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9-1-2007

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### Recommended Citation

Coll, R., & Davis, R. (2007). Faith Schools and State Education: Church-State Relations and the Development of the 5-14 Religious Education Program in Scotland. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 11 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.1101062013>

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# FAITH SCHOOLS AND STATE EDUCATION: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 5-14 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM IN SCOTLAND

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*Public policy questions such as public funding for Catholic schools, the extent of government involvement in private education, and church-state relations in general are not unique to the United States. This article discusses Catholic education in Scotland, with a view to explaining the ongoing need for cooperation and goodwill in church-state relations concerning schools.*

## INTRODUCTION

The status of faith schools situated within secular, state-funded educational systems continues to excite strong and contrasting opinions from a wide range of social, religious, and cultural commentators throughout the United Kingdom and beyond (Judge, 2001). While much recent work has been done on the philosophical and ideological controversies surrounding faith-based schools and the legitimacy of their claims on state sponsorship (Conroy, 2003), much less attention has been paid to the institutional relationships on which the links between state authorities and religious organizations responsible for the promotion and protection of faith-based schools actually depend. Neglect of this area of study impedes a full understanding of the processes of policy formation by which a range of religious bodies—most especially the Christian churches—arrive at meaningful and enduring accommodations with secular authorities in order to safeguard the interests of their schools within non-religious educational systems.

This paper is not concerned with the political or philosophical controversies surrounding faith-based or denominational education in the United Kingdom, which are well-rehearsed elsewhere (Gardner, Cairns, & Lawton, 2003). It aims, instead, to examine in some detail one particular episode in the recent history of educational policy formation in Scotland in which the supposedly distinctive needs of faith-based schools assumed central importance. This episode is part of a longer history of Church-state relations in Scottish

Catholic education. It is important to emphasize that, historically, Scottish education has enjoyed a distinctive identity within the British state, quite separate from the educational systems of the rest of the United Kingdom. Between 1872 and 1998, oversight of Scottish education resided with the Scottish Office, an executive arm of the United Kingdom government presided over by the Secretary of State for Scotland, a full member of the British Cabinet. Within the Scottish Office, the Education Department (SOED) assumed responsibility for educational policy, quality, and standards, inspection of schools, regulation of the curriculum, and initial teacher education. These arrangements, subject only to minor amendment such as changes to nomenclature, remained relatively stable throughout the 20th century, adjusting successfully to major innovations in access, certification, and curriculum reform. All major changes in educational policy and practice in the period of its jurisdiction were managed and implemented through the SOED, making it in effect the key decision-making authority with which all other stakeholders in Scottish education—including the Catholic Church—were required to deal.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the schools provided by the Catholic Church in Scotland were very poorly resourced. Serving an impoverished and mostly Irish-descendant population, the majority of staff were underpaid and not qualified to teach. In 1872, the schools had been invited to transfer from Church control to state control, with individual schools retaining the right to determine their religious nature if they so wished. This was unacceptable to the Catholic Church. The Church believed that the conditions on offer did not safeguard the denominational character of its schools. The Church fully appreciated that its schools were of a low standard materially and academically, yet it balanced this with the fact that Catholic children were guaranteed the faith dimension of education about which the community felt so strongly.

Eventually, the government recognized that the Catholic minority was being treated unfairly since it was unable to share the facilities of state education for which its membership was expected to pay through general and local taxation. It was well known that the quality of education provided for Catholic children was of an inferior standard to that of other schools (Scotch Education Department, 1891). The volume of debt faced by the Church as a result of providing a parallel system of Catholic education was even discussed in the popular press (“Editorial,” 1917). The government’s intention, developed in the course of the First World War, to establish a broadly based national education system meant that the Catholic situation needed to be addressed. After much controversy, the Scotland Act of 1918 was passed, which gave children in Catholic schools the same educational opportunities as those in other schools. In addition, Catholic teachers under the jurisdic-

tion of the Catholic Church would teach religious education to Catholic children in accordance with the catechetical principles of the Catholic faith. The provisions of the 1918 Act left the Church and its schools in Scotland in a uniquely advantageous situation. The schools were to be fully funded and maintained by the state, while the Church retained control over both the appointment of teachers and the religious education curriculum. This position was without direct parallel anywhere else in the world and has endured largely unchanged for almost a century.

Under the terms of the Act, which have remained in place to the present day, Scottish Catholic schools are able to enjoy the full benefits of complete state funding of every aspect of their work without compromising their autonomy or ethos as Catholic institutions. Within the state system, Catholic schools are fully accountable to the government for their academic standards, implementation of educational policy initiatives, and quality of leadership. They fall within the same national and local inspection regimes as all other schools, and their performance is both monitored and transparent. The distinctive Catholic climate of the schools is respected and supported through all of these processes of professional scrutiny, allowing the schools control of their admissions policies and recruitment of staff. On a day-to-day basis, Scottish Catholic schools are administered through local education authorities, which provide them with their funding and resources on precisely the same basis as their nondenominational counterparts. At the same time, the schools preserve their distinctive, faith-based mission and character. While adhering to national curricular guidelines shared across all schools, the network of Catholic primary and secondary schools, with the involvement and support of the Church, live out their distinctive identity through the religious education curriculum, sacramental preparation, liturgical celebration, and promotion of Catholic values (Fitzpatrick, 2003).

One of the fruits of the relationship described above has been the ability of Catholic schools to participate fully in decades of curriculum development and reform in Scotland, another area of Scottish education traditionally controlled by the SOED. Historically, curricular guidance was provided to all schools and to local government authorities in the form of national circulars and memoranda (Anderson, 2003). Although these rarely involved the exercise of statutory powers, their advisory status was of vital importance to the governance of schools and almost never set aside. In the area of religious education, curricular guidance throughout the 20th century was provided to schools while acknowledging the rights of the Catholic Church in relation to religious education in Catholic schools under the terms of the 1918 Act. Fundamentally, these rights included full autonomy in the determination of the content and implementation of the religious education component of the curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 5-14 ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BEGINS**

In 1993, the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) reached agreement on the redevelopment of the religious education curriculum for Catholic schools, as part of a wider national program of curricular reform and modernization. The agreement resulted in the creation of a separate curricular document for Catholic schools, *Religious Education 5-14 Roman Catholic Schools* (1993), produced and funded collaboratively by the SOED and the Catholic Church. Analysis of the formal and informal processes by which the agreement was reached sheds valuable light upon a series of Church-state policy themes with relevance well beyond the specific local phenomenon of religious education in Scottish Catholic schools. It reveals, in particular, some of the key forms of dialogue and interaction on which negotiation between secular state and religious authorities can be based, when both parties wish to secure meaningful cooperation and consensus on important questions of educational policy and planning. In an educational system that maintains support for faith-based schools, while at the same time requiring them to adhere to nationally agreed curricular guidelines and priorities, the state is placed in a position where it is required to negotiate with religious organizations which themselves possess only limited official standing within the formal structures of educational policymaking. In the Scottish case, the complex processes that culminated in the creation of a separate set of guidelines in *Religious Education 5-14 (Roman Catholic Schools)* epitomize a very particular pattern of interaction and consultation between state and religious authorities, ranging well beyond the fixed framework set by legal statute and evolving over a long period of communication, compromise, and accommodation.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The historical and contextual factors summarized above form the backdrop to the episode with which this paper is principally concerned. An examination of the detailed negotiations that gave rise to the *Religious Education 5-14 Roman Catholic Schools* (Scottish Office Education Department, 1993) in the early 1990s reveals, we argue, several important levels of communication which stretch well beyond the formal, institutional structures of Church-state consultation as these are expressed in both statute and established civil service procedures.

For the purposes of this study, the character of these negotiations was extensively reconstructed using a wide variety of documentary and archive material. Archive sources included correspondence between the Catholic

Education Commission (CEC) and the SOED; minutes of meetings between the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) and the CEC; and interviews with leading participants in the process. The purpose of this approach was to access, through triangulation of the available data, the perspectives of the leading agents involved in the experience, and to probe beneath the surface formalities of legally-formulated roles and relationships, thereby capturing the motivations and aspirations of the protagonists amidst their pursuit of what they themselves came to regard as a mutually-beneficial and politically necessary consensus.

The lightly structured interview was adopted as the most appropriate interview technique. A number of interview questions were created, governed by overarching research questions, in order to produce interview material to be analyzed. The interviews were lightly structured in order to standardize questions, while creating a degree of openness of response on the part of the interviewees. Interview interventions took place when necessary, encouraging further depth to interviewees' responses. The prime objective was to provide an environment that encouraged and protected the spontaneity of response. It was necessary to listen with what Oppenheim (1992) calls "the third ear" in order to ascertain what was being said and, equally importantly, what was being omitted. In contrast to the fully structured interview, the researchers had to, "pick up the gaps and hesitations and explore what lies behind them and...create an atmosphere which is sufficiently uncritical for the respondent to come out with seemingly irrational ideas, hatreds and misconceptions" (Oppenheim, p. 66).

Interviews were conducted with four key protagonists involved in the process. Elite interviewing was employed in order to isolate the perspectives of key individuals representing the various stakeholder groups. Of those interviewed, all had been charged with the purpose of taking forward religious education in Scottish schools. In the period under review in this study, the interview subjects were:

- The convener of Review and Development Group 5 (RDG5), the group set up by the SOED and responsible for the creation of the Religious and Moral Education 5-14 Guidelines
- The chief inspector from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMI) responsible for religious education
- The chairperson of the Catholic Education Commission for Scotland
- A lecturer in religious education from St. Andrew's College, the national Catholic teacher education institution for Scotland, and member of RDG5.

Although small, the sample was considered appropriate because it was what Patton (1990) terms “information-rich” (p. 169), owing to the status of the individuals involved and their knowledge of, and insight into, the whole process.

## RESULTS

The first point that became apparent in the collection of the data was that both the Catholic Church and the Scottish Office clearly saw it to be in their interests to strive for a good working relationship in this potentially controversial area. Although the Catholic Church has the exclusive responsibility for the content of religious education in its schools in Scotland, these schools operate within the national educational system, and every decision made regarding schools in Scotland affects them directly. The Church cannot risk complacency in relation to its statutory responsibilities, since all other aspects of Catholic schools are required to function in accordance with state priorities, in key areas such as curricular innovation, national assessment, and the management of learning and teaching. The Church has always been keen, therefore, to be involved in any new developments in Scottish education likely to impinge on the life and work of its schools, since it strives for its schools to be moving forward with the state sector as a whole while at the same time preserving their distinctive identity. When interviewed, the chairperson of the CEC at the time of the 5-14 developments indicated that it was the task of the CEC to “try to ensure that what happens within the national system is appropriate for Catholic schools.” This comment touches on the key role of the CEC. The Catholic Education Commission was created in 1971 by the Conference of the Bishops of Scotland to advise the Conference on all matters of relevance to Catholic education. In the early 1990s, the CEC was made up of a cross-section of teachers, clergy, and lay advisors from beyond education. With regard to the debates surrounding 5-14 document, the Chairperson stated that, “We just didn’t want RE [religious education] left aside like some sort of second class subject. We felt it had an important part to play in this national framework.”

These comments reinforce the view that the CEC was from the outset eager to be a part of any developments associated with the inclusion of religious education in the 5-14 curriculum, since the CEC recognized that changes in this area would have a direct bearing on the character of religious education in Catholic schools. Minutes from an early meeting between the CEC and the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (SCCC) show clearly the extent to which the CEC wished to be seen to be involved in the process: “[The Chairperson] mentioned that the CEC greatly appreciated being included in this consultation process....He pointed out that denomina-

tional school syllabuses were in need of review.”

At the time of these major changes to the curriculum, the SCCC was a quasi-autonomous agency maintained by the SOED to develop and monitor the curriculum in schools. In relation to 5-14 Guidelines, the SCCC assumed responsibility for oversight of what was known as Review and Development Group 5 (RDG5), the group charged with the drafting of the new religious education document. The minutes provide an early impression of the negotiating position taken by the Church in its dealings with the SOED.

The Scottish Office of the early 1990s was also keen to retain the Catholic Church’s interest in all of the major educational developments of the time, even while recognizing that the Church was statutorily entitled to autonomy in key areas such as the determination of the religious education syllabus in its schools. Commenting from the perspective of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Schools (HMI), a representative underlined the desirability of securing national coherence as religious education was revitalized across all Scottish schools:

The minister in the Scottish Office would have been keen to ensure that RE in Catholic schools was not out of the mainstream developments going on in other schools... Obviously we wanted to make sure that Religious Education moved ahead in Catholic schools just as it was doing in other curricular areas. We were keen to take a coherent view of the whole curriculum throughout the country.

Establishing this coherence across the religious education curriculum was clearly intended to make life easier for the Scottish Office in terms of its plans for inspecting schools and raising standards. It could of course be argued that the Catholic Church broke that coherence by eventually obtaining a separate religious education document for its schools. However, it is important to emphasize that from the outset, the Church did accept the principle of the national 5-14 framework and the need for coherence across the curriculum. Having the Church cooperate and work closely on matters such as religious education meant that the Scottish Office could address all schools when making educational statements and providing advice, rather than being obliged always to provide separate information for the two sectors. Since the Catholic Church embraced the principle of the 5-14 framework for religious education—and, indeed, reflected most of its salient features in its own document—the Scottish Office was given a locus in aspects of the development of religious education in Catholic schools.

When the original non-denominational consultation document proposed by RDG5 was first rejected by the Catholic Church, on the grounds that it was insufficiently sensitive to the theological and pastoral needs of Catholic schools, the Scottish Office—anxious to keep the Church on board—react-



ed quickly. It proved attentive to the issues raised by the Church, and following a prolonged period of negotiation, agreed to give the Church its own guidelines—guidelines designed to fit the larger 5-14 framework but which would also prove acceptable to Catholic schools and to the Church. Initially, it was agreed that a “Catholic Supplement” would be written, but the process of preparing the supplement eventually resulted in the emergence of a separate document, since it soon became clear to all parties that there was no point in having a document half of which was unsuitable for the non-denominational majority of Scotland’s schools. The Scottish Office was prepared to accept this solution as long as the Church continued to observe mainstream government developments in religious education, since these were designed to perform a key function within the overall 5-14 structure. The HMI representative observed that:

The wishes of the CEC in terms of the rationale and in terms of faith developments were understood. Yes, we could quite understand what they were saying....They were entirely justified in seeking some further advice in how to use the guidelines and that further advice resulted in another document....It is absolutely right that the CEC should continue to promote the aims of the Catholic Church in terms of education.

The CEC chairperson explained how important it was to convince the Scottish Office that there was a problem with the original document and highlighted the response received when this point was made by the CEC:

We had to persuade them that this was what was needed and they accepted it. We did not have to battle. Obviously they would have preferred one document, but we put our case forward to them and it was accepted.

Interestingly, when the Church worked on its document, the Scottish Office involvement was minimal. The government appointed a representative from HMI to the working team set up jointly by the Church and the Scottish Office to produce the separate document. The representative’s role was to ensure that all of the mainstream national developments in religious education were accorded proper recognition and that the overall 5-14 curricular architecture of strands and levels was being respected. An academic in teacher education then employed by St. Andrew’s College—in the period in question, the national Catholic college for teacher education in Scotland—was one of the Church secondees working on the document and summarized the role played by the HMI representative: “[He] was involved and he gave us a free hand. He never interfered but guided us....When they [the Scottish Office] saw all the elements that 5-14 should have, they never questioned anything.”

It seems clear from the range of perspectives available that the Scottish Office was quite willing to acquiesce in the Church's approach. At the same time, the Church seemed willing to embrace the structures of 5-14 as long as it remained free to determine the detailed content of the document and its implementation in schools. The Church did not feel that it had surrendered any important responsibility for religious education to the Scottish Office as the Church itself retained control of the writing of the new document. The chairperson of the CEC stated "We didn't feel that we were passing responsibility away in any way at all because, after all we were writing the document."

Indeed, the Church could see great advantages in the way a specifically Catholic document could be situated positively within the national curricular framework for all schools and pursued this vigorously. There were obvious and considerable benefits to be accrued from the legitimization of the Church's position and the ratification of its curricular guidelines by state authorities, even if this ratification implied no adherence on the part of the state to Church teachings. For the first time, educational documents embodying official Church teachings on key areas of faith, morals, and religious practice were to receive the support of the state and were to appear in a key curricular publication produced by the state. The chairperson of the CEC captured the subtlety of this process and the scale of the opportunity it presented:

The group...worked their way through the document using the exact same framework as was in the document for non-denominational schools....We had control over the document. Their role was just to make sure that it was consistent in terms of the structure and framework. It was a very good partnership.

## **EMERGING ISSUES FOR THE CHURCH**

In summary, throughout this episode the relationship between the Church and the state in relation to the religious education syllabus in schools appeared to be amicable and businesslike. The final proposals were put forward and accepted, demonstrating the levels of trust then existing between the Scottish Office and the CEC and which proved so important to securing the seemingly propitious outcome. It would, of course, be naïve to imagine that the state negotiators believed they had yielded nothing but concessions to the Church in arriving at the agreement, appeasing a powerful and politically influential interest group. The educational imperatives driving the broader 5-14 program remained in place—to increase the role of the state in the centralized management and regulation of the curriculum nationwide and to minimize local variation and autonomy. In securing its distinctive and officially-sanctioned guidelines for the teaching of religious education in accordance with the principles of the Catholic faith, the Church also implicitly

recognized the extended jurisdiction of the state in important elements of religious education practice in Catholic schools, principally through the activities of HMI.

A significant point to note in this analysis is that the personnel involved in the negotiations and correspondence between Church and state were of the highest possible status, experience, and calibre. This serves to highlight the importance accorded by both parties to the maintenance of a positive working relationship for executive decision making. Cardinal Thomas Winning—Archbishop of Glasgow and then the most senior Catholic churchman in Scotland—and the then Senior Chief HMI, were in frequent contact throughout the period in order to maintain a high-profile channel of communication for the resolution of any problems beyond the competence of the immediate negotiators. While this arrangement may appear to outside observers as unduly cozy or even conspiratorial, what it reflects is that statutory arrangements are not by themselves sufficiently flexible to support the complex layers of interaction and communication operative in negotiations of this nature and sensitivity. There is a need for a climate of opinion to be nurtured in which shared values and common goals can be formulated and refined. Minority groups that assume an adversarial stance in relation to state power in a democratic polity risk isolation and marginalization of their influence and are unlikely to succeed in securing their goals (Leese, Piatek, & Curyllo-Klag, 2002). The Catholic Church in Scotland in the 1990s could afford neither an impasse nor rejectionism if it wished to continue to enjoy the full benefits of state support. It opted instead for a policy in which respect for difference was paramount. In so doing, it perhaps marked out a template for possible future arrangements between the state and minority groups seeking particular educational privileges or exemptions.

There were two especially sensitive areas of negotiation in the debates surrounding the creation of the 5-14 religious education guidelines for Catholic schools. One related to the Church's need for clarification of the status of the new document. The second was the issue of funding for the document's publication and circulation to schools. In relation to the first concern, it is important to note that the overarching 5-14 national framework was not in fact fixed in statute. Unlike England and Wales, there is no national curriculum in Scotland and curricular guidelines do not carry legislative force. Rather, they are seen to be the result of a process of deliberation and consultation on the part of the major stakeholders in Scottish education. Their status as guidelines indicates the function they are intended to perform with respect to curriculum planning and delivery and to the maintenance and improvement of national standards as monitored by HMI. In one sense, this consensus culture for which Scottish education is renowned (Bryce &

Humes, 2003) appears to support the patterns of pluralism and participation on which an institution like the Catholic Church depends for its role in education. However, as Arthur (1995) has shown, consensus cultures can induce their own forms of conformity and coercion, bringing considerable normative pressure to bear on divergent groups to assimilate to the dominant view. The Church showed itself alert to this dangerous feature of consensus and skillfully avoided the trap by clearly establishing the basis upon which its guidelines would be implemented and monitored in its schools. It was concerned to clarify, in particular, the place of its new guidelines in the practice of inspection and to ensure that they would not be seen merely as a set of concessions or opt-outs. It was therefore agreed that the Catholic 5-14 guidelines would have a status equal to that of the original guidelines in that the Inspectorate would apply them on exactly the same basis as the non-denominational guidelines were to be applied to non-denominational schools. In adopting this approach, the Church demonstrated a creative response to the provisions of the 1918 Act. On the one hand the Act continued to safeguard the role of the Church in relation to the content and implementation of religious education in Catholic schools. This remained crucial to the Church's sense of security. On the other hand, however, the Church clearly felt confident enough in its position to enter into a mature working partnership with the state, unthreatened by the state's role in the delivery of religious education. The result was a positive consensus in which both parties fully respected the other's territorial jurisdiction, responsibilities, and difference. A subtle acknowledgement of this can be seen in the agreement that the document was not to be called "National Guidelines," since it was to apply to only one sector, but was to be understood as the official guidelines for religious education in Catholic schools, and as the chairperson of the CEC stated "that is all that really interests us."

Funding was another issue, not discussed until just before publication. The Church felt that the Scottish Office should offer financial assistance, since the document was destined for state schools funded by the taxpayer. The Senior Chief HMI had approached the Scottish Office on this matter and explained that there had been a discouraging response on precisely the grounds that the CEC had chosen not to use the original Scottish Office guidelines and that "since the Catholic Bishops define RE [religious education], the Church should bear the financial responsibility." The Church responded, outlining that the obligation to "define RE" was a "statutory duty...and not a form of self-indulgence." Eventually a compromise was reached, and it was agreed that half the costs were to be met by the Scottish Office.

The feelings surrounding this compromise are clearly conveyed in a vari-

ety of correspondence between the SOED and the CEC surrounding the launch phase of the Catholic document—including communications between the chief HMI and the chairperson of the CEC:

The funding of the production and publication of the supplement was discussed when we met. We pointed out that the limited funds at the disposal of the SOED had, of necessity, to be targeted primarily towards support of the implementation of the national guidelines in all schools. We indicated, however, that if the supplement is published as a joint initiative by SOED and CEC, it would be reasonable for the two organisations to contribute to the costs. (HMI chief inspector, personal correspondence, November 1992)

The resultant position avoided laying responsibility exclusively with one partner and allowed each side to realize its aspirations within the overall process.

The positive outcomes emerging from the 5-14 negotiations undoubtedly raised important questions about the Church's broader involvement with the Scottish Office in the development of religious education. One significant criticism conveyed by two of the interviewees was that the 5-14 experience had revealed the need for earlier and wider consultation between the state and the Catholic Church. The remit of RDG5 was designed before the consultation with the CEC and Church involvement did not exist from the start of the process, where it properly belonged. If a unitary set of guidelines were intended for all schools, Catholic included—and since the Church held responsibility for religious education in Catholic schools—then perhaps the Church ought to have been represented on groups such as RDG5 from their inception. The obvious problem with this argument is that no other religious group was similarly represented; but then no other religious group held statutory rights under the 1918 Act regarding religious education for its faithful. Despite the seeming lack of communication at the start of the process, the Scottish Office and the CEC did not allow this issue to come between them. Regardless of the frequency of their communication on matters concerning religious education, the truth remains that they succeeded on these occasions in cooperating in a professional manner that appeared to benefit both sides. Indeed, maintaining this relationship throughout the 5-14 developments was of vital importance. If it had not existed, the consequences may well have been severe. The 5-14 program was not bound by law, and the Catholic Church was ever conscious of its rights under the 1918 Act. The Church also recognized the desire of the Scottish Office to have a coherent 5-14 program implemented in all subject areas and in all state schools. The Church occupied a strong position both legally and politically, and the Scottish Office was well aware of this. The Church was under no legal obligation to accept

the 5-14 proposals for religious education tabled by the Scottish Office since under the 1918 Act responsibility for providing religious education continued to reside exclusively with the Church. Legally, the Church could have withdrawn from the process at any time if it had so wished. However, the positive relationship formed between both parties resulted in a relatively trouble-free exercise where no such recourse proved necessary and where each emerged satisfied with the outcome.

## CONCLUSION

Close examination of the relationship between Church and state in the creation of the national guidelines for religious education in Scottish schools in the early 1990s highlights decisively the centrality of professional relationships in the resolution of potentially conflicting interests. The Scottish Office and the Catholic Church developed very quickly a successful professional relationship for the exploration of changing patterns of religious education in schools. It is clear from this study that the statutory provisions of the 1918 (Scotland) Act played a major role in providing the basis for this relationship and in incentivizing both parties to ensure that all students in Scotland received a coherent and jointly agreed curriculum. Indeed, the results of this study would seem to confirm the Catholic Church's repeatedly stated view that it is the existence of the 1918 Act, and the guarantees it provides, that enables the Church to make its voice heard, and its influence felt, in all matters concerning religious education in Catholic schools (Fitzpatrick, 1995). Understood in terms of broader cultural developments, it is clear that what lay behind the Church's strategy in the 1990s was the desire to see Catholic education and Catholic social advancement integrated into the mainstream of Scottish society. Overcoming the ghetto mentality that was such a stifling legacy of the past required the preservation of Catholic distinctiveness within a wider conception of the common good and recognition of the contribution of modern Scottish Catholics to that common good (Paterson, 2000).

Explaining the position of the Scottish Office in the 5-14 religious education debate is more complex. It is conceivable that, well aware of the moral and legal strength of the Church's position in relation to the provision of religious education, the Scottish Office quite simply and deliberately opted for cooperation rather than conflict in order to avoid the Church insisting on direct participation in the work of groups such as RDG5. Alternatively, conscious of the overriding requirement to maintain the involvement of all Scottish schools within a national framework covering every curricular area, the Scottish Office opted to appease the Church in order to avoid a damaging split counter to the spirit and the goals of the 5-14 project. However the motives of the protagonists are finally evaluated, it is undeniable that an

effective working relationship did rapidly and expediently emerge. It is a major contention of this essay that the development and the character of this working relationship is best understood hermeneutically rather than analytically, its outworkings interpreted through an appraisal of the interpersonal, structural, organizational, pastoral, and cultural frames of reference shared (and not shared) by all of the parties to the experience. Formal and legal descriptions of the relationship, based on concepts of authority and entitlement, provide important parameters for explaining the process, but the full extent of the dialogue—and the full gravity of the issues at stake—can only be measured, as the evidence of this study has shown, if the various primary data (and especially the perspectives of the leading agents) are understood as evidence of a new consensus being actively forged rather than old perceptions, positions, and procedures being merely reinforced to the point of possible stalemate.

The devolution settlement of 1998, which saw the re-establishment of a separate Scottish Parliament responsible for the governance of Scottish internal affairs such as health and education, has not radically altered the conditions for dialogue between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Scottish state authorities. Responsibility for education is now invested in the recently constituted Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), which replaced the SOED. Recent educational developments suggest continuing negotiations between the state authorities and the Church, each striving to arrive at a mutually acceptable set of relationships that preserve the interests of both parties (CEC, 2003). On September 23, 2002, in a speech to students at the University of Glasgow, Nicol Stephens, then Junior Minister for Education in the fledgling Scottish Parliament, stated that future relations between the Scottish Executive Education Department and the Church on the issue of denominational schools would continue to be based on dialogue and partnership. A subsequent example of this can be seen in the discussions between SEED and the CEC regarding provision for the distinctive continuing professional development needs of Catholic schools in the era following the landmark McCrone agreement on the salaries and conditions of Scottish teachers (CEC, 2003). Working groups and consultation bodies have been constituted that will examine ways in which the ambitious national continuing professional development goals can be firmly embedded in the context of Catholic schools and their distinctive mission. Most recently, a major collaboration between SEED and the CEC has resulted in the creation of a staff development tool for use in all Catholic schools entitled *Faith and Teaching* (CEC, 2003) and fully funded by the central state authorities. The launch of this initiative underlines the continuing importance for future research of the whole area of Church-state cooperation with which this study has been concerned.

The question remains as to whether the increased collaboration of the Church with the Scottish state authorities, compounded by the growing secularization that Scotland is experiencing along with most other advanced democratic societies, presents any problems for integrity of the Scottish Catholic schools sector. Certainly, accepting the full funding by the state for the educational endeavors of the Church does not come without conditions. Equally, there are political and educational interests in Scottish education actively opposed to the continuation of state-funded denominational schools. The evidence of this study of the 5-14 process highlights certain dangers, the most conspicuous of which concerns the involvement of the secular state authorities in the formal inspection of religious education, an area previously the exclusive preserve of the Church and its schools. Although these inspections are conducted on the basis of the 5-14 religious education curriculum discussed above, the principle of external inspection has been conceded. This arrangement requires the continuing vigilance of the Church and the Catholic school leadership if boundaries and jurisdictions are to be properly maintained. More widely, participation in the 5-14 initiative as it impacts religious and moral education has sometimes produced a language in which the distinctions between the denominational and nondenominational sectors have been eroded. There is an increased tendency in popular and media accounts of Scottish education to elide the differences in rationale and practice between the two sectors in the teaching of religious education. One optimistic response to this, from the perspective of faith-based schooling, is to recognize that the partnership between Church and state requires Catholic educators in Scotland at all levels to be confident and informed in the assertion of their own distinctiveness and rights and in their clear commitments to progressive state-funded education. Institutionally, the willingness on the part of the Church to collaborate with the state must not be interpreted as a dilution of the obligations enshrined in the 1918 Act and manifested in the continued flourishing of Scottish Catholic schools. The findings of this study strongly suggest grounds for believing that a creative and dynamic relationship can indeed be maintained between the Church and the state, even in conditions of full-state funding, provided there is transparent communication, recognition of identity, and mutual trust.

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