U.S. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THE RELIGIOUS WHO SERVED IN THEM: CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE FIRST SIX DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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This article, the second in a series of three articles surveying the contributions of the religious to U.S. Catholic schooling, focuses upon their contributions during the first six decades of the 20th century. Through this period, not only did the religious provide the personnel needed to support the tremendous expansion of Catholic schooling, they also stepped forward to provide diocesan and national Catholic educational leadership, pushed Catholic pedagogical theory beyond its traditional European roots, designed new religion curricula, advanced women's equality, and upheld parental rights in educating their children. These contributions made it possible for Catholic schools to provide Catholic youth the moral and intellectual formation to lead the American Catholic community during the post-Vatican II decades.

For most American Catholics, "God's bricklayers" predominated the first half of the 20th century (Connelly, 1976, p. 320). As this caricature implies, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals personified the Church's expanding institutional presence and influence in the United States, especially as they dedicated new churches, schools, hospitals, and social service agencies.

As the proliferation of Catholicism impacted Catholic schooling, there were in 1900 nearly 4,000 Catholic schools in the United States (Ellis, 1969). Within two decades, an additional 4,103 schools were constructed, educating 1,926,000 students (NCEA, 1986). Then, between 1920 and 1965, the nation's bishops consecrated 5,189 new elementary and secondary school

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cornerstones. This explosive 64% increase included a 66% increase in elementary schools and a 55% increase in secondary schools. As this era closed and the post-Vatican II era dawned, 13,292 Catholic schools enrolled 5,574,000 students (NCEA, 1986). There were 177,223 religious and lay teachers serving in the schools—120,206 in the elementary schools (a 289% increase when compared to 1920) and 57,013 in the secondary schools (a 719% increase when compared to 1920).

Although the number of religious sisters, brothers, and priests teaching and administering in the nation's Catholic schools increased by 249% between 1920 and 1965, their proportion relative to the percentage of lay educators decreased 27.9%. Concurrently, the proportional percentage of lay educators increased by 27.9%. Indeed, as Quigley argued in 1938, the control of Catholic schooling to the lay ministry was underway decades before Vatican II.

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLING

The expansion of Catholic schooling during the first half of the 20th century portended an era punctuated by efforts to coordinate Catholic schooling. Whereas in the 18th and 19th centuries Catholic schooling was primarily a parochial matter, the effects of industrialization, the standardization of workplace processes and procedures, the emergence of a professional managerial class, and the institutional impetus provided by the Third Baltimore Council interacted in such ways that the locus of power shifted away from local parishes to newly established diocesan and national organizations. The prototypical image of the bishop as a serene, pastoral, and gentle shepherd of souls gave way to a new, more powerful executive image, the corporation sole (Kantowicz, 1983).

Although bishops, archbishops, and cardinals embodied the Church for many American Catholics, the religious embodied the Church locally. In the decades between 1900 and 1965, the religious who controlled the schools made contributions to Catholic education by providing diocesan and national leadership. They introduced progressivism into religion curricula, and their moral leadership advanced women's equality and protected parental rights in educating their children. In sum, the contributions of the religious made it possible for Catholic schools to provide Catholic youth a moral and intellectual formation that prepared them to lead the American Catholic community during the post-Vatican II decades, when the universal Church opened its windows to the modern world.

PROVIDING DIOCESAN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

With diocesan interests gradually taking precedence over parochial concerns early in the 20th century, it was not unusual for the bishop to act unilaterally and without consulting his priests or the laity in his "search for order" (Walch, 1996). Whether or not this was a part of the larger trend to consolidate ecclesiastical authority in diocesan chanceries (Dolan, 1985), the overall direction for Catholic schooling was clear. By the end of the 19th century, bishops were appointing trusted clergymen as their "Inspectors of Schools," an official role later retitled "Superintendent of Schools."

Along the eastern seaboard as late as the 1850s, and in the western territories as early as the 1860s, bishops initiated the centralization of parochial schools within their dioceses by creating boards of education. Philadelphia's Bishop Kenrick established the first Catholic school board to assist him in "regulating and perfecting" the Catholic schools (Gabert, 1973, p. 68). In 1863, Cincinnati's Archbishop, John Baptist Purcell, appointed an Archdiocesan School Board, whose president was Purcell's auxiliary bishop, Sylvester Rosecrans. Though Rosecrans did not function as a superintendent in the sense that term would be understood in the 20th century, Rosecrans and the Board did regulate the Archdiocesan parochial schools, especially with regard to the certification of teachers (Perko, 1981). Then, in 1886, the fifth synod of the Archdiocese of New York officially established a school board (Augenstein, 1996).

These incipient attempts to centralize power in a diocesan office met with resistance, especially from pastors and religious superiors who jealously guarded their relative independence in school governance. In Cincinnati, for example, even though Purcell's board was defunct, Archdiocesan deans—priests who coordinated Archdiocesan activities in a given locale—assumed many of the board's duties and exercised oversight of the Catholic schools. In 1883, when a dean challenged the qualifications of a Sister of Mercy, her Provincial Superior intervened, expressing vigorous opposition to what she posited was an incursion into the Sisters' territory, namely, rules regulating the certification of teachers. In two strongly worded letters to Purcell's successor, William Henry Elder, Sr. Mary Baptist threatened to withdraw her Sisters if Elder enforced the rules. Faced with having to replace the Sisters of Mercy, Archbishop Elder relented and, in a letter to Sr. Mary Baptist, expressed regret for the pain caused (Perko, 1981).

By the close of the 19th century, the movement to centralize diocesan educational efforts solidified. In 1889, William E. Degnan was appointed the nation's first Catholic school superintendent, as the term "superintendent" would be understood by the mid-20th century, for the Archdiocese of New York. Also that year, the Archbishop of Philadelphia appointed Nevin Fisher

to a similar position. Over the next decade, S. F. Carroll was appointed in Omaha and John Belford in Brooklyn (Augenstein, 1996). In 1910 only 30% of the nation's dioceses had appointed school superintendents. Within two decades 60% of the nation's dioceses had superintendents and "...it was clear to a majority of Catholics that the appointment of school superintendent was vital to insure the continued development of Catholic education in any diocese" (Walch, 1996, p. 102). While secular priests formed the personnel pool from which most superintendents were drawn, not all early superintendents were clergymen. In 1919, Wilfrid Lessard became the nation's first Catholic lay superintendent, serving as superintendent of parochial schools for the Diocese of Manchester for 13 years before returning to his law practice in 1932 (Augenstein, 1996).

It was E. F. Gibbons, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Buffalo, New York, who identified the direction which the Catholic superintendency would take for much of the 20th century. In a talk to his fellow superintendents at the 1905 Catholic Educational Association meeting, Gibbons spoke about centralizing Catholic education in a diocesan office, echoing the Taylorian ideal that the superintendent's task was to make schooling more efficient and effective (Callahan, 1962). The job description for the supervisor/superintendent included: fostering communication between the teachers serving in a diocese; Americanizing ethnic parochial schools; and engaging in school evaluation and public relations work by promoting the uniform quality of the Catholic schools and their successes throughout the diocese (Gibbons, 1905).

This early job description portrays the diocesan superintendent not so much as the "chief inspector" of schools, that is, an administrator exercising control over the details of daily life in schools, as much as one who promotes Catholic schooling within the diocese; that is, an educational leader who articulates the purpose for Catholic schooling and provides the means for educators to implement policy locally. Gibbons' job description balanced the decentralized nature of Catholic schooling and the theory of subsidiarity, thus melding the theological purpose of Catholic schooling with the movement to centralize schooling and making it more efficient and effective.

In the decades following Gibbons' speech, however, diocesan educational offices and the superintendents who led them increasingly resembled their public school counterparts, especially as diocesan schools offices exerted considerable influence over what would transpire in diocesan schools (Augenstein, 1996). By the close of this era, the superintendent in most dioceses was not some bureaucrat ensconced in a distant chancery office. In fact, the superintendent's name was very familiar, especially to students enrolled in the Catholic schools as, for example, in the Archdiocese of Chicago where the superintendent's signature and name appeared on the front of every student's report card.

SUPPLYING NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The impetus to professionalize Catholic education through national coordination became a priority during the first two decades of the 20th century. Again, the religious figured prominently in this movement.

With the inauguration of the Catholic Educational Association (CEA) in 1904 and the Department of Education in the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC) in 1919, Catholic education boasted two national organizations to act on its behalf. While the CEA (in 1927 renamed the National Catholic Educational Association, NCEA) was the "congress" of many voices dedicated to Catholic education who implemented policy at the school level (O'Connell, 1909), the NCWC's Department of Education was the bishop's agency, exercising episcopal oversight concerning educational policy.

Nowhere does clerical influence upon the direction U.S. Catholic schooling would take in the 20th century figure more prominently than in the contributions made by CEA and NCEA leaders during the first six and one-half decades of the 20th century. Their annual addresses, sermons, reports, and editorials demonstrate each leader using this forum to respond publicly to a primary policy question concerning Catholic schooling: What is a distinctively American Catholic moral and intellectual formation? Over the decades, their unified response, veiled in rhetoric carefully crafted for public consumption, evidences a vision of Catholic schooling with roots that reach at least as far back as Bishop John Carroll's *Pastoral Letter of 1792* (Carroll, 1792/1984). This vision was also the point of contention in the schooling controversy (Morrissey, 1976; O'Connell, 1988; Rippley, 1980) and certainly varied with popular perceptions about what was transpiring daily in Catholic schools.

The second CEA president general, Timothy J. Shahan (1908-1929), answered the policy question by relating a dualistic story. He suggested that, if the American nation was to succeed in forming students morally and intellectually, all of its schools should provide instruction in sin and its sanctions, the dignity and responsibility of human free will, a sense of social duty to God, discipline and obedience, and the need for a sacramental life (Shahan, 1911). In an era when anti-modernism informed the Church's stance toward the world, if the sacramental aspect of Shahan's five-point agenda was deleted, his policy reflected anew the previous century's pan-Protestant solution that voided public schools of sectarian differences in order to provide youth a common moral formation (Cremin, 1970, 1980; Tyack, 1966; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Indeed, what Shahan expounded was, by his day, a traditional theme. Namely, as U.S. citizens, Roman Catholics would participate actively in and

influence the republic's common moral code. And yet, this theme reiterated John Ireland's liberal Americanist agenda as much as the conservative agenda of Ireland's archiepiscopal nemesis, Michael Corrigan. But, what had changed by the time Shahan ascended to national prominence is that only Catholic schools could fulfill this egalitarian ideal because public schools, for the most part, could not provide students a moral formation. In Shahan's mind, then, only Catholic schools were capable of forming true Americans (Shahan, 1912).

In the 1930s and 40s, John Bertram Peterson, who served as NCEA president general from 1936-1944 following a distinguished career at Catholic University of America, responded to the policy question by incorporating the best of progressive educational theory with the best of Catholic educational practice. A protégé of the Catholic progressivist educator Fr. Thomas Shields, Peterson's educational philosophy included imbuing moral as well as mental self-discipline into the curriculum so that graduates would be equipped to withstand the challenges to human freedom in general and to American democracy in particular.

With events on the Continent posing a clearer and more present danger to democracy, few citizens would have disagreed with J. B. Peterson's proposition that American schools must inculcate moral values in youth. But, the real problem was that the nation's public schools did not provide this program. To provide for this lack, Peterson argued in 1936, Catholic schools would provide the educational program characterizing true Americans. Graduates would be loyal to but also could respectfully dissent from legitimate authority and the shifting tides of public opinion.

Although John Timothy McNicholas served as NCEA president general for only four years (1946-1950), his Dominican training provided a unique qualification for this prelate from Cincinnati to unmask the "unthinking" he concluded had come to monopolize the nation's public education establishment. Steeping his philosophy in the traditional fonts of education (God, home, Church, and civil society), McNicholas responded to the policy question arguing that moral training must permeate every phase of schooling so that "right" thinking and "moral" living would be inculcated into the student's every conscious thought and act (McNicholas, 1947-48).

Like his predecessors, McNicholas reasoned that since public schools did not provide this essential public service, Catholic schools must. Most notably, these "truly American" schools would graduate students trained to dissent from legitimate authority if it did not use "right" reason to arrive at arguable conclusions (McNicholas, 1947-48, p. 44). Influential American Catholics like former Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, former New York Governor Mario Cuomo, one-time Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, Congressman Henry Hyde, former United Nations representative Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Michael Novak, George Weigel, and Garry

Wills as well as television journalists Christopher Matthews, Cokie Roberts, and Timothy Russert and Supreme Court Justice Antonio Scalia—even though their theological and political views diverge—exemplify Catholic citizens trained in the ideal Archbishop J. T. McNicholas espoused and promulgated.

In a speech delivered posthumously, McNicholas argued that peace education was a moral imperative (McNicholas, 1950-51). This proposal is interesting when viewed in light of the late-1960s movement to infuse peace studies into Catholic high school religion curricula. Historically, educating American Catholic youth to be peacemakers was hardly novel.

McNicholas' short tenure as NCEA president general evidenced the continued ascension of the Americanist ideal in Catholic educational policy. While much of what McNicholas said might be categorized by those whose interest would be to label him as "conservative" or "narrow" in thought, a more careful reading of McNicholas' argument, at least as it appears in published texts, does not validate such a categorical judgment. In fact, Archbishop McNicholas' carefully nuanced argumentation liberates him from any categorization aligning him with his brother prelate, New York's Cardinal Francis Spellman, who at the time was waging a crusade against the nation's First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt (Grant, 1979).

These three national Catholic educational leaders guided the NCEA during a period characterized by the Church's generally hostile and defensive attitude toward the modern world. Each expressed a high degree of openness to the ideals embodied in the American form of self-governance, and their words reveal a reconciliation of the institutional demands of Roman Catholicism with the egalitarian ideals of American Catholicism. These educational leaders achieved this outcome by focusing upon the importance of including moral training as part of every young American's educational program. The content of that moral training, however, was not quite as parochial as popular caricatures of Catholic schools portray it.

The major point of contention between Catholic and public educational policy, then, was not simply that Catholics would build and maintain separate schools to inculcate sectarian religious ideologies and practices. Rather, these national Catholic educational leaders contended exactly what some in the hierarchy maintained as early as the 1820s: public education had abandoned its common school heritage whereby parents exercised their God-given right to provide for the education of their children. Furthermore, as T. J. Shahan prophesied,

> The inculcation of [Christian morality] is a necessary part of the service which the country expects of its schools, it is no less essential for the life of the school itself. Those, indeed, are the sure foundations in the minds and hearts of our people on which American education must be built. Once these

> disappear the school will sink to the level of the factory. It will lose all ideal significance. Its appeal for the better things will fall on ears that are closed—on pathways to the soul that have never been opened. Let the school take heed of itself lest, having failed to quicken the spiritual forces in the youth of the land, it send forth a generation that will look upon it with indifference or contempt. (1924, pp. 32-33)

For these national Catholic educational leaders, an educational program devoid of a moral formation would eventuate a generation of American citizens so thoroughly indoctrinated in materialism, secularism, and atheism that they would be impotent with regard to making informed moral decisions. The purpose for Catholic schools, then, was to effect the transformation of American society by equipping youth to contend with the manifestations of evil, both in the nation and in the world.

The organization of the U.S. Catholic schools became increasingly complex during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, and the issue of administering a separate U.S. Catholic school system—"confederation" would be more accurate—became more pressing. Under Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt, who served as NCEA executive secretary for two decades (1946-1966), the NCEA expanded its services to Catholic educators. Hochwalt's executive ability proved to be a valuable asset as he shepherded the NCEA beyond an era characterized by the Church's defensive attitudes toward the world and into an era of greater openness.

Hochwalt's flair for organizational detail made it possible for the NCEA to continue advancing its earliest policy interests. For him, Catholic educational policy mandated cultivating in young Americans the ideals, attitudes, and habits as well as the knowledge and skills required for them to conduct their lives as citizens in a pluralistic democracy (Hochwalt, 1951-52). As progressive an educator as any, or at least he so thought, Hochwalt called for the development of a society of learned American Catholics, hoped that the NCEA would become the home to Catholics who had received their undergraduate and post-baccalaureate training but had strayed from the Church—whom he called "wanderers in the wasteland"—and challenged U.S. Catholic educators to conceive of a "New Rome" (Hochwalt, 1963-64). Hardly a conservative's manifesto, Hochwalt positioned the NCEA to be the primary arena where post-Vatican II educational policy would be debated and the renewal of American Catholicism planned. For the monsignor, Catholic schools would spur this renewal in the post-Vatican II era by continuing to prepare another generation of American Catholic leaders.

By the mid-1960s, however, many of the nation's diocesan superintendents identified Hochwalt with a traditionalist, sectarian Catholic worldview (Horrigan, 1977). As the monsignor's correspondence indicates, this categorization frustrated him, not only because it accused Hochwalt of something he believed he was not, but furthermore, couldn't advocate or respond to

publicly, if only for the reason that such a response would have exposed his true sentiments and threatened success in shepherding his vision to fruition.

During the first half of the 20th century, the nation's bishops may have believed that they controlled Catholic schooling. However, as is evident from the reports, speeches, and homilies of the NCEA leaders during these years, NCEA policy advocated an agenda for Catholic schooling that varied considerably from the neo-Thomist mindset of many prelates and pastors. Perhaps unbeknownst to—or even, tolerated by—those who paid the bills, the religious controlled the nation's Catholic schools. They also controlled diocesan schools' offices and the National Catholic Educational Association, and from these bully pulpits they explicated the educational policy and practices characterizing how a new generation of American Catholic leaders would be formed. These were the youth—the Church militant—who would be "the soldiers for Christ" as the post-Vatican II era dawned.

FURNISHING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

During the 1800s and first half of the 1900s, much of Catholic educational thought was informed by a religious ethos stressing personal sin as well as the salvation effected through passive reception of the Church's sacraments. By the 1960s, however, another ethos informed Catholic educational thought, a more optimistic psychological and social ethos stressing the student's human development as well as active participation in the sacraments (Gleason, 1969).

Bryce has chronicled "a few pioneers whose vision and conviction chartered new directions" (1978, p. S-36) during the first five decades of the 20th century. These are the priests whose instructional leadership led to the improvement of religion textbooks and teaching methods as well as the integration of the study of Christian doctrine with life and religious practice, especially liturgical worship. Through the combined efforts of these innovative instructional leaders, Catholic pedagogical practice underwent a dramatic, though imperceptible, metamorphosis.

One pivotal individual at the turn of the 20th century was Peter Christopher Yorke, a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and "kind of Cesar Chavez of his day [who] championed the fundamental rights of workers to organize to improve working conditions and to negotiate in collective bargaining sessions" (Bryce, 1978, p. S-38). In addition to his commitment to social justice, Fr. Yorke's passionate concern for the religious formation of youth inspired him to design a series of religion textbooks integrating scriptural and liturgical texts.

In contrast to the Baltimore Catechism, Yorke's texts were graded, their language and narrative content were shaped to the understanding of their readers, and each was designed not only to be attractive to students but to

draw them into the content so that religious instruction would not be solely a matter of studying "the anatomy of a skeletonized theology," but also a matter of learning how "to walk with Christ, how to believe with the centurion..." (Yorke, as cited in Bryce, 1978, p. S-40). Furthermore, Yorke's *Textbooks of Religion* series was a collaborative effort—designed, field-tested, and revised with practitioners. His collaborative efforts bore fruit as the series soon replaced the Baltimore Catechism, promulgated only 15 years earlier, in the Catholic schools. The *Textbooks of Religion* also became the early forerunner of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine handbooks used throughout the United States in the decades prior to Vatican II.

A second priest, Thomas Shields, more of an intellectual than the more practical Fr. Yorke, also sought to improve the teaching of religion by gearing it to the student's learning capabilities at various stages. Reflecting the influence of Dewey's experimental approach to pedagogy (Dewey, 1944), the 16 principles Shields enumerated in *The Psychology of Education* (1906) placed the student, not the teacher, at the center of the learning process. Shields' approach was revolutionary, at least for Catholic educators, as Shields made students active agents in the learning process, not passive recipients who parroted back what teachers and textbooks stated (Murphy, 1973, 1974; Ward, 1947; Wohlwent, 1968).

Against the rising tide of modernism, the implications of progressive educational philosophy for the teaching of religion were clear, at least to Fr. Shields. First, to join the advance of the social sciences with Catholic catechetical theory, Shields redesigned religion texts, eventually producing four volumes that replaced the traditional question-and-answer format exemplified by the Baltimore Catechism with prayers, religion lessons, and lists of commandments and Church laws accompanied with illustrations, poems, and hymnody. Shields' texts were written in prose; the narratives drew upon the student's experience; and, every lesson was related to a Gospel story.

This accomplished, Shields turned his attention to a more ambitious project, the improvement of Catholic teacher education and expanding Catholic higher educational opportunity to include women. For Shields, higher education was not a "males-only" bastion. Instead, he argued, "[h]igher education will prove profitable not only to men, but also to women. Hence, we cannot restrict superior education to either sex, since it is by its very nature destined to extend its powerful influence to all members of the social body—to each according to his capacity and condition in life" (1907, p. 288).

Shields' persistent efforts to open the Sisters' College at Catholic University of America, his influence in shaping the Sisters' Summer School movement, and his correspondence school at Catholic University of America signaled a fundamental change in Catholic schooling. Not only was Shields' program the first opportunity for women religious to receive degrees from a national Catholic center of learning, but more importantly, Shields' role in

these programs signaled the first sustained incursion of progressive theories steeped in the secular social sciences into the professional training of Catholic educators. It would be several decades later, however, after students trained by innovators like Pace, Shields, Yorke, O'Hara, and Michel would control Catholic schools, that Catholic educational progressivism would evidence itself in academic achievement as well as in the view graduates of Catholic schools would take of Catholicism and membership in the Church.

Thus, it was during the first six decades of the 20th century that the instructional leadership furnished by the religious provided the stimulus to lay the groundwork for change. The involvement of the religious in the movement to centralize and direct U.S. Catholic schooling, especially as diocesan superintendents and NCEA leaders, provided two arenas where the religious promoted Catholic educational progressivism. Furthermore, the leadership of the religious in introducing progressive pedagogical theory into teacher training, when combined with their consensus-building approach to developing religion curricula and textbooks, as well as opening the doors of higher education to women, portended momentous changes in Catholic educational thought.

Despite the Vatican's best efforts to suppress Americanism in 1899, the ideals imputed to Isaac Hecker and his followers continued to inform Catholic educational thought. The instructional leadership furnished by the religious during the first six decades of the 20th century provided the foundation for teachers in Catholic schools to inculcate in their students more progressive and pluralistic attitudes during an era generally characterized by anti-modernism. It would take decades, however, before pedagogical practice in Catholic schools would reflect these trends. Perhaps this is due simply to the reason that Catholic education is built upon a centuries-old tradition that cannot be summarily dismissed or abandoned (McNamara, 1996).

ADVANCING WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Beyond the sheer force provided by their numerical presence in parochial schools, religious sisters contributed to the life of the 20th century American Catholic community in an unprecedented way, one not often reflected upon in scholarly print. In sum, these educators did not simply pass on the faith to the next generation. Neither were religious sisters "ignorant classroom tyrants" or an "arm of the Inquisition"—even if some of their students did characterize them in this way (McNamara, 1996). More seriously, religious sisters were intensely demanding of themselves and, as they went about instructing youth, were a living reminder about what women could do, if only given the opportunity (Ewens, 1978; McNamara, 1996; Misner, 1978). As these women instructed their students, especially during the first 65 years of the 20th century, they revolutionized Catholic pedagogical practice and

shaped how the next generation of American Catholic women would envision their lives, their religion, and their roles.

Brewer (1987) traces the origins of this contribution to the earliest efforts of religious women to provide educational opportunities for young girls to the Latin patristic era, in general, and to St. Jerome, in particular, who "allowed his friend Laerta's daughter, Paula, to study reading, writing, Latin, Greek, scripture, and the Early Fathers..." (p. 1). While the societies of Christian antiquity generally barred women from attending schools and engaging in the professions, it is of no small consequence that women's monasteries educated women as early as the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance. However, the educational program found in most monasteries prepared young women for convent life rather than for life in the home or the world. It was, however, the first move in a protracted, centuries-long effort to recognize women's equality—one that would culminate in post-Vatican II American Catholic feminism.

While there had been scattered attempts to reform the educational programs offered in convent schools and to provide young women a rigorous intellectual formation, most were quashed. For example, a 17th century Englishwoman of St. Omer, Mary Ward, directed one such movement. Educating young girls not only in piety, faith, and for their role in the home, Ward also provided the female equivalent of a Jesuit schooling, a moral and intellectual formation that "would guarantee the faith of women and allow them to realize their potential" (Brewer, 1987, p. 5). Ward was opposed by local clergy who "needed and wanted women to prepare girls for their eventual roles as Christian homemakers" (Brewer, 1987, p. 5). Rome suppressed Ward's group in 1631 for the ostensible reason that Ward and her associates wore secular dress and lived outside the monastic cloister.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, convent schools and girls' academies in the New World held to the traditional Catholic ideal, although fissures were evident in the foundation. Like the European progenitors of these schools, the curriculum in convent schools and girls' academies in the United States stressed faith and piety as the cornerstones of Catholic femininity. For the most part, the daily schedule organized life as if students were aspirants to religious life. In contrast to the European ideal, however, U.S. convent schools and girls' academies prepared students for roles in the home and the world, not only the convent. An 1841 advertisement for an academy sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in Cincinnati evidences this trend, stating that "the heart must be educated *as well as the mind* and adorned with those qualities which beautify manners, and render virtue more attractive and amiable" (as cited in Brewer, 1987, p. 9, italics added).

More than likely, the virtuous, intelligent, and capable woman propounded in this advertisement was a vague hope (at best) or a publicist's prevarication (at worst), responding to 19th-century non-Catholic educational

reformers whose schools boasted that they educated young women by empowering their intellectual capacity and preparing them for a profession (namely, teaching) and thereby making them self-sufficient. Willard's Troy Seminary (founded in 1821) and Mount Holyoke (founded in 1837) exemplified this ideal, where piety was inculcated and young girls were challenged to excel intellectually as well as physically. If Catholic girls' academies and convent schools were to attract new students, these schools had to respond to the challenges posed by their competitors.

The Religious Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Sinsinawa Dominicans responded by modifying curricula to include vocational training. Brewer (1987) maintains that "[t]hese changes, however, did not compromise the rest of academy life. The schedules and rules followed by the girls matched those of their teachers and all recreational activities contained a religious and moralistic purpose" (p. 76). In the end, "Catholic academies...gave the girls little training for work inside or outside the home and showed little concern for the practical issue of a woman supporting herself or the domestic duties of a wife and mother... (p. 11). There was one significant difference, however: "In a country where influential and prominent girls' schools prepared their students for the moral reform of America and the world, Catholic academies prepared their pupils for eternal life" (p. 11). Thus, both private and Catholic girls' academies used similar means to effect different (though not mutually exclusive) educational ends.

In Catholic girls' academies and convent schools, students were not mute when expressing their ideas about Catholic women and their role in the new millennium. Of particular significance at the turn of the 20th century was the question of women's rights and suffrage. In classroom debates, students questioned biblical arguments supportive of the subjugation of women to men, argued the merits of women serving as President of the United States, and maintained that women could be both mothers and professionals. Brewer notes: "...convent schoolgirls no longer adhered to the traditional Catholic position on the role of women. In addition to acknowledging the value of the single woman, academy students advocated greater involvement for women in affairs of state" (1987, p. 113). By the late 19th century, change was imminent concerning how American Catholic women would regard their role in American society for, as many graduates commenced forth into American society, they had been prepared for and chose careers in office work, teaching, social work, and traditionally male professions including law, medicine, politics, journalism, and zoology.

Several decades after the trend to educate women for the professions was operative in Catholic girls' academies and convent schools, the first historian of U.S. Catholic schooling, Fr. James Burns, challenged convent schools and girls' academies throughout the United States to reform their education-

al programs. One of Burns' abiding interests was that Catholic girls take courses enabling them to become productive members of the American work force. About convent schools, Burns argued:

> There is evidently a serious defect in the adjustment of education to individual and social needs, where pupils who will have to go out and seek employment as soon as they graduate spend a large part of their time in school in the study of music and other artistic accomplishments, to the entire neglect of studies that would be of immediate help to them in securing good positions. (1917, p. 122)

Burns' vision was not so much revolutionary as it was an amalgam, a traditional educational program that also included commercial courses and domestic sciences. But, this curricular change provided the intellectual foundation for Burns to advance his primary goal—to open the doors of Catholic higher education to women. To prepare young girls for this eventuality, Burns added that Catholic girls' academies and convent schools should offer a college preparatory program.

But women's religious congregations didn't need Fr. Burns or his amalgam, for many had already forged ahead into this territory. For example, the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, founded in 1863 as a Catholic girls' academy, was chartered as a college in 1896 and, by 1915, most of the 19 Catholic women's colleges in existence had evolved from girls' academies (Power, 1958). Some of the earliest support for higher education for Catholic women came from a surprising source, the conservative bishop of Rochester, Bernard J. McQuaid. Not only was he instrumental in opening one of the nation's first Catholic normal schools; McQuaid also advocated higher educational opportunity for American Catholic women long before the first Catholic college for women was established (Kunkel, 1974).

Nearly nine decades following the publication of Fr. Burns' book, Margaret O'Brien-Steinfels spoke about the impact religious women had upon the American Catholic Church, especially how religious women inculcated new attitudes about women's equality in their students. Steinfels told the *1996 Conference on Women and the Culture of Life:*

> Catholic women often had as models religious sisters who were teachers, professors, nurses, administrators, presidents of colleges, advisors, friends full of sound advice and enthusiastic counsel, some of whom set an example by breaking new ground, going where no women had gone before. Their achievements, personal and institutional, were enormous, and too often in an age of individual achievement and sexual liberation their stories have been eclipsed. And since I have a little litany of the saints going here, let me go even further and recall to mind the priests and bishops who have aided and abetted the effort for women's equality....the existential record of the

> church on women is better than its theory; and that record is particularly good in the United States, thanks in part to a Catholic school system that treated boys and girls as equally capable, equally competent, and to women's colleges that built upon this capability and competence. (1996, pp. 17-19)

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of Catholic girls' academies and convent schools during the 19th and 20th centuries, Brewer notes,

> [f]ew institutions in the American Catholic Church can rival the far-reaching influence of the convent school. Whatever their weaknesses or strengths, the nuns and the women educated in these schools played a crucial role in the development of a Roman Catholic faith and piety in an American setting (1987, p. 137).

Through their control of the convent schools, religious women inculcated a distinctive American Catholic ethos in their students, one supplying the foundation for graduates to advance women's equality during the 20th century. In light of this contribution, it should not have proven surprising that, in the late-1980s, two women—not men—provided leadership for the nation's two educational organizations. Sr. Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, was the secretary of the USCC Committee on Education and Sr. Catherine MacNamee, CSJ, was the president of the National Catholic Educational Association.

Once again, revolutionary change in Catholic educational thought was more evolutionary. The religious—who controlled the schools and, in this era, two national Catholic educational organizations—advanced and perfected the Americanist agenda their forebears had entrusted to them—from the very first day their parents enrolled them as students in Catholic school.

UPHOLDING PARENTAL RIGHTS

One final yet significant contribution the religious sisters made to U.S. Catholic schooling during the first half of the 20th century focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of U.S. educational law. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, who staffed St. Mary School in Portland as well as a number of other schools in Oregon, gained notoriety by challenging an Oregon statute that struck at the heart of Catholic educational philosophy (Jorgenson, 1968).

Similar to many women's religious communities throughout the nation, the Sisters at St. Mary School busied themselves providing for the basic educational needs of Catholic youth. The Sisters' obstinate support of parental rights came at an important historical juncture, just as state legislatures throughout the nation asserted the state's primary interest in educating youth and thereby usurping parental rights. Thus, when the State of Oregon legis-

lated that all children must attend public schools four years following the statute's enactment, the Sisters sued the State and, in the landmark 1925 Supreme Court decision, *Pierce v. the Society of Sisters* (269 U.S. 510), the Court declared that the child is not a "mere creature of the state."

Pierce established a constitutional precedent supporting a fundamental tenet of Catholic educational philosophy, namely, that parents bear the primary right to educate their children. As parental rights concern the education of children, parents bear a divine obligation to provide their children a moral and intellectual formation. When both the state and Church uphold and support parent rights, the most important national treasure, God's children, receive the educational program needed if they are to exercise responsible citizenship not only in this world but for the next as well (Jacobs, 1997).

To this day, *Pierce* continues to uphold parental prerogatives in educating their children. The Sisters' stalwart advocacy of parental rights also continues to remind legislators that a state's interest in educating youth does not allow it to trample upon parental rights.

A SUMMARY ASSESSMENT AND LOOK FORWARD

By 1968, U.S. Catholic schooling had become a "formidable structure" (Ellis, 1956/1969) composed of 10,757 elementary schools with 4,165,504 students and 2,275 secondary schools boasting a total enrollment of 1,089,272 students. Indeed, what would have been inconceivable to most American Catholics only one century earlier was the fact one century later: Catholic schools formed the world's largest private system of schools (Hunt & Kunkel, 1984).

The soul of Catholic schooling—the religious who controlled Catholic schooling—provided the personnel needed to support this expansion. These women and men stepped forward to provide diocesan and national Catholic educational leadership, pushed Catholic pedagogical theory beyond its traditional European roots and designed new religion curricula, advanced women's equality, and upheld parental rights in educating their children. Through these and other contributions, these religious sisters, brothers, and priests translated Scripture and Church tradition into an educational program that formed how a new generation of American Catholics, the post-Vatican II generation, would think about the Church and membership in it.

In view of these contributions, it would be inaccurate to assert that those who controlled Catholic schools between 1900 and 1965 were interested solely in mainstreaming immigrant youth into the nation's economic, political, social, and moral fabric. Neither would it be accurate to think that those who controlled Catholic schools were interested primarily in forming a Catholic intellectual élite, a failure Ellis (1969) attributed to Catholic

schools. Another, more persistent objective animated the religious serving in the schools. As O'Brien notes about this era in U.S. Catholic history: "The fact is that the hierarchy, clergy, and the laity, all wished to be both American and Catholic and their attempt to reconcile the two, to mediate between religious and social roles, lies at the heart of the American experience" (1992, pp. 308-309). It was those who controlled the Catholic schools—the religious sisters, brothers, and priests—who brought this hope to fulfillment by the mid-1960s.

Ironically, U.S. Catholic schooling floundered the years immediately following the close of the Second Vatican Council. Many in the community, along with Mary Perkins-Ryan (1964), asked: "Are parochial schools the answer?"

Seven years later, an answer to this question may well have come from a surprising source, the editors of *Newsweek*. In an article reporting the condition of U.S. Catholic schooling, they wrote:

> In religion as in architecture, form tends to follow function and finances. From this perspective, American Catholicism appears to be a school system with churches attached. And indeed, to those students who spend a full sixteen years in them, Catholic schools are the church, from grade school though college—when the system works—students encounter a responsive religious milieu that attempts to integrate Catholicism with expanding intellectual horizons....Catholic schools may yet turn out to be not only alternatives to public schools, but also *centers for encouraging a new kind of pluralism in Catholic thought, morality, and spirituality* as well. (1971, pp. 83-84, italics added)

For the tiny minority of post-Vatican II American Catholics who continued to believe that Catholic schools were the only effective way to provide children the moral and intellectual formation they deserve, the editors of *Newsweek* offered a purpose for post-Vatican II Catholic schooling. However, had the editors of *Newsweek* and the "true believers" been familiar with U.S. Catholic educational history, they would have recognized that those who controlled the nation's Catholic schools had been introducing pluralism into Catholic thought, morality, and spirituality long before Vatican II.

In the third and final article of this series, the focus will shift to the contributions made by the religious to Catholic schools in the three decades following the close of the Second Vatican Council. Even though the religious sisters, brothers, and priests gradually receded from front stage, those who did remain labored alongside their lay collaborators to promote academic achievement, to provide educational opportunity for the poor and marginalized, and to solidify their schools' Catholic identity. Armed with the documents of the Second Vatican Council and an unflinching belief that "the future belongs to those who control the schools" (Heming, 1895, p. 172), the

religious of the post-Vatican II era bequeathed leadership of American Catholic schooling to their lay collaborators, those who would lead American Catholic schools into the third Christian millennium.

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