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U.S. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THE RELIGIOUS WHO SERVED IN THEM: THE STRUGGLE TO CONTINUE THE TRADITION IN THE POST-VATICAN II ERA

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This last in a series of three articles surveying the contributions of the religious to U.S. Catholic schooling focuses upon these contributions during the decades following the close of the Second Vatican Council. In an era when control of Catholic schooling was in transition from the hands of the religious to their lay collaborators, these women and men extended the legacy of their forebears by continuing to give form to the mission and purpose of U.S. Catholic schooling—namely, what it means to be an American Catholic—for the youth of the post-Vatican II era. These young women and men will provide leadership for the American Catholic Church during the first decades of the new millennium.

If the first six decades of the 20th century were the "boom years" for U.S. Catholic schooling, a more sanguine picture emerged during the three decades following the Second Vatican Council. Between 1965 and 1995, Catholic elementary schools decreased by more than one-third (35.4%). Almost one half of Catholic secondary schools closed as well (decreasing 49.1%). Not only did the total number of Catholic schools decline 37.9%, enrollment plummeted 52.7%. As the years stretched into decades, even the most erstwhile proponents were tempted to think about these as the "bust years," attributing this "golden twilight" (Greeley, 1989a) to a failure of nerve on the part of Church leaders and parents (Brown & Greeley, 1970; Elford, 1971; Greeley, 1973, 1992; Herr, 1984; O'Rourke, 1983; Sly, 1985; Walsh, 1981).

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And yet other factors suggested that this was an era of institutional consolidation, especially in view of some demographic changes influencing the Church as it became more suburban than urban. For example, in spite of the closings and declining enrollment, research indicated that Catholics were willing to support the construction of new Catholic schools (McCready, 1981) and, in the decade between 1985 and 1995, 139 Catholic schools were opened, with many of these opening in regions where few, if any, Catholic schools existed (Meitler Consultants, Inc., 1997). Indeed, the worst case scenario did not occur (Editors of Newsweek, 1971; Greeley, McCready, & McCourt, 1976; Kelly, 1976). Using 1985 as a baseline, even though these 139 schools represented a small increase (1.5%) in the total number of Catholic schools, it was an amazing increase in light of the conventional wisdom which contended that Catholic schools were an artifact of the past.

In 1995, there were 118,761 teachers in the nation's Catholic elementary schools. The religious numbered 10,002—an 86.8% decrease from 1965. Teachers in Catholic secondary schools in 1965 numbered 57,013, while in 1995 there were 48,006—a 15.7% decrease. Although the number of religious in Catholic secondary schools decreased 85% between 1965 and 1995, the actual percentage decrease was slightly more than one half—54.1% (National Catholic Educational Association [NCEA], 1986, 1996). Incontestably, the number of religious teaching in the nation's Catholic schools was substantially lower. However, because the number of Catholic schools had also decreased (37.9%), the de facto presence of religious teachers in the nation's Catholic schools did not decline as precipitously as did their numbers.

Furthermore, the data describing the presence of the laity in the nation's Catholic schools indicate a pattern emerging as early as the 1920s. In 1995, there were 151,100 lay teachers in the nation's Catholic schools, representing a 238% increase from 1965 (NCEA, 1986, 1996). And their percentage increased 54.8%, paralleling the decrease in the percentage of religious teachers. In sum, not only did the number of laity in the nation's Catholic schools increase, their actual presence magnified to such a degree that in 1995 lay women and men accounted for more than 9 out of every 10 teachers and administrators in Catholic schools (NCEA, 1996).

At the same time, one would distort these data by attributing the decline in the number of religious in U.S. Catholic schools solely to the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II. In fact, the presence of religious in the nation's Catholic schools began its decline in the mid- to late-1950s, as an increasing number of the laity began to serve in the expanding number of Catholic schools, particularly the high schools.

Given the vantage retrospective analysis provides, since at least the early 1950s concerted efforts ought to have been made to provide vocational training for the lay Catholic educators who would serve in, and eventually con-

trol, the nation's Catholic schools. Quigley (1938) first sounded the alarm at least 12 years before the decline began and the alarm has sounded time and again as late as the 1980s, when for example, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) produced its *Visions and Values in the Catholic School* project (1984) and United States Catholic Conference (USCC) published a three-volume series *Formation and Development for Catholic School Leaders* (1993, 1994). Both series were designed to provide vocational training for those serving in the nation's Catholic schools.

BEQUEATHING THE HERITAGE

In the first decade following Vatican II, many religious left the educational apostolate to engage in new ministries. For a variety of reasons, other sisters, brothers, and priests resigned from religious life or the priesthood. Frustrated by this exodus, some proponents of Catholic schooling pointed the finger of blame at the religious who, the proponents believed, had abandoned Catholic schools, compromising their existence and identity.

In fairness, however, the exodus of religious women and men from the nation's Catholic schools was a more complex phenomenon than any finger-pointing and blame-finding would suggest. For example, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many bishops pressed religious sisters' congregations to serve in Catholic schools and, in some cases, mandated others to leave the pious works they were performing on behalf of the needy and marginalized. When these religious communities examined their earliest charism in light of the Second Vatican Council's call for the renewal of religious life, many sisters decided to return to the pious works that served as their congregation's inspiration before being pressed into service in the nation's Catholic schools.

And yet, despite the personal and professional difficulties this exodus presented, the sisters, brothers, and priests who served alongside their lay collaborators in the nation's Catholic schools in the post-Vatican II decades extended their predecessors' heritage by making some rather impressive contributions to U.S. Catholic schooling. Perhaps the fact that U.S. Catholic schooling did not collapse is the most obvious contribution. But, more significantly, the erstwhile and dedicated ministry of these religious enabled Catholic schools to demonstrate academic credibility and to renew their distinctive identity in a new era. Largely as a consequence of these two contributions, what was unimaginable as late as the 1940s was finally realized in the 1980s, namely, some of the nation's political leaders were challenging public schools to imitate Catholic schools. This achievement was tempered, however, by the fact that the religious who sustained Catholic schooling through its infancy and adolescence were now bequeathing control of its adulthood to their lay collaborators.

PROMOTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED

The most prominent contribution post-Vatican II teachers and administrators made to U.S. Catholic schooling concerns academic achievement, especially on the part of impoverished, inner city youth. No longer could critics of Catholic schools lambaste them as inferior. Nor could critics unjustifiably allege that Catholic schools inculcated in students a sheltered, ghetto mentality. In fact, Catholic schools of the post-Vatican II era provided students a solid intellectual formation and instilled tolerant attitudes on a wide array of social issues (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). These data were the exact opposite of what many believed the actual case to be (Greeley, 1992).

For example, Greeley and Rossi (1966) found that by the mid-1960s Catholic education greatly resembled public education both in structure and content and that despite the obvious inequality in educational resources the nation's Catholic schools did not lag behind their public school counterparts in terms of student academic achievement. The news was not all good, however, because these differences were due primarily to parental religious belief and socioeconomic class, not to Catholic schooling. Thus, Greeley and Rossi were unequivocal in judging the irrelevance of Catholic schools: "There is no evidence that Catholic schools have been necessary for the survival of American Catholicism" (1966, pp. 227-228). Indeed, many were left wondering whether Catholic schools would be irrelevant to the survival of American Catholicism in the post-Vatican II era.

High School Achievement: Public, Catholic and Private Schools Compared (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982) reported some rather impressive findings concerning academic achievement in Catholic schools. The data lent credence to Greeley and Rossi's earlier argument that private schooling in general and Catholic schooling in particular connoted greater verbal and mathematics scores achieved by sophomores and seniors than by their counterparts in public high schools. Coleman et al. attributed these results to the fact that Catholic schools provide a safer, more disciplined, and more orderly environment. Further, the researchers noted that students attending Catholic schools attended more school, did more homework, and generally undertook a more rigorous (though narrower) academic program than did their public school peers.

Research findings provided by Coleman et al. (1982) proved to be very good news for Catholic school proponents. Not only were Catholic schools credible when compared with their competitors, but teachers in the Catholic schools of the post-Vatican II era appeared to possess two significant strengths: professional credibility and clear purpose.

- Professional credibility: Teachers in Catholic schools possess professional skills enabling them to motivate students to achieve academically despite fewer resources.
- Clear purpose: Teachers in Catholic schools bring something intangible to their work.

Evidently, they do not view their work as a job governed by contractual obligations; more significantly, they view teaching as a vocation governed by covenantal responsibilities (Jacobs, 1996a).

The overall advantage portrayed in *High Schools and Beyond* was found to be somewhat smaller than Coleman et al. had suggested (Raudenbush & Bryk, 1986; Willms, 1984, 1985, 1987). And so, five years later, Coleman and Hoffer (1987) utilized longitudinal data and more powerful statistical tools to restudy the interactions between predictors of student achievement and type of school. Publishing their results in *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities* (1987), the authors discovered their revised data reconfirming Greeley's (1982) assertion that Catholic schools raised the academic achievement of populations traditionally scoring at lower levels. Functionally, Catholic school effectiveness evidences itself in three factors: a strong academic curriculum; a communal atmosphere; and social resources and relationships enculturating students into the school's academic purpose (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Thus, Coleman and Hoffer theorized that, because Catholic schools take their existence from a religious community, namely, the local Catholic community or a religious congregation, Catholic schools exhibit higher levels of "social capital" when compared to other public and private schools.

While the effects demonstrated in this research are important and may indeed "sell" Catholic schools to parents wary of a public school system reputed to lack these essential elements of good schooling (particularly in the nation's urban centers), proponents are mistaken when they use these effects to sell Catholic schools, for these effects are not what make a Catholic school distinctively Catholic. Instead, these factors point to a fundamental purpose, a moral rationale, that guides what is done in Catholic schools. That is, something intangible motivates academic achievement and is communicated through the educative process in Catholic schools. This something, the Catholic culture, supports the tacit assumptions and values that bind together what is done in Catholic schools and provides students a unified educational experience causing them to identify themselves and their aspirations with "the way we do things around here" (Bower, 1966). It is this culture which manifests itself in curriculum, discipline, and climate—all of which serve to invite, challenge, and sometimes compel students to envision their future lives being connected to what transpires in Catholic schools.

It cannot be overstated how impressive the research data are, especially

when one compares the Catholic schools of the post-Vatican II decades with their late-19th and early-20th century counterparts. Only eight decades earlier, such outcomes would have been a pipe dream. To the skeptics, achieving these outcomes would require Herculean efforts and nothing short of divine grace, if only because the problems confronting U.S. Catholic schooling seemed too overwhelming. Adequate teacher training and inadequate financing were only two of a host of problems.

Through a combination of Herculean efforts and an infusion of divine assistance, the pieces of the Catholic schooling puzzle fell into place in the decades following Vatican II. Alongside their lay collaborators, the religious provided the inspirational wherewithal and God provided the grace. The nation's Catholic schools grew beyond alleged mediocrity to the enviable position of providing students an intellectual formation that would enable them, as graduates, to assume leadership in their parishes, towns, businesses, states, and nation. And, in sharp contrast to public opinion, those who served in the U.S. Catholic schools between 1965 and 1995 proved to the nation that spending more money does not necessarily translate into increased academic achievement. Instead, academic achievement is a byproduct of a school and faculty who affirm and support the intellectual and social aspirations of the parents who enroll their children in these schools.

RENEWING CATHOLIC SCHOOL IDENTITY

With research demonstrating that Catholic schools provide students a sound intellectual formation, additional research was needed to identify whether and how Catholic schools, as distinctively Catholic, provide students an equally sound moral formation. As a first step in this direction, social scientists in the early 1980s initiated research projects to examine the impact of Catholic education upon student attitudes toward moral issues.

In 1981, Bryk, Lee, and Holland initiated a long-term project to identify the factors contributing to Catholic school effectiveness. Whereas Coleman et al. (1982) examined academic achievement, these researchers sought to ferret out the a priori factors embedded in the consequence of academic achievement. The results of this research, significant for understanding the process of moral formation in Catholic schools, were published 12 years later in *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Bryk et al., 1993).

In general, support was found for the assertion that Catholic high schools have an independent effect upon academic achievement, especially in terms of reducing disparities between disadvantaged and privileged students (Bryk et al., 1993; Coleman et al., 1982; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). But of far greater significance are the four factors Bryk and his colleagues identified as contributing to that outcome; namely, that a delimited technical core, a communal organization, decentralized governance, and, an inspirational ideolo-

gy, individually and in interaction with one another, communicate the Catholic school's purpose.

The delimited technical core, what might be called the "technology of Catholic schooling," is the humanistic education required of all students. Bryk et al. argue: "At base is an active institutional purpose, the aim of a common education of mind and spirit for all, that integrates these structures and policies" (1993, p. 298). What is important about Catholic schooling is not so much what courses students take, but that the same basic educational goals apply for all students—educational goals steeped in an organizational purpose that motivates high performance (Vaill, 1986).

As students partake of this delimited technical core, they develop a shared common linguistic, conceptual, and symbol system, what Bryk et al. (1993) identify as "humanistic" and what Hirsch (1987)—in advocating a similar delimited technical core for the nation's public schools—has called "cultural literacy." In short, because Catholic high schools provide this delimited technical core, students come to know and understand the language, concepts, and symbols associated with the school's a priori purpose. The substantive point is that a delimited and technical core effectively transmits key elements of Catholic culture, namely, its language, concepts, and symbols. Whether or not individual students believe in and will practice the elements of that ethos upon graduation is an entirely different issue that Coleman et al. (1982), Coleman & Hoffer (1987), and Bryk et al. (1993) did not investigate.

The communal organization of Catholic high schools represents the array of activities, structural components, and shared beliefs that provide a common ground among and between school members. The "common ground established here orders and gives meaning to much of daily life for both faculty and students" (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 299). This clear purpose sustains and enculturates a diverse body of individuals into a functioning educational community and, while individual rights are respected, failure to uphold the common good carries formal and informal sanctions. Thus, this communal organization which emerges from and provides support for the school's deeper culture not only organizes life in the school, but also gives purpose to the way things are done in Catholic schools. Because what is done in the Catholic high school is done for a clear purpose, all members can contribute in their own way to achieving that purpose.

In sum, Catholic high schools are organized communally, and while this requires uniformity in purpose it does not necessitate absolutist conformity in function. Ideally, all members desire to belong to the school and to participate in it. And, like those ancient civilizations that banished members who violated sacred mores and engaged in taboo behavior, so too, the communal organization of the Catholic school militates against anomalies threatening its unity of purpose. Interestingly—and in stark contrast to caricatures

portraying Catholic schools being governed by harsh, unyielding, and authoritarian tyrants—the number of students expelled annually from Catholic schools indicates that there is a rather spacious terrain in post-Vatican II American Catholic schools demarcating unity of purpose from individual self-expression (Yeager, Benson, Guerra, & Manno, 1985).

Bryk et al. (1993) also argue that decentralization characterizes the communal organization of post-Vatican II Catholic high schools and represents "the set of fundamental beliefs and values that constitute the spirit of Vatican II" (p. 300). Decentralization is "predicated on the view that personal dignity and human respect are advanced when work is organized in small communities where dialogue and collegiality may flourish" (1993, p. 302). That decentralization continues to exhibit itself in post-Vatican II Catholic high schools should not prove surprising. Financial resources continue to be meager and a shared, common purpose also continues to frame the legitimate exercise of authority (Jacobs, 1997a). That is, the adults who form the community of educators bear responsibility for translating the school's purpose into practice.

However, Bryk et al. (1993) err when they attribute decentralization to the Second Vatican Council. Subsidiarity has always characterized Catholic social teaching in general and U.S. Catholic schooling in particular. In previous generations subsidiarity required principals, teachers, pastors, and parents to recognize their legitimate role in the educational process and to exercise prudence in decision making by dedicating their best efforts toward achieving a shared goal, namely, providing youth a Catholic education (Jacobs, 1997a, 1997b).

Lastly, an inspirational ideology evidences itself in effective Catholic high schools. Steeped in Christian personalism, this ideology serves not only to inform behavior, but reminds members of the Catholic school community that what they do must reflect why they do it. In addition, this inspirational ideology uplifts members of the school community by transforming ordinary words and actions into symbols of shared meanings and common values, especially as these are expressed through the school's delimited technical core, communal organization, and decentralized governance (LaPlante, 1992; McLaren, 1986).

In sum, these four factors identify what has made Catholic high schools effective in the post-Vatican II U.S. Catholic Church, at least as these effects have been identified by examining student performance on standardized achievement tests. For Bryk and his colleagues (1993), these four factors interact so powerfully that they not only convey an institutional purpose, but integrate the school's structures and policies so that every member of the school community not only knows what the school stands for, but also can actively contribute to furthering its stated purpose. At the same time, however, it will remain incumbent upon educators in the nation's Catholic schools

to make the four factors more explicit in their decision making if Catholic schools are to effectively communicate and inculcate the Catholic ethos in their students.

As I have noted elsewhere (Jacobs, 1996b, 1997b), these four factors identify the culture of Catholic schooling and are critical if students enrolled in Catholic schools are to know, understand, appreciate, value, and ultimately make the school's Catholic identity their own. However, academic achievement does not mean ipso facto that students graduating from Catholic schools will believe in and practice the Catholic religion solely as a consequence of attending Catholic schools.

What the research indicates is that teachers in the nation's Catholic schools of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s contributed to the intellectual and moral formation of their students, by inculcating in them the humanistic form of cultural literacy shared by the universal Catholic community. In a world riddled by the specter of moral relativism, skepticism, blatant and unashamed materialism, and agnosticism (if not outright atheism), as well as the bifurcation of morality into personal and public spheres, the religious who served alongside their lay collaborators in the post-Vatican II era U.S. Catholic schools not only preserved but also communicated the school's distinctive Catholic culture. How the adult lives of students who graduate from Catholic schools will reflect this contribution is a topic researchers will need to study in future decades.

A study initiated in 1991 by the Knights of Columbus and conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) went beyond the previous studies by surveying student attitudes about moral issues. One generation earlier, Rossi and Rossi (1961) identified some effects of parochial schooling in America. And, as reported earlier, Greeley and Rossi conducted a similar study five years later, arguing that the differences evidencing themselves were due primarily to parental religious belief and socioeconomic class, not Catholic schooling (1966).

The 1991 NORC study indicated that Catholic schools were effective in shaping student morals, albeit in some rather limited ways. The data indicated that students attending Catholic schools are more likely to attend Mass, consider a religious vocation, and oppose abortion. This was the good news. In other significant ways, the news wasn't so good. The data also indicated that in some instances Catholic schools were ineffective in shaping student morals because their students' attitudes toward prayer and sexual morality did not differ significantly from their peers in other schools (Walch, 1996).

Nearly three decades after Greeley and Rossi published their research, Educational Testing Service (ETS) conducted a study inquiring into the effect Catholic schools have on student attitudes about religious and moral issues. The 1994 ETS results largely substantiated the 1991 NORC data. That is, when it comes to handing on the faith to the next generation, there is very lit-

tle difference in outcomes between students attending Catholic schools and those students attending out-of-school religious education programs. Sommerfeld summarized the confidential report: "The findings counter a prevailing belief that religious education in Catholic schools is superior to the largely volunteer-staffed parish programs..." (1994, p. 13).

Although the 1994 ETS data raised serious questions about the effectiveness of both in-school and out-of-school religious education programs, Bryk et al. (1993) provide a perspective for interpreting the ETS data. That is, while Catholic schools may not be exemplary in teaching religion—and educators in Catholic schools must exercise vigilance that the teaching of religion be exemplary—at the same time, educators in Catholic schools do transmit Catholic culture successfully. The good news is that a program of moral formation permeates the curriculum and, as Greeley (1989b) notes, "Catholic schools seem to have their effect on those who attend them, not so much through formal religious instruction class, but rather through the closeness to the Catholic community which the experience of attending Catholic schools generates" (p. 241).

When Ryan asked in 1964 whether Catholic schools were the answer, her question was motivated by the fact that only a minority of Catholic youth had attended Catholic schools as well as her sincere conviction that the religious education programs then available in Catholic schools would be inadequate to the demands of the post-Vatican II era. But, even she assumed that Catholic schools provided students knowledge of the faith and practice of the Church, inadequate as she believed these programs to be. By the mid-1990s, however, the NORC and ETS studies provided evidence suggesting otherwise and a potentially more explosive question could be raised: "Are Catholic schools necessary since they are no better than CCD programs in communicating the faith and practice of the Church?"

What must not be overlooked when endeavoring to respond to this prickly question—a question that has been asked at least as far back as 1792 when the nation's first bishop, John Carroll, wrote his pastoral letter—is that U.S. Catholic schools are intended to provide youth the moral and intellectual formation they will need to function capably as Catholic citizens in a pluralistic republic. Any discussion about the program of moral formation provided in Catholic schools, as Greeley (1989b) asserts, is very much a matter of where the Catholic community sets the standard. If Catholics expect that 100% of students graduating from Catholic schools will uphold every aspect of Church teaching and participate actively in every parish activity, Catholic schools are doomed to failure. On the other hand, if the Catholic community sets the standard too low—for example, hoping students who graduate from Catholic schools have experienced some vaguely and ill-defined inspirational ideology in a generic communal organization—then Catholic schools will have failed in their responsibility to communicate the essential cultural

core—the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church.

Truth lies somewhere between these extremes. For example, Catholic schools are not seminaries; that is, they do not exist to indoctrinate students in the faith and practice of the Church. Rather, U.S. Catholic schools provide students an integrated program of moral and intellectual formation designed to enable them to function effectively as responsible Catholic adults in a representative democracy. A well-conceived program of moral formation, then, must include both the faith and practice of the Church as well as provide a supportive culture wherein students learn, as Newman suggested, to think of matters as Catholics do and to give witness to the Catholic faith in their lives and work.

Research indicates that, for the post-Vatican II era, U.S. Catholic schools have become aligned more proximately with the latter than the former. In contrast, U.S. Catholic schools in the pre-Vatican II era appear to have been aligned more proximately with the former than the latter—although only anecdotal data support this assertion. However, if the anecdotes are accurate, there was a wide chasm separating the progressive theory of religious education being propounded in the nation's Catholic colleges and universities from actual practice in the nation's Catholic elementary and secondary schools. It was the progressives' goal that religious instruction 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, S40).

While the NORC and ETS studies may have felt like a powerful body-blow to Catholic school proponents, this research made an important contribution to informed discourse about the effectiveness of the programs of academic and moral formation in the nation's Catholic schools. And certainly, much work remains if Catholic schools are to be characterized as educational communities wherein Catholic purposes are communicated by educators who care for and about their students as well as through curricula that inform both the hearts and the minds of students. But, as the research conducted by Coleman et al. (1982), Greeley (1982), and Bryk et al. (1993) affirm, post-Vatican II U.S. Catholic schools have provided students an educational culture where they experience living and working in a distinctively Catholic community—one steeped in an inspiring ideology and dedicated to the moral and intellectual formation of youth.

The good news is that Catholic schools continue to offer students something no parish-based religious education program or public school can offer, that is, a community of adults dedicated to the education of the whole student. And yet, there is a challenge—and it is not an easy one—for parents, bishops and diocesan officials, pastors and parish boards of education, principals and teachers, and students as well. If Catholic schools are to be a true educational alternative, all of these individuals and groups must collaborate

to perfect the programs of moral formation provided in Catholic schools as well as to demonstrate this unambiguously not only in rhetoric but also in fact (Jacobs, 1996b).

ENTRUSTING SCHOOLS TO THE LAITY AND EXPANDING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the three decades following the Second Vatican Council, three NCEA presidents entrusted increasing responsibility and leadership for U.S. Catholic schooling to the laity. This was to be expected in view of the significant rise in the number of lay women and men teaching and administering in Catholic schools. More importantly, it was a recognition of the vocation of the laity (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1981a; Vatican Council II, 1988).

C. Albert Koob (a Norbertine priest who served from 1966 to 1974), John F. Meyers (a secular priest who served from 1974 to 1986), and Catherine MacNamee (a sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet who served one decade, 1986 to 1996) were transitional figures who shepherded the NCEA to the conclusion of the era when religious sisters, brothers, and priests controlled U.S. Catholic schooling. Although this transition had, for the most part, been realized in most dioceses by the early-1980s, the transition at the national level was not complete until 1996, when Sr. Catherine completed her tenure as NCEA president, and Leonard DeFiore, the superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Metuchen (NJ), succeeded Sr. Catherine as the NCEA's first lay president. The curtain had drawn on the saga of the religious and their contributions to the legacy of U.S. Catholic schooling. At the dawn of the 21st century, the future would belong to the laity who would control the nation's Catholic schools.

In addition to entrusting the control of U.S. Catholic schools to the laity, Fr. Koob, Fr. Meyers, and Sr. Catherine followed the bishops' lead by expanding the notion of "Catholic education" to include religious educational opportunity for all Catholics, at all ages, for a lifetime.

Fr. Koob signaled this shift early in his tenure when he asserted in *Momentum*, the NCEA's official journal, that U.S. Catholic education was no longer synonymous with Catholic schools. In a 1972 column, Koob argued somewhat idealistically that Catholic educators needed to free themselves from the ideological constraints which functioned to support an educational system that was a remnant of a bygone era. In his role as NCEA President, Fr. Koob was announcing a change in direction for national Catholic educational policy. In reality, however, Koob's announcement came after the NCEA had already initiated numerous programs aimed at promoting the development of parish-based religious education programs not only for children and youth but for adults as well (1971b). But, in view of this change of direction—unsupported by objective statistical data—at least one observer

wondered whether Catholic schools were "committing suicide" (Greeley, 1973).

And yet, Fr. Koob was probably hedging his bets because he also asserted the NCEA's abiding interest in and traditional support for Catholic schools, especially schools dedicated to forming the next generation of American Catholic leaders. Fr. Koob was most succinct: "It is urgent that the story of Catholic schools convey the great success of the schools in training leaders for the Church and for the nation" (Koob, 1973, p. 2). To achieve this outcome, Fr. Koob did not turn to liberation theology. Instead, he resuscitated his predecessor's vision—redeeming Christian humanism as the central component of Catholic educational philosophy, albeit with a late-1960's twist—to teach Catholic school students about freedom of conscience and the right to freely choose one's faith (Koob, 1971a). Fr. Koob's efforts were successful, for as Bryk and his colleagues (1993) verified, by the 1980s Christian humanism was as much a defining element of the Catholic school's curriculum as were less apologetic methods to teaching religion. It was an outcome that would have very much pleased Koob's predecessor, Msgr. Frederick Hochwalt.

Koob's successor, John F. Meyers, took his cue from the U.S. bishops' statement on education—*To Teach as Jesus Did* (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1984)—to argue that Catholic schools would continue to be places where mature and responsible Catholics would devote their talents and energies to "building a faith community...developed by the faith-life, the liturgical-life, and the service-life of the teachers working together in a common cause" (p. 2). And yet, Fr. Meyers fudged a bit, invoking the more ecumenical and inclusive term, Christian, rather than its more parochial counterpart, Catholic, to describe this school. One year later, however, Meyers retreated a bit by reaching out to Catholic school proponents, asserting in his *Momentum* column that "although appearances may have changed, the essential reality is still the same" (1973, p. 2). Students would continue to receive a formative program including both a moral and an intellectual component, Fr. Meyers maintained.

The post-Vatican II Catholic school ideal Fr. Meyers described actually resembled more the American common school propounded by its supporters during the 18th and 19th centuries than his ideal reflected what the average Catholic (or pastor or bishop, for that matter) envisioned a post-Vatican II Catholic school to be. Meyers' ideal deftly integrated two centuries of American Catholic educational thought, an ideal that could have emanated as much from Bishop John Carroll as it could have from two archepiscopal rivals, John Ireland and Michael Corrigan. It was also identical to the ideal T. J. Shahan endorsed as did Archbishop McNicholas. In reality, the ideal Fr. Meyers promulgated for U.S. Catholic schooling was nothing new for the American Catholic Church, despite its post-Vatican II gloss.

It was during Sr. Catherine's tenure that significant changes in the landscape of U.S. Catholic schooling began to materialize. First, the post-Vatican II erosion of Catholic schooling ebbed. Concurrently, support for Catholic schools increased. And, by the mid-1990s, the number of Catholic schools increased (Meitler Consultants, 1997) as did the number of students (NCEA, 1996). It would not be trite to assert that, when Sr. Catherine left the NCEA presidency in 1996, Catholic schools were "Schools To Believe In," as NCEA publicists proclaimed.

Given the instability resulting when the Church called itself to renewal at Vatican II, these three Catholic educational leaders made remarkable contributions to U.S. Catholic schooling, especially as they built upon and perfected this American legacy. In particular, these three national Catholic educational leaders renewed traditional themes in American Catholic educational philosophy. In addition, Fr. Koob, Fr. Meyers, and Sr. Catherine shepherded U.S. Catholic schooling to an important crossroads, where its destiny would rest securely in the hands of the laity. And yet, long before each of these Catholic educational leaders achieved national prominence, they had labored in Catholic schools and, perhaps unbeknownst to them, were forming their successors—the next generation of Catholic lay leaders.

A SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

I have organized this survey of the contributions religious sisters, brothers, and priests made to U.S. Catholic schooling with conscious attention to the fact that Catholic schools are people, not buildings. For the most part, research on Catholic schooling fails to appreciate this fact, having reported descriptive data, such as numbers of schools and teachers, and measured levels of academic achievement.

In light of the qualitative contributions made by the religious to U.S. Catholic schooling during the three decades following the close of the Second Vatican Council, what has transpired in Catholic schools is not simply the competent communication of a technical, delimited, core curriculum. More important is the communication of the collective mission and purpose that educators in Catholic schools have brought to the challenging task of forming youth both morally and intellectually since at least as far back as the early 1800s. It is these women and men, individually and collectively, who, within the confines of the nation's Catholic schools, have given form to the mission and purpose of what it means to be an American Catholic not only in the post-Vatican II era, but in each previous era as well (Jacobs, 1990).

In prior generations, whether the religious educated immigrant youth, poor and middle class youngsters, or the children of the upper class, these educators brought to their work, first and foremost, a moral purpose, what Bryk et al. (1993) identified as an inspiring ideology transcending all they

did. And throughout the generations, these disciple-educators represented to youth what all Catholics should endeavor to be—selfless, tireless servants of the Gospel—women and men whose actions proclaim the Scripture and tradition they profess in words. Through their control of the nation's Catholic schools, the religious sisters, brothers, and priests with their lay collaborators alongside them shaped how students would conceive living as American Catholics in diverse and shifting social contexts and historical eras.

For more than 200 years, legions of sisters, brothers, and priests offered their lives in generous service to the Church's educational apostolate. In the post-Vatican II era, this sacrificial offering continued to live in the message of faith, hope, and love renewed in their progeny—the laity—who would control the schools. And now, because some lay women and men have stepped forward and accepted God's call by dedicating their lives to the Church's educational ministry, some youth will continue to receive a distinctively American and Catholic moral and intellectual formation. The effects of this educational program will be evidenced when the students graduate and they accept the mantle of leadership in the American Catholic community early in the 21st century.

In the post-Vatican II era, the soul of U.S. Catholic schooling remains what it always has been—the women and men who teach and administer in the nation's Catholic schools. Because of this, even though new Catholic schools are being constructed, it must be asked where this generation and future generations of educators will receive their formation as Catholic educators (Jacobs, 1996a, 1996b) so that these generous women and men will foster a unique Catholic identity in their schools (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1981a, 1981b; Heft, 1991; Helbling, 1993; Ristau, 1991; Rogus, 1991). Success in this endeavor is an imperative if the moral and intellectual effects of Catholic schooling will become evident in its graduates' lives.

Without doubt, the American Catholic community of the 21st century will be a much different community—perhaps more like the Catholic community and Catholic school Isaac Hecker envisioned (Gower, 1976; O'Brien, 1992)—than the anti-modernist community existing at the dawn of the 20th century. Much of this outcome is due to the contributions the religious made to Catholic schooling. Not only did they control the nation's Catholic schools during the 19th and 20th centuries, they also formed the next generation of American Catholic leaders.

Ironically, this is an outcome that, had the conservative majority at Baltimore III foreseen, they might well have thought twice before mandating "every Catholic child in a Catholic school." Likewise, had the liberal minority—the "Americanists"—perceived the faintest glimmer portending that the schooling controversy would conclude this way, they might well have jumped on the bandwagon to make passage of the school mandate unanimous.

As the 20th century wanes and gives rise to the promise of the 21st century, what is evident is that the Americanist project—the formation of an American Catholic Church through the vehicle of Catholic schools—was achieved largely as a result of the religious sisters, brothers, and priests who served in the nation's Catholic schools. Joseph Salzmann was correct: "If on any one point the friends and enemies of the Catholic Church are a unit, it is on the question of the importance of the schools. Both hold the view that the future belongs to him that controls the schools" (as cited in Heming, 1895, p. 172).

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