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# AN IGNATIAN ANALYSIS OF THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY: LESSONS FOR JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION

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*Love it or leave it, the Walt Disney Company is widely regarded as a model organizational culture, a multinational corporation with theme park, movie, and entertainment interests all over the world. Disney has experienced unequalled success in promoting its vision and mission. This article, the first of a two-part series, examines the lessons of Disney for Catholic higher education, particularly in the Jesuit tradition.*

Many health care, business, and education organizations are concerned with better understanding their climate and culture. While these groups are different in innumerable ways, they share many characteristics. Each represents a large complex organization that delivers various services to people. It is in the organization's best interest to reflect upon its mission, values, and identity and through critical reflection to better understand the quality of its claims with the reality experienced by its stakeholders (Breslin, 2000).

Sergiovanni (1995) advised educational leaders to give serious attention to "the informal, subtle, and symbolic aspects of school life" (p. 95). Believing that school communities must continuously ponder questions that inform and shape their culture, Sergiovanni wrote:

What is this school about? What is important here? What do we believe in? Why do we function the way we do? How are we unique? How do I fit into the scheme of things? Answering those questions imposes an order on one's school life that is derived from a sense of purpose and enriched meanings. (pp. 95-96)

It is the responsibility of leadership to frame these questions and to elicit responses to them. Sergiovanni (1984) believed that leadership would enrich an institution's culture by

articulating school purposes and mission; socializing new members to the culture; telling stories and maintaining or reinforcing myths, traditions, and beliefs; explaining "the way things operate around here"; developing and displaying a system of symbols over time; and rewarding those who reflect this culture. (p. 9)

These conscious efforts described by Sergiovanni must include the active participation and interest of many people to bring awareness to realities that are often operating on a subliminal level or that might be obscured.

Deal and Peterson (1991) reflected upon the hidden aspects of a school's culture when they commented that

the concept of culture is meant to describe the character of a school as it reflects deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have been formed over the course of its history. Beneath the conscious awareness of everyday life in any organization there is a stream of thought, sentiment, and activity. This invisible, taken-for-granted flow of beliefs and assumptions gives meaning to what people say and do. It shapes how they interpret hundreds of daily transactions. This deeper structure of life in organizations is reflected and transmitted through symbolic language and expressive action. Culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time. (p. 7)

While Deal and Peterson (1991) and Sergiovanni (1984) were primarily describing aspects of school culture as it is found in elementary and secondary education, their observations are apropos to the educational culture of higher education. Culture can be defined in many ways with each definition underscoring a distinctive aspect or highlighting a particular nuance. Peterson and Spencer (1991), writing from a higher education perspective, offered the following interpretation:

Culture, as a construct or concept, emanates primarily from anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and, more recently, studies of organizational behavior and psychology. It focuses on the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work. Organizational culture is a holistic perspective. (p. 142)

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The unique mission and identity that distinguish institutions of Catholic higher education have recently come under close scrutiny by many interested constituencies (Burtchaell, 1998; Currie, 1999; Haughey, 1996; John Paul II, 1990). While various strategies are being implemented to enhance the culture of these institutions, an objective critique is sought to assess what is working

and what is not. The business community shares this concern of advancing its culture, and has also invested considerable resources to understand this phenomenon (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Higher education could benefit from a study of what successful businesses have discovered and have done to further their corporate culture.

The Walt Disney Company is recognized for its effective strategies for developing and advancing its culture (Capodagli & Jackson, 1999; Grover, 1997; Peters & Waterman, 1982). This study presents what one notable company has discovered about advancing its culture and considers the implications for Jesuit higher education.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the common elements of the culture of Jesuit higher education in the United States as perceived by the schools' mission and identity directors. The study also compared the college and university findings of 27 Jesuit institutions (Passon, 1999) with those effective and analogous strategies used by one successful American business, the Walt Disney Company, to deepen its corporate culture and communicate it to the public.

## **CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION**

During the 1960s, Catholic institutions of higher education experienced dramatic changes that would echo, in varying degrees, the situation in Catholic elementary and secondary education of fewer religious men and women, escalating costs, and an uncertain future. However, one major difference should be kept in mind when conceptualizing the relationship between Catholic higher education and the institutional Church: Catholic higher education, with the exception of 14 colleges and universities sponsored by bishops or dioceses and several ecclesiastical faculties, has traditionally functioned independently of the direct governance of the Church. That symbiotic harmony between the presence of a religious community and the Church preserved the institutional Catholic mission and culture on these campuses. When the numbers of vowed religious began to decline drastically, professors were hired with little or no thought given to their attitudes toward the Catholic culture of the schools (Burtchaell, 1998). Higher education found itself trying to pay equitable salaries while keeping the cost of a private education affordable to students.

Finding solutions to financial crises often meant seeking answers that resulted in secularization (Hennesey, 1981). Whether some schools compromised their religious character to qualify for funds or used this argument to justify secularizing goals is a contentious question (Burtchaell, 1998). Taking

advantage of government money and programs has been a traditional source of growing secularization in Catholic higher education. The period of the 1960s also witnessed a growing concern and awareness of what might be lost if conscious efforts were not made to claim a religious identity and mission.

## **A DEFINING MOMENT: LAND O' LAKES**

The Land O' Lakes meetings were held in preparation for the International Federation of Catholic Universities conference held in Kinshasa, Zaire (Kinshasa Statement, 1992). These meetings derived their name from the second gathering that was held at the University of Notre Dame's retreat in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin. The document produced at the second meeting became the "magna carta" of Catholic higher education in the United States. A salient ideal from the document characterizes the Catholic university as a "community of learners or a community of scholars, in which Catholicism is perceptibly present and effectively operative" (Land O' Lakes Statement, 1992, p. 7). This objective would be echoed universally by Catholic higher education in the Kinshasa Statement with its adoption of the goal that "the Catholic university must be an academic institution, a community of scholars, in which Catholicism is present and operative" (Kinshasa Statement, 1992, p. 13).

## **CATHOLIC CULTURE AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Catholic higher education would struggle with understanding the meaning of a "Catholicism that was perceptibly present and effectively operative" (Land O' Lakes, 1992, p. 7). These institutions were keenly aware that the original schools of higher education in the United States, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, were all founded with a sectarian mission but had consciously or unwittingly allowed that religious dimension to fade (Rudolph, 1962). While Catholic higher education presumed much good will and optimism during this time of transition, various schools experienced a growing secularization and diminishment of Catholic identity and culture (Burtchaell, 1998).

## ***EX CORDE ECCLESIAE***

Concern about mission and identity is manifested in special presentations, discussion groups, and ongoing seminars within Catholic higher education. These discussions received a new urgency in 1990 with the promulgation of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. The fine points of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* were analyzed and debated by the bishops of the United States and the Catholic higher education community for nine years after its publication. While there remains much concern about how to implement the norms relating to the theology professor's mandate from the bishop and the guidelines advising that the majority of board members and faculty

be Catholic, the bishops of the United States approved the document with 233 in favor and 31 against at their November 1999 meeting (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 1999).

Some view the current challenge surrounding implementation to be a conflict of different world views (Dosen, 2000). Others (George, 2000) are remarkably hopeful, given the numerous disagreements yet to come. It remains clear, however, that Catholic education at every level must answer the call to become mission driven in every aspect of the organization (Pittau, 2000). The main focus of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is a call, challenge, and reminder for higher education to distinguish and develop the Catholic culture.

Nineteen years after the Land O' Lakes meeting, and following the 1995 Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) National Conference, "On Catholic Higher Education: Practice and Promise," David J. O'Brien (1996) made the following assessment of Catholic higher education's progress, in view of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae's* increasing urgency:

Independent boards of trustees have become the governing bodies of most Catholic colleges and universities. Faculty and staff are now predominantly lay, extremely well educated, highly professional, more balanced in proportions of men and women, and much more religiously diverse. For a generation, with the help of government tuition assistance and remarkably loyal alumni, parents, and benefactors, most Catholic colleges and universities have prospered. Lists of top-quality schools, regionally and even nationally, and hints about "best bargains" in higher education now invariably include more than a fair share of Catholic institutions. Academic freedom is well established, internal academic governance gradually moves toward shared responsibility, and presidents dependably, and nearly unanimously, rally when necessary to defend institutional autonomy and academic integrity. (p. 1)

While these strides and accomplishments cited by O'Brien (1996) were achieved by extensive deliberation and struggle, they do not in any way obscure the presence or counter the impact of some of the culturally erosive forces in Catholic higher education. In fact, some would assert that lay boards and the cultivation of religious diversity were the Trojan horses which bore agents of diminution to the mission of Catholic higher education. Gallin (1996) commented that:

the changes made in governance of the colleges created some new problems: a lessening of interest on the part of some religious in the mission of Catholic higher education; a loss of a distinctive Catholic culture on many campuses; and perhaps most understandably, an ambiguity about the mission itself. (p. 131)

## JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Of the 236 Catholic institutions of higher education in the United States, the Society of Jesus sponsors 28, with 2 of these 28 being jointly sponsored by orders of women religious. What has been said of Catholic education in general, and of Catholic higher education in particular, is also true of Jesuit higher education. A reduction in the number of Jesuits, escalating costs, and a proactive plan for mission and identity have all been causes for concern. Throughout this study whatever is said of Catholic higher education in general may be understood to be true of Jesuit higher education as well.

Though each Jesuit institution is fully autonomous, these schools form a network through an organization called the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), headquartered in Washington, DC. Within this organization, various administrators, such as presidents, directors of campus ministry, and vice presidents of finance, student development, and others hold meetings of mutual concern throughout the year to provide insights, resources, support, and encouragement in advancing the apostolate of Jesuit higher education. One such group within the AJCU is the Directors of Mission and Identity, which was formally approved by the AJCU on February 14, 1992. This group of administrators is comprised of representatives from each of the Jesuit colleges and universities.

The Directors of Mission and Identity are responsible for creating strategies designed to advance the Catholic culture in a Jesuit tradition on each campus. The directors typically work with the university community to develop programs to orient new faculty and employees while offering ongoing enrichment for others. These activities may include, but are not limited to, participation in the hiring process, presentations at orientations, retreats, discussion groups, and lecture sponsorship. It should be noted that the directors are not the sole animators of the Catholic and Jesuit culture of the school. Offices of campus ministry and other groups are also interested in enhancing this mission within the university. It is not unusual to see various schools and programs, such as a school of law or business, sponsoring lectures or joining together in community service projects that underscore the mission and identity of the university.

This evolution of attention to Catholic and Jesuit culture also illustrates that there are many stakeholders in the university interested in better understanding its culture and mission. Higher education stands among many organizations that are actively studying their cultures and missions and trying to implement effective strategies to further enhance their cultural identities while critically evaluating those tactics that range from the ineffective to those that are erosive (Collins & Porras, 1994).

## **BUSINESS AND EDUCATION CULTURES INTERFACE**

Many organizations representative of health care, business, and education are concerned with their respective cultures. One strategy that has received focus for strengthening organizational culture is the pervasive effort to find people who will embrace the institution's mission and values. Studies of diverse organizations can yield meaningful insights, as in the case of higher education studying what business has discovered about advancing institutional culture.

Collins and Porras (1994) were surprised that their research on enduring and visionary businesses found an eager and receptive ear among nonprofit organizations. Upon further reflection, they recognized similarities between organizations such as business and education, for-profit and nonprofit:

Both face the need to transcend dependence on any single leader or great idea. Both depend on a timeless set of core values and an enduring purpose beyond just making money. Both need to change in response to a changing world, while simultaneously preserving their core values and purpose. Both benefit from cult-like cultures and careful attention to succession planning. Both need mechanisms of forward progress, be they BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals), experimentation and entrepreneurship, or continuous self-improvement. Both need to create consistent alignment to preserve their core values and purpose and to stimulate progress. Certainly, the structures, strategies, competitive dynamics, and economics vary from for-profit to nonprofit institutions. But, the essence of what it takes to build an enduring, great institution does not vary. (p. xix)

What seems to be critical for all effective leaders and organizations is the calculated accessibility of their cultures (Schein, 1992). One possible way of understanding the Land O' Lakes Statement (1992) that Catholicism be perceptible and effective would be to emphasize the accessibility of the institution's mission and identity. The scholars of the field (Deal & Peterson, 1991; Peterson & Spencer, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1995) suggest that it would be in the school's best interest to identify its unique cultural dimensions and to reveal these in such a way that their presence, meaning, and significance are apparent to the members of that organizational culture, as well as to the most casual visitor. Higher education may benefit from analyzing how other successful organizations formulate their strategies to create a culture that reinforces and delivers their mission.

### **THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY**

The Walt Disney Company was highlighted in Peters and Waterman's (1982) *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, but

received far greater coverage in a PBS video (Tyler & Nathan, 1984) based on this book. The book and video generated much interest in the strategies that the Disney Company used to advance its corporate culture. In fact, Disney recognized an opportunity to establish an educational branch in the company, known as the Disney Institute, which would share its philosophy and techniques for professional development. The Walt Disney Company is recognized for its excellent and enduring strategies to advance its institutional mission and identity (Connellan, 1997).

These strategies typically center on advancing the mission of the Walt Disney Company, which is to provide quality entertainment (Collins & Porras, 1994). The following qualities are associated with advancing the Disney Company's mission:

- Use of a special language, such as "Employees are cast members" (Collins & Porras, 1994, p. 128)
- The pervasive use of symbols and rituals (Watts, 1997)
- Hiring practices that seek people who will embrace the mission and contribute to it (Capodagli & Jackson, 1999)
- Well-planned orientation programs that consist of multiple meetings (Collins & Porras, 1994)
- Ongoing enrichment programs and education programs (*Disney Approach to People Management*, n.d.)
- The value of being part of and contributing to a team (Bennis & Biederman, 1997)
- Recognizing and celebrating outstanding contributions to the organization (*Disney Approach to People Management*, n.d.)
- Affiliation with the company as a source of pride (*Disney Approach to People Management*, n.d.)
- Frequent and varied forms of communication (Capodagli & Jackson, 1999)
- Attention to detail (Connellan, 1997)
- Quality standards of safety, courtesy, excellence in performance, and efficiency (*Disney Approach to People Management*, n.d.)
- Ongoing assessment to improve services and products (Watts, 1997).

Disney strives to permeate its organization with these values and objectives, while concretizing them in a way that will be obvious to anyone who encounters the culture.

## **THE JESUIT PURSUIT OF NEW PERSPECTIVES**

St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), the founder of the Society of Jesus, advised in the spiritual world that one should go where one finds light. This means that in prayer a person should try a form, and if it gives life and consolation the person should pursue it; but if it is found perpetually difficult or empty, one is advised to move onto something else. The wisdom of this advice can

be appropriated to other areas of life. The application of such wisdom to this particular study would be that any effective insights about strategies researched and used by business to advance their mission and identity should be evaluated with a view toward their utility in Jesuit higher education. Studies of organizations yield meaningful insights for all enterprises for those willing to listen and be open to new perspectives. Business, in particular, spends considerable money on investigating practices that are found effective. These discoveries are especially attentive to finding employees who will embrace the institution's mission and values.

The supreme governing body of the Society of Jesus, General Congregation 34, met in Rome from January 5 to March 22, 1995. This congregation's overriding theme was that Jesuits should be open to and in dialogue with various cultures. Decree Four (Society of Jesus, 1995), *Our Mission and Culture*, established that: "A genuine attempt to work from within the shared experience of Christians and unbelievers in a secular and critical culture, built upon respect and friendship, is the only successful starting point" (p. 60). While this document has broad applications, its wisdom can be appropriated to this study. It would be in keeping with the spirit of this congregation for Jesuit higher education to enter a dialogue with a successful business model, to discover what might be learned from a new perspective and starting point.

## THEORETICAL RATIONALE

The theoretical rationale of this study was based on Total Quality Management (TQM) and its ongoing renewal, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), concepts attributed to the seminal work of statistician W. Edwards Deming (1986). John J. Bonstingl (1992), who serves as a consultant to schools seeking to implement TQM principles, recounted Deming's impact upon Japan and the transformation of perceptions toward Japanese products:

The story of TQM...is entwined with the legend of Japan's phoenix-like resurrection from the ashes of World War II. Japanese industrial leaders insist this could not have happened without the help of Deming and his fellow American statistical experts, Joseph M. Juran and Armand Feigenbaum. Deming and Juran lectured throughout Japan in the years following the war, teaching manufacturers how to reverse their well-established reputation for shoddy, cheap goods by designing quality into their work systems.... It was not until three decades after Deming's first lecture tour of Japan that Americans finally "discovered" our then-octogenarian native son. On June 24, 1980, what must now be one of the most famous television documentaries of all time, "If Japan Can, Why Can't We?" focused on the growing disparity between U.S. and Japanese industrial competence. (pp. 4-5)

Bonstingl (1992) consolidated and summarized the principles of TQM and CQI into a set of fundamental tenets:

1. The organization must focus, first and foremost, on its suppliers and customers.
2. Everyone in the organization must be dedicated to continuous improvement, personally and collectively.
3. The organization must be viewed as a system, and the work people do within the system must be seen as ongoing processes.
4. The success of Total Quality Management is the responsibility of top management. (pp. 6-7)

Both TQM and CQI depend upon the active interest, enthusiasm, and investment of people within an organization. When TQM was introduced to the academy, there was a major shift in its application and history, as TQM was originally designed for business and industry (Lewis & Smith, 1994). Numerous other organizations have seized the wisdom and insights of these wedded theories to strengthen their own organizations.

Deming (1986), the founder of TQM, stressed the importance of realizing that TQM was not the latest trendy program, but an attitudinal shift. It was not running a new seminar or campaign, upon completion of which a company returned to business as usual. Rather it was a whole new way of approaching an organization, in which everything must be premised on the clarity of an organization's purpose. As Mead (1996) commented:

Define your mission/vision/goal—aim for constant improvement in the product or service you offer your clients. You cannot do this without maintaining a high level of motivation and satisfaction in the people that comprise your organization—consider that a part of your goal.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The promulgation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990) renewed an interest and urgency in discussions about the mission and identity of Catholic higher education. The 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States have demonstrated a desire to preserve and develop their Catholic culture with its unique Jesuit charism. This desire is particularly evident in the establishment of mission and identity offices at each of the schools. The administrators of these offices meet annually to share insights and to discuss programs and problem-solving solutions to advance the mission of the schools. An ongoing search for excellence, which is so much a guiding value in Jesuit education, suggests an openness to discover successful strategies that may lie outside of the academy but are useful to the purposes of higher education.

The Walt Disney Company established a professional development pro-

gram in the Disney Institute to respond to various inquiries about their flourishing organizational strategies. Business, health care, government agencies, and education have all studied the Disney formulas to see what might be useful to their various constituencies. Since Jesuit higher education and Disney are both concerned with advancing their institutional cultures, hiring for mission, and encouraging employees to embrace and live the mission and values of the institution, there is much to be gained from a comparison.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review summarizes the current thinking regarding the issue of advancing institutional culture. The first section reviews the literature of Catholic and Jesuit higher education. The second section examines the Walt Disney Company's practices to advance institutional culture. The final section presents a survey of writings on Total Quality Management (TQM) and its application to higher education.

### CATHOLIC AND JESUIT UNIVERSITIES

The 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States represent nearly 12% of the total number of institutions of Catholic higher education. Many other institutions are affiliated with religious orders, and various dioceses sponsor a few. A religious order's charism distinguishes how it manifests or emphasizes its Catholicism. The first section of the literature review presents various aspects of the Catholic and Jesuit identities of the colleges and universities sponsored by the Society of Jesus.

#### Assessment of Historical Factors

Historians identify the 12th-century founding of the universities of Paris and Bologna as the beginning of what would be recognized today as higher education (Perkin, 1997). These schools were typically cathedral schools, and their Catholic identity established an unbroken link with today's Catholic institutions of higher education. Three centuries after the establishment of the University of Paris, Ignatius of Loyola, an alumnus of the university and the founder of the Society of Jesus, approved the first Jesuit school primarily for lay students at Messina, Sicily, in 1548 (Bangert, 1986).

Initially, the Jesuits were not interested in schools because Ignatius saw this ministry as an entanglement that would hamper the mobility of this missionary order. With the pioneer success of Messina, the Jesuits would count 35 colleges at the death of Ignatius in 1556 (O'Malley, 1993). These colleges would be more analogous to contemporary high schools, but they constitute the beginning of Jesuit higher education. Buckley (1998) cited two documents written by Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises* (Loyola, 1951) and

Part IV of *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (Loyola, 1970), as the foundational documents that established these schools and provided a link to Ignatius. *The Spiritual Exercises* animate the interior life, while bestowing purpose and meaning, and Part IV of *The Constitutions* describes the practical considerations of educating scholastics. Following Ignatius' work, the Society of Jesus collectively produced the *Ratio Studiorum* (Society of Jesus, 1970), a foundational document of Jesuit education, which prescribed the scope and sequence of the curriculum.

Founded in 1789 by Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore, Maryland, Georgetown was the first Catholic academy in the United States. Paralleling the histories of other colonial schools in the United States, the establishment of Georgetown had in view the desire to prepare a well-educated clergy to serve in the growing republic and to be open to students of every religion and class. Eventually Carroll would entrust Georgetown to the Society of Jesus, to imbue and guide the institution in its style and substance of teaching.

Buckley (1998) presented a concise summary and analysis of the history of Catholic higher education in the United States using Jesuit schools as illustrations. David O'Brien's (1994a) *From the Heart of the American Church* provided the historical antecedents to better understand contemporary issues regarding the Catholic identity of higher education in the United States. Gallin (1996) presented the historical background on one such issue often cited as a key to advancing identity, that of the governance and separate incorporation from the religious communities of institutions of Catholic higher education. Gallin asserted that the transition of boards from being predominantly composed of religious members to an inclusion of lay people was in response to the teaching of Vatican II. She substantiated this observation by claiming that the change in the composition of boards did not result in secularization, but in laicization. This postconciliar period raised many new questions about how institutions of higher education would maintain and advance their Catholic identity. John Paul II's (1990) promulgation of the apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* sparked widespread discussions about the urgency of clarifying the Catholic identity in each school. Roundtree (1994) claimed that conversations within the university about mission and identity would be more productive than imposed programs or unattainable goals cited in dry mission statements.

### **Elements of Identity**

Steinfels (1995) viewed the juridical compliance expected by Rome in response to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to be undermining the wisdom and knowledge of the United States bishops. He also called for pluralism in adapting the document to meet the varying situations presented by Catholic higher education in the United States. Echoing Steinfels' unease with the implementation of the papal document, Cavadini (1999) focused his concern on

the mandate to teach Roman Catholic theology that must be issued by the local bishop. Cavadini pondered the criteria to be used to issue this mandate. In commenting upon why he would not seek such a mandate, McBrien (2000) called the charges about an eroding Catholic identity in higher education unpersuasive. He further stressed that the Catholic culture does not solely reside in theology courses. Greeley (1999) insisted that:

The Catholicity of a college...is not finally affected by requirements for theology and philosophy courses, ownership by "secularized" boards, crucifixes in the classrooms, Catholic proportion of the faculty and student body, mandates for theologians, oaths by presidents, prohibition of gay and lesbian clubs, juridical control by bishops, or any of the other issues so hotly debated today. The problem rather is the flight from Catholic content and substance which occurred in the wake of the destabilization of structures by Vatican II. (p. 26)

Greeley (1999) described a muddled understanding of the Catholic identity in higher education and the efforts to dismantle whatever vestiges may have remained, particularly in the curriculum. Greeley asserted that Catholic colleges have maintained a healthy sense and use of symbols, metaphors, and management of memories; and he further predicted a continuation of this practice with a substantive number of Catholic students and faculty. He believed that schools will enhance their identity when studies such as Catholic literature and American Catholic history are integrated into the curriculum. Nichols (1999) cited the growth and popularity of Catholic studies programs at many institutions of higher education, where the substance of Greeley's admonition to expand the contributions of Catholic intellectualism is taking root.

Greeley's (1999) emphasis on Catholicism as an integrating factor complements an earlier idea proposed by Douglas (1990), who believed that Catholic higher education must create a community in which scholars would cultivate research flowing from Catholic tradition. He noted a prevalent negative attitude toward Catholic higher education as too parochial and isolated. The response to this charge by many institutions was to become pluralistic and inclusive. Hellwig (1990) used Dulles' (1974) *Models of the Church* to understand some of the stresses felt in Catholic higher education; she observed that Catholic higher education is trying to serve too many masters with the Church and intellectual communities.

O'Brien's (1994b) landmark reflection, *Jesuit Si, Catholic...Not So Sure*, frankly addressed the discomfort and sometimes embarrassment that accompanied a Catholic identity. He sought a forum to discuss the positive aspects that a Catholic identity brings to academe and to diminish the attitude that a Catholic identity is restrictive and narrow. O'Brien posed the following five propositions to facilitate conciliatory discussions to assist in improving

### Catholic identity and image:

1. American Catholic colleges and universities have a responsibility to relate in some way to the hierarchy and to the Catholic community.
2. Developing a positive expression of Catholic identity requires commitment and strategy: something must be done.
3. Catholic identity carries with it some specific academic responsibilities.
4. Catholic higher education makes sense only in terms of Catholic intellectual life.
5. One key to revitalizing Catholic higher education lies in its commitment to education for justice. (pp. 6-11)

Buckley (1998) proposed a dialectical understanding of the contemporary developments in Catholic higher education. The first premise of this dialectic is the pre-Vatican II culture of higher education characterized by an abundance of vowed religious in all aspects of leadership, a liberal arts core emphasizing philosophy and theology, and a uniform manner or organization. He suggested that if indeed a golden age ever existed, the decades of the 1940s, 1950s, and very early 1960s would be that period. The "new emphasis on professionalism, separate incorporation, academic excellence, internal diversity, cultural location within the American situation, academic freedom, etc." (p. 47) may seem a denial or dismissal of previous emphases. Buckley suggested that this may not be a final dismantling of the past, but a secondary development in the dialectic; this is his perspective of the place in which Catholic higher education finds itself today. The direction in which higher education must now move is the central thesis of his work: "The fundamental proposition that grounds the Catholic university is that the academic and the religious are intrinsically related, that they form an inherent unity, that one is incomplete without the other" (p. 15).

### **The Curriculum**

Buckley (1998) also stressed the essential integrating influences that philosophy and theology serve in shaping the Catholic and Jesuit culture of an institution. Philosophy and theology are components of the core curriculum that carve the culture of an institution. Loughran (1999) tied the core curriculum to the mission of the institution. While not specifying its content, he offered suggestions on procedures to identify and renew the core curriculum. McShane (1999) concurred with Loughran that the core curriculum is not cast in stone, but must be revisited and periodically updated, despite the acrimony this may generate at a school.

Passon (1999) conducted a survey of the 28 Jesuit institutions regarding their core curricula. With 27 institutions responding, this study found that the schools shared a heavy emphasis on the humanities with special weight upon the disciplines of theology and philosophy. The strongest conclusion from the

study was “that all of the Jesuit colleges and universities root their core curricula in their mission statements. All of the Jesuit schools see the core as an important reflection and affirmation of their Ignatian identity and heritage” (p. 17).

Feeney (1999) viewed the curriculum as the chief descriptor of an institution’s mission and identity. What might Catholic education offer to the postmodern undergraduate? Feeney characterized such students: “Nothing surprises them. Their emotions are exhausted. They desire hope and meaning but find only meaninglessness. And life is a game of chance” (p. 32). Developing citizens who bring to bear a mission to do justice in society is a common refrain in the literature.

O’Brien (1993) suggested a proactive attitude in Catholic higher education toward contemporary society that emphasizes engaging in contemporary issues. If Catholic higher education saw itself as a stakeholder in Church reform, O’Brien argued, it might make its academic resources more available to the national and local churches.

### **Hiring for Mission**

O’Brien (1993) also emphasized faculty development programs that assisted teachers in relating their research to the needs of the Church, and “deliberate action to influence faculty training, recruitment and hiring to ensure a critical mass of faculty in all disciplines committed to the mission of the school and alert to the agenda of the American church” (p. 25). Committed faculty are considered foundational to this kind of progress (Greeley, 1999; Malloy, 1992; O’Brien, 1994a; Steinfels, 1995). Finding and hiring such faculty who are informed and committed to the mission is a central topic and area of concern. Leahy (1991) also stressed the importance of finding personnel who will be supportive of the institution’s academic and religious mission and goals.

Passon (1997) asked how Jesuit colleges and universities incorporated guidelines of hiring for mission and described this concept as informing candidates of the institution’s mission and soliciting commitment to it. Passon noted that corporations use this procedure. His research indicates that this practice of hiring for mission is relatively new, and so it is a work in progress that is both resisted and welcomed at the schools. Passon described how job expectations at the school should be clear, but this is premised on “the institutional culture in which the new person will work, at the departmental, college, and university level. If the university’s mission is not having a clear impact on that culture, then it should” (p. 12). Passon viewed the hiring for mission strategies to be a positive development, and in places where people are uncomfortable with its impact, attributed this apprehension to be a positive sign of doing something beneficial. He also described that most of the schools have invested serious resources into Ignatian mission and identity

programs that are an essential part of hiring and orientation programs.

Araujo (1997) presented some of the legal aspects that hiring for mission might raise by addressing concerns regarding Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which governs discrimination in hiring based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. After analyzing various cases and congressional interpretations, Araujo maintained:

While employers cannot, at one level, discriminate against would-be employees on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, Jesuit colleges and universities are nonetheless given statutory flexibility to select employees who share the schools' mission: to seek wisdom and understanding within a context of religious belief. (p. 19)

Feeney, Gilman, and Parker (1997) reflected on the experience of hiring for mission, the involvement of the search committee in this effort, and the effect of hiring for mission on employee selection. The reflections of these scholars echoed Passon's (1997) observation that hiring for mission is a work in progress. Issues of hiring the best candidate for the position surfaced especially with regard to establishing criteria for judging qualities as best. Should a candidate's Catholic affiliation take precedence over the stronger degree of a candidate of a differing faith background? Burtchaell (1998) asserted that Catholic institutions have lost their fortitude to cite being Catholic as a defining credential.

Pauly (1997) reflected upon how the topic of mission could be divisive and suggested that it can exaggerate the secularization of Catholic higher education. He was critical of rhetoric focused on hiring for mission and took special aim at emphases on mission statements:

To summarize my position: Any attempt to describe the behavior of a complex modern organization as the expression of simple, shared beliefs spectacularly misunderstands the sociology of our universities. At its worst, mission talk functions as a cover for conservative ideology or administrative power. Judiciously used, especially retrospectively rather than prospectively, mission talk adds sense and significance to an organization's work. (p. 28)

Gleason (1995) commented on the history of the University of Notre Dame's mission statement that originally cited its foundational precept to be its distinctive Catholic character. Gleason noted discomfiture around a part of the statement stressing that the faculty be composed of a critical mass of committed, dedicated Catholics. "That reaction is significant," he wrote, "for it reveals that ongoing changes in the composition of the faculty have lessened that body's willingness to regard religion as a legitimate consideration in hiring" (p. 321).

Kane (1997) offered a case study of a Jesuit university's efforts to imbue its hiring and promotion with mission-related values. Kane referenced companies, such as Disney, where hiring and promotion practices "insure that the organization hire only those who accept and practice the values and principles promoted by the company and its existing organizational culture" (p. 32).

Burtchaell (1998) chronicled what he saw as the disintegration of the religious identity of three Catholic institutions. He cited the development of the following as damaging Catholic identity: "lay autonomy, an embarrassment about scholarly mediocrity, and the drive for recognition by the then secular American academy and the acceptance of its liberal dogma" (p. ix).

Gleason (1995) observed a serious identity crisis in contemporary Catholic higher education:

It consists in a lack of consensus as to the substantive content of the ensemble of religious beliefs, moral commitments, and academic assumptions that supposedly constitute Catholic identity, and a consequent inability to specify what that identity entails for the practical functioning of Catholic colleges and universities...the crisis is not that Catholic educators do not want their institutions to remain Catholic, but that they are no longer sure what remaining Catholic means. (p. 320)

This section focused on the literature about Catholic and Jesuit higher education that is pertinent to better understanding the underpinnings of institutional culture. Historical circumstances, the impact of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990), topics of the curriculum, and hiring for mission are some of the pivotal concerns. While there are ample views and at times conflicting opinions on any one of these issues, there is a consensus that mission and identity strategies are worthy of discussion for the vitality and future of the institutions.

## **THE CULTURE OF THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY**

Fjellman (1992) analyzed the cultural dynamics of the Walt Disney Company through a critical analysis of Walt Disney World in Florida and demonstrated how the Disney corporate culture is at the service of its ideology. The Disney company's ideology and culture manipulated stories, symbols, and behaviors that often reflected an ideal, not necessarily a reality. Fjellman asserted that: "notions about the home, family, and sex roles as well as historical figures...are cleaned up and repackaged in the interest of Disney themes" (p. 29). Fjellman believed that the Disney Company excels in its understanding of how culture works. Throughout his book, Fjellman substantiates how Disney knows that its culture:

is learned....[it] is both shared and distributive; that is, there are levels of culture. Some of these [elements] are shared by most if not all people within their purview. Other pieces of culture are indirectly available...much of culture, especially that which is ubiquitous, is tacit...it is made up of rules of interpretation and symbols in which these rules may be carried and embodied...it provides the assumed background for action...when actions are institutionalized, people know what to expect from others. (pp. 25, 26)

Disney's accomplishments in cultural engineering have not gone unnoticed. The Walt Disney Company was cited by Peters and Waterman (1982) as an excellent company primarily for its emphasis upon service through people. Peters and Waterman's book, and a video based upon it, created a surge of attention around Disney's business formula. To meet the public's interest, the Disney Institute began offering onsite courses on such topics as "The Disney Approach to People Management," "The Disney Approach to Leadership Excellence," "The Disney Approach to Customer Loyalty," "The Disney Approach to Quality Service," "The Disney Approach to Managing for Creativity & Innovation," and "The Walt Disney World Approach to Human Resources Management." These seminars impart successful strategies considered vital to the Disney Company and chief among these is the advancement of its culture (Fins, 1995).

Collins and Porras (1994) augmented the understanding of culture with positive characteristics of a cult, which they found present in visionary companies, including Disney. These characteristics embody a "fervently held ideology, indoctrination, tightness of fit, elitism" (p. 122). These descriptors are further understood "to create an intense sense of loyalty and dedication and to influence the behavior of those inside the company to be consistent with the company's ideology" (p. 287). Collins and Porras confirmed what Disney CEO Michael Eisner (Eisner & Schwartz, 1998) claimed about the company's mission: "Disney operates on a basic premise that hasn't changed. People want to be entertained and informed. At Disney, we do that through storytelling" (p. 419).

Grover (1997) presented a historical commentary of the Disney Company's growth and expansion from a small animation studio to an entertainment and media giant. Throughout the company's development, the vision and leadership of Walt Disney served as a consistent touchstone and point of orientation. Watts (1997) also offered a penetrating biography of Disney and a critical history of the company while illustrating the enormous influence of the man, the business, and its values on popular American culture.

The Disney culture is not confined to the United States. The worldwide extension of this culture is sometimes called Disney Imperialism. This exportation is achieved through films, merchandise, and the establishment of Disney theme parks in Tokyo in 1983 and near Paris in 1992. In Hong Kong,

Disneyland is slated to open in 2005 (Reckard, 1999). Elements of imperialistic phenomena have been chronicled and scrutinized in essays by various scholars. Burton-Carvajal (1994) described three popular animated films as exporting Yankee cultural chauvinism with a colonialist attitude: *South of the Border with Walt Disney* (1942), *Saludos Amigos* (1943), and *The Three Caballeros* (1945). Piedra (1994) also critiqued the Disney portrayal of Latin America through stereotyped gender roles and presentation of North American values as superior. Cartwright and Goldfarb (1994) described the Disney Studio's partnership with the federal Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in producing condescending health films for Latin America to "associate illness and poverty with particular bodily 'customs,' and health and prosperity with Western scientific standards of hygiene" (p. 170). Yoshimoto (1994) pointed to the strange anomaly of Tokyo Disneyland in Japan and its questionable influence on Japanese nationalism. With Disney's acquisitions of television networks and internet services, Yoshimoto asserted that the company will continue to expand its markets and recognition throughout the world.

### **Employees**

Although Walt Disney is the name and face most readily identified with the company, the organization is made up of many people. Thomas (1998) demonstrated that from the earliest years of the company Walt Disney was the creative extrovert in the public limelight, while his lesser known brother, Roy, exerted equal influence behind the scenes in building the company with sound business acumen. Leadership is one of the benchmarks of visionary companies cited by Collins and Porras (1994), which they described as "top executive(s) who displayed high levels of persistence, overcame significant obstacles, attracted dedicated people, influenced groups of people toward the achievement of goals, and played key roles in guiding their companies through crucial episodes in their history" (p. 262). Securing the personal investment and loyalty of personnel is a quality for which Disney is known. Bennis and Biederman (1997) enumerated the critical contribution and value of individuals working together as a team at Disney's animation department and also described the conscious choice made by animators to advance the company's mission, not their own names. Collaboration and teamwork took various forms at the company.

Rose (1998) described how conflict is built into the Disney company meetings at various levels of management. The leadership believes that the best ideas will emerge from frank discussions in which two conflicting sides of an idea are presented. Wetlaufer (2000) recorded Eisner's strategy in which ideas are regularly proposed in a supportive or egalitarian environment. At these meetings people are not intimidated to be supportive, critical, or dismissive of an idea. This forum welcomes brutal honesty and creates synergy

throughout the organization. Wetlaufer related the emphasis at Disney on getting various divisions of the company to be in cooperative dialogue with one another. Finding the right personnel for the company is a major focus.

Capodagli and Jackson (1999) typified positive assessments of Disney strategies in hiring people who were slated to take on the corporate identity. They also assessed the process of immersing new hires into the mission and identity of the company through initial orientation and ongoing development. Koenig (1994) described the results of these programs with an example: "Guests wonder where the park finds all of their cheerful and caring employees. Mostly, Disneyland teaches them to be that way" (p. 61). While cheerfulness and cleanliness are hallmarks of encountering Disney personnel and the company, there are other reactions.

Koenig (1994, 1999) described the genuine camaraderie and job satisfaction that exist among past and current Disney employees, but also described disgruntled employees, excessive company demands, low wages, long hours, difficult working conditions, union and labor problems, lawsuits, and accidents. Koenig documented Disney's vigilance and efforts to preserve the positive Disney image when contrary realities emerged. The salutary mystique of the Disney Company is one that can readily draw heated criticism.

Schweizer and Schweizer (1998) alleged that the current management at Disney had abandoned those values so personified by the company such as the centrality of the family, an esteem for children, cleanliness, honesty, a work ethic, patriotism, safety, and wholesome entertainment. The authors pointed out several examples that are currently eroding the positive image of Disney as a moral guardian of the media. Among these developments are complexities that have developed through licensing the production of Disney toys, clothing, and other merchandise to unscrupulous licensees in Third World countries, such as Haiti, Honduras, China, and Thailand. Some of these licensees who have purchased rights to manufacture products using the Disney name and characters have exploited various labor laws. This study was also critical of Disney's expansion of entertainment partnerships that produce shows of questionable virtue. Schweizer and Schweizer alleged that Disney is primarily interested in making money and is compromising its heritage on the way to the bank.

Some of Disney's practices are widely criticized. There are differences of opinion and evidence whether some of these practices are intentional, as some allege, or neglectfully haphazard, such as the violation of child labor laws by lack of control over licensees, or hiding unflattering reports about the company (Schweizer & Schweizer, 1998; Stevens, 1998-1999). However, other controversial practices can be open to interpretation. Schweizer and Schweizer (1998) cited Disney's openness to gays, as reflected in corporate policies, and special gay days at the theme parks as further examples of the

company's duplicity and disloyalty to its public image. However, Griffin (1998) presented a history of the company's attitude toward gays with a more positive assessment of its current welcome of the gay community. There are many stakeholders in Disney's image who are concerned with how Disney promotes that image, and not all of these concerns relate to financial returns.

Collins and Porras (1994) asserted that while Disney is a business that must produce revenues to stay solvent, it has also demonstrated the hallmark of a visionary company that must have a purpose beyond the bottom line. They described Disney's fidelity to its core ideology of entertaining people and how Disney places equal if not greater importance on the creative processes to deliver this entertainment. Watts (1997) presented the pervasive presence of the Disney Company in American culture and Koenig (1997) articulated the proprietary attitude of consumers stating:

For years, people had argued over what was and what was not appropriate for a Disney movie or theme park, only now they were taking it a little more personally. They were worried, yes, about what they might want their children to see, but now they were also concerned about what they, themselves, wanted to see. Like Mickey Mouse, who grew so popular animators could no longer have him do anything outrageous for fear of offending his legions of fans, Disney animation and theme parks as a whole became subject to the expectations of canonization. People know Disney is a business. They just don't want it to act like one. (pp. 235-236)

Connellan (1997) and Capodagli and Jackson (1999) demonstrated a response to the wide interest in appropriating Disney's strategies to other companies. Capadogli and Jackson systematized the Disney insights of advancing mission and culture in such a way that organizations can adapt these principles to their own particular situations. Capadogli and Jackson focused their book around the philosophical beliefs of the company's founder, Walt Disney, who was driven to believe, dream, dare, and do. Connellan also distilled Disney strategies into seven applicable lessons:

1. The competition is anyone the customer compares you with. (p. 112)
2. Pay fantastic attention to detail.
3. Everyone walks the talk. (p. 113)
4. Everything walks the talk. (p. 114)
5. Customers are best heard through many ears.
6. Reward, recognize, and celebrate. (p. 115)
7. Xrxryonx makxs a diffxrxncx [sic]. (p.116)

Orwall (2000) underscored the Disney Company's attention to detail in describing CEO Michael Eisner's involvement in the details of the theme

parks, scripts, and stores. Gunther (1999) asserted that the company has outgrown its ability to be managed in a personal hierarchical manner and claimed that recent financial setbacks were not refocusing Eisner's attention on Disney's culture but on operations, fiscal engineering, and growth. Gunther noted Eisner's commitment to the creative process as being the necessary foundation for the financial success of the company. Gunther also cited Eisner's assessment that the public presumes that Disney makes quality products.

The Disney Company is frequently analyzed in the literature through its acquisitions, lawsuits, personnel, departures, performance in the stock market, movie reviews, and the development of its theme parks. This review of literature on the Disney Company's culture focused upon those critiques that facilitate an understanding of the strengths and criticisms of its culture and the strategies to advance it.

## **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

A common definition of TQM cited by Lewis and Smith (1994) facilitates this literature review: "The application of quality principles for the integration of all functions and processes of the organization. The ultimate goal is customer satisfaction. The way to achieve it is through continuous improvement" (p. 320).

Total Quality Management (TQM) and its ongoing renewal, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), depend upon the active interest, leadership, enthusiasm, and investment of people within an organization. TQM and CQI principles have been adopted by many organizations.

The transfer of TQM principles to education was criticized by Sergiovanni (1996), who believed that this model overemphasized the role of leadership at the expense of the community. While expressing caution and suspicion about the usefulness and transfer of corporation models such as TQM to the world of education, Sergiovanni concedes that business principles can be beneficial in processing ideas and problem solving. Other scholars have commented upon the transfer of TQM from the corporate world to educational institutions.

Williams (1993) considered the benefits and deficits of TQM principles in higher education, but argued for the advantages that TQM would bestow upon the school. Lewis and Smith (1994) observed that when the TQM model and its principles are applied to education, some accommodation will have to be made, as the theory originally targeted the corporate world. Hertzler (1994) underscored the idea that TQM and CQI principles are more complicated because of education's intangible qualities that make it more fluid. Yet chief among the many characteristics that business and education share is the involvement of people.

Lawler, Mohrman, and Ledford (1995) echoed TQM founder W. Edwards Deming in highlighting the essential contribution of committed employees to the purposes of the organization. Blankstein (1996) stressed an assumption of TQM that members of the organization have a natural ambition to contribute their best efforts to the enterprise. Heverly (1991) extended this principle of presuming the best about the motives of members when he stressed that an organization's problems are rarely the responsibility of the members but often that of a flawed system which limits their best contribution. LeTarte (1993) proposed the following principles for adapting TQM and CQI in higher education:

TQM is a college-wide system for establishing shared vision, mission, goals and methods for focused improvement actions. Continuous improvement requires respect for ourselves, for each other, and/or our customers; participation, cooperation, and teamwork across the institution; and faith in our ability to learn and act together. Continuous improvement of everything we do is our way of life. Quality is defined by the needs and expectations of our students, staff, and community. Decisions are made and our performance is measured based on data and facts. (p. 20)

Aliff (1996) asserted that these principles produce a climate that encourages good communication and a building of consensus and ownership for quality within an organization.

Lewis and Smith (1994) developed an interpretation of the 14 principles of TQM for higher education. Hazzard (1993) provided a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the 14 principles of TQM in higher education. Among the strengths he cited inter-department collegiality, improved employee involvement and morale, and a shared language throughout a school. Hazzard also presented some noted flaws that TQM brings to higher education. These deficiencies include irritation with teamwork, lack of serious commitment to the process by leadership, and difficulties with multicultural efforts. Overall, Hazzard believed that TQM would serve higher education well if problems related to its implementation were addressed.

Difficulties in relation to implementing TQM in higher education were addressed by Winter (1991) who claimed that for TQM to be successfully adopted in higher education, the culture in these institutions must change. Winter specifically addressed the organization of relationships within higher education and between the faculty and administration, as well as how new ways of sharing authority must occur. Ewell (1991) stressed that the highest authorities in the school must make a serious commitment to TQM if it is to achieve positive results.

Cornesky (1993) offered insights into how a professor could organize and deliver a course using TQM standards. Emphasizing the climate professors set in the classroom, Cornesky observed that:

A quality instructor understands the need for students to have pride in their work and will not deprive the students of that opportunity. Simply put, you understand that unempowered students will be less inclined to achieve high personal goals or want to contribute to the class. Quality instructors see themselves as guides for students. They not only provide the materials with which to achieve the necessary goals, but also act as resource persons, researching the subject matter and being available to the students. (p. 44)

While TQM's overall thrust in higher education will be apparent in a quality education that is recognized as such by the consumer, that is, the student, Chickering and Potter (1993) offered another analysis and warning. While these scholars approve of TQM's interest in the student and the student's concerns, they also suggested that what the student wants and what the student needs can be conflictual.

Burgar (1993) presented a case study analyzing how TQM methods were used to solve an enrollment problem in a Master of Business Administration degree program. Demichiell and Ryba (1997) described the benefits of effective TQM strategies that strengthened collaboration between faculty and administration. Arnold, Harman, and Vanderbilt (1999) described a case study of how TQM consensus-building strategies resolved a budgetary crisis.

## SUMMARY

The three areas of focus for this literature review may seem unrelated to one another, but a closer investigation demonstrates numerous similarities that provide a convergence of ideas supporting this study. Total Quality Management stresses the identity and mission of an organization. All members of the organization must be knowledgeable and committed to this vision on some level. The Walt Disney Company has demonstrated its expertise at promoting its mission and corporate values, and has been sought out by other organizations to understand its strategies. Jesuit colleges and universities continue to reflect upon their unique place in higher education. In charting the future, Jesuit higher education shares many of the principles of TQM and definite parallels with the Disney Company to create a unique culture.

In the next article the author will report the results of a study measuring the similarities between the Walt Disney model of creating a tangible organizational ethos and the works of Jesuits in Catholic higher education. Readers and professionals in elementary and secondary education will find valuable applications from this study that can be used in their own mission efforts. The results will suggest strategies that might benefit all dimensions of Catholic education.

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