternative choices and values - values very often alien to the Christian code. It is against this background that the teaching of religion must be situated.¹⁹³

2.7 A synopsis of Church documents in relation to religious education and catechetics in the current Irish context.

A detailed synopsis of the pertinent Vatican Documents is not possible in the context of this thesis for reasons of space. What follows is an *expose* of the salient points in selected documents which have a bearing on the current situation as regards religious education and religious instruction in the Irish curriculum.

¹⁸⁹ Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *op cit.*, p 534.

¹⁹⁰ Gallagher, Michael Paul. (1997 (b)) New Forms of Cultural unbelief. *The Future of religion in Irish Education.* (ed. Hogan & Williams) Dublin:Veritas. p 64.

¹⁹¹ Walsh, Ann. (1997). *op cit.* p 64.

¹⁹² Looney, Ann. (1998). *op cit.*, p 75.

¹⁹³ Quinlan, Tom. (1996). 'What Future for RE?' in *The Furrow*, Vol. XLVII No.1 (January) pp97-103 Maynooth: The Furrow Trust. p 98.

2.7.1 *Gravissimum Educationis*.

The Second Vatican Council addressed the issue of education in its Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*,¹⁹⁴ of 1965. Firstly, in echoing the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights,¹⁹⁵ it asserted that 'all men of whatever race, condition or age....have an inalienable right to an education'.¹⁹⁶ However, it also asserted that 'all Christians....have a right to a Christian Education'.¹⁹⁷ A Christian education is geared towards ensuring that those who have been baptised become more appreciative of the gift of faith that they have received.

They should learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth. (Jn 4:23), especially through the liturgy. They should be trained to live their own lives in the new self, justified and sanctified through the truth (Eph. 4:22-24). Thus they should...make their contribution to the Mystical Body..... Accordingly the sacred Synod directs the attention of pastors of souls to their very grave obligation to do all in their power to ensure that this Christian Education is enjoyed by all the faithful and especially by the young who are the hope of the church.¹⁹⁸

This definition of Christian education is denominational. It should support faith and it should celebrate faith. What is described as 'Christian education' is really religious instruction. The Vatican Council placed the responsibility for ensuring that Christian education was available for all the baptised with the local bishop.

Bishops should be especially concerned about catechetical instruction. Its function is to develop in men a living, explicit and active faith, enlightened by doctrine... This instruction should be based on Holy Scripture, tradition, liturgy and on the teaching authority and life of the Church.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Vatican II (1965) (b) '*Gravissimum Educationis*' in *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Volume I*. (ed. Flannery, A.) Collegeville: Liturgical Press. pp 725-737.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Universal Profession of the Rights of Man. December 1948

¹⁹⁶ Vatican II (1965)(b) *op cit.*, p 726.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p 727

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p 728

¹⁹⁹ Vatican II (1965) (c) '*Christus Dominus, Decree on the pastoral office of Bishops in the Church*' in *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Volume I*. (ed. Flannery, A.) Collegeville: Liturgical Press. pp 564-568.

A non-denominational religious education syllabus with the benefit of mere 'Catechetical Guidelines' scarcely fulfils what *Christus Dominus* requires of the Irish bishops.

The definition of Christian education, as given in *Gravissimum Educationis*, is echoed by Lane²⁰⁰ who also sees Catholic and Christian education in terms of catechesis and evangelisation.

Catholic education is as old as Christianity itself and as such goes back to the command of Christ given to his disciples: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:18) Catholic Education therefore is about bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the lives of men and women in the world. This task is often described in terms of evangelisation and as such constitutes an essential element of the mission of the Church in the world.²⁰¹

Christian education, Catholic education, catechesis and evangelisation are about increasing and strengthening the membership of the Church. It involves not only Scripture and tradition but it also includes liturgy, putting faith into practice through prayer. Clearly, *Gravissimum Educationis* envisages religious instruction occurring within a specific denominational class. As illustrated in Chapter one, the legal safeguards did allow for that eventuality in Irish post-primary schools. It seems strange that the bishops, as teachers of the faith, should settle for something far less.

2.7.2 *Ad norman decreti, The General Catechetical Directory.*

In the aftermath of Vatican II, many Vatican Congregations continued to implement the sentiments of the Council in documents that were later published.

²⁰⁰ Dermot A Lane was Director of Studies, Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin.

²⁰¹ Lane, Dermot A. (1991) *Catholic Education and the School: Some Theological Reflections*. Dublin: Veritas. p 4.

In the area of education, the first, and most significant, of these was the already mentioned *Ad norman decreti*, *The General Catechetical Directory*, published in 1971. The Directory was aimed at bishops, episcopal conferences and those who have responsibility in the area of catechetics. Its primary function was to assist in the production of local catechisms and catechetical directories.²⁰² The function of catechesis, according to *Ad norman decreti*, is to develop in man a living, explicit and active faith, enlightened by doctrine.

In keeping with the definitions of religious instruction already cited, *Ad norman decreti* also envisaged an element of prayer or liturgical celebration in catechesis: 'Catechesis must therefore train the faithful to meditate on the word of God and to pray in private'²⁰³ and, later, 'catechetical activity should be accompanied by prayer'.²⁰⁴ It must also be 'Christocentric', it must centre on the person of Jesus Christ and it must be Trinitarian, through Christ, to the Father, in the Spirit.²⁰⁵ In relation to the sources of catechesis, the decree states

the content of catechesis is to be found in the word of God in scripture and tradition; its meaning is more deeply penetrated and developed by the community of believers under the guidance of the magisterium, the sole authentic teacher; it is celebrated in the liturgy; it shines out in the life of the Church, especially in holy people and in saints; and to some extent it appears in the genuine moral values which by God's providence exist in society.²⁰⁶

These provisions or stipulations make it difficult to see how effective catechesis or religious instruction can occur in a non-denominational religious education class. However, the decree did address the need to provide an intellectual basis for faith and the proposed syllabus for religious education will, to some degree, conform to this requirement: 'nowadays, scientific rigor is demanded everywhere. Catechesis must take every care to provide rational justification for the faith'.²⁰⁷ The

²⁰² Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *op cit.*, p 530.

²⁰³ Ibid. p 545.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p 571

²⁰⁵ Ibid. pp 552-553

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p 554

²⁰⁷ Ibid. p 545.

religious education syllabus offers students an opportunity to ‘develop an informed and critical understanding of the Christian tradition in its historical origins’.²⁰⁸

The Directory required the establishment of an episcopal commission on catechetics and that a plan of (catechetical) action be published. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the Directory seems to have coincided with the demise of the catechism as the primary teaching instrument in catechesis. Nevertheless, *Ad norman decreti* did place strong emphasis on the role of the catechism but did seem to indicate that the time was opportune for these catechisms to be rewritten in the light of educational development and in the aftermath of Vatican II. The product was to be submitted to the Apostolic See for ‘examination and approval before promulgation’.²⁰⁹ As indicated above, Bishop Lucey of Cork and Ross did implement this provision in his own diocese. A strong argument could be made for asserting that with the prevailing educational philosophy of the time, the publication of the Directory was used as an opportunity to abandon the catechism, which the directory never intended, and the embrace of other pedagogical aids such as experience, which the directory mentioned. The result was a lack of doctrinal content, as shown by Ratzinger above, in many catechetical programmes which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* attempted to address and rectify. By 1997, the *General Catechetical Directory* was revised and the *General Directory for Catechesis*²¹⁰ was published. Given that this directory was promulgated during the papacy of John Paul II, it is not surprising that the primary sources of reference are the Council documents, the earlier *General Catechetical Directory*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *Catechesi Tradendae*.

As the *General Directory for Catechesis* was published after the *Catechism of the*

²⁰⁸ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p 4

²⁰⁹ Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *op cit.*, pp 591-592.

²¹⁰ Congregation for the Clergy. (1998). *op cit.*

Catholic Church, it is not surprising that there was a reiterating of the need for local conferences and dioceses to devise their own catechisms with reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Catechism is 'meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and Catholic doctrine'.²¹¹

The role of catechesis in the Catholic school is also addressed. Religious instruction is integral to the mission of the Catholic school and, in this regard, 'it is opportune that the Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences specify the kind of catechetical activity to be implemented in Catholic schools'.²¹² It is unlikely that the catechetical guidelines, approved by the Irish Episcopal Conference, to accompany non-denominational religious education would satisfy what the *General Directory for Catechesis* envisaged.

2.7.3 *Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools.*

Another significant document in terms of Catholic education was *Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools*²¹³, a document published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1977. This document was an *expose* of the role and responsibilities of the Catholic school in society. Again, one of the primary duties of the Church is evangelisation,

Evangelisation is, therefore, the mission of the Church; that is, she must proclaim the good news of salvation to all.....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 the centre in which a specific concept of the world is ... developed and conveyed.²¹⁴

The school is a place where the Church evangelises and instructs the faithful. In that regard, 'the Church considers that the Catholic school provides a privileged

²¹¹ Ibid. pp 139-140.

²¹² Ibid. p 263.

²¹³ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) *op cit.*, pp 606 - 629.

²¹⁴ Ibid. pp 607-608.

environment for the complete formation of her members.²¹⁵

While acknowledging that the Catholic school had a function in relation to the whole of society, the Congregation was clear that there was a specific duty in relation to religious teaching:

the importance and need for catechetical instruction in Catholic schools cannot be sufficiently emphasised....The school must do everything in its power to aid the Church fulfil its catechetical mission and so must have the best qualified teachers of religion.²¹⁶

Perhaps, it is this passage that is most pertinent to the current Irish situation *vis-a-vis* religious education. The issue of qualification is crucial to both the teaching of religious education and religious instruction. A previous survey by the writer revealed that, in the Diocese of Cork and Ross, over forty per cent of teachers of religion had either 'no formal qualification' or had merely 'attended in-service courses'.²¹⁷ This was higher than the results of a national survey, published in 1991, in which thirty one per cent of respondents were in the same category.²¹⁸ The Catholic Church in Ireland has, to date, been unwise in allowing this situation to develop. The document also dealt with the issue of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school.

While the bishop's authority is to watch over the orthodoxy of religious instruction and the observance of Christian morals in Catholic schools, it is the task of the whole educative community to ensure that a distinctive Christian educational environment is maintained in practice.²¹⁹

This provision, in relation to the role of the diocesan bishop as regards education, was subsequently included in the *Code of Canon Law* in 1993. The Code is clear that bishops have a responsibility in relation to religious instruction which is not just confined to Catholic schools:

²¹⁵ Ibid. p 609.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p 619.

²¹⁷ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, p 68.

²¹⁸ Weafer, J & Hanley, Ann. (1991) *op cit.*, p 23.

²¹⁹ Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) *op cit.* pp 623-624

The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school, and through various means of social communication, is subject to the authority of the church. It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the diocesan bishop to regulate and watch over it. The local Ordinary is to be careful that those who are to be appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non-catholic ones are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their Christian life, and in their teaching ability.²²⁰

This canon, if instituted, would have grave implications in relation to employment contracts. This issue is dealt with in chapter four. Canon 805 reiterates the role of the local bishop in relation to the hiring (and firing) of teachers of religion:

In his own diocese, the local Ordinary has the right to appoint or to approve teachers of religion and, if religious or moral considerations require it, the right to remove them or demand that they be removed.²²¹

An obvious development with the introduction of non-denominational religious education with added catechetical guidelines is that the teacher will not be employed as a denominational religion teacher. The authority of the bishop in relation to religious formation and education, even in Catholic schools, is thereby eroded.

Malgre les declarations, Catholic Schools also stated that the school has a duty to ensure that in the daily life of the school, the student should come to realise that he is called to be a living witness of God's love for all people and that he is part of salvation history that has Christ, the saviour of the world, as its goal.²²²

In that regard, the sentiments expressed have been echoed by Professor John Haldane. For Haldane, the primary function of Catholic schools is evangelisation, to provide forms of education through which Catholicism's doctrines and

²²⁰ Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1983) *The Code of Canon Law.*, Canon 804, p 147

²²¹ Ibid. Canon 805, p 147

²²² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977) *op cit.* p 617.

devotions are transmitted. The school must consider salvation and the reality that man exists for the sake of God's glory.²²³ 'The primary purpose for which we were created is certainly not that of loving ourselves, as the ethical egoist might have it; but nor is it that of loving one another. Rather it is that of loving God.'²²⁴ While the document does stress that religious education or a Catholic education cannot be compartmentalised into the catechetics class, it also stresses that the Catholic school has an integral role within the Church's work of evangelisation. The primary venue for this is, obviously, the religious education class. If that class is dictated by something other than Catholic truths and Catholic values, it is surely reasonable to assert that the Catholic school may, unwittingly, become a less effective agent of evangelisation. Evidence suggests that this may have been happening. 'Sacraments' and 'doctrine' were the second and third most difficult subjects to teach, according to the Weafer and Hanley survey. Further, a higher percentage of those *with* formal qualifications found these areas to be more difficult.²²⁵ This may well lead to a questioning of the content of 'formal' courses. These findings were reflected in a more recent diocesan survey by the writer where 'Church teaching' was found to be the most difficult subject to teach at both Junior and Leaving Certificate stages.

2.7.4 *Catechesi Tradendae*.

The initial and primary contribution of John Paul II's papacy, regardless of the aforementioned *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in the realm of catechetics was The Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*.²²⁶ This document was written in the aftermath of the Synod of Bishops in 1977 which had as its theme 'catechesis'. Paul VI was preparing to publish the proceedings before he died. *Catechesi Tradendae* then is very much a continuation of the teachings of Paul VI.

²²³ Haldane, J. (1996) *op cit.*, pp 133- 135

²²⁴ Ibid., p 134

²²⁵ Weafer, J & Hanley, Ann. (1991) *op cit.*, p 48.

²²⁶ John Paul II (1979) *op cit.*

Catechesi Tradendae (1977) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) influenced greatly the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997). For example, the *General Directory for Catechesis* refers to *Catechesi Tradendae* in presenting norms and criteria for catechesis:

Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures, for Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the Church.²²⁷

While the exhortation reiterates all that has previously been mentioned, it does offer a significant contribution to the current Irish situation in the area of textbooks:

An objective presentation of historical events, of the different religions and of the various Christian confessions can make a contribution here to better mutual understanding. Care will then be taken that every effort is made to ensure that the presentation is truly objective and free from the distorting influence of ideological and political systems or of prejudices with claims to be scientific. In any case, such schoolbooks can obviously not be considered catechetical works: they lack both the witness of believers stating their faith to other believers and an understanding of the Christian mysteries and of what is specific about Catholicism, as these are understood within the faith.²²⁸

The use of textbooks for non-denominational education will not suffice for catechetics. Further, *Catechesi Tradendae*, and Canon 804 above, seem to suggest that, from a catechetical viewpoint, teachers of catechetics should be able to give witness to the faith by their own belief. This has serious implications. Firstly, there is no guarantee that the teacher of religious education will be Catholic or Christian. Secondly, selection of a teacher of non-denominational religious education on the grounds of the teachers' own religion would be difficult to defend in the Courts in terms of discrimination laws and European legislation. This issue is addressed in greater detail in chapter four.

²²⁷ Ibid. p 7. Also Congregation for the Clergy (1998) *op cit.*, p 101.

²²⁸ John Paul II (1979) *op cit.* p 30

2.7.5 *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.*

The Congregation for Catholic Education issued 'Guidelines for reflection and renewal' in relation to education in Catholic schools in 1988. While secondary schools are the only *de jure* 'Catholic schools' in Ireland, community schools and colleges are *de facto* Catholic schools. It is for that reason that these guidelines are apposite in this context.

There are four distinct qualities to Catholic education: (a) the educational climate, (b) the personal development of each student, (c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, and (d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.²²⁹ The integral role of the religion class in this mission is clear. The guidelines also give an instruction on 'the nature of religious instruction'. It is this section which is of particular relevance to this thesis.

The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reasons 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.²³⁰

The guidelines seem to contradict the wisdom of combining a secular religious education syllabus with a course in religious instruction.

School directors... should respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction. It should have a place in the weekly order alongside other classes, for example; it should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority; ...religious instruction in the school needs to be coordinated with the catechesis offered in the parishes, in the family, and in youth associations.²³¹

This guideline cannot be compatible with the current Irish situation where the religious instruction syllabus is, in effect, dictated by a non-denominational

²²⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. available from Vatican Website, http://www.vatican.va/roman_cur.../rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html; Internet; accessed 22 February 2001. p.1

²³⁰ Ibid., p.15.

²³¹ Ibid. p.16.

syllabus and is governed by guidelines that make no reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church!

Arthur and Gaine report that this document is significant in that it represents the first time that a church document draws a distinction between religious instruction and catechetics.²³² Religious instruction in the context of this document is, in reality, religious education, as 'it has the goal of knowledge and is clearly treated as an academic discipline'.²³³

The 'tension' regarding the content of a syllabus for religious education is also addressed by the guidelines in its outline for an organic presentation of the Christian event and the Christian message. The essential task of the religious instruction teacher is to

summarise Christology and present it in everyday language...this should be preceded by a presentation of some basic ideas about Sacred Scripture, especially those having to do with the Gospels, Divine Revelation and the Tradition that is alive in the Church. with this as a base the class begins to learn about the Lord Jesus. His person, his message, his deeds and the historical fact of his resurrection lead to the mystery of his divinity: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'.²³⁴

Given the integral role of the teacher in the Faith mission of the Catholic school, the guidelines reiterate that everything must be done to ensure that Catholic schools have adequately trained religion teachers. Chapter four examines some of the legal difficulties in this regard given the combining of religious education with religious instruction. The survey in chapter six assesses the current qualification level in schools where the two disciplines have been combined.

2.7.6 The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium.

One of the more recent documents coming from the Vatican concerning religious

²³² Arthur, James & Gaine, Simon. 1996 *op cit.*, p348.

²³³ Arthur, James & Gaine, Simon. 1996 *op cit.*, p 348

²³⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) *op cit.*, p17.

education and Catholic schools has been *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*.²³⁵ This document is pertinent to this thesis in that it addressed the issues that face Catholic schools and Catholic education in the context of the new millennium. In that context, the primary purpose of Catholic schools is reiterated: to evangelise, so that all people may receive the gift of salvation.²³⁶ By its nature, the Catholic school is a place where young people are afforded the opportunity of Christian formation, in the Christian school there is no distinction, 'no separation between time for learning and time for formation..'²³⁷ This view is crucial in that it refuses to distinguish between formation and learning. That distinction is present in the religious education syllabus and it is surprising, therefore, that the Irish Episcopal conference have welcomed that syllabus' introduction.

In general terms, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* echoes the views of John Haldane, that the function of a Catholic school is to make Jesus known and, ultimately, salvation. In that regard, the Catholic school is an integral part of the Church's evangelical mission.

The danger for Catholic schools, in the aftermath of a non-denominational religious education syllabus, is that these schools would now be a less effective or focussed evangelical instrument of the Church. In that regard, the introduction of non-denominational religious education combined with catechetics may effect the primary purpose of the Catholic school: evangelisation and formation.

²³⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

²³⁶ Ibid, p36.

²³⁷ Ibid, p43

2.8 Overview.

In brief, the Church documents are explicit that Catholic schools are places of evangelisation, places where the entire message of salvation is promoted throughout the life of the school, but specifically in the religious education class. The syllabus for this class must be according to catechetical programmes approved by the local bishop and with Roman approval. The course must be Christocentric; it must comprise of Sacred Scripture, doctrine, tradition and liturgy.

In effect, what the church documents variously refer to as religious education are, in fact, catechetics. The documents do allow that comparisons with other religions are beneficial and worthwhile, but these are secondary to promoting a growth in faith.

The combining of a non-denominational religious education class with catechetics seems unlikely to fulfil what is envisaged by the Vatican documents in Catholic schools. Community schools also come under this category according to the Costello judgment, mentioned earlier. The logical solution to this dichotomy is to cease combining the two disciplines and provide for separate classes in religious education and religious instruction. This would also eliminate any difficulties that might arise from the personal faith of the religious education teacher.

A further point. The catechetical guidelines (1999) issued by the Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference for use in schools offering religious education as an examination subject make no reference to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994). This lacuna seems most surprising given that the catechism was addressed to bishops, episcopal conferences and catechists and given that one of its primary functions was to assist in devising local/ national catechisms and catechetical programmes. In that context, it may be more appropriate for the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference to devise a credible independent syllabus for religious instruction in post-primary

schools, as is their responsibility, and let the Department of Education and Science or who ever wishes to devise a syllabus for non-denominational religious education.

CHAPTER THREE THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

3.1 The State and religious education.

This chapter is specifically concerned with the relationship between the state, particularly through the Department of Education and Science and the provision of religious education within the Irish post-primary curriculum. Within the lifetime of the last three governments and, specifically, during the tenure of the Ministers for Education in these governments²³⁸, there has been considerable change in the attitude of the Department of Education and Science towards religious education. The Department of Education and Science's *Rules for National Schools* gave high ranking to religious education, providing for a daily class of religious instruction. By the time the Green and White Papers on Education were written, culminating in the Education Act (1998) itself, religion and religious education were seen to be aspects of a culture, the object of which was to understand critically rather than to form or support belief. This shift is crucial in the context of this thesis in that it signifies a move from catechesis or religious instruction to religious education within the syllabus and in the philosophy of the Department of Education and Science. The aforementioned White paper on Education²³⁹, (a product of the Rainbow Coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left), lapsed when the Government was voted out of office in June 1997. Nevertheless, the philosophy that it contained regarding

²³⁸ In January 1992, Niamh Breathnach was appointed Minister for Education under the Fianna Fail / Labour coalition government. In November 1994, Labour, of which Breathnach was a member, withdrew from Government and Seamus Brennan was acting Minister for Education from 17 November 1994 to 15 December 1994. In the aftermath of Labour's withdrawal from Government, the Fianna Fail administration lost a vote of no confidence in the Dail. The President, Mary Robinson, exercised her constitutional prerogative and refused to call a general election. Instead, she invited the members of Dail Eireann to form another Government. In December 1994, FineGael, Labour, The workers Party and some independents formed what was to be called 'The Rainbow Coalition'. Niamh Breathnach was again appointed Minister for education on 15 December 1994, a position that she held until the collapse of that administration in June 1997. At that time, a Fianna Fail / Progressive Democrat led government was returned to power and Micheal Martin was appointed Minister for Education and Science. Martin held this post until 1999, when he was moved to Health and Michael Woods became Minister for Education and Science.

²³⁹ Department of Education, 1995. *Charting our Education future; White Paper on Education*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

religion indicates the current philosophy within the Department of Education and Science.

It could be argued that the White Paper on Education placed less emphasis on religion as opposed to other subjects:

Each school will be expected to provide students with experience in the following areas..... Civic, Social and Political Education, Arts Education, Religious Education, Guidance..... While some of these areas may be provided through the formal time-tabling of courses, other areas..... may best be provided by a cross-curricular approach or by specific short courses.²⁴⁰

It follows therefore, that in 1995, the then Department of Education seemed not to be equating religious education with what one could call the 'core subjects' of the curriculum, but rather with the extras, the second league, regarded as such because of their relative unimportance from the point of view of examinations and university points. While acknowledging that the Education Act 1998 makes provision for the teaching of religious education to examination level and the Universities Act 1997 allows funding for the teaching of theology in universities, it is regrettable that the only mention of religious education in the 1998 Act couples religious education with health education. It is difficult to see the link between the two, though it seems that neither are 'core subjects' within the post-primary curriculum. In section 9 (d) of the *Education Act 1998*, a recognised school shall

promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit in the school.²⁴¹

It seems unsatisfactory that the ethos of Catholic schools, which is such an important consideration for many parents, and the responsibilities that the Catholic ethos places on Catholic schools and their management, should be

²⁴⁰ Ibid. pp 48-49.

²⁴¹ Department of Education and Science. (1998) *Education Act 1998*. Dublin: The Stationery Office. p13

reduced to 'having regard to the characteristic spirit in the school'.

There are, however, redeeming factors in the Department's attitude to religious education. Amongst these are the syllabus, as devised by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment), for religious education and also the successful defence by the State against a recent action brought by Noel Murphy and the Campaign for the Separation of Church and State. Both of these issues are dealt with later in this chapter.

3.2 The development of the syllabus for Religious Education.

It is established that there is a legal obligation to provide 'faith instruction' or catechetics to all students of vocational schools, community schools and community colleges. What is significant in the current situation, where religious education is being introduced as an examination subject, is that the state, and not the individual churches, are setting the syllabus. This has many implications, not least of which centre on the ability of the state's syllabus to satisfy the demands of the Vocational Education Act of 1930 and the Articles of Management of Community schools and Colleges.²⁴² It also raises the possibility that the syllabus may change with the passage of time and may not be as 'amenable' to the Christian and Catholic churches as it now is.

The development of an examination in religious education, welcome as it might be, was not without obstacle. The religious education syllabus gives religious education parity with all other examination subjects. However, the Intermediate Education Act of 1878, which provided the legal framework for post-primary education in Ireland until the amendments and additions included in the Education Act 1998, prohibited examinations in religion. Obviously then, this provision had

²⁴² This issue of the differences in content and ideology between the syllabus for religious education and the requirements of the various churches for religious instruction / catechetics / faith development is addressed in detail in chapter four.

to be repealed.²⁴³ The Education (No. 2) Bill of 1997 which became the Education Act 1998, makes the provision in section 35

Section 5 of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act. 1878, is hereby amended in subsection (4) by the deletion of "provided that no examination shall be held in any subject of religious instruction, nor any payment made in respect thereof."²⁴⁴

From a legislative viewpoint therefore, the Education Act 1998 has paved the way for the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.

The path to the syllabus began in earnest in Spring 1996 when the NCCA²⁴⁵ published the first draft of its syllabus for both the Junior and Senior Certificate cycles. As a consequence, a series of meetings were arranged nationwide and in May 1997 an amended set of syllabi were published. Feedback on these was due back by September 1997. In May 1998, the syllabus for Junior Certificate was completed and approved by the Council. The Senior Certificate syllabus was also completed and awaits approval.²⁴⁶ As a result of concern expressed at that early stage by the teacher unions, specifically relating to difficulties concerned with the training and the provision of teachers, the Department delayed the syllabus introduction from the originally planned general introduction in September 1999 for all classes commencing Junior and Senior cycles, to an introduction in September 2000 on a phased basis. That process began in June 1999 when a circular letter (M19/99) was issued stating that the syllabus would shortly be approved and that the subject would be introduced on a phased basis commencing in September 2000 with about fifty schools throughout the country.²⁴⁷ In fact the programme was introduced in sixty seven schools and these schools are the

²⁴³ Williams, Kevin. (1997). Religion in Irish Education, Recent trends in Government policy. *The future of Religion in Irish Education*. (ed. Hogan & Williams) Dublin: Veritas. p17.

²⁴⁴ Department of Education and Science. (1998). *op cit.*, p33.

²⁴⁵ The NCCA, The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is the body that examines the post-primary syllabus and advises the minister on course content and standard. With the Education Act of 1998, the Council became a statutory body (Sections 38-48, Education Act, 1998.)

²⁴⁶ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1998). *Comhairle (November)*, Dublin. p.8.

²⁴⁷ Department of Education and Science (1999) *M19/99 Religious Education*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

subject of the survey in chapter six. The Minister for Education and Science did approve the syllabus in late 1999 and the Junior Certificate syllabus was distributed to all post-primary schools in early 2000. It is hoped that the syllabus for Senior Cycle will be introduced in 2003 when this initial group reaches that stage. These times are dependent on the required funding being made available from the Department of Finance²⁴⁸ as well as being dependent on the ability of individual schools to offer the subject. This is significant in that the circular letter advises that three class periods per week are essential to be able to teach the subject. A previous survey by the author of post-primary schools in the Dioceses of Cork and Ross found that the majority of schools did not provide three class periods a week for religious education at Junior Certificate level.²⁴⁹ One hundred and forty four schools are due to introduce the subject in September 2001. In September 2002, any school who wishes to may introduce the subject.

3.3 The aims of the syllabus for Religious Education.

The aim of education previously accepted by successive Ministers for Education forms the rationale behind the new syllabus for religious education.

The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development for personal and family life for working life for living in the community and for leisure.²⁵⁰

Emerging from that philosophy, the new syllabus ensures that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretations of life. It seeks to promote tolerance and mutual understanding and to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other or no religious traditions²⁵¹. This, however, presumes that

²⁴⁸ Ann Looney, NCCA, in conversation with the writer, 25 November 1998.

²⁴⁹ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, pp.63-64

²⁵⁰ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1997). *Redraft Syllabuses for Religious Education*. Dublin: NCCA. p4.

²⁵¹ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p4.

denominational religious education has not got the capacity to impart such values. It could be argued that such a religious education syllabus would fail to give due recognition to the faith community out of which every child's faith emerges. The syllabus is concerned with the origins of the Christian tradition and its cultural and social expressions. It provides for the introduction of a series of moral codes, values and norms for behaviour that will help students in the formation of moral decisions and in their daily social interaction. However, this assumes that such values and virtues cannot be taught or achieved through the medium of a religious education class as it is currently constituted.

The aims of the new religious education syllabi at Junior Certificate level are

1. To foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples of all ages and at all times.
2. To explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion.
3. To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live and continue to have an impact on personal lifestyle, interpersonal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and their contexts.
4. To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretations of life.
5. To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student.²⁵²

Further, the syllabus, at Junior Certificate level, will 'invite the students to reflect on their own experiences', and, by so doing, the students 'continuing search for meaning, will therefore be encouraged and respected.'²⁵³ At Junior Certificate level, students will be expected to study communities of faith, the foundation of Christianity and the foundations of other major world religions, the question of Faith, the celebration or expression of faith and the moral challenge posed by religion. This will be assessed by examination at Junior Certificate level with

eighty per cent of marks awarded for the written examination and twenty per cent

²⁵² Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, pp 4-5. also National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1997) *op cit.*, p35

²⁵³ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p.4.

for project work at ordinary level. At higher level, eighty five percent of the marks would be awarded for the written examination and fifteen percent for the project.²⁵⁴

The secular aims of religious education, as enumerated by the Department of Education and Science find an echo in the writings of Heinz Streib.²⁵⁵ For Streib, religious education should be a process dealing with perplexity and astonishment, rather than providing a flood of answers to questions that are unknown to students. It should be a 'creative laboratory' for thought experiments and for fiction, rather than a curriculum of clear-cut lessons about the facts of one's own religion or another. Religious education has the goal of overcoming literal faith and nurturing the conflict of interpretations, it should transcend the concreteness of one's own Church, community and religious traditions. It is 'an aesthetic adventure rather than an instruction as it were in hermeneutic objectivity'.²⁵⁶ In that sense, Streib's non-denominational views of religious education are influenced by his professorship of ecumenical theology. Religious education is not religious instruction and the Department of Education and Science's definition of the syllabus is more in keeping with the creativity of Streib rather than with the norms of the General Catechetical Directory. The Department of Education and Science course is philosophical as opposed to instructional in that it

seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of why people believe, as well as tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of all... As part of a programme of preparation for the responsibilities of citizenship, the course makes particular reference to the Christian tradition.²⁵⁷

As already mentioned, the final syllabus for senior certificate level has yet to be published and will not be published until 2003, the earliest date the subject can be

²⁵⁴ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1997) *op cit.*, p29

²⁵⁵ Heinz Streib is Professor for Religious Education and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Bielefeld, Germany.

²⁵⁶ Streib, Heinz. (2001) 'Is there a way beyond fundamentalism? Challenges for faith development and religious education' in *The fourth R for the Third Millennium. Education in Religion and Values for the Global future*. Dublin: Lindisfarne Books. p.192-193.

²⁵⁷ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p.4.

introduced at Senior Certificate level.

At Senior Certificate level, the syllabus will explore the search for meaning and values, the origins and contemporary expressions of Christianity, world religions and decision making. Students would also take one of the following options; 'Women', 'Religion and the Christian tradition', 'Issues of justice and peace', 'Worship, prayer and ritual', 'The bible as literature and sacred text', 'Religion - the Irish experience' and 'Religion and Science'. At ordinary level, seventy five percent of the marks would be awarded for the written examination and twenty five percent for course work. At higher level eighty percent of the marks go for the written examination and twenty percent for course work.²⁵⁸ A *caveat* though, it should be noted that what is available at the time of writing is the redraft Senior Certificate syllabus (May 1997) and whereas the Junior Certificate syllabus remained substantially the same as the earlier redrafted version, indications are that the Senior Certificate Syllabus has been altered radically.²⁵⁹

The proposed syllabus has been given a broad welcome by the teacher unions, the ASTI, the TUI, and also by the Diocesan advisors for religious education, the religion teachers associations and the voluntary schools national management bodies. The syllabus was also welcomed by the Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference. In a prepared statement, the Conference stated that the introduction of a state examination syllabus was both a challenge and an opportunity:

The opportunity lies in the recognition of Religious Education as an academic discipline requiring resources and time at least as great as any other subject on the curriculum. The challenge is to ensure that the syllabus is taught in a way that fully reflects the faith tradition of the pupils.²⁶⁰

It is expected that the introduction of a new syllabus in religious education, and

²⁵⁸ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1997) *op cit.*, p83.

²⁵⁹ Ann Looney, NCCA, in conversation with the writer, 25 November 1998.

²⁶⁰ Irish Episcopal Conference (2000) *Statement on the publication of the Junior Certificate Religious Education syllabus*. Maynooth: Irish Episcopal Conference.

the subjects elevation to the status of an examination subject, will encourage students to treat it as seriously as any other subject as it will have points awarded for third level entry. From the schools' view point, religious education as an examination subject should encourage the appointment and allocation of qualified teachers of religion to all classes, a situation that does not universally pertain at present.

However, in relation to the syllabus and the examination on that syllabus, it is of note that

the syllabus for Junior Certificate is quite specific on what will and will not be tested, and notes in its concluding pages that neither the personal faith commitment of a student nor their religious affiliation can be the subject of assessment in the Junior Certificate examination.²⁶¹

The proposed new syllabi are not going to be the cure of all that is unpalatable about the teaching of religion from both the teachers and students perspective, but they will go a long way towards improvement. Unfortunately though, religious knowledge is not the same as religious belief. There is still the challenge or the difficulty of nurturing faith development as opposed to the transmission of faith content or the essential facts and doctrines.

3.4 Combining Catechetics and religious education.

The NCCA syllabi for religious education are written from an educational rationale, it is up to the individual churches to draw up guidelines for the teaching of religion from the standpoint of their own respective church beliefs and practices.²⁶²

As already indicated, a committee of the Irish Episcopal Conference explored ways in which (denominational) catechetics could be taught hand in hand with

²⁶¹ Looney, Ann. (2000) 'Testing Times? A new challenge for religious education.' in *Doctrine & Life*, Vol.50., No.7 (September 2000) Dublin: Dominican Publications. p386. also, *ad passim* Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, p.45

²⁶² Hynes, Noreen. (1998) Irish Episcopal Commission for Catechetics- Guidelines for the NCCA Syllabi in *Newsletter of Secretariat of Secondary Schools. Vol. XXIV, No. 9 June*. Dublin: Secretariat of Secondary Schools. p.3

(non-denominational) religious education. These guidelines for the Junior Certificate syllabus were approved at the March 1999 meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference and were sent to post-primary schools in April 2000, shortly after the Department of Education and Science distributed copies of the final syllabus.²⁶³ Guidelines have yet to be approved for the Senior Certificate syllabus, and as this syllabus will not be coming into effect until 2003, when students who will take the subject at Junior Certificate level will be beginning Senior Cycle, it is not expected for some time. A further difficulty lies in the fact that the final Senior Certificate syllabus has yet to be published, so there is still an amount of guesswork and speculation in the writing of these guidelines.

The initial phase of producing these guidelines has been co-ordinated by Harry Casey, the author of a commonly used religious education text-book, *In the Beginning*. Subsequent to this, the work was carried out by Dr. Renehan²⁶⁴, who has indicated to this writer that these guidelines do not represent another syllabus. They are meant to be a catechetical teaching tool for the teacher of religious education. These guidelines were drawn up after consultation with The Religion Teachers Association; The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools; The National Diocesan Advisors; The Joint Managerial Body; The Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools; The Catholic Headmasters Association; The Irish Vocational Education Association and the Irish Episcopal Commission for Catechetics. The guidelines produced address the following issues/topics: the religious education of Catholic students, ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, the role of diocesan advisors, certification and assessment, professional qualification, in-service training, texts and resources, time-tabling,

²⁶³ The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference (1999) *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of catholic Students, Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus*. Dublin: Veritas.

²⁶⁴ Dr. Caroline Renehan is Director of the National Catechetical Office and Executive Secretary of the Commission for Catechetics, a body of the Irish Episcopal Conference. She has responsibility for primary, post-primary and adult catechesis. In Autumn 2000, she took up a post as lecturer in Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin.

home-school-parish links, chaplaincy, liturgical cycle and catechetical guidelines for each of the sections in the Junior Certificate State Syllabus.²⁶⁵

It is difficult to see how these guidelines will succeed. The syllabus is meant for students of all and no religions and is meant to ensure that 'students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and the non-religious interpretation of life'.²⁶⁶ The intention is upheld and sustained in the actual syllabus: 'the students own experience and their commitment to a particular religious tradition and/ or a continuing search for meaning will be encouraged and supported' and the course also 'seeks to acknowledge the non-religious interpretations of life'.²⁶⁷ Given that *any* one of the Christian religions is only one part of the course, students will not have time for significant catechetical instruction as there will be a full, comprehensive, non-denominational and examinable syllabus to cover. At the end of the day the teacher, whatever the goodwill, will have to cover the entire syllabus with a view to preparing students for examination. However, despite this, Hynes, a then member of the NCCA religious education syllabus committee, believed that there was 'plenty of scope for faith development and formation in Catholicism as well as the knowledge of Christian religions'.²⁶⁸ When religious education as an examination subject was introduced in September 2000, Noreen Hynes applied for and obtained the position of national co-ordinator, employed by the Department of Education and Science.

However, Hynes' view, though based upon the syllabus, does not take cognizance of the difficulties individual teachers may have with time constraints in covering the syllabus. It also presumes that teachers who are qualified to teach the non-denominational religious education syllabus are both willing and competent to teach faith formation or development. However, it must be acknowledged that the

²⁶⁵ Hynes, Noreen. (1998). *op cit.*, p3.

²⁶⁶ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. 1997. *op cit.*, p4

²⁶⁷ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, pp.4-5.

²⁶⁸ Hynes, Noreen. (1999) Religious Education for Junior Certificate. *Newsletter of Secretariat of Secondary Schools. Vol. XXV, No.8., June.* Dublin: Secretariat of Secondary Schools. p. 3

responsibility for faith formation in the Catholic school rests on the entire school community not just the catechetical department. It could be asserted that this has not always been the case and faith formation was sometimes 'compartmentalised' to the detriment of the schools Catholic ethos.

A central notion to faith is the actual 'expression' or *praxis* of that belief. Strictly speaking, the state syllabus makes no provision for such celebrations, though in the proposed Senior Certificate syllabus, mention is made of ways of praying. It is important to note also that the syllabus may, with the passage of time and the progression of Ministers of Education and Science, change and may shift from a Christian or Catholic interpretation. In view of these concerns and in view of the fact that the subject is optional anyway and the syllabus may change, this writer believes that Catholic schools should still offer distinct and dedicated catechetics classes in order to remain true to their ethos and their function.

The separation of religious education from religious instruction may well, in the fullness of time, lead to a greater parochial involvement in the education system with the goal of faith development, something an examinable syllabus cannot aid or assess. Theology, after all, is faith seeking understanding. An examination can only assess knowledge not faith. However, the only programme that resembles this ideal at present is the RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This programme has not been an unqualified success, primarily because it depends on too many variables which include the goodwill and enduring enthusiasm of the participants, the availability of trained and enthusiastic catechists and the support of the local clergy.

In many ways then, what the proposed syllabus consists of is the Philosophy of Religion, not faith in any form. It also remains to be seen as to what extent schools will be able to offer this new subject, religious education. Time-tables are currently overloaded, and religious education, currently not being an examination

subject, has a much shorter allocation of classes than those of an examination subject. If religious education is to be taken as an examination subject, up to Higher Leaving Certificate level, where will the extra allocation of classes come from? Hardly from Maths or English!

3.5 Church reaction to the State syllabus

What was most surprising in relation to the introduction of the religious education syllabus was the almost unqualified support it received from Church sources. When the final syllabus was published in April 2000, the Irish Episcopal Conference released an already prepared statement welcoming the syllabus. However, in fairness to the Conference, their statement spoke of the introduction as being both ‘a challenge and an opportunity’. The challenge, the statement added, was to ‘ensure that the syllabus is taught in a way that fully reflects the faith tradition of the pupils’.²⁶⁹ This challenge concerns teacher qualification to teach catechetics and religious education, a receptive state syllabus and a sufficient time allocation. While acknowledging that the bishops statement needed to be positive, there was no mention of the legal requirement on schools to teach catechetics and the implied dangers for non-examinable catechetics when it is combined with a state-set examinable religious education syllabus.

The National Post-Primary diocesan advisors welcomed the introduction of the religious education syllabus. While acknowledging that many have highlighted ‘a sense of dichotomy between religious education and catechetics’, the diocesan advisors ‘do not fear the risk of such polarisation because at the heart of all religious education is an engaging with the meaning of life’.²⁷⁰ This ‘engaging with the meaning of life’ bears more than a passing resemblance with the State’s aim of the secular religious education course, ‘to foster an awareness that the search for meaning is common to all peoples of all ages and of all times and to explore how

²⁶⁹ Irish Episcopal Conference (2000) *op cit*.

²⁷⁰ O’Neill, Donal (2000) Religious Education as an examination subject in *Intercom*, Vol 30., No.1., February 2000. Dublin: Catholic Communications Institute. p.30

this search for meaning has found and continues to find expression in religion'.²⁷¹

The Diocesan Advisors are appointed by the diocesan bishop, have their salaries paid for by the diocesan bishop, are accountable to the diocesan bishop and report on the standards of religious education/instruction in schools to the diocesan bishop. These advisors are also a resource for teachers of religion. Their primary function is catechetics not religious education, a secular subject as it now is. In so far as anyone has an ability or duty to assess or examine the effectiveness of a school's catechetical programme, it is the diocesan advisors.

In an article in *The Fold*, the diocesan magazine of the diocese of Cork and Ross, Micheal de Barra, the post-primary diocesan advisor for catechetics in that diocese, answers several questions in relation to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. Seven schools in the Diocese of Cork and Ross and sixty seven nationally commenced the subject in September 2000.²⁷² No mention is made of the significant fact that religious education is not catechetics and is non-denominational. Perhaps there is a case for saying that some of those involved in religious education have, conveniently?, overlooked this point. Sr. Anne Holton, who lectures in St. Patrick's College, Carlow and who works as a diocesan advisor for the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, states that 'the aim of religious education is to guide the student to recognise the revelation of God in their lives and fully respond to it and so develop a relationship with God'.²⁷³ This is incorrect. Religious education is a non-denominational secular subject that is not concerned with 'developing' or establishing a relationship with God. It is a subject for students of all and no religion.²⁷⁴ Care must be taken in relation to definition. Religious education is neither catechetics, religious instruction or faith development. Religious education is now defined by the Department of Education

²⁷¹ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (1997) *op cit.*, p35

²⁷² De Barra, Micheal. (2000) 'Students begin studying religion as an exam subject.' in *The Fold* (Autumn 2000) Cork, Diocese of Cork and Ross. pp 4-5.

²⁷³ Holton, Anne. (2000) 'Religious Education: an Examination Subject' in *The Furrow* (May 2000) Vol LI, No. 5. Maynooth, The Furrow Trust. p291.

²⁷⁴ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*, pp 4-5.

and Science who set the subject's syllabus, not by the Irish bishop's, diocesan advisor's or individual schools.

Devitt believes that the new syllabus in religious education ought to provide much valuable assistance for teachers for their catechetical work in Irish second-level schools. Not only that, but the challenging content of these syllabuses should also enrich the more general life of the entire Catholic Church in Ireland.²⁷⁵

What Devitt expresses is possible. Faith must have an intellectual basis. Knowledge of other faiths is important and to be commended. A critical analysis and evaluation of their own faith can be beneficial to a student's faith. However, concerns must be raised that this scenario presupposes the appropriate qualification and competence of a teacher in both disciplines; religious education and catechetics. It presupposes a state syllabus that is amenable to catechetical input. It also, perhaps idealistically, presupposes that a teacher will spend sufficient time with a class on non-examinable catechetical instruction when there is an examinable syllabus to be covered, success in which will mean points for third level entry for the student and, in some cases, an evaluation of the teacher's ability. What of the students who opt not to take religious education? There are too many variables, too many presuppositions. These difficulties are addressed in detail in chapter four.

Frank Hurl²⁷⁶ raises an interesting point that might be overlooked. *The General Directory for Catechetics* holds that religion should be taught in the context of faith formation and evangelisation while the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* holds that there should be doctrinal content in the teaching of religion. Hurl asks if these two 'characteristics' have any role to play in the introduction of the new syllabus? He acknowledges that many 'Catholic religious educators may now feel that they cannot fulfil their catechetical role, which includes faith formation and

²⁷⁵ Devitt, Patrick M. (2000) *Willingly to School*. Dublin: Veritas. p 13.

²⁷⁶ Frank Hurl is a teacher of religious education in Blackrock College, Co. Dublin

the teaching of doctrine, in this new environment of State examination'.²⁷⁷ This is the central issue. The aim of religious education is diametrically opposed to the aim of catechetics, one is denominational and presupposes faith while the other is non-denominational and neither requires nor confirms faith. In that context, it seems surprising that many, including diocesan advisors, who have responsibilities for faith development, should welcome a secular syllabus which may impinge negatively on faith development and formation:

A religious way is for the religious person *the* way. Religion teachers do not say 'this might be good' or 'there are plenty of other ways if this one is too difficult'. Religions are about the one way to follow because it is demanded of you.²⁷⁸

3.6 State funding for religious education.

Article forty-four, section two of the Irish Constitution states 'the State guarantees not to endow any religion'.²⁷⁹ This provision would seem to prohibit State funding for teachers of religious instruction and denominational school chaplains and was the basis of a court case taken by The Campaign to Separate Church and State Ltd. against the Minister for Education in 1996. The Campaign to separate Church and State argued that the £1.2 million in payments made annually to such chaplains represented a breach of article 44.2.2 of the constitution, which guarantees that the State would not endow any religion. When the case opened in the High Court in 1995, there were seventy six chaplains in Community and Comprehensive schools.²⁸⁰

In refusing the application, Mr. Justice Costello stated

it is clear that one of the important reasons why chaplains as well as teachers are appointed to the staff of community schools is for the purpose of assisting the religious formation of the children

²⁷⁷ Hurl, Frank. (2000) 'Religious Education: Catechetics or Academics?' in *The Furrow* (May 2000) Vol LI, No. 5. Maynooth, The Furrow Trust. p280.

²⁷⁸ Harris, M. & Moran, G. (1998) *op cit.*, p31

²⁷⁹ Government of Ireland (1999) *Bunreacht na hEireann* (Ed. Dec. 1999) Dublin: Government Publications Office. pp 168-170

²⁸⁰ Pollak, Andy. (1998) Legal challenge to chaplains pay initiated in 1988. *The Irish Times*, 26 March 1998. Dublin. p5

attending the school (assistance which, *inter alia*, is given by the celebration of Mass in the school). In effect, the State, by paying salaries for chaplains, is having regard to the rights of parents *vis-a-vis* the religious formation of their children and enabling them to exercise their constitutionally recognised rights. If this is the purpose and effect of the payment how can it be said to be unconstitutional?²⁸¹

In his landmark judgment, echoing a previous judgment of Mr. Justice Henchy,²⁸² Mr. Justice Costello, in January 1996, stated that this provision of the Constitution must be interpreted in conjunction with Article forty two. Consequently the State must be permitted to assist parents in the religious formation of their children.²⁸³ Following this decision Mr. Justice Costello ruled that

The payment of salaries of teachers of religion (including ministers of religion and members of religious orders) out of public funds is constitutionally permissible and does not constitute 'endowment of religion' as prohibited by Article 42.2.2 (of the Irish Constitution). Taking the matter one step further, the judge held that, if the payment of salaries of teachers of religion out of public funds does not constitute 'endowment of religion' , then this must apply whether the teacher is in a denominationally managed school or in primary or secondary schools not so managed.²⁸⁴

A further consequence of note arising from the Costello judgment was the defining of community schools as Catholic schools.²⁸⁵ This definition arises from an interpretation of the contents of the Instruments and Articles of Management of such schools as indicated elsewhere in chapter 1.5.2.

Given the Costello judgment, the teaching of denominational religion to children in

²⁸¹ Griffin, Kieran, (1997) Whither the fourth R? 'A perspective on the future of Religion in the primary school' in *The Future of religion in Irish Education*. (ed. Hogan & Williams) Dublin: Veritas. p 78

²⁸² The case involved McGrath Vs the Trustees of Maynooth College. The Trustees are, in fact, members of the Irish Episcopal Conference. McGrath was a priest/professor in the University, resigned as a priest and was dismissed from his post as professor by the Trustees. He subsequently took an action for unfair dismissal against the Trustees and lost in the Supreme Court. Glendenning (1999) quotes this case from the Irish Law Reports Monthly(ILRM), (1979), p166.

²⁸³ Glendenning, Dymphna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 66

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Walshe, John. (1999) *op cit.*, p 171.

State-aided schools seemed set to continue as heretofore, with the added protection of an emphatic court pronouncement for protection. However, by January 1998, it was of no great surprise that the Costello judgment was appealed to the Supreme Court to test its constitutionality. While the case was essentially against the Department of Education, as it then was, which was paying the salaries of the chaplains concerned, the Catholic bishops, at their own request, enjoined the defence and they were later joined by the Church of Ireland who also instructed counsel for the defence.

On Wednesday, March 25th. 1998, the Supreme Court delivered its verdict.

In the reserved judgment, Mr. Justice Barrington said that a religious denomination was ‘...not obliged to change the general atmosphere of its school merely to accommodate a child of a different religious persuasion who wishes to attend that school’.²⁸⁶ Mr. Justice Barrington did enter a *caveat* into his judgment, whereby the system of salaried chaplains was to be available to Community schools of all denominations.

The former Chief Justice, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Justice Hugh O’Flaherty, a then judge of the Supreme Court, and Mrs. Justice Susan Denham concurred with the judgment of Mr. Justice Barrington. Mr. Justice Ronan Keane, now the Chief Justice, delivered a separate judgment, again dismissing the appeal.

The Barrington judgment acknowledged that chaplains provided an extra dimension to religious education, ‘evidence has established that chaplains, besides looking after the pastoral needs of the children, helped them with counsel and advice about their day-to-day problems’.²⁸⁷

The issue of a legal challenge to the State paying the salaries of Chaplains is now completed, and the concept seems safe from further challenge. The difficulty for the future rests in the fact that religious orders of brothers and sisters and dioceses

²⁸⁶ Carolan, Mary. (1998) State pay for school chaplains is legal, Court rules. *The Irish Times*, 26 March 1998. Dublin. p 5

²⁸⁷ Ibid. p 5

will not be able to supply these chaplains as they are suffering from a decline in numbers. That day is approaching and sooner than many might realise.

The involvement of Religious in education is in its last phase. First was the shift from teaching to administration, now comes the phase of setting up Boards of Management or, in the case of elitist schools, Boards of Governors.²⁸⁸

This decline has, more recently, been acknowledged by Church authorities. The Congregation for Catholic Education has acknowledged this decline in numbers and the consequences for schools. However, the congregation also notes that this decline is due, in part, to Religious abandoning the teaching apostolate, in many cases the reason for their order's existence. 'The present time is not without its difficulties, not only on account of the alarming decrease in numbers (of religious), but also of a serious misunderstanding which induces some Religious to abandon the teaching apostolate.'²⁸⁹

3.7 Priests, chaplains and pastoral agents.

In many schools, the traditional priest chaplain has been replaced by a 'lay-chaplain'. The term is misleading, because it is a misnomer. The term 'chaplain' is a specific term. Canon 564 of the Code of Canon Law states

A chaplain is a priest to whom is entrusted in a stable manner the pastoral care, at least in part, of some community or special group of Christ's faithful, to be exercised in accordance with universal and particular law.²⁹⁰

Even the more secular *Collins Concise English Dictionary* defines a chaplain to be 'a member of the clergy attached to a private chapel, institution, ship, regiment etc'.²⁹¹ The term chaplain then, as it is being used, is misleading. That misuse was addressed by the Vatican in 1997. The document *Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred*

²⁸⁸ O' Brien, John. (1994). *Seeds of a new Church*. Dublin: Columba. p17

²⁸⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education. (1998) *op cit.*, p42.

²⁹⁰ Canon Law Society of Ireland and Great Britain. (1993). *op cit.*, p103

²⁹¹ Concise Oxford English dictionary. (1991) *op cit.*, p188

ministry of the priest, was published in 1997, though, as the English translation did not become freely available until 1998, the document was not discussed until then.

The Instruction declared

It is unlawful for the non-ordained faithful to assume titles such as “Pastor”, “Chaplain”, “Co-ordinator” “Moderator” or other such similar titles which can confuse their role and that of the pastor, who is always a bishop or priest.²⁹²

Perhaps a more correct title would be pastoral care agents or pastoral care assistants. However, it is apparent that the currently used term of ‘Chaplain’ is incorrect and misleading. This situation also applies in hospitals and prisons, as well as schools, where in the recent past, non-ordained ‘chaplains’ have been appointed.

3.8 The role of the universities in relation to the provision of qualified ‘graduate’ teachers of religion.

While the issue of time will impinge greatly on the introduction of the religious education syllabus, so will the issue of qualification. While the many legal difficulties relating to qualification are raised in chapter four, the provision of theological qualification at university level is central to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject and merits closer analysis. It is untenable that a course would be introduced to the post-primary syllabus without parallel arrangements being made for the provision of suitably qualified teachers to implement that syllabus. As there is an ideological dichotomy between religious education and religious instruction, both in content and ultimate aim, so there is a similar difficulty with theology from a church and university viewpoint and in relation to subsequent qualification to teach either religious education or religious instruction.

²⁹² Congregation for the Clergy. (1997) *Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of the priest*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. p 17

The traditional path to secondary teaching in Ireland has been through a primary degree and a higher diploma in education from either Trinity College, Dublin or one of the colleges of the National University of Ireland. These colleges have various arrangements for the provision of theological courses. These arrangements have serious repercussions for Catholic schools not only if graduates are to be employed as teachers of religious instruction or catechetics but also if graduates are employed as teachers of religious education and if that subject is to be combined with religious instruction. This is the situation that is being advocated by the Irish bishops catechetical committee. It is these arrangements and their implications for a non-denominational religious education syllabus with which this section is concerned.

3.9 The Irish Universities and their denominational theology faculties.

The University of Dublin, Trinity College, was founded in 1591 as a reformation foundation being an agent of the Tudor policy of colonisation.²⁹³ The term 'reformation' is central to the ethos and identity of Trinity, which has been consistently perceived as Protestant. It is also the theological training college for Church of Ireland students for ministry. This 'reformation' or 'protestant' orientation is significant in that it explains why Catholics were forbidden to study at Trinity. To that end, 'until 1971, Dublin diocesan regulations forbade Catholics to attend Trinity College'.²⁹⁴ However, there has been a long history of suspicion between the Catholic Church in Ireland and Trinity graduates. In 1930, Letitia Dunbar-Harrison, a Protestant and an honours graduate of Trinity College Dublin was appointed, after open competition, to the post of librarian for the county of Mayo. The local library committee, supported by Mayo County Council refused to approve the appointment and the Government stood by the decision of the

²⁹³ Glendenning, D. 1999, *op cit.* p.39

²⁹⁴ Inglis, Tom. (1998) *Moral Monopoly, The rise and fall of the Catholic Church in modern Ireland*, 2nd. Ed, Dublin, University College Dublin Press. p. 60.

Local Appointments Commission. Significantly, and of relevance to this thesis, a Christian brother, M.S. Kelly argued that 'her mental constitution was the constitution of Trinity College'. However, these concerns were insignificant in comparison to the concerns expressed in relation to the employment of Trinity graduates as 'dispensary doctors' with reference to the issue of birth control.²⁹⁵

While these incidences are from a generation past, they do illustrate the fundamental differences between Catholicism and colleges like Trinity. These differences may well resurface with the provision of theology at university level.

Maynooth College, now National University of Ireland, Maynooth, was established in 1795 for the training of Catholic priests in Ireland and remained exclusively a seminary until the late 1960's.²⁹⁶

The vast majority of post-primary teachers in Ireland are graduates of the National University of Ireland. The National University of Ireland came into being as a result of The Irish Universities Act 1908. This Act established two new universities, the National University of Ireland and Queen's University, Belfast. These universities were to be *de jure* non-denominational. The National University of Ireland was to comprise of three constituent colleges, Cork, Galway and Dublin. University College, Dublin was to be a *de facto* university for Catholics, having originated by decree of an 1851 Synod of Bishops (Catholic) at Thurles who decided to establish a Catholic University and invited the Oxford convert, John Henry Newman, to become its rector.²⁹⁷ Queens College, Belfast retained its Protestant identity. Maynooth College was affiliated to the National University under the 1908 Act and did not become a full constituent college until the enactment of The Universities Act 1997.²⁹⁸ The 1908 Act made no reference to

²⁹⁵ Keogh, Dermot. 1994. *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Nation and State*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. pp. 55-57

²⁹⁶ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, p.39

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p 39.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.* pp 40-41

Trinity College, 'a mercy for which it was profoundly grateful.'²⁹⁹

Whereas the Irish Universities Act of 1908 made provision for a non-sectarian form of tertiary education, it was accepted that the National University of Ireland (with constituent colleges at Cork, Dublin and Galway) was 'under Catholic influence, if not indeed (under) Catholic control'.³⁰⁰ This view is also supported by Inglis, who believed that the 1908 Act was the product of almost a century of agitation, by the Catholic hierarchy, for a Catholic University. The result, he believed, 'was designed so that the Church would have considerable influence in its governing bodies'.³⁰¹ Murphy argues that the 1908 Act

...had not only a political but a partitionist rationale. Partition was prefigured, educational apartheid prevailed and sectarianism was instituted in the two new universities, North and South, despite their ostensibly non-denominational basis.³⁰²

However, Patrick Corish,³⁰³ believed otherwise:-

The new institution was quite positively undenominational. There was some provision to protect the faith of students, but many would consider it vague and insufficient. There was little, if any, advances on the Queen's Colleges in regard to Theology: chairs of theology might be set up by private endowment, and the university buildings might be used for teaching. There would be no grant for the erection of a university church.³⁰⁴

This prohibition in funding the erection of a university chapel explains why the college chapel of University College Cork was, of necessity, privately funded following a bequest from the Honan family and when the foundation stone was laid in 1916, the chapel 'was technically and literally outside the grounds of the non-denominational college'.³⁰⁵

Whereas theology faculties were denominational in non-denominational colleges,

²⁹⁹ Murphy, John A. (1995) *The College: A History of Queen's/ University College Cork*. Cork: Cork University Press. p.163

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Inglis, Tom. (1998). *op cit.*, p. 60

³⁰² Murphy, J.A. (1995) *op cit.*, p.163

³⁰³ Rev. Patrick Corish is a former President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. He held the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in Maynooth from 1947 to 1975 and the Chair of Modern History (NUI) from 1975 to 1988.

³⁰⁴ Corish, P.J. (1995) *Maynooth College 1795-1995*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. p 263.

³⁰⁵ Murphy, J.A. (1995) *op cit.*, pp.195-196

the argument has been made that other disciplines were denominationalised also. Murphy states that during the O’Rahilly presidency of UCC,³⁰⁶ examination papers and the required answers were Catholic in content. In medical ethics, the lecturer was the Catholic dean of residence and in philosophy, the religious approach is evident in the task, renowned in folklore, ‘refute the pernicious errors of Kant!’ Further incidences of a Catholic ethos in the examinations of secular faculties required students to ‘Argue against the modern encroachments on the Family’ and the questions ‘How would you establish the existence of the human soul as a spiritual reality?’ (Pre-Medical, Autumn 1943, Psychology and Sociology paper), ‘How would you refute Agnosticism?’ (BA, 1944, Logic paper) and ‘How would you prove the immortality of the human soul?’ (BA, 1944, Psychology paper).³⁰⁷ It seems fair to assert that while the colleges themselves were necessarily non-denominational, the influence of the Catholic Church permeated through statutes and ‘Christianised’ secular subjects through the influence of the various professors. This is evidenced from the examination papers quoted above and seems to refute the assertion of Professor Corish that the National University ‘was quite positively undenominational’.³⁰⁸

Subsequent Acts made provision for the establishment of the other universities in Ireland; ‘the newer universities such as Dublin City University and the University of Limerick were established by the Dublin City University Act 1989 and the University of Limerick Act 1989.’³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Alfred O’Rahilly was Registrar of University College, Cork from 1920 to 1943. He was President of the College from 1943 to 1954. He occupied the chair of Mathematical Physics from 1917 to 1943.

³⁰⁷ Murphy, J.A. (1995) *op cit.*, p.281.

³⁰⁸ Corish, P.J. (1995) *op cit.*, p 263.

³⁰⁹ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.*, p.41

3.10 The 1908 Irish Universities Act and the provision and prohibition of theology in the university.

From the viewpoint of the provision of theology in the university, what is of note is the provision in the 1908 Irish Universities Act that within the National University of Ireland and Queen's University, Belfast, 'no religious tests were allowed... and the public funding of religious instruction or chapels was to be prohibited'.³¹⁰ It was this provision that impinged upon the teaching of theology in Irish universities and is most responsible for the shortage of qualified teachers of religion.

However, there are differences of opinion on the supposed prohibition of the teaching of theology. Section 7 of the 1908 Act dealt with the issue of public money.

Provided that nothing in this provision shall prevent the recognition by the Governing Body of the University of any Professor of or Lecturer in Theology or Divinity as a Professor of the University so long as the Professorship is founded and maintained entirely by means of private benefaction, or the use of any building belonging to the university or college, for any teaching given by such Professor, or for any other religious teaching no part of the cost of which is defrayed out of public funds. But no student shall be compelled to attend such theological teaching, or religious instruction, and no Professor of or Lecturer in Theology or Divinity shall be eligible for membership of the General Board of Studies or of any other Faculty other than the Faculty of Theology.³¹¹

In effect, the 1908 Act allowed for the establishment of a Faculty of Theology within the Colleges of The National University of Ireland provided that the costs incurred were met outside of the college budget, in effect, the public purse. This provision was in accordance with the later Irish Constitution, *Bunreacht na hEireann*, enacted in July 1937. Article 44, 2.1 states 'The State guarantees not to

³¹⁰ Ibid. p.40

³¹¹ Keogh, Dermot. (1997) 'Catholics and the Godless Colleges, 1845-1995' in *Theology in the University*. (ed. Corkery, P. & Long, F.) Dublin: Dominican Publications. p.66

endow any religion.³¹² This interpretation of the 1908 Act is supported by the subsequent NUI Charter 15(3) which transcribes the relevant section of the 1908 Act, as quoted above, directly.

As provided by the fourth sub-section of section seven of the Irish Universities Act, 1908, nothing in the provisions of that sub-section shall prevent the recognition by the Governing Body of the University of any Professor of or Lecturer in Theology or Divinity as a Professor of the University, so long as the Professorship is founded and maintained entirely by means of private benefaction.³¹³

Following these provisions, Chairs of Theology within the colleges of the National University of Ireland emerged. Given the Catholic originations of University College Dublin, it is not surprising that this college was the first of the NUI Colleges to establish a Chair of Theology.

Dermot Keogh³¹⁴ outlined the background to establishing Chairs of Theology in the NUI Colleges in an address entitled 'Catholics and the Godless Colleges' to a seminar in UCC in 1995 entitled Theology in the University, the proceedings of which are published under a book of the same name.³¹⁵

At the October meeting of the Irish Episcopal Conference of 1908, a decision was taken to establish a 'University Committee' which was empowered to deal with matters arising from the University Act of that year. One year later, in October 1909, the Conference adopted a report of the University Committee which provided for a course in scholastic philosophy and revealed religion for lay undergraduates. However, what was of greater significance was the resolution

that a small joint committee of bishops and representatives of Maynooth College [be set up to] consider and report whether a faculty of theology should be established in the National University, and if the committee favour its establishment they are requested to draft a detailed scheme on the subject for the consideration of the bishops- the committee to consist of the

³¹² Government of Ireland (1999) *op cit.*, p.168

³¹³ Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, pp.66-67.

³¹⁴ Dermot Keogh is professor of History at University College, Cork.

³¹⁵ The proceedings of this conference are published in *Theology in the University: The Irish Context*, 1997 (Ed. Corkery, P. & Long, F.) Dublin: Dominican Publications.

archbishops of Dublin and Tuam, the bishops of Raphoe, Kildare and Galway, the President of Maynooth College, and three representatives of the Maynooth theological faculty to be chosen by the faculty.³¹⁶

A number of points are notable. Firstly, the Catholic bishops acted immediately in the aftermath of the 1908 act but, perhaps of greater importance, they pre-determined that any university course in theology should be Catholic, be under episcopal control and be orthodox. The presence of four members on the committee from the Pontifical University of Maynooth in 1909 would have assured adherence to church teaching. However, by 1910, it was believed that it was not practical to establish a theological faculty with the National University and 'that a fund be created at once for the purpose of engaging three or more lecturers on subjects connected directly or indirectly with religion and suited to university lay students in all the constituent colleges of the National University and in the Belfast University.'³¹⁷

At the Episcopal Conference meeting of June 20th 1911, a resolution was passed to the effect that

'in view of the fact that in existing circumstances a statutory Faculty of Catholic Theology in connection with the National University is out of the question on Catholic principles, a Faculty of Theology be formed in Dublin to supply for the deficiencies of recent University legislation on the theological side'.³¹⁸

Later that year, at a meeting of bishops on October 10th. 1911, a committee was established with authority to appoint a Jesuit, Fr. Peter Finlay to deliver a course of lectures during the forthcoming academic year in University College Dublin. The programme to be followed and the remuneration for same was to be arranged between Fr. Finlay and the committee. The committee also had the authority to

³¹⁶ Extract from the minutes of the Irish Episcopal Conference meeting of October 12th. 1909 in Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, pp.67-68

³¹⁷ Extract from the minutes of the Irish Episcopal Conference meeting of June 21st. 1910 in Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, p68

³¹⁸ Extract from the minutes of the Irish Episcopal Conference meeting of June 20th. 1911 in Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, p69

appoint a second professor, if it believed such a course of action was expedient.

After these developments, matters seemed to rest or at least lose their momentum.

Clerical deans of residence had been appointed in each of the university colleges.

The issue of a Chair of Theology in the National University was again raised at the meeting of October 11th. 1912 in relation to a chair of Catholic theology in UCD.

'A memorandum and indenture of foundation of "a professorship of Catholic theology" had been prepared for the bishops by Chief Baron Palles and Mr. Murnahan, Q.C.'³¹⁹

The Professor duly appointed was Fr. Peter Finlay, S.J. and the salary was 'to be £200 per annum, which sum the Archbishops would pay to the Senate of the National University at the beginning of each year'.³²⁰ This procedure enabled a chair of Catholic Theology to be established in the National University because it was funded by the Catholic bishops paying the professor's salary through the NUI Senate. A feature of the appointment was that the contract was for a fixed term. This provision allowed for replacement by the episcopal authorities after five years. With the passage of time, Prof. Finlay was replaced, after serving a second term of office, by another Jesuit, John J. Hannon. Prof. Hannon advised the bishops that 'certain difficulties would arise if he were to be appointed to the chair of theology'. As a consequence, the bishops decided that future appointees would be from the faculty of theology in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. By 1938, UCD had agreed to three chairs of theology: moral theology, Catholic biblical theology and Catholic dogmatic theology. However, it is significant that these chairs were not instituted by either the National University of Ireland or UCD, its constituent college. Rather, they were founded and maintained by the four Archbishops of the Irish Episcopal Conference, Armagh, Dublin, Cashel and Tuam. In that sense, the influence of the 1908 Irish Universities Act which

³¹⁹ Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, p70

³²⁰ Ibid.

allowed for the teaching of religion if it were privately funded, reached as far as UCD in 1938.

The appointment of three professors of Catholic theology in UCD was made possible because of a 'Deed of Foundation' between the Irish bishops and the university. The deed in many regards was a complex document which endeavoured to distinguish between UCD, the constituent college of the National University of Ireland, and the National University of Ireland itself. It is also worth considering that the then UCD was the direct descendant of Newman's Catholic University, as mentioned earlier. As a result of the deed, 'the university recognised the holders of the three professorships as being professors of the university, but the professorships were not instituted by the university as professors of the university as such'.³²¹ Further, while these professors were located in University College Dublin, the Deed of Foundation is with the National University of Ireland. As previously indicated, and in order to comply with the aforementioned 1908 Act, the Irish bishops paid the salaries of these professors to the National University of Ireland, not directly to the college where the professors were located.

The Deed of Trust itself is significant in that it makes provision not only for the appointment but also for the removal of the professor (of Catholic theology) by the bishops.

The holder of the Professorship shall from time to time be nominated by the then existing Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland (hereafter called 'The Bishops') subject to confirmation by the Senate of the said University.

Such nomination may be for any defined period of one or more years either absolute or subject to determination by the Bishops at such times and under such circumstances shall be specified in the Instrument of Nomination.

Upon the cessation of the period of appointment of any Professor or upon his resignation with the consent of the Bishops and of the Senate or upon his appointment being duly terminated by the

³²¹ Ibid. p.71 Keogh refers to a copy of the Deed of Foundation, President's Office files in the UCC archives

Bishops in pursuance of the terms specified in the instrument of Nomination (and notice therefore being given to the Senate) he shall cease to be or to be recognised as a professor of the University.³²²

Following the appointment of three chairs of Catholic theology at UCD, one chair was established in University College Cork, UCC, in 1959. Given these developments, it is not true to say that the 1908 Act prevented the teaching of theology in the colleges of the National University of Ireland. There is a belief that the bishops did not wish to see theology as a recognised university subject and were content to leave theology as, primarily, a seminary discipline. Notwithstanding, the bishops did take a more enthusiastic line in co-operating with the university authorities to ensure that medical ethics, philosophy, sociology and education were taught in the Catholic intellectual tradition.³²³

In brief then, the 1908 Act did not prevent the teaching of theology in the university but ensured that any denominational instruction was to be privately funded. This point is significant in that it is commonly and mistakenly held that the constituent colleges of the National University were prevented from teaching theology. The Irish bishops and the National University of Ireland entered into an agreement that saw the bishops appointing the professors and paying their salaries and the Senate of the National University of Ireland 'rubber stamping' the bishops nominees. This practice had implications for the type of theology that was taught in the university, the function of the theological department within the university community and for what has been called 'academic freedom'.

3.11 The 1997 Universities Act and a secular theology.

The Universities Act of 1997 repealed the provision of the 1908 Act that prevented the State funding of courses in theology in the colleges of the National University of Ireland. However, a question emerges with the introduction of

³²² Ibid. pp. 71-72

³²³ Ibid. p.72

theology onto the university curriculum. The control that the bishops had over professorial appointments and terminations will cease, given that the 1908 Act allowed for privately funded 'denominational' theology. What will be the 'ethos' of the emerging third-level theology? This tension between objectivity and denominationalism is crucial to any debate on teacher training for religious education and religious instruction, especially if both disciplines are to be combined. An objective, non-denominational course in theology will be sufficient qualification for teaching the Department of Education and Science syllabus in religious education. However, if religious instruction is to be combined with religious education, then a certain grounding in, and knowledge of, the Christian or Catholic faith would be required for teachers. That is the problem posed by the 1997 University Act. Theology in the university has lost its denominational ethos and has become non-denominational. This makes it more difficult to implement the proposal of the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference that religious education and religious instruction should be combined.

It could be argued that for theology to develop as a third level discipline, faith and theology need to stand apart. Historically, that has not been the case. Theology was seen to be an ecclesiastical discipline and, in most cases, was denominational in orientation. Notwithstanding the denominational form of theology in the non-denominational colleges of the National University of Ireland, faculties of theology existed with a definite denominational ethos in Queen's College, Belfast, Trinity College, Dublin (Protestant) and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (Catholic). The danger in this denominational setting is that the issue of academic status is deemed to be of less importance than orthodoxy, accountability to one's own Church or pastoral relevance. It can also be argued, as indicated previously, that the 1908 Act did allow the bishops to establish chairs of theology in the Irish universities but they chose not to. This may well be due to reasons of control:

The churches have jealously guarded theology as an ecclesial property and have up to now been less than cheerful about the prospect of losing control, a very real prospect if theology becomes available on the curriculum of a secular university.³²⁴

This dilemma is reflective of the dichotomy at second level between religious education and religious instruction, essentially with third level theology being either religious studies or theology.

3.12 The University, the theologian and academic freedom.

Long argues that theology 'reflects the age in which it is exercised' and of its very nature presumes a pluralism which avoids 'single explanations which claim to have a world view'.³²⁵ Religious studies on the other hand, in Long's view, is a science of comparison, is conducted from a distance and as such does not lead to the appreciation of any particular religion. Long concludes that theology and not religious studies has the objective of broadening the religious experience of the learner. The combining of the discipline of theology to the idea of pluralism is central to the current debate on the role of the theologian under the papacy of John Paul II. This debate centres on the role of the theologian and the faculty of theology in the wider church community but also on the academic freedom of the theologian and the theology department itself. A tension has emerged between the magisterium and the academic freedom of the individual professors. The issue dates to 1968 and the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Two cases illustrate this tension. Fr. Charles Curran was obliged to vacate his post as Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of America, following a lengthy court case in 1986.³²⁶ The core issue was the acceptance of the primacy of papal teaching.

More apposite from the Irish university viewpoint, is the case of Fr. James Good,

³²⁴ Long, Fiachra (1997) 'Teaching Theology in a Secular University' in *Theology in the University*, (ed. Corkery, P. and Long, F.) Dublin: Dominican Publications. p.107

³²⁵ Ibid. p.115

³²⁶ Ibid. p.119

Professor of Theology at University College Cork from 1959³²⁷. Fr. Good resigned his post in 1970 after publicly attacking the Church's teaching on contraception in the aftermath of *Humanae Vitae*.³²⁸ Ironically, Fr. Good reacted to press reports on the contents of *Humanae Vitae* and made his objection public the night before *Humanae Vitae* was actually published. Good referred to the encyclical as a 'major tragedy' which would 'be rejected by the majority of Catholic theologians and by Catholic lay people'.³²⁹ Given the denominational nature of university theology as a consequence of the 1908 Act, the private funding of same by the Irish bishops and their right to appoint and terminate the appointment of professors, it was not surprising that Fr. Good should be censured and eventually be forced to resign.³³⁰

Under the 1908 Act, theology departments in the National University of Ireland were denominational. Under the 1997 Act, this denominational characteristic will be more difficult to preserve and therein lies the problem for schools. A third level qualification in theology may not be sufficient to enable the graduate to teach catechetics or religious instruction. This raises the issue of the standing of the theological faculty in the National University Colleges within the Catholic church.

³²⁷ John A. Murphy in his work *The College, A history of Queen's/University College, Cork* states that James Good became Professor of Theology in 1959 and that the position 'lapsed after 1968 when Fr. Good declared his public opposition to the *Humanae Vitae* encyclical letter on contraception, and suffered ecclesiastical penalty accordingly'. See p.281 This contradicts Long's date of Fr. Good's appointment. However, Murphy appears to contradict his own earlier view in the same work when he states that Good was Professor of Theology from 1958 to 1970.

³²⁸ Long, Fiachra (1997) *op cit.*, p.120

³²⁹ Keogh, Dermot. (1997) *op cit.*, p.267

³³⁰ A certain confusion has arisen in relation to Fr. Good's role within UCC. While Murphy credits him with the Chair of Theology, Good never actually taught theology in UCC. According to Prof. V. A McClelland, the then Professor of Education in UCC, Good was 'technically a statutory lecturer in Philosophy'. For a number of years Good worked in the Education Dept. in UCC, where he was involved, initially, in administrative duties and, latterly, in Limerick, as an agent of UCC's Education department in Mary Immaculate Teacher Training College.

In relation to Good's relationship with the Diocese of Cork and Ross, Bishop C. Lucey removed Good's faculties to hear confession and to preach at Mass. Good later went to Turkana, Kenya as a missionary. Lucey, after resigning as Bishop of Cork and Ross on age grounds, went to join him in the Turkana desert.

According to the Code of Canon Law, Canon 833,

the following are personally bound to make a profession of faith, according to the formula approved by the Apostolic See:.... in the presence of the Chancellor, or in the absence of the Chancellor, the local Ordinary, or the delegates of either: the rector of an ecclesiastical or Catholic University, at the beginning of the term of office; in the presence of the rector if he is a priest, or of the local Ordinary or the delegates of either: those who in any universities teach subjects which deal with faith or morals, at the beginning of their term of office...³³¹

This profession of faith and oath of Fidelity was published in the official bulletin of the Holy See, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* on January 9, 1989.³³² Whereas the Code envisages the profession of faith and the Oath to be taken by all those in any universities who teach faith or morals, in reality

all the teachers who obtain their appointment through canonical mission in any university whatever are bound; all the teachers who obtain their position without canonical mission in whatever university (*de facto* Catholic or fully secular) are not bound.³³³

Under the 1908 Act, while the National University Colleges were non-denominational, professors were appointed through the bishops and were, as such, bound by the Profession of Faith and Oath of fidelity to the Magisterium. This safe-guarded the content of the theology being taught, from a Catholic viewpoint and ensured 'orthodoxy'. However, under the 1997 Act, the bishops have no say in the nomination or appointment of professors. Therefore, even though the professors may be Catholic and even Religious, under a vow of obedience to their Superior or Ordinary, they are not bound by the Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity. This development is significant in relation to the content of third level theology courses and the subsequent recognition of such degrees.

³³¹ Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1983) *op cit.*, pp.151-152

³³² Orsy, Ladislav. (1990) *The Profession of Faith and the Oath of Fidelity*. Dublin: Dominican Publications. p.7.

³³³ Ibid., pp 47-48.

The significance of this development or 'progression' was not lost on Prof. Maire Mulcahy³³⁴ of the National University of Ireland, Cork (UCC). Prof. Mulcahy believes that there is a need for an in-depth consideration of the kind of theology that is appropriate for third-level education. The theology that was experienced under the 1908 Act was 'peripheral, selective and defensive' and, to that end, 'no theology is perhaps better than bad theology'. Theology, when introduced into the university curriculum, must be objective and must encourage interaction with the other disciplines, including the sciences.³³⁵ This 'interaction' was also envisaged by Prof. Enda McDonagh³³⁶ who stated in the course of an address to launch the 'Diploma in Applied Theology and Community Development' in NUI, Galway in September 1999 that theology, psychology and sociology have much to offer 'in mutual affirmation and criticism, in extension and perhaps at times in transformation'.³³⁷

It is clear then, that the National University community saw the 1997 Act as a means of liberating theology from ecclesiastical control and separating theology from religious education and also as a means of broadening the framework in which theology operates. This development was advocated by Denis Bullen who, in a report to the Select Committee on Education (Ireland) 1835-1838, later known as the Wyse Committee, stated that Theology spelt trouble and religious instruction for students should take place away from the college as was the practice in London University.³³⁸

³³⁴ Prof. Maire Mulcahy is Professor of Zoology and has served on the Higher Education Authority and on the Steering Group on Higher Education.

³³⁵ Mulcahy, Maire. (1997) 'Can the vacuum be filled' in *Theology in the University*, (ed. Corkery, P. and Long, F.) Dublin: Dominican Publications. p.105

³³⁶ Professor Enda McDonagh is former Professor of Moral Theology at the Pontifical University, Maynooth. He is a member of the Senate of the National University of Ireland and is Chairman of the Board of Governors at NUI, Cork.

³³⁷ McDonagh, Enda (1999) Beyond 'pure' Theology in *The Furrow*, Vol. 50., No. 11. November 1999. P. 582.

³³⁸ Murphy, J.A. (1995) *op cit.*, p.7.

3.13 The implications of a non-denominational theology faculty for Catholic schools, religious education and catechetics.

This redefinition of theology in the university since the 1908 Act complements the philosophy from which the Department of Education and Sciences syllabus for religious education as an examination subject emerged. However, it negates the relevance of a qualification in theology from the National University of Ireland in relation to the teaching of catechetics or religious instruction, as mentioned elsewhere, a legal obligation in schools. This emerging 'theology' in the university would seem to contradict the wisdom of the Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference who have advocated combining the state's religious education syllabus with catechetics.

This development must spur Churches to establish reputable institutes for training catechetics teachers either on a national or diocesan basis. As previously indicated, the Pontifical University at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth is making some moves in this direction and it is also of note that the Maryvale Institute from Birmingham is now commencing accredited courses in Irish centres. However, the crucial point for those concerned with teacher qualification is that with the recent and likely developments in relation to theology departments in universities, the Catholic Church can no longer presume that theology graduates of the National University of Ireland will be qualified to teach catechetics or faith instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR SOME LEGAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS AN EXAMINATION SUBJECT.

4.1 Implications arising from the combining of religious education and religious instruction.

As indicated in chapter three, the Irish bishops have approved catechetical guidelines to be used in conjunction with the new state syllabus. To that end, catechetical materials were distributed to the sixty seven post-primary schools involved in introducing the religious education syllabus in September 2000. Significantly, and of concern, by October 2000 one school had returned this material as the teachers felt that it was too 'Catholic' for a non-denominational subject. The survey in chapter six tests this view with the other schools involved in the initial introductory phase of the programme. However, the incident does raise the point that the majority of teachers devote themselves to either of the two aims of religious education: teaching the practice of a religious way of life or teaching the understanding of the phenomenon of religion.³³⁹ Moran and Harris warn that

unless all of the teachers (parents, administrators, classroom instructors, coaches counsellors, *(sic)* dormitory monitors) first clearly distinguish the two aims, the school will create muddle and rebellion. When there is lack of clarity in the distinction, then on the one side the academic inquiry may not be challenging enough and on the other side the formation may not be particular enough.³⁴⁰

There is a real danger that in combining religious education with catechetics there will be a lack of clarity, if not a 'muddle' and, ultimately, neither subject will be taught effectively. Given that catechetics is non-examinable and does not count for university entrance points, it seems reasonable to assert that catechetics will be given less attention than an examinable non-denominational syllabus. This likely

³³⁹ Harris, M. & Moran, G. (1998) *op cit.*, p30 & p42.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p43.

scenario makes the bishops proposal to combine both disciplines seem ill-conceived. The post-primary diocesan advisors on religious education, who are appointed by individual bishops, welcomed the syllabus and also advocate combining religious instruction with religious education. However, they are aware of the challenges contained in such a development. These are enumerated by one of the group:

- a. it could diminish the amount and quality of catechesis in post-primary schools;
- b. within the curriculum, there is the danger of a bias towards relativism, given that the course is one that is open to those of any faith and no particular faith;
- c. the status and perception of the current religious education programme, which would continue, might be diminished;
- d. the most qualified teachers would require most of their time to prepare and teach the new subject to the detriment of their catechetical role and the current programme;
- e. it brings religion into the whole culture of points and competition, and religion is no longer the space where students can reflect.³⁴¹

While it is encouraging to see these concerns being expressed by the diocesan advisors for religious education, the same body has done little to address and allay them. The survey in chapter six is extremely uncomplimentary of the diocesan advisors

It must be remembered that religious education is not compulsory. Some schools will offer it on the curriculum, some may not. If a school does not offer religious education, it must still teach religious instruction/ catechetics. That is the fundamental flaw in the catechetical guidelines that have been issued to schools. The Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference now, perhaps unintentionally, has defined the syllabus for catechetics in relation to a State syllabus for students of any and no religion!

Further, particularly at Senior Certificate level, if a school does offer religious education, not all students will wish to avail of the subject. In such cases, religious

³⁴¹ O'Neill, Donal (2000) *op cit.*, p.30

education may be 'grouped' with geography or another optional subject. In the event of such circumstances, the school still has an obligation to provide catechetics to all students, not just to those who opt to take religious education. What of combining religious education and religious instruction then? If, and when such a situation arises, it is probable that students who do not take religious education will not be provided with catechetics/ religious instruction. This unsatisfactory situation is the consequence of combining the religious and the secular, religious instruction with religious education. If religious education and religious instruction are combined, the legal obligation to provide religious instruction will only be satisfied if all students take religious education as well. This situation seems unlikely and even more improbable when one considers the dearth of qualified teachers to teach the subject.

In view of the fact that the subject (religious education) is optional anyway and the syllabus may change, Catholic schools should still offer catechetics classes to remain true to their ethos, their function and, in the case of vocational schools and community schools and colleges, their legal obligation.

The Irish education system is unique in that Irish post-primary education was originally denominational and, to the present day, the churches have a guarantee of religious instruction within the post-primary school curriculum. In that sense, the current situation cannot be identically compared to other countries. However, one of the more controversial events in Catholic religious education in England and Wales in recent years was the adoption of *Weaving the Web* as the framework for religious education in Catholic schools. This programme was devised by the National Project of Catechesis and Religious Education and published in 1987-1988. Two dioceses, Birmingham and Salford, discouraged use of the programme. The programme has been criticised for an 'alleged lack of doctrinal content and the presentation of all religions as being of equal value'.³⁴² Critics of the programme

³⁴² Arthur, James (1995) *op cit.*, p65.

may have mistaken the syllabus as being catechetics when, in fact, it was religious education. The programme was aimed at pupils of whatever religious persuasion or none and faith is presupposed in neither pupil or teacher.³⁴³ Within the *Weaving the Webb* programme, while students may be challenged to develop their own faith commitment, religious education is not primarily concerned with developing Christian, or any other faith.³⁴⁴ It is obvious that the *Weaving the Webb* syllabus bears striking resemblances to the Irish Department of Education and Science's religious education syllabus both in content and in aim. While this programme is now viewed with caution by the English hierarchy, it is ironic that the Irish hierarchy should appear to embrace a similar programme.

4.2 A shortage of qualified religious education/catechetics teachers.

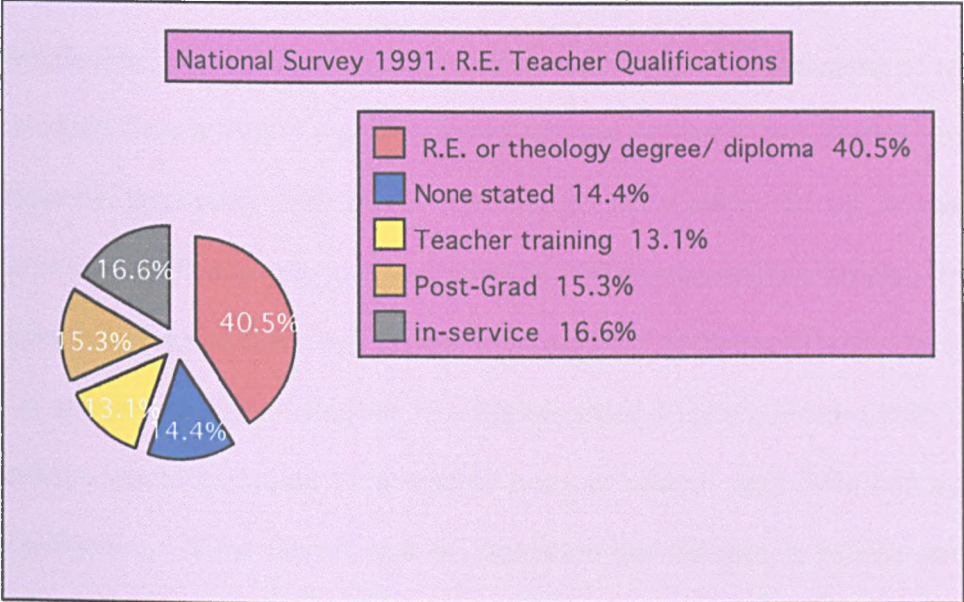
The greater availability of theology courses, alluded to in chapter three and later in this chapter, is to be welcomed and is central to the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum. However, it has been evident to all involved in education that there has been a shortage of teachers who were qualified to teach religious instruction and religious education for some time. In 1991, the following figure illustrates the teacher qualification profile in Ireland in relation to religious education. These figures relate to the national survey by Weafer and Hanley.³⁴⁵ For the purposes of comparison with a survey conducted by the writer in 1999 of post-primary schools in the diocese of Cork and Ross, some categories are combined.

³⁴³ Ibid. p 65.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. pp 65-66.

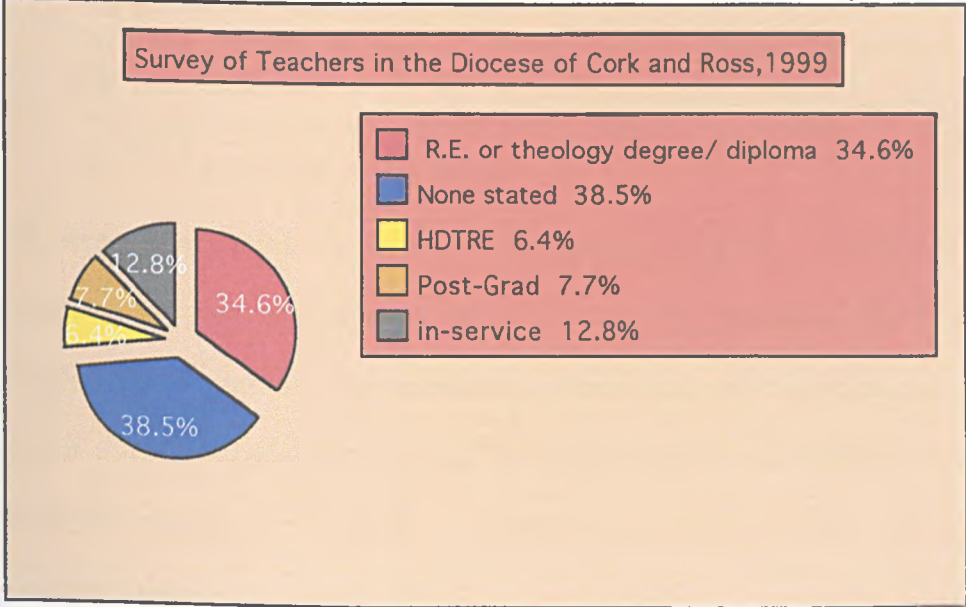
³⁴⁵ Weafer, John & Hanley, Ann. (1991) *op cit.*, p.23.

Fig 4.2.1 Teacher Qualifications: National Survey 1991.



These figures relate to a National survey. What is of note is the relatively high percentage of respondents with either a degree or a diploma in religious education/theology. This may be accounted for by the relatively high presence of religious and clergy in the education system at that time. The figure relating to those with no qualification is relatively low, 14.4%.

Fig. 4.2.2 Teacher Qualifications:Diocese of Cork and Ross survey, 1999.



The above figure is a representation of the findings of a survey of teachers of

religion in the diocese of Cork and Ross in 1999.³⁴⁶ Two figures are of note. Significantly, just 34.6% of teachers who are involved in the teaching of religious education have a formal qualification in religion. whereas this finding compares relatively favourably with the earlier Weafer and Hanley survey, it should be borne in mind that as religious education will be an examination subject, there is a presupposition that there will be qualified teachers available to teach the subject. It is unthinkable that in subjects like Mathematics, English, Science and French, students would be taught by a teacher body of whom only 34% had a formal qualification. If the Department of Education and Science is serious about the introduction of Religious Education as an examination subject, then it must, as a matter of urgency, address this issue of qualification.

The seriousness of the situation is compounded by the fact that a significant 38.5% responded they had no qualification to teach the subject. This response is almost two and a half times the national figure as of 1991. The discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that

... 'formal qualifications'are only available in the Leinster region and this precludes access for many who may wish to pursue this choice of career. This has been a real difficulty for those of us involved in Religious Education, because, when appointments are being made in schools, the pool of qualified candidates is very small.³⁴⁷

This writer, having also interviewed prospective teachers for the posts of 'Teacher of religion' can empathise with Sr. Coirle. For the successful introduction of Religious Education to the examinable curriculum, it is essential that more courses in religious education be available to teachers in areas outside Dublin. The survey in chapter six assesses the current qualification profile of religious education teachers.

As of September 2000, Rev. Dr. Michael Conway of the Pontifical University at

³⁴⁶ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *Op. Cit.*, p.68

³⁴⁷ McCarthy, Coirle. (1991) 'Response from a diocesan advisor' in *Whither religious education*. (Ed. Weafer & Hanley) Dublin, Columba. p.138

Maynooth established courses in religious education for teachers accredited through the Pontifical University. These courses are part-time and are offered in various centres throughout the country with the co-operation of the local diocese. What is of note is the use of the term 'religious education' in the course title. Since one assumes that such a course for teachers being accredited through the Pontifical University will be Catholic in character, it seems that Maynooth is either unaware or ignoring the fact that religious education is now, according to the Department of Education and Science, non-denominational and certainly not religious instruction or catechetics. Within the Irish educational framework, the term 'religious education' cannot refer to anything other than the non-denominational Department of Education and Science syllabus. This issue of terminology or definition needs to be addressed by schools and church authorities in order to avoid confusion.

Notwithstanding, there are serious obligations on school authorities to ensure that there are sufficient teachers within the school to teach religious instruction. It may happen that these might not be the teachers of religious education. In relation to community schools, this provision is included in the Instruments of Management

(iv) The principal shall be immediately responsible for making the arrangements for all the religious worship conducted and for the religious instruction given at the college and for the attendance of pupils thereat.

(v) The committee and Board shall ensure that there are, at all times, sufficient teachers in the college to give religious instruction. Depending on circumstances and requirements, teachers of religion may be appointed in permanent wholetime, temporary wholetime or part-time capacity.³⁴⁸

The suitability and qualification of teachers to teach both religious education and religious instruction is dealt with elsewhere in this chapter.

³⁴⁸ Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Diocesan office. p 23.

4.3 Difficulties arising from the issue of teacher qualification.

As was obvious from the survey conducted by Weafer and Hanley, *Whither religious education?*,³⁴⁹ there is a serious dearth in the availability of trained teachers of religion. This situation is as a result of the scarcity of colleges / universities offering formal qualifications in theology. Currently, the Pontifical University at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, does offer qualifications in theology as does Milltown Park, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, All Hallows, Dublin and St. Patrick's College, Carlow. Many of these colleges award their degrees through the Pontifical University at Maynooth or, as in the case of Saint Patrick's College, Carlow, through the NCEA (National Council for Education Awards). However, the 'mainstream' NUI colleges do not offer their students a qualification in theology at degree level despite offering a certificate or diploma in catechetics through the education department.³⁵⁰ It now seems likely that such a situation may be rectified by the establishment of Chairs of Theology in the colleges of The National University of Ireland. These positions, unlike arrangements in the past, would be independent of the Episcopal Conference and appointees would be appointed in the normal university way, without episcopal involvement. The Irish Catholic reported, on 28 January 1999, that theology is to be taught at University College, Galway.³⁵¹ The NUI Galway will offer a two year diploma course in Applied Theology and Community Development in association with the Western Theological Institute, an initiative of the Bishops of the West of Ireland. The possibility of offering such a course within the National University of Ireland after one hundred and fifty years, was made possible by the Universities Act 1997, which amended a section in the Universities Act 1908. The

³⁴⁹ The findings of this national survey were subsequently published by the Research and Development unit, a body of the Irish Bishops Conference based in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Weafer, John & Hanley, Ann. (1991) *op cit*.

³⁵⁰ This situation obtained in UCC, where Fr. Gearoid Manning, amongst others, of the Education Department in the college, offered a part-time, evening series of lectures in catechetics leading to a diploma in catechetics for successful students.

³⁵¹ Quinn, David. (1999) Theology to be taught at Galway University. *The Irish Catholic*. January 28th.1999. Dublin.

1908 act prevented public funds financing courses in theology in the NUI colleges. As mentioned earlier, The Education Bill 1998, similarly amended the same provision in the Intermediate Education Act, 1878. The 1908 Act did not prevent the teaching of theology as such, but as public funds were not available for it, it became financially impossible, the churches themselves being unable to finance such a venture.³⁵² This development may be the start of a welcome trend to offer theology in the NUI colleges. Further, Mary Immaculate College is aligning itself to the University of Limerick, Mater Dei to Dublin City University and, of course, Trinity College, Dublin, has always offered a degree in theology, but this degree was seen as being the preserve of the Church of Ireland. Indeed, the Church of Ireland students for ministry study theology in Trinity College. These degrees in theology will be conferred through the National University of Ireland and the other Universities. This development may see some limited church influence in academic appointments in that some of these colleges already offering theology are denominational in character and hence, under church control. It remains to be seen what authority the episcopal conference, or the local bishop, will retain over these institutes when they are subsumed into the wider university community.

This 'alignment' raises further concerns, what the university accepts as 'theology', the Catholic church may not accept. In an address to the bishops of the United States Episcopal Conference during their *ad limina* visit to Rome in June 1998, Pope John Paul II addressed himself to the relationship between the bishop, the university and the theologian. Admittedly, the American scenario is different to the Irish in that America has specifically Catholic universities. However, the relationship is comparable in that Catholic institutes are providing the Irish Universities with 'schools of Theology' as mentioned above and as graduates of such institutes will be seeking employment in Catholic schools and

³⁵² Ibid. p.3

teaching Catholic religious instruction:

Bishops have a special responsibility in relation to the work of theologians. If, as the whole Catholic tradition testifies, theology is to be done in and for the church, then the question of theology's relationship to the teaching authority of the Church is not extrinsic - something imposed from outside- but rather intrinsic to theology as an ecclesial science. Theology itself is accountable to those whom Christ has given responsibility for overseeing the ecclesial community and its stability in the truth.³⁵³

In a sense, the battle lines are drawn, since the Catholic Church sees the theology department as being a servant of the Church's mission and as being accountable to the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. In reality, theology departments in NUI colleges will operate differently. For example, in the case of the already cited arrangement between the West of Ireland Theology Institute and NUI, Galway, the theology department is working in conjunction with the Department of Community Development. Professor Enda McDonagh in his address launching the Diploma in Applied Theology and Community Development said that the title of the course

alerts to the more radical character of the initiative: Applied Theology and Community Development. The detailed programme confirms as it expands on that reality. Theology is to be studied in immediate dialogue with two other university disciplines and departments and in the practical framework of community development.³⁵⁴

Theology's partners on the course are psychology and sociology.³⁵⁵ As there is a difference between religious education and religious instruction, there seems to be a corresponding difference between theology from the Church's viewpoint and the viewpoint of the university. This dichotomy may well confuse the issue of qualification for an 'amalgamated' religious education/ religious instruction approach.

³⁵³ John Paul II (1999) 'The Church's Educational Mission' in *Springtime of Evangelization - The complete texts of the Holy Father's 1998 Ad Limina addresses to the Bishops of the United States*. San Francisco, Ignatius Press. p87.

³⁵⁴ McDonagh, Enda (1999) *op cit.*, p.580

³⁵⁵ Ibid. p.582

Essentially, while graduates of such university courses may be recognised for the teaching of religious education, will Catholic schools and schools that are legally obliged to teach Catholic faith instruction be obliged to recognise graduates of these secular -based courses in theology when employing teachers of religion? Clearly, if a school chooses to distinguish between religious education and religious instruction, there is no difficulty. However, if a school combines both disciplines, and the Irish Episcopal Conference for Catechetics seems to be envisaging and encouraging this, a teacher who is qualified for religious education may not be qualified for religious instruction. This would arise if a third-level college appointed professors and lecturers that may not be in 'good standing' with the Catholic Church. Presumably, such colleges would be free to recruit staff for the theological department from any or no religious background. Whereas it would be difficult and possibly legally unsound to question these appointments on the basis of religious background, it would be important if graduates were expected to assume responsibility for catechetics or faith instruction. This may embroil a school in legal difficulties and give rise to a situation where graduates of a National University of Ireland College that offers theology may be discriminated against in favour of graduates from the Pontifical or other 'Catholic' colleges. Indeed, a situation may arise where a graduate's ability to obtain a job, if religious education and religious instruction were to be combined, might well depend on the standing, within the church community, of the faculty of theology in the graduates *alma mater*! Can the Catholic Church discriminate against these 'secular' college graduates in favour of graduates of their own colleges when employing teachers in Catholic schools? Such a venture would be difficult to justify though some justification could be argued under the safeguards offered to schools in relation to ethos under the 1998 Employment Equality Act. This matter is dealt with in greater detail in 4.4 below.

A distinction needs to be emphasised between what is necessary for qualification and what is required for appointment. A degree with a theology component seems to be the obvious requirement for teaching religious education. If religious education is combined with religious instruction, then some evidence of commitment to the Catholic Church may be required in Catholic schools but also in vocational schools and community schools and colleges who have an obligation to provide religious instruction.

In brief then, a situation may emerge where non-Catholic graduates may be given jobs in Catholic schools as teachers of religion. For legal reasons, the religion of the applicant cannot be used as a basis for questioning at interview stage, especially as religious education is non-denominational. Such a line of questioning would risk an appeal to an employment tribunal and the courts on the basis of discrimination.

4.4 Relevant implications arising from Irish and European employment legislation.

The 1998 Employment Equality Act prohibits discrimination on the basis that one applicant 'has a different religious belief from the other, or that one has a religious belief and the other has not.'³⁵⁶ The legal situation as regards employment becomes more complex when one considers that Ireland, as a member of the European Community, is subject to European law. In England, Archbishop Nichols of Birmingham has expressed concern at European legislation which could prevent Catholic schools from specifically employing Catholic teachers. Archbishop Nichols, in an interview with *The Universe* newspaper stated that Catholic schools get their identity from their whole way of life, not just from R.E. lessons. Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State for Education, believes that 'it should be acceptable for a Church school to require a teacher to be an active

³⁵⁶ Glendenning, D. (1999) *op cit.* p.407

member of the Church in question'. However, 'a parliamentary insider' believed that 'religious schools would receive an exemption from the EU ruling for R.E teachers but not other members of staff.'³⁵⁷ While legislation is constantly being introduced, the impact of European Union legislation on the laws of member countries cannot be underestimated and may well oblige national governments to alter existing laws. This poses real problems for Catholic and all denominational schools in regards teacher employment. Indeed, this point was raised by the Christian Institute, an evangelical body, who have released a booklet expressing fears that faith-based organisations could be sued for discrimination under a European directive if they do not employ candidates of other faiths. Examples of possible conflict foreseen by the booklet, *European Threat to Religious Freedom* include an atheist suing after being rejected for the post of church secretary and a rejected Hindu applicant suing a Muslim charity for the homeless.³⁵⁸ However, reaction to the proposed EU directive is such in England that the scenarios envisaged by the Christian Institute seem unlikely to occur. Each government has a veto on the introduction of such EU legislation.

The issue did not come to prominence in the Irish press until October 2000. The Minister for Justice was reported to have said that he was unhappy with draft European legislation that, if enacted, would remove the certainty that exists regarding the preservation of the religious ethos of schools. The Minister subsequently threatened that he would veto the proposal and did so on October 17th. 2000. By exercising this veto, the Minister ensured that schools and hospitals run by religious are entitled to give preference to staff of their own faith in order to preserve the ethos of these institutions. The proposed European Union legislation would have 'obliged all states to outlaw employment discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, ethnic origin and sexual orientation

³⁵⁷ Parry, Marie. (2000) 'Schools face teachers ban' in *The Universe*, 9 July 2000. Manchester: Gabriel Communications. pp.1-2.

³⁵⁸ Wilkins, John. (2000) 'Evangelicals see EU directive as threat to faith groups' in *The Tablet*, 15 July 2000. London: The Tablet. p.970.

by the year 2003, and on grounds of disability and age by 2006 at the latest.³⁵⁹

The Minister argued that Ireland's existing legislation, particularly the 1998 Employment Equality Act and the 1999 Equal Status Act were sufficient anti-discrimination measures and offered Irish schools and hospitals more certainty in upholding their ethos than the proposed European Union legislation. The central issue lies with the 1998 Employment Equality Act and the the 1999 Equal Status Act. Both these laws outlaw all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender and sexual orientation. However an exception is made in the case of denominational schools where employers can require teachers of all subjects to uphold the school's religious ethos.³⁶⁰

This provision of Irish law was established in the landmark case *Flynn Vs Sister Mary Anne Power* (1985). Briefly, the High Court held that it was fair to dismiss a teacher employed in a Catholic secondary school operated by the Holy Faith Sisters, who had by her conduct in life rejected the norms of behaviour that the school existed to promote.³⁶¹ Flynn was residing with, and had become pregnant by, an already married man in a country town. In the High Court, Flynn argued that her dismissal arose from her pregnancy which would have been automatically unfair. Prior to the pregnancy, her employer, the Sisters, had asked her to terminate her 'affair' as it was a source of scandal in the town and had resulted in letters to the school from some parents. An Employment Appeals Tribunal established that the dismissal was not unfair. Justice Costello subsequently ruled in the High Court that the dismissal was fair and arose from Flynn's behaviour and not her pregnancy. Significantly, Costello ruled that

an employee's behaviour in sexual matters may justify dismissal if it is capable of damaging the employer's business. In this instance it was held that the plaintiff's conduct might damage the school's

³⁵⁹ Hennessy, Mark and Downing John (2000) 'O'Donoghue wins right for schools to select teachers of their own faith' in *The Examiner*, October 18th. 2000. Cork. p1.

³⁶⁰ Downing, John. (2000) 'O'Donoghue squares up to Europe to save religious ethos in Irish schools' in *The Examiner*, 17 October 2000, Cork. p1.

³⁶¹ Doolan, Brian. (1992) *Principles of Irish Law. (3rd. Ed.)* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. p 454.

efforts to promote certain norms of behaviour and religious principles which it was established to foster.³⁶²

It is clear that the influence of European legislation will impact greatly on the rights of Catholic schools to employ who they wish to with a view to preserving their ethos. What is significant has been the silence of the Irish Churches on this matter. While acknowledging that there may be communication between the churches and the Minister for Justice, the issue is one that is crucial to the future of Catholic education in Ireland, and as such, warrants some statement. By way of contrast, the issue was one of national debate in England.

In the light of national and European legislation on employment equality, Catholic secondary schools would be well advised to advertise for a 'teacher of religious education and religious instruction' in order to safeguard the ethos of the school. In vocational schools, community schools and community colleges, where there is a legal obligation to teach religious instruction, though the schools themselves are not specifically Catholic, the situation becomes more difficult and may well result in 'test cases' coming before the courts. For example, it has been reported that the TUI has been concerned for some time about the 'lack of permanency for some teachers of religion in vocational schools. The problem is very much due to the Bishops' concern over the protection offered to permanent teacher of the VEC under the *1930 Vocational Education Act*.³⁶³

It is to be welcomed and encouraged that a proper mechanism be put in place for the training of teachers of religion. However, the Department of Education and Science needs to be sensitive to the needs of Catholic schools and the ethos of Catholic schools in setting guidelines for establishing who is 'qualified' to teach religion in these institutions.

³⁶² Glendenning, Dymna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 430

³⁶³ Farry, Michael. (1998) *op cit.*, p 36.

4.5 Further issues for schools arising from the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.

4.5.1 Staffing.

There is a further difficulty which is related to the issue of qualification; the issue of staffing. With religion as a full examination subject, there will not alone be a shortage of qualified teachers, but if schools do manage to employ qualified religion teachers, their existing teacher allocation will not increase. A schools teacher allocation is based on that schools enrolment, not the range of subjects offered to students. Further, the school day will not lengthen to facilitate extra classes in religious education. In this scenario, at time-table level, at the expense of which existing subject will be the provision of religious education? Consequently, in relation to the schools teacher allocation, which teachers will be 'surplus', and be liable to be redeployed, in order to make room for the employment of a qualified religion teacher? It is obvious that these questions have serious implications for teacher unions, yet, this writer is unaware of any representation made by the unions on this aspect to the proposed elevation of religious education to the examinable curriculum.

4.5.2 Time.

Yet another difficulty arising from the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum relates to time. It is evident, from previous research already mentioned by this writer and cited in the Weafer and Hanley survey, that the time allocated to religious education is significantly less than that allotted to other subjects. If religious education is to be an examination subject, where will the extra time come from? As mentioned previously, the Department of Education and Science required two hours per week as a minimum allocation for a school to be eligible to offer the subject. This allocation is also binding on community schools and colleges by virtue of their Articles of management and on vocational

schools by virtue of Circular Letter 73/74. In reality, the writer's survey of teachers of religion in the diocese of Cork and Ross indicated that this requirement was met by just 13% of respondents at Junior Cycle and 11% of respondents at Senior Cycle.³⁶⁴

The Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) at their AGM on April 27th., 1999, reported that, as a result of the PCW (Programme for Competitiveness and Work), among other implications, 66% of schools will have to increase class size and 77% of schools will have to reduce subject options. The reason given was the reduction in teaching hours, as a consequence of the PCW, for assistant principals.³⁶⁵ This report echoed an earlier survey conducted by the ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland) which established that twenty six per cent of schools had to drop subjects because of lack of staff and forty five per cent of schools stated they had been prevented from adding new subjects because of a lack of staff.³⁶⁶ While acknowledging that the situation painted by the IVEA and the ASTI was part of a ploy to obtain a better staff allocation for schools, it still seems most unlikely that another subject will be welcome into, or find room in, the curriculum. Despite all the goodwill that may arise, it is felt that the issues of time and an already overloaded curriculum may well decide the fate of religious education as an examination subject.

4.5.3 Inspection.

A corresponding issue that has not been mentioned in any literature is the role of the inspectorate in the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. In every subject in the curriculum, the Department of Education and Science has a group of qualified inspectors who report to the Minister and ensure

³⁶⁴ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, pp 63-65.

³⁶⁵ McSweeney, Neans. (1999) Vocational Educators not happy with new structure. *The Examiner*. Cork. 28 April 1999. p.6

³⁶⁶ Pollak, Andy. (1999)(a) 60% of Classrooms too crowded-survey. *The Irish Times*. 29 March 1999. Dublin. p.4.

standards are maintained. They also oversee the setting and correcting of examinations. It is essential that a similar system be put in place for religious education. In the Catholic school, the religion class will consist of religious education, as set down by the Department of Education and Science, and also catechetics, if the bishop's guidelines for combining the two distinct disciplines are followed. It is imperative that this crucial aspect of catechetics will not be overtaken by the examinable curriculum. In this regard, the diocesan advisor for post-primary education will have to take on a different role and ensure that Catholic schools remain true to their ethos and obligations. However, such a move seems unlikely as the diocesan advisors seem to have given the state syllabus an unqualified welcome.

Currently, there is 'goodwill' among teaching staff towards religious education. There must also be competence, and both the Department of Education and Science and the various dioceses have obligations in this regard. In documentation available to date from the NCCA or the Secretariat of Secondary Schools, there is no mention of any provision for an inspectorate in religious education.

4.6 Religious education and catechetics in the Irish context: two ideologically compatible or opposed disciplines?

To date, religious education, not being an examination subject, had a syllabus or course that was flexible and was dictated for catechetical purposes by the episcopal catechetical committee. It was relatively easy to dictate the syllabus in voluntary secondary schools, which were Catholic founded and operated, but also in community colleges and community schools, where as mentioned, the Catholic Church has guarantees written into a variety of documents. In vocational schools, the local bishop has the authority to nominate teachers of religion. Consequently, the big difference with the introduction of the State examinable syllabus in religious

education is in the area of content. As indicated previously, this syllabus was drawn up in consultation with the Catholic bishops, but this does not prohibit a subsequent Minister from altering the syllabus in a radical way without either consulting with, or obtaining the consent of, the bishops. This scenario is not impossible. There seems to be a trend of Religious withdrawing from decision making bodies. Indeed, not all of these 'withdrawals' are voluntary. A recent controversy arose in relation to the Coombe Maternity Hospital in Dublin, specifically in relation to its ethics committee. A former Minister for Education voted against the nomination of a Catholic priest to the committee on the grounds that '...no ordained minister of any religion should represent the hospital on an ethics committee'.³⁶⁷ Given this objection to clergy on an ethics committee, it is not impossible that there would be an objection to clergy on a non-denominational syllabus committee for religious education. While an objection is not a final decision, it is possible that in certain situations, such an objection would win the support of a majority.

Many other difficulties arise from a religious education syllabus that may be altered in the future. A subsequent syllabus may contain elements that would be opposed to the teachings of the Church. This would pose difficulties for Catholic schools who offer that syllabus. Furthermore, as it stands, the proposed syllabus makes it compulsory for all students to study one of the world's major religions. Obviously, it is envisaged that in Catholic schools this will be Catholicism or Christianity. However, this is not necessarily so. This provision may change. Indeed, as it stands, it seems possible that a teacher in a Catholic school may opt for Islam instead of Catholicism or Christianity. It is a valid option within the syllabus. The school authority's ability legitimately to prevent such a scenario seems unclear as, in practice, a teacher decides the modules for his/her class. The Education Act 1998 makes provision in section 15 (2) (b) for the Board to

³⁶⁷ Quinn, David. (2000) No clergy need apply. in *The Irish Catholic*, 1st. June 2000. Dublin. p.1.

...uphold, and be accountable to the Patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school....³⁶⁸

Nevertheless, Teacher Unions would not appreciate this element of autonomy being eroded. These situations, though possible, are in the immediate future unlikely. However, in establishing any legal framework or in implementing any set of guidelines, there is an obligation to make provision for the unlikely, even the unthinkable, in so far as is reasonable, and to preempt future difficulties.

As indicated earlier, the final syllabus for Leaving Certificate students will not be published until a date is set for its implementation. The bishops are now being asked to approve the syllabus. In effect, the Catholic bishops are being asked to approve a syllabus that they did not devise and that they have not seen for use in Catholic schools!

As the syllabus stands, there are obligatory and optional components. It is possible that in the future such status could be altered and components which would be contrary to the Catholic faith could be made obligatory for use in Catholic schools. Indeed, it is possible, though unlikely, that the component or module dealing with Catholicism may be removed.

There are many different interpretations between the Christian churches on crucial matters of faith, even in the area of scriptural interpretation. Not all Christian religions accept all the books of the bible. A further example and an obvious one in this country because of recent debate is the issue of the Eucharist and the issue of inter-communion within the Christian Churches. Divorce is another example as is the issue of Papal authority and the ordination of women. Can Catholic schools prevent a teacher from using text books that take a different view to that of the Catholic Church on these and similar issues? Can school authorities insist that the

³⁶⁸ Department of Education and Science. (1998). *op cit.* p19

text books used in Catholic schools be approved, be orthodox or have an *imprimatur*³⁶⁹ ? Can action be taken against a teacher in a Catholic school who uses such material that is contrary to Catholic teaching but included in the syllabus? While the Education Act 1998, section 15 (2) (b), above, does give authority to the Board of Management to preserve the ethos or what it calls 'the characteristic spirit'³⁷⁰ in the school, these issues impinge on the independence of the individual teacher in teaching a subject. It remains unclear and untested as to what role the teacher unions and, ultimately, the Courts would adopt in the light of such a development. If a teacher is employed to teach religious education, it may eventually seem unreasonable for the Board of Management to (i) restrict that contract to teaching a syllabus revised by itself and (ii) penalise that teacher, who is paid by the Department of Education and Science, for teaching other options on the syllabus set by the Department of Education and Science.

The subject itself is an option. While it may be popular at Junior Certificate level, it may not be so at Senior Certificate level. It may not be possible for a school, due to its teacher allocation, to offer a class of catechetics to students who opt not to take religious education. The proposed subject is to be examined. Concerns may be raised regarding the correcting and the setting of that examination. Students taking the option on Catholicism or Christianity have their papers set and corrected by a non-Catholic or non-Christian.

As regards the teaching of the new subject, a number of issues emerge. As previously indicated, the Colleges of the National University of Ireland are currently planning to establish Chairs of Theology. The Bishops, as a body, would have no say in such appointments. Assuming that the Department of Education and Science would recognise all graduates of theology as being qualified to teach religious education, could Catholic schools discriminate on the basis of where a

³⁶⁹ An *Imprimatur* is granted by a diocesan bishop and is a declaration that the book is free from moral and doctrinal error.

³⁷⁰ Department of Education and Science. (1998). *op cit.* p19

teacher obtained his or her degree? In brief, can Catholic schools insist that their teachers be trained in named approved colleges? Can such a provision be made in community schools and community colleges where Catholic religious instruction is covered by deed of trust? A debate on these issues would be divisive and would embroil the Catholic Church in a conflict with the teacher unions. For that reason, it seems likely that nothing will be said or clarified in this regard in the immediate future. However, this issue may well arise in a few years time especially if there is a change in either Irish or European employment legislation.

There are several other contentious issues that can be cited in relation to a combined religious education/religious instruction syllabus. An obvious example is the issue of abortion. The position of the Catholic church is clear. Direct abortion is never permissible. The Constitution of the country is less emphatic. In the aftermath of the 'X case', the Supreme Court has decreed that abortion is legal in certain circumstances. Another referendum is possible or the issue may be addressed by way of legislation. An all party group has examined the issue and a referendum to alter the Irish Constitution seems likely in the near future. It is distinctly possible, if not probable, that a solution may be found which would not obtain the unqualified support of the Catholic Church. In this scenario, if a teacher teaches the State interpretation and not Catholic Church teaching, the Catholic school has little redress, given that the teacher's position is legally correct despite the provisions of section 15 (2) (b) of the 1998 Education act.

The Episcopal Conference has a duty to seek clarification on these matters from the Department of Education and Science before the syllabus begins in any more Catholic schools. The right of the local bishop to decide which qualifications suitable for teachers of religion in Catholic schools is being taken over by the State, as is the right to choose a syllabus. The *Code of Canon Law* (Canon 805) stipulates that the local ordinary (bishop) is 'to be careful that those appointed as

teachers of religion in schools, even non-catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine'. Similarly, the Code gives to the local bishop the right to appoint and remove teachers of religion within his own diocese.³⁷¹

As already mentioned in chapter one, 'religious education' in the broad sense has two aims: to teach people to practice a religious way of life and to teach people to understand religion.³⁷² The question needs to be asked, 'Can the same teacher fulfil both aims?' A professional educator may have a conflict in carrying out the aims of religious education. For example 'a teacher of religion in a Lutheran high school may aim at the understanding of religion while the school's administration may be trying to form good Lutherans'.³⁷³ A teacher in a religious school has the opportunity to be both kinds of teacher, or a teacher of both aims. When there is a lack of clarity in the distinction of these aims,

then on one side the academic enquiry may not be challenging enough and on the other side the formation may not be particular enough. Endless talk about Christianity or Judaism is not religious education.³⁷⁴

Unfortunately, the proposal by the Irish Bishops to combine religious education with a catechetics course runs the risk of such confusion.

While the introduction of religious education may be a welcome step for several reasons, it does present serious concerns for those who are engaged in Catechetics and in the management of Catholic secondary schools. While the introduction of an examination in religious education will increase the standing of religion within the curriculum, it also raises issues which, to date, have not been satisfactorily posed, much less answered. Religious education is not catechetics and it is not religious instruction. By attempting to combine the two, the Irish Bishops Catechetical Commission have only succeeded in raising more difficulties and jeopardising the teaching of religious instruction in post-primary schools,

³⁷¹ The Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland. (1983) *op cit.*, p 147.

³⁷² Harris, Maria & Moran, Gabriel. (1998) *op cit.*, p30.

³⁷³ *Ibid.* p42.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p43.

ironically, that which they must safe-guard. Ultimately, schools may decide not to teach religious education: that is their choice. They do not have a similar choice in relation to catechetics. An already overcrowded time-table, difficulties with qualification and some teachers personal difficulties with aspects of Church teaching may ensure that the combining of religious education and religious instruction will be regretted and revoked before the subject reaches Senior Cycle.

CHAPTER FIVE - Methodology

5.1 The survey.

The aim or purpose of any survey may be defined as the process of obtaining information, 'which can be analysed and patterns extracted and comparisons made'.³⁷⁵ Since the crucial issues in relation to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject have already been identified as relating to teacher qualification, the various obligations to teach religious instruction in the different school types and the ability to combine successfully religious education and religious instruction, are the primary areas that this survey sought to examine.

While the questionnaire employed is a new one, it is, nevertheless, inspired by the aforementioned survey conducted by John A Weafer and Ann M Hanley.³⁷⁶ It was also influenced by a previous survey by the writer in regard to religious education in schools in the Diocese of Cork and Ross.³⁷⁷

These surveys, especially Weafer's, were used primarily for purposes of reliability, validation and comparison as they analysed the '...attitudes, ideals, needs and problems of religious education teachers at post-primary level in Ireland'.³⁷⁸ Weafer's survey was based on the replies of 679 religious education teachers in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and was conducted during the months of April, May and June 1989, by the Irish Hierarchy's research unit, the Council for Research and Development, based at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. The previous survey by the writer involved the replies of one hundred and one religion teachers in the diocese of Cork and Ross. Those questionnaires were distributed between October and December, 1998.

³⁷⁵ Bell, Judith. (1993) *Doing your research project. (2nd. Edition)* Buckingham: Open University Press. p. 10.

³⁷⁶ Weafer, John A. & Hanley, Ann M. (1991) *op cit.*, pp 105-124

³⁷⁷ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, pp 111-116.

³⁷⁸ Weafer, John A. & Hanley, Ann M. (1991) *op cit.*, p.13

5.2 Objectives.

The objectives of the survey were, firstly, to document the theological qualification of teachers involved in teaching religious education in Ireland during the first year of the subject's introduction. In this regard, in schools where there were more than one teacher of religious education, respondents were encouraged to indicate the number, qualification and status (lay, brother, sister, priest) of each of the other religious education teachers in the school. In schools where there was more than one teacher of religion, the possibility of sending a questionnaire to each teacher of religion was discounted as such a course of action would distort the result and larger schools would have a disproportionate weighting. Instead, the questionnaire was sent to the coordinator of religious education, as designated by the school, and where possible, that person was asked to record the gender, status and qualification details of the other respondents.

As indicated earlier, while *Veritas* has sent catechetical materials to the participating schools, at least one school has returned this material. The survey then sought to assess the suitability of the catechetical materials sent to those schools and to establish if teachers felt that religious education and religious instruction could successfully be combined. The survey also sought to examine the practical steps that individual schools had taken to combine catechetics with religious education.

Given this combination of religious education and religious instruction, the roles of both the diocesan advisor for catechetics and the State coordinator for religious education are important, both to preserve the integrity of their own subject areas

and as a resource and support to the teachers concerned. Questions 13 and 14 examined these roles. One of the main arguments for the introduction of religious education as an examination subject was that it would raise the profile of the subject among pupils, teachers and parents. Questions 18 to 20 ascertained if this had actually happened.

5.3 Method.

As indicated previously, sixty seven schools in Ireland introduced religious education as an examination subject in September, 2000. Noirín Hynes, the state coordinator for the subject, was contacted in December 2000 and a request was made to her for the names of the schools teaching the subject. At that point, the writer was directed to put the request in writing and to send it to Mr. Bernard Kirk of the Galway Education Centre. It is from this office that the subject is being coordinated. In January 2001, Bernard Kirk forwarded to the writer the names and addresses of the schools that were offering the subject. This list contained sixty eight schools. One, Terence Macswiney Community College, Knocknaheeny, Cork. withdrew from the introduction as they felt that they were not ready to proceed at that time.³⁷⁹

That list was cross-checked with a Government of Ireland publication, *List of post-primary schools*³⁸⁰, and the telephone number of each participating school was obtained. The list of all participating schools is supplied in appendix iii.

Of the sixty seven participating schools, four were Church of Ireland secondary schools or secondary schools affiliated to another denomination. Since a significant portion of the survey concerned catechetical guidelines issued by the Catholic Episcopal Commission for Catechetics, these four schools were omitted

³⁷⁹ Writer in telephone conversation with Mr. Tony O'Neill, Principal. January 24th. 2001.

³⁸⁰ Government of Ireland. (2000) *List of Post Primary Schools*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

from the survey. Of the sixty seven schools involved then, sixty three were sent questionnaires. These are categorised as 35 secondary schools, 17 community colleges or vocational schools and 11 community or comprehensive schools.³⁸¹

On Thursday, January 25th. 2001, the writer contacted these sixty-three schools by telephone. In some cases it was possible to talk to the coordinator of religious education on the staff. In such cases, the purpose of the survey was explained and a request was made for assistance. Where it was not possible to speak to the coordinator, the name of that person was obtained and a brief message left.

All questionnaires were posted on Friday, January 26th, so that all schools would receive them by Monday, January 29th. 2001. It was felt it was more appropriate that all schools should be surveyed at the same time. When posting, a letter was sent explaining the survey and appealing for cooperation. That letter also stressed the confidentiality and anonymity of the process. A copy of the letter is reproduced in Appendix i. However, a short personal note, either based on the earlier conversation or expressing apologies for not being able to contact the respondent personally the previous day, was included. This was done with a view to establishing rapport and ensuring a high response rate. The questionnaire was accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope for return. A copy of the questionnaire is to be found in Appendix ii. Only Questionnaires that were returned by March 1st.2001 were included in the analysis.

While the process was cumbersome, it was also necessary in that a high response rate was crucial. The strategy worked in that the final response rate was 74.6%

5.4 Structure.

It was felt that the shorter the questionnaire, the higher the response rate. The questionnaire consisted of two sections contained in two pages. The first section

³⁸¹ A full list of participating schools and of the four schools not included in the survey is contained in appendix iii.

(questions 1 to 10) examined the background of the teacher; Gender, status, school type and academic qualification for teaching religious education. It also assessed the number of students in the religious education class, first year as a whole, and the time allocation for religious education. Where possible, questions were closed, requiring in most cases the circling of a given option.

Section two (questions 11 to 20) employed a Likert scale. Scales were appropriate in the context of this survey as 'scales are devices to discover strength of feeling or attitude'.³⁸² The Likert scale is recognised as being the most straightforward scale of attitudes available. This point is significant because it was felt that by keeping the questionnaire 'user-friendly' or easy to complete, the chances of a high response were enhanced.

In section two, respondents were asked to record their strength of agreement with ten statements, ranging from '1' or 'strongly agree' to '5' indicating 'strongly disagree'. In this regard, the statements were clear and unambiguous.

Finally, questions 21 and 22, were concerned with the catechetical guidelines. Respondents were asked if they had or had not introduced these guidelines or whether they were unsure if the guidelines had been introduced in their schools or not. Interestingly, in some responses, the answers supplied to each question were mutually exclusive!

5.5 Analysis.

The completed questionnaires, a total of forty seven from the sixty three distributed, were analysed using the package SPSS for Windows 1998.

Analysis took place under three headings. Initially, frequency figures were obtained which indicated the numerical frequency of each response. However, as

³⁸² Bell, Judith. (1999) *Doing your Research Project*. (3rd. Edition) Buckingham: Open University Press. p 185.

indicated previously, while religious instruction enjoys protection by agreements and circulars in vocational schools and in community schools and colleges, it ironically enjoys no such protection in Catholic secondary schools. As already illustrated in chapter two, religious instruction is the *raison d'être* for such secondary schools. Results were then analysed by cross tables. In effect, the response for each question was 'broken-down' into the four categories, 'vocational schools', 'community colleges', 'community schools' and 'secondary schools'. This analysis is crucial in that it illustrates the treatment of catechetics, religious education and teacher qualification in each of these school types. While one might expect Catholic secondary schools to have the most favourable environment for catechetical activity, this was not always the case. In this regard, in relation to some questions, there was a large diversity in responses. A simple frequency table does not allow for this, more detailed, analysis.

Finally, questions nine and following were analysed according to school type and according to whether the school was in or out of Leinster. Previous research by Weafer and Hanley indicated that there was a dearth of qualified religion teachers outside of Leinster as it was in Leinster that all theology courses were available. This analysis was important in that it illustrates the need for the provision of theology courses by both the university sector and Church authorities outside the pale.

The final question, relating to practical steps in the teaching of catechetics was analysed manually, as the open-nature of the question and the variety of responses made any other form of analysis difficult.

A surprising and unexpected development was the number of teachers who telephoned, e-mailed or wrote to the writer expressing views and concerns in relation to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. The

fact that these responses were freely made, unprompted and in addition to the questionnaire makes them a valuable source of information. These documents are analysed at the end of chapter 6.

5.6 Limitations.

In analysing the data accrued, there are some limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, the 67 schools that have introduced examinable religious education to the curriculum did so voluntarily. These schools volunteered to be members of the first phase of introduction, the group with which this survey is concerned. It follows then that one would expect more enthusiasm for examinable religious education within this group than there might be within the teaching profession as a whole.

Secondly, this survey was sent to the coordinator of religious education in the designated schools. The responses may not represent those of the others involved within these schools. In the survey, in order to maximise responses, confidentiality was seen to be crucial. Accordingly, the respondents' school is not recorded in the questionnaire. In practical terms, this meant that not more than one questionnaire could be sent to each school as, otherwise, schools with five teachers of religious education would influence the results of the survey disproportionately.

Finally, in respect of significance testing, forty-seven questionnaires were returned. This is a relatively small number on which to base Chi-square tests etc. While a significant difference, i.e. a value less than 0.05, was recorded in respect of some responses, it is possible that other questions would have recorded a significant difference also should there have been a larger base.

CHAPTER SIX AN ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY FINDINGS.

6.1 Response rates.

Of the sixty-three questionnaires distributed, a total of forty-seven were returned. This represents a response rate of 74.6% Thirty-five questionnaires were distributed to secondary schools. Twenty-four were returned. This indicates a response rate of 68.6% for secondary schools. Eleven questionnaires were sent to community schools. All were returned, a 100% response rate. In relation to community colleges and vocational schools, the Department did not differentiate between these categories in the *List of post-primary schools*³⁸³, however, a total of seventeen questionnaires were distributed to schools in these categories. Five questionnaires were returned from community colleges and seven from vocational schools. A total response of twelve out of seventeen distributed or 70.59%.

6.2 Reliability Tests.

The analysis package made comparisons possible between school types, between Catholic secondary schools and all other schools, between schools in the Leinster area and those elsewhere and, obviously, frequency tables. Pearson Chi-square tests were obtained for each comparison and, while these figures are indicated in each individual analysis, they can be found in greater detail in the Appendices. However, in passing, the reliability value is given after each figure. The Chi-square test gives an exact 2-tailed probability figure in the column titled 'Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)'. This figure is crucial in terms of significance testing in that this figure gives the likelihood of there being no difference. In statistical terms, anything less than 0.05 is significant (one in twenty chance of there being no difference). A reading of 0.01 would indicate a likelihood of there being no difference in one case in a hundred.

Non-parametric, Chi-square tests were deemed to be the most appropriate

³⁸³. Government of Ireland (2000) *op cit.* p iii.

reliability tests because the questions, particularly those involving scales, involved nominal and ordinal data. It is widely accepted that such data is unsuitable for parametric tests, though this traditional approach to analysis is under attack.³⁸⁴ Bi-nomial tests could have been employed, particularly in relation to the outside / inside Leinster analysis. However, such tests would not have allowed for a four-way analysis between the school types, Catholic secondary school, community school, community college and vocational school. In the interests of uniformity, then, Chi-square tests have been used throughout.

6.3 Analysis.

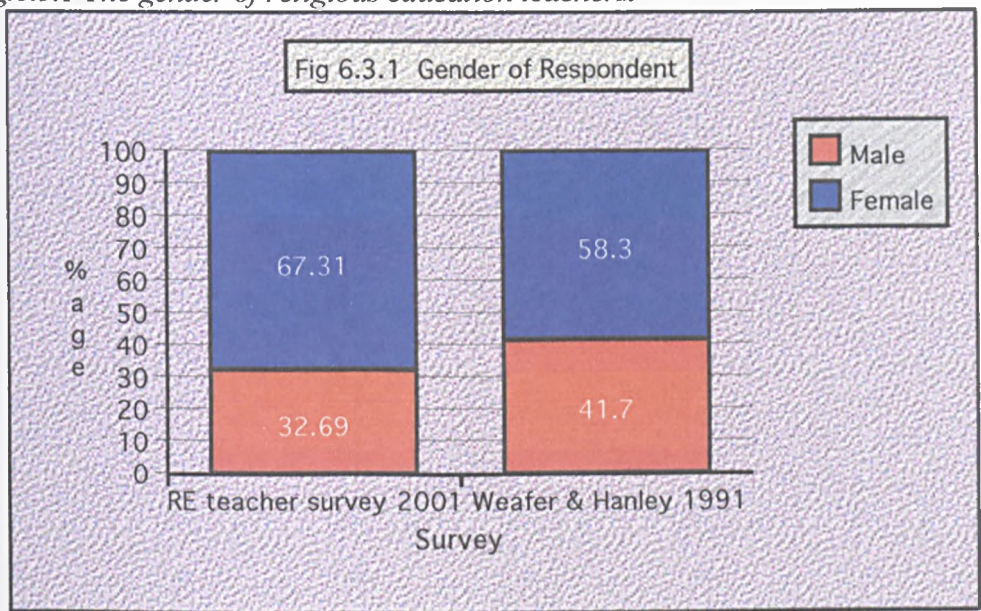
Each question is analysed separately. Where useful, a comparison is made with an identical question on the Weafer and Hanley survey³⁸⁵. Initially, analysis is made on the basis of frequency, thence between Catholic and State sector schools and, where useful, between the different school types, and finally, between schools in and out of Leinster. A table of mean values is also given for questions 11 to 21. In these questions, respondents had to give their responses according to a Likert scale. In this scale, 1 indicated strong agreement with responses extending to 5, indicating strong disagreement. In general, the lower the value, the higher the agreement with the given statement. For each of these questions, a total mean value is supplied along with mean values for Catholic schools, state sector schools, schools within Leinster and schools outside Leinster. This allows the reader to establish quickly differences towards the statement from within the different groupings. For ease of analysis, these questions are taken in order, the number of the question on the questionnaire corresponding to the number of the section within 6.3. The number of returned questionnaires was 47. In the case of each individual analysis, N indicates the valid response for that question and can be verified in Appendix iv.

³⁸⁴ Howitt, Dennis & Cramer, Duncan. (2000) *First steps in Research and Statistics*. London: Routledge. pp 51-52.

³⁸⁵ Weafer, John A. & Hanley, Ann M. 1991. *op cit*.

6.3.1 The gender of religious education teachers. (N=44)

Fig.6.3.1 The gender of religious education teachers.

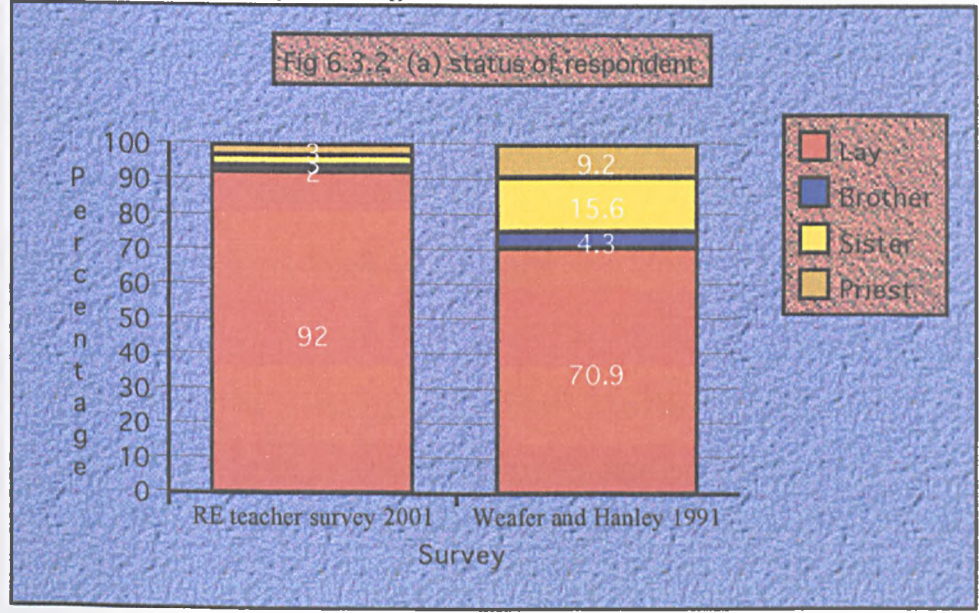


Respondents were asked to indicate their gender, and also to indicate the gender of the other religion teachers on staff. While 44 respondents answered this question, the majority of respondents did not enter the gender of the other teachers on the staff. In terms of analysis, the gender of 52 teachers was indicated.

As can be seen, the ratio of male to female teachers is approximately 1:2. However, what is of note is the decline in the number of male teachers of religion since the Weafer and Hanley survey. This finding, while it is of concern, in so far as it would be desirable if the proportion were more equal, is not surprising given the greater number of females within the profession as a whole. This trend has been commented on by the teacher unions. In that sense, this finding echoes the need for initiatives to attract males into the post-primary teaching profession and, particularly, into teaching religious education.

6.3.2 The status of religious education teachers. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.2(a) The status of the religious education teacher.



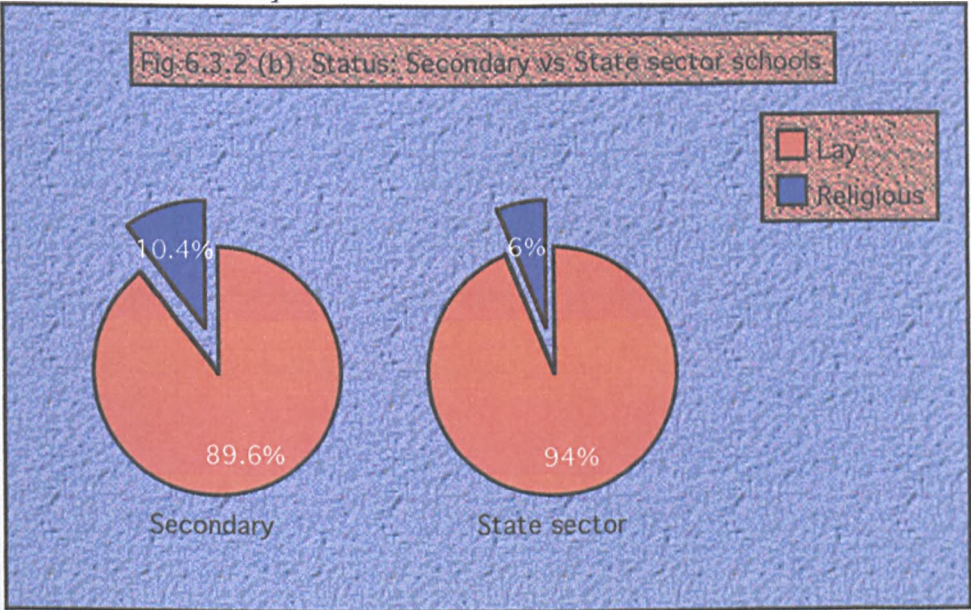
As in the previous question, respondents were encouraged to indicate the status of the other teachers of religion on their schools' staff. The statistical analysis did not allow for an easy identification of information, given the instances of multiple entries. For this reason, this question and question 9, relating to qualification, were analysed manually. The status of 99 teachers was indicated. Of these, the overwhelming majority were lay. In the following analysis, comparison is again made with the Weafer and Hanley survey.³⁸⁶

Mention has been made of the decline in the numbers of Religious who are involved in the teaching apostolate. In the context of this survey, of the 99 teachers whose status was revealed, 91 were lay teachers, 3 were sisters, 3 were priests and 2 were brothers. What is particularly noticeable is the decline, in the ten year period between the two surveys, in the numbers of religious sisters from 15.6% to 3%. Traditionally, secondary schools were able to rely on the religious orders of priests, brothers and sisters, that were attached to their schools, as their main supply of teachers of religion. With the current decline in the numbers of such personnel, because of a rising age profile, a decline in vocations and a

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p31.

diversification of ministry, such schools have to rely on the laity to supply their needs for religion teachers.³⁸⁷ Given this scenario, it is not surprising that over ninety percent of teachers of religion are lay. In that context, this figure is further evidence of the reliance of the Catholic Church on its lay members for the effectiveness of catechetical activity. It is also further evidence of the need for proper courses for such lay teachers of religion.

Fig 6.3.2(b) *The Status of teachers of religion - secondary school / state sector school comparison.*



As indicated above, one might have expected a higher rate of Religious within the staff of secondary schools as opposed to State sector schools. This is not so, as the following figure illustrates. In this figure, community schools, community colleges and vocational schools are collapsed to form ‘State sector schools’, similarly, priests, brothers and sisters are ‘collapsed’ to form the category, ‘religious’.

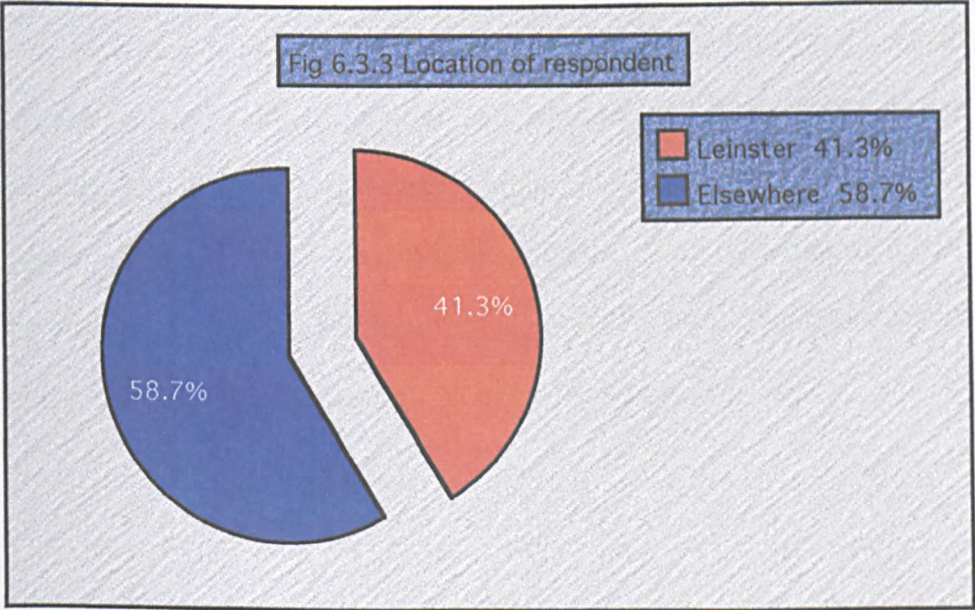
It is clear that, from this particular survey, there is no great difference (4.4%) in the religious status profile of religion teachers between Catholic secondary schools and all other post-primary schools combined. The almost equal number

³⁸⁷ Feheney, J.M. (1998) *op cit.*, p 207 also Congregation for Catholic Education. (1998) *op cit.*, p 42.

of priests, brothers and sisters in both categories may be partly attributed to the salaried chaplains that are allocated to community colleges and community schools. A case in point: in the Diocese of Cork and Ross, a diocesan priest is a salaried chaplain in Nagle Community College and another in Ballincollig community school. A Religious Sister of Mercy is chaplain to Schull community college. There are other examples and the arrangement is evidence of the goodwill that exists between diocesan authorities and vocational education committees in the case of community colleges and between the various dioceses and the Department of Education and Science in the case of community schools. The goodwill originates in the model agreements mentioned previously. These salaried 'Religious' chaplains are also allocated minimal teaching hours.³⁸⁸ It would be expected that many of these chaplains, appointed by Diocesan authorities, would be Religious and would be involved in the current phase of religious education as an examination subject.

6.3.3 Respondent inside or outside the Leinster area. (N=46)

Fig 6.3.3 Is your school inside or outside the Leinster area.

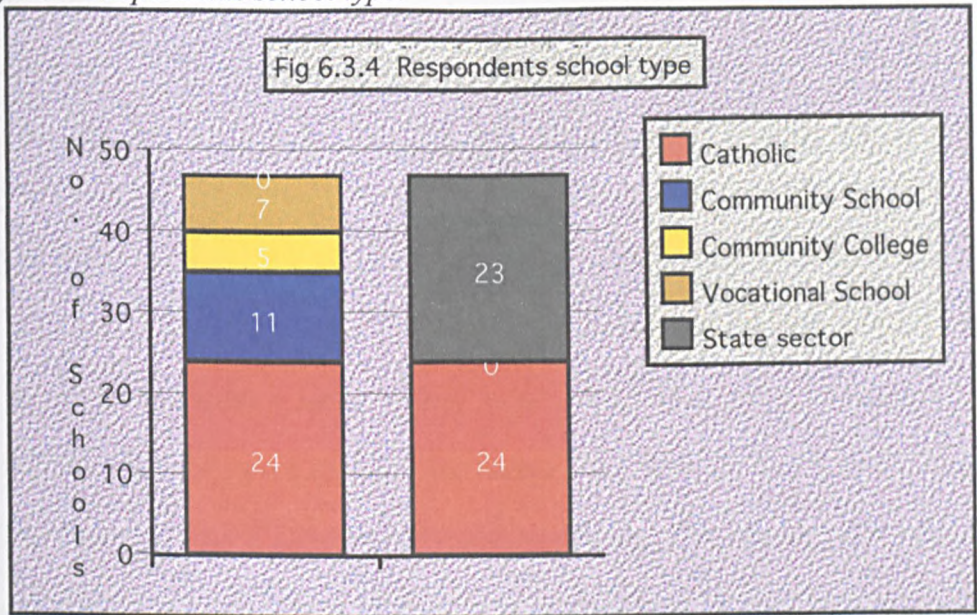


³⁸⁸ Currently, the recommended class allocation for each chaplain should not exceed six teaching hours per week.

Concern has been expressed that many of the courses in theology being offered in Ireland take place within the Leinster area.³⁸⁹ The purpose of this question was to facilitate in ascertaining whether there is any significant qualification difference between teachers of religion in and out of Leinster. This analysis will be used as a ‘crosstab’ with question 9 (6.3.9 below). In relation to this question, 19 respondents were from the Leinster area, 27 from without.

6.3.4 Respondents school type. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.4 Respondents school type.

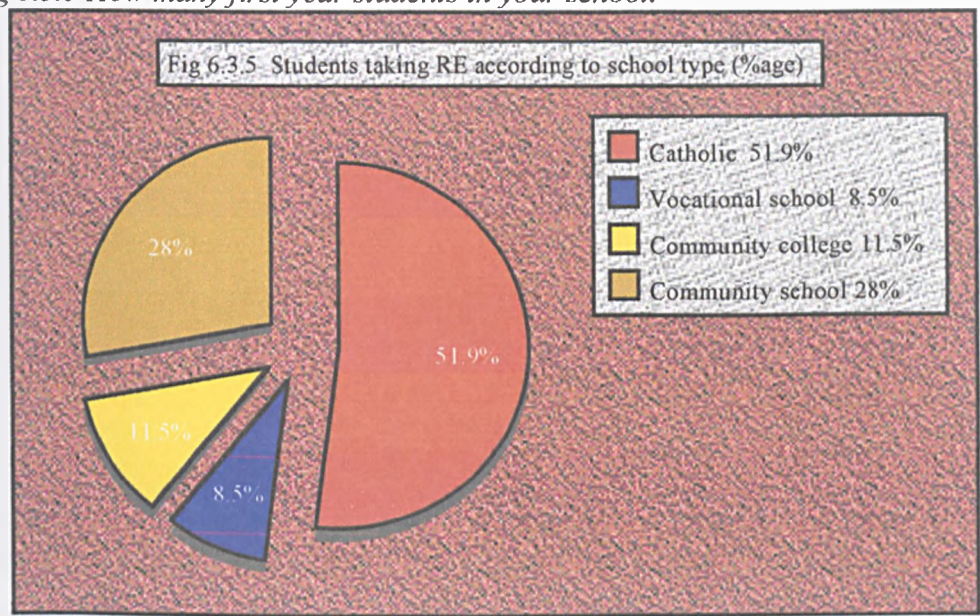


One of the critical aspects of this survey is to ascertain if there is any significant difference between Catholic schools and community schools and colleges and vocational schools in their approaches and attitudes towards the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. This question will allow a comparison between the responses of teachers in such Catholic schools and teachers in other schools, collectively termed ‘State sector school’.

³⁸⁹ This problem was alluded to by Coirle McCarthy in response to the Weafer and Hanley survey in the context of difficulties in obtaining qualified religion teachers outside of Leinster. see McCarthy (1991) ‘Response from a Diocesan Advisor’ in *Whither Religious Education*. (ed. Weafer & Hanley) Dublin: Columba p138

6.3.5 Number of first year students in respondents school. (N=46)

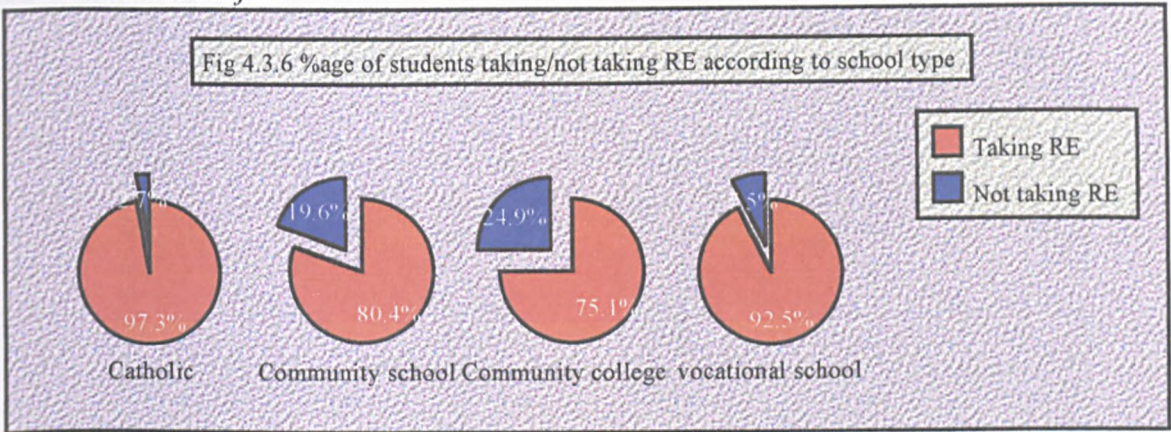
Fig 6.3.5 How many first year students in your school.



In analysing this response, use is made of means as well as actual numbers and percentages. The figures and means for each school type are to be found in Appendix iv. In general terms, the response also provides a profile of the number of students that attend each school type within the group of schools that introduces religion as an examination subject in 2000. In brief, 2626 students attend first year in a Catholic secondary school, 432 attend first year in a vocational school, 1415 attend first year in a community school and 583 students attend first year in a community college.

6.3.6 Number of first year students taking religious education as an examination subject. (N=46)

Fig 6.3.6 The number of first year students taking religious education as an examination subject.

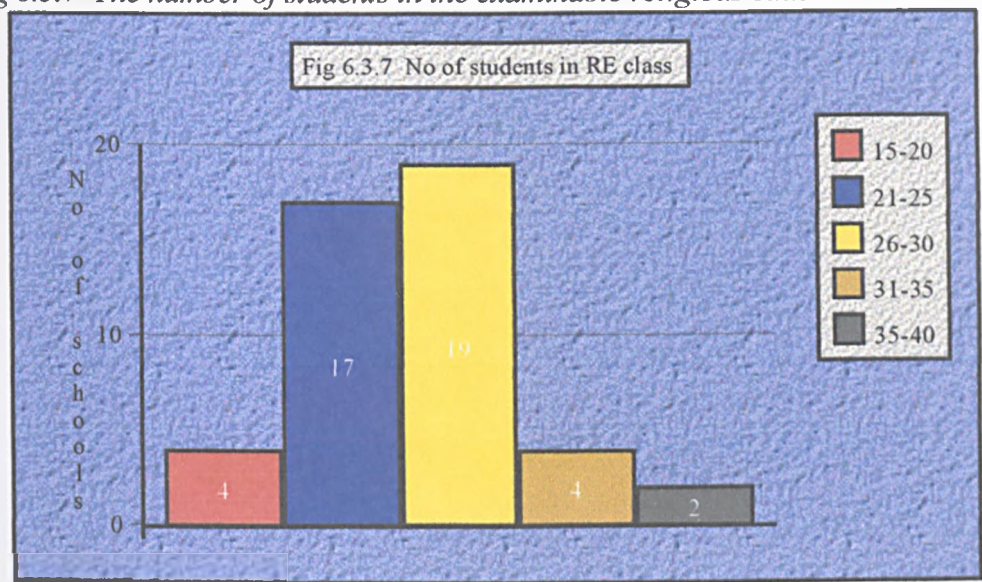


This question bears a resemblance to the previous question. The function of this question was to ascertain the number of students in each school type that were not taking the subject, religious education. The above figure expresses the percentage of students within each school type that were and were not taking religious education as an examination subject. Again, these figures can be obtained from Appendix iv.

As can be seen, Catholic secondary schools have the highest percentage of first year students taking religious education as an examination subject. This may be accounted for by the higher qualification ranking of teachers in such schools, (see 6.3.9 below) or it may be accounted for by the fact that some schools within the other groupings may not have offered religious education to all classes within the first year cycle. As community schools, colleges and vocational schools are perceived as not being *de jure* ‘Catholic’ schools, parents who may not wish their children to partake of religion class may send their children to such schools. Such withdrawals would also increase the ‘not taking RE’ percentage above. It may also be indicative of a higher importance being afforded to religious education, even non-denominational religious education, within secondary schools for reasons of ethos.

6.3.7 Number of students in the examinable religious education class.
(N=46)

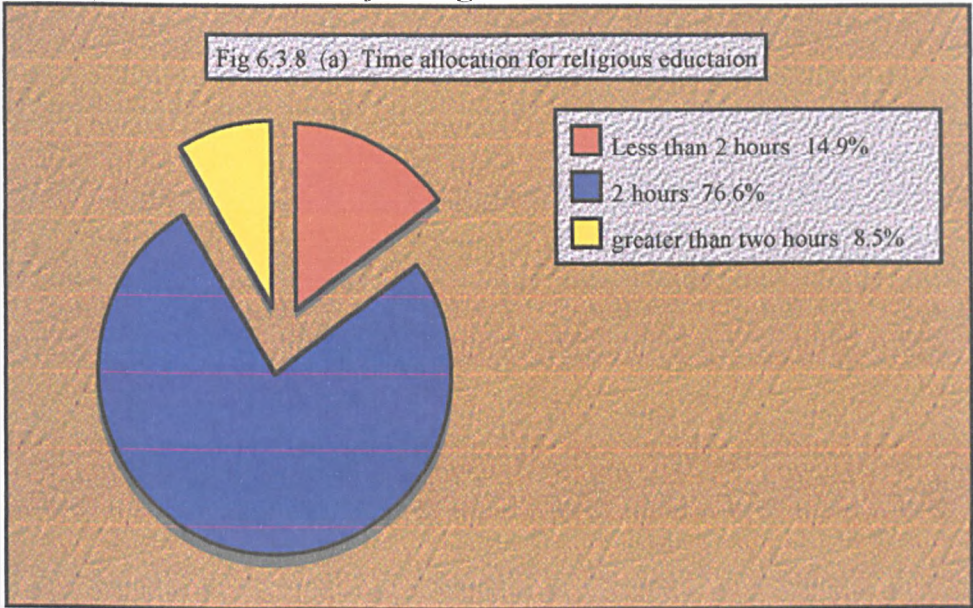
Fig 6.3.7 The number of students in the examinable religious education class.



As can be seen, the greater number of religious education classes have between 21 and 30 students. However, this figure also provides evidence that the classes in six schools (13%) have more than 30 students. When one considers that the Department of Education and Science allows one teacher for every eighteen students, these findings may indicate that the schools’ teacher allocation is being used elsewhere, possibly facilitating smaller classes for ‘main’ subjects, Irish, English, Maths and French. As religious education becomes more a part of the schools’ curriculum, this may change. However, the high classroom size may also be indicative of a shortage of qualified teachers or of teachers willing to teach the subject. Again, in this particular analysis, it needs to be remembered that these schools volunteered to introduce the subject. The expectation then is that these schools represent the current ‘best practice’ in relation to religious education.

6.3.8 Time allocation for religious education. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.8(a) The time allocation for religious education.

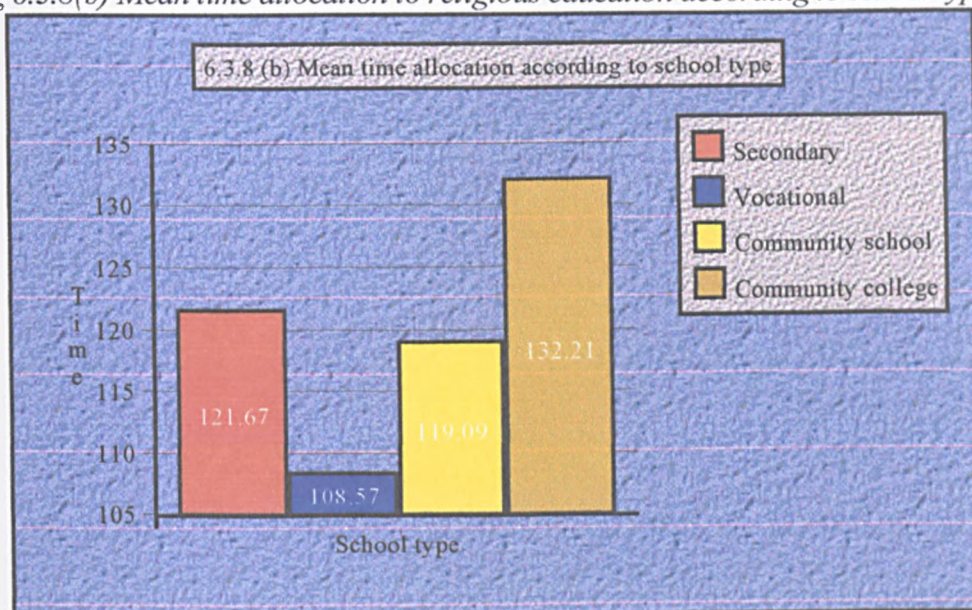


The critical issue in relation to this analysis is the guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Science in relation to examinable religious education. Schools wishing to introduce the subject should have an allocation of two hours per week for the subject.³⁹⁰ These figures, relating to schools, from Appendices iv and viii, indicate that this, in many cases, is not the case.

These findings illustrate a continued perception of religious education as being not as important as other subjects. However, it can also be interpreted as being the product of an overcrowded timetable. These issues have been dealt with previously.

³⁹⁰ Department of Education and Science. (1999) *op cit.*

Fig 6.3.8(b) Mean time allocation to religious education according to school type.

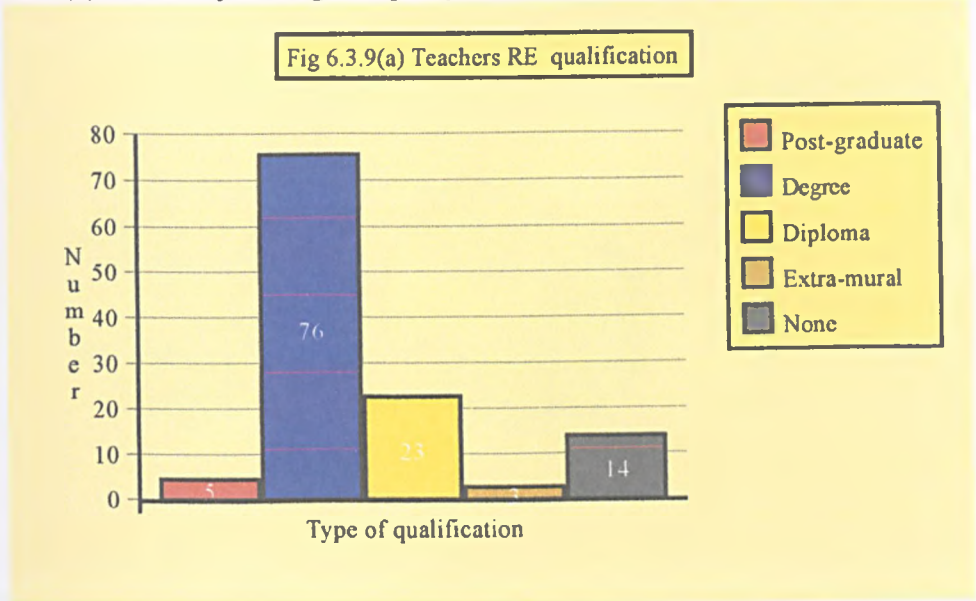


In terms of a school type analysis, one might have expected, for reasons of ethos, the time allocation for religious education in Catholic secondary schools to be greater than other schools. This is not the case.

Community colleges would seem to have the greatest allocation of time, 132 minutes. This is testimony to the success of the agreements between dioceses and religious orders and the various Vocational Education Committees which provide for religious instruction. Community schools are just 1 minute less than the two hours stipulated, while secondary schools are 1.6 minutes in excess. However, it is noticeable also that all school types have less time for religious education than the time allowed for by the Articles of Management of community schools and community colleges and circular letter 73/74, in respect of vocational schools. This deficit in time afforded to religious education may be further evidence of an overcrowded curriculum and of a situation where the importance of religious education on the curriculum has been degraded with the passing of time.

6.3.9 Respondents highest religious education qualification. (N=122)

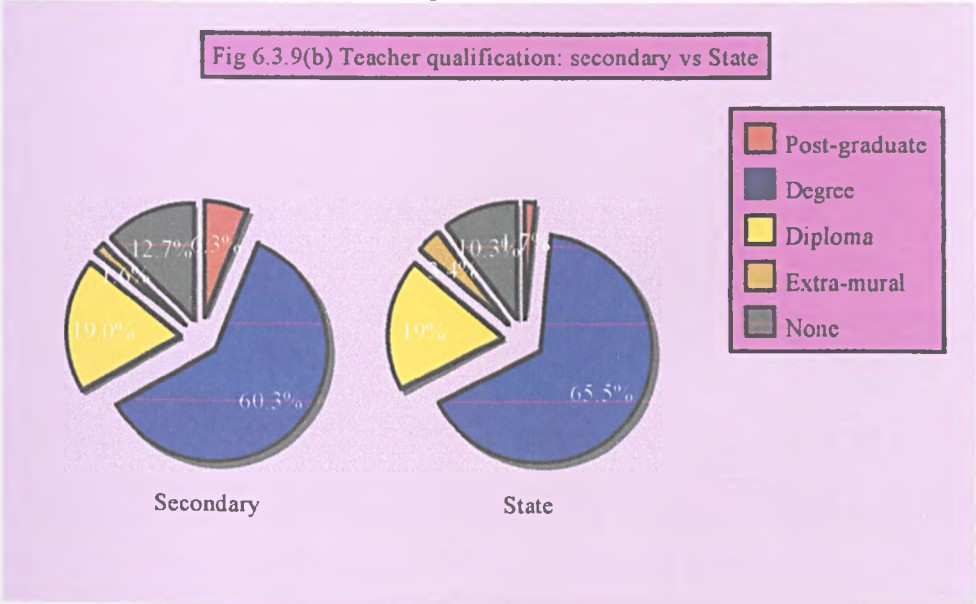
Fig 6.3.9(a) What is your highest qualification for teaching religious education.



Respondents were also invited to record the qualification of their colleagues in the religious education department in responding to this question. While all 47 respondents answered the question, qualification details of 122 teachers were submitted. Responses to this question were collated manually, the results of which are to be found in Appendix iv. The question of qualification is central to the profile of religious education as an examination subject. It is an area to which the Catholic Church in Ireland has not been attentive. The responses are analysed under three headings, frequency, secondary schools versus State Sector schools and whether the school is inside or outside of Leinster.

As can be seen, the vast majority of respondents (66%) have a theology degree qualification to teach religious education. However, it is of concern that 11.5% of teachers have no qualification for teaching religious education. This is the result of university colleges within the NUI sector being without theology departments. It is an area that both Church and State must address. While the Universities Act of 1997 will address the difficulty to some extent, the remedy is not without concern.

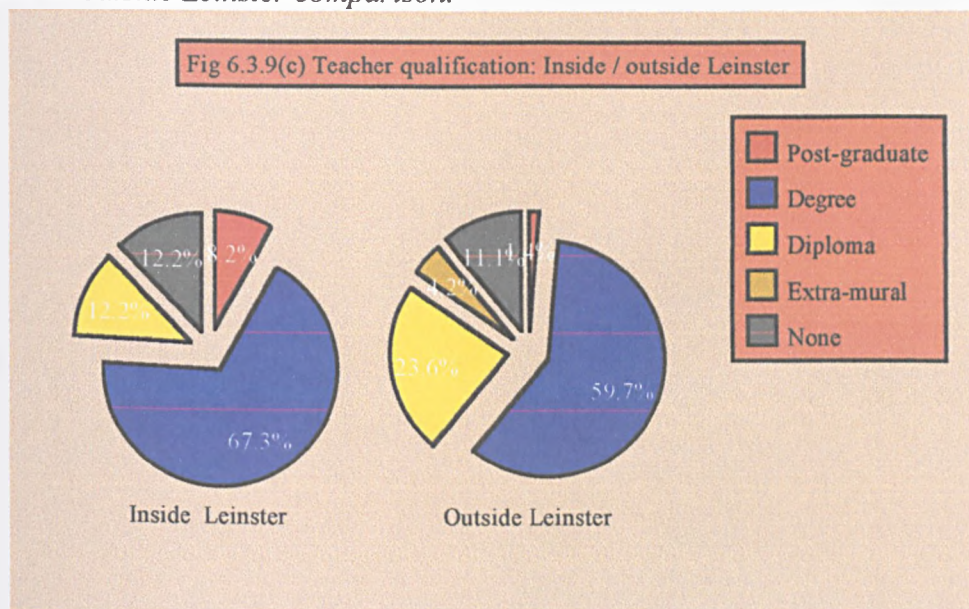
Fig 6.3.9(b) What is your highest qualification for teaching religious education : secondary vs state sector school comparison.



There is no real difference between the theology qualifications of teachers of religious education in secondary schools and those in State Sector schools, 66% in each sector have a degree level qualification. While more secondary teachers have a ‘post-graduate’ award in theology, a higher percentage of State Sector teachers have a primary degree. It is also notable that secondary schools have, surprisingly, a slightly higher number (2.4%) of teachers without any qualification. As Religious continue to withdraw, this situation may increase, especially outside Leinster. (see below) However, while acknowledging the relatively high qualification levels, it must be remembered that these schools volunteered to teach the new subject and, as such, they may not be representative of the broader picture. That picture may be more alarming as evidenced in other surveys.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ A previous survey by the writer in schools in the diocese of Cork and Ross, revealed that 30% of teachers of religion did so without a formal religion/ theology qualification. see Deenihan, Thomas. (1991) *op cit.*, p 68. This confirmed an earlier national survey that established that 31% of teachers had either no formal qualification in religion(14.3%) or had merely attended an extra-mural course in religion (16.7%) see Weafer and Hanley (1991) *op cit.*, p 23.

Fig 6.3.9(c) What is your highest qualification for teaching religious education : inside vs outside Leinster comparison.

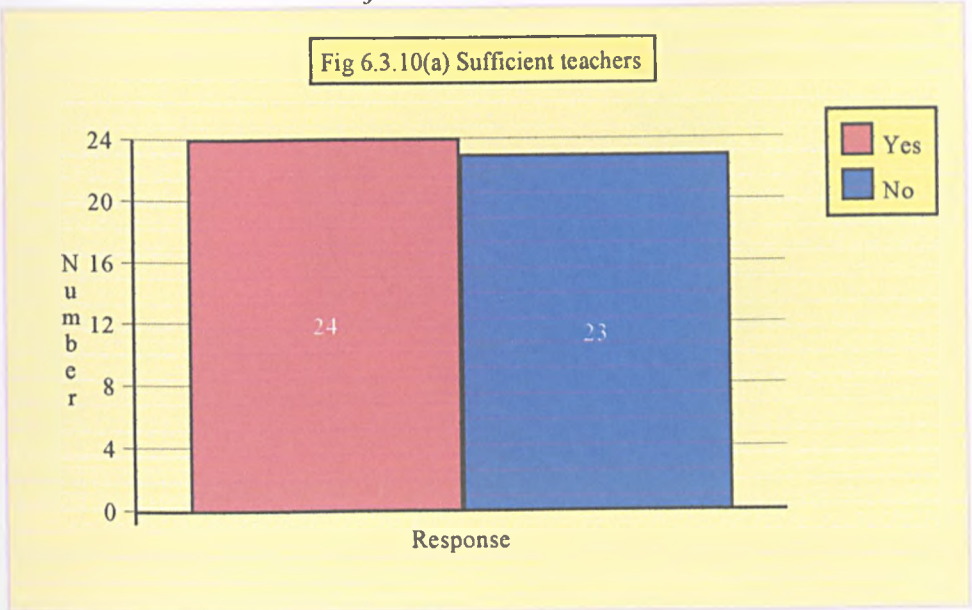


As expected, a greater percentage of teachers with both primary and post-graduate degrees in theology teach within Leinster. This finding confirms a similar result in the Weafer and Hanley survey.³⁹² Again, it underlines the difficulties caused by a centralisation in the Dublin area of centres offering third-level qualifications in theology. The Universities Act of 1997 and recent initiatives undertaken by various Dioceses in conjunction with, among others, the Pontifical University at Maynooth and Maryvale Institute in Birmingham should go some way towards redressing this dichotomy. Reference also needs to be made to the 12% in each category who have no qualification for teaching the subject. It is unthinkable that teachers should, or should be expected to, teach an examinable subject for which they have no professional academic training. While this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, the 12% who have no qualification may also be representative of a core group within the teaching community who see no need for, and who have no desire to obtain, a qualification for teaching religious education.

³⁹² Weafer and Hanley (1991) *op cit.*, p26

6.3.10 If all students in your school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject? (N=47)

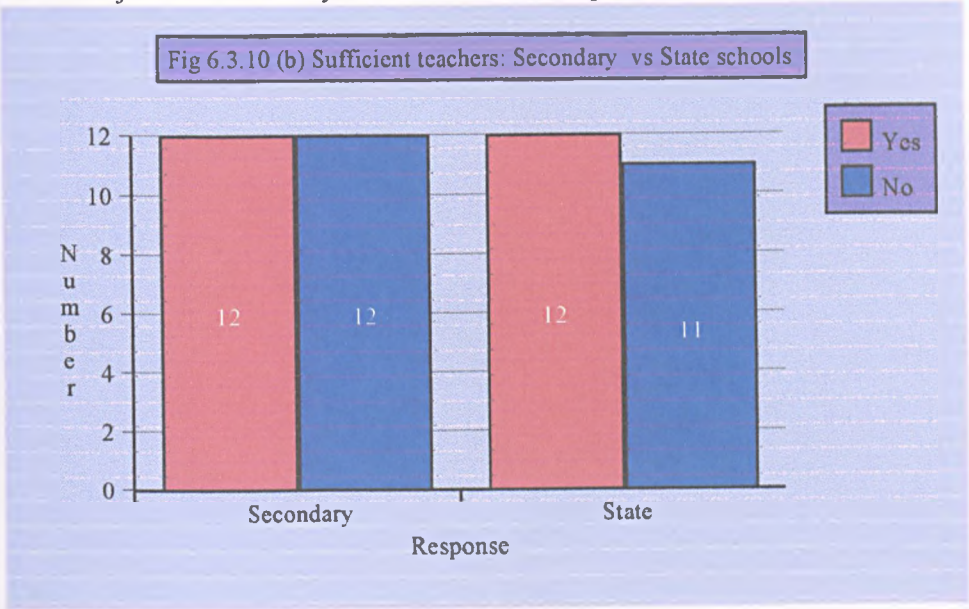
Fig 6.3.10(a) *If all students in your school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject?*



This survey concerns the first year of the phased introduction of religious education as an examination subject. Within time, the subject will be offered to all classes. While the previous question assessed teacher qualifications at first year level, this question enquired as to whether there would be sufficient teachers to teach the subject in the light of all students in the school taking the subject.

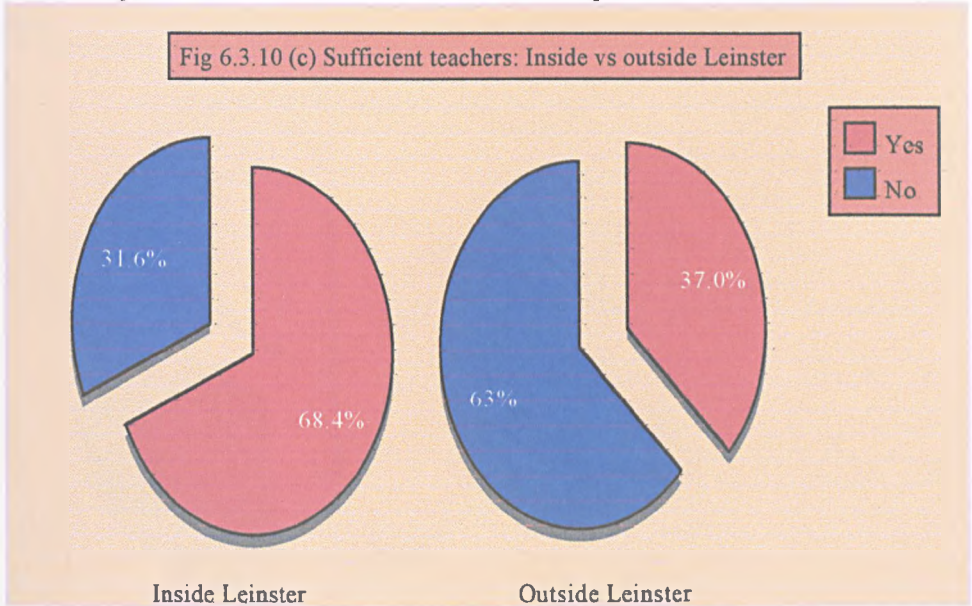
Respondents were evenly divided. However, the significant 49% who feel that their school would not have sufficient qualified teachers of religion in the light of a general introduction of the subject, further underscores the need for a broad-based immediate provision of appropriate theology courses for teachers.

Fig 6.3.10(b) *If all students in your school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject? : secondary vs state school comparison.*



While the above figure indicates parity between secondary and State schools in relation to having qualified teachers to teach religious education to all classes, it should be understood that these schools should have had qualified teachers all along! There may be some case for asserting that there has been a shortage of qualified teachers; nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence for asserting that schools used their teacher allocation for other subjects and were content to let these teachers ‘fill’ their timetable with a class of religion here and there. Similarly, secondary schools may have relied excessively on Religious to teach religious education within their schools. Now, in the aftermath of a decline in such Religious, these schools have a dearth of qualified religious education teachers. It must be of concern that half of the schools that have introduced religious education as an examinable subject do not have qualified teachers to teach that subject to the whole school. Unless appropriate measures are put in place, and unless schools employ religious education teachers as part of their teacher allocation, the future of religious education as an examination subject seems to be less than secure.

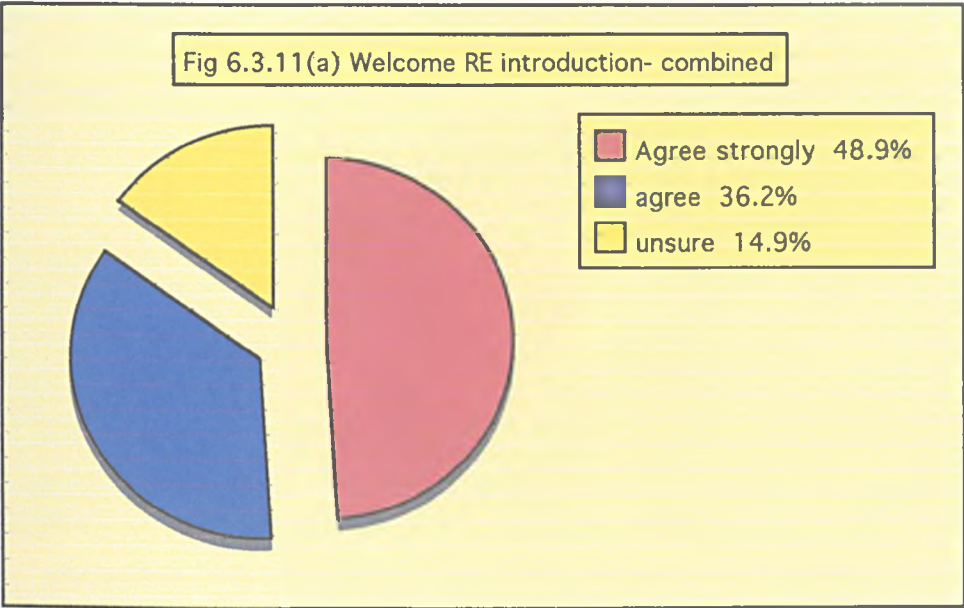
Fig 6.3.10(c) *If all students in your school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject? : inside vs outside Leinster comparison.*



The above figure underlines the dichotomy in teacher qualification between schools in and out of Leinster. Fig 6.3.9(c) above revealed a difference in teachers' qualification. This figure is of more significance because it addressed the ability of schools in and out of Leinster to teach religious education with qualified teachers to all students. 68% of schools in Leinster have sufficient teachers; that is not to ignore the significant 32% who do not. However, outside of Leinster, almost 63% of the schools that volunteered to introduce religious education on a phased basis do not have qualified teachers to continue with that introduction to the school as a whole. This situation is unusual. No other subject would be allowed to be taught or introduced with such a serious shortage of qualified teachers. Again, this finding underlines the need to introduce properly accredited degree courses for religion teachers.

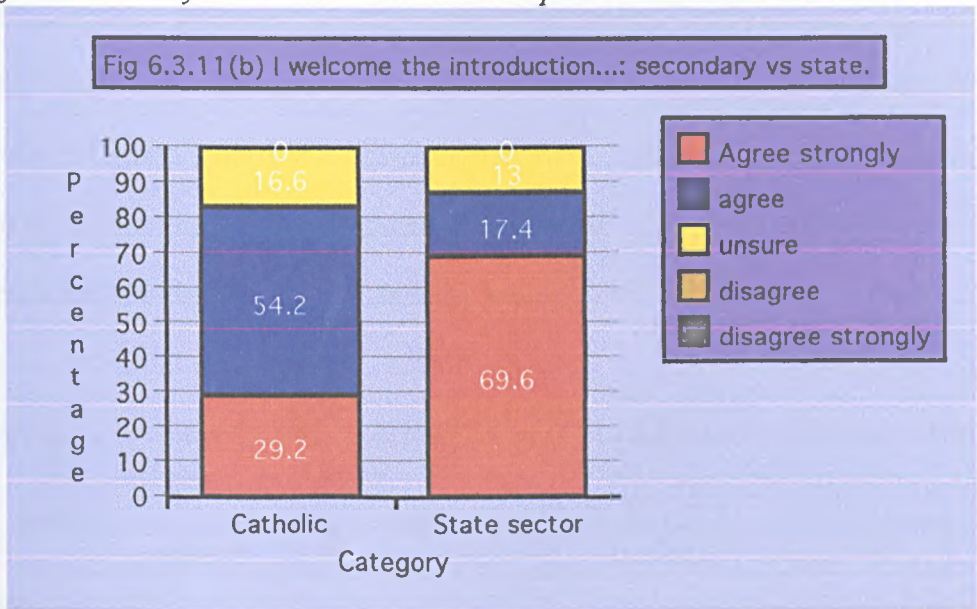
6.3.11 I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.11(a) I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.



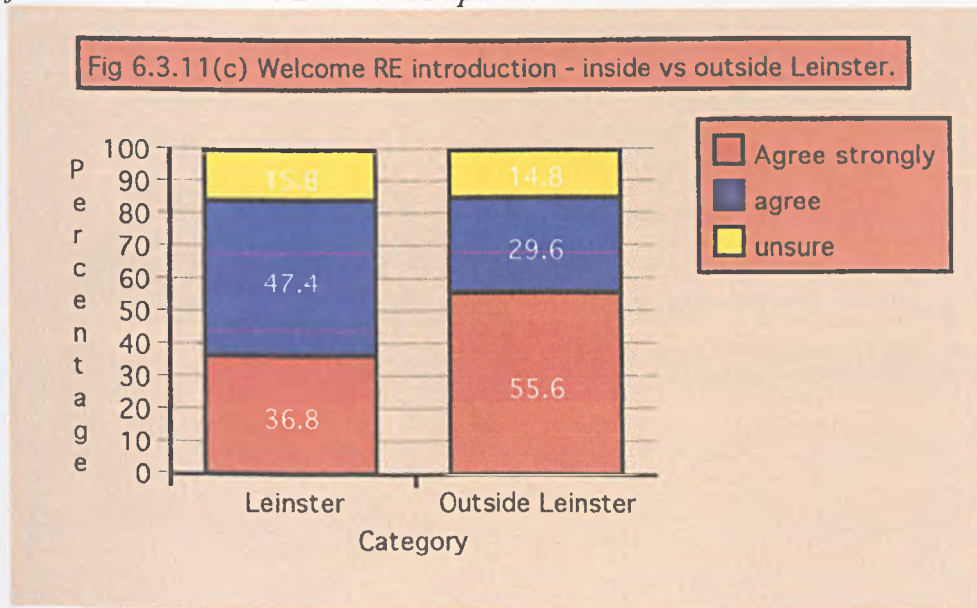
The schools which introduced religious education as an examination subject did so voluntarily. In that sense, it is no surprise that 85% of respondents would ‘agree’ that they welcome the subject’s introduction. However, the 15% who are ‘unsure’ represent a constituency that may well have ‘agreed’ before they introduced the subject and now are not as sure. This 15% may indicate that some teachers, less than six months into the first phase of introduction, are experiencing reservations. The current unwillingness on the part of the Department of Education and Science to review the syllabus after the first phase of introduction should be reconsidered.

Fig 6.3.11(b) I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: secondary vs state sector school comparison.



In a comparison between Catholic secondary schools and schools in the State sector, there is no difference in the combined ‘agree strongly’/ ‘agree’ responses. However, there is a significant difference, confirmed by a Chi-square test (.015), in the ‘agree strongly’ responses. In general, Catholic secondary teachers seem to be less enthusiastic than their colleagues in the State sector in relation to the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum.

Fig 6.3.11(c) I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



In relation to responses in and out of Leinster, an equal number of respondents in both categories welcome the introduction. However, that welcome is stronger outside Leinster. In some ways this response is surprising in that a greater number of schools outside Leinster do not have sufficient teachers to teach the subject in the light of a general introduction. A Chi-square test on this comparison indicates that the difference is not significant (0.412)

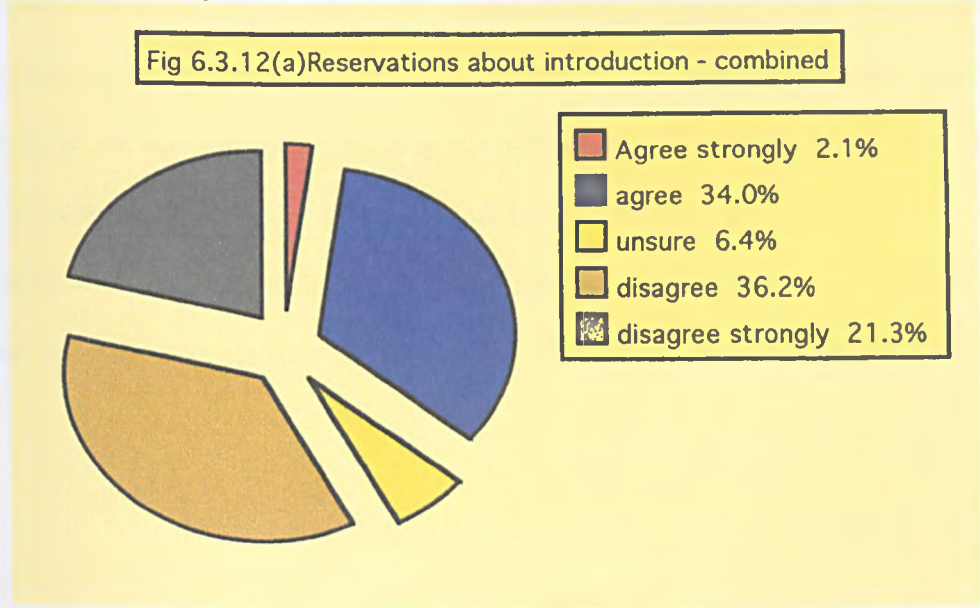
Table 6.3.11 I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: mean values.

Total	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
1.66	1.88 (+ 0.22)	1.43 (-0.23)	1.79 (+0.13)	1.6 (-0.06)

From an evaluation of mean responses, it is clear that there is little difference between any sector and the average mean. However, State sector schools welcome the introduction more than any of the cited sectors and the subject is least welcome in the Catholic secondary school.

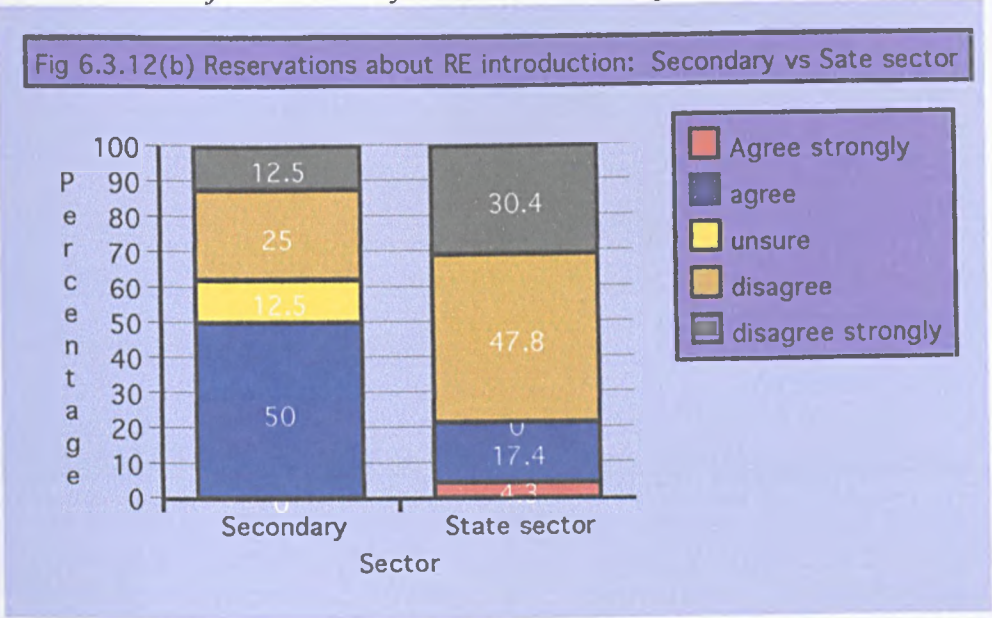
6.3.12 I have reservations about the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.12(a) I have reservations about the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.



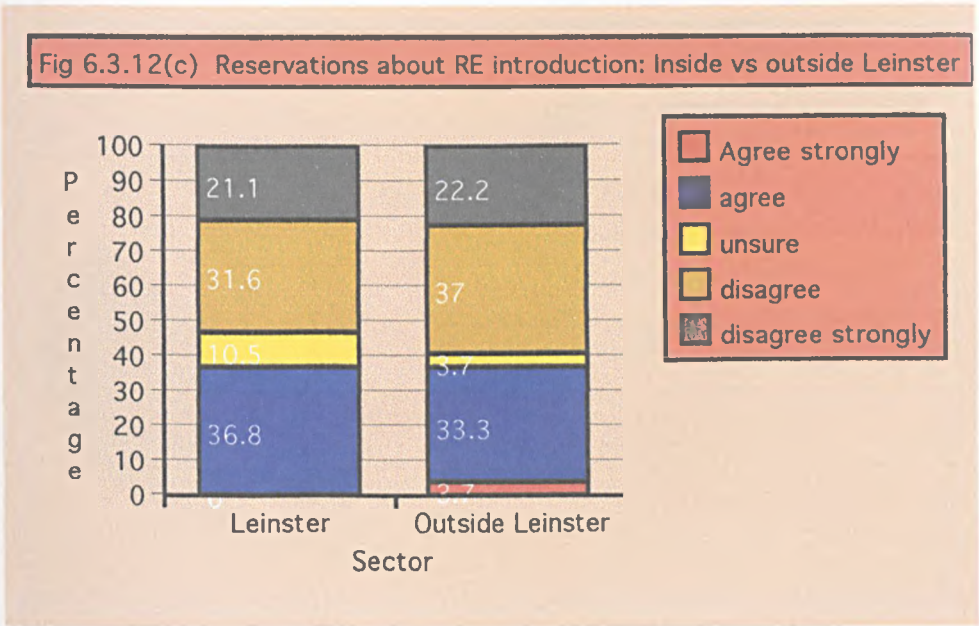
While no respondent indicated that they disagreed with the introduction of religious education as an examination subject, see 6.3.11(a) above, a considerable 36% indicated that they had reservations about the introduction. However, the combined 57.5% who disagreed with the statement and, thus, had no reservations is considerable.

Fig 6.3.12(b) I have reservations about the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: secondary vs state sector comparison.



An analysis of responses according to a secondary / State sector divide is significant, in that such an analysis reveals that 50% of teachers in secondary schools have reservations about the introduction while only 22% of teachers in the State sector have such. This consolidates 6.3.11(b), which indicated a greater welcome for the subject in State sector schools. This may be indicative of an awareness of teachers in Catholic secondary schools of the mission of such schools and of the inability of a non-denominational syllabus to support that mission. A Chi-square test confirms the significance of this difference (.026).

Fig 6.3.12(c) I have reservations about the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



There is no significant difference in responses from in or out of Leinster, a finding verified by a Chi-square test (.801)

Table 6.3.12 I have reservations about the introduction of religious education as an examination subject: mean values.

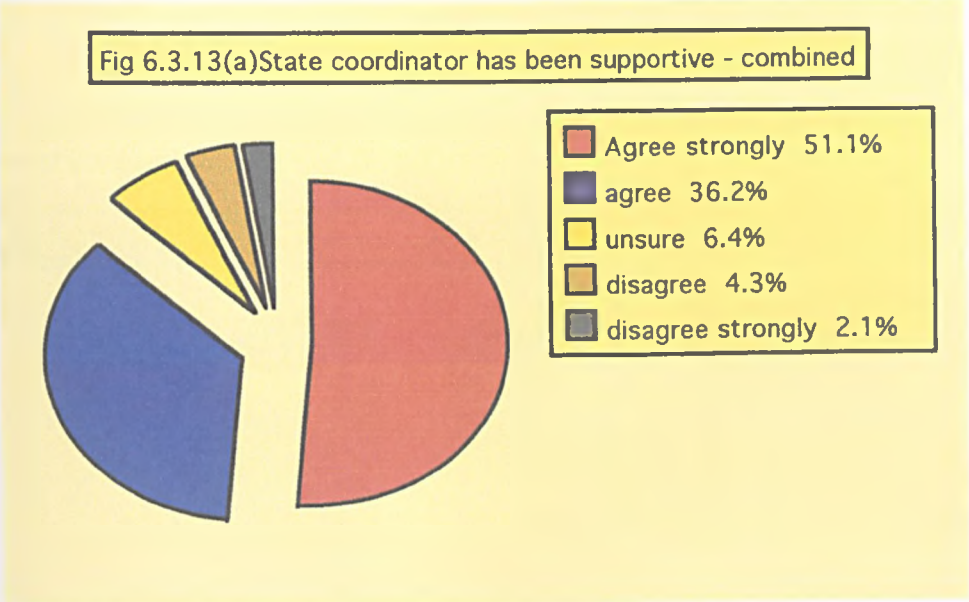
Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
3.4	3.0 (-0.4)	3.83 (+0.43)	3.37 (-0.03)	3.41 (+0.01)

Whereas there is little mean difference either within or without Leinster, Catholic secondary schools have more reservations than their counterparts in State schools. This may well be attributed to the tensions between religious education and religious instruction which have a particular bearing on the ethos of Catholic schools.³⁹³

³⁹³ Further evidence for this assertion can be found in 6.3.22 below, where teachers outlined how catechetics was being combined with religious education.

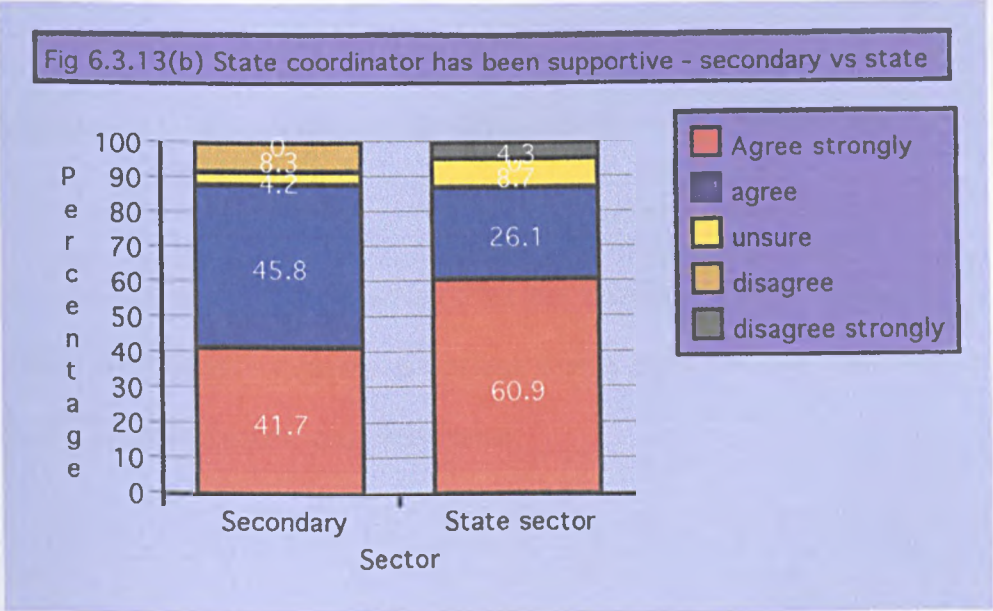
6.3.13 The State coordinator has been supportive. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.13(a) The state coordinator has been supportive.



This result vividly illustrates that the vast majority of teachers have found that the Department of Education and Science’s coordinator for religious education, Noirin Hynes, has been helpful to them. Ms. Hynes is concerned solely with the State non-denominational syllabus.

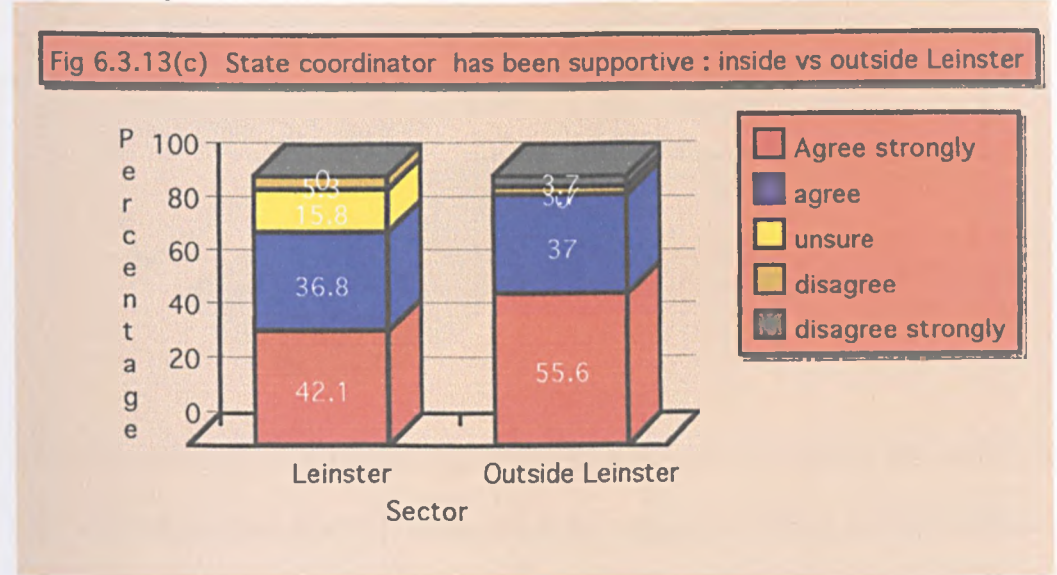
Fig 6.3.13(b) The state coordinator has been supportive: Secondary vs state sector comparison.



Again, there is no significant difference in responses between Catholic secondary

schools and schools in the State sector. An observation confirmed by a Chi-square value of 0.244.

Fig 6.3.13(c) The State coordinator has been supportive: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



Again, there is little difference in responses evaluating the support of the state coordinator from respondents in and out of Leinster. Though there does appear to be a slightly more positive reaction from outside Leinster, most noticeable within the ‘agree strongly’ responses. Notwithstanding, the difference is negligible, an assertion confirmed by a Chi-square value of 0.286.

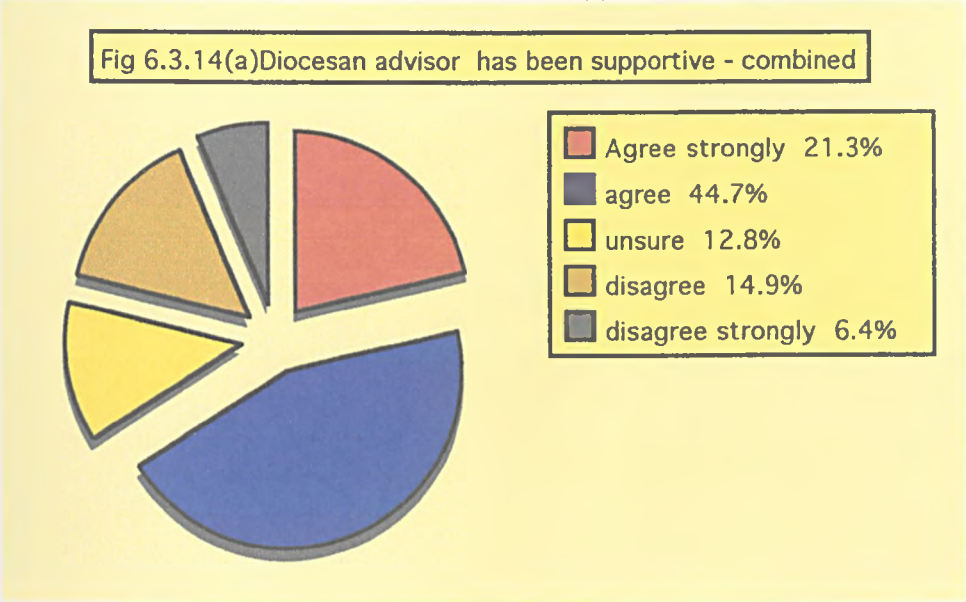
Table 6.3.13 In my experience, the State coordinator has been supportive:mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
1.7	1.79 (+0.09)	1.61 (-0.09)	1.94 (+0.24)	1.63 (-0.07)

Again, the stronger positive reaction from the ‘outside Leinster constituency’, to the State coordinator’s support, is obvious from a mean value in that category of 1.94, 0.24 higher than the combined mean.

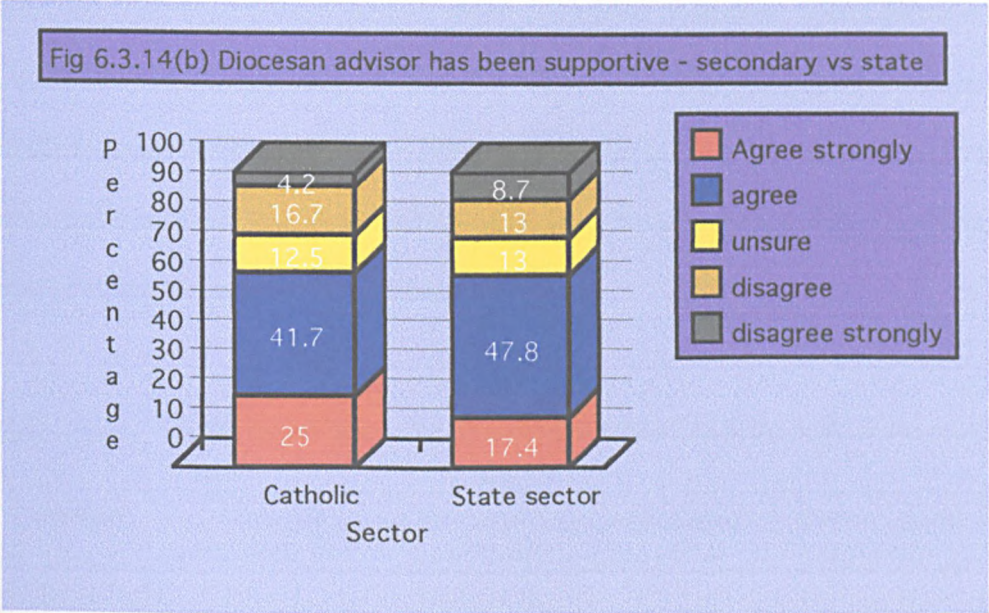
6.3.14 The Diocesan advisor has been supportive. (N=47)

Fig 6.3.14 (a) The Diocesan advisor has been supportive.



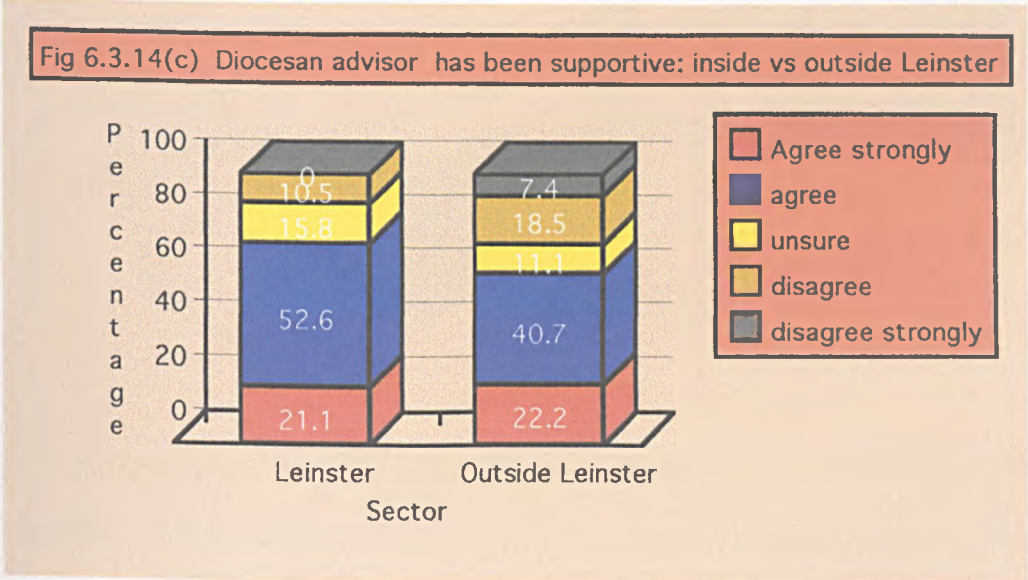
Given the proposal to combine religious education with catechetics, the role of the Diocesan advisor is crucial in maintaining the integrity of religious instruction on the curriculum. While the majority of respondents, 66%, confirmed that the advisor has been supportive, a considerable 20% disagreed. The combined 'agree' response is 20% lower than the combined 'agree' response for the role of the State coordinator above. This result consolidates the fears that a non-examinable catechetics course will be subsumed by an examinable non-denominational curriculum. Indeed, in March 2001, it became known that the Department of Education and Science was no longer cooperating with Diocesan advisors and was not allowing diocesan advisors access to in-service days for teachers which were being organised by the Department of Education and Science. This is further evidence of a belief, within the Department of Education and Science, that religious education and religious instruction are two distinct subjects and should not, or cannot, be combined. The Diocesan advisors must ensure that catechetics is taught in all schools regardless of the provisions made for religious education.

Fig 6.3.14 (b) *The Diocesan advisor has been supportive: secondary vs state sector comparison.*



There is no significant difference between respondents in Catholic secondary schools and their counterparts in the State sector, a finding confirmed by a Chi-square value of 0.924. This finding could be interpreted as stating that diocesan advisors, rightly, do not confine themselves to teachers in Catholic schools, but, involve themselves with all teachers of religion.

Fig 6.3.14 (c) *The Diocesan advisor has been supportive: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.*



While the difference in responses from inside and outside Leinster is not huge, there is, nevertheless, a 15% higher combined 'disagree' response by respondents

from out of Leinster. A difficulty arises in this situation. Outside Leinster covers over twenty counties and as many individual dioceses. Each diocese has its own advisor(s). If any one or more of these are unsupportive, the reading for outside Leinster will be affected. However, while a Chi-square test confirms no major difference, 0.660, this finding will be a source of comfort to diocesan advisors in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

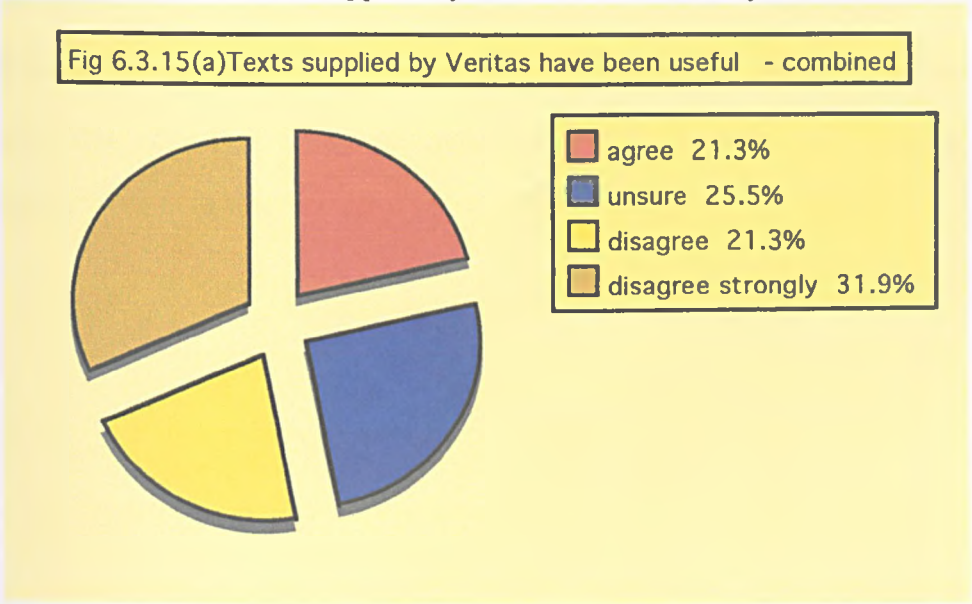
Table 6.3.14 In my experience, the diocesan advisor has been supportive: mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
2.4	2.33 (-0.07)	2.48 (+0.08)	2.16 (-0.24)	2.48 (+0.08)

The above table illustrates the perception that the diocesan advisor has been most helpful inside Leinster.

6.3.15 The texts supplied by Veritas have been useful. (N = 47)

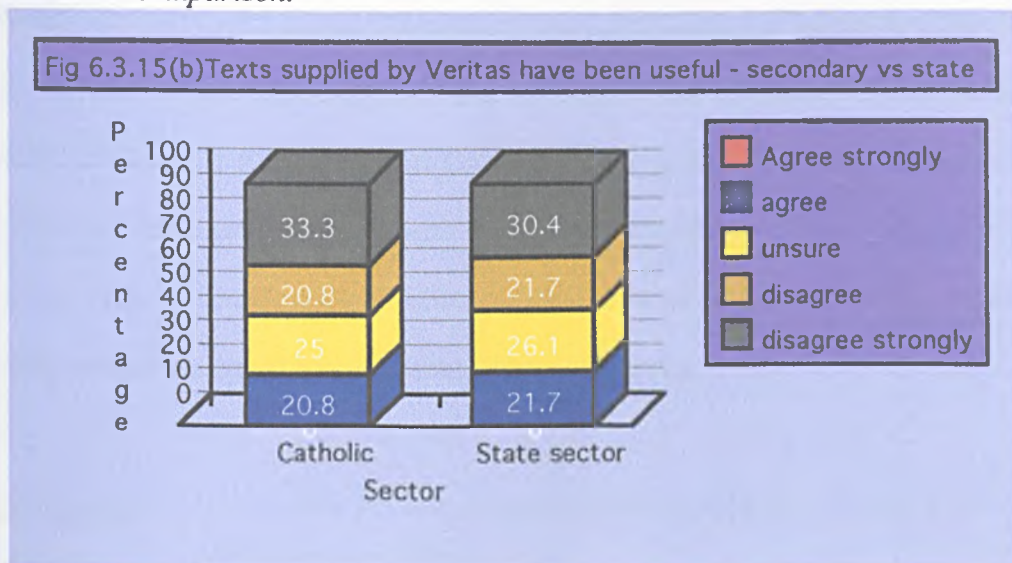
Fig 6.3.15(a) The texts supplied by Veritas have been useful.



The most notable feature of the above figure is the absence of any ‘agree strongly’ response. As previously indicated, *Veritas* issued catechetical material to all schools involved in the first phase of introduction. At least one school returned that material. The above figure illustrates that the material has not been well

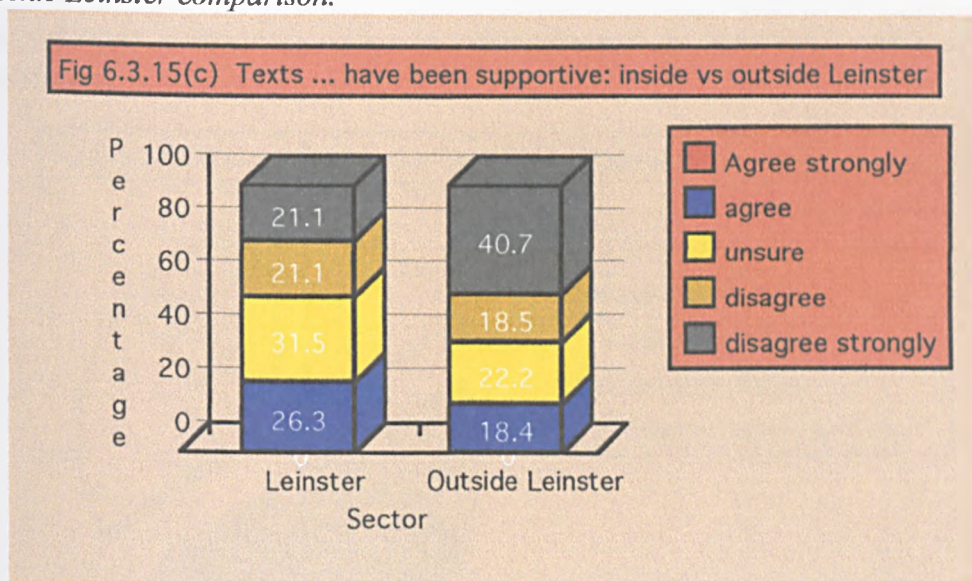
received, with 53% of respondents believing it to be unhelpful. *Veritas* is the publishing wing of the Irish Episcopal Conference. It must be a source of grave concern that materials that *Veritas* are publishing are not addressing teachers' needs and are not helpful. There would appear to be a need for an engagement between *Veritas* and catechists in order to devise suitable catechetical programmes that would be of benefit to teachers. This question concerned materials sent to schools regarding a catechetics course that was to be combined with non-denominational religious education. The finding may also be an attempt to express the impossibility of such a mix by some respondents. However, Fig 6.3.16(a) below would contradict such an occurrence on a large scale. It is also true to say that the materials sent to schools by *Veritas* have a stronger emphasis on the catechetics/ faith component than materials disseminated by the Department of Education and Science. As the catechetics / faith component is non-examinable, teachers may find other materials more useful in the context of a State examination. This was always going to be a primary danger in combining religious education with religious instruction and illustrates how the combination of religious education with catechetics on the curriculum can damage the 'integrity' of catechetics.

Fig 6.3.15(b) The texts supplied by Veritas have been useful: secondary vs state sector comparison.



There is little or no difference between the perceptions of teachers in Catholic secondary schools and those in the State sector. The high Chi-square value of 0.997 confirms this observation.

Fig 6.3.15(c) The texts supplied by Veritas have been useful: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



While there is no difference in a comparison between school types, there is some difference between respondents in and out of Leinster. The Chi-square value of 0.562 confirms that the difference is not significant. In Leinster, 42.2% of respondents feel that the texts supplied have been unhelpful, while outside

Leinster, that figure rises to 59.2%. It is difficult to account for this discrepancy, perhaps the difference in qualification between teachers in these areas might go some way towards explaining the issue. It may also be true that *Veritas*, through Mater Dei and the Archdiocese of Dublin, has a greater profile and affinity with teachers in Leinster than it has with those from elsewhere. Those involved with *Veritas* programmes have tended to be within the Leinster area. However, this is purely conjecture based on geographical considerations

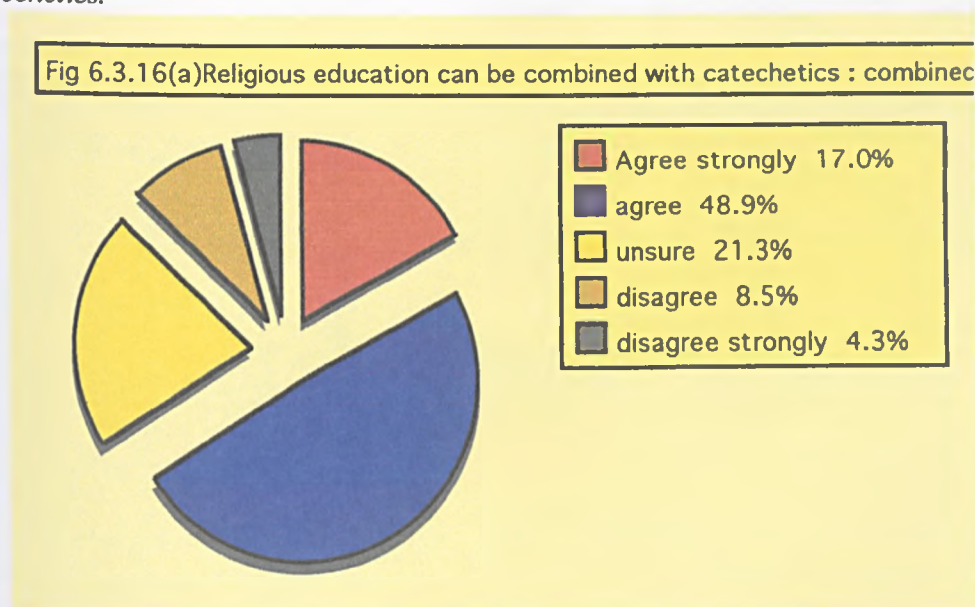
Table 6.3.15 I have found the catechetical texts supplied by Veritas to be helpful: mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
3.64	3.66 (+0.02)	3.61 (-0.03)	3.37 (-0.27)	3.81 (+0.17)

Again, table 6.3.15 confirms that the catechetical materials have been more useful to teachers in the Leinster area.

4.3.16 Teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics. (N=47)

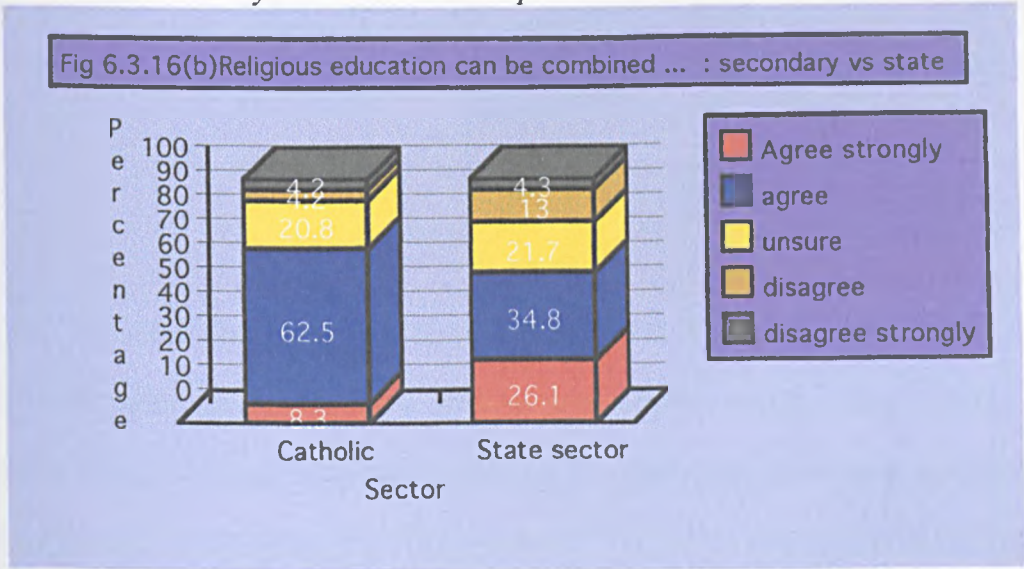
Fig 4.3.16(a) Teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics.



Over 65% of respondents feel that religious education can be combined with catechetics. It is this writer's view that this may illustrate a lack of awareness of

the difficulties involved, especially in relation to the stated aims of religious education. However, one teacher in eight feels that the bishops' proposal to combine the two subjects is not possible and one in five is 'unsure'. As mentioned earlier, one community school returned catechetical material on the basis that catechetics was incompatible with religious education. It would be interesting to pose this question again to the same group of people in two year's time when their classes are preparing for the Junior Certificate examination. One suspects that with pressure of time and other constraints, this finding might be different. However, the fact that such an 'agree' figure is so high may indicate that these teachers are actually combining religious education with catechetics. The question remains, is catechetics better or worse off being combined with non-denominational religious education? The analysis in 6.3.21(d) illustrates that while 66.4% of teachers feel that religious education can be combined with catechetics, a number far below this are actually doing so!

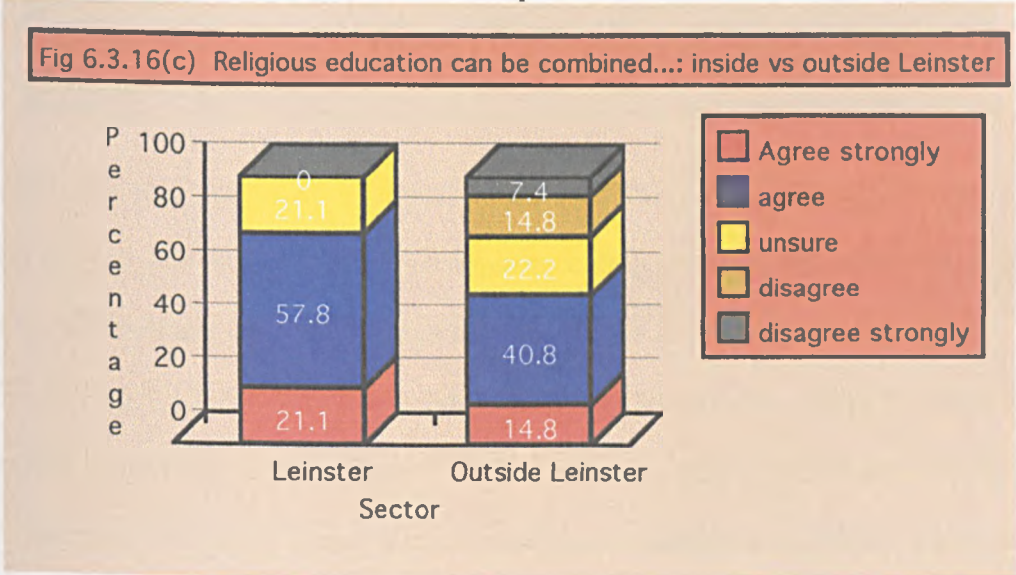
Fig 4.3.16(b) Teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics: secondary vs state sector comparison.



The above figure is difficult to explain. Less teachers in the State sector feel that religious education and catechetics can be combined, even though a greater number

in that category ‘agree strongly’ that such a combination is possible. Further, as illustrated in fig. 6.3.11(b), a greater number of teachers in this category welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. This may indicate that a sizable number of teachers in the State sector do not see catechetics as being part of a non-denominational religious education class. A 10% larger number of teachers in that sector feel that such a combination is impossible. One could assert that, in general terms, secondary teachers are more positive towards the possibility of the combination while those in the State sector, while also agreeing, hold more diverse views. The difference in responses is not significant with a Chi - square value of 0.276. In this section, fig 6.3.16(d) analyses these responses by school type.

Fig 4.3.16(c) Teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



While 79% of respondents in the Leinster area feel that religious education can be combined with catechetics, only 55% of respondents outside Leinster share a similar view. This may indicate a difference in approach to catechetics within the Leinster area, specifically the Archdiocese of Dublin, to that of schools outside Leinster. This finding has a bearing on 6.3.15 above, in that the catechetical texts supplied by *Veritas* were regarded as being more useful by teachers within

Leinster. The issue may also be linked to 6.3.10, where schools within Leinster seemed to have a higher ratio of religion teachers on their staff than schools elsewhere. However, the Chi-square value of 0.271 indicates that the difference is not significant.

Fig 4.3.16(d) Teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics: school type comparison.

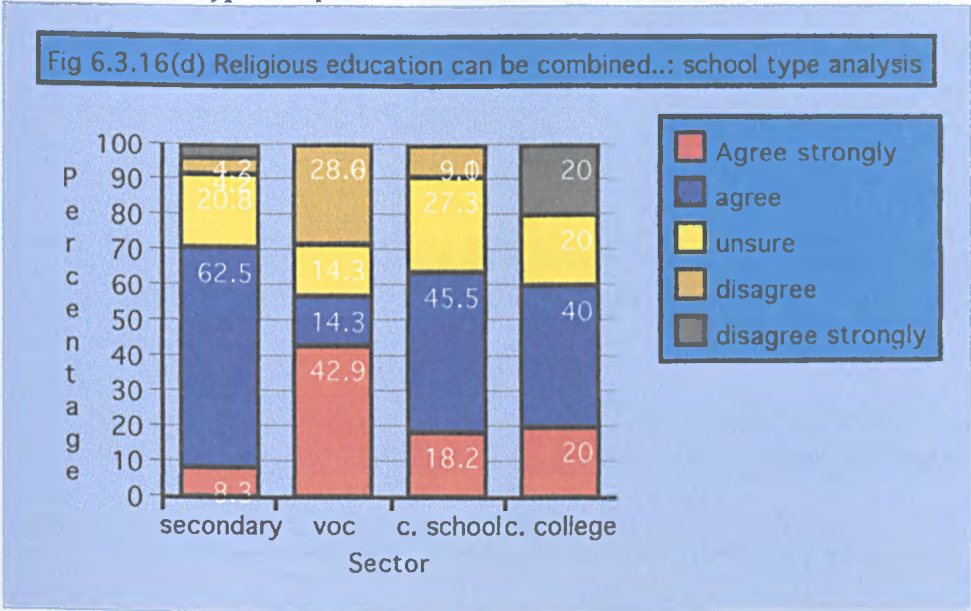


Figure 6.3.16(d) provides a clearer outline of the school by school analysis. However, a *caveat*, within the community college sector there were only five respondents hence each response in that sector was 20%.

The finding for the Catholic secondary school is remarkable. Here is found the highest combined ‘agree’ figure -70.8% and the lowest combined ‘disagree’ response - 8.4% In practical terms, teachers of religion in Catholic secondary schools, many of which schools were founded to impart religious instruction, feel that such religious instruction can be combined with a non-denominational religious education syllabus, although this is tempered by the 50% of secondary school respondents who have reservations, fig 6.3.12(b) above..

Within the State sector, there is a larger ‘disagree’ with a significant ‘unsure’ response. This need not necessarily mean that teachers feel that religious

instruction would be downgraded. There is evidence, already cited, that teachers within this category feel that the two subjects are mutually exclusive and, thus, cannot be combined.

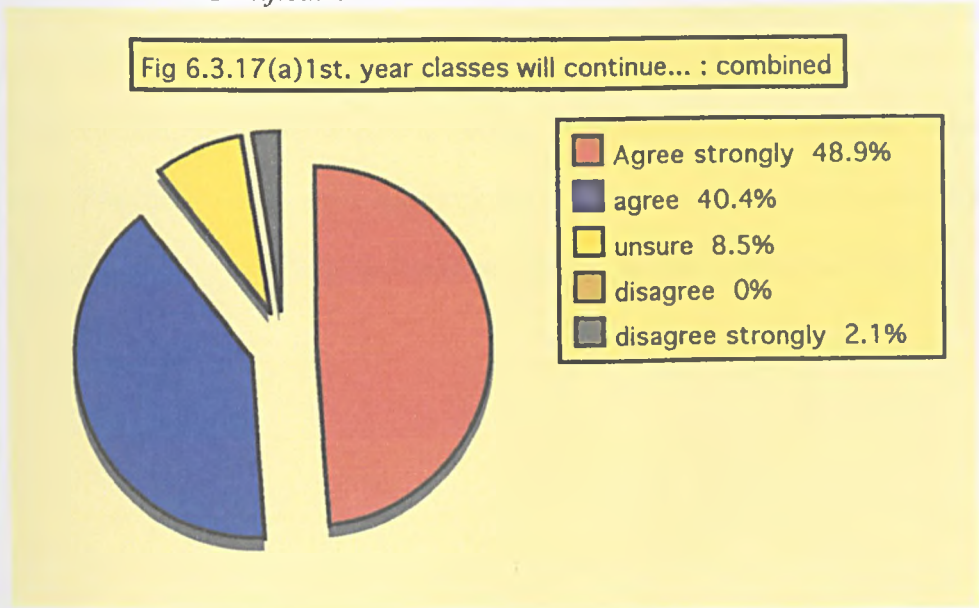
Table 6.3.16 I believe that, in practice, teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics: mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
2.34	2.33 (-0.01)	2.34 (+0.01)	2.0 (-0.34)	2.59 (+0.25)

The above table illustrates that the belief that religious education can be combined with catechetics is strongest within Leinster.

6.3.17 First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate. (N=47)

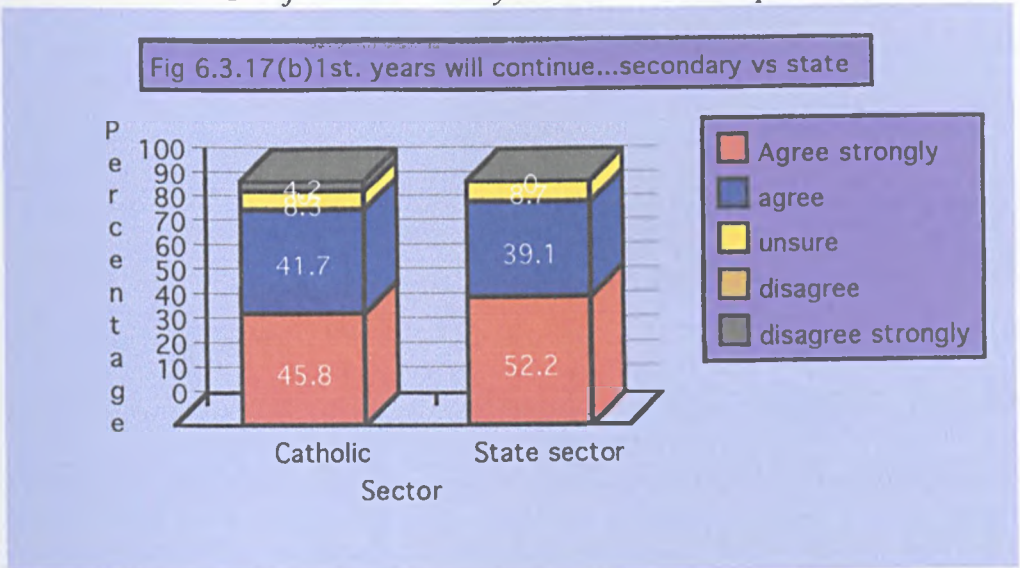
Fig 6.3.17 (a) *First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate.*



Obviously, a significant majority of schools will continue to offer religious education as an examination subject to classes until Junior Certificate level. This is not surprising: that was the purpose of the introduction. Given that implied intention to continue with the subject, the 10.6% who either will not continue with the subject or are ‘unsure’ might be higher than expected. As schools

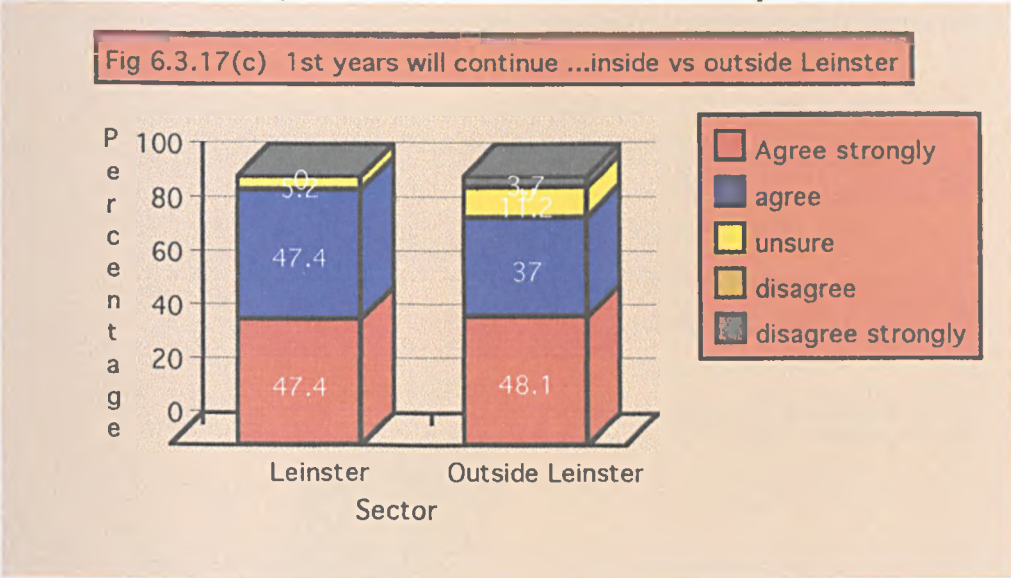
introducing the subject with first years did so with the intention of continuing, this finding may indicate that the experience, in some cases, has not lived up to expectations and may be a further consequence of a dearth in qualified staff.

Fig 6.3.17 (b) *First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate: secondary vs state sector comparison*



There is little difference in the responses between those of Catholic secondary schools and schools within the state sector, confirmed by a Chi-square value of 0.783. Two schools in each category are ‘unsure’ and one secondary school ‘disagrees strongly’ and, thus, will not be continuing with the introduction.

Fig 6.3.17 (c) *First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.*



Again, respondents from the Leinster area are more positive than teachers from elsewhere, where there was a higher ‘disagree’ and ‘unsure response’. No school inside Leinster disagreed with the statement. This more positive response towards examinable religious education from respondents within Leinster is echoed in other questions and may indicate greater resources in Leinster for religion teachers. Leinster in the context of this survey means Dublin. With the centralisation of universities, colleges, libraries and other agencies, this might not be surprising. The Chi-square value for this ‘crosstab’ of 0.698 indicates that the difference is not significant.

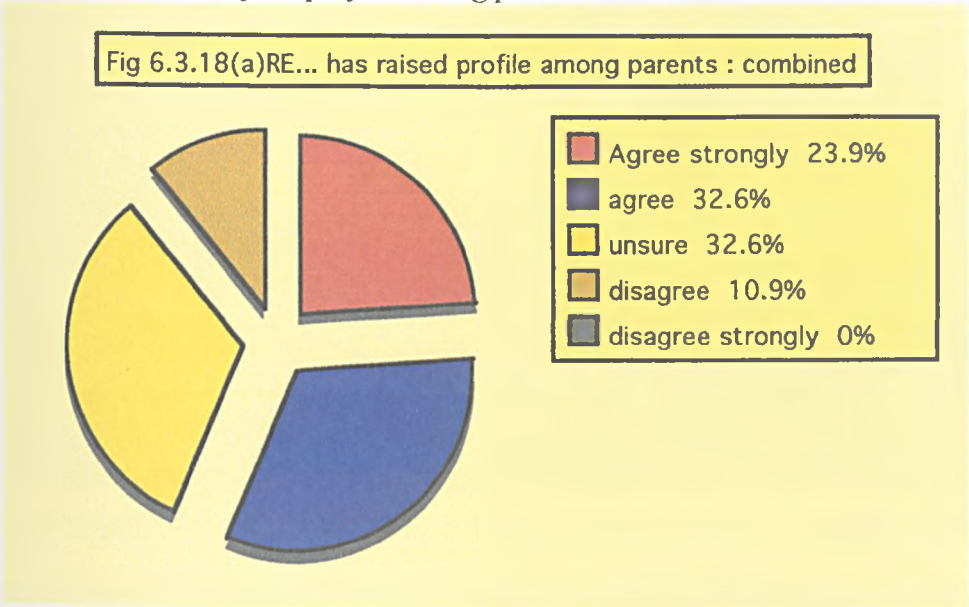
Table 6.3.17 *First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate: mean values.*

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
1.66	1.75 (+0.11)	1.57 (-0.09)	1.58 (-0.08)	1.74 (+0.08)

As can be seen from the table, there is very little differentiation from the combined mean in any of the given categories.

6.3.18 Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents. (N=47)

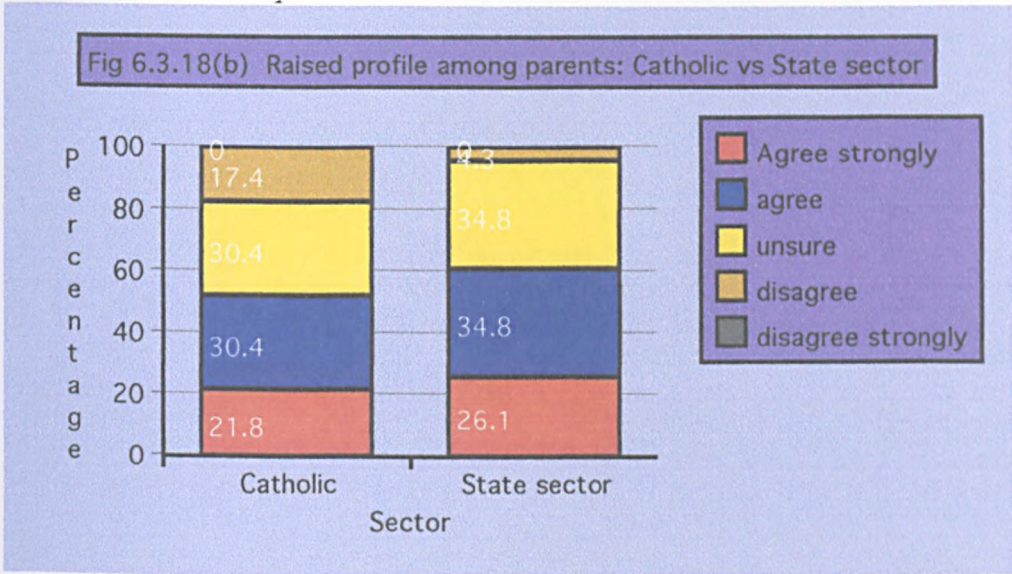
Fig 6.3.18(a) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents.



One of the primary reasons for teacher support for the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum was the issue of status. In a previous survey, it was established that only 50% of parents spoke to the religion teacher at parent/ teacher meetings.³⁹⁴ Accordingly, religious education did not rate highly with parents, presumably because it was not in the ‘premier league’ of examinable subjects. In that context, it is surprising that only 56% of teachers feel that the introduction of examinable religious education has succeeded in raising the subject’s profile. One might suspect that as time progresses and as this class become closer to Junior Certificate examinations, the profile might increase further.

³⁹⁴ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, p 80.

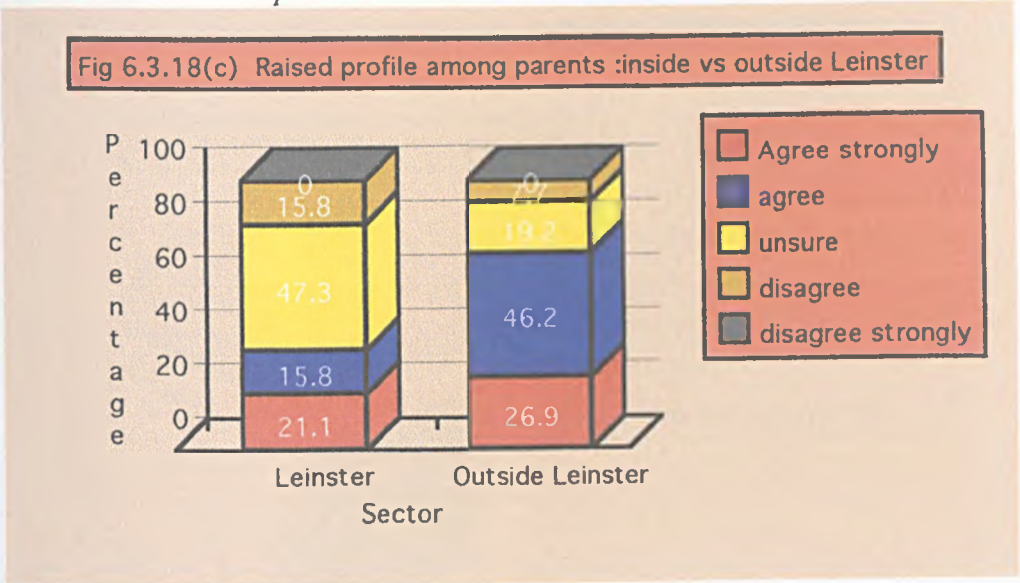
Fig 6.3.18(b) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents: secondary vs state sector comparison.



The negligible ‘disagree’ response from the State sector may indicate that the introduction of religious education has raised the profile of the subject in *de jure* non-catholic schools.³⁹⁵ Again, this may be linked to time allocation, but, and more likely, it may also be due to the prospect of a State examination in the subject. The discrepancy with Catholic schools may be accounted for by the fact that many secondary schools, run by Religious, traditionally placed great emphasis on religion in the curriculum and parents would have been aware of this. Again, a high Chi-square value of 0.567 is indicative of no significant difference.

³⁹⁵ Care must be taken to differentiate between *de jure* and *de facto* Catholic schools. While secondary schools are the only *de jure* (by law) Catholic schools in Ireland, Community schools have been described, as already mentioned, as being *de facto* Catholic because of their Deeds of Trust and Articles of Management. By the same token, a similar concession could be made in relation to community colleges.

Fig 6.3.18(c) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



It is difficult to account for the difference in responses by teachers from inside and outside Leinster. Clearly, there is a perception that the ‘elevation’ of religious education to the examinable curriculum has substantially increased the profile of the subject among parents outside Leinster. This may indicate a greater interest in educational matters outside Leinster, but it is far from conclusive. It may also indicate that religious education already had a high profile among parents in Leinster before the introduction of an examinable curriculum. The Chi-square value is 0.085. This value is higher than the ‘significant’ threshold of 0.05. However, with a higher response and a greater number of respondents, this difference may become ‘significant’.

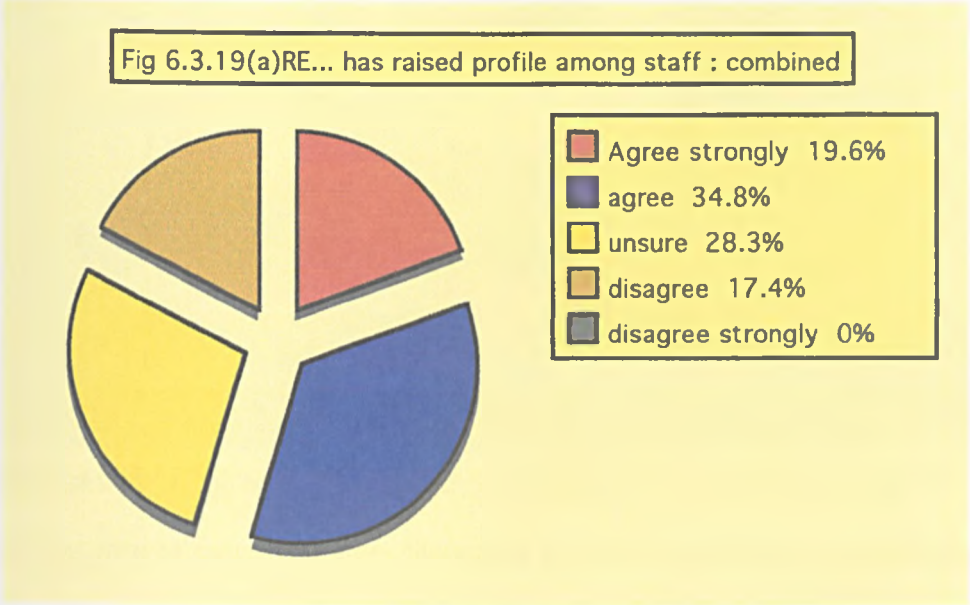
Table 6.3.18 Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile of the subject among parents:mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
2.3	2.43 (+0.13)	2.17 (-0.13)	2.58 (+0.28)	2.08 (-0.22)

The profile of religious education seems to have been increased most among parents outside Leinster as a result of the introduction of an examinable syllabus.

6.3.19 Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among staff. (N=46)

Fig 6.3.19 (a) *Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among staff.*



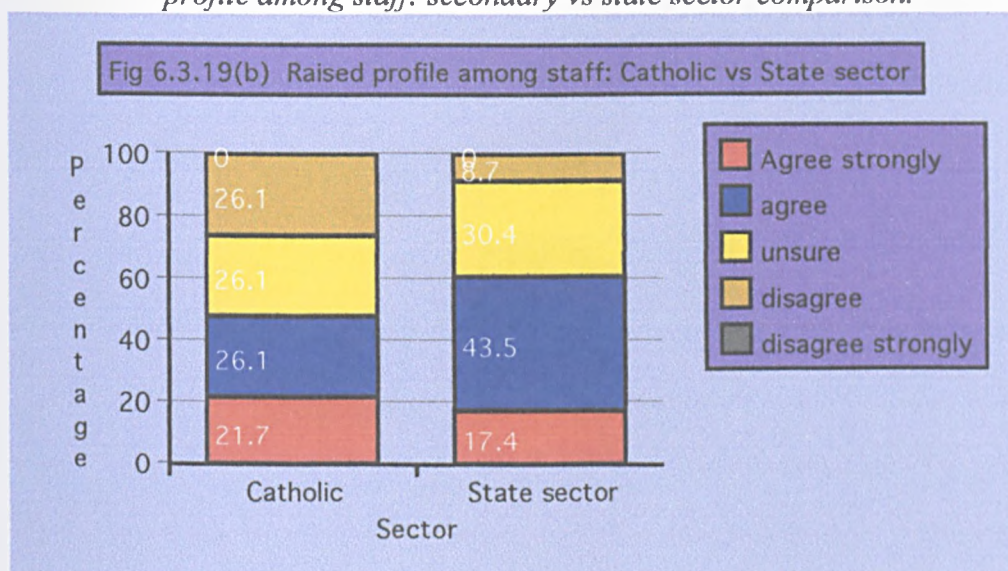
Again, the combined 'agree' response rate is somewhat lower than expected, 54.4%. The large 'unsure' response -28.3% - may indicate that many respondents might feel such an evaluation is too early. Previous research has indicated that religious education has had a low profile among staff. In a previous survey by the writer, 52% of teachers of religion in the diocese of Cork and Ross felt that religion did not have a high profile with staff³⁹⁶ and, in a previous national survey, 41.8% of respondents felt that religious education had a high profile with staff.³⁹⁷

The issue of the subject's profile with staff is important in that such a perception will impinge on hours and resources allocated to the subject in a school.

³⁹⁶ Deenihan, Thomas. (1999) *op cit.*, p 81.

³⁹⁷ Weafer & Hanley. (1991) *op cit.*, p 67.

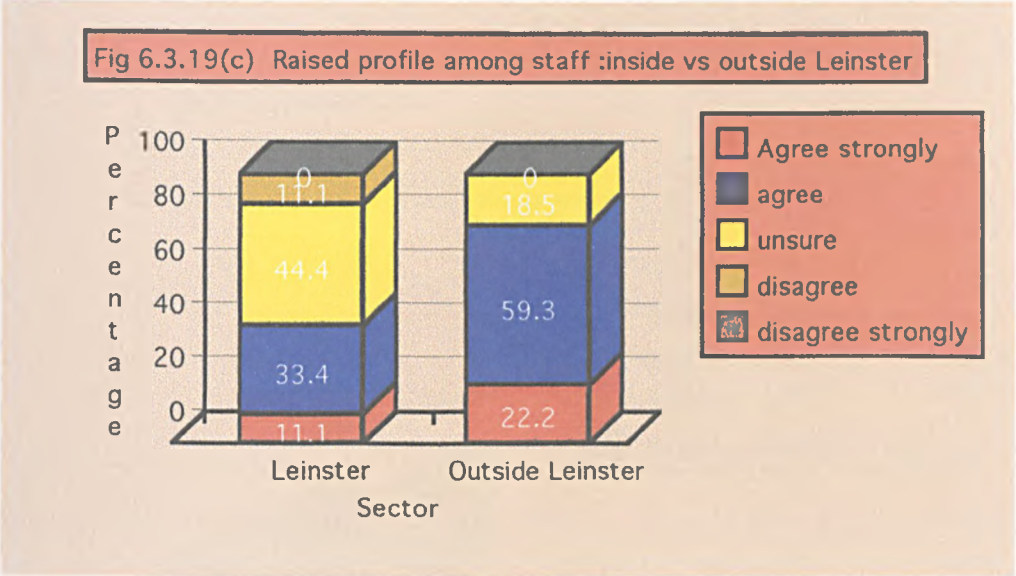
Fig 6.3.19 (b) *Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among staff: secondary vs state sector comparison.*



There is a higher 'agree' response to the statement in the State sector schools.

As in the case of parents, above, secondary schools traditionally placed a greater emphasis on religious education, often because of the presence of Religious. This analysis allows for an interpretation that the elevation of religious education to the examinable curriculum has obliged teachers in State sector schools to treat the subject more seriously. Indeed, it raises the possibility that schools and teachers are more concerned with the examinable curriculum than with non-examinable or extra-curricular activities. It is for this reason that the then Department of Education some years ago elevated 'civics' to the examinable curriculum by introducing an obligatory, common level subject 'Civic, Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.)'. A Chi-square value of 0.364 indicates that the difference is not at a statistically significant level.

Fig 6.3.19 (c) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among staff: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



As with previous questions, there is a graphically obvious difference between respondents within and outside Leinster. It may be that schools within Leinster always afforded religious education a higher standing than schools outside Leinster. This assertion could be justified by citing Leinster’s proximity to the teacher training colleges offering religion/ theology. It may also be that schools in Leinster are not treating the subject as seriously as their colleagues elsewhere. However, the higher ‘agree’ responses from within Leinster to *Veritas* texts being helpful, (6.3.15) and the diocesan advisor being helpful (6.3.14) make this latter interpretation less likely. The Chi-square value of 0.249 is not statistically significant.

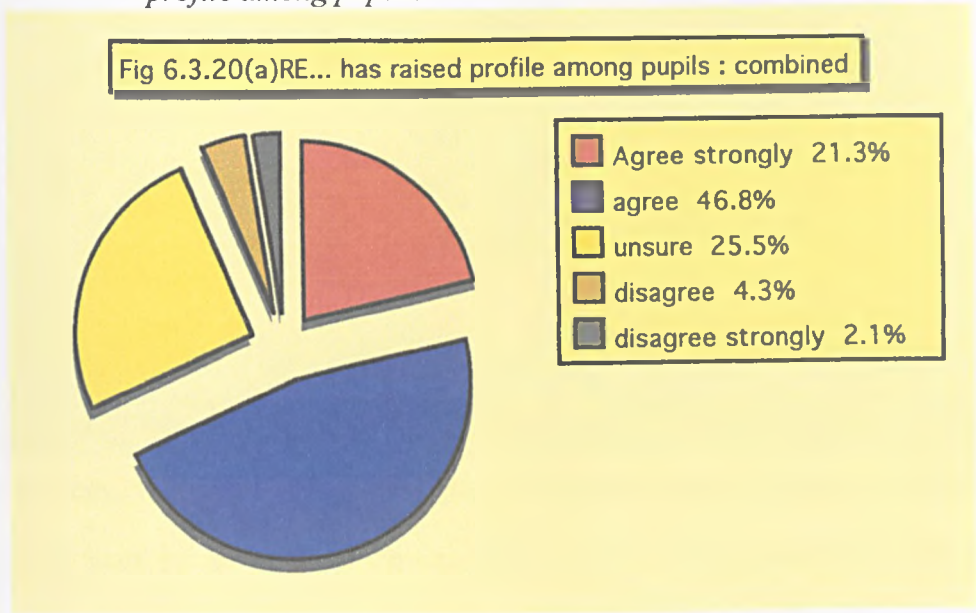
Table 6.3.19 Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among staff:mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
2.43	2.57 (+0.14)	2.3 (-0.13)	2.56 (+0.13)	2.3 (-0.13)

Again, the table confirms little difference in mean values. One could say, that by a small margin, the profile with staff has been raised more in State sector schools outside Leinster

6.3.20 **Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among pupils.** (N=47)

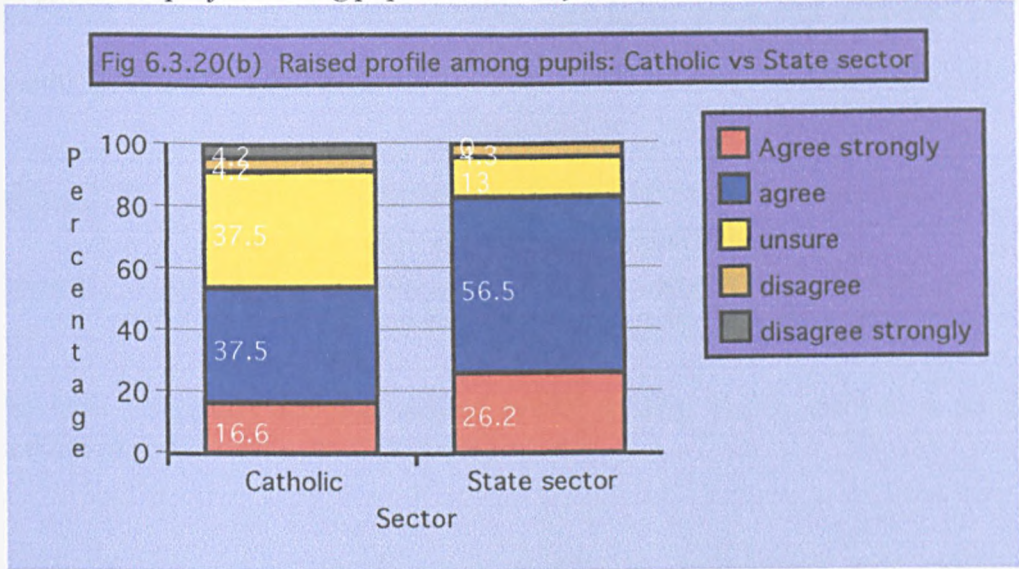
Fig 6.3.20(a) *Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among pupils.*



Of the three questions inquiring into the profile of religious education in the aftermath of the introduction of an examinable syllabus, the greatest increase in profile was with pupils. This is easily justified. Students are concerned with examinations, success and third level entry points. By establishing an examination in religious education, student interest will be increased.

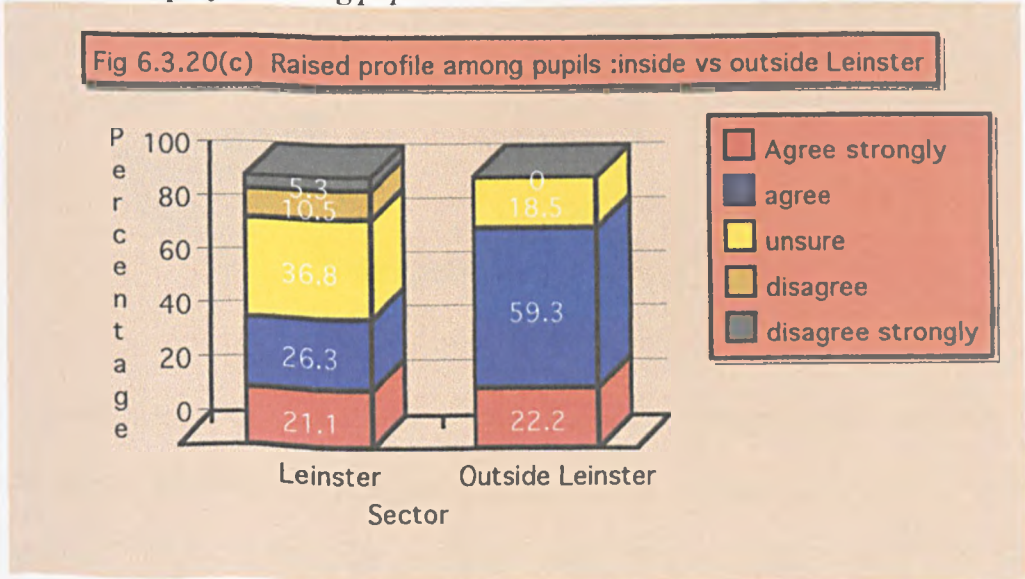
Ironically, this may not be a good finding for the Catholic Church. If student profile is increased on account of an examination, it must be remembered that this examination is concerned solely with the non-denominational syllabus. In time, students may regard the examinable syllabus as being the entire, or important, course and may disregard the non-examinable catechetical syllabus and may, eventually, become resentful of the time allotted to it. The same may apply to parents and teachers.

Fig 6.3.20(b) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among pupils:secondary vs state sector comparison.



There seems to be an obviously higher combined ‘agree’ response regarding pupils in State sector schools. This is accentuated by the presence of ‘disagree strongly’ from within the secondary sector. However, a Chi-square value of 0.276 would not rank the difference as being significant. Again, this finding may indicate that secondary schools traditionally had a higher emphasis on religious education.

Fig 6.3.20(c) Religious education as an examination subject has raised the profile among pupils:inside vs outside Leinster comparison.



Again, as in previous figures, the profile of the subject has risen with staff outside Leinster. This is in keeping with the rise in profile among parents and teachers in

the same category. A Chi-square value of 0.05 or less would be statistically significant. In this case, the value is 0.079. In a larger group, this difference could become statistically significant.

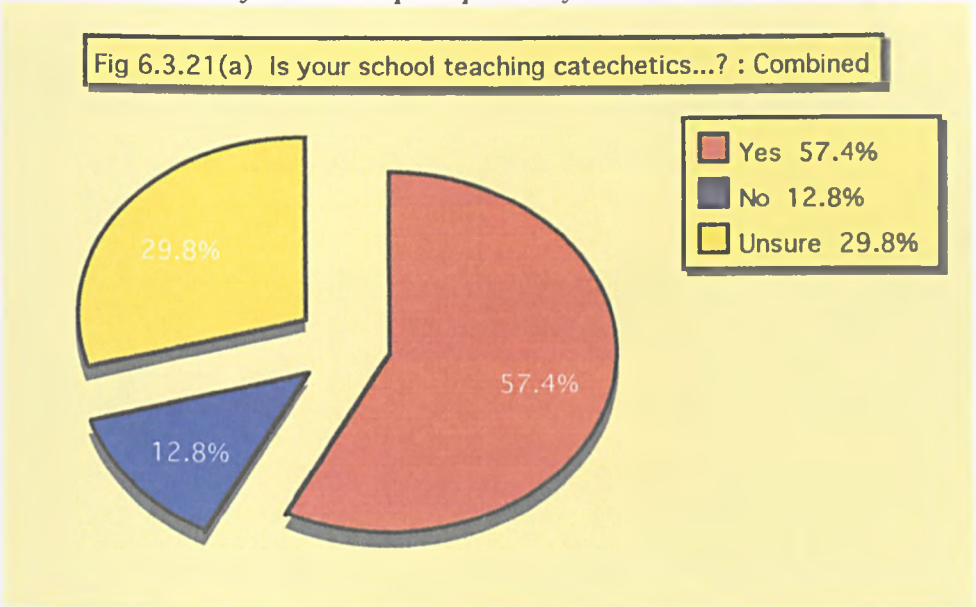
Table 6.3.20 Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among pupils: mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
2.19	2.42 (+0.23)	1.96 (-0.23)	2.53 (+0.34)	1.96 (-0.23)

The table illustrates that the subject profile among pupils enjoyed a greater increase in state sector schools outside Leinster.

6.3.21 Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference? (N=47)

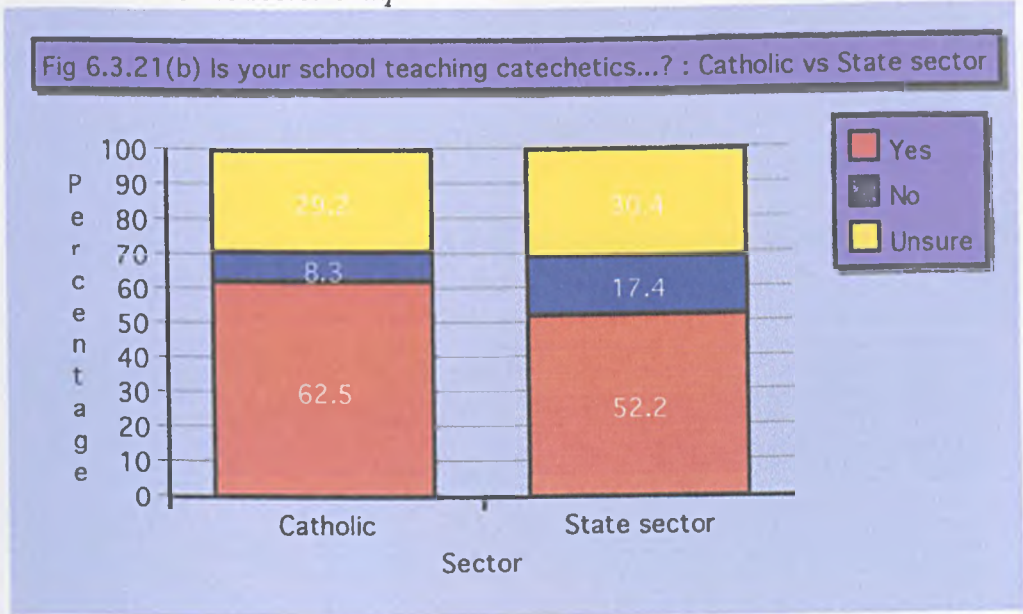
Fig 6.3.21(a) Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?



A central theme of this thesis is that the Irish bishops acted unwisely in combining catechetics with a non-denominational religious education syllabus. Figure 6.3.21(a) justifies that assertion. Only 57% of schools stated that they were teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education. One in eight schools were not and a surprising and significant 30% were unsure. This reflects

poorly on the distribution and use of the guidelines. It must also be borne in mind that many of those who indicated they are implementing the guidelines indicated in the next response that they had not taken any concrete measures in doing so yet! It would seem that the 57% 'yes' response is the more optimistic evaluation of the guidelines' implementation. In fig 6.3.21(d) below, responses to this question are analysed in the light of the responses made to the next question, asking respondents to outline concrete steps taken in regard to combining catechetics with religious education. That picture illustrates a serious ineffectiveness on the part of the guidelines and augers poorly for the future of catechetics in Irish post-primary schools.

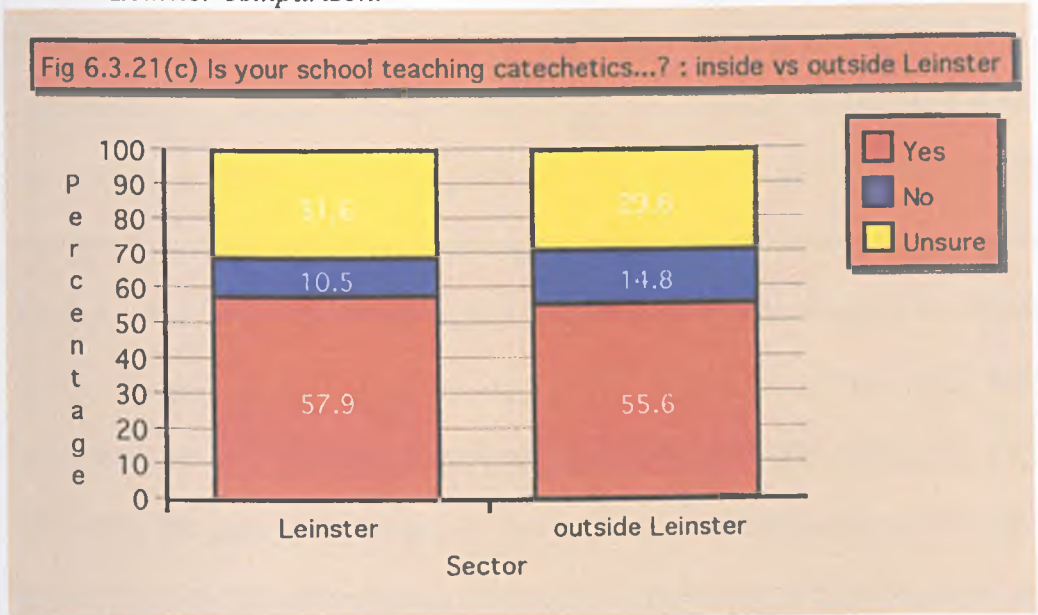
Fig 6.3.21(b) *Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?: secondary vs State sector comparison.*



Responses between Catholic schools and schools in the State sector indicate a higher 'yes' response from Catholic secondary schools. This should be expected, given the ethos and *raison d'etre* of such schools. While the 'unsure' response is significant, the 8% of schools that are not teaching catechetics is worrying. If Catholic schools exist to make Jesus known and loved, this response indicates

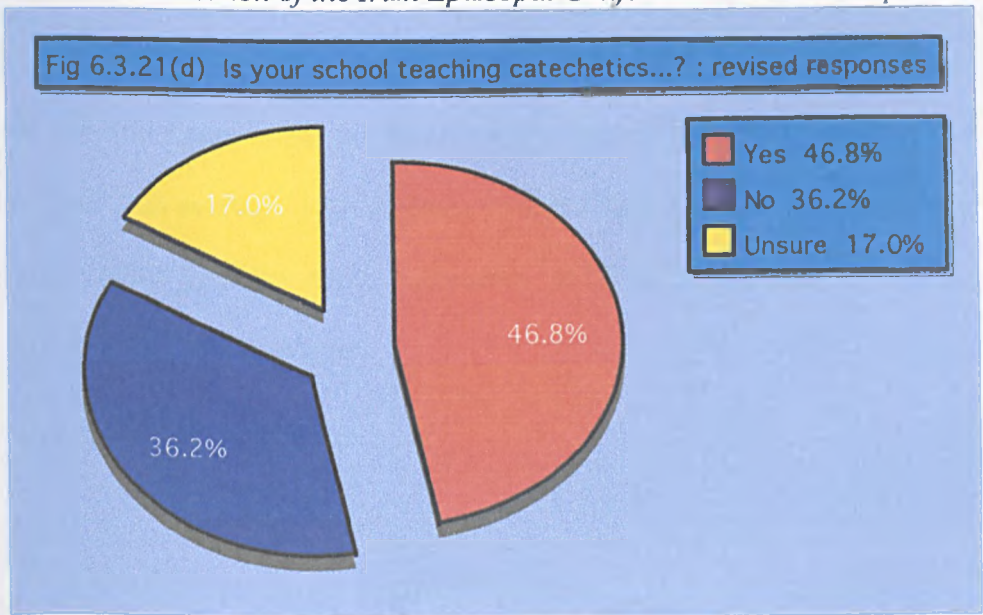
that some Catholic schools have lost, or abandoned, their mission. The Chi-square value of 0.613 indicates the difference is not statistically significant.

Fig 6.3.21(c) *Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?: inside vs outside Leinster comparison.*



There is almost no difference between schools in and out of Leinster, a finding confirmed by a Chi-square value approaching 1: 0.913

Fig 6.3.21(d) *Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?: Revised responses.*



As indicated above, in some cases, there was an inconsistency between the responses to this and the next question. For this analysis, respondents were re-categorised when their responses to the next question indicated an answer other than the one proffered to this question. The result is significant. Less than half of the respondents actually are teaching catechetics in accordance with the guidelines issued by the catechetics commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference. A sizable 17% are unsure and 36% are not. In any evaluation of the success, or otherwise, of the guidelines, this figure is of more relevance and concern than fig 6.3.21 (a). It illustrates that there is a compelling need for distinct catechetics classes on the post-primary curriculum. Despite the findings of 6.3.14 above in relation to the support of the diocesan advisor, this finding illustrates that such diocesan employees need to do more than advise, but should now insist that catechetics be taught in all schools. Unfortunately, in this regard, the proposal to combine religious education with catechetics, by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference seems to have been an 'own goal'.

Table 6.3.21 Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?:mean values.

Combined	Secondary	State sector	Inside Leinster	Outside Leinster
1.55	1.46 (-0.09)	1.65 (+0.1)	1.53 (-0.02)	1.59 (+0.04)

Again, the above table indicates no real difference between any of the sectors, though the lower mean in the secondary school category indicates there was a higher than average 'yes' response in that category. It should be noted that this mean table uses the stated responses, ie. fig 6.3.21(a) and not the 'revised' responses, 6.3.21(d) above.

6.3.22 What measures have been taken in your school in relation to teaching catechetics to students who are taking religious education as an examination subject? (N= 42)

This question was the only 'open' one on the questionnaire. The responses were interesting, in that they displayed a significant lack of knowledge as to (i) the purpose of the syllabus for religious education, (ii) the difference between religious education and catechetics, (iii) the obligation on community schools and colleges to teach catechetics, and (iv) the actual content and purpose of the catechetical guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In general, of the forty-two respondents who answered the question, a total of eighteen confirmed, by clarification, that they were teaching catechetics according to the guidelines issued by the catechetics commission and subsequently detailed practical positive steps within their schools in relation to combining religious education with catechetics. These initiatives involved prayer, liturgies, class masses, retreats, observance of the liturgical calendar with appropriate services for various feast days etc. However, of this eighteen, two expressed serious reservations regarding the long term viability of the approach. The key issue was one of time, '....in the future I don't know if we will have the time to include everything. After all, the students are sitting an exam. Only time will answer this question.'³⁹⁸ Another respondent felt that 'we are trying to do both but it is clear that there are difficulties. A look needs to be taken at what is a catechist as opposed to a religious education teacher'.³⁹⁹

Six respondents, who indicated they were teaching catechetics according to the guidelines issued in the previous question, illustrated this was not so. Responses from the group ranged from 'none so far'⁴⁰⁰ to a more forthright 'none, first year

³⁹⁸ Male lay secondary school respondent in Leinster.

³⁹⁹ Female lay secondary teacher in Leinster.

⁴⁰⁰ Female lay vocational teacher outside Leinster.

students are not taught catechetics’!⁴⁰¹ One wonders if this situation will apply to all classes as examinable religious education advances through the school. One respondent indicated ‘classes are time-tabled together to facilitate moving of students from class to class (honours - pass) as a measure taken to combine religious education with catechetics!’⁴⁰²

Clearly, there is still a high degree of ignorance regarding the context and purpose of the guidelines.

Of the twelve who answered the question and who had previously indicated they were ‘unsure’ if their school was teaching catechetics according to the guidelines issued, six subsequently confirmed that uncertainty by their response to this question. One indicated the guidelines were, in fact, being observed. However, five indicated their ‘unsure’ was actually a resounding ‘no’!

Of the six who were unsure, some indicated they were in the process of discussing the ‘need for a faith dimension’ and were ‘trying to sort something out’. One felt ‘religion has been very much left to each teacher to do their own thing so it is hard to say what is going on’.⁴⁰³ Another indicated the chaplain was trying to gain access to classes but some teachers were unwelcoming as they felt such a visit impinged on the time needed to cover the syllabus.⁴⁰⁴ Other respondents again mentioned difficulties of time. It seems that many teachers are willing and enthusiastic to teach catechetics with religious education but are unaware of the support the guidelines actually offer.

Of the five who indicated uncertainty but, who are in effect not offering catechetics according to the guidelines, four indicated they have either no

⁴⁰¹ Male lay community college teacher outside Leinster.

⁴⁰² Female lay secondary teacher outside Leinster.

⁴⁰³ Female lay secondary teacher outside Leinster.

⁴⁰⁴ Female religious community college teacher in Leinster.

measures or have not yet implemented any and another indicated 'we are teaching the new RE course in the three classes per week - at this moment we are just concentrating on this'.⁴⁰⁵

One respondent who indicated that his school was not teaching catechetics according to the guidelines also indicated that 'as a community school, I believe the school has a duty to educate, not necessarily to catechise - that responsibility, I believe, lies with the local Church in conjunction with the school chaplain'.⁴⁰⁶ This view needs to be challenged. As indicated previously, such community schools have been defined, by the Supreme Court, as *de facto* Catholic schools because of their articles of management which stipulate two and a half hours faith instruction per week for each student.⁴⁰⁷

The responses given by teachers to this question reiterate the concerns raised elsewhere in this thesis; pressures of examinations will limit catechetical time and will ultimately negate catechetical content in the religious education classes.

⁴⁰⁵ Female lay vocational school teacher in Leinster.

⁴⁰⁶ Male lay community school teacher outside Leinster.

⁴⁰⁷ This issue is dealt with in greater length in 1.5.2 above.

CHAPTER SEVEN - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

7.1 Difficulties arising for religious education.

Essentially, the survey of religion teachers has indicated five key areas that need critical attention (i) the issue of time, (ii) the issue of teacher qualification, (iii) support structures in place for the religious education teacher/ catechist, (iv) the status of religious education among parents, staff and pupils and (v) the attitudes of teachers towards the introduction of religious education as part of the examinable curriculum, the combination of catechetics with religious education and the level to which the guidelines for catechetics are known and being followed. Difficulties also arise from the nature and content of the religious education curriculum.

7.1.1 The issue of time.

A significant difficulty in relation to the introduction of religious education to the examinable curriculum is the issue of time. In many ways, the volume of time allocated to a subject within a school's time-table is indicative of the importance that the school places on the subject.

Certain minimum periods of time have been stipulated by government in relation to religious education and catechetics. The Department of Education and Science has prescribed that schools that introduce the subject must allocate a minimum of two hours to examinable religious education.⁴⁰⁸ The survey (fig 6.3.8(a)) illustrated that this provision has already been breached, 14.9% of schools allocating less than two hours per week to the subject. However, vocational schools, community schools and community colleges are obliged to offer two hours 'religious instruction' per week.⁴⁰⁹ Clearly, schools have an obligation therefore, to allocate two hours to examinable religious education, if the school

⁴⁰⁸ Department of Education and Science (1999) *op cit*.

⁴⁰⁹ Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community schools in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Diocesan office. p.23. in respect of community schools and also, Education Secretariate, Archdiocese of Dublin. *Community Colleges in the Archdiocese of Dublin*. Dublin: Diocesan Office. p. 9. in respect of the similar provision vis-a vis community

opts to offer the subject, and two hours to 'religious instruction' or catechetics. The proposal to combine religious education with catechetics is actually damaging to both disciplines in that it attempts to teach both subjects in the time allocation for one subject. While the proposal to combine religious education with religious instruction has been examined in this thesis from, primarily, the perspective of catechetics, it is now becoming clear that the Department of Education and Science is also unhappy with the proposal. Diocesan Advisors have been refused access to in-service seminars for teachers of religion organised by the Department of Education and Science.⁴¹⁰ This can reasonably be interpreted to mean that the Department of Education and Science does not see the religious education class as being the natural venue for catechetics. In practical terms, these two subjects need to be separated. However, such a move would not be popular and will cause time-tabling difficulties.

The Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) at their AGM on April 27th. 1999 reported that as a result of the PCW (Programme for Competitiveness and Work), amongst other implications, 66% of schools will have to increase class size and 77% of schools will have to reduce subject options.⁴¹¹ The reason cited was the reduction in teaching hours, as a consequence of the PCW, for assistant principals. This report echoed an earlier survey conducted by the ASTI (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland) which established that twenty six per cent of schools had to drop subjects from the curriculum because of lack of staff and forty five per cent of schools stated they had been prevented from adding new subjects for the same reason.⁴¹² Given the situation painted by the IVEA and the ASTI, it seems most unlikely that another subject will be welcome into, or find room on, an already overcrowded curriculum. Despite all the goodwill that may arise, it is felt that the issue of time and an already overloaded

⁴¹⁰ This information was supplied to the writer in a conversation with Micheal de Barra, Diocesan Advisor for the Diocese of Cork and Ross, on March 22nd. 2001.

⁴¹¹ McSweeney, Neans. (1999) *op cit.*, p 6.

⁴¹² Pollak, Andy. (1999 (a)) *op cit.*, p 4.

curriculum may well decide the fate of non-examinable catechetics and examinable religious education. There is an understandable tendency to group both together. However, since both subjects are distinct and have distinct aims, such a move would do justice to neither. It also needs to be understood that examinable religious education is optional: schools may or may not place it on the curriculum. Schools do not have a similar choice in relation to 'religious instruction' or catechetics.

One possible development in this regard is that the Articles of Management of community schools and colleges allow pupils to be excused from religious instruction if their parents/ guardians send written consent to the school authorities. A future scenario is possible where schools may encourage this practice in order to dispense with the need to provide two hours of religious instruction to pupils, and teach non-denominational, examinable religious education instead.

7.1.2 Teacher qualification.

Perhaps the most alarming result of the survey was the finding in relation to teacher qualification.(Fig. 6.3.9) Only 66% of respondents had a degree qualification for teaching religion. This situation is compounded by the 14% who had no formal qualification.⁴¹³

Unfortunately, this figure does not paint the full picture. The survey was concerned with the schools involved in the first phase of the subject's introduction and, to date, only first year students are involved with the subject. Fig. 6.3.10(a) illustrates that 50% of the schools, that represent the best practice in relation to teaching religious education, would not have qualified teachers to teach religious education to all their pupils! This deficit is more pronounced outside of Leinster where 63% of schools would not have qualified teachers (fig 6.3.10(c))

⁴¹³ In this context, no formal qualification includes the three respondents who attended extra-mural courses.

It is unthinkable that school administration, the Department of Education and Science or parents would allow such a situation to continue in relation to any other subject on the curriculum. This situation would seem to indicate that professional qualification is not seen as important for the teaching of religious education. Certainly such a situation could not arise in relation to, say, the teaching of Irish, English or Mathematics! Perhaps a situation may have developed with the passing of time that all teachers who were practising Catholics were felt to be capable of teaching religious education. There is a large body of anecdotal evidence for asserting that in many schools, teachers who had not reached their allocation of 22 hours teaching in the week were given a class of religious education to 'fill their time-table'. The over reliance on Religious, many of whom had officially retired, for the teaching of religion has been alluded to. Another factor was the reluctance of schools to use its teacher allocation to employ a qualified religion teacher. Sr. Coirle cites as an example the failure to appoint a catechist in a school when the opportunity arises and to appoint a teacher of an examination subject instead.⁴¹⁴

If religious education is to be offered as an examination subject and if catechetics is to be treated seriously by school authorities, this situation will have to change. However, it is worth noting that the research finding is not entirely unexpected. There has been long standing documented evidence that religious education has suffered from a dearth of qualified teachers. Such evidence was recorded in the Weafer and Hanley national survey where, it was revealed that 46% of teachers of religion had no formal qualification.⁴¹⁵ Accounting for this deficit of formal qualification, Sr. Coirle McCarthy, the then Diocesan Advisor for the Diocese of Cork and Ross, stated 'the reality is that "formal qualifications" ... are only available in the Leinster region and this precludes access for many who may wish

⁴¹⁴ McCarthy, Coirle. (1991) *op cit.*, p 139.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, p 138.

to pursue this choice of career.’⁴¹⁶ Ten years later, as fig 6.3.10(c) illustrates, that situation still obtains.

As religious education is now an examination subject, the universities and / or the Department of Education and Science will have to provide means by which teachers can obtain a suitable and relevant qualification to equip them to teach religious education in a competent manner. Notwithstanding, the various dioceses must also ensure that there is a supply of qualified teachers available to schools in relation to the teaching of catechetics. Anything less than such an initiative would be unfair to both the teachers concerned and their students.

7.1.3 The support structures in place for the religious education teacher/ catechist.

The survey analysed teachers’ attitudes towards three particular support structures in place, the State coordinator who is concerned with the examinable religious education syllabus, the diocesan advisor, who is a diocesan employee and is concerned solely with catechetics and, thirdly, the catechetical materials distributed to the schools involved in the survey by *Veritas*.

In general terms, the State coordinator was seen to be supportive by 86% of respondents. This is of no concern to catechetics. The diocesan advisor was seen to be supportive by 66% of respondents. In general terms, there is perceived to be a more effective support structure in place for religious education than for catechetics. The fact that the State coordinator is not working in collaboration with the diocesan advisors, and is refusing diocesan advisors access to in-service sessions, makes it more difficult for catechetics to enjoy parity of esteem with catechetics within the class period.

A pivotal support structure for catechetics was to be the catechetical materials sent to schools by *Veritas*. This was not so. No respondent ‘agreed strongly’ and only 21% ‘agreed’ that these were ‘useful’. In comparison, over 50%

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p 138.

disagreed. (fig 6.3.15(a)) There is clearly a deficiency in the catechetical materials being sent to schools, particularly in the area of content. That situation was alluded to in chapter two, but despite the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the situation has not been rectified. Many commentators are attributing this lack of content in the various catechetical programmes in use to the demise of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the chronic lack of knowledge, among the 'faithful', of Church teaching. It has been observed that the problem with current 'catechetical materials' is that

content has been chucked out the window by the Father and Sister Trendies who despised the manner in which they were taught. Now, it is all about experience... The result is that by the time a person leaves school they do not really know about how authority works in the Church, and they do not know the justification for the hierarchical structure of the Church....in the same way, Catholics are not taught the basics of the faith.⁴¹⁷

The problem is one of both content and methodology. The content of catechetical programmes has been lacking, though some programmes have sought and obtained an *imprimatur* for their catechetics books. What is noteworthy is that these publications have been produced independently of *Veritas*, the publishing wing of the Irish Episcopal Conference. It has been observed that many of the catechetical text books that were in use in the Irish post-primary school had 'awful' content:

in fact, they are often almost content-free and that is exactly the way their authors want it,... teachers are more likely to ask you to list five ways in which God was good to you this week instead of teaching you five things about God.⁴¹⁸

It has been reported elsewhere that at least one school returned these materials on the grounds that religious education is not catechetics. This school is now using materials supplied by the Department of Education and Science. Every text

⁴¹⁷ Quinn, David. (2001) 'Church to blame for the corruption of Catholicism' in *The Sunday Times* (Irish Edition) March 4th.2001 London. p 17.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, p 17.

book will have a different approach to a given subject. Books published by *Veritas* would be expected to have a strong catechetical emphasis. However, this catechetical aspect is non-examinable. Other publishers will concentrate more on the examinable curriculum. It is obvious that these books will be of more use to the teacher in preparing students for examinations. Further, teachers will be reluctant to insist that students pay for a second book, which will not be necessary for examination. This is a further obstacle for both *Veritas* and the successful merger of the two disciplines.

The proposal to combine catechetics with religious education was one that involved a considerable risk from the beginning. There was always a danger that one would be overshadowed by the other, and given that the examination will be in religious education, catechetics was at a disadvantage from the start. This survey has illustrated that this initial disadvantage has not been overcome but has been accentuated by poor support structures for catechetics.

7.1.4 The status of religious education among parents, staff and pupils.

One of the compelling arguments for the introduction of an examinable syllabus in religious education was that such a development would increase the profile of the subject among pupils. This survey confirmed the veracity of this belief. The introduction of an examination has increased the profile of religious education among staff (54.4% agree - fig 6.3.19(a)) parents (56.5% agree - fig 6.3.18(a)) and, most substantially among students (68.1% agree - fig 6.3.20 (a))

However, it must be remembered that this perceived increase in profile is linked to the introduction of an examination. Only religious education is examinable. The increase in profile is not necessarily of benefit to catechetics. It is an increase in profile for a non-denominational subject which the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Bishops Conference and not the Department of Education and Science has linked to catechetics.

The difficulty in this regard is that teachers, parents and pupils will adopt a utilitarian approach and become interested solely in the examinable curriculum. In that likely scenario, catechetics will be afforded even less time than at present, be regarded as 'not being of consequence' and, in extreme cases, be objected to as it would take valuable classroom time from an examinable syllabus. Ultimately, the increase in profile afforded to examinable religious education offers no comfort to non-examinable catechetics.

7.1.5 Attitudes of teachers towards religious education and catechetics.

Of the teachers involved in the survey, 85% welcomed the introduction of examinable religious education, 14% were unsure and none did not welcome the introduction (fig 6.3.11(a)). However, this resounding assent is tempered by the 36% of teachers who expressed reservations about the introduction (fig 6.3.12(a)). This rises to a considerable 50% in the case of teachers in Catholic schools (fig 6.3.12(b)). Clearly, while most teachers think the concept of an examinable syllabus in religious education is a good idea, a considerable percentage of them still has reservations. It has been consistently pointed out to teachers and to the writer that the introduction is not on a pilot basis, rather on a phased basis and, in that regard, the syllabus is not open for renegotiation or change.⁴¹⁹ While it is understandable that the Department of Education and Science wants to move on with the introduction, it is of concern that there is no mechanism whereby the reservations or concerns of teachers can be addressed. Some teachers have raised this difficulty with the State coordinator. Indeed, one such teacher e-mailed the writer expressing his

... grave reservations about the new Junior Cert. R.E. syllabus, (despite) having attended several inservice sessions, in addition to

⁴¹⁹ This was stated to the writer by both Noirin Hynes, the state coordinator, and Dr. Caroline Renehan, Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference in separate telephone calls in December 2000. The view was again confirmed to the writer by Michael deBarra, the Diocesan post-primary advisor for the Diocese of Cork and Ross, in a conversation on March 22nd.2001.

having attempted to teach it for over a term. I commented at the latest session that I believed that the syllabus was too vague. The presenter disagreed (unsurprisingly), and replied that the syllabus was "open to a number of interpretations".⁴²⁰

It is unwise not to have some review mechanism in place with the authority to make alterations. Such intransigence, on the part of the Department of Education and Science, may lead to frustration and disillusionment.

Regarding the significant issue of the ability to combine religious instruction with catechetics, 66% agreed that such a merger was possible (6.3.16(a)). However, only 57% of respondents indicated that their school was actually doing so according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission (6.3.21(a))

Despite these findings, what was of most concern were the comments offered by respondents to question 22. These comments highlighted the difficulties associated with time which teachers faced in attempting to combine religious education with catechetics. Not surprisingly, many indicated that, even at that early stage,⁴²¹ pressures associated with the examinable syllabus had led to a dereliction of the catechetics aspect. In this regard, there was a chronic lack of awareness of the legally enforceable requirement to teach 'faith instruction' in vocational schools and in community schools and colleges. This lack of awareness was best articulated by the respondent⁴²² who, in relation to the teaching of catechetics in his school wrote 'as a community school, I believe the school has a duty to educate, not necessarily to catechise - that responsibility, I believe lies with the local Church in conjunction with the school chaplain'.

It is clear that some teachers are open to the idea of combining catechetics with religious education, others clearly are not. However, it is equally evident that of those that are, this willingness will be severely restricted by preparation for an

⁴²⁰ The respondent's name, while given to the writer, is not revealed. For the purpose of the survey, he was a lay male teacher in a community college.

⁴²¹ In this context, it is worth noting that the questionnaire was distributed half way through the first year of the 'phased' introduction.

⁴²² Male, lay community school teacher outside Leinster.

impending examination in the religious education section and the inability to cover two courses with distinct aims in one time allocation.

7.1.6 The syllabus in religious education.

The issue of the syllabus for religious education is one that should cause most concern in the Catholic hierarchy. The syllabus is set by the Minister for Education and Science, following recommendations made by the NCCA presumably after appropriate consultation. As indicated in chapter two, the current syllabus, at Junior Certificate level, is acceptable. However, what of the future? This is the fundamental flaw in defining catechetics in terms of a non-denominational subject. A subsequent minister may change the syllabus; indeed, it would be unthinkable that the syllabus would not be subject to alteration after a period of time. Should, or when, such a situation arises, the Catholic Church has no redress. It must be emphasised again that the syllabus in religious education is meant for students of 'all and no denominations'. Religious education will not be catechetics. To that end, the Catechetical Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference, in preparing and distributing guidelines for teachers who will be teaching religious education as an examination syllabus, seem to presume that catechetics will not be offered as a separate class from religious education. That is unwise and it is this writer's view that such separate classes should be sought and offered. Indeed, it is ironic that the Department of Education and Science is more forthright in drawing a distinction between religious education and catechetics than the Catholic Church itself.⁴²³ Another significant issue arises, if catechetics and religious education are combined, what catechetical arrangements will be made for students who may choose not to take this religious education?

Again, attention is drawn to the notion of a Catholic school and Prof. Haldane's

⁴²³ This assertion is based on the evidence already cited, that the Department of Education and Science has refused diocesan advisors access to in-service sessions for religious education teachers.

definition of it. There is no obligation on Catholic schools, from an ethos viewpoint, to offer religious education as an examination subject, but there certainly is an obligation to provide catechetics.

A development of note that occurred at the end of April 1999 in this regard was that the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) at their 1999 Annual General Meeting overwhelmingly passed a motion that they would adopt a

policy that Religious Education / faith formation will continue to be an integral part of the curriculum in voluntary secondary schools for all students when Religious Education is offered as an optional examination subject.⁴²⁴

This motion indicates an awareness, on the part of Catholic school managers, that religious education is not catechetics and, in that regard, is reassuring. However, as fig 6.3.21(b) illustrates, only 62.5% of Catholic secondary schools stated that they were teaching catechetics according to the guidelines issued. Fig 6.3.21(d) illustrates that the actual percentage is much lower.

Care must be taken that the examination subject does not replace catechetics. Care must also be taken that the syllabus for religious education within a school always reflects the ethos of that school. Under current arrangements, that syllabus can be changed. While acknowledging that it is unlikely that a Catholic ethos would be excluded without agreement, it is worth remembering that whoever controls the curriculum, controls the school.

While there may be a welcome for a 'liberal' religious education syllabus in some quarters, this scenario presents its own problems. A syllabus with an 'absolute and clear-cut religious and moral credo' provides the teacher with a framework within which he/she can operate. With the new religious education syllabus and similar situations where 'the credo is less absolute and clear-cut, the dilemmas for

⁴²⁴ Motion 6, Motions for AMCSS conference 1999.

teachers' becomes more challenging.⁴²⁵ A corresponding difficulty, from the teachers viewpoint, is the ability to teach a religious education syllabus without reference to one's own faith and beliefs. A teacher cannot teach in a vacuum, because, 'in reading texts and interpreting ideas, the teacher fosters patterns of thinking and privileges certain modes of inquiry and decision making'.⁴²⁶ Perhaps, it is for this reason that the Department of Education and Science are becoming apprehensive about diocesan advisors influence and input to a non-denominational religious education syllabus. The opposite also holds true. Catholic schools should ensure that teachers of such 'religious education' are not ideologically opposed or at variance with the teachings of the Catholic Church. As previously mentioned, schools need to advertise for 'teacher of religious education with catechetics' when such vacancies arise.

There is an understandable concern that religious education for pupils of 'all and no denomination' may well represent the secularisation of religious education *per se*. It is imperative that qualified teachers are available to ensure that the Christian / Catholic ethos of any school and its policy on religious education is maintained. Non-denominational religious education is a misnomer and must never replace catechetics in the Catholic school. In that regard, the advent of religious education onto the examinable curriculum may well inspire further discussion on the nature and role of 'Catholic education'. While such a discussion would be welcome, it is, unfortunately, an aspect of educational debate that has been largely ignored in Ireland. It is to be hoped that the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools, The Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Bishops Conference will soon initiate discussion in this area. The introduction of

⁴²⁵ Grace, Gerald. (1996) Leadership in Catholic Schools in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keeffe and O'Keeffe) London: Falmer press. p 75.

⁴²⁶ Lacey, Catherine A. (1996) Renewing Teaching. in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity*. (Ed. McLaughlin, O'Keeffe and O'Keeffe) London: Falmer press. p 258

examinable religious education to the curriculum should have facilitated such a discussion.

7.2 Recommendations.

Arising from this thesis, it is evident that there are many risks associated with the combining of religious education and catechetics. Some of these are easily surmountable, others less so. This section sets out some provisions that, if followed, would be beneficial to both religious education and catechetics.

7.2.1 A separation of religious education and religious instruction.

A question was posed in chapter one of this thesis, 'is religious education , a non-denominational subject according to the Department of Education and Science, capable of being taught in conjunction with religious instruction or catechetics?' It can be but not in a way which respects the aims and objectives of both of these distinct subjects. Chapter three dealt with the syllabus for religious education. Again, it must be reiterated that while this syllabus was set after consultation with Church authorities, that consultation was not obligatory and proposals made by Church authorities certainly were not binding. The aims of religious education are secular:

- To foster an awareness that the Human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times.
- To explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion.
- To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal life-style, inter-personal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.
- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretations of life.
- To contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the student.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁷ Department of Education and Science (2000) *op cit.*, p 5

In attempting to achieve these aims, students will be invited to 'reflect on their own experiences'.

The aims of religious instruction or catechetics are different

The aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavours to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know His 'mystery', the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him.⁴²⁸

Furthermore, this is not just to be an academic exercise; catechetics is also the cousin of celebration.⁴²⁹ Catechetics posits one religion, not a plurality, and involves the transmission of doctrines and devotions and also implies that the faith acquired be celebrated liturgically. If religious education is objective, religious instruction must be subjective.

Religious education can never be reduced to 'knowledge' about religious belief without in some way compromising the very essence of religious belief which in all cases involves a commitment in the Christian religions to a personal relationship with a creative and loving God experienced in and through the faith community which is the Church.⁴³⁰

As the aims of religious education and religious instruction are diametrically opposed, the interests of both subjects are better served by distinct classes. When one considers the constraints of time, the issue of appropriate qualification and the purpose of Catholic schools, 'to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrines and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted',⁴³¹ the need for such a separation becomes compelling. In that sense, the current situation *vis-a-vis* religious education and religious instruction in the Irish post-primary

⁴²⁸ John Paul II (1979) *op cit.*, p 18.

⁴²⁹ Warren, Michael. (1986) *op cit.*, p 82.

⁴³⁰ Cassidy, Eoin. (1995) *op cit.*, p35.

⁴³¹ Haldane, John. (1996) *op cit.*, p 133.

curriculum calls for a revisiting of Rossiter's 'creative divorce'. The 'divorce' was an attempt to draw a distinction between religious education and catechesis in the 1970's, despite official Church documents at the time using the terms interchangeably.⁴³² Arthur and Gaine quote Marthaler, already mentioned in chapter two, who defined religious education as being, primarily, 'an academic enterprise' while catechesis involves, amongst others, a 'more advanced instruction to nourish and sustain a living faith in the community and its individual members'.⁴³³ Religious education cannot be expected to either 'nourish' or 'sustain' a living faith. Catechesis or religious instruction has a different agenda and, as such, needs to be separated or 'divorced' from religious education.

7.2.2 The availability of qualifications.

One of the issues highlighted in the survey was the lack of appropriate qualifications for religious education teachers and catechists. At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between what are appropriate qualifications for teachers of non-denominational religious education and for catechists.

Chapter three, specifically 3.11, outlined how the *Universities Act, 1997* allowed for the establishment of faculties of theology in the National University of Ireland Colleges. However, these faculties will be non-denominational. Unlike arrangements consequent to the 1908 Act, the bishops will not have the right of nomination for appointment. This allows for a situation where a non-Christian could be a professor of theology in any of these colleges. Graduates of such faculties would be qualified for appointment as 'teachers of religious education' but not as 'teachers of religious instruction'. In that situation, legal difficulties arise in relation to discrimination at appointment stage. This issue was dealt with in chapter four, specifically 4.4. It is now essential that Catholic schools, as well as community schools, community colleges and vocational schools, which intend

⁴³² Arthur, James & Gaine, Simon. (1996) *op cit*, p 339

⁴³³ Arthur, James & Gaine, Simon. (1996) *op cit*, p 339.

to combine religious education with catechetics advertise for a 'teacher of religious education with catechetics'. Unless that distinction is made, teachers of religious education may be employed in such schools who may have no inclination, interest or qualification to teach catechetics.

There is an obligation on the local bishop, and through him, on the authorities of Catholic schools to ensure that 'those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even in non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their Christian life, and in their teaching ability.'⁴³⁴

The issue of the availability of qualifications in catechetics, or true doctrine, is dealt with elsewhere. It is of concern that many of the teachers who are teaching religious education, even in Catholic schools, are without formal qualifications. While it is the concern of the state to make provision for the qualification of teachers of religious education, it is the concern of the Church to provide recognised courses that culminate in a qualification for teaching catechetics. Church authorities have been advocating the establishment of such courses for some time:-

Higher institutes of catechetics should be further developed or founded, so that suitable catechists may be trained to take charge of catechetics at diocesan level or in religious congregations. Such higher institutes can be national or international. They should set university standards with regard to the curriculum, length of courses and conditions for admission. Schools of catechetics should also be established by individual dioceses or at least by regional episcopal conferences. These would offer a less advanced but equally valid course for the training of full time catechists.⁴³⁵

While the extract is thirty years old, dating to 1971, there is no evidence of any such enduring measures undertaken in the Irish Church. Of more concern, the Pontifical University of Maynooth, the university through which many other colleges award their degrees and the university of the national seminary in Ireland

⁴³⁴ Canon Law Society of Ireland and Great Britain. (1993) *op cit.*, canon 804, p 147.

⁴³⁵ Sacred Congregation for the Clergy. (1971) *op cit.*, p 590.

has neither a chair or department of catechetics. In that sense, it seems fair to assert that the Irish Church has relied for too long on informal arrangements, the goodwill of teachers and has been negligent in not providing proper structures for the training of competent catechists. The inherent dangers in such a policy are clear, an unprepared teacher can do a great deal of harm. Everything must be done to ensure that Catholic schools have qualified and competent teachers of religion.⁴³⁶ Indeed, the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1988 again reiterated the need for the establishment of such courses when it expressed the view that

we need to look to the future and promote the establishment of formation centres for these teachers; ecclesiastical universities and faculties should do what they can to develop appropriate programs so that the teachers of tomorrow will be able to carry out the task with the competence and efficacy that is expected of them.⁴³⁷

Unfortunately that did not happen. It must happen now. Happily, there is evidence of some movement in this direction. As previously indicated, in 2000, Fr. Michael Conway was appointed to the staff of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth to coordinate extra-mural theology courses for laity. This initiative needs to be supported and needs to extend beyond the Leinster region. In that regard, individual dioceses should, through their diocesan advisors, establish creditable courses, accredited through Maynooth, Maryvale or other reputable bodies, part-time courses in theology for catechists. Only then can the emerging complaint that the Catholic Church does not teach people the faith anymore be put to rest.⁴³⁸

7.2.3 The roles of the inspectorate and the diocesan advisor.

A corresponding issue that has not been mentioned in any literature or documentation is the role of the inspectorate in relation to the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. In every subject in the curriculum,

⁴³⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988) *op cit.*, p 23

⁴³⁷ Ibid, p 23

⁴³⁸ Quinn David. (2001) *op cit.*, p 17

the Department of Education and Science has a group of qualified inspectors who report to the Minister and ensure standards are maintained. It is essential that a similar system be put in place for religious education. In the Catholic school, it now seems likely that the religion class will comprise of religious education, as set down by the Department of Education and Science, and also catechetics. It is imperative that this crucial aspect of catechetics will not be overtaken by the examinable curriculum. In this regard, the diocesan advisor for post-primary education will have to take on a different role and ensure that Catholic schools remain true to their ethos and obligations. A number of years ago, the diocesan advisor was known as the 'diocesan inspector'. This title was felt to be negative and was consequently changed. However, an element of inspection and consequent reporting is essential in the maintenance of standards. Perhaps, the diocesan advisor could make such an annual report to the local bishop and also to the Chief Executive Officer of the local Vocational Education Committee, as these bodies have a responsibility to provide 'catechetical instruction' in vocational schools, and community colleges.⁴³⁹ There is provision for such inspection in Church documents. 'The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools in his territory, even those established by members of religious institutes.'⁴⁴⁰ The diocesan advisor acts in the place of the diocesan bishop in this regard.

More significantly, in 1978, the TUI called for a method of inspection for teachers of religion similar to that for teachers of other subjects.⁴⁴¹ Presumably, it was envisaged that this inspection would be carried out by the then Department of Education. Crucially, it seems to indicate that the teachers union, the TUI, accepts the principle that teachers of religion should be subject to inspection.

Nothing was done in relation to the provision of that 'inspection' since 1978.

⁴³⁹ Farry, Michael. (1998). *op cit.*, p 34

⁴⁴⁰ Canon Law Society of Ireland and Great Britain. (1993) *op cit.*, canon 806, p 147.

⁴⁴¹ Farry, M (1998) *op cit.*, p 37. Farry makes reference to the TUI newsletter, *TUI News and Views* Vol. 1., No. 4. December 1978 to validate his claim

The view of Professor James Arthur has already been quoted; if universities, and correspondingly schools, become less Catholic, it will not be because of any particular decision but through erosion.⁴⁴² A primary role of the diocesan advisor is to ascertain if there is such erosion and that the provisions for teaching religious instruction are upheld, particularly in terms of content. Within the Catholic school, there is an obligation on catechists to impart knowledge that is in accord with the Magisterium. This obligation was recently restated by John Paul II in his jubilee address to catechists:-

Your work, dear catechists and religion teachers, is more necessary than ever and requires on your part constant fidelity to Christ and to the Church. For all the faithful have a right to receive from those who, by office or mandate, are responsible for catechesis and preaching *answers that are not subjective, but correspond with the Church's constant Magisterium*, with the faith that has always been taught authoritatively by those appointed teachers and lived exemplarily by the saints.⁴⁴³

This 'work' must be supported, evaluated and reported on by the Diocesan Advisor. Should this not happen, the profile of religious instruction is likely to decline further until it disappears from the curriculum and becomes a mere consideration in a non-denominational religious education syllabus.

Currently, there is 'goodwill' among teaching staff towards religious education and religious instruction. There must also be competence, and both the Department of Education and Science and the various dioceses have obligations in this regard. The obvious persons to assess this 'competence' are the Department of Education and Science inspectorate and the diocesan advisors. In documentation available to date (June 2001) from the Department of Education and Science or the Secretariat of secondary schools, there is no mention of any provision for a process of inspection in either religious education or catechetics. This needs to be put in

⁴⁴² Arthur, James. (2000) *op cit.*, p 34.

⁴⁴³ John Paul II (2000) *Address to Catechists* at St. Peter's Rome. 10 December 2000. http://vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/documents/hf_jp_ii_hom_20001210_jubilcatechists_en.html accessed 15 Feb 2001

place as a matter of urgency and is of particular concern to Church authorities and those concerned with catechetics, a subject that, since it does not enjoy the support and benefits of a State examination and a specific time allocation, is in danger of losing its place on the post-primary curriculum

7.2.4 *The role of the local Church.*

While there may be a deficit in post-primary faith development, it must be remembered that ‘...the faith development of the student is the overall responsibility of (a) the home, (b) the entire teaching staff, including the R.E. teachers and the chaplain, and (c) the parish.’⁴⁴⁴ In that regard the local church may have relied excessively on Catholic schools as being the solitary organ of catechesis in the Irish Church. It seems likely that this situation will not continue indefinitely and so, alternative approaches need to be devised. Bishop Donal Murray of Limerick⁴⁴⁵ acknowledges this development:

The danger of leaving religious education to the school alone poses a particular challenge to parishes. The fact that, especially in urban areas, teenagers often attend schools far removed from their parish, raises the urgent question : how can these young people be received into the community of the parish and invited to see themselves as vital components in its life.⁴⁴⁶

That is not to absolve the Catholic school of its obligation to make Jesus known. Pope John Paul II reminded Catholic teachers that any distinction that may exist between religious instruction and catechesis does not change the fact that a school can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis too.⁴⁴⁷ Catholicism, Christianity itself, is not a private religion. It is meant to be lived in community as community. Anything else is not Catholicism or not Christianity.

⁴⁴⁴ Mooney, Brian. 1991. The views of a teacher. *Whither Religious Education*. (ed. Weafer & Hanley) Dublin: Columba. p 142.

⁴⁴⁵ While Donal Murray is now the Bishop of Limerick, this quotation dates to 1991 when he was an Auxillary Bishop in Dublin.

⁴⁴⁶ Murray, Donal. 1991. Observations of a Bishop. *Whither Religious Education*. (ed. Weafer & Hanley) Dublin: Columba. p 158.

⁴⁴⁷ McClelland, V. Alan. 1996. Wholeness, Faith and the Distinctiveness of the Catholic School. *The Contemporary Catholic School*. (ed. McLaughlin, O’Keeffe & O’Keeffe) London: Falmer press. p 160.

Murray quotes John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* when he states that

if things are not as we would wish them to be in this area, the consequences for education in faith must be serious because 'the parish community must continue to be the prime mover and the pre-eminent place for catechetics'⁴⁴⁸

Catechesi Tradendae continues to stress that

every big parish or every group of parishes with small numbers has the serious duty to train people completely dedicated to providing catechetical leadership (priests, men and women religious, lay people), to provide the equipment needed for catechetics under all aspects, to increase and adapt to the places for catechetics to the extent that it is possible and useful to do so, and to be watchful about the quality of the religious formation of the various groups and their integration into the ecclesial community.⁴⁴⁹

An over-reliance, by the parish and the Church in general, on an educational system that was essentially Catholic, negated the need for such provisions. However, a changing educational system with less allegiance to the Catholic, or any other, Church makes it crucial that individual parishes and, through them, parents reclaim this duty.

The Rite of Baptism, as already quoted, sees the parents as 'the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith,' and expresses the wish that they might 'also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do.'⁴⁵⁰ Perhaps, it is time for the church to re-emphasise this responsibility and for it to be taken seriously. From a catechetical viewpoint, initiatives will have to be taken at both parish and diocesan level. Some of these are already in place, the 'Faith friends' programme and GIFT, *Growing In Faith Together*. The abiding difficulty with these programmes is they depend on the motivation and enthusiasm of a few people. This motivation may not last and in many cases, worthwhile initiatives

⁴⁴⁸ Murray Donal (1991) *op cit.*, p 158.

⁴⁴⁹ John Paul II (1979). *op cit.* p 56

⁴⁵⁰ International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) (1992). *op cit.*, p 85.

have collapsed.

As already mentioned, there is merit in reverting to the practice of the celebrant preaching on catechetical themes at Sunday Mass. Such a development may also improve the standard and content of such homilies! It is noted by Moran that for 'many centuries the main recipient of catechetical instruction has been the young child. The Catholic Church is trying to shift that focus. The synod of 1977 said that the "adult catechumenate" should be the model of catechetical work.'⁴⁵¹

In stating all this, it is faith formation and making Jesus known and loved that makes a school Catholic; not academic excellence or whole person development. Catholic schools must not, cannot absolve themselves of this responsibility. It is in the school that many children first experience a 'faith community'; care must be taken that this experience is availed of as a method of nurturing faith. In that sense, the local school represents the missionary aspect of the local church to young people. 'Catholic schools in addition to offering a high quality academic education, need to nurture the faith and promote the spiritual and moral development of every person attending the school.'⁴⁵² It is for this reason it is vital that the local priest should have frequent access to the religious education class within the school. As indicated elsewhere, schools will not always have the services of a priest chaplain. In such circumstances, the presence of a non-ordained pastoral agent⁴⁵³ does not absolve the local priest of pastoral responsibility.

7.2.5 Appointment to membership of Trustee and Management Boards.

Because of the decline in personnel, many religious orders have withdrawn from the classroom and even Management Boards. It is imperative that the people who are nominated in their place to both Boards of Management and Trusteeship

⁴⁵¹ Moran, Gabriel. (1989). *Religious Education as a Second Language*. Alabama: Religious Education Press. p 149.

⁴⁵² Hypher, Paul (1996) *op cit.*, p 228

⁴⁵³ Congregation for the Clergy. (1997) *op cit.*, p 17.

reflect the Catholic ethos of the schools. Not to do so would betray the reason for the existence of the schools in the first place. There are indications that the parties to Boards of Management may not be aware of these 'obligations'. This writer was at a recent discussion on RSE policy formation. At that meeting a teacher stated that she would not be able to give church teaching on sexuality or abortion as she did not subscribe to them; a parent stated that she did not agree with such Church teaching either and did not send her child to that school because it was a Catholic school and the school principal did not believe in religious emblems in the classroom as a sign of the schools Catholic' nature - no religious emblems are visible in that school. In the case of the parent, academic results were the deciding factor. Under such circumstances, Catholic ethos means little. The reality seems to be that Catholic schools need to be more clear as to their own end and purpose and should be more assertive in ways of achieving that end. This may well be a task for the AMCSS and should certainly be reflected in the choice of nominees for Management Boards and Trustees. What does a Catholic ethos mean to these 'partners'? Is it making Jesus known and loved, salvation, academic excellence, convenience or something else? In any emerging curricular distinction between catechetics and religious education, the very nature and purpose of a Catholic school may have to be clarified. It was recently estimated that there are sixty religious orders operating secondary schools in Ireland, many with just one or two schools.⁴⁵⁴ As numbers of religious decline, the problem of finding suitable trustees to continue the operation and ethos of these schools emerges. Some orders reverted trusteeship to the local diocesan trustees, a case in point being the Mercy Sisters withdrawing from Ardscoil Phobal Bheanntirai in Bantry, Co. Cork and 'signing' trusteeship over to the Cork diocesan trustees.. However, in the long-term, CoRI feels that this is not an option. CoRI has been examining school

⁴⁵⁴ Pollak, Andy. 1999(b) Church grip on schools will ease under new trusteeships. *The Irish Times*. 7 June 1999. Dublin. p 19

ownership models based on the assumption that within five to ten years all Catholic secondary schools will be owned by trusts in which the laity will be heavily represented.⁴⁵⁵ Initially, these lay people will be nominated by the religious orders but as time progresses, who will appoint the trustees? Catholic school authorities need to put in place stringent measures in relation to the appointment of members of Boards of Management and to Trustee Boards. Specifically, these appointees should be clear as to the purpose and ethos of Catholic schools and should be able to defend that view. With the passing of the Education Act, 1998, certain members of Boards of Managements are representative.⁴⁵⁶ The current agreement is for four Patron representatives, one of which is the Chairperson and has a casting vote, two teacher representatives and two parent representatives. The principal is *ex-officio* non-voting secretary to the Board. The balance between patrons nominees and representatives of parents and teachers is very fine, all the more reason that care should be exercised in making such appointments.

7.3 Conclusion.

Other jurisdictions have and are combining religious education with faith formation. There is a growing awareness that such a combination is not successful. *The Weaving the Web* programme in use in England was a case in point. Two dioceses (Birmingham and Salford) discouraged use of the programme and, though devised by the National Project of Catechesis and Religious Education, the programme was widely criticised for lack of doctrinal content and a presentation of all religions as being of equal value.⁴⁵⁷ Arthur suggests that the programme may

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, p 19

⁴⁵⁶ Department of Education and Science (1998) *op cit.*, p 14, section 14(1)

⁴⁵⁷ This issue was the subject of much commentary when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) issued *Dominus Iesus* in 2000. This document asserted that not all Churches were equal and other Churches could not be regarded as 'sister Churches' of the Catholic Church.

have been mistaken for catechesis when, in fact, it is religious education.⁴⁵⁸ That view is consolidated by Nesbitt⁴⁵⁹, who believes that, in the English context, religious education must not be denominationally based.

It is religious education, not religious instruction: in other words, it is distinct from religious nurture, both formal and informal, in which members of faith communities provide for their young people.⁴⁶⁰

That early English programme bears striking resemblance to the current Irish syllabus for religious education in that it was aimed equally at all pupils of whatever religious conviction and none and, also, in that faith was presupposed neither in teacher nor in pupil. Such religious education is geared towards students learning about and from various religions, though it is acknowledged that students may be challenged to deepen their own faith commitments, whatever they may be. Such religious education is not concerned with developing Christian, or any other, faith.⁴⁶¹ The fact that within the *Weaving the Web* programme Catholicism seemed 'to be less a distinguishing feature than it was hitherto'⁴⁶² proves the point.

An evaluation of this parallel non-denominational English 'religious education' programme by Terence Copley⁴⁶³ is almost Pauline in character, in that it makes its weakness its special boast. In describing the achievements of the syllabus, Copley writes:

pupils and their teachers could express an enthusiasm for RE without automatically being presumed to be religious. Time proved that the ability of RE to shed its various skins like a snake -RI, RK, Divinity, Scripture, Bible Knowledge - demonstrated real

⁴⁵⁸ Arthur, James. (1995) *op cit*, pp 65-66

⁴⁵⁹ Dr. Eleanor Nesbitt is Senior Lecturer in Religions and Education in the Institute of Education, University of Warwick.

⁴⁶⁰ Nesbitt, Eleanor. (2001) Representing Faith Traditions in Religious Education: An Ethnographic Perspective. *The Fourth R for the Third Millennium. Education in Religion and Values for the Global Future*. (Ed's Francis, Astley and Robbins) Dublin: Lindisfarne Books. p 138.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, p 66

⁴⁶² McClelland, V.A. (1995) 'Parents, Church and School' in *Education and the Family*. (ed. Feheney) Dublin: Veritas. p 23.

⁴⁶³ Terence Copley is Professor of Religious Education at the University of Exeter

resilience in the face of massive social change.⁴⁶⁴

Historically, religious education in the Irish post-primary school never adopted these 'virtues'. In the light of such a syllabus, the religious education teacher does not build or consolidate faith but, rather, has 'unique opportunities to engage people in richness: by dancing with diversity, diving into conflict, seeking convergence, building community and acting boldly'.⁴⁶⁵ Such a teacher would find it difficult to combine religious instruction with religious education.

In Chapter one, Watson's three approaches to religious education were stated: the 'Highest Common Factor' approach; the 'Phenomenological' approach' and the 'Confessional' approach.⁴⁶⁶ These views of Nesbitt, Copley and Mullino-Moore illustrate that in the context of a non-denominational, examinable syllabus, the 'Confessional' approach to religious education is neglected. For this reason the Irish Bishops must insist on dedicated time within the curriculum for religious instruction. Such a demand is not unwarranted: it is a legal obligation for schools. Should that separation not take place, there is a real danger that in the continued confusion between religious education and religious instruction, teaching methodologies and content will satisfy the aims of neither. To that end, combining religious instruction with religious education has undermined the protection afforded to religious instruction in community schools and colleges and in vocational schools.

The current state of religious education is far from ideal. The opportunity for clarification, afforded by the elevation of religious education to the examinable curriculum, has not been developed. Despite the ten years that have elapsed since

⁴⁶⁴ Copley, Terence. (1997) *Teaching Religion Fifty years of religious education in England and Wales*. Devon:University of Exeter Press. p 190

⁴⁶⁵ Mullino Moore, Mary Elizabeth. (2001) Richness in Religious Education: Ethnic, Religious and Bio-Diversity. *The Fourth R for the Third Millennium. Education in Religion and Values for the Global Future*. (Ed's Francis, Astley and Robbins) Dublin:Lindisfarne Books. p 132.

Mullino Moore is Professor of Religion and Education, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

⁴⁶⁶ Watson, Brenda, (1993) *op cit.*, pp 38-44.

the Weafer and Hanley survey,⁴⁶⁷ the view that 'all the research findings point to the fact that within the present school environment the status of religious education is handicapped by uncertainty as to the goals to be achieved.'⁴⁶⁸ remains true. Ironically, that uncertainty has been sustained by the proposal of the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference to combine religious instruction with religious education.

In one sense, it is the best of times to be teaching religious education and the worst of times: the worst of times because God seems no longer central to everyday existence, but the best of times too. There is a Supreme Court decision validating the payment of chaplains, an integral resource to the teaching of denominational religious education. There is also the opportunity to define catechetics, independently of non-denominational religious education. Such can be done easily while model agreements are in place. The onus is on catechists to seize the opportunity.

There is no doubt that some of the difficulties that teachers of religion experience will remain, no matter what developments arise. Many of these difficulties exist because of the nature of society and the manner in which society is developing. The difficulties facing the contemporary catechist are many and varied; a society that is becoming more humanist and less religious, a world that has abandoned certainties and embraced doubts and a student population that has grown too quickly and is focused too finely on examination results and university entrance, a difficulty compounded by an examination in non-denominational religious education.

The AMCSS motion calling for concurrent classes in catechetics is a positive and reasonable step. Sadly, the Episcopal Conference has undermined this motion by attempting to combining the two. Of course, catechetics can be taught in the

⁴⁶⁷ Weafer & Hanley (1991) *op cit.*

⁴⁶⁸ Mooney, Brian. (1991) *op cit.*, p 142

examinable religious education class. It is for this purpose that the episcopal commission for catechetics prepared guidelines. However, this presupposes that the teacher is willing to teach catechetics, and from the viewpoint of the Department of Education and Science there is no obligation on the teacher to do so, though mention is made of 'contributing to the moral and spiritual development of the student.'⁴⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the survey in chapter six indicates that the number of teachers of religion who were actually combining catechetics with religious education is a cause of concern.

Perhaps, it would be appropriate to conclude with *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Vatican II *Declaration on Christian Education*, which attempted to 'restate the age old tradition of the Church on schools and schooling and to delineate a number of major principles' which guided the Church in fulfilment of the missionary command of Christ, 'Go, teach all nations'.⁴⁷⁰ 'All men of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to an education'⁴⁷¹. However, and of concern to this thesis, 'all Christians have a right to a Christian education'⁴⁷² Such a Christian Education ensures that those who have been baptised are introduced to a knowledge of the mystery of salvation and, thus, become more appreciative of the gift of faith which they have received. 'They should learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth, especially through the liturgy'.⁴⁷³ While all Christians have this right by virtue of their baptism, the duty to provide this right is allotted to 'pastors of souls' who have 'a grave obligation to do all in their power to ensure that this Christian education is enjoyed by all the faithful and especially the young who are the hope of the church'.⁴⁷⁴

Fortunately, the mechanism still exists within the Irish post-primary education

⁴⁶⁹ Department of Education and Science (2000) *op cit.*, p5

⁴⁷⁰ McClelland, V.A. (1995) *op cit.*, p 18.

⁴⁷¹ Vatican II. 1965(b) *op cit.*, p 726.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*, p 727

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, p 728

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p 728

system whereby students can get that 'Christian education', which is, in fact religious instruction. That kind of education is safeguarded by the aforementioned '*Instruments of Management*' and '*Articles of Management*' which exist for community schools and colleges, and were interpreted, by Mr. Justice Costello in the High Court, to mean that trustees and the boards of such schools are 'legally obliged to provide religious worship and religious instruction'.⁴⁷⁵ Circular Letter 73/74 makes similar provision for vocational schools.⁴⁷⁶ Secondary schools should even be more enthusiastic by virtue of their ethos.

However, this thesis has endeavoured to illustrate how and why 'Christian education' is not provided by the syllabus for religious education⁴⁷⁷ as published by the Department of Education and Science. Accordingly, The Irish Episcopal Conference must give serious consideration to their stated policy of allowing catechetics to be combined with religious education. After all

the formation and education in the Catholic religionis subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it.⁴⁷⁸

That duty cannot be delegated to the Department of Education and Science, no more than Catholic education with religious instruction can be imparted by a non-denominational examination subject.

⁴⁷⁵ Glendenning, Dympna. (1999) *op cit.*, p 64.

⁴⁷⁶ Farry, Michael. (1998) *op cit.*, p 36

⁴⁷⁷ Department of Education and Science. (2000) *op cit.*

⁴⁷⁸ Canon Law Society of Ireland and Great Britain. 1993. *op cit.*, p 147 canon 804.

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SURVEY.

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APPENDIX I

28 January 2001.

Dear colleague,

I am currently conducting a research survey into the teaching of religious education as an examination subject in the 67 schools where the subject was introduced in September 2000.

The research will involve the co-ordinators of first year religious education. The result will, I hope, give an up-to-date and comprehensive view on the introduction of religious education to the curriculum as an examination subject. The survey is being conducted as part of a doctoral thesis.

As a teacher of religion, in St. Goban's College, Bantry, I have been the recipient of more questionnaires than I would wish for. I must confess, too, that not all of these questionnaires have been filled in and returned to the sender. It is with a somewhat guilty conscience then that I am asking you to take the trouble to respond to this questionnaire when it arrives. I do appreciate the trouble and time these documents can cause!

It goes without saying that the questionnaires are totally confidential. There are no distinguishing marks on the questionnaire and I have no way of discerning who did or did not respond. I have kept the questionnaire as simple and as brief as possible, a mere two pages!

The survey itself is devised in part from a national survey conducted in 1989 by John Weafer and Ann Hanley of the Council for Research and Development in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, the results of which were published by Columba Press in 1991 under the title of *Whither Religious Education, A survey of Post-Primary Teachers*.

On a practical level, should you wish for a copy of the survey results, I would be glad to forward them in due course. In order to protect confidentiality, you might wish to request same under separate cover.

As a suggestion, can I request that when you get the survey you would respond to it as soon as possible and return it to me in the attached stamped addressed envelope? I make the request fully aware of the strains on time that these surveys cause and totally appreciative of your co-operation.

With sincere thanks and best wishes,

Fr. Tom Deenihan. M.Ed.

APPENDIX II

SURVEY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS.

Please circle the appropriate number when answering questions.

1. Please indicate gender. Male.....1 Female.....2
2. Are you a lay person.....1 a religious sister.....2
a religious brother.....3 a priest.....4

If more than one teacher is involved in teaching religious education as an examination subject to first year students, please indicate the number of teachers alongside each option.

3. Is your school in the Leinster area.....1 or outside the Leinster area.....2
4. Are you teaching in a secondary school.....1 a vocational school.....2
a community school.....3 a community college.....4
5. How many first year students in your school? _____
6. How many 1st. year students are taking religious education as an examination subject? _____
7. How many students are there in the examinable religious education class? _____
8. What is the total time allocation for religious education per week for first years? _____
9. What is your highest qualification for teaching religious education? (please circle)
Post Graduate degree in Theology.....1 Degree in Theology.....2
Diploma in Theology.....3 Extra-mural Courses.....4
No formal qualifications.....5

If more than one teacher is involved in teaching religious education as an examination subject to first year students, please indicate the number of teachers alongside each option.

10. If all students in the school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject?
yes.....1 No.....2

IN RELATION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS AN EXAMINATION SUBJECT, PLEASE EVALUATE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

11. **I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject.**
Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
12. **I have reservations about the introduction of RE as an examination subject.**
Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
13. **In my experience, the state co-ordinator has been supportive.**
Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5

14. **In my experience, the diocesan advisor has been supportive.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
15. **I have found the catechetical texts supplied by Veritas to be useful.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
16. **I believe that, in practice, teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
17. **First year classes in my school taking religious education as an examination subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
18. **Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
19. **Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among staff.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
20. **Religious Education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among pupils.**
 Agree strongly.....1 Agree.....2 Unsure.....3 Disagree.....4 Disagree strongly.....5
21. **Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference?**
 Yes.....1 No.....2. Unsure.....3
22. **What measures have been taken in your school in relation to teaching catechetics to students who are taking religious education as an examination subject.**

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire.

Please return as soon as possible in the stamped addressed envelope to

*Fr. Tom Deenihan, The Presbytery,
 Bantry, Co. Cork.*

APPENDIX iii.

List of 67 participating schools in the first phase of the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. The four schools which were not surveyed due to their non-Catholic denominational background are indicated with an asterix.*

Secondary Schools (39):

St. Leo's College, Dublin Rd., Carlow.

Maria Immaculata Secondary School, Dunmanway, Co. Cork.

Christian Brothers School, Youghal, Co. Cork.

Colaiste Chriost Ri, Capwell Rd., Cork.

St. Angela's College, Patrick's Hill, Cork.

Christ the King Secondary School, South Douglas Rd, Cork.

St. Columba's College, Stranolar, Co. Donegal.

Belvedere College, Great Denmark St., Dublin 1.

Loreto College, 53, St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2.

*Alexandra College, Milltown, Dublin 6.

*The High School, Danum, Zion Rd., Rathgar, Dublin 6.

St. Declan's College, Nephin Rd., Cabra, Dublin 7.

St. Mary's Secondary School, Holy Faith Convent, Glasnevin, Dublin 11.

Assumption Secondary School, Walkinstown, Dublin 12.

*Wesley College, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.

Presentation College, Currylea, Tuam, Co. Galway.

St. Mary's College, St. Mary's Rd., Galway.

Mean Scoil na mBraithre Chriostai, Daingean ui Chuis, Co. Kerry.

St. Mary's Secondary school, Mayderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

*Kilkenny College, Castlecomer Rd., Kilkenny.

Meanscoil na mBraithre Chriostai, Sraid Sheamais, Kilkenny.

Patrician College, Ballyfin, Portlaoise, Co. Laoise.

St. Fintan's Secondary School, Doon, Co. Limerick.

Presentation Secondary School, Sexton St., Limerick.

Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon. Co. Longford.

Mean Scoil Muire, Convent Rd., Longford Town.

St. Mary's Diocesan School, Beamore Rd., Drogheda, Co. Louth.

St. Vincent's Secondary School, Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

St. Louis Secondary School, Monaghan.

St. Nathy's College, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon.

St. Mary's College, Ballysadare, Co. Sligo.

Ursuline College, Sligo.

Ardscoil na mBraithre, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

De La Salle College, Newtown, Waterford.

Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Ozanam St, Waterford.

St. Finnian's College, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Loreto Secondary School, Spawell Rd, Wexford.

Dominican College, Wicklow.

Community Colleges and Vocational Schools (17):

Mannix College, Charleville, Co. Cork.
Coachford Community College, Coachford, Co. Cork.
Colaiste Chairbre, Dunmanway, Co. Cork.
Davis College, Annabella, Mallow, Co. Cork.
Colaiste Eoin, Cappagh Rd., Finglas, Dublin 11.
Castleknock Community College, Carpenterstown Road, Castleknock, Dublin 15.
St. Kevin's Community College, Fonthill Rd., Clondalkin, Dublin 22.
Tuam Vocational School, Tuam, Co. Galway.
Gairm Scoil an Neidin, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.
Causeway Comprehensive School, Causeway, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Lough Allen College, Drumkeerin, Co. Leitrim.
Davitt College, Springfield, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Beaufort College, Trim Rd., Navan, Co. Meath.
Vocational School, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.
Athlone Community College, Retreat Rd, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
Vocational School, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglas, Co. Wicklow.

Community and Comprehensive Schools (11):

St. Aidan's Comprehensive School, Cootehill, Co. Cavan.
St. Caimin's Community School, Tullyvarraga, Co. Clare.
Carrigaline Community School, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.
Kinsale Community School, Kinsale, Co. Cork.
Old Bawn Community School, Old Bawn, Tallaght, Dublin 24.
Scoil Mhuire Community School, Clane, Co. Kildare.
Community School, Carrick-On-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.
Ballyhaunis Community School, Knock Rd., Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.
St. Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.
St. Ciaran's Community School, Navan Rd., Kells, Co. Meath.
St. Brendan's Community School, Birr, Co. Offaly.

Appendix iv Frequencies.

Q.1 Please indicate gender. Male..... 17 32.69% Female..... 35 67.31%

2. Are you a lay person.....91 a religious sister.....3
a religious brother..... 2 a priest..... 3

3. Is your school in the Leinster area.....19 (40.4%)
or outside the Leinster area.....27 (57.4%) N= 46

4. Are you teaching in a
secondary school24 (51.1%)
a vocational school7 (14.9%)
a community school .. 11 (23.4%)
a community college.....5 (10.6%)

5 How many first year students in your school? N=46
Mean = 109.91
No. of students = 5056

6. How many 1st. year students are taking religious education as an examination subject? N=46
Mean = 98.72
No. of Students = 4541

7. How many students are there in the examinable religious education class? N=46
Mean = 27

8 What is the total time allocation for religious education per week for first years? N=47
Mean = 120.21 (minutes)

9. What is your highest qualification for teaching religious education?

Post Graduate degree in Theology.....	5
Degree in Theology.....	76
Diploma in Theology.....	23
Extra-mural Courses.....	3
No formal qualifications.....	14

10. If all students in the school were, in time, to take religious education as an examination subject, would there be sufficient qualified teachers to teach the subject?

yes.....24 (51.1%)	No.....23 (48.9%)
--------------------	-------------------

11 I welcome the introduction of religious education as an examination subject. N= 47

Agree strongly.....	23 (48.9%)
Agree.....	17 (36.2%)
Unsure.....	7 (14.9%)
Disagree.....	0
Disagree strongly.....	0

12 I have reservations about the introduction of RE as an examination subject. N=47

Agree strongly.....	1 (2.1%)
Agree.....	16 (34%)
Unsure.....	3 (6.4%)
Disagree.....	17 (36.2%)
Disagree strongly.....	10 (21.3%)

13. In my experience, the state co-ordinator has been supportive. N=47

Agree strongly.....	24 (51.1%)
Agree.....	17 (36.2%)
Unsure.....	3 (6.4%)
Disagree.....	2 (4.3%)
Disagree strongly.....	1 (2.1%)

14. In my experience, the diocesan advisor has been supportive. N=47

Agree strongly.....	10 (21.3%)
Agree.....	21 (44.7%)
Unsure.....	6 (12.8%)
Disagree.....	7 (14.9%)
Disagree strongly.....	3 (6.4%)

15.I have found the catechetical texts supplied by Veritas to be useful. N=47

Agree strongly.....	0
Agree.....	10 (21.3%)
Unsure.....	12 (25.5%)
Disagree.....	10 (21.3%)
Disagree strongly....	15 (31.9%)

6. I believe that, in practice, teaching religious education can be combined with teaching catechetics. N=47

Agree strongly.....	8 (17%)
Agree.....	23 (48.9%)

Unsure.....	10 (21.3%)
Disagree.....	4 (8.5%)
Disagree strongly.....	2 (4.3%)

17. First year classes in my school taking religious education as an exam subject will continue with the subject until Junior Certificate. N=47

Agree strongly.....	23 (48.9%)
Agree.....	19 (40.4%)
Unsure.....	4 (8.5%)
Disagree.....	0
Disagree strongly.....	1 (2.1%)

18. Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among parents. N=46

Agree strongly.....	11 (23.9%)
Agree.....	15 (31.9%)
Unsure.....	15 (31.9%)
Disagree.....	5 (10.6%)
Disagree strongly.....	0

19. Religious education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among staff. N=46

Agree strongly.....	9 (19.1%)
Agree.....	16 (34%)
Unsure.....	13 (27.7%)
Disagree.....	8 (17%)
Disagree strongly.....	0

20. Religious Education as an examination subject has raised the subject profile among pupils. N=47

Agree strongly.....	9 (19.1%)
Agree.....	16 (34%)
Unsure.....	13 (27.7%)
Disagree.....	8 (17%)
Disagree strongly.....	0

21. Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with religious education according to the guidelines issued by the Catechetics Commission of the Irish Episcopal Conference? N=47

Yes.....27 (57.4%) No.....6 (12.8%) Unsure.....14 (29.8%)

Appendix v

Comparison according to school type.

The following statistics provide a comparison between responses from within the four school types: secondary school, vocational school, community college and community school.

However, as indicated in chapter six, responses in respect of teacher status and teacher qualification were collated manually. These are given hereunder.

Q. 2 Status of respondent.

	<i>lay</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>Brother</i>	<i>Priest</i>
Secondary	43	2	1	2
Vocational	11	0	0	0
Community school	31	0	1	1
Community coll.	6	1	0	0
TOTALS	91	3	2	3

Q. 9 Highest qualification for teaching religious education.

	post-grad	degree	diploma	extra mural	none
Secondary	4	38	12	1	8
Vocational	0	11	1	0	0
Comm. school	0	23	8	2	4
Comm. college.	1	4	2	0	2
TOTALS	5	76	23	3	14

Are you teaching in a * Welcome RE as examination subject

Crosstab

			Welcome RE as examination subject			Total
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	7	13	4	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	29.2%	54.2%	16.7%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	30.4%	76.5%	57.1%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count	5	1	1	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	21.7%	5.9%	14.3%	14.9%
	Community School	Count	8	2	1	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	72.7%	18.2%	9.1%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	34.8%	11.8%	14.3%	23.4%
	Community College	Count	3	1	1	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	13.0%	5.9%	14.3%	10.6%
Total	Count	23	17	7	47	
	% within Are you teaching in a	48.9%	36.2%	14.9%	100.0%	
	% within Welcome RE as examination subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.848 ^a	6	.182
Likelihood Ratio	9.223	6	.161
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.782	1	.095
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .74.

Are you teaching in a * Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject

			Reservations about introduction of RE as exam			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count		12	3	6
		% within Are you teaching in a		50.0%	12.5%	25.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject		75.0%	100.0%	35.3%
	Vocational School	Count		1		5
		% within Are you teaching in a		14.3%		71.4%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject		6.3%		29.4%
	Community School	Count		2		6
		% within Are you teaching in a		18.2%		54.5%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject		12.5%		35.3%
	Community College	Count	1	1		
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.0%	20.0%		
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	6.3%		
Total			1	16	3	17
		% within Are you teaching in a	2.1%	34.0%	6.4%	36.2%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

			Reservatio	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	3	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	12.5%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	30.0%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count	1	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	10.0%	14.9%
	Community School	Count	3	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	27.3%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	30.0%	23.4%
	Community College	Count	3	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	60.0%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	30.0%	10.6%
Total			10	47
		% within Are you teaching in a	21.3%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.784 ^a	12	.012
Likelihood Ratio	23.455	12	.024
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.587	1	.058
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 17 cells (85.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Are you teaching in a State co-ordinator has been supportive

Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a	State co-ordinator has been supportive			
				Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
	Vocational School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a	10	11	1	2
				41.7%	45.8%	4.2%	8.3%
				41.7%	64.7%	33.3%	100.0%
				6	1		
				85.7%	14.3%		
	Community School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a	25.0%	5.9%		
				45.5%	45.5%	9.1%	
				20.8%	29.4%	33.3%	
				3	5	1	
				60.0%	45.5%	20.0%	
	Community College	Count	% within Are you teaching in a	12.5%		33.3%	
				60.0%		20.0%	
				51.1%	36.2%	6.4%	
				24	17	3	2
				100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	% within Are you teaching in a				

Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a	State		Total
				Disagree Strongly		
	Vocational School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a			7
						100.0%
						14.9%
						11
						100.0%
	Community School	Count	% within Are you teaching in a			23.4%
						100.0%
						5
						100.0%
						10.6%
	Community College	Count	% within Are you teaching in a			1
						20.0%
						100.0%
						1
						2.1%
Total		Count	% within Are you teaching in a			47

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.351 ^a	12	.105
Likelihood Ratio	16.896	12	.154
Linear-by-Linear Association	.093	1	.760
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 17 cells (85.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Are you teaching in a * Diocesan advisor has been supportive

			Diocesan advisor has been supportive			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	6	10	3	4
		% within Are you teaching in a	25.0%	41.7%	12.5%	16.7%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	60.0%	47.6%	50.0%	57.1%
	Vocational School	Count	2	3	1	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	28.6%	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	20.0%	14.3%	16.7%	14.3%
	Community School	Count	2	5	1	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	18.2%	45.5%	9.1%	9.1%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	20.0%	23.8%	16.7%	14.3%
	Community College	Count		3	1	1
		% within Are you teaching in a		60.0%	20.0%	20.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive		14.3%	16.7%	14.3%
Total	Count	10	21	6	7	
	% within Are you teaching in a	21.3%	44.7%	12.8%	14.9%	
	% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

			Diocesan	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	33.3%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count		7
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive		14.9%
	Community School	Count	2	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	18.2%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	66.7%	23.4%
	Community College	Count		5
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive		10.6%
	Total	Count	3	47
		% within Are you teaching in a	6.4%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.837 ^a	12	.924
Likelihood Ratio	6.850	12	.867
Linear-by-Linear Association	.512	1	.474
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 18 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Are you teaching in a * Texts supplied by Veritas useful

			Texts supplied by Veritas useful		
			Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	5	6	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.8%	25.0%	20.8%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	Vocational School	Count	1	4	
		% within Are you teaching in a	14.3%	57.1%	
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	10.0%	33.3%	
	Community School	Count	2	2	4
		% within Are you teaching in a	18.2%	18.2%	36.4%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	20.0%	16.7%	40.0%
	Community College	Count	2		1
		% within Are you teaching in a	40.0%		20.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	20.0%		10.0%
Total	Count	10	12	10	
	% within Are you teaching in a	21.3%	25.5%	21.3%	
	% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%	...	

			Texts	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	8	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	53.3%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count	2	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	28.6%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	13.3%	14.9%
	Community School	Count	3	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	27.3%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	20.0%	23.4%
	Community College	Count	2	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	40.0%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	13.3%	10.6%
Total	Count	15	47	
	% within Are you teaching in a	31.9%	100.0%	
	% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.177 ^a	9	.516
Likelihood Ratio	9.890	9	.359
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.992
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.06

Are you teaching in a * Combine teaching RE with catechetics

			Combine teaching RE with catechetics			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	2	15	5	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	8.3%	62.5%	20.8%	4.2%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	25.0%	65.2%	50.0%	25.0%
	Vocational School	Count	3	1	1	2
		% within Are you teaching in a	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	37.5%	4.3%	10.0%	50.0%
	Community School	Count	2	5	3	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	18.2%	45.5%	27.3%	9.1%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	25.0%	21.7%	30.0%	25.0%
	Community College	Count	1	2	1	
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	12.5%	8.7%	10.0%	
Total	Count	8	23	10	4	
	% within Are you teaching in a	17.0%	48.9%	21.3%	8.5%	
	% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

			Combine	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count		7
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics		14.9%
	Community School	Count		11
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics		23.4%
	Community College	Count	1	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	10.6%
Total	Count	2	47	
	% within Are you teaching in a	4.3%	100.0%	
	% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.877 ^a	12	.248
Likelihood Ratio	13.562	12	.330
Linear-by-Linear Association	.074	1	.786
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 17 cells (85.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .21.

Are you teaching in a * First years take RE until Junior Certificate

			First years take RE until Junior		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	11	10	2
		% within Are you teaching in a	45.8%	41.7%	8.3%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	47.8%	52.6%	50.0%
	Vocational School	Count	3	3	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	13.0%	15.8%	25.0%
	Community School	Count	8	3	
		% within Are you teaching in a	72.7%	27.3%	
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	34.8%	15.8%	
	Community College	Count	1	3	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	4.3%	15.8%	25.0%
Total		Count	23	19	4
		% within Are you teaching in a	48.9%	40.4%	8.5%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

			First years	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	4.2%	100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count		7
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate		14.9%
	Community School	Count		11
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate		23.4%
	Community College	Count		5
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate		10.6%
Total		Count	1	47
		% within Are you teaching in a	2.1%	100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.137 ^a	9	.726
Likelihood Ratio	7.280	9	.608
Linear-by-Linear Association	.251	1	.617
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 13 cells (81.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	5	7	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	21.7%	30.4%	30.4%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	45.5%	46.7%	46.7%
	Vocational School	Count	2	3	2
		% within Are you teaching in a	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	18.2%	20.0%	13.3%
	Community School	Count	4	4	3
		% within Are you teaching in a	36.4%	36.4%	27.3%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	36.4%	26.7%	20.0%
	Community College	Count		1	3
		% within Are you teaching in a		20.0%	60.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents		6.7%	20.0%
Total		Count	11	15	15
		% within Are you teaching in a	23.9%	32.6%	32.6%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

			RE has	
			Disagree	Total
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	4	23
		% within Are you teaching in a	17.4%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	80.0%	50.0%
	Vocational School	Count		7
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents		15.2%
	Community School	Count		11
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents		23.9%
	Community College	Count	1	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	20.0%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	20.0%	10.9%
Total		Count	5	46
		% within Are you teaching in a	10.9%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.123 ^a	9	.624
Likelihood Ratio	9.751	9	.371
Linear-by-Linear Association	.003	1	.956
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 13 cells (81.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .54.

Are you teaching in a * RE has raised the subject profile among staff

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	5	6	6
		% within Are you teaching in a	21.7%	26.1%	26.1%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	55.6%	37.5%	46.2%
	Vocational School	Count		3	3
		% within Are you teaching in a		42.9%	42.9%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff		18.8%	23.1%
	Community School	Count	4	5	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	36.4%	45.5%	9.1%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	44.4%	31.3%	7.7%
	Community College	Count		2	3
		% within Are you teaching in a		40.0%	60.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff		12.5%	23.1%
	Total	Count	9	16	13
		% within Are you teaching in a	19.6%	34.8%	28.3%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

			RE has	
			Disagree	Total
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	6	23
		% within Are you teaching in a	26.1%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	75.0%	50.0%
	Vocational School	Count	1	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	14.3%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	12.5%	15.2%
	Community School	Count	1	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	9.1%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	12.5%	23.9%
	Community College	Count		5
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff		10.9%
	Total	Count	8	46
		% within Are you teaching in a	17.4%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.143 ^a	9	.266
Likelihood Ratio	14.009	9	.122
Linear-by-Linear Association	.937	1	.333
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 14 cells (87.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .87.

			RE has raised the subject profile among pupils			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	4	9	9	1
		% within Are you teaching in a	16.7%	37.5%	37.5%	4.2%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	40.0%	40.9%	75.0%	50.0%
	Vocational School	Count	1	5		1
		% within Are you teaching in a	14.3%	71.4%		14.3%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	10.0%	22.7%		50.0%
	Community School	Count	5	5	1	
		% within Are you teaching in a	45.5%	45.5%	9.1%	
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	50.0%	22.7%	8.3%	
	Community College	Count		3	2	
		% within Are you teaching in a		60.0%	40.0%	
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		13.6%	16.7%	
Total	Count	10	22	12	2	
	% within Are you teaching in a	21.3%	46.8%	25.5%	4.3%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

			RE has	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	4.2%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count		7
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		14.9%
	Community School	Count		11
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		23.4%
	Community College	Count		5
		% within Are you teaching in a		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		10.6%
Total	Count	1	47	
	% within Are you teaching in a	2.1%	100.0%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.030 ^a	12	.299
Likelihood Ratio	16.646	12	.163
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.000	1	.157
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 16 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Are you teaching in a * Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines

Crosstab

			Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines			
			Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Are you teaching in a	Secondary School	Count	15	2	7	24
		% within Are you teaching in a	62.5%	8.3%	29.2%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	55.6%	33.3%	50.0%	51.1%
	Vocational School	Count	4	1	2	7
		% within Are you teaching in a	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	14.8%	16.7%	14.3%	14.9%
	Community School	Count	6	1	4	11
		% within Are you teaching in a	54.5%	9.1%	36.4%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	22.2%	16.7%	28.6%	23.4%
	Community College	Count	2	2	1	5
		% within Are you teaching in a	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	7.4%	33.3%	7.1%	10.6%
Total	Count	27	6	14	47	
	% within Are you teaching in a	57.4%	12.8%	29.8%	100.0%	
	% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.118 ^a	6	.661
Likelihood Ratio	3.163	6	.788
Linear-by-Linear Association	.226	1	.635
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .64.

Appendix vi
Catholic secondary school versus State sector school comparisons.

While Appendix v provided an analysis of responses in terms of each school type, this section provides an analysis in terms of Catholic secondary schools and all other schools combined.

Q. 2 Status of respondent.

	<i>lay</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>Brother</i>	<i>Priest</i>
Secondary	43	2	1	2
State sector	48	1	1	1
TOTALS	91	3	2	3

Q. 9 Highest qualification for teaching religious education.

	post-grad	degree	diploma	extra mural	none
Secondary	4	38	12	1	8
State sector	1	38	11	2	6
TOTALS	5	76	23	3	14

School type * Welcome RE as examination subject

Crosstab

			Welcome RE as examination subject			Total
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	
School type	Secondary School	Count	7	13	4	24
		% within School type	29.2%	54.2%	16.7%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	30.4%	76.5%	57.1%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	16	4	3	23
		% within School type	69.6%	17.4%	13.0%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	69.6%	23.5%	42.9%	48.9%
Total	Count	23	17	7	47	
	% within School type	48.9%	36.2%	14.9%	100.0%	
	% within Welcome RE as examination subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.412 ^a	2	.015
Likelihood Ratio	8.756	2	.013
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.264	1	.039
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.43.

School type * Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject

Crosstab

			Reservations about introduction of RE as exam			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count		12	3	6
		% within School type		50.0%	12.5%	25.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject		75.0%	100.0%	35.3%
	State Sector	Count	1	4		11
		% within School type	4.3%	17.4%		47.8%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	25.0%		64.7%
Total	Count	1	16	3	17	
	% within School type	2.1%	34.0%	6.4%	36.2%	
	% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Reservatio	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	3	24
		% within School type	12.5%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	30.0%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	7	23
		% within School type	30.4%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	70.0%	48.9%
Total	Count	10	47	
	% within School type	21.3%	100.0%	
	% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.054 ^a	4	.026
Likelihood Ratio	12.848	4	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.319	1	.021
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.

School type State co-ordinator has been supportive

Crosstab

			State co-ordinator has been supportive			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count	10	11	1	2
		% within School type	41.7%	45.8%	4.2%	8.3%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	41.7%	64.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	State Sector	Count	14	6	2	
		% within School type	60.9%	26.1%	8.7%	
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	58.3%	35.3%	66.7%	
Total	Count		24	17	3	2
	% within School type		51.1%	36.2%	6.4%	4.3%
	% within State co-ordinator has been supportive		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstab

			State	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count		24
		% within School type		100.0%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive		51.1%
	State Sector	Count	1	23
		% within School type	4.3%	100.0%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	100.0%	48.9%
Total	Count		1	47
	% within School type		2.1%	100.0%
	% within State co-ordinator has been supportive		100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.452 ^a	4	.244
Likelihood Ratio	6.640	4	.156
Linear-by-Linear Association	.454	1	.500
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.

School type * Diocesan advisor has been supportive

Crosstab

			Diocesan advisor has been supportive			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count	6	10	3	4
		% within School type	25.0%	41.7%	12.5%	16.7%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	60.0%	47.6%	50.0%	57.1%
	State Sector	Count	4	11	3	3
		% within School type	17.4%	47.8%	13.0%	13.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	40.0%	52.4%	50.0%	42.9%
Total		Count	10	21	6	7
		% within School type	21.3%	44.7%	12.8%	14.9%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstab

			Diocesan	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within School type	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	33.3%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	2	23
		% within School type	8.7%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	66.7%	48.9%
Total		Count	3	47
		% within School type	6.4%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.903 ^a	4	.924
Likelihood Ratio	.912	4	.923
Linear-by-Linear Association	.179	1	.672
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 7 cells (70.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.47.

School type * Texts supplied by Veritas useful

Crosstab

			Texts supplied by Veritas useful		
			Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count	5	6	5
		% within School type	20.8%	25.0%	20.8%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
	State Sector	Count	5	6	5
		% within School type	21.7%	26.1%	21.7%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	10	12	10
		% within School type	21.3%	25.5%	21.3%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstab

			Texts	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	8	24
		% within School type	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	53.3%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	7	23
		% within School type	30.4%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	46.7%	48.9%
Total		Count	15	47
		% within School type	31.9%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.045 ^a	3	.997
Likelihood Ratio	.045	3	.997
Linear-by-Linear Association	.030	1	.863
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.89.

School type * Combine teaching RE with catechetics

Crosstab

			Combine teaching RE with catechetics			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count	2	15	5	1
		% within School type	8.3%	62.5%	20.8%	4.2%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	25.0%	65.2%	50.0%	25.0%
	State Sector	Count	6	8	5	3
		% within School type	26.1%	34.8%	21.7%	13.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	75.0%	34.8%	50.0%	75.0%
Total	Count	8	23	10	4	
	% within School type	17.0%	48.9%	21.3%	8.5%	
	% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Combine	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within School type	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	1	23
		% within School type	4.3%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	48.9%
Total		Count	2	47
		% within School type	4.3%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.111 ^a	4	.276
Likelihood Ratio	5.283	4	.259
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.961
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 7 cells (70.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .98.

School type * First years take RE until Junior Certificate

Crosstab

			First years take RE until Junior		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
School type	Secondary School	Count	11	10	2
		% within School type	45.8%	41.7%	8.3%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	47.8%	52.6%	50.0%
	State Sector	Count	12	9	2
		% within School type	52.2%	39.1%	8.7%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	52.2%	47.4%	50.0%
Total	Count	23	19	4	
	% within School type	48.9%	40.4%	8.5%	
	% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			First years	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within School type	4.2%	100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count		23
		% within School type		100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate		48.9%
Total	Count	1	47	
	% within School type	2.1%	100.0%	
	% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.075 ^a	3	.783
Likelihood Ratio	1.461	3	.691
Linear-by-Linear Association	.604	1	.437
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.

School type * RE has raised the subject profile among parents

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
School type	Secondary School	Count	5	7	7
		% within School type	21.7%	30.4%	30.4%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	45.5%	46.7%	46.7%
	State Sector	Count	6	8	8
		% within School type	26.1%	34.8%	34.8%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	54.5%	53.3%	53.3%
Total	Count	11	15	15	
	% within School type	23.9%	32.6%	32.6%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree	
School type	Secondary School	Count	4	23
		% within School type	17.4%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	80.0%	50.0%
	State Sector	Count	1	23
		% within School type	4.3%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	20.0%	50.0%
Total	Count	5	46	
	% within School type	10.9%	100.0%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.024 ^a	3	.567
Likelihood Ratio	2.152	3	.541
Linear-by-Linear Association	.844	1	.358
Valid Cases	46		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.50.

School type * RE has raised the subject profile among staff

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
School type	Secondary School	Count	5	6	6
		% within School type	21.7%	26.1%	26.1%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	55.6%	37.5%	46.2%
	State Sector	Count	4	10	7
		% within School type	17.4%	43.5%	30.4%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	44.4%	62.5%	53.8%
Total		Count	9	16	13
		% within School type	19.6%	34.8%	28.3%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree	
School type	Secondary School	Count	6	23
		% within School type	26.1%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	75.0%	50.0%
	State Sector	Count	2	23
		% within School type	8.7%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	25.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	8	46
		% within School type	17.4%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.188 ^a	3	.364
Likelihood Ratio	3.292	3	.349
Linear-by-Linear Association	.777	1	.378
of Valid Cases	46		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.00.

School type * RE has raised the subject profile among pupils

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile among pupils			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
School type	Secondary School	Count	4	9	9	1
		% within School type	16.7%	37.5%	37.5%	4.2%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	40.0%	40.9%	75.0%	50.0%
	State Sector	Count	6	13	3	1
		% within School type	26.1%	56.5%	13.0%	4.3%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	60.0%	59.1%	25.0%	50.0%
Total	Count		10	22	12	2
	% within School type		21.3%	46.8%	25.5%	4.3%
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
School type	Secondary School	Count	1	24
		% within School type	4.2%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count		23
		% within School type		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		48.9%
Total	Count		1	47
	% within School type		2.1%	100.0%
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.108 ^a	4	.276
Likelihood Ratio	5.639	4	.228
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.069	1	.080
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.

School type * Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines

Crosstab

			Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines			Total
			Yes	No	Unsure	
School type	Secondary School	Count	15	2	7	24
		% within School type	62.5%	8.3%	29.2%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	55.6%	33.3%	50.0%	51.1%
	State Sector	Count	12	4	7	23
		% within School type	52.2%	17.4%	30.4%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	44.4%	66.7%	50.0%	48.9%
Total		Count	27	6	14	47
		% within School type	57.4%	12.8%	29.8%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.979 ^a	2	.613
Likelihood Ratio	.992	2	.609
Linear-by-Linear Association	.194	1	.659
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.94.

Appendix vii
Inside versus outside Leinster Comparisons.

As indicated in chapter six, previous research by Weafer and Hanley indicated that there was a serious discrepancy in qualification between teachers inside and outside Leinster. This appendix evaluates the extent of that discrepancy and also analyses other responses in terms of the location of the respondents.

Q. 9 Highest qualification for teaching religious education.

Inside Leinster (N=49)

	post-grad	degree	diploma	extra mural	none
Secondary	3	14	4	0	4
Vocational	0	2	0	0	0
Comm. school	0	15	2	0	1
Comm. college.	1	2	0	0	1
TOTALS	4	33	6	0	6
Percentage	8.16%	67.36%	12.24%	0%	12.24%

Outside Leinster (N=72)

	post-grad	degree	diploma	extra mural	none
Secondary	1	24	8	1	4
Vocational	0	9	1	0	0
Comm. school	0	8	6	2	3
Comm. college.	0	2	2	0	1
TOTALS	1	43	17	3	8
Percentage	1.38%	59.73%	23.61%	4.17%	11.11%

Is your school * Welcome RE as examination subject

Crosstab

			Welcome RE as examination subject			Total
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	7	9	3	19
		% within Is your school	36.8%	47.4%	15.8%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	31.8%	52.9%	42.9%	41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	15	8	4	27
		% within Is your school	55.6%	29.6%	14.8%	100.0%
		% within Welcome RE as examination subject	68.2%	47.1%	57.1%	58.7%
Total	Count	22	17	7	46	
	% within Is your school	47.8%	37.0%	15.2%	100.0%	
	% within Welcome RE as examination subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.773 ^a	2	.412
Likelihood Ratio	1.781	2	.411
Linear-by-Linear Association	.807	1	.369
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.89.

Is your school * Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject

Crosstab

			Reservations about introduction of RE as exam			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count		7	2	6
		% within Is your school		36.8%	10.5%	31.6%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject		43.8%	66.7%	37.5%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	1	9	1	10
		% within Is your school	3.7%	33.3%	3.7%	37.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	56.3%	33.3%	62.5%
Total	Count	1	16	3	16	
	% within Is your school	2.2%	34.8%	6.5%	34.8%	
	% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Reservatio	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Your School	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	19
		% within Is your school	21.1%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	40.0%	41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	6	27
		% within Is your school	22.2%	100.0%
		% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	60.0%	58.7%
Total	Count	10	46	
	% within Is your school	21.7%	100.0%	
	% within Reservations about introduction of RE as exam subject	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.642 ^a	4	.801
Likelihood Ratio	1.992	4	.737
Near-by-Linear Association	.011	1	.916
Total of Valid Cases	46		

4. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

Is your school * State co-ordinator has been supportive

Crosstab

			State co-ordinator has been supportive			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	8	7	3	1
		% within Is your school	42.1%	36.8%	15.8%	5.3%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	34.8%	41.2%	100.0%	50.0%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	15	10		1
		% within Is your school	55.6%	37.0%		3.7%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	65.2%	58.8%		50.0%
Total	Count	23	17	3	2	
	% within Is your school	50.0%	37.0%	6.5%	4.3%	
	% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			State	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count		19
		% within Is your school		100.0%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive		41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	1	27
		% within Is your school	3.7%	100.0%
		% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	100.0%	58.7%
Total	Count	1	46	
	% within Is your school	2.2%	100.0%	
	% within State co-ordinator has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.433 ^a	4	.246
Likelihood Ratio	6.844	4	.144
Linear-by-Linear Association	.576	1	.448
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

Is your school * Diocesan advisor has been supportive

Crosstab

			Diocesan advisor has been supportive			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	10	3	2
		% within Is your school	21.1%	52.6%	15.8%	10.5%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	40.0%	47.6%	50.0%	28.6%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	6	11	3	5
		% within Is your school	22.2%	40.7%	11.1%	18.5%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	60.0%	52.4%	50.0%	71.4%
Total	Count	10	21	6	7	
	% within Is your school	21.7%	45.7%	13.0%	15.2%	
	% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Diocesan	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count		19
		% within Is your school		100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive		41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	2	27
		% within Is your school	7.4%	100.0%
		% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	58.7%
Total	Count	2	46	
	% within Is your school	4.3%	100.0%	
	% within Diocesan advisor has been supportive	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.415 ^a	4	.660
Likelihood Ratio	3.153	4	.533
Linear-by-Linear Association	.931	1	.335
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 7 cells (70.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .83.

Is your school * Texts supplied by Veritas useful

Crosstab

			Texts supplied by Veritas useful		
			Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	5	6	4
		% within Is your school	26.3%	31.6%	21.1%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	50.0%	50.0%	44.4%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	5	6	5
		% within Is your school	18.5%	22.2%	18.5%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	50.0%	50.0%	55.6%
Total	Count	10	12	9	
	% within Is your school	21.7%	26.1%	19.6%	
	% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Texts	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	19
		% within Is your school	21.1%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	26.7%	41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	11	27
		% within Is your school	40.7%	100.0%
		% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	73.3%	58.7%
Total	Count	15	46	
	% within Is your school	32.6%	100.0%	
	% within Texts supplied by Veritas useful	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.048 ^a	3	.562
Likelihood Ratio	2.110	3	.550
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.647	1	.199
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.72.

Is your school * Combine teaching RE with catechetics

Crosstab

			Combine teaching RE with catechetics			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	11	4	
		% within Is your school	21.1%	57.9%	21.1%	
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	50.0%	40.0%	
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	4	11	6	4
		% within Is your school	14.8%	40.7%	22.2%	14.8%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	50.0%	50.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	22	10	4	
	% within Is your school	17.4%	47.8%	21.7%	8.7%	
	% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			Combine	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count		19
		% within Is your school		100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics		41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	2	27
		% within Is your school	7.4%	100.0%
		% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	58.7%
Total	Count	2	46	
	% within Is your school	4.3%	100.0%	
	% within Combine teaching RE with catechetics	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.165 ^a	4	.271
Likelihood Ratio	7.322	4	.120
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.795	1	.051
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 7 cells (70.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .83.

Is your school * First years take RE until Junior Certificate

Crosstab

			First years take RE until Junior		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	9	9	1
		% within Is your school	47.4%	47.4%	5.3%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	40.9%	47.4%	25.0%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	13	10	3
		% within Is your school	48.1%	37.0%	11.1%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	59.1%	52.6%	75.0%
Total	Count	22	19	4	
	% within Is your school	47.8%	41.3%	8.7%	
	% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			First years	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count		19
		% within Is your school		100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate		41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	1	27
		% within Is your school	3.7%	100.0%
		% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	58.7%
Total	Count	1	46	
	% within Is your school	2.2%	100.0%	
	% within First years take RE until Junior Certificate	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.432 ^a	3	.698
Likelihood Ratio	1.818	3	.611
Linear-by-Linear Association	.436	1	.509
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

Is your school * RE has raised the subject profile among parents

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	3	9
		% within Is your school	21.1%	15.8%	47.4%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	36.4%	20.0%	64.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	7	12	5
		% within Is your school	26.9%	46.2%	19.2%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	63.6%	80.0%	35.7%
Total	Count	11	15	14	
	% within Is your school	24.4%	33.3%	31.1%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	3	19
		% within Is your school	15.8%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	60.0%	42.2%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	2	26
		% within Is your school	7.7%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	40.0%	57.8%
Total	Count	5	45	
	% within Is your school	11.1%	100.0%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among parents	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.633 ^a	3	.085
Likelihood Ratio	6.878	3	.076
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.952	1	.086
N of Valid Cases	45		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.11.

Is your school * RE has raised the subject profile among staff

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile		
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	2	6	8
		% within Is your school	11.1%	33.3%	44.4%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	22.2%	37.5%	61.5%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	7	10	5
		% within Is your school	25.9%	37.0%	18.5%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	77.8%	62.5%	38.5%
Total	Count	9	16	13	
	% within Is your school	20.0%	35.6%	28.9%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	2	18
		% within Is your school	11.1%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	28.6%	40.0%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	5	27
		% within Is your school	18.5%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	71.4%	60.0%
Total		Count	7	45
		% within Is your school	15.6%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among staff	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.121 ^a	3	.249
Likelihood Ratio	4.167	3	.244
Linear-by-Linear Association	.746	1	.388
N of Valid Cases	45		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.80.

Is your school * RE has raised the subject profile among pupils

Crosstab

			RE has raised the subject profile among pupils			
			Agree Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	4	5	7	2
		% within Is your school	21.1%	26.3%	36.8%	10.5%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	40.0%	23.8%	58.3%	100.0%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	6	16	5	
		% within Is your school	22.2%	59.3%	18.5%	
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	60.0%	76.2%	41.7%	
Total	Count	10	21	12	2	
	% within Is your school	21.7%	45.7%	26.1%	4.3%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

1.

Crosstab

			RE has	Total
			Disagree Strongly	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	1	19
		% within Is your school	5.3%	100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count		27
		% within Is your school		100.0%
		% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils		58.7%
Total	Count	1	46	
	% within Is your school	2.2%	100.0%	
	% within RE has raised the subject profile among pupils	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.357 ^a	4	.079
Likelihood Ratio	9.558	4	.049
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.277	1	.039
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .41.

Is your school * Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines

Crosstab

			Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines			Total
			Yes	No	Unsure	
Is your school	In The Leinster Area	Count	11	2	6	19
		% within Is your school	57.9%	10.5%	31.6%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	42.3%	33.3%	42.9%	41.3%
	Outside The Leinster Area	Count	15	4	8	27
		% within Is your school	55.6%	14.8%	29.6%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	57.7%	66.7%	57.1%	58.7%
Total		Count	26	6	14	46
		% within Is your school	56.5%	13.0%	30.4%	100.0%
		% within Is your school teaching catechetics in conjunction with RE according to the guidelines	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.182 ^a	2	.913
Likelihood Ratio	.186	2	.911
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.989
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.48.